

# Explore It

## FOR LEADERS



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### JESUS FORGIVES SIN

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📖 **Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 7:36-39,44-48**

🎯 **Aim: To become aware of things we know that are wrong**

Jesus often got into trouble with the religious leaders for spending time with people who they thought were the wrong sort. In today's stories Jesus invited a hated tax collector to follow him, and he showed love and kindness to a desperate woman. Our session today reminds us of the love of Jesus and how he is willing to forgive us whenever we make a mistake.

Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper
- A heart-shaped piece of paper (optional) – see Pray It
- Explore It Ideas handout

You will need:

- A blindfold and a selection of items to smell, eg vinegar, perfume, lemons, tomato ketchup, coffee, mints, washing-up liquid, Coca-cola, pickled onions, oranges
- A selection of *Kids Alive!* magazines

## Start It

Set up a 'Guess the smell' activity. Can the children guess what they are smelling, without looking at the items (use a blindfold)?

**Ask:** What was your most/least favourite smell out of all the fragrances in the game?

💬 **Say:** In our story today, a woman brings a beautiful smelling perfume to Jesus and pours it over his feet. The room must have smelt amazing! (John 12:3 says the sweet smell 'filled the whole house'.) We'll find out more later in our session.

## Sing It

💬 **Say:** Throughout this month our memory verse has helped us to focus on God's amazing love for us. Let's share our memory verse together.

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'**

— (John 3:16 *NIV*)

💬 **Say:** Our song for today reminds us how wide, high, long and deep the love of God is and how he is always with us.

**'Wide, High, Long, Deep'** by Ellie Holcomb (3:19)

## Tell It

💬 **Say:** Jesus had a habit of spending time with people that were looked down on and rejected. Today we will discover two people who met with Jesus and were treated with respect. Both had done many things wrong, but Jesus forgave them.

### Ask:

- What do you know about the Ancient Romans?
- Do you know how they usually conquered a city? (*They would surround the city walls and attack them with catapults and battering rams. They would do surprise attacks and stop people from leaving. And if all else failed, they would negotiate.*)
- Do you know what happened to the people that lived in that city? (*They could keep their own way of living, their own culture. But they had to obey Roman laws and pay taxes. The Romans shared their methods of improving life, eg with roads, sanitation and plumbing.*)

**Say:** The Romans had taken over many of the towns where the Jewish people lived. They had to pay a lot of taxes to the Romans, and the Jewish people were not happy about this. In our story today we meet Matthew. Although Matthew was Jewish, he collected taxes from his fellow people to give to the Romans.

**Ask:** What do you think the Jewish people thought about what Matthew did for a job?

**Say:** Matthew was not a popular person. Let's hear more about his story.

### Read:

**'When Jesus was leaving, he saw a man named Matthew. Matthew was sitting in the tax office. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." And Matthew stood up and followed Jesus.**

**'Jesus had dinner at Matthew's house. Many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with Jesus and his followers. The Pharisees saw this and asked Jesus' followers, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"**

**'Jesus heard the Pharisees ask this. So he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor. Only the sick need a doctor. Go and learn what this means: 'I want faithful love more than I want animal sacrifices.' I did not come to invite good people. I came to invite sinners."**

— (Matthew 9:9-13 ICB)

### Ask:

- What did the Pharisees think about Jesus spending time with Matthew?
- Do you think Jesus was bothered that Matthew was a tax collector? Explain your answer.
- How did Jesus show his love for Matthew?

**Say:** Matthew followed Jesus and his life changed for ever. This was all because Jesus saw past any mistake Matthew had made and loved him.

**Say:** In our second story, we meet a woman who had also made a lot of mistakes. Let's watch the clip to find out what happened when she met Jesus.

## Video

[Jesus and the Sinful Woman](#) by Saddleback Kids (3:15)

### Discuss:

- Why do you think the sinful woman wanted to be near Jesus? How did she show her love for him?
- How did Simon react to her arrival? Why do you think he was so unkind?
- Why was Simon surprised that Jesus wanted to spend time with the sinful woman?
- Do you think Simon thought he was better than the woman? If so, in what way?
- Jesus told Simon a parable. What was the simple truth hidden in the story?
- What differences did Jesus point out between Simon's behaviour and the woman's actions?

**Say:** Jesus forgave her sins, but Simon would not even touch anyone who was considered a 'sinner'. The woman had done many wrong things in her life, but was more grateful to Jesus than Simon had been. Jesus changed her life and she wanted to say thank you and show how much she loved him.

## Action It

Ask the children to imagine that they have been asked to create a comic strip Bible story for the back page of *Kids Alive!*. Show them some examples to remind them how the comic strip is presented. They can choose one of the stories from today's session:

- Jesus and the Tax Collector – Matthew 9:9-13
- The woman and the perfume – Luke 7:36-39,44-48

Give the children time to create their own comic strip of their chosen story and share it with the rest of the group.

## Pray It

**💬 Say:** Throughout this month's *Explore It* sessions we have seen Jesus show love to people that others chose to ignore. God sent Jesus to show them just how much they are loved. That includes you and me. Our memory verse reminds us just how much God loves us. Let's share it together.

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'**

— (John 3:16 NIV)

Explain to the children that the woman in the story wanted to show her love for Jesus.

### Discuss

Discuss how the way in which Jesus had forgiven her, had made her love Jesus even more.

Ask the children to think about and discuss the following questions:

- What do you understand by the word 'sinner'?
- Are you aware of the things you do which are wrong? Do you ever try and put them right?

Explain to the children that, just like Matthew and the woman, we can ask God for forgiveness when we do something wrong. If appropriate, give the children the opportunity to do this.

Give each child a heart-shaped piece of paper. On the paper ask the children to write a thank you prayer to Jesus and then share them together as a group.

If required you can play our 'Sing It' song for today as the children write their prayers.

### Listen

**'Wide, High, Long, Deep'** by Ellie Holcomb (3:19)

## Explore It

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

# Explore It

## IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

OCTOBER  
SESSION 04

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## FOR ME



### Discover

This week's Bible story was filled with a beautiful fragrance poured on to Jesus' feet.

What is your favourite smell? Why do you like it so much?

Watch the clip to discover the amazing way God created your nose to smell all your favourite fragrances.

**How Your Nose Works? – The Dr Binocs Show**  
by Peekaboo Kidz: watch until 4.22

## TOGETHER



### Share

In this week's *Explore It* session you created a comic strip version of Jesus meeting either Matthew the tax collector, or the woman with the perfume. Retell the story to someone at home and remind them of the amazing gift of forgiveness Jesus gives to each one of us.



### Song for the week

**'Wide, High, Long, Deep'** by  
Ellie Holcomb (3:19)



### Memory verse

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'**

— (John 3:16 NIV)

### KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.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!

