§ Explore it

The lost sheep



Bible verses:

Luke 15:1-7 A lost sheep



Aim:

To better understand the reason for Jesus' parables, and to know God wants a relationship with everyone



Today's fruit:

Patience



Today's parable is all about a lost sheep.

This month we will discover more about four of Jesus' parables. Jesus often used parables to teach people how to follow him and share his love with others. The lost sheep teaches us that everyone is precious to Jesus, no matter what they have done or how lost they are.

God demonstrates patience with us as he waits for us to come close to him.

Each child will need:

- Memory verse wristband
- Resources to retell the parable, eg props, paper and pens, puppets ... see Action It
- A sheep cutout from the Sheep prayers handout and pens/pencils
- Explore It ideas handout

You will need:

- To prepare a hidden/lost items activity see Start It
- Today's fruit sign: Patience



Ask:

- Have you ever lost anything?
- What was it, and how did you feel when it went missing?
- Did you ever find it and, if so, what did that feel like?





Start with an activity where the children have to find lost things. There are lots of options for this activity. Any activity that involves the children hunting for something that is difficult to find will be perfect! For example:

- Hide several items in the room and ask the children to find them.
- Give the children a list of items to find, like a scavenger hunt.
- Bring a selection of Where's Wally books to see who can find him the quickest.
- Or use one of the following clips where the children need to find things.

Hidden Pictures Puzzle #4 (dog show 2020) by Highlights Kids (3:06)

Find the Hidden Picture Challenge: Fruit Edition by Games 4esl (5:03) This one is tricky!



Display the Patience sign.

Say:

In today's story the shepherd patiently searches for his lost sheep. God grows the fruit of patience within us. Today's song reminds us to be patient with others, just as God is patient with us.

Song

'Patience' ('Herbert the snail' with lyrics) by Wesley's Wuppets (2:40)



Ask:

Have you heard the word 'parable' before? If so, describe what one is.

Say:

A parable is a story used to teach a great truth or to challenge people to change the way they are living their lives.

Ask:

What parables do you know? Share them with the group.

Say:

Jesus once told a story about a lost sheep. There were all sorts of people listening, from tax collectors to religious leaders. Let's watch the clip to find out more.





Video

One Lost Sheep (God's story) by Crossroads Kids (3:21)

Watch: 0:00-0:48 'So Jesus told the Pharisees a story, to teach them a lesson about God.'

Say:

The teachers of the law were angry with Jesus because he was spending time with people they didn't think were good enough or special enough. Their laws told them they shouldn't spend time with people like that.

Ask:

- Why do you think the religious leaders were so angry with Jesus?
- What do you think about Jesus spending time with people who weren't making good choices?

Say:

In the very last sentence of the clip we heard that Jesus was about to tell the religious leaders a story. Before we carry on watching, let's read the story in Luke 15:3–7.

Two translations are provided, depending on your group's understanding.

Option 1

'So Jesus told them this story: 'Think about a man who has 100 sheep. He may lose one of them. What does he do then? He leaves all his other sheep in the fields. Then he goes. He looks for the sheep that he has lost. He looks until he finds it. When he finds the sheep, he is very happy. He lifts it up and he puts it across his shoulders. Then he carries it back home. He speaks to all his friends and to the people that live near him. He says, "I have found the sheep that I lost. So come to my house and we can all be happy together." When one person stops doing wrong things, it is like that. It makes those that live with God in Heaven very happy. They will be happier about that one person, than about 99 people who already obey God.'

(Luke 15:3-7 Easy English Bible)

Option 2

'Then Jesus told them this story: "Suppose one of you has 100 sheep, but he loses one of them. Then he will leave the other 99 sheep alone and go out and look for the lost sheep. The man will keep on searching for the lost sheep until he finds it. And when he finds it, the man is very happy. He puts it on his shoulders and goes home. He calls to his friends and neighbours and says, "Be happy with me because I found my lost sheep!" In the same way, I tell you there is much joy in Heaven when one sinner changes his heart. There is more joy for that one sinner than there is for 99 good people who don't need to change.'

(Luke 15:3-7 *ICB*)

Watch: 0:49-2:53 'And that's the story of the shepherd and one lost sheep.'



Ask:

- How do you think the shepherd felt when he noticed that one of his sheep was lost?
- How did he react when he found the lost sheep?
- The people listening thought about what it meant to be a good shepherd. How did they describe a good shepherd?
- What message did Jesus want the religious leaders to hear about the people?
- What celebrations take place in Heaven when one person believes in Jesus for the first time?
- How does this story teach us that everyone matters to God?

Say:

Jesus' parable shares the message that God loves everyone. Jesus is explaining to the religious leaders that those who have walked away from God's care are the ones we should be searching for. Jesus wants us to love and care for those who are lost because they need to know God's love.

Give each child a Memory verse wristband.

Say:

Our memory verse for this month reminds us that staying close to God is the best choice that we can make. Jesus loves those who are lost, but ultimately he wants us all to follow him as he is the Good Shepherd. Let's read the memory verse together.

Memory verse

'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.'

(Psalm 37:5 ICB)



Explain that the children are going to create their own version of the story of the lost sheep. You can guide this activity based on the resources you have available and the skills of your group. They may like to write new words to a well-known song, telling the story of the lost sheep. They could create a comic strip or poem. They could even retell the story using puppets. The most important thing is that they remember each part of the story and communicate the message that God loves everyone.

Watch the last part of the *One Lost Sheep* clip to recap the story.

Watch: 2:53-end.

- Jesus told stories called parables.
- One parable is about a shepherd and 100 sheep.



- One sheep got lost.
- The shepherd left the 99.
- The lost sheep was found.
- The shepherd threw a party because God cares about every single person.

The children can share their versions of the story together.



Say:

For our prayer time, we are going to pray for the people in our lives who do not know Jesus yet. There may also be those who used to follow Jesus and no longer believe in him. These people are very precious to God.

Ask:

Take a moment to think about the people in your life who do not know Jesus yet. Which person would you like to pray for?

Give each child a cutout sheep from the *Sheep Prayer* handout, to write their prayer on. As the music plays, ask the children to write a prayer for their person who does not know Jesus. If they feel comfortable, then they can share their prayers when the music ends.

Listen

'Reckless Love' feat Cory Asbury (short for kids) by Stehen Miller (2:59)

Key dates (optional)

Sau:

This weekend is *Farewell Sunday* within The Salvation Army, in the UK when some officers move from one church to another. We are going to spend some time praying for all the adults and children who will be moving to a new place.

Spend time praying with your group and then bring the session to a close.



Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.

Explore It is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)



Explore it

The lost sheep

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses: Luke 15:1-7



Aim:

To better understand the reason for Jesus' parables, and to know God wants a relationship with everyone



Today's fruit: **Patience**

> Children & Youth



This week we thought about all the people we know who do not know Jesus. Choose one person and promise to pray for them every day. This person matters to God and is like a lost sheep. If you get the chance, tell them about Jesus. If it helps, imagine the celebrations that will take place in Heaven if they decide to follow Jesus.



Watch

Snuggle up with someone at home and watch this beautiful retelling of the lost sheep.

Lost Sheep (paper stop motion short film) by Lukas Rooney



Song for the week

'Patience' (Herbert the snail with lyrics) by Wesley's Wuppets



Memory verse

'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.'

(Psalm 37:5 ICB)



Kids Alive! Online - salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive

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July: Memory Verse Wristband

Explore it



'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.'





'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.'





'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.'





'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.'





'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.' (Psalm 37:5)





'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.'
(Psalm 37:5)





Explore it

'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.'

(Psalm 37:5)

'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.'

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(Psalm 37:5)

'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.'

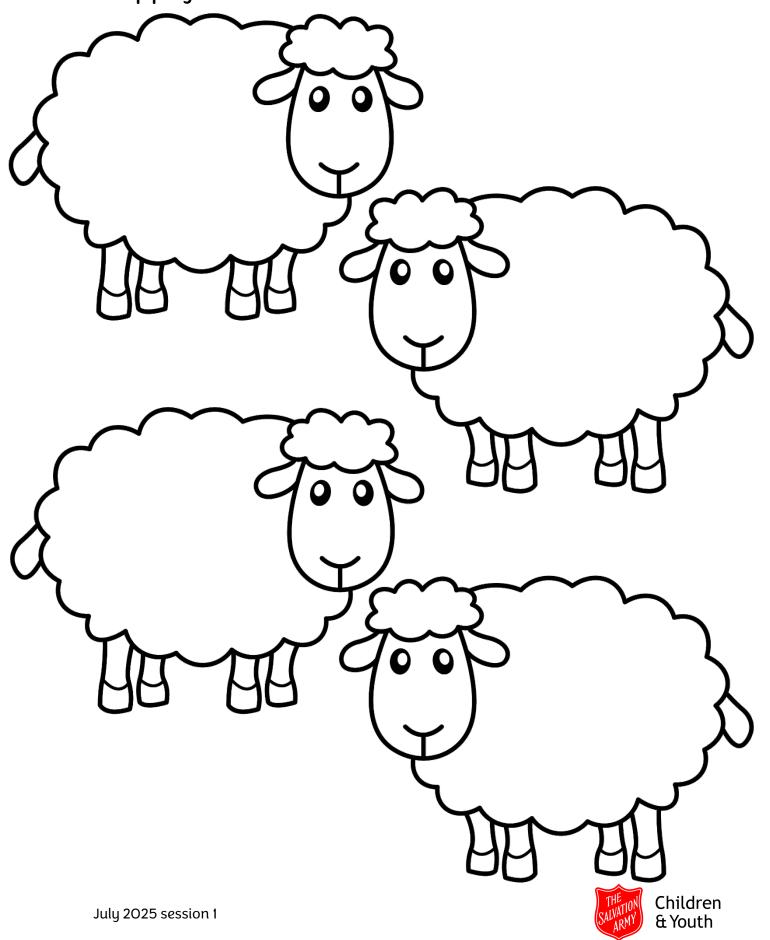
(Psalm 37:5)







Sheep prayers



Explore it

The sheep and the goats



Bible verses:

Matthew 25:31-46
The King will judge all people



Aim:

To better understand the reason for Jesus' parables and think about how we love God and love others



Today's fruit:

Faithfulness



Today's session is all about sheep and goats.

Through Jesus' parable, we learn what it looks like to follow him – like a sheep – and what it means to turn away from Jesus – like a goat! We think about ways to share God's love with people in need, staying close to him and showing his faithfulness to everyone we meet.

We can live out the fruit of faithfulness by loving God and loving others.

Each child will need:

- White and buff-coloured card, cotton wool, PVA glue, wooden stick/s, pens and scissors
- Explore It ideas handout

You will need:

- To organise two large sheets of paper each with two columns: similarities and differences
- To decide how much prep work and support your children will need to make the puppets see Action it
- Today's fruit sign: Faithfulness



Sau:

Today we carry on learning more about the parables of Jesus. Last week was all about the shepherd and today is all about the sheep – and the goats! To get us started, we're going to see how much you know about the similarities and differences between sheep and goats.



Split the children into teams and give each team a large sheet of paper divided into two columns with the headings 'Similarities' and 'Differences'.

Ask the children to watch the clip carefully and remember all the similarities and differences between sheep and goats. They must not start writing until the clip has finished. The winning team is the one that can remember the most similarities and differences between sheep and goats.

Video

Sheep us Goats (differences and facts for kids) by The Adventure Brothers (3:58)

Here are just a few of the similarities and differences mentioned in the clip.

Similarities

- They are closely related.
- They are roughly the same size.
- They are (usually) domesticated.
- They both have four compartments in their stomachs.
- They both have rectangular pupils.
- They both can make milk and cheese.
- They both can have horns.

Differences

- A sheep's tail usually hangs down. A goat's tail usually sticks up.
- Most sheep do not have horns. Goats usually have straight horns.
- Some goats have beards.
- Sheep have a divided upper lip.
- Sheep have thick woolly coats that need shearing.
- Goats have hairy coats.
- Sheep graze eating the grass.
- Goats graze and browse as they like to eat leaves as well as grass. They can also climb to find food.
- When sheep get lost, they are happy to see their shepherd.
- When goats get lost, they resist being brought back to the shepherd.
- Goats are curious and more independent, but sheep prefer to be with the rest of the flock.
- A baby sheep is called a lamb, and a baby goat is called a kid.





Ask:

As well as lots of similarities and differences, what fun facts did you discover about sheep and goats?



Say:

Sheep like to be close to their shepherd, but goats like to wander off and do their own thing. As part of God's flock, we follow the Good Shepherd, and we can trust in him. Our memory verse reminds us that we can depend on God. Let's share it together.

Memory verse

'Depend on the Lord.

Trust him, and he will take care of you.'

(Psalm 37:5 ICB)

Say:

Our song for today is one that we have shared before. It's all about trusting God.

Song

'I'm Trusting You' (Roar VBS group publishing) by Lifetree Kids (3:43)



Ask:

- Have you ever been put into a group for a game or an activity? If so, how did they separate the groups?
- Was it by age, by height, or was it random?
- In today's story, there are two groups. Think back to our Start It activity. What do you think the two groups might be?

Video

Sheep and Goats (Bible story) by LifeKids (2:54)

Say:

In this parable Jesus speaks about the time to come when he will be on the throne and people will be separated.



Ask:

What did Jesus mean when he said that the people would be separated like sheep and goats?

Say

What separates the people will be the way they glorify God.

Read:

'Then the King will say to the good people on his right, "Come. My Father has given you his blessing. Come and receive the kingdom God has prepared for you since the world was made. I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you invited me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me."

'Then the good people will answer, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food? When did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you alone and away from home and invite you into our house? When did we see you without clothes and give you something to wear? When did we see you sick or in prison and care for you?"

'Then the King will answer, "I tell you the truth. Anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me."'

(Matthew 25:34-40 ICB)

Ask:

- What kind of people does Jesus want us to care for and love?
- When Jesus said that he was hungry, thirsty and homeless, why did the people get confused?
- What did Jesus mean when he said this?

Say:

Jesus speaks about those who are hungry, thirsty, lonely, unclothed, sick and imprisoned. All these people need love and care, just as if each of them was Jesus.

Ask:

What do you think Jesus meant when he said, 'Anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me' (Matthew 25:40 ICB)?

Say:

This parable teaches us to respond to those who are in need.

Ask:

- How can we respond to people who are in need?
- Jesus said that when we respond to someone who needs help, it is as if we are loving and caring for him. How does that make you feel? Does it make you see other people differently?
 If so, how?



Say:

In this parable, Jesus said there are two different types of people – those who are close to God and those who aren't.

Ask:

- If you're someone who is close to God, and loves God, what sort of things might people see you doing?
- What sort of person might you be?

Say:

If we are not careful, we might read this parable and think that God only loves us if we are close to him. Think back to last week's parable, in which Jesus was described as the Good Shepherd.

Ask:

What did Jesus do when one of the sheep went missing?

Say:

We know that our actions don't always match up with who we are. Sometimes people make mistakes or make the wrong choice. The important thing is that we keep choosing kindness, just as Jesus did.

=□ Action it

Explain that the children are going to make sheep and goat puppets to remind them of the parable Jesus told. There is a lot of flexibility with this activity, and, considering the skills of your children, you can decide how much you would like to prepare in advance. You can also decide whether you want the children to just make a sheep or a goat, rather than both.

The clip provided shows you how to make the sheep and goats. As well as describing how to make the goats and sheep, the clip recaps the main teaching in the story. This may be useful to play as the children make their sheep and goats.

Video

Children's Space: The Parable of the Sheep and Goats by Bradford Cathedral (4:42)



Display the Faithfulness sign.

Say

In last week's story we read about the parable of the lost sheep. We saw an example of God's



faithfulness and discovered the lengths he is willing to go to look after his lost sheep. This week, we read a parable calling us to follow Jesus' example by loving and caring for people in need.

Ask:

When we show faithfulness to God, it means we trust what God says and try to follow what is right. If we are faithful to God, what things might we do?

Say:

For our time of prayer today, we're going to sing a song that reminds us of God's faithfulness. As you sing all the ways that God shows his faithfulness, ask God to help you to show that same love to others.

Song

'Goodness of God' by Eleven22 Kids (3:16)

Bring the session to a close in prayer.

Key dates (optional)

Together 2025

This weekend, members of The Salvation Army in the UK and Ireland gather for a conference in Birmingham. If you are there, listen out for stories about God's faithfulness and how people are being faithful to God.



Remember to send home the Explore It ideas for children and families.



Explore It is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)



Explore it

The sheep and the goats

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses: Matthew 25:31-46



Aim:

To better understand the reason for Jesus' parables and think about how we love God and love others



Today's fruit: Faithfulness

> Children & Youth



Discover

This month we are learning all about the parables of Jesus. Watch the clip to discover more about parables.

What is a Parable? (Bible answers for kids) by Maranatha Chapel Kids (0:46)

How could you live out the message of the parable of the sheep and the goats?



Create

This week we discovered the similarities and differences between sheep and goats. Watch the clip again and create a 'true or false' quiz to try out on the people at home.

Sheep vs Goats (differences and facts for kids) by The Adventure Brothers



Song for the week

'I'm Trusting You' (Roar VBS group publishing) by Lifetree Kids



Memory verse

'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.'

(Psalm 37:5 ICB)



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Explore it

The rich fool



Bible verses:

Luke 12:13-21

Jesus warns against selfishness



Aim:

To better understand the reason for Jesus' parables, and think about our priorities



Today's fruit:

Self-control



In our parable today we meet a man who is rich beyond his wildest dreams.

Instead of sharing his wealth, he builds bigger barns to keep it safe and make sure nobody else gets their hands on it. Through this parable, Jesus teaches us the importance of placing God at the centre of our lives rather than focusing on our possessions.

We show the fruit of self-control when we choose to put God above everything else.

Each child will need:

- Seven wooden sticks, pens and a ziplock bag
- Pens/pencils and paper
- Explore It ideas handout

You will need:

- Today's fruit sign: Self-control
- A flipchart and pens (optional)



Ask the children to imagine that they have just been given one million pounds. Give them time to draw or write down what they would do with the money.

As they share their ideas, guide the discussion to point out where they have spent the money on things for themselves and where they have shared it with others. Discuss with the children



whether they think rich people should share their money with others. What examples do they know of rich people helping those in need? If they were rich, would they share their money? If so, why?



Say:

In today's parable, a rich fool places his trust in the things he owns. Our memory verse reminds us where we need to place our trust. Let's share it together.

Memory verse

'Depend on the Lord.

Trust him, and he will take care of you.'
(Psalm 37:5 *ICB*)

Song

'You, You, You' (Sky VBS group publishing) by Lifetree Kids (2:21)



Say:

Today we discover another of Jesus' amazing parables. Jesus spent time with many different people, teaching them how to put God at the centre of their lives. This parable reminds us to put God first and stop spending time on things that won't last forever. Let's watch the clip to hear Jesus' story.

Video

The Parable of the Wealthy Man by Saddleback Kids (2:17)

Say:

The two brothers were arguing over money. Jesus said the following to them: 'Be careful and guard against all kinds of greed. A man's life is not measured by the many things he owns.' (Luke 12:15 ICB)

Ask:

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said this?
- What kind of things do people want to own today to show how wealthy they are?
- What is Jesus trying to teach us about focusing on him rather than on the things we own?



Say:

To help the people understand what he was trying to say, Jesus told them a parable.

Read:

'Then Jesus used this story: "There was a rich man who had some land, which grew a good crop of food. The rich man thought to himself, 'What will I do? I have no place to keep all my crops.' Then he said, 'I know what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones! I will put all my grain and other goods together in my new barns. Then I can say to myself, I have enough good things stored to last for many years. Rest, eat, drink, and enjoy life!'"'

(Luke 12:16-19 ICB)

Ask:

- The man had so many crops he couldn't fit them into his barn. What did he decide to do?
- What do you think of his choice to build bigger barns? What could he have done instead?
- What might have happened if he had shared the food with others?

Say:

Unfortunately, the man decided to keep all his crops to himself. God was not impressed with his choice.

Read:

'But God said to that man, "Foolish man! Tonight you will die. So who will get those things you have prepared for yourself?"

'This is how it will be for anyone who stores things up only for himself and is not rich toward God.'

(Luke 12:20-21 ICB)

Ask:

 How do you think the man felt when he realised that he would not benefit from all the things he had stored away for himself?

Say:

The man in the story was not a real person. Jesus used the story to teach people what is important in life. The point Jesus is making is that our relationship with God should be prioritised over everything else. The way that we care for and share with others demonstrates that God is the centre of everything that we do.

Ask:

- How does it make us feel when we care and share?
- How do you think God feels when he sees us looking out for others?



Say:

Sometimes it can be difficult to put our selfish needs aside and focus on others.

Display the Self-control sign.

Ask:

What does it mean when we show self-control?

Say:

Sometimes it means not doing something that we want to do, or thinking more carefully before we act. This can feel like a difficult thing to do, but God can help us, and we can have the fruit of self-control. But rather than sharing his abundant crops with others, the rich man selfishly kept them all for himself.

Ask:

How could the rich man have shown self-control?

Say:

The rich man is described as keeping everything for himself and building new barns to store all his crops. There is no mention of him sharing with anyone. As followers of Jesus, we are called to be the body of Christ, living in a way that reflects God's love for us. Our focus should not be on what we own, but on how we can share God's love with others.



Today's Action It activity is based around the following clip.

Video

Un-selfish Sticks Craft for 'a Fool and his Money' (Sunday school lesson) by Sermon4Kids (0:56)

Discuss

Discuss as a group the many unselfish activities they could do. If you think it would help your group, then list them on a flipchart. Examples include: making breakfast, tidying my bedroom, clearing the table, dusting the living room ...

Ask the children to choose seven unselfish acts and write one on each lollipop stick. They can then place them in their zip-lock bag, take them home and complete one unselfish act each day. Encourage the group to report back in the next session how they got on.



🃸 Pray it

Our prayer time will encourage the children to ask God to help them show self-control. Ask the children to look through the unselfish sticks in their bag. Discuss which one they will find the most challenging and why.

Encourage each member of the group to say a short prayer asking God to help them complete the unselfish act during the week. An example prayer is provided below.

Dear God.

I want to show others how much I love you by (insert unselfish act). Grow the Spirit of self-control in me so that I can place you at the centre of my life. Amen.

Key dates (optional)

The Salvation Army is holding many residential camps this summer. Pray that children attending will be encouraged to spend time with God and put him first.

66 Explore it

Remember to send home the Explore It ideas for children and families.



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Explore it

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

The rich fool



Bible verses: Luke 12:13-21



Aim:

To better understand the reason for Jesus' parables, and think about our priorities



Today's fruit: Self-control

> Children & Youth



Act

In this week's session, you created a bag full of unselfish acts to choose from. Every day, pick out a stick and complete the unselfish act. Remember to tell your group's leader how it went at your next session.



Share

Watch the clip with someone at home and discuss what it means for you and your family. How does the story of the rich fool challenge you to focus on others rather than yourself?

It's easy to be greedy (Luke 12:13-21) by Our Daily Bread Ministries



Song for the week

'You, You, You' (Sky VBS group publishing) by Lifetree Kids



Memory verse

'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.'

(Psalm 37:5 ICB)



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Self

Explore it

§ Explore it

The great banquet



Bible verses:

Luke 14:15-24
A story about a big banquet



Aim:

To better understand the reason for Jesus' parables, and think about sharing inclusion



Today's fruit:

Joy and kindness



In our final session on the parables, there is an opportunity for everyone to share in a banquet.

In today's parable a man holds an amazing feast – but his guests decide not to attend. In response, the man opens his doors and includes everyone, inviting them to share in the banquet. Today we'll discover how important it is for us to share God's joy and kindness, including everyone that we meet.

God shows us kindness in the way he provides for us; and by joyfully sharing what we have with others, we show kindness too.

This session can be moved to coincide with the last week of term and provide a way to celebrate together before the summer holidays. You may decide to ask the children to bring something for the mini-banquet or even ask parents to join you for this part of the session.

Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper
- Explore It ideas handout

You will need:

- Food for a mini-banquet please be aware of allergies
- Prepare your meeting space for a mini-banquet
- Today's fruit signs: Joy and kindness





Ask:

- Have you ever attended a large celebration, like a wedding, a birthday party or a big meal at church?
- What was your favourite part?
- Who was invited?
- How long do you think it took to organise it?
- If you were planning a big meal or celebration, who would you invite?
- What food would you serve and who would provide the entertainment?
- How would you feel if the people you invited decided they had better things to do and didn't come?

Say:

That's exactly what happened to the person in the parable we will read about today.



Sau:

In our parable today we are reminded that everyone is invited to be part of God's Kingdom. God is the one who we can depend on and trust. Before we sing together, let's share our memory verse for this month.

Memory verse

'Depend on the Lord.

Trust him, and he will take care of you.'

(Psalm 37:5 ICB)

Song

'All Around the World' (weird animals VBS group publishing) by Lifetree Kids (3:43)



Say:

When God made humans, he wanted to be close to them. He wanted to love them, and for them to love him. God invites us to be part of his family and listen to him as he listens to us.



Say:

In today's parable, Jesus asks us to imagine God hosting a huge banquet where everyone is invited.

Video

God's Story: Parable of the Banquet by Crossroads Kids' Club (3:25)

Ask:

- It takes a lot of preparation to get a banquet ready for a large group of people. How do you think the man felt when his guests said they couldn't come?

Say:

Most likely, each person who accepted the banquet host's invitation would have known well in advance. They would have accepted the invitation and told the host they'd be there.

Ask:

What excuses did the quests use to avoid attending the banquet?

Say:

This story helps us to understand how God feels about the people in his Kingdom. Everyone is invited, but not everyone accepts the invitation.

Ask:

- How do you think God might feel when people choose not to know him?
- As we imagine God inviting us to a huge feast, why is it important that we accept his invitation?

Say:

When the man discovered that the guests were not going to show up, he gave his servant a new set of instructions.

Read:

'So the servant returned. He told his master what had happened. Then the master became angry and said, "Go at once into the streets and alleys of the town. Bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame." Later the servant said to him, "Master, I did what you told me to do, but we still have places for more people." The master said to the servant, "Go out to the roads and country lanes. Tell the people there to come. I want my house to be full! None of those men that I invited first will ever eat with me!"

(Luke 14:21-24 ICB)

Ask:

- Imagine you are the servant sent out to invite people, who are usually excluded, to come to a huge banquet. Where would you go to find people to invite and what would you say to them?
- How do you think they would feel hearing that they were invited to such a special event?



Say:

The parable was a way of Jesus telling the Pharisee – the important scholar and community leader whose house he was eating at – that he should be sharing what he had with those who would never be able to repay him in the same way. Jesus wanted to show people that when you love others, your reward will be God-given. He also shows us that God wants to welcome everyone into his Kingdom.

Ask:

- Are there any people in your school, or other places, that often get left out?
- How could you include them more in your conversation and games?

Display the Kindness sign.

Say:

Today we have two fruit of the Spirit to think about. Our first one is kindness.

Ask:

Including people can sometimes be challenging, as we're not sure what to say: and sometimes, if we're honest, we'd rather stay with people that we know well. What role does the fruit of kindness play in our ability to include those who are usually left out?

Say:

Kindness helps us to see other people and what they might need. It helps us to be brave and include people in the things we are doing. God shows kindness to us as he invites us to be part of his family. We can show that same kindness to others.



Share together in a mini-banquet. This can be managed in whatever way best suits your group, including inviting parents to join in. The aim is for everyone to share together and celebrate God's love for us all.



Say:

Our prayer time today is a little more lively than usual. We have shared in a banquet together and now it's time to party!

Display the *Joy* sign.

Say:

We have already talked about kindness as an important fruit of the Spirit that God grows within



us. Today we have an extra fruit of the Spirit – joy. When we include people in God's Kingdom then we all experience joy. We have shared together in our mini-banquet and now we're going to sing all about the joy in our hearts.

Song

'The Joy, Joy, Joy, Down in my Heart!' (kids praise and worship) by Listener Kids (1:59)

When the song ends, share a closing prayer with the group.

Key dates (optional)

This weekend is *Welcome Sunday* in The Salvation Army, when some officers (full-time leaders) and their families join their new church. As many adults and children will become part of a new church family, we pray that they would experience joy and kindness in their new home.



Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



Explore It is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)



July: Session 4

8 Explore it

The great banquet

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses: Luke 14:15-24



Aim:

To better understand the reason for Jesus' parables, and think about sharing inclusion



Today's fruit: Joy and kindness

> Children & Youth



Discover

During our sessions this month, we have read lots of different parables. Choose three other parables to read and discover the message Jesus has for you in each one.



Serve

Ask someone at home to help you create a mini-banquet for a group of people. Who could you invite along to help them feel included?



'All Around the World' (weird animals VBS group publishing) by Lifetree Kids



Memory verse

'Depend on the Lord. Trust him, and he will take care of you.'

(Psalm 37:5 ICB)



Kids Alive! Online - salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!







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§ Explore it