

Jesus Cares



Bible verses:

Matthew 8:1-4; John 4:46-54



Aim:

To see how Jesus cared for everyone



Today's fruit:

Faithfulness



Today we are going to discover two stories in the Bible about people from very different backgrounds and look at the way Jesus cared for them. One man was lonely and rejected because of a painful skin disease. The other was an important royal official desperate for his son to be healed. Both men came to Jesus in faith, and both discovered his love, care and compassion.

Each child will need:

- A 'Memory Verse Wristband' handout
- A range of art and craft materials and paper – see 'Action it'
- 'Explore it Ideas' handout

You will need:

- 'Favourite Things' handout – slips cut up, folded, and placed in a container
- The 'Fruit of the Spirit – Faithfulness' sign – download from **Salvationist**



Start it

Explain to the children that they will be answering the question 'What is your favourite ...?' Prior to the session, cut up the 'Favourite Things' handout, fold each slip of paper and place them all in a container. Invite a child to take a folded slip from the container and read out the question. Continue taking turns answering different questions together (you do not have to use all 40 slips).

Say:

It can be quite easy to share our favourite book, superhero or sport, but when we're talking about people it's a different story.

Ask:

How might it feel if we thought that our teacher had a favourite member of the class? Would it make a difference if we were the favourite? If so, how?

Say:

In today's story we discover that Jesus didn't have favourites. He loved and cared for everyone.

Sing it

Give each child a wristband from the 'Memory Verse Wristband' handout.

Say:

Our memory verse for this month reminds us that God loves us so much that he sent Jesus. Let's read it together.

Read:

'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:

To help us memorise the verse, we are going to sing a song all about John 3:16.

Watch:

'For God so Loved the World' (John 3:16) by The Rizers (2:46)

Share it

Say:

Today we are going to discover two stories in the Bible about people from very different backgrounds and look at the way Jesus cared for each of them.

First, we are going to meet a man who had a skin condition called leprosy. In the time of Jesus, there were some illnesses that meant that you couldn't live and worship with your friends and family. In fact, the person who had the illness had to keep away from everyone and became an outcast. There was no cure then for leprosy, and often people thought that the ill person had done something wrong to deserve their illness.

Ask:

How do you think it felt to be isolated from friends and family for an illness that wasn't your fault?

Say:

These days we know a lot more about illnesses and how they are caused. But in the time of Jesus things were different and people were often treated unfairly. Let's read the story from Matthew's Gospel to find out more.

Read:

When Jesus came down from the hill, great crowds followed him. Then a man sick with a harmful skin disease came to Jesus. The man bowed down before him and said, 'Lord, you have the power to heal me if you want.'

Jesus touched the man and said, 'I want to heal you. Be healed!' And immediately the man was healed from his skin disease. Then Jesus said to him, 'Don't tell anyone about what happened. But go and show yourself to the priest. And offer the gift that Moses commanded for people who are made well. This will show people that you are healed.'

(Matthew 8:1-4 ICB)

Ask:

- How do we know that the man with the harmful skin disease had already heard about Jesus?
- What do you think it felt like to be standing in front of someone who could take your illness away?

Say:

The man came believing he could be healed, and trusted Jesus enough to ask for help. As soon as Jesus said, 'Be healed!', the skin condition disappeared.

Ask:

- Why was this healing so important to the man?
- What difference do you think it made to his everyday life?

Say:

Jesus cared for someone that many people chose to ignore. In our next story we learn about a man that everyone in the town would have known. He was one of the king's important officials and his son was very poorly.

Watch:

'Jesus Healed the Official's Son' (Children's Bible Story, John 4:46-54) by Grace Baptist Church of Glendale (1:40)

Ask:

- What amazing miracle had Jesus performed on his last visit?
- What did the royal official do when he heard that Jesus was in the area?

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said, 'You people must see signs and miracles before you will believe in me'?

Say:

The royal official would not give up, and faithfully trusted that Jesus could heal his son. On his way home the royal official discovered that his son had been healed just as Jesus said he would be.

Discuss:

Think about the two characters we have met in our stories today.

- How are they similar?
- How are they different?
- How did Jesus treat them both when they came and asked for help?

Say:

Jesus cared for both the outcast sick man and the important king's official. Whoever people were, Jesus welcomed them, cared for them and responded to their need.

Action it

Say:

Our memory verse for this month is the perfect reminder that we are loved. Let's share it again together.

Read:

'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:

Today you are going to create your own version of the memory verse and fill it with pictures and symbols that remind you that God loves everyone.

Give the children a range of drawing and craft materials. Discuss ideas together about ways they could create a picture of the memory verse. They may decide to use a heart-shaped piece of paper; or 'concertina' the paper so that the memory verse is gradually revealed. It might be helpful to have a large version of the memory verse on display in case they can't remember it.





Pray it

Say:

Today we met two very different people who came to Jesus for help. The man with leprosy trusted that Jesus cared about him, even when other people ignored him. The royal official trusted that Jesus could heal his son, even before he saw what had happened.

In both stories, the men showed faithfulness as they trusted Jesus and believed he could help them.

Ask:

- Why do you think the two men trusted Jesus?
- What do these stories teach us about the way Jesus cares for people?
- What does it mean to be faithful?

Display the 'Fruit of the Spirit – Faithfulness' sign

Say:

One of the fruits of the Spirit is faithfulness. God is always faithful and keeps his promises to us. We can learn to trust him and grow in faithfulness too.

Watch:

'The Faithfulness Song' by Cheeky Pandas (2:39)

Pray:

Dear God,

Thank you that Jesus cared for all kinds of people and responded to their needs with love and compassion.

Thank you that you are faithful and always keep your promises.

Help us to trust you more and to grow in faithfulness 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)

Jesus Cares

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:
Matthew 8:1-4;
John 4:46-54



Aim:
To see how Jesus
cared for everyone



Today's fruit:
Faithfulness



Remember

Watch the clip to help you memorise this month's memory verse.

Watch:
'Eureka! Remember Verse - John 3:16' by
The Foundry Kids

www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdGIwn5bKE



Share

This week we shared our favourite things. We took slips of paper out of a container and asked, 'What's your favourite ...?' Create your own 'favourite things' game and find out what the people at home like.



Song for the week

Watch:
'For God so Loved the World' (John 3:16) by
The Rizers

www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2iHNzNJKJw



Memory verse

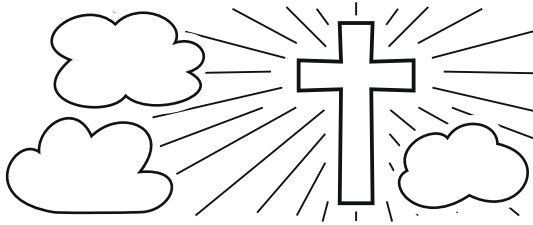
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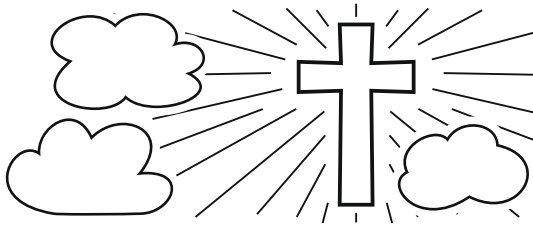
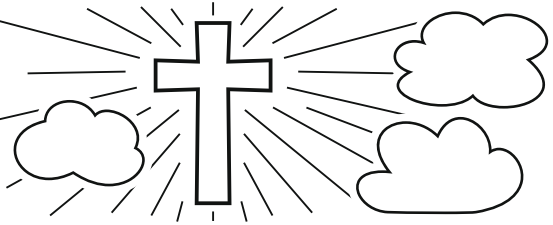
**LIVING
OUT FAITH**

Explore it

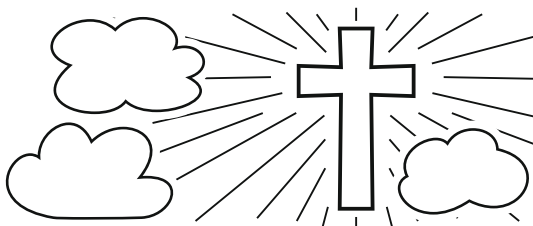
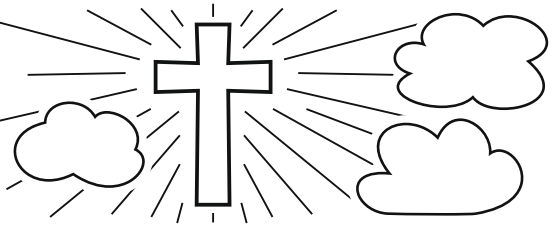
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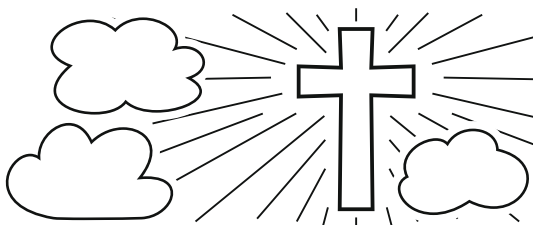
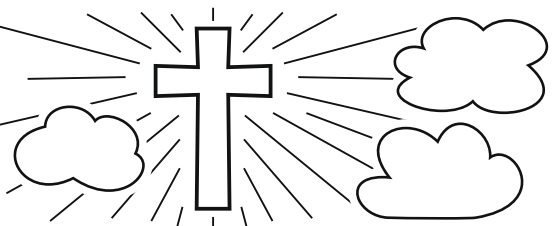
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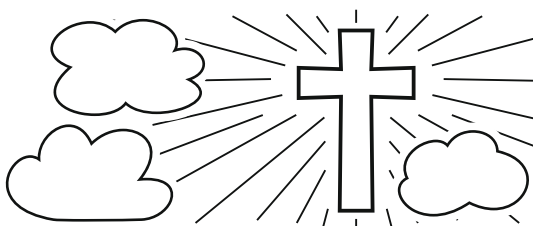
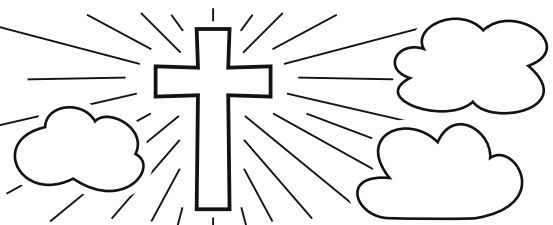
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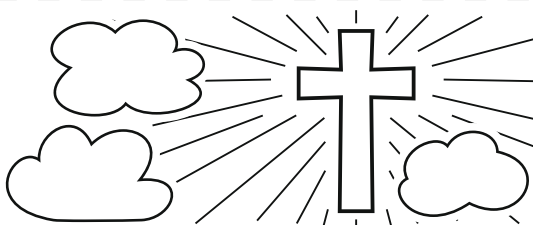
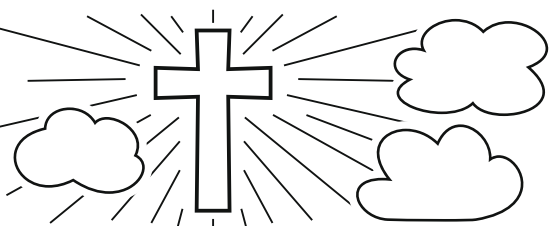
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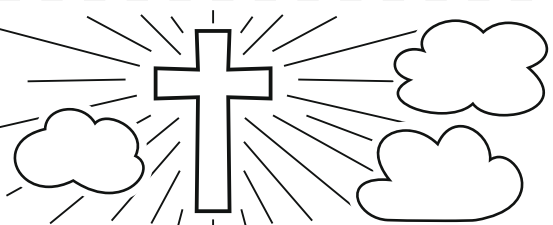
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colour	item of clothing	TV programme	shop	book character
drink	snack	subject in school	ice cream	dessert
take-away	chocolate bar	number	cartoon character	fruit
book	animal	season	superhero	Disney movie
film	band	smell	musical instrument	place you have been to
sport	memory	breakfast food	day of the week	way to travel
team	place	country	gift you've received	thing to do on your birthday
song	hobby	video game	way to have fun	toy

Jesus Heals

**Bible verses:**

Mark 2:1-12

**Aim:**

To think about the motive of the man's friends and consider what it might look like for us to want to bring our friends to Jesus

**Today's fruit:**

Faithfulness



In today's story a group of friends do everything they can to bring a paralysed man to Jesus. When the house becomes too crowded to get inside, they refuse to give up and find another way to get their friend close to him. Jesus not only heals the man physically, but also forgives his sins, showing that he understood exactly what the man truly needed. In today's session, we'll discover how the friends showed faithfulness in action and think about how we can help others find their way to Jesus too.

Each child will need:

- Card, hole punch, string, scissors, two pipe cleaners, sticky tape or a tape easy to remove (like washi or masking tape), pens/pencils – see 'Action it'
- Small slips of paper – see 'Pray it'
- 'Explore it Ideas' handout

You will need:

- Chairs, cushions, cones or tape lines
- Blindfolds (optional) – see 'Start it'
- The 'Fruit of the Spirit – Faithfulness' sign – download from **Salvationist**

Start it

Create a simple obstacle course around the room using chairs, cushions, cones or tape lines. Divide the children into teams. In each team, choose one child to complete the course while keeping their eyes closed. If children are comfortable doing so, you may wish to use a blindfold instead. Remind the children to move slowly and safely at all times.

The rest of the team must help guide their teammate safely through the course using only their voices. Encourage the teams to work together and not give up if they find the challenge difficult.

Once each team has completed the challenge, gather the children together to discuss the activity.

Ask:

- What was difficult about the challenge?
- How did it feel to trust your team?
- Did anyone feel like giving up at any point?

Say:

In today's Bible story, a group of friends refused to give up when they tried to bring someone to Jesus.

Sing it

Our memory verse for this month reminds us that God loves everyone. Let's share it together.

Read:

'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*)

Our song for today encourages us to be like Jesus and show the love of God to everyone we meet.

Watch:

'L-O-V-E' (Kids Worship Music) by Compass Bible Church (2:24)

Share it

In today's story Jesus miraculously heals a paralysed man. Lots of people wanted to spend time with Jesus and see the amazing things he was doing. As we watch the clip, think about what the man's friends were willing to do to help him get close to Jesus.

Watch:

God's Story: Jesus Heals a Man by Crossroads Kids' Club (3:39)

Watch: 0:00 to 1:20 ('Let's call this guy Matt, even though the Bible doesn't tell us his real name.')

Ask:

- What is a miracle?
- What other miracles did Jesus perform?
- Why do you think people were so desperate to spend time with Jesus?
- We have just been introduced to a man carried by four friends on a mat. Do you know what happens next in the story? Share it with the rest of the group.

Watch: 1:21 to 3:07 ('And that's the story of Jesus healing a guy.')

Say:

The man's friends refused to give up. Even when the house was crowded, they found another way to get their friend to Jesus. They trusted that Jesus could help him and were willing to overcome every obstacle in their way.

Ask:

- Why do you think the friends worked so hard to bring the man to Jesus?
- What obstacles did they face?
- What does this story teach us about friendship?
- How do you think the paralysed man felt when his friends helped him?

Say:

Before Jesus healed the man's body, he forgave his sins. Jesus understood that the man needed more than physical healing. He needed forgiveness and a restored relationship with God too.

Some of the religious leaders were shocked by what Jesus said. In their eyes, only God could forgive sins, and they didn't believe Jesus was the Son of God.

Read:

The Jewish teachers of the law and the Pharisees thought to themselves, 'Who is this man? He is saying things that are against God! Only God can forgive sins.'

But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, 'Why do you have thoughts like that in your hearts? Which is easier: to tell this paralysed man, "Your sins are forgiven", or to tell him, "Stand up and walk"? But I will prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' So Jesus said to the paralysed man, 'I tell you, stand up! Take your mat and go home.'

(Luke 5:21-24 *ICB*)

Ask:

- Why do you think Jesus forgave the man before healing him?
- What do you think this story teaches us about who Jesus is?

Say:

Jesus cared about the man's whole life, not just his physical illness. By forgiving the man and healing him, Jesus showed that he really was the Son of God.

Let's recap the story.

Watch: 3:08 to the end.

Ask:

- What part of the story most stood out to you?
- What do you think Jesus thought about the actions of the man's friends?
- What might it look like for us to help people find their way to Jesus today?

Display the 'Fruit of the Spirit – Faithfulness' sign

Say:

Last week we saw faithfulness in how people trusted Jesus. In today's story, the friends showed faithfulness in a different way by refusing to give up and instead doing everything they could to bring someone to Jesus.

Action it

Explain to the children how to make a model of the paralysed man on a colourful stretcher based on the following clip. The clip is intended as a guide for leaders preparing the activity and does not need to be shown during the session.

Watch:

'Craft 4 Paralysed Man' (Messy Church March 2021) – by Finaghy Methodist (4:09)

You may wish to have the holes in the card already done and adapt the resources to include removable tape so children can show the man picking up his mat and walking.

Once the children have completed the craft activity, encourage them to retell the story to someone else in the group and talk about how the man's friends helped him get to Jesus.

Pray it

Say:

In today's story the paralysed man's friends refused to give up. Trusting that Jesus could help, they did everything they could to bring him to Jesus.

Ask:

- Who helps you when life feels difficult?
- Who has helped you learn more about Jesus?
- How can we help others feel loved and closer to Jesus?

Say:

Sometimes helping people find their way to Jesus can mean encouraging them, praying for them, inviting them along to church or simply being a good friend.

Give each child a small piece of paper. Ask them to quietly think of someone they would like to pray for.

This could be:

- someone going through a difficult time
- someone who feels lonely
- someone who needs encouragement
- someone who would like to discover more about Jesus

Give them time to write the person's name on the slip of paper. Invite the children to hold their paper while you pray together. They don't have to show it to anyone else. They can take the paper home with them to use as part of the Explore it Ideas activities.

Pray:

Jesus, thank you for the friends in today's story who refused to give up. Help us to be faithful friends who encourage, support and care for others. Please help the people we are thinking about today to know your love.

Amen.

Explore it

Remember to send home the 'Explore it Ideas' for children and families.



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Jesus Heals

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Mark 2:1-12



Aim:

To think about the motive of the man's friends and consider what it might look like for us to want to bring our friends to Jesus



Today's fruit:

Faithfulness



Pray

In our *Explore it* session this week, you chose one person to pray for and wrote their name on a slip of paper. Try to pray for that person every day this week and ask God to help them know his love.



Song for the week

Watch:

'L-O-V-E' (Kids Worship Music) by Compass Bible Church

www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJ9te-Gtfew



Watch

Using the craft activity you made in this week's *Explore it* session, retell the story of the paralysed man to someone at home.

Watch the clip together and discuss what you have discovered about Jesus and the determination of the man's friends. Why do you think they were willing to do so much to bring someone to Jesus? What does this story teach us about friendship, forgiveness and helping others find their way to Jesus?

Watch:

'Jesus Heals the Paralytic' by RodTheNey
www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLqHYkGU4Zg



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 – salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive

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



Children & Youth

Jesus and the Pharisees


Bible verses:

Matthew 15:1-11; 12:1-8


Aim:

To discover why the religious leaders became angry with Jesus and what he wanted people to understand about God


Today's fruit:

Kindness



In today's *Explore it* we'll discover that the religious leaders were often frustrated with Jesus because he did not follow their rules and traditions in the same way they did. Jesus wanted people to understand that God cared about more than outward appearances and rituals. Through the things he said and did, Jesus showed that kindness, mercy and what is happening in our hearts matter deeply to God.

Each child will need:

- Card and/or coloured paper
- Scissors, glue and sticky tape
- Coloured pens/pencils – see 'Pray it'
- 'Explore it Ideas' handout

You will need:

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



Start it

Ask:

- What kinds of things make you want to pick up a book and read it?
- Have you ever chosen a book because the cover looked interesting? Was the book as good as the cover? If so, why / why not?

Say:

People sometimes say, 'Don't judge a book by its cover.'

Ask:

What do you think that means?

Say:

In today's *Explore it* we are going to discover that the religious leaders cared a lot about what people looked like on the outside, but Jesus wanted people to understand what really matters on the inside.

**Sing it**

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

Say:

In today's session we are going to think about the way Jesus treated people with kindness and mercy, even when the religious leaders were angry with him.

One of the fruits of the Spirit is kindness. Kindness means caring for people and treating others with love. Our song for today gives us lots of examples of ways that we can show kindness to others.

Watch:

'The Kindness Song' by Cheeky Pandas TV (3:01)

**Share it****Say:**

In our last session we discovered that not everyone was happy with what Jesus was doing. When Jesus forgave the sins of the paralysed man, the religious leaders questioned why he thought he could do that. After all, only God can forgive sins. They were also frustrated with Jesus because he didn't always follow the rules in the same way they did.

Ask:

Do you always wash your hands before you eat?

Say:

In the time of Jesus, washing your hands before eating wasn't simply a matter of hygiene; it was part of Jewish Law, and you had to do it in a particular way. Our story for today starts with a grumpy group of religious leaders who were unhappy with the disciples' hand-washing habits.

Read:

Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem. They asked him, ‘Why do your followers not obey the rules given to us by the great people who lived before us? Your followers don’t wash their hands before they eat!’

(Matthew 15:1-2 *ICB*)

Say:

The Pharisees cared a lot about rules and traditions, but Jesus wanted people to understand that God cared about more than appearances and rituals.

Watch:

Jesus Fights the Pharisees by PursueGOD Kids (stop at 1:32)

Ask:

- Why do you think the Pharisees became frustrated with Jesus?
- What do you think Jesus wanted people to understand about God?
- According to the clip, what mattered more to Jesus than simply following the rules?

Say:

Jesus wanted people to understand that God is more interested in what is happening in our hearts than simply following rules on the outside. God cares about the way we treat people, the words we use and the kindness we show to others.

Read:

Jesus called the crowd to him. He said, ‘Listen and understand what I am saying. It is not what a person puts into his mouth that makes him unclean. It is what comes out of his mouth that makes him unclean.’

(Matthew 15:10-11 *ICB*)

Ask:

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said this?
- Why do you think the religious leaders found Jesus difficult to understand?

Say:

This wasn’t the only time that the Pharisees tried to catch out Jesus and his disciples.

Read:

About that same time, Jesus was walking through some fields of grain on a Sabbath day. His followers were with him, and they were hungry. So they began to pick the grain and eat it. The Pharisees saw this, and they said to Jesus, ‘Look! Your followers are doing something that is against the Jewish law to do on the Sabbath day.’

(Matthew 12:1-2 *ICB*)

Ask:

- What were the disciples doing?
- Why do you think the Pharisees were upset about it?

Say:

The Sabbath was supposed to be a special day of rest and worship, but over time the religious leaders had added lots of extra rules about what people could and could not do.

Read:

(Jesus replied)

‘The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath day.’

(Matthew 12:8 ICB)

Ask:

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said he was ‘Lord of the Sabbath’?
- Why do you think this upset the Pharisees?

Say:

Jesus wasn’t saying that rest and worship were unimportant. He wanted people to understand that God cared about people more than strict rule-keeping. Jesus was also reminding the people that he had authority from God.

Ask:

What do you think Jesus wanted the people to understand about God?

Say:

Jesus continued to do things in a way that the Pharisees did not like. They believed he was going against God, when in fact Jesus was helping people understand what God is really like. Jesus showed kindness and love to people, even when the religious leaders thought rules were more important.

 Action it**Say:**

At the beginning of today’s *Explore it*, we thought about the saying, ‘Don’t judge a book by its cover.’ Through the things he said and did, Jesus helped people understand that God cares about what is happening in our hearts, not just the things people notice on the outside.

Show the children how to create a simple pop-up heart book using the following clip as a guide. The clip is intended for leaders preparing the activity and does not need to be shown during the session.

Watch:

Easy 3D Heart Pop Up Card by Cellustrationart (0:19)

Encourage the children to decorate the outside of their books with pictures and words that describe themselves.

They could include:

- things they enjoy
- hobbies and interests
- favourite foods, sports or animals
- talents and achievements
- family and friends

On the front of the book, the children can write:

‘God loves everything about (insert name).’

Inside the book the children can create a simple pop-up heart with the words:

‘Especially my heart!’

As the children work, encourage them to think about the things that matter to God, such as kindness, love, forgiveness and caring for others. Once the children have completed their books, invite them to share some of the things they chose to include.



Pray it

Say:

In today’s session we discovered that Jesus wanted people to understand what God is really like. The Pharisees cared a lot about rules, but Jesus reminded the people that God cared deeply about them and loved them.

Our memory verse this month reminds us just how much God loves the world and every person in it. Let’s say the verse together.

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)

Say:

God also gave the Sabbath as a gift, a special time to rest and spend time with him. For our prayer time today, we are going to take a few moments to be still, rest and remember how much God loves us.

The length of this activity will depend on your group. Ask the children to find a comfortable space to sit or lie down quietly. As they listen to the music, encourage them to spend time with God and think about the things that matter most to him, such as kindness, love and caring for others. When the group becomes restless, fade the music and bring the session to a close in prayer.

Watch:

'God So Loved' (Hidden In My Heart III) by Scripture Lullabies (5:21)

Explore it

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



Jesus and the Pharisees

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Matthew 15:1-11;
12:1-8



Aim:

To discover why the religious leaders became angry with Jesus and what he wanted people to understand about God



Today's fruit:

Kindness



Discover

Look up the following Bible verses:

- Ephesians 4:32
- Luke 6:31
- Galatians 5:22-23

What do these verses teach us about the kind of hearts God wants us to have?



Rest

How good are the people at home at taking a moment to rest?

Ask them to spare five minutes to take some moments to relax and listen to a Scripture Lullaby with you.

Watch:

'God So Loved' (Hidden In My Heart III) by Scripture Lullabies

www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3l96fPb-HQ



Song for the week

Watch:

'The Kindness Song' by Cheeky Pandas TV

www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLuRcbQVDt8



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)

Jesus Forgives

**Bible verses:**

Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 7:36-39, 44-50

**Aim:**

To recognise that if we come to Jesus, he forgives us for the wrong things we do

**Today's fruit:**

Love



In today's *Explore it* we'll discover that Jesus welcomed and forgave people who were often rejected or looked down on by others. Matthew was disliked because he collected taxes for the Romans, and the woman in our second story was judged because of the mistakes she had made. Yet both discovered that Jesus loved and accepted them. Through these stories we'll learn that no matter what mistakes we make, we can always come to Jesus and experience his love and forgiveness.

Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils
- Heart-shaped pieces of paper – see 'Pray it'
- 'Explore it Ideas' handout

You will need:

- A blindfold and a selection of scented items – for example vinegar, perfume, lemons, coffee, oranges or washing-up liquid – see 'Start it'
- A selection of *Kids Alive!* magazines – see 'Action it'
- The 'Fruit of the Spirit – Love' sign – download from **Salvationist**



Start it

Set up a 'Guess the smell' activity using a selection of scented items – for example vinegar, perfume, lemons, coffee, oranges or washing-up liquid (check for allergies beforehand). Invite

the children to smell each item without looking at it. If appropriate, you may wish to use a blindfold.

Ask:

- Which smell was your favourite?
- Which smell did you like the least?
- Which smells were difficult to guess?

Say:

In today's story a woman brings expensive perfume to Jesus and pours it over his feet. The fragrance filled the room and everyone noticed what she had done. We'll discover more later on!

Sing it

Say:

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

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)

Say:

Our song for today reminds us how wide, high, long and deep God's love is and how he is always with us.

Watch:

'Wide, High, Long, Deep' (Official Lyric Video) by Ellie Holcomb (3:19)

Share it

Say:

Jesus had a habit of spending time with people who 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?

- How did they usually conquer a city? *The Romans would surround the city walls and attack them with battering rams. They would do surprise attacks and stop people from leaving. If all else failed, then they would negotiate.*
- What happened to the people living in the city once it was conquered? *The people in the city would usually be allowed to keep their own culture and way of living, but they had to obey Roman laws and pay taxes.*

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 love for Matthew?

Say:

Matthew followed Jesus and his life changed for ever. Jesus saw past the mistakes Matthew had made and loved him.

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.

Watch:

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

Ask:

- 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 this sinful woman?
- Jesus told Simon a parable. What was the simple truth hidden in the story?

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.

Display the 'Fruit of the Spirit – Love' sign

Say:

In today's stories we saw God's love through the way Jesus treated people with kindness, forgiveness and compassion.

Ask:

What examples of God's love do we see in these two stories from the Bible?

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 people just how much they are loved. That

includes you and me too. Earlier in today's session we shared our memory verse together. As we finish our time together, let's remind ourselves once again just how much God loves us.

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)

Say:

In today's stories Jesus welcomed and forgave people that others looked down on or rejected. The woman was so grateful that she wanted to show Jesus just how much she loved him.

Ask:

- Why do you think the woman wanted to thank Jesus?
- What do these stories teach us about the way Jesus treats people?
- Why is it good to know that we can always come to Jesus when we make mistakes?

Say:

Just like Matthew and the woman in today's stories, we can always come to Jesus. He loves us, forgives us and helps us start again.

Give each child a heart-shaped piece of paper. Invite the children to write or draw a thank you prayer to Jesus. They may wish to thank him for his love, forgiveness, friendship or the people who care for them. If appropriate, invite the children to share their prayers with the rest of the group.

You could play today's 'Sing it' song quietly in the background as the children write or draw their prayers.

Watch:

'Wide, High, Long, Deep' (Official Lyric Video) by Ellie Holcomb (3:19)

Explore it

Remember to send home the 'Explore it Ideas' for children and families.



Jesus Forgives

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Matthew 9:9-13;
Luke 7:36-39, 44-50



Aim:

To recognise that if we come to Jesus, he forgives us for the wrong things we do



Today's fruit:

Love



Discover

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

What is your favourite smell and 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.

Watch:

How Your Nose Works? By The Binocs Show Peekaboo Kidz

www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9CpmgTPhu8



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 the people at home and remind them of Jesus' amazing gift of forgiveness.



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)



Song for the week

Watch:

'Wide, High, Long, Deep' (Official Lyric Video) by Ellie Holcomb

www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xln8iaBM00

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

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



Children
& Youth

Explore it

