

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*

Start it

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.

Sing it

Say:

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)

Share it

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 guests 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.

Action it

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.



Pray it

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, 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.

Explore it

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



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Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



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Aim:
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Today's fruit:
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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?



Song for the week

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



Memory verse

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(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!



Children
& Youth