**This material has been created for you to share with the children in your corps, either within your worship service or in their own gathering this Candidates Sunday.**

*The Elmer story video is embedded in this text if you wish to use it as a pause halfway through. The full URL link is at the end.*

Did you know that without light, we would not see any colour? Jesus taught that we can bring light into the world to show people how extraordinary and diverse this world is, created by a generous God who is its artist. In these words of Jesus, our lives can also change the lives of those around us – or in other words, introduce them to the generous artist himself.

*‘Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand – shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.* (Matthew 5:14-16, *The Message*)

Have you ever heard somebody say that a person is ‘showing their true colours’? This can seem very confusing because we live in the true colour of our skin. Just look at your class at school: we mix with friends of all colours and religions too, where everyone is treated equally. But ‘true colours’ is a way of saying what somebody is like *on the inside*, who they really are – perhaps kind and caring, or mischievous and keeping secrets; the kind of person you are when nobody is looking. I wonder what your ‘true colours’ are?

We can distinguish around seven million different colours in the world. But they are all made from combining just three: red, yellow and blue (interestingly, the colours which often represent The Salvation Army). Colours can be light or dark, bright or dull, warm or cool. Artists talk about shades, tints and tones. This helps us begin to understand that each of us is unique and has something to bring to the world that no one else can.

Colours also create emotions. Red is associated with strong emotions such as love, passion and anger. Yellow is connected with the mind and intellect, the feeling of new ideas and new ways of doing things. Most Post-it Notes are yellow for a very good reason! Green is about nature and growth. It is restful and symbolises healing. The God-colours of this world bring reactions out of us. Do you remember gazing at a pink sunset sky, a rainbow appearing on a car journey, or the hint of yellow in a sunrise?

So colours teach us about our created uniqueness as individuals and the way God pulls at our emotions. But did you also know that some colours look great side-by-side? A famous Spanish painter who loved colour, Pablo Picasso, said: ‘*Why do two colours, put one next to the other, sing? Can one really explain this?*’ Perhaps it is worth remembering that you don’t have to shine on your own; but being a light along with friends who also follow Jesus sometimes makes it easier.

Getting back to our ‘true colours’, I’d like you to meet Elmer. His [story](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=what+i+elmer+the+elephant+about&adlt=strict&view=detail&mid=6B6715F185312652E8A46B6715F185312652E8A4&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dwhat%2Bi%2Belmer%2Bthe%2Belephant%2Babout%26FORM%3DHDRSC4%26adlt%3Dstrict) is a popular children’s picture book by British author David McKee and many of you will know it from school. Elmer was an elephant with a patchwork skin of yellow, orange, red, pink, purple, blue, green, black and white squares, and with a cheerful and optimistic personality to match. But Elmer decides to try and look like all the other elephants by rolling around in some grey berries. He loves practical jokes, but now he blends in with the herd who all appear sad. When Elmer surprises them with the loudest ‘Booo!’ he can shout, his friends immediately laugh, as it begins to rain, washing off Elmer’s grey coat and revealing his true colours.

I think Elmer’s true colours were already revealed: his character wanted to bring joy to others. Perhaps your personality likes doing that too? Following their happy reunion, the elephants reassure Elmer that they love him because of his differences, and not in spite of them, and they celebrate by painting themselves in multi-coloured paint in recognition of Elmer’s unique appearance and personality.

Candidates Sunday is a day to celebrate who we are. God has created us with unique personalities and skills, all of which are important when it comes to shining as lights upon his world. I wonder what God is asking you to do with your character today? Perhaps start by being honest about your true colours.

Elmer story – (5 min 13 secs)

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=what+i+elmer+the+elephant+about&adlt=strict&view=detail&mid=6B6715F185312652E8A46B6715F185312652E8A4&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dwhat%2Bi%2Belmer%2Bthe%2Belephant%2Babout%26FORM%3DHDRSC4%26adlt%3Dstrict>