



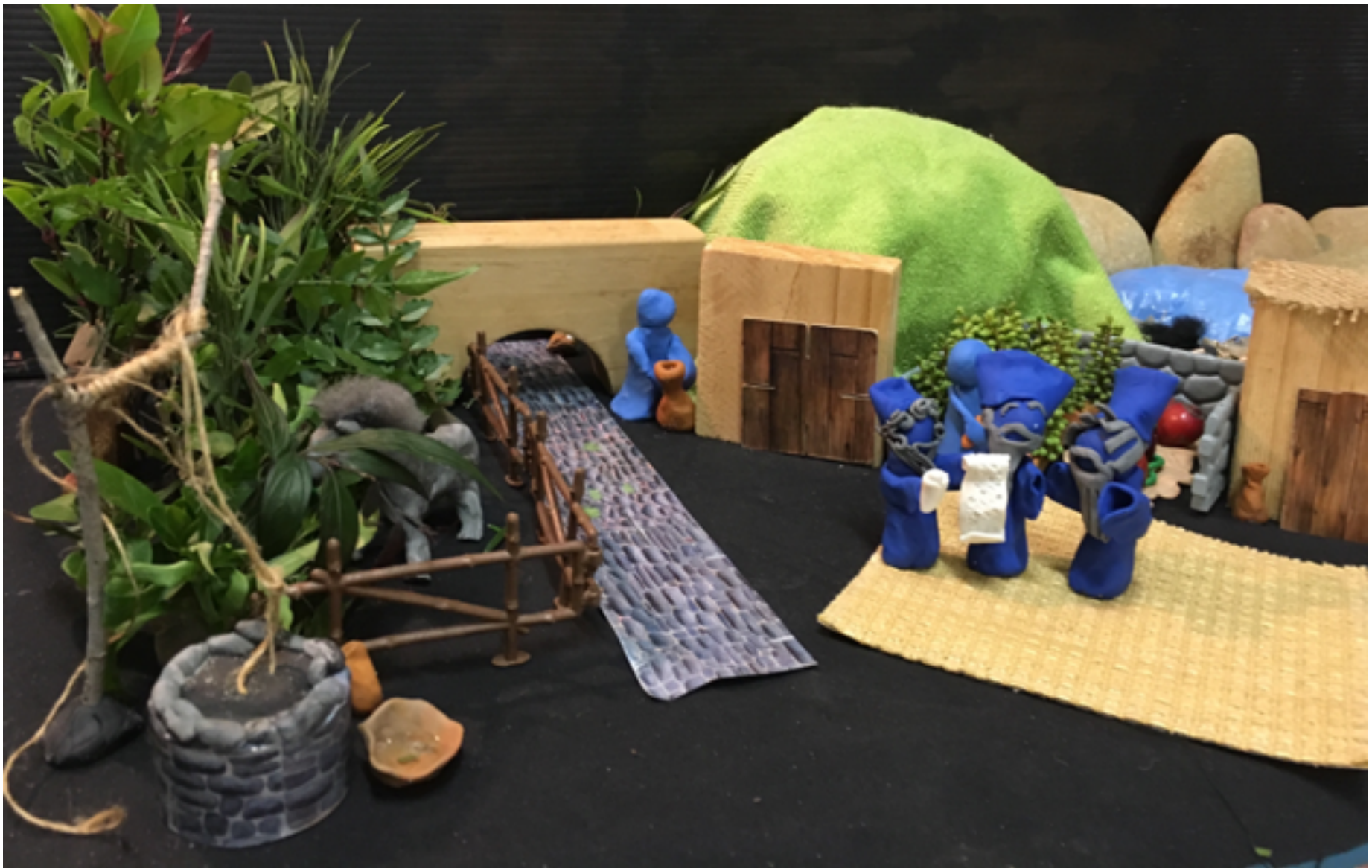
In every village across the land
– in the grassy hills and the shady valleys,
in the cracked cliffs
and the dry bone desert
by the salty sea and the lovely lake.



– people lived
and planted their vegies



and tended their animals,
and fished the waters.



And in every village
were Big rule keepers.



In every village
across the land
soldiers came to fight.
Soldiers in armour
with spears and swords.
The people fought hard
but the soldiers
were stronger.



This land is no longer yours.
Say the soldiers.
It belongs to our mighty King
from far far away.



What shall we do?
Say the people.
We do not even
know this king
from far far away.
We do not know
this king's rules



We have our own
Big Rules
– say the
Big Rule Keepers.



In every village across the land you will plant your vegies
and tend your animals and fish the waters.
But now you will sell them and make money for the king.



You will take the money
– it is called tax
– and give it to the king
from far far away.



This is the new big rule you must do.
We will stay with our spears and swords
and make sure you pay.



“But what shall we eat if we have to sell our food to make money for the King?”

- ask the children of the hills and valleys and the desert and the cliffs and the lake and the sea.



“You will all have to work harder and grow more food and catch more fish if you want to eat.”



How shall we
give it
to the
king from
far far away?

We do not
even know
this king!



The soldiers replied:
In every village
across the land
you will plant
your vegies
and tend your animals
and fish the waters.
And you will sell them
and make money for
the king.



And in every village across the land one of you will be the money-taker
The Money-taker will take the money and give it to us
and we will send it to the king far far away.



Who wants to be
the Money taker?

Who will be the
money taker
– in the grassy hills
and the shady
valleys,



Who will be the money taker
by the dry-bone desert and in the cracked cliffs
Who will be the money taker
by the salty sea and the lovely lake?



Do they have a special name?
Do they get to keep any of the money?

- the people ask

Yes –
they will be called
Tax Collectors.
And if they take
extra money,
they can keep it.

- reply the
soldiers



That sounds mean
That doesn't sound
fair

I don't want to be a
money taker

Money takers
Boooo!!!

Tax collectors
Boooo!!!



The soldiers wait
a moment...

“I will”
said a little man
Zak
in the back of the
crowd in the
village
near the salty sea
Boooooo!!!

“I will”
said the son of a
Big Rule Keeper
in the village in
the hills
Boooooo!!!



“I will”
Said the oldest
farmer in the
village in the
cracked cliffs

“I will”
Said a man named
Levi in the village
by the lovely lake.

“Good”
said the Soldiers.
Done.



So in every village
across the land
– in the grassy hills
and the
shady valleys,
in the cracked cliffs
and the
drybone desert
by the salty sea
and the lovely lake
– people worked
harder
and planted
their vegies
and tended
their animals.



They sold enough to pay their tax to the money takers and had just enough left over for themselves most of the time. The Money takers took the money and gave to the soldiers who took it to the King that no one and ever seen far far away. And the Big Rule Keepers reminded the people to keep their Big Rules too.



One day Jesus was walking through the village by the lovely lake.
Capernaum, said the sign.
There were villagers with their vegies and animals and fish selling at the market.



The children were helping to carry baskets of bread



The Big Rule keepers were standing on the corner worrying about how the villagers didn't have time for keeping the Rules with all this extra work. There were the soldiers strolling by, swords half hidden. And there was the Money Taker: Levi in the village by the lovely lake. "Taxes Taken" said the sign.



Jesus says to Levi,
“Come on. Give up on this money taking, for a king you don’t know, far far away. Follow me. Follow me in the ways of the kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is not far far way. It is right here now. In the village by the lovely lake.”



What does Jesus mean?

Levi says, 'Tell you what Jesus. Do you like parties? A big feed and great time drinking and talking?'

Sure do! - says Jesus

Done! - says Levi.



Let's have dinner.
I'll invite my friends
to come.

Tell me about this
Kingdom of God who
is not far far away.

Tell my friends who
are money-takers
too.

They need to hear.



Tell my friends who don't have a vegie patch or animals or nets for fishing.
Who must make their money in work that harms them
just to pay taxes to a king they don't know who is far far away.
They all need to hear about this Kingdom of God that you say is near.



Levi and his friends, the money takers, the people called 'sinner' All eat and drink and talk and laugh and listen to Jesus tell stories of this Kingdom of God that is near.



The Big Rule
keepers look
through
the open door.
This is
against
the rules!
A party?!
With the
Money-taker?
A dinner
– with the
sinner?



What about
all the rules?



Jesus says with a big smile,
“In the kingdom of God who is not far far away, there is just One Big Rule:



Love.
Love your friends,



Love your enemies,



Love all
that God
has made.
Love God.



Just love.