

Do I have to? The Prophet Jonah



Bible verses:

Jonah 1:1-3,15-17; 2:7-9; 3:4-5,10; 4:1-11



Aim:

To explore how Jonah responded when God asked him to share his message



Today's fruit:

Patience



In today's session we follow Jonah's story as he struggled to listen to God and eventually learned to trust him.

Jonah was a prophet whose job was to share important messages from God with the people. When God asked Jonah to take his message to the city of Nineveh, an enemy city, Jonah did everything he could to avoid doing it. Instead of responding straight away, he tried to run away from what God had asked him to do. As we explore Jonah's experience of waiting and praying inside the fish, we will discover how the Holy Spirit helps us grow the fruit of patience in our lives.

Each child will need:

- A 'Memory Verse Wristband' handout
- Pens or pencils
- 'Explore it Ideas' handout

You will need:

- The 'Fruit of the Spirit - Patience' sign - download from **Salvationist**



Start it

Play a game of opposites: the children are to do the opposite of what you ask them to. Choose from the list below and shout out an instruction. Depending on how competitive you would like it to be, you could ask the children who do not do the opposite to sit out until you have a winner or be judges with you as the game continues.

1. Touch your elbows together.

2. Keep your mouth closed.
3. Sing 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star' backwards.
4. Touch your right ear.
5. Count down from ten to one.
6. Clap quickly.
7. Pat your right shoulder.
8. Stand up.
9. Kneel on your left knee.
10. Hop on your left leg.

Say:

In our story today, our Bible character decides that he is going to do the opposite of what God asked him to do.



Sing it

This month we are learning about some of the prophets in the Old Testament. Prophets had an important job. God asked them to share his message with his people.

Our memory verse reminds us that when God calls someone, they can choose how they respond.

Give each child a 'Memory Verse Wristband'.

Say:

Let's say our memory verse together.

Memory Verse

Then I heard the Lord's voice. He said, 'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?'

So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'

(Isaiah 6:8 *ICB*)

Say:

Today's song will help us to learn this month's memory verse.

Watch:

'Isaiah 6:8 Here I Am, Send Me' (Bible Memory Verse Song) by Victory Kids Music (3:14)

Share it

Say:

In our story today we are meeting one of the prophets called Jonah.

When God gave Jonah an important message to share, Jonah did not respond in the way you might expect. Instead of saying, 'Here I am. Send me', Jonah's response was more like, 'Do I have to?'

Ask:

- What are the kinds of tasks that, when you are asked to do them, make you say, 'Do I have to?'
- How does it make you feel when you are asked to do something you really do not want to do?
- How do you normally react?

Say:

Our story today is found in the Old Testament of the Bible. Let's watch a clip to find out what happened.

Watch:

Jonah and the Fish by Saddleback Kids (2:58)

Say:

Jonah was a prophet. That means his job was to listen to God and share God's message with others.

One day, God gave Jonah a very important message and told him to take it to the city of Nineveh. God wanted Jonah to warn the people there that they needed to change the way they were living.

Ask:

Why do you think Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh?

Say:

Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Kingdom. The people there were cruel enemies of Jonah's people, and Jonah did not like them at all. He thought they behaved so badly that they did not deserve God's forgiveness.

Ask:

Do you think Jonah's dislike of the Ninevites was a good enough reason for Jonah to say no to God? If not, why not?

Say:

Instead of going to Nineveh, Jonah decided to run away. He got on a boat and tried to travel in the opposite direction as far away from Nineveh as he could. While Jonah was on the boat, a

huge storm began to blow. The sailors were terrified and asked Jonah to pray to God. God gave Jonah the chance to do the right thing. Jonah could have asked the boat to turn around and go to Nineveh.

Ask:

What did Jonah do instead?

Say:

Jonah chose to be thrown into the sea rather than do what God had asked him to do. But Jonah did not drown. God sent a huge fish to swallow him, and Jonah spent three days and three nights inside it. While he was there, Jonah prayed to God and had time to think about what had happened. Eventually he agreed to do what God had asked. The fish spat him out, and Jonah did go to Nineveh to share God's message.

Ask:

What happened next?

Say:

The people of Nineveh listened to Jonah's warning. They stopped their bad behaviour and turned back to God. When God saw that they had changed, he forgave them.

So everything ended happily ... including for Jonah.

Or did it?

Let's read what happened next.

Read:

But Jonah was very unhappy that God did not destroy the city. He was angry. He complained to the Lord and said, 'I knew this would happen. I knew it when I was still in my own country. It is why I quickly ran away to Tarshish. I knew that you are a God who is kind and shows mercy. You don't become angry quickly. You have great love. I knew you would rather forgive than punish them. So now I ask you, Lord, please kill me. It is better for me to die than to live.'

Then the Lord said, 'Do you think it is right for you to be angry?'

Jonah went out and sat down east of the city. There he made a shelter for himself. And he sat there in the shade. He was waiting to see what would happen to the city. The Lord made a plant grow quickly up over Jonah. This made a cool place for him to sit. And it helped him to be more comfortable. Jonah was very pleased to have the plant for shade. The next day the sun rose. And God sent a worm to attack the plant. Then the plant died. When the sun was high in the sky, God sent a hot east wind to blow. The sun became very hot on Jonah's head. And he became very weak. He wished he were dead. Jonah said, 'It is better for me to die than to live.'

But God said this to Jonah: 'Do you think it is right for you to be angry because of the plant?'

Jonah answered, 'It is right for me to be angry! I will stay angry until I die!'

And the Lord said, 'You showed concern for that plant. But you did not plant it or make it grow. It appeared in the night, and the next day it died. Then surely I can show concern for the great city Nineveh. There are many animals in that city. And there are more than 120,000 people living there. Those people simply do not know right from wrong!'

(Jonah 4:1-11 *ICB*)

Ask:

Why do you think Jonah was so angry?

Say:

Jonah struggled to understand something important about God. God cares about everyone, even people we might not like very much. God loved the people of Nineveh and wanted them to change.

Jonah also had to learn to trust God. After spending three long days inside the fish, Jonah finally chose to listen and do what God had asked him to do.

Sometimes God asks us to do things that feel difficult, or that we do not really want to do. Like Jonah, we may need time to pray, think and learn to trust God.

Display the 'Fruit of the Spirit – Patience' sign.

Ask the children where in the story Jonah had the opportunity to grow in patience. They might mention Jonah waiting inside the fish, travelling to Nineveh, or waiting to see what God would do with the city.

Say:

In several parts of the story Jonah had to wait. He waited inside the fish, he travelled the long journey to Nineveh, and he waited to see what God would do. During that time, Jonah was learning to trust God and listen to what he was asking him to do.

Today's fruit of the Spirit is patience. Patience grows in our lives as we learn to wait for God and trust that he knows what is best.

Action it

Say:

Today you are going to get the chance to create your own Jonah song. To give you some ideas, watch the clip and see how the story is told through song.

Watch:

'Jonah Song' by Saddleback Kids (2:21)

Say:

Your challenge is to create your own song about Jonah's story.

You can choose any part of the story to focus on. Your song might include Jonah running away from God, waiting inside the fish, travelling to Nineveh, or learning to trust God.

Remember that today's fruit of the Spirit is patience, so you might want to include something in your song about waiting, trusting God or learning to listen to him.

Invite the children to work in small groups to write their songs, or create one together as a whole group. Encourage them to choose a well-known tune and write new words to match the story of Jonah. You might suggest using a familiar church song or something simple such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star'.

Just as early-day Salvationists sometimes wrote new words to well-known tunes, the children can create their own lyrics that tell the story of Jonah or highlight what Jonah learned about listening to God.

Once the songs are finished, invite each group to perform their Jonah song for the rest of the group.



Pray it

Say:

Deep inside the belly of the fish, Jonah cried out to God.

Read:

**'When my life had almost gone,
I remembered the Lord.**

Lord, I prayed to you.

And you heard my prayers in your Holy Temple.

**'People who worship useless idols
give up their loyalty to you.**

**Lord, I will praise and thank you
while I give sacrifices to you.**

I will make promises to you.

And I will do what I promise.

Salvation comes from the Lord!'

(Jonah 2:7-9 ICB)

Say:

While Jonah was inside the fish, he had time to stop and think. He prayed to God and began to trust him again.



Sometimes we also need to pause, pray and remember that God is with us, even when things feel difficult or confusing.

Invite the children to sit quietly for a moment. Encourage them to think about something that feels difficult right now, or something God might be asking them to do.

Pray:

Dear God,

Thank you that you listen when we pray, just as you listened to Jonah.

Help us to trust you and be patient as we learn to follow what you ask us to do.

Amen.

Explore it

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)

Do I have to? The Prophet Jonah

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Jonah 1:1-3,15-17;
2:7-9; 3:4-5,10; 4:1-11



Aim:

To explore how Jonah responded when God asked him to share his message



Today's fruit:

Patience



Wait

Sometimes we have to wait before we understand what God is doing. Jonah had to wait inside the fish and learn to trust God.

Think about something that feels difficult or something you might be waiting for right now.

Talk to God about it and ask him to help you be patient.



Create

Watch the Bible Minecraft version of the story of Jonah and the fish. Team up with one of your Minecraft friends or family to create a world for a Bible story of your choice.

Watch:

Jonah and the Fish - Bible Minecraft by Zelistic
youtu.be/cOk7YXfJNV4?si=4GAYj_HS9MztL9DY



Song for the week

Watch:

'Isaiah 6:8 Here I Am, Send Me' (Bible Memory Verse Song) by Victory Kids Music
www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6tN9LzslBo



Memory verse

Then I heard the Lord's voice. He said,
'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?'
So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8 ICB)

Explore it

Then I heard the Lord's voice.

He said, 'Whom can I send?

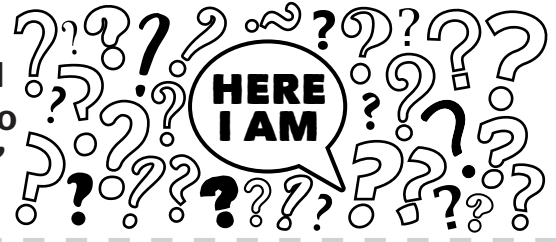
Who will go for us?'

So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'

(Isaiah 6:8)



Then I heard the Lord's voice. He said, 'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?' So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8)



Then I heard the Lord's voice. He said, 'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?' So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8)



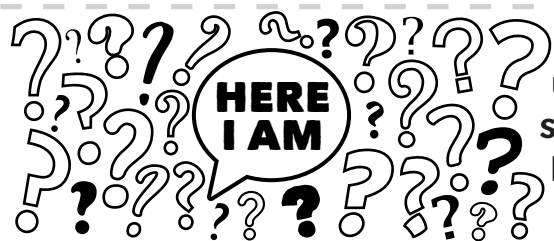
Then I heard the Lord's voice. He said, 'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?' So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8)



Then I heard the Lord's voice. He said, 'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?' So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8)



Then I heard the Lord's voice. He said, 'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?' So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8)



Then I heard the Lord's voice. He said, 'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?' So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8)



**Then I heard the Lord's
voice. He said, 'Whom can I
send? Who will go for us?' So
I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8)**

**Then I heard the Lord's
voice. He said, 'Whom can I
send? Who will go for us?' So
I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8)**

**Then I heard the Lord's
voice. He said, 'Whom can I
send? Who will go for us?' So
I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8)**

**Then I heard the Lord's
voice. He said, 'Whom can I
send? Who will go for us?' So
I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8)**

**Then I heard the Lord's
voice. He said, 'Whom can I
send? Who will go for us?' So
I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8)**

**Then I heard the Lord's
voice. He said, 'Whom can I
send? Who will go for us?' So
I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8)**



Send Me! – Isaiah



Bible verses:

Isaiah 6:1-8



Aim:

To explore the poetic language and pictures found in the book of Isaiah, and to reflect on his words, 'Here I am, send me!'



Today's fruit:

Faithfulness



In this session we explore some of the poetic language and powerful pictures found in the book of Isaiah.

As we learn about Isaiah's vision and his response – 'Here I am. Send me!' – we are encouraged to reflect on what it means to listen to God and respond faithfully.

Each child will need:

- Pens or pencils and paper
- 'Explore it Ideas' handout

You will need:

- The 'Fruit of the Spirit – Faithfulness' sign – download from **Salvationist**
- An object for a relay race (such as a beanbag or small ball)
- A large sheet of paper or flipchart



Start it

Divide the children into two teams and ask each team to stand in a line. Place an object (such as a beanbag or small ball) at the other end of the room.

Explain that this is a relay race. When you say 'Go!', the first child in each team must run to the object, pick it up, and run back to their team. Before tagging the next person, they must say, 'Send me!' Then the next child runs and repeats the task. Continue until everyone in each team has had a turn.

Say:

Today we're going to hear about someone who was ready to say, 'Send me!' when God asked.

Sing it

Say:

Today's song reminds us that God knows us, loves us, and sends us to share his light with others.

Watch:

'Shine from the inside out' (Kids Worship) by Allstars Kids Club (2:02)

Share it

Say:

In our last *Explore it* we met the prophet Jonah, who struggled when God asked him to share an important message. This week our prophet, Isaiah, was more willing to do what God asked him to do.

Ask:

What is a prophet?

Say:

A prophet is someone who listens to God and shares God's message with his people. The prophets of the Bible shared promises and warnings from God. They also helped the people understand more about him.

In our story today, Isaiah was in the Temple when he had an extraordinary vision of God.

Read:

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a very high throne. His long robe filled the Temple. Burning heavenly creatures stood above him. Each creature had six wings. They used two wings to cover their faces. They used two wings to cover their feet. And they used two wings for flying. Each creature was calling to the others: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of heaven's armies.

His glory fills the whole earth.'

Their voices caused the frame around the door to shake. The Temple filled with smoke. I said, 'Oh, no! I will be destroyed. I am not pure. And I live among people who are not pure. But I have seen the King, the Lord of heaven's armies.'

On the altar there was a fire. One of the burning heavenly creatures used a pair of tongs to take a hot coal from the fire. Then he flew to me with the hot coal in his hand. The

creature touched my mouth with the hot coal. Then he said, ‘Look. Your guilt is taken away because this hot coal has touched your lips. Your sin is taken away.’

Then I heard the Lord’s voice. He said, ‘Whom can I send? Who will go for us?’

So I said, ‘Here I am. Send me!’

(Isaiah 6:1–8 *ICB*)

Ask:

- What do you think Isaiah might have felt when he saw this vision?
- Which parts of the vision sounded the most surprising or unusual to you?
- What pictures or images stood out to you?

Say:

Isaiah’s vision is full of powerful pictures. He describes angels calling to one another, smoke filling the Temple and God sitting on a throne. These pictures help us understand something about how great and holy God is. While Isaiah was seeing this vision, he also heard God asking an important question. God asked, ‘Whom can I send? Who will go for us?’

Ask:

Did anyone recognise Isaiah’s reply?

Say:

Isaiah’s reply to God is our memory verse for this month. Let’s share it together.

Memory Verse

Then I heard the Lord’s voice. He said, ‘Whom can I send? Who will go for us?’

So I said, ‘Here I am. Send me!’

(Isaiah 6:8 *ICB*)

Say:

When God asked who would go and share his message, Isaiah chose to respond straight away. Even though he felt unworthy, Isaiah said, ‘Here I am. Send me!’

Isaiah continued to share God’s message with the people. Often he used poetic language and powerful pictures to help them understand what God was saying. Let’s watch a short clip that tells us a little more about Isaiah and some of the images he used in his message.

Watch:

Isaiah: God’s story by Crossroads Kids’ Club (stop at 3:35)

As the children watch the clip, listen for any interesting pictures or poetic phrases Isaiah used. When the clip is finished, write these on a board or large sheet of paper along with the Bible reference (see list below). Discuss the different examples of poetic language and ask the children to share the pictures the words create in their minds. Add these thoughts to the ideas board. These phrases will be used later in the ‘Action it’ activity.

They will soar on wings like eagles.

But the people who trust the Lord will become strong again.
They will be able to rise up as an eagle in the sky.
They will run without needing rest.
They will walk without becoming tired.

(Isaiah 40:31 *ICB*)

A light to the whole world.

The Lord told me,
'You are an important servant to me.
You will bring back the tribes of Jacob.
You will bring back the people of Israel who are left alive.
But, more importantly, I will make you a light for all nations.
You will show people all over the world the way to be saved.'

(Isaiah 49:6 *ICB*)

Good news to the poor.

The Lord God has put his Spirit in me.
This is because he has appointed me to tell the good news to the poor.
He has sent me to comfort those whose hearts are broken.
He has sent me to tell the captives they are free.
He has sent me to tell the prisoners that they are released.

(Isaiah 61:1 *ICB*)

Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

A child will be born to us.
God will give a son to us.
He will be responsible for leading the people.
His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God,
Father Who Lives For Ever, Prince of Peace.

(Isaiah 9:6 *ICB*)

Say:

Many of the pictures Isaiah used were also promises about someone God would send in the future. Isaiah spoke about a rescuer who would bring light, hope and peace to the world.

Christians believe these promises were fulfilled when Jesus came many years later. Even though Isaiah lived about 700 years before Jesus was born, he faithfully shared the message God had given him.

Ask:

How do you think Isaiah was able to describe so many things about Jesus hundreds of years before he was born?



Say:

Christians believe that God was speaking through Isaiah. Even though Isaiah lived long before Jesus was born, God helped him share promises and pictures that pointed forward to the rescuer he would send.

Isaiah faithfully shared the message God had given him, even though he did not live to see those promises come true.

Ask:

Why do you think it might have taken courage for Isaiah to say, 'Here I am. Send me!'?

Leader's notes:

Show the children the 'Faithfulness' fruit of the Spirit poster.

Ask:

What do you think it means to be faithful when God asks us to do something?

Display the 'Fruit of the Spirit – Faithfulness' sign.

Say:

This week our fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness. Faithfulness grows in our lives when we choose to listen to God and keep trusting him, just as Isaiah did.

Action it

Say:

Isaiah often used pictures and poetic language to help people understand God's message. Earlier we collected some of the powerful images Isaiah used.

Today you are going to choose one of those phrases and create your own picture to show what the words might look like.

Give each child a sheet of paper and some pens or pencils. Ask them to choose one of the poetic phrases from the ideas board and create a drawing that represents what the words mean. Encourage the children to think creatively about the images Isaiah used.

Say:

When you have finished your picture, write the phrase somewhere on your page so others can see which part of Isaiah's message you chose.

Invite the children to share their pictures with the group and describe how they turned Isaiah's words into art.

Pray it

Say:

In our story today, Isaiah heard God asking an important question:

'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?'

Isaiah chose to respond straight away. He said:

'Here I am. Send me!'

(Isaiah 6:8 *ICB*)

Explain that the children are going to use a simple action to help them remember Isaiah's response in the story. Ask the children to stand in a circle or spread out around the room.

When they hear God's question, they should open their hands in front of them as if they are listening carefully.

When Isaiah's response is spoken, they should place a hand on their chest to show that Isaiah was ready to respond to God.

Say the first part of the verse aloud:

'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?'

Invite the children to open their hands.

Then say together:

'Here I am. Send me!'

Ask the children to place a hand on their chest.

Repeat this once or twice so the children remember the words and actions.

Say:

Isaiah listened to God and faithfully shared the message God gave him.

Pray:

Dear God,

Thank you for the story of Isaiah and the vision you showed him.

Help us to listen when you call and to trust you each day.

Give us the courage to say, 'Here I am. Send me!'

Amen.

Explore it

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)

Send Me! – Isaiah

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:
Isaiah 6:1-8



Aim:
To explore the poetic language and pictures found in the book of Isaiah, and to reflect on his words, 'Here I am, send me!'



Today's fruit:
Faithfulness

Share

Read Isaiah 6:8 together.

Why do you think Isaiah was willing to say, 'Here I am. Send me!'

Talk about a time when it took courage to do the right thing.

Create

The book of Isaiah is full of poetry. Try writing a short prayer poem asking God to help you listen to him and grow in faithfulness, just as Isaiah did.

Song for the week

Watch:
'Shine from the inside out' (Kids Worship)
by Allstars Kids Club (2:02)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPehjNB3MCM

Memory verse

Then I heard the Lord's voice. He said,
'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?'
So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8 /CB)

**LIVING
OUT FAITH**

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!

In the Potter's Hands – Jeremiah



Bible verses:

Jeremiah 18:1-6,18



Aim:

To explore the picture God gave
Jeremiah and the response from others



Today's fruit:

Kindness



In this session we will explore the picture God gave to the prophet Jeremiah at the potter's house.

As Jeremiah watched the potter shaping and reshaping the clay, God used this image to show how he was working in the lives of his people. Although the people did not want to listen to Jeremiah's message, the picture of the potter reminds us that God does not give up on people. As we children reflect on this story, we will discover how the Holy Spirit helps us grow the fruit of kindness by not giving up on others.

Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper
- 'Explore it Ideas' handout
- Air-dry clay
- Plastic knives or forks for shaping the clay
- Aprons or old T-shirts (optional)

You will need:

- The 'Fruit of the Spirit – Kindness' sign – download from **Salvationist**



Start it

Today's activity is slightly different as the aim is to get the children to fire up their imaginations ready for their activity in the 'Action it' section. Watch the clip together and discuss which ideas they like the most and which they think are the most creative. The clip is nine minutes long but can be cut short if required.

Watch:

30 Artists Taking Pottery to the Next Level by Insider (9:08) Stop as required.

Say:

In our session today we will be thinking about clay and the way it can be shaped and remoulded. Try and keep in your mind all the wonderful creations you have seen when we come to our Bible story later in the session.

Sing it

Say:

This month we have been learning a memory verse about how people respond when God calls them.

Memory Verse

Then I heard the Lord's voice. He said, 'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?'

So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'

(Isaiah 6:8 ICB)

Say:

God often sent prophets to share his message with the people, but the people did not always listen. They often chose their own way instead of God's. In today's story, Jeremiah reminds the people that God's way is better.

Watch:

'Your Way's Better' (Motion & Lyrics Forrest Frank) by Kid Kardia (2:27)

Share it

Say:

Before we read our Scripture for today, we need to watch a short clip to help us understand it. You have already seen some amazing clay creations today, but this clip shows us how a pot is actually made.

Watch:

'How to make a pottery bowl in under 3 minutes' by *The Great Pottery Throw Down* (2:17)

Ask:

- Have any of you ever tried making a pot on a potter's wheel? If so, what was it like?
- If you haven't tried it, do you think you would be able to make a pot like the one in the clip?
- Why do you think it takes so much skill?

Say:

Our Bible story today is set in the Old Testament, and our main character is the prophet Jeremiah. Like many of the prophets we have learned about so far, Jeremiah had a special message from God to deliver to the people. He used the idea of a potter's wheel to help the people understand what God wanted to say.

Read:

This is the word the Lord spoke to Jeremiah: 'Go down to the potter's house. I will give you my message there.' So I went down to the potter's house. I saw him working at the potter's wheel. He was making a pot from clay. But something went wrong with it. So the potter used that clay to make another pot. He used his hands to shape the pot the way that he wanted it to be.

Then the Lord spoke his word to me: Family of Israel, can't I do the same thing with you?' says the Lord. 'You are like the clay in the potter's hands.'

(Jeremiah 18:1-6 *ICB*)

Ask:

- What do you think God meant when he described the people as clay in his hands?
- What do you think the picture of the potter teaches us about God?

Say:

When Jeremiah watched the potter at work, he noticed something important. The potter did not throw the clay away when the pot was spoiled. Instead he patiently reshaped it and started again. God used this picture to show Jeremiah something about his people. They were not living the way God wanted, and their lives needed to be reshaped.

Ask:

- In what ways do you think God wanted to reshape the people of Israel?
- In what ways do you think God might want to reshape us?

Say:

The potter in the story shows patience and care. Instead of giving up on the clay, he takes time to remould it into something new.

Display the 'Fruit of the Spirit - Kindness' sign

Say:

This reminds us of today's fruit of the Spirit: kindness. God does not give up on people. Instead he continues to work patiently in our lives to shape us and help us grow. Sadly, the people did not want to listen to Jeremiah's message. Let's read how they responded.

Read:

Then the people said, 'Come, let's make plans against Jeremiah. Surely the teaching of the law by the priest will not be lost. And the advice from the wise men will still be with

us. We will still have the words of the prophets. So let's ruin him by telling lies about him! We won't pay attention to anything he says.'

(Jeremiah 18:18 *ICB*)

Ask:

What does this tell us about how the people responded to Jeremiah?

Say:

Instead of listening to God's message, the people complained about Jeremiah and even planned to spread lies about him. They refused to pay attention to what God was trying to tell them.

Ask:

What can we learn from the mistakes the people made in their relationship with God?

Say:

The people refused to listen to Jeremiah and ignored what God was trying to tell them. But God did not give up on them. Just like clay in a potter's hands, God patiently shapes our lives. Through his kindness, he continues working in us, helping us grow and become the people he created us to be.

Action it

Say:

In our story today, the people of Israel were compared to clay in the potter's hands.

Ask:

Who do you think is the potter in the story?

Say:

Today you are going to have the chance to make your own creation using clay. As you create, think about the ways God shapes and moulds our lives.

For this activity you will need air-dry clay for the group. Give the children the opportunity to create something from their own imagination. They can remould the clay, start again and reshape their work as they go. This helps them experience the picture Jeremiah described when he said that the people of Israel were like clay in God's hands.

Remind the children that the potter in the story did not throw the clay away when the pot was spoiled. Instead he patiently reshaped it. In the same way, God continues to work in our lives with kindness and care.

Ask:

In what ways are we like clay being moulded and shaped by God's hands?



Pray it

Say:

Today's session has been very busy with lots of activity. Now that we have all tidied up, we are going to spend a few moments thinking about everything we have discovered about God today.

Create a time of quiet reflection for the children. Depending on your space and facilities, they can lie quietly on the floor or sit with their eyes closed.

Play the video below and allow the children to listen to the song 'The Potter's Hand'. If the children become restless, you may wish to fade the music out before it ends. Once the music has finished, bring the session to a close with prayer.

Listen:

'The Potter's Hand' by Hillsong Worship (4:16)



Explore it

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)

In the Potter's Hands - Jeremiah

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Jeremiah 18:1-6,18



Aim:

To explore the picture God gave Jeremiah and the response from others



Today's fruit:

Kindness



Watch

The Great Pottery Throw Down is a British TV series. Select an episode and watch it with someone at home. As you watch the potters making their creations, think about what today's session taught us about God shaping our lives.



Create

Take home your clay creation, and once it has dried out completely, you can continue creating and painting it!



Memory verse

Then I heard the Lord's voice. He said, 'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?'
So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8 ICB)



Song for the week

Watch:

'Your Way's Better' (Motion & Lyrics Forrest Frank) by Kid Kardia (2:27)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrP5PrOBn2E

**LIVING
OUT FAITH**

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!

How have you loved us? – Malachi



Bible verses:
Malachi 1:1-2



Aim:
To think about what Malachi had to share, and how he did it



Today's fruit:
Love



In this session we will learn about the prophet Malachi and the message he shared with God's people.

Although Malachi had to challenge the people about the way they were living, God began with an important reminder: 'I love you.' As the children explore this message, they will discover that love grows in our lives when we choose to honour God and do everything in love.

Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils
- Paper / white card
- Paper cup
- Felt-tips
- 'Explore it Ideas' handout

You will need:

- The 'Fruit of the Spirit - Love' sign - download from **Salvationist**
- Glue
- Scissors
- Pipe cleaners



Start it

Give each child a piece of paper and a pen or pencil.

Say:

Today we're going to start with a quick challenge. Think about the people in your life who care about you. This might be a parent, grandparent, friend, teacher or someone else who looks after you.

Ask:

How do you know when someone loves or cares about you?

Invite the children to write or draw two or three things that show someone cares about them. After a minute or two, ask a few children to share their ideas.

These might include:

- They help me when I'm struggling.
- They spend time with me.
- They listen to me.
- They encourage me.
- They look after me.

Say:

Sometimes people show love in ways we expect, like saying kind words or giving us a hug. Sometimes love also means helping us learn, guiding us or correcting us when something isn't right. In today's story, God has an important message for his people, and the prophet Malachi is the one chosen to share it.



Sing it

Say:

Throughout this month we have learned about the prophets in the Old Testament. Today's prophet, Malachi, had a very challenging message to bring to the people. Malachi responded to God's calling in the same way as Isaiah. Our memory verse reminds us that when God calls someone, they can choose to respond and say, 'Here I am. Send me!'

Say:

Let's say our memory verse together.

Memory Verse

**Then I heard the Lord's voice. He said, 'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?'
So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'**

(Isaiah 6:8 ICB)

Say:

Today's song helps us remember this month's memory verse. We used it in our first session, so you may already know it.

Watch:

Isaiah 6:8 'Here I Am, Send Me' (Bible Memory Verse Song) by Victory Kids Music (3:14)

Share it

Say:

Our story today comes from the book of Malachi. Malachi was a prophet who shared messages from God with the people.

Before God said anything else to the people, he began with these words:

The Lord said, 'I love you.'

(Malachi 1:2 *ICB*)

Ask:

How do you think the people reacted to such loving words from God?

Say:

When God said 'I love you' to his people, they did not respond the way we might expect. Instead of thanking God, they replied:

'How have you loved us?'

(Malachi 1:2 *ICB*)

Ask:

- Why do you think the people might have asked that question?
- Have you ever had someone say something to you that you didn't really want to hear? It might have been a parent, teacher or even a friend. What did it feel like?
- Can someone still care about us even when they say something we don't like?

Say:

God loved his people, but he could see that they were not living in the way he wanted for them. So God sent the prophet Malachi with an important message. Let's watch the clip to find out the message God gave Malachi to share.

Watch:

Malachi the Prophet by Allen Hamlin (3:28)

Ask:

What problems were people experiencing in the clip?

Allow the children time to share what they remember. If needed, remind them of some of the things the clip showed and share the related Bible verses.

The people had started to forget how important God was in their lives.

Some of the problems included:

- The priests were not leading the people well in worship (Malachi 1:6-8).
- People were bringing weak or sick animals as offerings instead of giving their best to God. (Malachi 1:7-8)
- Some people were saying that it was pointless to serve God (Malachi 3:13-14).
- Others were keeping back things that belonged to God, like their tithes (Malachi 3:8-10).

Say:

God's people had returned from exile many years earlier, and they had hoped that life would become wonderful again. However, things were still difficult, and many people had become discouraged. Instead of trusting God and honouring him, some people began to be careless about worship or stopped taking their faith seriously.

Ask:

Why do you think God cared about the way the people were worshipping and living?

Say:

God cared because these were his people, and he wanted them to live in a way that honoured him and helped them grow. Even though Malachi had to share some difficult messages, God had already reminded the people of something very important.

Display the 'Fruit of the Spirit - Love' sign.

Ask:

What was the very first message God gave to his people at the start of the book of Malachi?

Read:

The Lord said, 'I love you.'

(Malachi 1:2 *ICB*)

Say:

God was not saying that he would only love the people if they obeyed him. Instead, he was reminding them that because he loved them, he wanted them to turn back to him and live in a better way.



Action it

Say:

At the end of the book of Malachi, God gives his people a hopeful picture of what it will be like for those who honour him.

Read:

‘But for you who honour me, goodness will shine on you like the sun. There will be healing in its rays. You will jump around, like calves freed from their stalls.’

(Malachi 4:2 *ICB*)

Say:

When calves have been kept in a stall for a long time and are finally let out into the field, they run and jump around because they are full of energy and joy.

Malachi used this picture to help people imagine the joy and freedom that comes from following God. Today we are going to make our own jumping cows to remind us of this joyful picture from the Bible.

The children are going to make a simple jumping cow using paper and a paper cup.

To make the cow:

1. Give each child a paper cup and a piece of white paper or card.
2. Ask the children to decorate the paper cup to look like the cow’s body by colouring it white and adding black spots.
3. On a separate piece of card or paper, draw and colour a cow’s head with eyes, nose, ears and horns. Cut out the head.
4. Attach the cow’s head to the front of the paper cup.
5. Add four small legs underneath the cup using rolled paper or pipe cleaners so the cow can stand and appear ready to jump.

A short demonstration video showing how to make the jumping cow is available [here](#).

Watch:

How to Make a Toy Cow from a Paper Cup by @Kidiestime7 (0:25)

Say:

When you see your jumping cow, remember the joyful picture Malachi shared. God promises joy and hope for those who honour him.



Pray it

Say:

Hold your jumping cow for a moment.

In the book of Malachi, God gives his people a joyful picture of what it is like to follow him. He says they will be like calves running freely in a field. When calves are finally let out of their stalls, they run and jump because they are full of energy and joy.

In a moment we are going to listen to a song based on these words from the Bible. As the music plays, you can move your cow and imagine it jumping freely in a field. As you do this, take a moment to thank God for his love and for the joy that comes from following him.

This is a lively song based on the words of Malachi 4. (You don't need to listen to the whole song.)

Listen:

'But For You Who Fear My Name' by The Welcome Wagon (3:20)

Pray:

Dear God,

Thank you that you love us, just as you reminded your people through Malachi.

Thank you for the joy that comes from knowing you.

Help us to honour you and follow your ways each day.

Amen.



Explore it

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)

How have you loved us? - Malachi

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:
Malachi 1:1-2



Aim:
To think about what Malachi had to share, and how he did it



Today's fruit:
Love



Draw

Use the clip to help you learn how to draw a realistic cow. When you finish your picture, you could write the words of Malachi 4:2 at the bottom.

Watch:

How to Draw a Cow by Mark Liam Smith
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACP4bVpk4uI



Share

Read Malachi 1:2 together: 'The Lord said, "I love you."'

Talk about ways people show love to one another in your family. Then thank God that his love for us never changes.



Song for the week

Watch:

Isaiah 6:8 'Here I Am, Send Me' (Bible Memory Verse Song) by Victory Kids Music
www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6tN9LzslBo



Memory verse

Then I heard the Lord's voice. He said, 'Whom can I send? Who will go for us?'
So I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'
(Isaiah 6:8 /CB)

**LIVING
OUT FAITH**