

QUESTION MARK

A resource for opening the Bible
with children, teens, and families.

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 victoria
COME TO LIFE

Question Mark

Question Mark is a resource for opening the Bible in fun and creative ways across all ages - children, teenagers and their families – in age-sensitive groups and, at times, in large multi-age gatherings. It was written for use in Scripture Union Family Missions, and is easily adaptable for use in many other contexts: holiday programs, multi-age Bible activities.

Question Mark takes ten questions that are asked in Mark's good news stories and invites us to explore and wonder about these questions too. Who is this man? Who can forgive sins? Who is the greatest? Who do you say that I am?

Question Mark provides sessions for primary, teens and early childhood groups, parent conversations starters, Bible dramas, Bible studies for teams and an interactive missional worship event for all ages, as well as a separate appendix of reproducible resources. Digital resources are available for download from the SU website, www.su vic.org.au please contact the SU Victoria office for access details.

SU Victoria is part of an international organization which is committed to partnering with churches in mission, making God's good news known to children, young people and families through missions, camps and schools.

Question Mark

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INTRODUCTION

FEELING...

CURIOUS?

NOSEY?

INQUISITIVE?

INTRIGUED?

PUZZLED?

Question Mark takes the questions that are asked in Mark's good news stories and invites us to scratch our heads and wonder along too.

Questions of all kinds are highly valuable ... and answers can be great as well, but here we are paying attention to the kinds of questions that will help us get to know Jesus.

Questions can be serious, really tricky, amusing, hilarious, perplexing, worrying, exciting ... so asking our questions along with other people can be great fun, helpful, reassuring, thrilling, engaging and - let's be honest - sometimes a little bit scary. But mostly questioning together is a great adventure.

It's important to let the questions help us, but not jump too quickly to the answers we might have had ready before we even heard the question. Many a game show contestant has come unstuck by answering before hearing the whole question. So let's be big listeners to these questions. Feel the weight and substance of them. By all means we will want to track down answers ... and we want them to be the kind of answers that we can live, not just think or say.

As we open up our question boxes, we can be encouraged that this is a discipleship activity. Jesus was a questioner, as well as a replier and responder; so as followers of his ways we question, reply and respond.

A WORD ABOUT THE APPENDICES

A number of activities use resources listed in the Appendices. Lots of the work has been done for you in terms of graphics and layout. Do make the most of these resources, by putting in some time beforehand. The day before your small group time (especially if you are already on mission) will be too late to be able to use them well. They need to be printed out – ideally in colour. Some of the resources are info cards or playing cards. These need to be cut out and laminated and cut out again. You might consider organising a small groups admin afternoon to do this for all the groups together. As there are a number of activities that use cards, keep each set in a zip lock bag to keep them together.

THEMATIC SCOPE

Question Words	Theme words	Bible	Songs
Session 1 <i>Who is this Man? Even the wind and the waves obey him? Why are you afraid?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus shows he is more powerful than nature Faith can replace fear Nature is not the boss 	Mark 4:35-41 Jesus calms a storm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oh Have You Heard? (C, S) God's Everywhere (S) We Were Sailing in Our Boat
Session 2 <i>Who can forgive sins?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus can deal with the things we do wrong and with the things done wrong to us Forgiveness can replace frustration Evil is not the boss 	Mark 2:1-12 Jesus heals a paralytic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Mate (S) The Pop Song (C) Jesus Cares About Me (S)
Session 3 <i>Who touched me? Why bother?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus uses his power to help those who need it most Hope can replace helplessness Trouble is not the boss 	Mark 5:21-43 Jesus heals a young girl and an older woman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who Can Trust in Jesus (C) Oh Have You Heard? (S) Busy Busy Busy Busy (S)
Session 4 <i>Why are you trying to trap me?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus shows us that God is more important than anything God can replace greed Money is not the boss 	Mark 12:13-17 Jesus answers a tricky question about money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Thing (S) The Birdy Song (S) The Whistle Song (C, S)
Session 5 <i>What do you want with us? Have you come to destroy us?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus came to destroy things that are messed up Calm can replace confusion Chaos is not the boss 	Mark 1:21-28 Jesus frees a man from a messed up spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pop Song (C) On & On (S) Jesus Cares About Me (S)
Session 6 <i>What were you arguing about? Who is the greatest?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus sorts out his disciples' ambitions with a child Humility can replace huge egos Fame is not the boss 	Mark 9:33-37 Jesus affirms children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hey Ho! Who Can Trust in Jesus (C) The Sneeze Song (C, S)
Session 7 <i>Who do you say I am?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus shows his purpose Friendship with Jesus can replace fakes What everyone else is doing is not the boss 	Mark 8:27-31 Jesus' disciples realise he is from God: Jesus predicts his death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making Up My Own Mind (C) God In a Bod (C) Who Can Trust in Jesus (C)
Session 8 <i>What shall I do, then with the one you call the King of the Jews?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus willingly dies Jesus' love can replace anything People are not the boss 	Mark 15 Jesus' trial and death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oh Have You Heard? (S) Romans 8:38 from the Bible (S) Digging Deep (C)
Session 9 <i>Who will roll the stone away?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus is alive A new beginning can replace a terrible end Death is not the boss 	Mark 16:1-8 Jesus' Resurrection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus is Alive (C) Making Up My Own Mind (C) Thank You God for Loving Me (S)
Session 10 <i>What is God's Kingdom like?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus tells a story to help us see the way God works God's ways can replace waste Big is not the boss 	Mark 4:30-32 Parable of the Mustard seed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digging Deep (C) Excited to be Invited (S) The Birdy Song (S)

The suggested songs for this resource can be found at:

- **(C)** Click – published by Scripture Union Victoria. Available at www.suvc.org.au/click
- **(S)** Snack Music – www.snackmusic.com.au for songs, free resources, sheet music or find them on iTunes, Spotify, etc.

THE MAKING OF MISSION

VISUAL AND VISIBLE

Many of us engaging in holiday mission teams have a strong sense of the contrast between the indoors, walled up context of our weekly church gathering, and the outdoors un-walled exposure to the public of our mission program.

Our weekly church things are typically held in properties that the church owns and has exclusive use of, and a high level of power in. But we pay the price of that ownership and predictability and power with the struggle that it is to get the public to set foot on the property, let alone walk through the doors.

By contrast, our mission programs are typically held in public parks, beach foreshores, footy ovals, playgrounds and picnic spots.

We often feel highly exposed and are mindful that we are not on our own turf and work without the home ground advantage. Our theology (see Luke 10; Jeremiah 29) tells us this is an excellent kingdom condition and to be pleased - even to seek this, more than to try and build our own space.

So we celebrate the openness of our activities, that those passing by can see what we are doing, and join in easily. We like our edges being ragged and porous so that those around can be easily absorbed into the gospel-centred community we are hosting and facilitating.

Well...that's the theory.

But over the past couple of decades of watching our mission summer by summer I've been noticing that this isn't always as straightforward as it sounds.

A LITTLE CASE STUDY

Even though our mission operated in a public park in the middle of a camping ground with a high volume of through traffic to the beach, we found that there seemed to be invisible perspex walls around us that somehow prevented passers by from stopping to join in - even just a little bit.

We discovered that we were seeing a good core of families every day - we knew their names, they knew us - they were cheerful and supportive and enthusiastic and loyal. And we loved them and listened to them. This was relational mission working well.

But it was rare to have someone just pass by and join in. We had lost our knack for picking up strays and randoms.

We had somehow become an in-group - the very thing we were not meant to be - the thing we were meant to be the opposite of.

What had happened?

Perhaps this happens at your mission site too?

There are many factors that contribute to this trend, and some of it has to do with our safe-practices with children - signing in and permission forms - and we don't want to undo that good progress.

But here are two other factors worth thinking about:

Firstly, We had made ourselves invisible.

We'd made ourselves visible to ourselves, but nothing was turned outwards to the world. The line of our eyesight, our gaze was towards each other - not out beyond the rim.

Secondly, we lacked a layered approach to inclusion. Options were: in or out. We needed ways for people to join us at the outer rim by just stepping in an inch, and then after that, another way of engaging that meant just stepping in another few inches. And then something else... and so on.

Offering people a coffee or a cordial, saying hi and getting into conversation- these are good basic personal ways of connecting, but sometimes people don't slow down enough even for that. Because there is no reason to stop and watch. Let's be honest, an adult who hangs around the fringes of children's activities and just watches can draw suspicion - so who would want to open themselves to that kind of innuendo?

We need reasons and ways for people to stop and look and be around the edges of our community in order to be engaged and drawn in further.

And so here we arrive at the importance of art. If we want people to stop and look, they need something visually engaging to stop and look at!

How can we create easy invitations and interactions for those who are passing by?

Here are a couple of easy suggestions, which you'll find are pointed to throughout the small group material.

PUBLIC ART EXHIBITIONS

Be prepared to display the pieces of art that your groups produce in the program. Set up a clothesline, or freestanding board to display the art on - and place it in an easily accessible space. Label the work attractively and clearly.

Some of the ideas in the small group sessions will translate well into an art installations: eg. a whole lot of rock prayers and resources for passers by to add their own.

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS

Keep honour boards of champions for the games you play.
 eg. The record for highest giant Jenga tower. Or giant Connect Four.
 The Bocce championship pair. Record for longest tennis ball throw and catch.

Use first names only for security. Occasionally in your program highlight these boards, with a little bit of 'We are the Champions' soundtrack and some applause as you read out the names.

Displaying these art galleries and honour boards firstly communicates the flavour of fun and creativity of our program to those who pass by.

Secondly it demonstrates that we are a community - we know each other's names, we honour each other's efforts and expressions.

Thirdly it creates an invitation to join - by publicly displaying our art and achievements, we show that we are face forward open to others, not just an in-house clique.

Fourthly, particularly in the artwork we have the chance to signal a little bit of our message in the way we label the art.

eg. 'Fabulous Feast for all - poor especially welcome' by Mandi, Nat, Keira, Jordan, Taylor and Emma.

Work out a pithy succinct little message to attach to your art exhibition and honour boards that clearly communicate that your program is open to the public for all ages to join and enjoy at any time, and a brief statement linking your program to the oversight of Scripture Union.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

These displays will take some time and care, but working out some good display options before mission and designating a couple of team members to keep this aspect of the mission running well and looking wonderful is a great investment of team time.

Finally - truly open edges to the community means that you won't limit your exhibition to only your program's artwork, but invite and welcome the art of others.

Make a space for campers/holidaymakers/towners art or the art of your team members that is an expression of their wider spiritual life.

Develop your mission's reputation as a place of hospitality to children, young people and families, and the arts.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

There are 10 sessions in this book. If you are running a shorter program you can select whichever sessions and activities you like. If you are shortening the program think carefully about which sessions you select. This resource is designed to provide opportunities for children, young people and families to meet Jesus. As we see in the Gospel itself, any encounter a person has with Jesus can be transformational. While the Gospel doesn't follow a formula, we encounter Jesus in story, in narrative, so be sure to select material in a way that connects Jesus life, death and resurrection, the cultural story of Jesus' people, and the larger story of the Kingdom of God.

Each session has multiple options for activities. Select which activities best suit your small group, the physical context of your mission and your own personal style. Every age group session has a checklist so you can easily remember the activities you choose.

APPENDICES

Templates, artwork and resources are available for small activities marked with an appendix reference.

Music resources (audio tracks and sheet music) have been suggested for each session.

Early Childhood sessions each feature a colour illustrated 'plasticine' story.

You can find all of these additional resources online at suvic.org.au/question-mark

TEAM STUDIES

It is important for the team to spend time in the Bible together. Each day there is a Bible engagement activity for the mission team. This is designed to have the team gain a deeper understanding of the Bible passages they will be leading the children in and conversing with parents about. Like the age group sessions there are activities and talk triggers.

PARENT CONVERSATION STARTERS

Engaging Parents and Carers in conversation is a scary thought for some people. Parents on many occasions are keen to talk and inquisitive about what their children are exploring and learning. With each daily session we include some ideas for starting conversations about the content with parents. The Conversation Starters invite adults to share their stories of household life in open and non-threatening ways, but with the opportunity to go deeper. Each page links a family life or parenting issue with the Bible passage for that day, to encourage connections within families around the Bible.

AGE GROUP SESSIONS

Each of the following sessions offers several options for each part (Connect – Context – Content – Consider – Consequence) of your small group time. Choose one activity for each of the 5 Cs, based on your own skills and the vibe of your small group; for example a bunch of Grade 6 girls or Grade 2 boys will need a different balance of activities.

You will find these activities tougher to run if you try and do them in larger groups – kids will miss out, and you will find yourself managing too much ‘stuff’ rather than having a great time with a little bunch of kids cracking open the Bible and discovering the kingdom of God together.

Keeping the leader: child ratio small is not simply a safety and care issue. We work in small groups because it facilitates and protects all of the things we value in the kingdom of God: Relationships, authenticity, justice, respect for our uniqueness. It is easier to offer grace in small groups, it is easier to accept difference. Large groups need a certain degree of homogeneity and conformity to work, so they are a ‘sometimes’ mode for missional contexts.

A couple of logistical things will help:

- Each small group sits on their own small picnic rug or tarp, defining their little tribe’s space
- Each small group leader should have their own box with the day’s resources in it
- Each small group leader keeps a ‘mini’ roll of the names of the children in their group
- If a small group leader hits a rough spot in their group, help can be offered by age group co-ordinators, team parents or other ‘support people’.

The thinking in these pages, all of the concrete resources and the ‘stuff’ are offered so that you may be released to be well prepared, prayerful and people oriented in mission.

MULTI-AGE WORSHIP GATHERING

The eleventh session in this book is a Multi-Age Worship Gathering. The Multi-Age Missional Worship Gathering outline is designed to provide Mission teams with a framework for their own authentic worship, whilst being sensitive to the culture of being outdoors, in public spaces, and inviting those families that have been part of other activities that the mission has run, as well as Christians of any denomination. The service combines elements that will resonate with a number of traditions while have a distinct Scripture Union flavour of its own – creativity, staying close to the text, exploring together, responding freely in meaningful and contextually appropriate ways.

An outdoor church service can be a great opportunity to worship with people from local churches, and share our faith, our unity and collaboration in the gospel.

TEENS MATERIAL

The teen conversations are designed around the 5 Cs and include activities, leading questions, Bible engagement and food. You will do well to plan ahead and remember that if you want people to open up, often you need to open up first. So, have answers from your own life to the questions on hand.

The Teens material is aimed at young adults in Year 7 - 9, however every group is different, and material always needs to be adapted to its context. If you have a group of older teens, consider using the Team Study or your own fusion of the Team and Teens material.

MUSIC RESOURCES

God is repetitive – God keeps saying things over and over. Repetition is a common part of music. Singing phrases over and over helps us to learn them, so singing about God and about our response to God will help us to remember more deeply (and eventually internalise) the truths that we are singing.

Some of the deepest and most significant (faith) memories that we hold on to are songs from our childhood.

Singing can free our brains from the cognitive thinking that a lot of other faith-oriented group activities involve (e.g. Bible study, listening to a sermon) so we can be with God rather than merely thinking about God.



Music can be used as a form of prayer by either listening or singing/playing along. God can speak to us – and we can speak to God – through music.

Music is an activity that we can engage in with people of diverse age, background and ability. Our faith is improved and strengthened by diverse voices, and music is an easy place to bring them all together.

Music (especially when it's catchy) goes with children from our ministries, into their families, homes, schools. Music is an effective tool for increasing the impact of our ministry beyond those who physically attend.

It's a good idea to include a new song most days, to keep things fun and fresh. It's also a good idea to include at least one known song each day. The third and fourth times you sing a song, you'll be more comfortable than the first time. We can't assume that everyone has heard/sung it before, so use songs day after day for familiarity.*

(*Source: Snack Music)

FRAMING WORDS OF WELCOME: INVITATION AND INFORMATION

Letting people know what's happening in your program is important.

Who are you? Why are you here? Who can participate and how? What's the deal with joining in? When and how will the food be served? Who do you speak to if you have a question?

Regard for the history of your site is important, too. While teams have a turnover of members each year, many of the community participating or passing by your program will have been regulars on location for years, sometimes decades and in many places for multiple generations. Sometimes, families have more idea of the usual drill of an SUFM program than a first time team member.

Remember that Scripture Union is committed to ministry with children and young people in the context of their families, and families as a whole, dynamic and complex organism. Use the language of families or families with primary aged children or families with primary and secondary aged kids or families with supervised toddlers, perhaps *"People of all ages are welcome, there's stuff for kids, coffees for the mums, safe space for toddlers, papers for the dads..."* (and whatever else you do).

Which of these phrases might be adaptable to your setting?

"G'day everyone, I'm Fred, and I'm here with the SUFM team.

Thanks for welcoming us here in the caravan park. SUFM have been part of life on the beach here for 53 years and we love being part of this community each year.



Great to see some familiar faces and old friends, and some people we haven't met before, but we're looking forward to getting to know you.

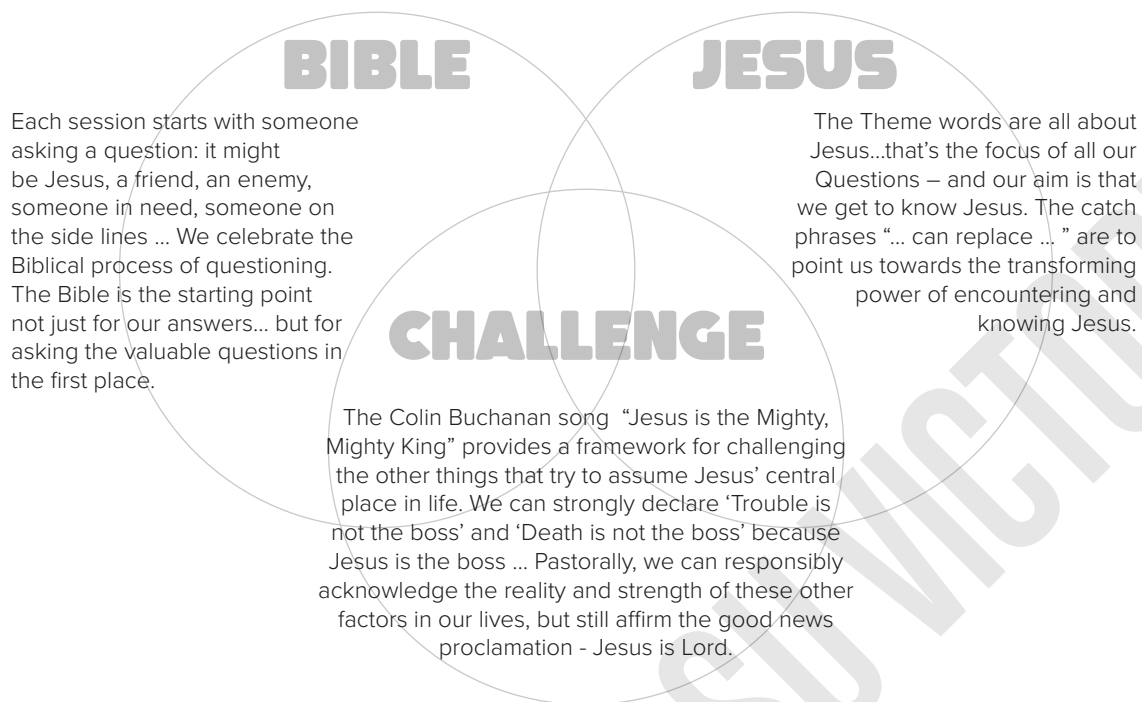
If you've never come across SUFM before, we're a bunch of people who share a common faith in Jesus, but we come from many different churches and suburbs & towns.

We'll be here until the 14th with a family friendly program pretty much every morning and evening. Everything we do here is free and everyone is welcome to join in however you like."

A poster of daily information on site briefly outlining some of the specific activities being run in the small group sessions is a great way of offering transparency in the program, and creating a talking point with potential participants, passers-by or parents of the children attending.

Visibility and accessibility are key components of a mission that is committed to being inclusive and just, open and accountable.

WEAVING IT ALL TOGETHER



QUESTION BOX

Each small group should have a question box. The Question Box should be brightly coloured, decorated with Question Marks and Question Words (Who What When Where How Why). Children are to be

encouraged to put their questions into the question box, so give some time to that in your program... have the question boxes out during your arrival activities, carnival or games time, and give some verbal reminders during that time.

Pre-printed postcards with a question mark logo could be provided to encourage questions, anonymise the questioners and help accessibility. For younger children still developing their writing fluency, leaders can offer to write down the questions children have, and the children can still 'post' them in the letter box.

In the appendix I have included a sample of the questions that year 5 and 6 students asked in the question box during a year of CRE, a number of years ago, and the answers that I wrote back to them.

As you prepare for *Question Mark*, thinking through how you could answer some of the big questions is important.

There are many good ways to answer the one question, for example, consider:

- How long will your answer take?
- How many different steps of logic are required?
- What beliefs does it assume?
- Does it open or shut down further enquiry?
- What other questions could it raise?
- Is your answer life-giving?

JESUS IS THE MIGHTY, MIGHTY KING

Use this song by Colin Buchanan to link each day, especially for your groups of under 8s. Add an action for each day.

For example:

Day 1: The Wind is not the boss, the Waves are not the boss, Nature is not the boss

Day 2: Sickness is not the boss, Sin is not the boss, Evil is not the boss

Day 3: Sadness is not the boss, Doctors are not the boss, Trouble is not the boss

Day 4: Dollars are not the boss, Coins are not the boss, Money is not the boss

Day 5: Chaos is not the boss. Mess is not the boss. Fear is not the boss

Day 6: Grown ups are not the boss, Kids are not the boss, Fakes are not the boss

Day 7: TV is not the boss, the Net is not the boss, What everyone else says is not the boss

Day 8: Hurt is not the boss, Wrong is not the boss, Death is not the boss

Day 9: Death is not the boss, I am not the boss, You are not the boss

Day 10: Big is not the boss. Trees are not the boss. Birds are not the boss.

As the days go by, you can simplify to:

“Nature is not the boss, Evil is not the boss, Trouble is not the boss” summary of the first 3 days, rather than singing all 3 items in all 3 verses.

AGE GROUP SESSIONS METHODOLOGY

WHAT'S THE POINT?

WHERE'S THE POINT?

HOW IS THE POINT MADE?

If you are coming to this material for the first time, and you have used or grown up with standard Sunday School or Christian Education Curriculum material, you might find yourself looking for the bit in the session where you 'get to the point'.

You will be frustrated.

This material doesn't have a specific 'point' or 'moral' so to speak. Because we are not wanting to promulgate specific points of doctrine, or define how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. We are praying for the kingdom to come. And that is not a small point concern. It's deeper and wider and longer and higher than our imaginations can possibly reach.

This material has been prepared recognising that we are engaging with people while they are living in communities and doing life, and so are we, alongside one another. Life doesn't stop. They are experiencing wins and fails, celebrations and tragedies, questions and new information from lots of sources. We are part of a larger conversation, including the larger conversation God is having with people.

In the context of all of this, our method is not to try and make a few points. Our method is to embody the Kingdom of God, and richly share its stories – lots of them, in multi-sensory, multi-dimensional, multi-faceted ways.

This is firmly evangelical material: meaning, the power of the Word is given first priority. We invest in the idea that as people are given access to the Bible, God's revelation and communication is strongest in that medium. And we invest in the idea that the way the Bible speaks, its own terms, phrases and cultural references, are better than any reduction or summary we can make.

A 3-point tract is not a clearer revelation of God than reading Mark 15. Or Mark 16. Or Mark 4.

As evangelical material we trust in the quality of Scripture itself. We make it accessible, we embody it, we remember the word doesn't equal the print but the living substance, we imagine it, we play with it and find God, ourselves, and our way in it. We know it was formed for people of all ages and backgrounds, originally most poor and illiterate, to hear and share, so we know that reading is not our only method. We don't reduce it to simply a 'point' or 'points'.

CREATING A PROGRAM WITH 'HANDLES'

The Thematic scope offers several ways of giving your program 'handles' – not a teaching 'point' that you aim for people to recite, but catch phrases that can help people find language for integrating the Bible story with their own story.

One set of these are the phrases that follow the form

'Faith can replace fear'

'Hope can replace helplessness'

'Jesus Love can replace anything'

Another set follow the tag lines in Colin Buchanan's song 'Jesus if the mighty mighty King' and follow the form

'Trouble is not the Boss'

'Money is not the Boss'

'Big is not the Boss'

These can be helpful in creating a sense of continuity and connection across the various sections of your program, age groups, activity groups, small and large gatherings, while keeping the content always grounded in engaging with the Bible together, and letting God speak.

So, where and how do we proclaim the Gospel?

Firstly, the Good News of God's Kingdom in Jesus is all through the stories and the activities as well as embodied in the community of your team and yourself.

Secondly, be sure to make time and pay attention to the 'consequence' section of each session. Each one has in some way a call to respond to God's call on our lives.

Thirdly, the Good News is more than a set of concepts that can be reduced to a curriculum. It is not a few set points that you teach a class. The Gospel isn't a formula. Rather, inviting people to respond to Jesus happens best and most naturally in the context of a warm and authentic relationship.

Every session offers a number of 'Consequence' activities: choose one of these to end your small group time, allowing children and young people the opportunity to respond for themselves.

Along with the consequence activities that are thematically linked to the Bible stories in the session material, the following page offers a tool to help you help others to consider their Journey with Jesus. It will help you have a meaningful conversation and can be used at any time on mission. Thus, extracting the 'ask' or 'appeal' from curriculum and resourcing you to springboard out of the program and 'ask' in a relational context increases opportunity.

X marks the spot (following page) can be done on paper, in the sand, with sticks or stones, on napkins at a fast food store or café – anywhere and in any context.

'X' MARKS THE SPOT

Explain that it is very difficult to draw Jesus on a piece of paper. Artists have guessed what He looked like when He was on earth. But now He is in heaven and is greater than anyone can imagine, so instead we print His name. (*Make the printing big*).

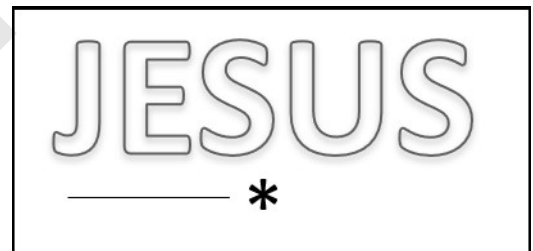


Indicate that when they think about Jesus and their lives, different children have different experiences.

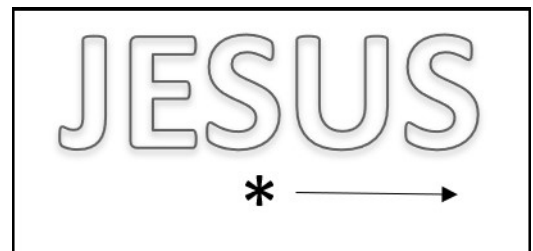
Some children (*now draw an asterisk very close to the "S" in "Jesus"*) know that they have already joined Jesus' Team, that they love Him, and are trying to follow Him and live as He wants.



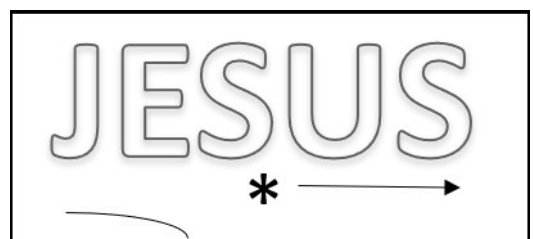
In fact (*now draw a line up to the asterisk*) these children feel that this has always been the case. Other people have helped them to find out about Jesus team and they have been following Jesus for as long as they can remember.



Children who are thinking in this way may want to say to Jesus: "Dear Jesus, I know that you love me and are very close to me. I want always to be on your team (*now continue the line into an arrow pointing across and off the page*). I never want to stop following you and pleasing you. Please help me to grow in my understanding and in my obeying."



Some children may be beginning to think they are starting take an unhelpful track... (*Draw a line that moves away from Jesus.*)



... Whenever ideas and thoughts about God or Jesus come into their mind, they are starting to push them out. Whenever there are choices between following Jesus or going their own way, often they choose to go their own way. It seems as if they are getting into the habit of blocking their ears to Jesus or pushing God away from their lives. So now, they are feeling as if they are not on Jesus team and going their own way instead. (*Draw asterisk*).



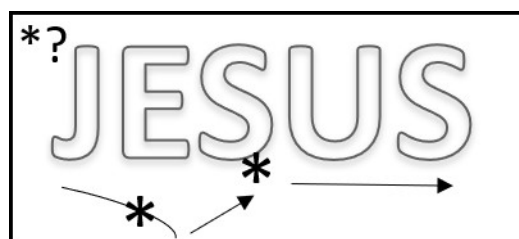
There is a problem with choosing to go on their own track. Every time they choose to block their ears to Jesus, they take another step on a track away from Jesus. Each time they take a step they move further and further away from Jesus. In time they find themselves a long way from Jesus, with their life going in quite the opposite direction to Jesus' hopes and ways for them. The Bible tells us that people who head in that direction can find themselves feeling very lost and a long, long way from Jesus.

In this case the only way back to Jesus is a "U" turn (*Draw this*). The Bible calls this being transformed, and it really is about turning back to Jesus and being forgiven by Jesus for following your own way, start a new life and accept Jesus' love and follow His ways.



When **some children** hear about Jesus, they are not sure what they think. They don't feel like they know a lot about Jesus and are not sure where they are? (*Draw an asterisk and a question mark*.) These children might like to think about it some more, learn more about Jesus or maybe talk about it more with others. When they have some more time and more information, they can decide what they want to do.

We have talked about four main kinds of children and the way they think about Jesus. We have drawn three starts on the paper to show the three kinds of children. Now we have the chance to talk together. When you talk with a child, draw a piece of paper like this, and get them to draw a star which shows you where they are in relationship to Jesus. In this way you will know where to **begin** to help them in taking the next step.



THE 5C_s

The majority of these resources are framed according to the following pattern.

1. CONNECT

The first part of any time that we spend together is given to just being together, getting to know each other, valuing each person... listening, laughing and belonging. Jesus' first commandment is always to Love. That is the beginning of all things. On a practical level though it's well worth investing the time to learn people's names thoroughly and get a sense of who they are and where they're coming from – it will make facilitating the group much easier later on. If you want to be listened to on any level, you must first listen. If children/young people feel heard, they are more likely to listen to you. You never know, you might learn something too!

2. CONTEXT

The world of the Bible can seem like a whole other planet, inhabited by some freaky aliens. However, by putting a bit of time into some orientation activities, your group might find that the situations in the Bible are intriguing and possibly very familiar as we encounter the same old same old of human beings.

3. CONTENT

If we want to get to know God, nothing can replace the centrality of engaging with the Bible (led by the Spirit). If opening the Bible is a hands-on, read-the-text-heaps, experiential, open event, there will be plenty of room for the whole person to be engaged – cognitively, physically, emotionally and spiritually: There is time and space for kids' questions, for processing time, for imagining ourselves in the text and for God to work.

These elements put together in this order suggest a pattern for sharing and growing in the good news of the reign of God together. This would be a good template to use when planning a small group time, a larger public gathering or presentation, a family event, a church service or even something to think about when having a conversation!

4. CONSIDER

We all have opinions on things. As we hear and experience God's living word, it's a healthy thing for us to wonder and to question, look at it from a few different angles, express our emotions and contemplate the possible meanings and possibilities for action.

A huge variety of media can provide the opportunity for us to work through in our own ways what is going on for us with God, and with what God's saying, and to share our ideas, ponderings and wonderings with one another. Some really fruitful ideas for consideration emerge from the questions beginning "Has anything like this ever happened to you?"

5. CONSEQUENCE

You can't hear that someone loves you to bits and is never ever going to stop - and just walk away. Because God is God, when he addresses us it demands a response. There are a range of different ways we might respond: With a big 'Get out of my Face' or 'I need more info on this one' or 'There you go again being the same awesome God' or 'Wow, I've got to change something and get on board with you, God'... The thing is, God takes our response to him seriously...so it's pretty important that we allow freedom for kids and grown ups to figure out what their response really is, and to own it. However if you've never connected with God before, some samples that help put into words what you're thinking can be helpful. For many years we had a sample called 'The sinner's prayer' (I'm sorry I've sinned, thankyou for dying for me, please forgive me and come into my life). A lot of the time, that one prayer won't be the most authentic response for the people we are with, so a variety of samples will be more helpful.

TRAINING PAGES

LINKING LINES

USING THE 'LINKING LINES' IN QUESTION MARK SESSIONS

The Linking lines for each activity are given as examples – they should be adapted to your own vocabulary and natural expression.

As you adapt them, here are some important principles. We can think of three aspects of **Affirmation – Observation – Orientation**.

1. Always begin with **affirmation** and encouragement for the group and their participation in the activity. Take the opportunity to assure them that you are enjoying their company.
2. **Describe** what you saw in the activity as the basis for your affirmation. When you reflect back to children your **observations** of them, you communicate to them that they have been seen, that you have been **paying attention to them**, that what they are doing **matters** to you. This is an important plank in children **trusting** your leadership and being **willing to participate** in the group.
3. Highlight elements of the activity that **parallel** an aspect of the story or the dynamics of the drama. This gives the group some **orientation** bearings for what is going on in the Bible, without foreclosing on their own curiosity and process with the material. Turning everything into an opportunity to tell kids 'here's the point' shuts down their learning and genuine engagement with the Bible. Remember that our aim for children young people and families is not to 'get the point of the story' but to meet God in the Bible.

Here's an example that I've broken down to show these parts:

You all did a great job playing volleyball without using your legs.

Affirmation!!

I loved seeing you using team work and helping each other, even when it was frustrating!

Observation!!!

Later today when we crack open the Bible we'll see a bunch of people who used team work like this with one of their friends who was disabled. When Jesus saw this teamwork, he got on board too.

Orientation

Meeting Jesus

TRAINING PAGES

CONTENT - 'STORY OF JESUS FROM THE BIBLE'

JESUS STORY-BIBLE STORY

You will notice that throughout *Question Mark* the phrase 'Story of Jesus from the Bible' is used consistently through the linking lines.

This is a robust way of keeping the focus on Jesus [tick].

It is a robust way of reminding people of the source of our material [tick].

It is a robust way of holding the Bible as a sacred and reliable text [tick] but not an abstract authority. The importance of the Bible cannot be disconnected from the person of Jesus.

This way of scaffolding our conversation is important for several reasons. The first is a set of contextual factors.

We have 2000 years of Christian theology and history and tradition from many countries and cultures.

We are working in a post-Christendom Australian culture, in which most people in the past three generations have had little if any exposure to the Bible. If you attended a faith-based school with any religious education, you are part of a small privileged minority.

We have seen several decades of films like *The Passion* and *The Last Temptation of Christ* and *The Life of Brian*. Many people who have never opened a Bible carry around a plethora of impressions about Jesus – some of which are extremely fanciful. Even many Christians are more formed by impressions from *The Jesus Movie* and *Veggie Tales* than a close reading of the Bible.

Where people may bring false or fanciful or even fantastical impressions of Jesus, it helps to be able to say plainly that our material is from the Bible, and to point to the text as our starting point.

OPENING THE BIBLE

As we engage with children, young people and families we do so on the foundation of opening the Bible together.

We need to be upfront and transparent about where our material comes from.

In this time of plenty of fake news and sensationalist rumour mills, we want to stay close to the source of our faith. To direct people towards reading the Bible for themselves.

(continued...)

One of the core commitments of Scripture Union as an international movement is that we invite people to meet God in the Bible.

This carries some imperatives –

One is that we make God the centre of our reading. We read for God's sake, for knowing and loving God, not for doctrinal teachings, or to establish a Christian culture or worldview.

Another is that we use the Bible as our reference for who Jesus is, and prioritise supporting the process by which children, young people and families encounter Jesus, above trying to engage people in beliefs about Jesus, or Christian theology.

LANGUAGE ABOUT THE BIBLE

We should be careful about the way we speak of the Bible.

'The Bible tells us' or 'The Bible says' is not healthy Bible engagement language.

It anthropomorphises the Bible, and turns the written words of Scripture into a person, rather than recognising that while the Bible is our reliable witness to who God is, to the revelation of Jesus and the work of the Spirit, the Bible is not a person – nor a God.

When we use the language 'the Bible says' or 'The Bible tells us' we are elevating the Bible in an idolatrous way. We read the Bible, and God's voice is heard through the Bible.

Being careful and diligent in our language with children, young people and families as they come to faith avoids damaging crises later. It is part of our commitment to being safe people, creating safe places, working with safe practices.

It is both strong ethics, and good theology.

USING THE PLASTICINE STORIES IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD MATERIAL

Each early childhood session contains a Plasticine Story – a retelling of the text that has been informed by socio-historical background and exegesis from the original text, and illustrated with the familiar materials of plasticine models in early childhood.

These stories are pitched towards young children through the use of rhyme

and repetition, humour and action, as well as seeking to engage their adult carers – parents and family members.

The stories are not purely Early Childhood level materials.

The stories reference the political and social issues of the stories, and deal with issues of mental health, gynaecology, taxation, inclusion, disability, poverty, as these are embedded within the Scriptures and are how the reality of God is revealed through Jesus in utterly human reality.

The stories are designed to prompt conversations with parents, as well as equip parents with language and cultural background for helping their children.

These stories can also be used in wider multi-age upfront gatherings.

TRAINING PAGES

EXPLORING QUESTIONS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: USING THE 'CONSIDER' PART OF A QUESTION MARK SESSION

Has anything like this happened to you?

In the Consider sections of these programs you will find suggestions for embodied, sensory activities that connect concrete materials with the biblical text.

These activities are not gratuitous 'fun things' for kids to do – though we do expect they will be deeply enjoyable. And they are not 'teaching' in the sense of making something that reinforces a prescribed dogma in relation to the text.

The use of sensory, embodied, material activities enables important processing time for children. Giving time and opportunity for this play is a matter of justice and respect in the way we treat children and their spiritual journey. Children can be easily and superficially manipulated into producing rote answers that we give them – but this short-circuits meaningful development of understand and integration of ideas.

Sensory, process based play or creativity acknowledges that the work of the child in their own time and way is important, in fact essential, if our ministry of sharing good news is to have integrity. We are not to be content or pleased with quick answers and responses that give us satisfaction. Instead we seek, in the creative work and activities that allow considering time, to be sure that this is not our work, not about us, but gospel work, the work of the Spirit and the work of the child or young person in relationship. Our prayer is not that people will respond to us, but to God.

In Scripture Union's International mission and ethos we are committed to children, young people and families meeting God in the Bible and prayer. This is a commitment not to apologetic transmission, but to hosting and facilitating deep spiritual encounter that is grounded in Scripture. That encounter – a relational encounter – takes time.

The role of the questions 'Has anything like this ever happened to you?' is to prompt and support children and young people finding connection points between their own story and the story of God. By asking and exploring this question we centre the child or young person or adult in the conversation.

And we shift the focus from something that feels like education – helping children learn something about Jesus – to a focus on supporting the child in their personal and authentic encounter with Jesus through the Living Word.

Inviting children to identify with the concrete, sensory and emotional world of the text, as well as the conceptual world of the text has twin strengths:

1. We provide multiple pathways through which children can participate and connect. Some children are comfortable conceptual processors, others are embodied meaning makers. And these can change from day to day. Everyday experiences open up or shut down or block parts of us. For example. Pain makes conceptual work almost impossible and we need to attend to things through our bodies. A child who has witnessed escalated relational conflict in the home just before attending a session may find emotional pathways too raw, but sensory work, or externalising activities – building, painting, creating, are helpful.
2. We affirm the solid theological framework that God calls us and connects with us as whole people. Whole humans. The way to God is not through understanding, nor through practice (works) but through faith. We must be careful not to fall into the trap of seeking to make children and young people understand things, with the goal of this bringing them faith. Children, people of any age, are met by God's grace first and over time we come to know as we are already known, come to understand more of the immeasurable and incomprehensible riches of God's grace.

The Consider section of the session is an open space for God's spirit to work in many ways, using the many gifts you bring, and indeed that the children and young people and families themselves bring.

ONLY FOR USE BY SU VICTORIA

DAY 1

Who is this Man? Even the wind and waves obey him. Why are you afraid?

THEME WORDS

Jesus shows he is more powerful than nature.

Faith can replace fear

Nature is not the boss

BIBLE

Mark 4:35-41
Jesus calms a storm

SONGS

Oh Have You Heard? (C, S)
God's Everywhere (S)
We Were Sailing in Our Boat (C)

INTRODUCTION

Who can sleep in a storm and calm the wind? The answer to the ancient mind was absolutely obvious – only a god – or to an Israelite - only the living God, maker of heaven and earth – can do this. For the Jewish disciples of Jesus, the sea was a powerful symbol of chaos and death, threat and danger. Right through the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) the imagery of the sea is one of foreboding and fear. And the threat of the sea was the central image in defining story of the people of Israel, the Exodus from Egypt, told from generation to generation, more pervasive an annual celebration than Christmas is for European Christian culture. It also features in the story of Jonah, in many Psalms, Job and the prophets.

Some of Jesus' disciples, whom the text implies are in the boat with him, were fishing labourers, so familiar with the tides and the shores of the lake – but not sailors. Their fear was real and extreme. So we can see why the story of this encounter with Jesus became so valuable in the earliest discipleship communities. It has everything – it addresses the basic human fears of death and the deep; it demonstrates the divinity of Jesus as Lord over not only wind and waves – but also dark scary forces; it defines Jesus someone who cares for his friends, and it defines disciples – not as those of us who are heroic true believers, but as those 'of little faith'. Jesus' teaching and healing and helping – as we'll see in later stories.

Finding yourself in the face of a killer storm is much like finding yourself face to face with God – you have two options: fear or faith. Fear or faith – certainty and safety aren't options. We can be capsized by our fears or find out what faith in Jesus will do.

MARK 4:35-41

Jesus Calms a Storm

³⁵That evening, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross to the east side." ³⁶So they left the crowd, and his disciples started across the lake with him in the boat. Some other boats followed along. ³⁷Suddenly a windstorm struck the lake. Waves started splashing into the boat, and it was about to sink. ³⁸Jesus was in the back of the boat with his head on a pillow, and he was asleep. His disciples woke him and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we're about to drown?" ³⁹Jesus got up and ordered the wind and the waves to be quiet. The wind stopped, and everything was calm. ⁴⁰Jesus asked his disciples, "Why were you afraid? Don't you have any faith?" ⁴¹Now they were more afraid than ever and said to each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

DAY 1

TEAM STUDY

Session 1 : Who can forgive sins? Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him? Why are you afraid?

Faith can replace fear

NATURE IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus shows that he is more powerful than nature

45-55 minutes process for Team Study

Divide into groups of 4-6

1 minute

Read the passage

2 minutes

Spend a strict 3 minutes on each of the following four questions:

12-13 minutes

- What do we learn about Fear in this passage?
- What do we learn about Faith in this passage?
- What do we learn about the Disciples in this passage?
- What do we learn about Jesus in this passage?

Share back each team's insights with the whole group

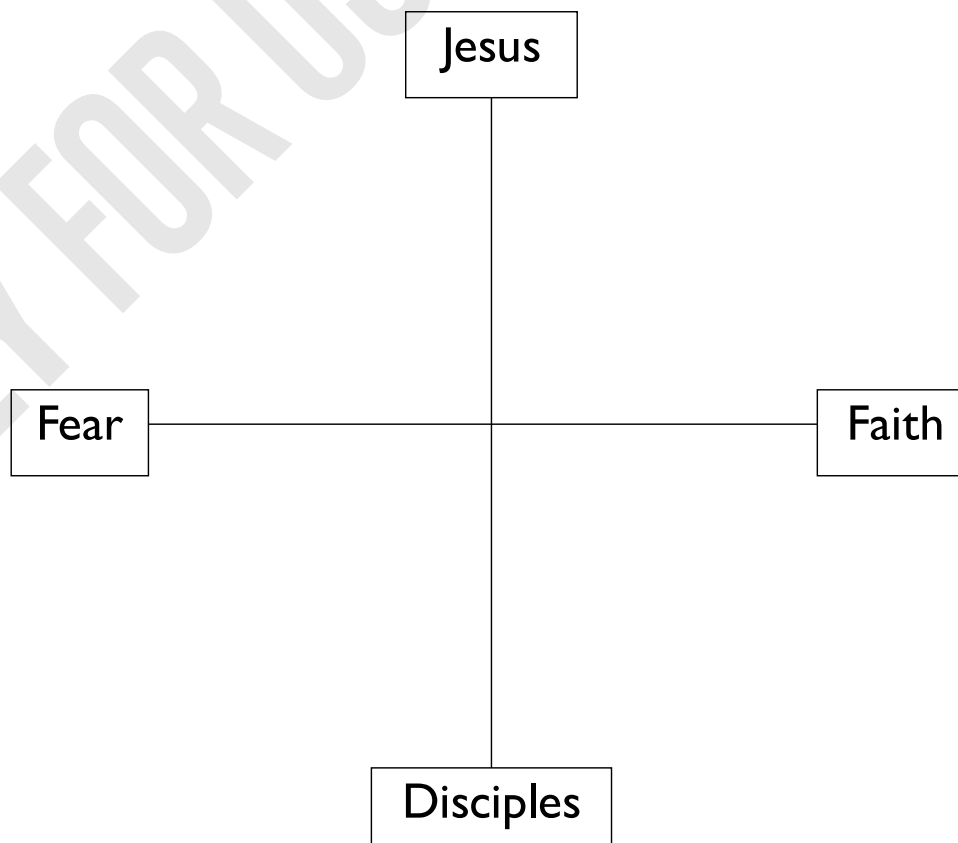
1-2 mins per group

Open conversation about the shared discoveries

5-10 minutes

Spend time alone asking, "Who is Jesus to me?"

15 minutes



DAY 1

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Faith can replace fear

Summary: Jesus shows that he is more powerful than nature

Bible: Mark 4:35-41 Jesus calms a storm

Questions: Who can forgive sins? Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him? Why are you afraid?

Song Line: Nature Is Not The Boss

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Shaving Foam Soaps
- Water Play With Boats In Tubs
- Build A Boat

2. Context:

- Song: We Were Sailing In Our Boat
- Song: Nothing Too Scary
- Storm Sound Effects

3. Content:

- Story Time

4. Consider:

- Stormy Sea Collages
- Prayer Sail
- Storm In A Bag – Zip Lock Bags

5. Consequence:

- Choosing Box

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Free Play

Playdough, blocks and quiet book corner can be offered every session for routine and stability, rotating a couple of other 'theme' activities for interest and variety. Offer a few or all of the following free-play options. Each of these can become a teaching/storytelling opportunity as well. After the Mat time, you may invite children back to one of these 'free-play' activities and allow them to tell/imagine the story with you...

SHAVING FOAM SOAPS

You will need:

- Small trays for each person – 4 litre ice-cream tub lids are excellent
- Shaving cream in a can
- Green/Blue food dye
- Towels

Give each person a tray and place a small dollop of shaving foam on it.

Invite them to use their fingers to turn their shaving foam into a sea with waves. Perhaps they can draw a boat and some sailors. They can use their fingers to dab rain drops all over the picture. Whenever they like, they can wipe it out and start again. This activity can be enhanced with a tiny pin drop of blue or green (or both) food dye on the shaving foam.

Remember to have towels ready for wiping hands. Watch out for shaving foam in the eyes.

Linking Lines:

The sea can be very very wavy and stormy – and then it can be very calm. Can you make your sea go from stormy to calm, and calm to stormy? In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, some people are out on the sea and it goes from calm to stormy to calm again.

WATER PLAY WITH BOATS IN TUBS

You will need:

- Tubs
- Plastic boats or plastic containers (e.g. takeaway food plastic ware, cream cheese containers)
- Water - just a few centimetres of water is plenty for this kind of fun

Use small depths of water in this sensory activity. Some children will enjoy parallel play in a common tub, and some children will prefer solo work, so have a few tubs available.

Explore the emotions of stirring up the water and pouring it calmly.

Linking Lines:

Some of our boats are floating beautifully. But some are sinking! What makes the boat sink?

BUILD A BOAT

You will need:

- Large cardboard box
- Extra card and paper
- Long cardboard rolls
- Scrap material pieces
- Thick crayons

As a group, make a large boat from a TV or washing machine box. Use some extra cardboard bits, cardboard rolls or sticks to add masts and sails. Encourage the children to draw portholes and ladders or ropes using the crayons. Use the boat for lots of imaginative play.

Linking Lines:

Do you like sailing on boats? Is it fun? Is it exciting? Is it scary? Do you sometimes feel a bit sick? In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, Jesus is on a boat and he is so relaxed he goes to sleep – but other people are frightened.

See also 'Prayer Sail activity' later on.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT **CONTEXT** CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Mat Time: Songs and Rhymes and Games

Use one or more of the familiar group songs or games to gather the group together and create a culture of listening and participating together. Encourage parents/carers to join in with their children.

SONG: WE WERE SAILING IN OUR BOAT

Link to song: see **Appendix 1.1** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

Teach the actions to 'We were sailing in our boat' from *Find Out* and sing together.

SONG: NOTHING TOO SCARY

Link to song: see **Appendix 1.2** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

While you sing this song have half the group make lots of stormy noises, and the other half pretend to be very scared.

STORM SOUND EFFECTS

You will need:

- Rice shakers
- Saucepan lids or baking trays
- Wooden spoons
- Sieves

Distribute the items one at a time to volunteers and listen to the sound that is made. Ask the group what it sounds like – rain? – thunder? – hail? Then put all the sounds together to make a storm.

Set a signal for starting (Your hand goes up) and for stopping (your hand goes down).

Give the children the opportunity to swap 'instruments'.

Encourage them to use their voices as well – for swishing wind.

Put the instruments away and use body percussion only: patting knees, clapping hands, stomping feet.

Linking Lines:

You have made a wonderful storm – it got VERY loud and a bit scary, even though I knew it was just you making the noise. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, there is a really scary storm. I think we are ready for it!

CONTENT...

CONNECT CONTEXT **CONTENT** CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Story Time

See 'Plasticine Story files' for visuals.

Ask another leader or parent to hold the pictures while you use your whole body in full dynamic expression in storytelling. Invite participation.

STORY TIME

Here is the Lake
It sparkles and glitters
On one side the village
And the other ten cities

Here is the shore
Where it's shallow and calm
Children splash in the water
And they come to no harm

The men work in teams
With their sons and their brothers
And they work hard and long
For the profit of others

They fix up the nets
and prepare for the night
When they'll drag in the fish
If their luck turns out right

Jesus arrives –
he's from up in the hills
He watches the fishing
And admires the skills

He stops for a chat
he's got things to say
and he talks about God
in an interesting way

'Hey fishing youngsters
Would you leave what you're doing?
God also is working
And has some plans brewing



Would you like to join in
On some good news net-casting-
Drawing everyone in
To God's love everlasting?'

That sounds amazing
Such brilliant Good news
An adventure with Jesus
They happily choose

At night they set sail
They all know their boat chores
Jesus sleeps in the back
He's no good with the oars

They're out now much deeper
Than they usually go
And the wind picks up speed
And a storm starts to grow

The youngsters are out of their depth
and they panic
"Jesus wake up – don't you see
The waves are volcanic?"

The waves are enormous
Our small boat is doomed
Don't you care we are sinking
And we'll soon be consumed?"

Jesus gets up
He speaks just a word
"Be quiet" - it is as if
The waves and wind heard

The sea and the sky seemed
To know Jesus voice
And obeyed him at once
As if they had no choice.

The storm is quiet
The danger behind
But still many questions
swirl in their young minds:

Who is this man?
He doesn't know sailing



And yet he brought calm
When we were all flailing

Who is this man?
He doesn't know boats
And yet it's because of him
We're still afloat

Who is this man
Who doesn't know fishes?
Yet he made the whole lake
Do as he wishes

Who is this man
Who could sleep
when we're stressed
And who woke to our panic
And made the sea rest?

Who is this man
who has powerful words?
but doesn't command us
or treat us like herds

Who is this man
Who brought the sea peace
And who took our small faith
And has made it increase?

Who is this man
Who speaks of God's ways
Who walks with us poor folk
And doesn't seek praise?

Who is this man
That nature can't sink
We have to admit
He's much more than we think?

Who is this man the sea cannot swallow?
and yet he has asked us to join him and follow

Who is this man
More power than thunder?
So many questions
So much to wonder....



CONSIDER...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT **CONSIDER** CONSEQUENCE

Exploring in Craft

Some children will prefer to go back to free play in this time, and not continue with a structured craft. This is normal and a valid choice.

STORMY SEA COLLAGES

You will need:

- White A4 paper – one per person
- Blue and green torn/wavy strips of cellophane
- Thin paste – a small amount in a container, topped up as necessary; thick brushes.
- Cotton balls, loosened

Give each person a piece of white paper and set the other materials in an accessible place.

Demonstrate brushing paste onto the paper and then adding strips of cellophane across the page in overlapping lines to look like waves. Some children at this age won't align their waves in parallel – that's fine, and can add to your discussion of the waves looking calm or looking stormy. For some children, it will be best for you or another grown up to brush their page with paste quickly, and then let them enjoy the cellophane.

Pull cotton balls into flat cloud formations. Place these lightly on the page – don't stick them down. Show the children how you can hold the page flat and jiggle it to make the clouds look stormy – and then gently blow the cloud away and leave the sea calm.

Linking Lines:

I wonder what you find scary? Maybe you are scared of storms and thunder? Maybe something else? Whatever we are afraid of Jesus is with us to keep us calm.

PRAYER SAIL

You will need:

- An old sheet or piece of calico as a sail (perhaps the one on the cardboard box boat from the Free play activity)
- Permanent markers

Ask everyone to take hold of an edge of the sail and pull it tight between you. Practice holding the sail up (vertically) and shaking it like the wind is blowing hard.

Take suggestions of the things the children are afraid of, or want to pray about. Accept every suggestion – even if it seems random. Ask the children to hold the sail around the edges and pull it tight. Write their prayer words, and keep them involved in the writing process.

Don't get hung up on writing either – most of your children won't be able to read...but having you write a word for them, or even their name and a sketch of the thing they say will show that you have listened to them.

Linking Lines:

Jesus friends were very scared but Jesus was with them, and they learned that Jesus is powerful and he cares. Sometimes we feel afraid whatever we are afraid of Jesus is with us and can help us. We are going to pray now and ask Jesus to help us with all the things we find scary. Here on our big cardboard boat we have a sail. I will write all the things that we want to pray about on the sail as our prayers.

“Dear Jesus, you know all about our fears and worries. Help us to trust you, because you are with us and powerful and loving. Amen”

STORM IN A BAG – ZIP LOCK BAGS

You will need:

- sandwich sized zip lock bags, one per person
- woodgrain contact cut into boat shaped pieces, some additions strips cut for masts, or oars
- cornflour
- blue food dye
- water
- spoons
- small jug
- duct tape

Give each person a sandwich sized zip lock bag.



Each person sticks a cut out shape of a boat from wood grain contact on the bag.

When the boat is complete: add half a cup of water, a tablespoon of cornflour and a few drops of blue food colouring into the bag and carefully squeeze out as much air as seal the bag tightly. Make sure the zip is well locked, and cover the opening with duct tape – just to be sure. Each child now mixes the contents of the bag by squeezing and massaging the bag.

The mixture will soon turn into a stormy sea background behind the boat. Show the group how you can use your finger to draw waves, and to make the seas calm and flat.

Linking Lines:

You can tell the story of the storm using your squishy bag. You can say what you think Jesus friends would have been feeling and yelling when they were in the middle of the storm. You can say the words Jesus said to make the storm stop. You can say who you think Jesus is.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Choosing Box

At the end of the session each day, remind everyone of the conversation starter page and bring out a 'choosing' box and invite each person (including parents and carers and bystanders) to choose something from the box to take home to remind them of the time together today.

Encourage taking the item home to talk about in the family, or to hold quietly later when they want to remember the Story of Jesus from the Bible.

CHOOSING BOX

In the Choosing Box today: a piece of bubble wrap

Linking Lines:

Choose a piece of bubble wrap to take home. I wonder what this can remind us of from our time together today? Maybe the bubbly wavy stormy sea? Maybe it reminds you of raindrops? Maybe it reminds you of how Jesus brought calm to the storm, and to his friends who were afraid. I wonder where you might put this when you get home? Maybe in a place to remind you of Jesus' peace, and that Jesus is with you.

DAY 1

PRIMARY

Session 1 : Who can forgive sins? Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him? Why are you afraid?

Faith can replace fear

NATURE IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus shows that he is more powerful than nature

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Phoebe Phobia
- Weather Jokes:
- Phobias

2. Context:

- Jelly Storms
- Shaving Foam Storms
- Weather Fuzzy Felt Boards
- Topography

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: Boat Jigsaw Pieces
- Opening the Bible: Shipwreck Scavenger Hunt
- Opening the Bible: Message in a Bottle
- Opening the Bible: Quickdraw

4. Consider:

- Song - We Were Sailing in Our Boat
- Storm in a Bag – Zip Lock Bags
- Build a Big Boat
- Wooden/Popstick Boat
- Unsinkable Paper

5. Consequence:

- Life Jacket Prayer Books
- Who's in the Boat?
- Stormy Questions on the Brain

CONNECT...

CONNECT | CONTEXT | CONTENT | CONSIDER | CONSEQUENCE

PHOEBE PHOBIA

Invite your group to sit in a circle.

Introduce yourself, and say that you are looking forward to getting to know everyone. Explain that everyone will take turns around the circle to introduce themselves.

Round 1: Just say your own name.

Round 2: Say the name of the person before you and your own name e.g. "That's Jana and I'm Felix" "That's Felix and I'm Manni"...

Round 3: Each person says their name and something they're not afraid of starting with the same sound (or letter) as their name...e.g.: "I'm Beth, not afraid of bugs." "I'm Felix and I'm not afraid of fans"

Round 4: Each person says their name and something they're not afraid of that rhymes with their name...e.g. "I'm Beth, not afraid of bad breath" "I'm Jana and I'm not afraid of Banana"

Linking Lines:

It was great fun hearing what you are all not afraid of – what a brave bunch you are! There are so many things you are not afraid of. But of course some things are really scary and today in a bit we are going to hear a story is about some guys who were really afraid. It happens to everyone sometimes.

WEATHER JOKES

See **Appendix 1.3** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Set of Cards with 'weather' themed jokes and pictures

Jokes are a fun way to get to know each other, to observe who the confident comedians are and who needs encouragement.

Print the weather jokes from Appendix 1.3 on separate pieces of card and put them into a joke box. Take turns around the circle to pull out and read a joke. If you have young pre-readers, let them choose the card, but you read the joke and let them guess the answer. Pre-literate humour is very left field, so get ready for some amazing answers.

Linking Lines:

You are all hilarious! Some of these jokes are groaners, but you all made them great fun. Weather jokes are fun – but sometimes weather can be scary – I wonder if a scary weather thing has ever happened to you?

You are all great comedians - It's good fun to joke about the weather because it's something that none of us can control. We're all in the same boat so to speak. Today we are going deep into the Bible into a story where the weather gets scary.

PHOBIAS

See **Appendix 1.4** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- List of phobias App. 1.4
- Bag/pillow case
- Label 'Beware Phobophobia'

Using the list of Phobias in Appendix 1.4 place some of the suggested items in a bag/old pillow case. On the outside write 'BEWARE – phobophobia!' and the names of all the phobias you have chosen from the list. Explain to the group that the bag is full of things that people are afraid of ... and that these fears have weird and wonderful names. In turn ask each person to reach into the bag and pull out one item. Ask them 'Are you ... phobic?' (the phobia matching the item they have pulled out.) Allow them to answer, then clarify to everyone what the phobia is and what it is called

Linking Lines:

Today our story is about some people with

- 'Brontophobia' fear of thunder & lightning and storms
- 'Kymophobia' fear of waves
- 'Ombrophobia' fear of being rained on
- 'Aquaphobia' fear of drowning

CONTEXT...

CONNECT **CONTEXT** CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

JELLY STORMS

You will need:

- Blue jelly
- Toy boats
- String
- Spoons
- Small bowls or cups
- Jelly Babies (*optional*)

Make a tub of blue Jelly. Use several packets of Jelly so you have a fair quantity and make it slightly thicker than the instructions say, to help the setting process for a large quantity. Find some small plastic toy boats (preferably the flat-bottomed type). Attach a piece of string to the bow of each boat. Challenge a few kids in your group who volunteer to pull the boats carefully across the surface without tipping them. You may even like to put a few Jelly Babies as crew in each boat. Everyone can watch, ready to call, 'Man Overboard' if needed. After everyone who wants to has been given a turn at 'smooth sailing', give each person a spoon and invite them to each have a turn at churning up the water into waves to make it look like a stormy sea. Now invite volunteers to have a turn at trying to pull the boat across the sea without losing any Jelly Baby 'crew'.

Finally, serve some jelly and a jelly baby into a small bowl or cup for each person and let them enjoy eating it!

Linking Lines:

We're about to hear a story about a large lake, Lake Galilee – or the Sea of Galilee – a small sea. It can be great for fishing along the shore, very calm and smooth like our jelly was at the start, and but it can also have really sudden strong storms – dangerous for the crew, just like our jelly baby crew.

SHAVING FOAM STORMS

You will need:

- Shaving foam
- Small trays (eg recycled meat/grocery trays or laminated A4 sheet)
- Towels
- Food dye – blue/green (*optional*)



Give each person a small tray with a dollop of shaving foam on it. Invite them to use their fingers to turn their shaving foam into a sea with waves. Perhaps they can draw a boat and some sailors. They can use their fingers to dab rain drops all over the picture. Whenever they like, they can wipe it out, make the sea calm, and start again. Remember to enjoy this activity yourself, modelling playfulness and creativity and wondering thoughtfulness.

This activity can be enhanced with a drop of blue or green (or both) food dye on each dollop of shaving foam.

Remember to have towels ready for wiping hands.
Watch out for shaving foam in the eyes.

Linking Lines:

I've loved watching you create your seascapes – and change the weather from calm to wavy to stormy. Do you know what brings on a storm or makes the water calm? (Welcome and affirm responses from the group). Changes in the air temperature moves the air around across the water that stirs it up. In the ancient world in the time of the Bible many people imagined that there were gods who controlled the weather – and would just mess about like we just did.

WEATHER FUZZY FELT

See **Appendix 1.5** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

Make individual fuzzy felt boards by gluing a square of flannelette on to a piece of strong card. Cutting the fabric with pinking shears will improve the look and durability of this. Give each child one of each of the fuzzy felt pieces made from the templates in App. 1.5 (waves, white cloud, grey cloud, lightning, rain, sun, boat). Allow some time for experimenting with the pieces, then invite volunteers to be the weather-forecaster and use the board to explain the weather today and tomorrow.

Linking Lines:

You have all done a wonderful job forecasting the weather. How can we tell what the weather is going to be? (take some suggestions – looking at the clouds in the sky, paying attention to the changing winds, listening to the birds, watching what the ants and insects are doing, seeing satellite photos from space that show the clouds moving).

We can sometimes guess what the weather is going to be, but no one can actually control the weather. The weather is part of nature, part of the complex and clever way that God has made a world that keeps growing



and providing food for us all. We'll see in our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, that Jesus changes the weather, just once to save his friends. . I wonder what that show us?

TOPOGRAPHY

See **Appendix 1.6** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

Using papier-mache, wire, flyscreening, cardboard – whatever materials you can find, construct a topographical model of Lake Galilee with a shore line and surrounding hills, small villages. See the pictures and plans in Appendix 1.6 for help. For younger children make a simple lake from a blue tarp surrounded by cardboard box hills covered in rugs.

If your program is at the beach – use sand and dig out a lake with hills surrounding it. If you have some keen maths and measurement wizards in your group provide them with the correct proportions for Lake Galilee, 21km long, 11km wide, 43m deep in the middle) and show them how to use a tape measure and some sticks and chalk to make improvised measuring sticks to check the length breadth and depth as others work on digging and building.

Linking Lines:

In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today we see Jesus and his friends crossing this famous Lake Galilee. The lowest lake in the world. His friends were fishermen who knew the shore, the beach really well, where it wasn't too deep and there were lots of fish to catch. But crossing the lake meant going out where it was really deep and where the weather could change suddenly.

CONTENT...

CONNECT CONTEXT **CONTENT** CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

OPENING THE BIBLE: BOAT JIGSAW PIECES

See **Appendix 1.7** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

Print out the card shapes with the words beginning with S from Mark 4:35- The card shapes fit together to make a boat. (See Appendix 1.7)

Give each person at least one card.

Read the passage and invite the group to join in on all of the words beginning with the letter S and for the person with that particular card to put it down in the centre of the group, to gradually make a boat by the end of the reading.

Linking Lines:

Great teamwork figuring out how this puzzle went together. Let's see if we can tell one another the story from the pieces of the puzzle. What parts of the story do you remember? Jesus' follower friends ask a good question – Who is this man? I wonder if they were thinking of an answer? I wonder if you are thinking of an answer to that question – Who is Jesus – if even wind and waves obey him?

OPENING THE BIBLE: SHIPWRECK SCAVENGER HUNT

See **Appendix 1.8** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- 'Shipwreck' debris: Old broken boards, pieces of wood, ropes, torn pieces of sail, tangled fishing line, old boot. Seaweed can be made easily by cutting black/green garbage bags into strips. Fish bone skeletons can be cut from white ice cream container plastic lids. (See template in Appendix 1.8)
- 8 items from the above list with one verse of Mark 4:35-41 written on each piece in black marker

Set up the items as if there has been a shipwreck. If you are at a beach location, do this in a place of the sand, and arrange for appropriate extra supervision and communication to facilitate safely moving to the beach for this activity. If that isn't a positive possibility, create a shipwreck site on a tarp.

Gather your group around the 'shipwreck'

What does this look like? What do you think this is? What kinds of things might we find in a shipwreck?

Invite them to see what they can find among the wreckage. As the pieces with writing are found, ask the finders to read them out.

When all of the pieces with writing have been found, challenge the group to work out what order they go in, and lay them out in line. Read through the passage together.



Linking Lines:

Our Story of Jesus from the Bible today narrowly avoids a shipwreck for his friends. They must have been really afraid. I bet they didn't expect that following Jesus might have some scary times. Their fear is very real, but Jesus replaces their fear and encourages their faith.

OPENING THE BIBLE: 'MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE'

See **Appendix 1.9** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Print out of Mark 4:35-41 (see App. 1.9).
- Empty clear plastic soft drink bottle, label removed.
- Clear sticky tape
- Blue/green food colouring
- Sand, small rocks, shells, small plastic sea creatures/fish

In preparation:

Tape the printout of the passage longways to the side of a large clear plastic drink bottle, so that the words are facing inwards, to be read by looking through the side of the bottle. 3/4 fill the bottle with water, and add one drop of blue/green colouring. Add a couple of spoons full of sand, some small rocks/gravel, and plastic sea creatures. Replace the lid and secure well with sticky tape, checking that there are no leaks.

With your group, explain that the Story of Jesus from the Bible takes place on a large lake, or sea.

Show the group the bottle and let them pass it around and name what they can see in the water.

Pass the bottle around a second time and let each person read any words they can – in any order. Don't worry about the narrative flow at this stage, just encourage reading and getting fragments of the story out. Make sure the bottle gets a good shake between each person.

Pass it around a third time, and this time try to have the group read one bit each in order. Let each person read as much or as little as they want. Keep passing it around until the whole passage has been read at least once and everyone has had a turn at reading something.

Linking Lines:

That was a stormy story! And hard to read, hard to keep going, hard to make sense of through the wavy water. I wonder if Jesus' followers found it hard to make sense of what was happening in the storm, they had just begun following Jesus and it was already very frightening and hard to keep going. They were very afraid, but Jesus showed his power to replace fear with faith.

OPENING THE BIBLE: QUICK DRAW**You will need:**

- Copies of Mark 4:35-41
- Scrap note paper
- Markers

Give each person a copy of Mark 4:35-41, a small pile of note paper and a marker. Explain that you are going to read a Story of Jesus from the Bible but you will stop and call 'Quickdraw' after some words. On the call 'Quickdraw' each person draws a super quick picture (like in Pictionary) of the last word read before the Quickdraw call. (You might need to remind the group what the word was.) The first person to finish their sketch holds it up and yells 'Quickdraw'. Give them lots of praise and affirmation, and then affirm each of the other drawings as they finish.

Then keep reading on, stopping on another word, and calling quickdraw again. Repeat this process focussing on various words in the text.

When you have finished, invite the group to tell what happened in the story back to you using their quickdraw pictures as stimulus.

Linking Lines:

Wow! You were really quick and were amazing under pressure. I love the ways you came up with drawing the different words and thinking creatively about it. Some of you stayed super calm too. Did you notice in the story how, – even when there was a storm going on around Jesus and everyone was panicking, he was so calm, he was asleep. Not afraid at all and able to help his friends replace their fear with a little bit of faith.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Choose one or two of these activities to give space to your group to have thinking and processing time for the Bible story. Invite them to talk about the way they can connect with the story using the 'Has This Ever Happened To You?' prompts suggested below.

Be respectful and careful not to over direct the children's responses or to try to turn the experience of the Bible story into a comprehension exercise or an exegesis session or 'teaching' time. In missional Bible engagement we are praying that children, young people and families will meet Jesus, and encounter God, and we trust the Holy Spirit to be working as we make opportunity for this and come alongside to share in the process.

Has This Ever Happened To You?

You've been in a boat...

You have felt afraid...

You were in a big storm...

You have felt like nothing could rescue you...

You asked Jesus for help...

SONG: WE WERE SAILING IN OUR BOAT

You will need:

- Soundtrack to 'We Were Sailing in Our Boat' (see **Appendix 1.1**)
- Optional nautical props and costumes
- Optional improvised percussion for storm
- Familiarity with the traditional actions or some ideas for fresh choreography

We were sailing in our boat
 We were happily afloat
 We were fine we were cool
 And the seas was like a pool
 Ah-ha-ha
 Ah-ha-ha

Then the lightning flashed
 and the the thunder crashed
 and the rain came down
 there was a storm
 Ah-ha-ha
 Ah-ha-ha



We were really freaking out
and so we began to shout
(shouting) "Wake up Jesus Wake up now,
Wake up now we're gonna drown!"

Ah-ha-ha
Ah-ha-ha

(whispered)

Then Jesus awoke
and spoke
to the storm
and everything was calm
Ah-ha-ha
Ah-ha-ha

We were sailing in our boat
we were happily afloat
now we're fine now we're cool
and Jesus rules
Ok...

Introduce the song 'We were sailing in our boat' to the group and work with their creative suggestions for developing a presentation with choreography/costumes/props/drama/sound effects.

Linking Lines:

Has anything like this ever happened to you? Can you remember the worst storm you've been in? Have there been other scary moments? Have you felt really calm because someone safe was looking after you?

STORM IN A BAG – ZIP LOCK BAGS

You will need:

- Zip lock bags
- Permanent markers
- Water
- Cornflower
- Blue food colouring
- Duct tape

Give each person a sandwich sized zip lock bag. With permanent markers each person draws a boat on their bag. Another option is to cut out a boat shape from wood grain contact and stick this as the bases of the boat on the

bag, adding other details with the marker.

When the boat is complete: add half a cup of water, a tablespoon of cornflour and a few drops of blue food colouring into the bag and seal it tightly, squeezing out any extra air as you do.

Each child now mixes the contents of the bag by squeezing and massaging the bag.

The mixture will soon turn into a stormy sea background behind the boat.

Linking Lines:

With your storm in a bag you can be in control of stirring up the storm and calming it down. That's because you are the one who has made it. When Jesus calmed the storm his followers realised he must be the one who has made the storm, the sea, the clouds the rain, the thunder...in fact everything, and also was the one who could bring calm and safety when they asked for help. . They were amazed to be Jesus friend, but also a bit afraid and freaked out...I wonder if you have ever felt really afraid, or ever asked for Jesus help? Has anything like this ever happened to you?

BUILD A BIG BOAT

You will need:

- Large whitegoods carton (TV/washing machine/fridge box)
- Extra cardboard pieces
- Cardboard rolls
- Pool noodles
- Sheet
- Rope
- Packing tape
- Knife/scissors

As a group, make a large boat from a TV or washing machine box. Use some extra cardboard bits, cardboard rolls or sticks to add masts and sails. Optional: Paint your boat.

Linking Lines:

There's some great teamwork going on here. It's a big project to build a boat. Jesus friends and followers in the story from the Bible today were fisherman – and they worked in teams all the time to sail their boat and catch fish with large nets. But in the storm their teamwork wasn't enough – they needed Jesus help. I wonder if something like this has ever happened to you and you have needed extra help? Or maybe you have asked Jesus for help sometime?

WOODEN/POP STICK BOAT

See **Appendix 1.10** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Wooden pop sticks (or collect small sticks from around the environment of your site)
- String
- Craft glue
- Paper/card
- Print out of App.1.10 or other patterns for boat building

Give each person a supply of pop sticks/sticks, string, paper, card and glue to create their own boat. See Appendix 1.10 for some design ideas.

Linking Lines:

The boats in Jesus time weren't very big, and they were made from wood, – like the boats we are making. I wonder how afraid you would feel in your boat in a storm? Has anything like this ever happened to you? Have you ever been in a boat? Have you ever needed rescuing?

UNSINKABLE PAPER

You will need:

- Tub
- Water
- Paper
- Coins

Try this experiment. Show your group the amazing unsinkable paper. Practice this first to make sure you know what to do.

Place a piece of paper in a tub of water. Make sure the corners are slightly turned down. Announce to the group that this is not the amazing unsinkable paper, but just an ordinary paper. How many coins can it hold?

Put one coin 2/3 along the paper. This should sink the paper straight away. Take out another piece of paper – announcing that this is the amazing unsinkable paper. Make sure the corners are ever-so -slightly up turned, but not so much that it is noticeable.

Place it on the surface of the water. Ask the group how many coins they think the amazing unsinkable paper can hold?



Carefully place coins one by one in the centre of the paper always keeping evenly balanced. Some of your group will recognise the physics behind this. Show them how to do the sinking and the unsinkable process, and let them try it for themselves.

Linking Lines:

Did you notice that it only took a very small change to turn the sinking paper into unsinkable paper. In the Story of Jesus from the Bible today, the friends of Jesus had a whole stack of fear – they were really terrified, and they only had a little bit of faith – just enough to tell Jesus about their fear, not even enough to actually ask for help! But Jesus knew what to do any way, and was ready to help

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

LIFE JACKET PRAYER BOOKS

See **Appendix 1.11** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Yellow/orange foam
- White paper printed templates of prayers
- Life jacket template App. 1.11
- Stapler
- Glue
- Red foam
- Contact paper

Using the Template in Appendix 1.11 cut enough basic life jacket shapes from orange/yellow foam for two per child. Cut a set of six of the jacket shapes prayers from white paper for each person.

Each person sandwiches 6 pages of white 'Life Jacket' prayer pages between two coloured foam shapes. Staple at the shoulders.

Using craft glue add contrasting red foam stripes down from the shoulders (covering the staples) and around the middle.

Decorate further with small pieces of holographic contact as reflectors.



Life jacket prayers:

Help
 I don't know what to do
 I'm glad you're here, Jesus
 Please help me trust in you, God
 Please help my friends who are in tough times

As the life jacket prayer books are being assembled talk with the group about the prayers written on each page. Talk about times you might feel like using the 'Help!' prayer or the 'I'm glad you're here, Jesus' prayer or the 'I don't know what to do' prayer.

Linking Lines:

I wonder if you have ever been in a situation where you have prayed a prayer like one of these life jacket prayers – or maybe a different one that helped your fear turn into faith.

Which of these prayers might be one you'd like to pray today?

WHO'S IN THE BOAT?

See **Appendix 1.12** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Cardboard cut outs of the 6 characters in App. 1.12 – the larger the better
- Cardboard box 'boat'

Invite your group to gather around a cardboard box 'Boat' and imagine that they each have to cross a lake in a wooden sail boat. The weather is sunny, but it looks like a storm might be coming. There is only room for 3 other people in the boat with you. Who would you choose to have in the boat?

Weather man
 Strong swimmer
 Experienced fisherman
 Carpenter
 Person who knows God
 God.

Allow each person, one at a time to choose their three, and discuss why.

Linking Lines:

Wherever we go, whatever happens to us, and whoever else is there with us to help, God is with us, always. God is with us and ready to help turn our fear into faith.

STORMY QUESTIONS ON THE BRAIN

See **Appendix 1.13** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- A3 poster outline of person's brain (App. 1.13)

OR

- Beanie or fisherman's hat
- Markers
- Post it notes

What questions might be going through the disciples minds as they are in the middle of the storm?

Draw a large picture of a person's brain (see App. 1.13). Ask the group to suggest what questions the disciples might have been thinking of as they were in the storm. Write these inside the brain, or allow volunteers to write these in their brain. After gathering these questions ask the group quietly to think of which of these questions they have ever thought themselves. An alternative method of doing this activity is to write the questions on post-it notes and stick them all over a fisherman's beanie. Then ask the group to each choose a question by taking a post it note and sticking it on their own forehead.

Finish by saying,

'Let's tell Jesus about our questions now..., "Dear Jesus thanks that you know what's going on in our minds. Thanks for all the great questions we can ask to understand you better. Thanks that you are more powerful than anything in nature because you made it all. Amen."'

Sample questions

- Why is this happening?
- Am I going to drown?
- What can I do to help?
- When will it end?
- What is Jesus doing?
- Does Jesus care?
- Does Jesus have power to do anything?

DAY 1

TEENS

Session 1 : Who can forgive sins? Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him? Why are you afraid?

Faith can replace fear

NATURE IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus shows that he is more powerful than nature

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Phoebe Phobia
- Phobias

2. Context:

- God... Nature... Humans... Who's in Control of What?

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: Radical Reading

4. Consider:

- Eat
- Who's in the Boat?

5. Consequence:

- Pillow Slip Prayer
- Message in a Bottle
- Choose Your Destiny

CONNECT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

When have you been afraid? Name a time when you looked at creation and felt in awe of it or overwhelmed by its force or power?

OR

Take a look at some photos of the force of creation (waterfalls, the Olgas, coral reef, earthquakes)— what do you feel?

PHOEBE PHOBIA

Invite your group to sit in a circle.

Introduce yourself, and say that you are looking forward to getting to know everyone. Explain that everyone will take turns around the circle to introduce themselves.

Round 1: Just say your own name.

Round 2: Say the name of the person before you and your own name e.g. “That’s Jana and I’m Felix” “That’s Felix and I’m Manni”...

Round 3: Each person says their name and something they’re not afraid of starting with the same sound (or letter) as their name...e.g.: “I’m Beth, not afraid of bugs.” “I’m Felix and I’m not afraid of fans”

Round 4: Each person says their name and something they’re not afraid of that rhymes with their name...e.g. “I’m Beth, not afraid of bad breath” “I’m Jana and I’m not afraid of Banana”

PHOBIAS

See **Appendix 1.4** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- List of phobias App. 1.4
- Bag/pillow case
- Label ‘Beware Phobophobia’

Using the list of Phobias in Appendix 1.4 place some of the suggested items in a bag/old pillow case. On the outside write ‘BEWARE – phobophobia!’ and the names of all the phobias you have chosen from the list. Explain to the group that the bag is full of things that people are afraid of ... and that these fears have weird and wonderful names. In turn ask each person to reach into the bag and pull out one item. Ask them ‘Are you ... phobic?’ (the phobia matching the item they have pulled out.) Allow them to answer, then clarify to everyone what the phobia is and what it is called

Today our story is about some people with:

- ‘brontophobia’ fear of thunder & lightning and storms
- ‘Kymophobia’ fear of waves
- ‘ombrophobia’ fear of being rained
- ‘aquaphobia’ fear of drowning

CONTEXT...

CONNECT — **CONTEXT** — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

What questions might the disciples have asked after Jesus calmed the storm?

GOD... NATURE... HUMANS... WHO'S IN CONTROL OF WHAT?

Divide into 3 groups. Name each group God, Nature, Humans. Ask each group to decide whether they are in control of, or controlled by the other two groups, and in what ways. After a few minutes of discussion within their groups, go through each group and try to plot what they think on a large butcher's paper diagram. See if the groups agreed with each other or not. Where things are unclear ask for examples. e.g: one group says, "God is in control of humans," but another group says "Humans have free will, so God isn't in control.". A key question to have up your sleeve in this discussion is, "If something isn't in control of you, does that mean you're in control of it?"

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Read through the story again. What words or couple of words stick out? What would the disciples have been feeling just before they woke Jesus up – trust or fear?

OPENING THE BIBLE: RADICAL READING

The idea of this reading is to simulate the desperation and difficulty of the disciple's situation. Ask for a few volunteers who are happy to read out loud; emphasise that you do really mean 'loud'. Explain that they can start or stop reading any time, passing the passage between them. (It's a good idea to have it printed in larger font on a separate piece of paper). The rest of the group have the task of making so much noise that it's hard for the readers to be heard. The readers should end up yelling the passage, as if they were actually trying to communicate through a storm. Have a practice and then see how you go.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

The Message version of the Bible v38 says: They roused him, saying, "Teacher, is it nothing to you that we're going down?" Have you ever prayed a prayer like this?

OR

Looking at asylum seeker issue: leaky boats arriving, people get sent for 'processing'. What might be their desperate prayer?

EAT

Eat 'Lifesaver' lollies as you chat about the Bible story!

WHO'S IN THE BOAT?

You are going to cross an unpredictable lake in a wooden sail boat. There is only room for 3 other people. Who would you choose to have in the boat? Weather man, strong swimmer, experienced fisherman, Carpenter, person who knows God, God.

Allow time for people to choose who they would take, then ask them to explain who they are not going to take and why. Lead into who they would take and why.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — **CONSEQUENCE**

How are you trusting God today?

Write down just for your eyes only a few of the big 'waves' you are facing today.

Are you trusting God about these problems or are you fearing the worst?

PILLOW SLIP PRAYER

Get an old pillowslip (they are usually less than \$1 in the op shop) and some permanent makers (Sharpies are colourful and easy to write with). Across the middle write "Hey Jesus ... wake up! Don't you care that..." Recap the part of the passage where the disciples are in serious trouble, but Jesus is asleep with his head on a pillow! Slacker! The Disciples wake Jesus up and accuse him of not caring. Sometimes we feel like Jesus does not care – but of course he does. Invite the group to write on the pillow slip the things they want Jesus to get up and start showing that he cares about. This may seem a strange and even slightly disrespectful way to pray; but notice in the passage that Jesus actually responds. No one gets in trouble for praying big, daring prayers, so let's get bold and ask Jesus to get busy in the storms we are in.

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

The message in a bottle is a classic symbol of the desperate survivor of a ship wreck trying to communicate. Give each person a bottle and a piece of paper and some time to write a message to God.

CHOOSE YOUR DESTINY

Where would you rather be?

- A. In a sail boat
- B. On a cruise ship
- C. In a donut on the back of a speed boat
- D. Building sand castles on the beach

Who would you rather be with?

- A. A bunch of great, but really smelly fishermen
- B. A bunch of regular people your age but who weren't into whatever you are into
- C. One person who you could absolutely trust and rely on, no matter what
- D. No one – just by your self

What do you do in a crisis?

- A. Try to do something practical, even if I'm not sure it's the right thing
- B. Put my undies on my head and run around screaming wibble wibble wibble
- C. Phone a friend and talk it out
- D. Order a pizza and pray

If Jesus turned up right in the middle of a tough time for me I'd:

- A. Tell him, "Go away, this is not a good time"
- B. Ask him for help to make things better
- C. Ask him why things were going wrong for me
- D. Give him an earful of my troubles

DAY 1

PARENT CONVERSATION

FAITH CAN REPLACE FEAR

What's the Story?

Has there ever been a parent in the history of the world who hasn't felt like they were just thrown in the deep end? Even for people who felt ready for parenting, whose kids were planned and welcomed with absolute joy, there is still a sense of white-knuckle what-have-I-got-my-self-into. Let alone the rest of us whose kids might have turned up while we were making other plans.

The adventure of parenting often feels like being out on a wild deep stormy sea in a small boat. And between those rare, amazing days of calm, smooth, sunny sailing, we are often so busy pulling on the ropes, ducking the boom or bailing out water that we don't have time to stop and feel what's going on for us:

- Sometimes we feel inadequate and overwhelmed and that the task is just too much for us.
- Sometimes we are worried that we will replicate the worst parts of the parenting we experienced ourselves, rather than the best.
- Sometimes we are afraid that in getting all the functional bits sorted – the kinder roster, the school uniforms, the excursion forms, the lunch order, the homework done, the grandparent visits, the new footy boots – we will miss the big picture: sharing time and heart and journey and love with our kids, our partner, and our community.

It's good to take a moment to stop and face those fears we all share. And to perhaps awaken in ourselves a little bit of faith, and recognise that it doesn't all depend on us.

Share Your Story

- Which parts of parenting do you find easy, like paddling in the shallows?
- Which parts of parenting do you feel out of your depth in?
- What are the big fears in parenting for you?

What's God's Story?

The sea is a common image for expressing what life feels like in the ancient writings of the Jewish and Christian faiths. The sea is a place of fear and foreboding, where there is real risk, of unknown scale. Storms and tsunamis,

engulfing waves and strong currents are unstoppable. And it may be a place of death and loss. It's where we meet our fears in full force. But it is also a place of depth. A place where the Big presence of God – of something greater than ourselves is felt.

In the strongest storms and crashing waves, we often find ourselves with a strange sense of faith. Not a big, certain arrogant faith, but a holding-on-for-dear-life faith. A faith that calls for help and finds calm and a different kind of power to our own.

In one of the early collections of stories about Jesus, there is a classic wild storm story. Jesus' friends are common fishermen, and they get into a boat, and instead of staying in the shallows, where they know their game, they head out into the deepest part of the inland sea. Jesus sleeps in the back of the boat while the professionals run into deep trouble and terror. Eventually, on the brink of disaster and going under, they wake Jesus and accuse him of not caring. That's got to be one of our worst fears, don't you think? That no one cares? Especially that God has dumped us in the middle of this wild and stormy life and doesn't care.

Jesus is quick to set that record straight. He brings stillness and calm to the boat. He affirms that a little faith goes a long way. God hasn't dumped us here and left us to sink or swim. God is present, close and caring in the waves of challenge and the winds of change.

Hear/Read More Mark 4:35-41

DAY 1

BIBLE DRAMA

Characters:

- Story Teller
- Voice over weather man
- Jesus
- 3 team member disciples
- A couple of extra disciples (from audience)

Props:

- Umbrella
- Ship's Wheel
- Instrument panel
- Pillow
- Water pistols, buckets of water, thundering saucepans etc, torches

Story teller: Time for a story from the Bible, but I think, just to be on the safe side, I might need this ...



13

(starts putting up an umbrella, but stops)

Voice over: And now for the weather report. Current conditions on the bay: calm, sunny and fine, little chance of rain, gentle fresh sea breezes, a lovely day for sailing.

Story Teller: Hmm, weather sounds good actually.



14

(Puts umbrella down to one side)

One evening, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross to the east side of the Lake."

Jesus invites disciples to the other side of the lake. (All into boat on one side of the audience) Mimed, with incidental dialogue: eg 'Come on fellas', 'Steady in', begin 'rowing' together

Story Teller: So they left the crowd, and his disciples started across the lake with him in the boat. Some other boats followed along. Suddenly a windstorm struck the lake.



15

(Storm Level 1: Starts suddenly, wind noises from the audience encouraged by team members and boat passengers start rocking. Storm Freezes –)

Disciple 1: It's OK. I'm sure Jesus will be on to it. He'll be checking the weather instruments.

Disciple runs to the weather instruments area of the boat, but Jesus isn't there.

Disciple 1: He's not here? Where's Jesus in this storm?

16

(Storm: Level 2 starts – added thunder (Kids), small rain (water pistols, cups) Boat passengers stressed, pre-spewing, out of control. Storm freezes –)

Disciple 2: This is bad, but I'm sure it's ok. Jesus will be up at the steering wheel.

2 Disciples run to the steering wheel, but Jesus is not there

Disciple 2: He's not here? Where's Jesus in this terrible storm?

17

(Storm level 3 starts – added lightning (torches and flashes) big rain (buckets of water) spewing, kids chaotic. Storm freezes -)

Disciple 3: This is out of control! Jesus must be at the front of the boat holding it together with his super human strength.

All disciples run to the front of the boat to see him: Jesus is not there

Disciple 3: He's not here? Where is Jesus in this monstrous storm?

Loud snore is heard from the back of the boat. All disciples run to the back of the boat and find Jesus asleep with pillow.

Story Teller: Jesus was in the back of the boat with his head on a pillow, and he was asleep. His disciples woke him and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we're about to drown?"

(Storm builds up again)

Jesus got up and ordered the wind and the waves to be quiet. The wind stopped, and everything was calm.

(Storm stops)

Jesus: Why are you frightened? Do you still have no faith? Can't you believe in me? Why would I sleep if you were in any danger?

13

(All calms down, all go back to rowing)

3 Disciples go aside

3 Disciples: "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Story Teller: Jesus asked his disciples, "Why were you afraid? Don't you have any faith?" Now they were more afraid than ever and said to each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him."

DAY 2

Who can forgive sins?

THEME WORDS

Jesus can deal with the things we do wrong and with the things done wrong to us.

Forgiveness can replace frustration

Evil is not the boss

BIBLE

Mark 2:1-12
Jesus heals a paralytic

SONGS

Good Mate (S)
The Pop Song (C)
Jesus Cares About Me (S)

INTRODUCTION

What I love about Jesus is that he never gives sin or evil or death or hopelessness the last word. To the religious know-it-alls standing around, the question is about sin – “Doesn’t Jesus know that this person is paralysed by sin? And that only God can forgive sins?” They hear Jesus declare the person’s sins forgiven and they call it blasphemy. What’s the problem with Jesus’ attitude in their eyes? It’s this: he just doesn’t cower under sin, he doesn’t give it enough reverence. They want Jesus to admit defeat in the face of sin and Jesus just plain refuses.

This is a good template for us – as we struggle with sin and as we speak about it with others. Often we think to ‘take sin seriously’ means we have to make it ubiquitous and inevitable – all have sinned and fallen short – we stress. Of course I’m not arguing with Paul that this isn’t the case. But when we make sin omnipresent and omnipotent, we are in danger of elevating it to ‘boss’ status – in territory that is exclusively God’s. Sin is not the boss, Jesus says and demonstrates this. Forgiveness replaces the frustration of paralysis. Sin is real and all over the place – but Jesus as God, deals with sin. His forgiveness is even more potent and powerful than sin.

The passage from Mark 2 in this session places a disabled person at the centre of the narrative. We will need to speak carefully and respectfully of the experience of disability, recognising that it takes many forms, seen and unseen, and is present in many families. Our Gospel community should be noted for its compassion and justice.

Some really important theological ground needs to be secure in all our discussions.

Firstly, in this story we see that Jesus treats the person’s disability and the person’s sin as separate issues. We will need to follow Jesus’ cue, and make sure that in all we say and represent, makes it clear that there is no link between a disability a person may have, and the issue of sin.

All people have differing capabilities – some are more obvious and obstructive in certain circumstances. We are all dependent on others in different ways. The paralysed person in the story was dependent on his friends for transport – but who knows what they were dependent on him or on others for.

We note that Jesus is often dependent on others for food and shelter and resources. Others depended on Jesus also. Life seems to have a pattern of needing to depend

DISCUSSING DISABILITY

Summary points

- Disability isn’t caused by sin; keep these as separate issues
- Use ‘person with a disability’ in preference to ‘disabled person’ or other terms
- Show compassion, not pity
- Take care in physical activities not to exclude or force participation on the basis of ability.
- Be careful not to parody or to portray comically or disrespectfully the experience of a disability.



on others and at the same time having others dependant on us.

Also, all people are part of the sinfulness that impacts the world. The person with a disability is neither more or less affected by sin than any other person.

There are still debates around the most appropriate language to use, and you will notice here that I use the term 'person with a disability' which is the most preferred term generally. This is because it places the person first and the disability second. 'Disabled person' implies that the personhood of the person is disabled, rather than affirming their personhood as primary and the particular disability as a specific condition that impacts part of their functioning, but does not define their personhood or identity.

However, if there is a person with a disability in your community who prefers different label, of course this is to be respected.

Finally make sure that in the physical activities you don't parody the experience of a disability for comedic effect, or ridicule the experience. Be careful not to use phrases of pity eg: 'wouldn't it be terrible to be paralysed', but rather show compassion.

MARK 2:1-12

Jesus Heals A Paralysed* Person

¹Jesus went back to Capernaum, and a few days later people heard that he was at home. ²Then so many of them came to the house that there wasn't even standing room left in front of the door. Jesus was still teaching ³when four people came up, carrying a paralysed man on a mat. ⁴But because of the crowd, they could not get him to Jesus. So they made a hole in the roof above him and let the man down in front of everyone. ⁵When Jesus saw how much faith they had, he said to the paralysed man, "My friend, your sins are forgiven." ⁶ Some of the teachers of the Law of Moses were sitting there. They started wondering, ⁷"Why would he say such a thing? He must think he is God! Only God can forgive sins." ⁸Right away, Jesus knew what they were thinking, and he said, "Why are you thinking such things? ⁹Is it easier for me to tell this paralysed man that his sins are forgiven or to tell him to get up and pick up his mat and go on home? ¹⁰I will show you that the Son of Man has the right to forgive sins here on earth." So Jesus said to the man, ¹¹"Get up! Pick up your mat and go on home." ¹²The man got right up. He picked up his mat and went out while everyone watched in amazement. They praised God and said, "We have never seen anything like this!"

*NB I have altered the CEV just slightly, replacing 'crippled' man with 'paralysed' man. The Greek text uses the word *παραλυτικός paralutikos* from which we derive the word 'paralyse': it is both more accurate and less historically pejorative than 'cripple'.

DAY 2

TEAM STUDY

Session 2 : Who can forgive sins?

Forgiveness can replace frustration

EVIL IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus can deal with the things we do wrong and with the things done wrong to us.

Opening the Bible: Read the 'ing' words

Give each person a copy of the bible passage. Explain that today's bible reading is sponsored by the sound 'ing'. For each word that we read that has an 'ing' sound, the group must jump up and act out that word. If everyone demonstrates the 'ing' word, 10 smarties will be paid into the jar in the middle. At the end of the reading the smarties will be divided among the group. NB: the ING words are: standing, teaching, carrying, sitting, wondering, thinking, anything!

Evil Everywhere

In small groups, look carefully at the passage for the marks of evil and wrong and sin and their effects (pain, suffering, injustice). You may want to brainstorm a list of the marks of evil in the world before looking at the passage. In small groups, make a list of all of the evidence of evil at work in this passage. From the people who selfishly crowd the door and don't let the guy in, to the judgement of the Teachers. The Teachers were quick to see one kind of evil (the disability of the paralytic, and the inference it was the result of sin) but blind to some other kinds. How might we be a bit the same?

Top Ten

This can be done in pairs as a competitive game, or as a simple whole group activity, which of course is recommended. If you need the element of 'competition' to rev this up, make it a 'if we get to 10, we'll open a bag of chips to share amongst us' challenge. The challenge is simply to call one category. For example: 'Top Ten ways of entering a house' and 'Go!!' The group starts to call out ideas. Perhaps use a piece of butcher's paper to scribble them down to keep track. You may even like to use a timer to record your best time

- things you can do with your legs
- ways of entering a house
- ways of carrying a paralysed person
- ways of drawing a crowd
- ways to get famous
- actual words you can remember from the Bible reading: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs only.

Forgiveness is Unpopular

Can you believe it?

The big beef the Teachers of the Law of Moses have with Jesus is that he forgives.

As a group or in small groups, list together some high profile calls for 'justice' and 'revenge'.

Can you think of any high profile calls for forgiveness?

Our media often highlights demands for 'justice', by which people mean 'payback time'.

When people talk about 'forgiveness', they usually mean 'forget'.

When a wrong has been done, who pays?

if there is revenge or payback

if justice is brought to bear

if forgiveness is given

We find offering forgiveness to someone difficult because we need to bear the cost of the wrong. We find receiving forgiveness difficult because we know deep down that we deserve justice. Jesus, on the other hand, is able to freely offer forgiveness. He knows just how hopeless and thorough our wrongs and the wrongs against us are. If Jesus called for payback or justice, we'd be sunk. Instead, he calls forgiveness and restoration into play.

Why is Jesus able to forgive?

There is a sense with Jesus that it's not like going back but going forward; making things better than they ever were; offering a fresh start. So the issue with the Teachers and Jesus becomes authority. Does Jesus have the authority to make things new?

To their amazement he does. A paralytic walks away. God's new world is breaking in.

Still the big beef the Teachers have with Jesus is that he forgives. Why is this?

Carrying people to Jesus

Use a large piece of fridge box card to make a stretcher, with ropes on each corner.

Invite the team to write the names of people they want to pray for today on pieces of paper and stick them to the 'stretcher'. Crowd around and read the passage aloud again. Give time for prayer for the people that we want to carry to Jesus, what ever it takes to get through. If you are able to raise the stretcher up above head height, and suspend it there for the day safely, do so as a reminder of your prayers and to keep praying.

DAY 2

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Forgiveness can replace frustration

Summary: Jesus can deal with the things we do wrong and with the things done wrong to us.

Bible: Mark 2:1-12 - Jesus heals a paralytic

Questions: Who can forgive sins?

Song Line: Evil Is Not The Boss

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Doctors and Dolls
- Building Houses and Cubby Houses

2. Context:

- Action Song – Here's a house
- Hokey Pokey – Song
- Carry Your Friend

3. Content:

- Story Time

4. Consider:

- Paralysed Person
- Body Outlines
- Pipe Cleaner People

5. Consequence:

- Choosing Box

CONNECT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Free Play

Playdough, blocks and quiet book corner can be offered every session for routine and stability, rotating a couple of other 'theme' activities for interest and variety. Offer a few or all of the following free-play options. Each of these can become a teaching/storytelling opportunity as well. After the Mat time, you may invite children back to one of these 'free-play' activities and allow them to tell/imagine the story with you...

DOCTORS AND DOLLS

You will need:

- Shallow cardboard boxes
- Tea towels or similar sized pieces of fabric
- Dolls/teddies/soft toy animals
- Box with Doctor set: few small bottles, a Berocca tube, a few teaspoons, a paddle pop stick thermometer, a small squishy ball or hardly blown up balloon as a blood pressure pump, and of course, a pack of band aids!

Put some sick 'dollies' in cardboard box beds with blankets. And tend them with medicine, bandages etc.

Linking Lines:

You are all wonderful doctors for the doll and the teddies. Very kind and helpful to them. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today there are some sick people, but the doctors a long, long time ago weren't able to heal them or help.

BUILDING HOUSES AND CUBBY HOUSES

You will need:

- Wooden blocks
- Cardboard boxes of any size
- Coloured paper
- Glue sticks

Build houses from wooden blocks or cardboard boxes.

A large washing machine box with a hole cut in the top and a door cut in the side will be handy for the story to come. Set this up as a cubby house for free play, and allow some decoration, sticking coloured paper to the outside.

Linking Lines:

You have made some wonderful houses – with windows and doors, roof and walls. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, Jesus visits a home, and lots of other people come to visit and then some more people come to visit and have to climb onto the roof!

CONTEXT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Mat Time: Songs and Rhymes and Games

Use one or more of the familiar group songs or games to gather the group together and create a culture of listening and participating together. Encourage parents/carers to join in with their children.

ACTION SONG: HERE'S A HOUSE

Link to song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5dKMIZOxy0>

from 00.50

Here's a house with a floor, with a floor, with a floor
 Here's a house with a wall, with a wall, with a wall
 Here's a house with a roof, with a roof, with a roof
 There's no house anymore, anymore
 There's no house anymore

Linking Lines:

In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today – there's a house – with a floor and walls and a roof – but there is a hole in the roof! I wonder why?

SONG: HOKEY POKEY

*You put your one hand in
 You put your one hand out
 You put your one hand in
 And shake it all about
 You do the Hokey Pokey
 And you turn around
 That's what it's all about.*

*Oh.....the Hokey Pokey
 Oh.....the Hokey Pokey
 Oh.....the Hokey Pokey
 That's what it's all about*

Invite your group to stand in a circle and sing a simplified version of this traditional action song.

Use 'one hand in'; 'two hands in' rather than left and right; same for feet. With this age group stick to hands, feet, and whole-self verses – which will be plenty long enough.

Linking Lines:

You are wonderfully wriggly dancers – shaking all the different part of your bodies. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today there is a person whose body won't do any wriggling or moving at all. And his friends carry him on a mat, to where he wants to go. When he goes to see Jesus he gets not just his wriggles back – but walks as well.

CARRY YOUR FRIEND

You will need:

- Teddy, doll or soft toy
- Piece of card big enough for the toy to lie on

Sit in a circle and leave small gap as the 'door'. Choose four volunteers to try to carry a teddy or doll on a cardboard stretcher with one person holding each corner. See if they can carry the stretcher all around the outside of the group, starting at the 'door' and then finishing by carrying the stretcher through the 'door', into the centre and letting the mat down gently to the ground. Depending on how many children you have ask for more volunteers to have a second turn. If you have lots of children and carers, form two teams with two stretchers and set them off in opposite directions around the circle.

Linking Lines:

Lovely teamwork! Great job carrying your teddy friend. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today some friends work together to carry their friend too – but it's not just for fun – not just for a game – it's for a serious reason.

CONTENT...

CONNECT | CONTEXT | **CONTENT** | CONSIDER | CONSEQUENCE

Story Time

See 'Plasticine Story files' for visuals.

Ask another leader or parent to hold the pictures while you use your whole body in full dynamic expression in storytelling. Invite participation.

STORY TIME

Here's Lou, lying on the street.
Lou's limbs are limp.
Lou's life is no easy street.

But
Lou's laugh is loud
Lou loves street spicy lentils
Lou likes listening and learning.
Lou loves God
Lou's a bit of a larrikin

Here are the street lads.
The street lads are all larrikin louts.
The street lads like Lou
Lou listens.
Lou is loveable.

Sometime locals walk past Lou on the street.
They see Lou, lying with limp limbs.

And they label Lou:
"Loser!"
"Lousy!"
"Lazy!"

Because they don't know Lou and his loud lough and his love for God.

And they are as loopy as a llama not to see that Lou, like you, like me, is loved by God.

The word is on the street!
Jesus has come back across the lake!
He's lodging in a house and people are lining up to listen.

The larrikin street lads look at Lou.

They've heard that Jesus loves losers and larrikins and lifts those who are low and lampoons the luxurious and leaves people better than he found them, even the lame and the limp limbed.

The lads lift up Lou and lug him along.
Can't leave Lou behind!
Lou's no load anyway. Lou's little and light and laughs loud.



At the house, the crowd is out the door and down the street.

It's a lockout.

But these street lads and Lou won't let that limit them
They take a lane around the back
And what luck!
A ladder leading to the low flat roof!

Up the ladder!!!
Four larrikin lads like lizards leap up the ladder, balancing Lou on the mat.
Watch it doesn't go lopsided!
What a lark! Laughs Lou.
On the roof they lay Lou down and dig through the layers.
The roof is made of mud.

They lift Lou on the mat and lower it through the hole.
Lower – lower - lower.

And Lou lands – right in front of Jesus legs.

Jesus looks down at Lou
Jesus looks up at the light coming through the roof and the larrikin street lads.
“You are Loyal friends with lots of faith” says Jesus with a salute.

Lining the room are a lot of Lah-dee-dah Leaders and Law-Lovers. They like labels and they are looking for one to lob on Jesus.

They lean in to hear what Jesus will say.

“Young Lou, you are forgiven – you're let you off the hook.”

Jesus looks at the Lah-dee-da leaders and the Law-Lovers.
They are livid with faces like lakes of boiling lava.

“Let off the hook!! Forgiven? Only God can forgive. That's illegal.”
They lecture Jesus.

“Let it go, legal eagles. You know Lou isn't limp limbed because he's done something wrong.
He's not unloved by God.
What is a larger leap – to tell Lou, that he's forgiven?
Or to tell him to get up and walk?”

The Lah-dee-dah Leaders and Law-Lovers are lost for words.



But Jesus is not lost. Jesus says “Listen and Look and Learn who I am: I am alive with God’s love and I’m licensed to lavish it liberally.

Lou – on your legs and leave for home!”

And Lou, leapt up, lithe and lively, and left with the mat and the lads, back to the street where they lived.

The crowd lost it! Jesus - what a legend!!!

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Exploring in Craft

Some children will prefer to go back to free play in this time, and not continue with a structured craft. This is normal and a valid choice.

PARALYSED PERSON

You will need:

- 3 pairs of old stockings
- Newspaper and/or Dacron filling (e.g. an old pillow with the stuffing pulled apart to be very fluffy)
- Stapler/bulldog clips
- Google eyes
- Markers
- Felt/fabric scraps
- Yarn
- Child sized shirt/shorts

Cut one pair of stockings at the knees and tie off the ends (these will be the arms).

Invite your group to scrunch up newspaper and fluff Dacron stuffing and to fill the arms and legs of the stockings.

Join the waists of the stockings together and staple or secure with bulldog clips at waists.

Taking the third pair of stockings, turn one leg inside out and place it inside the other leg, pushing the end all the way to the toe. Cut off at the knee.

Scrunch newspaper/Dacron to fill the double thickness stocking, making it



much more rounded than the arms and legs. This is the head. Knot it and attach to the body with another bulldog clip. Decorate face with google/button eyes, felt mouth, or use permanent markers to draw on the face wool hair. Dress in a pair of shorts & t-shirt.

Linking Lines:

Here is our friend, who can't stand up or move by himself. Is it his fault? Is he to blame? No. And we can help. We can carry him around. In the story the person who couldn't stand up also had friends who helped. They helped by carrying him. And they helped by carrying him to meet Jesus.

Jesus helped him in a different way – not by carrying him, but by making his body able to move himself and carry his own mat home

BODY OUTLINES

You will need:

- Paved area or sheet of black industrial plastic
- Chalk (coloured)

Have each person lie down, legs together while you trace around each person's body with chalk on the ground or on a piece of black plastic. Carefully help them up without smudging the outline. Let them decorate their silhouette on the ground with coloured chalk. This could be with details of face and hair – or it could be just with patterns – depending on the drawing development of the child.

If there are children who want to add specific genitals, don't be alarmed: this is perfectly natural and part of a child's growing body awareness. But don't allow it. Just remind the child that when we are in public with people other than our family, it's right and respectful to everyone, that we keep our bodies covered – and that includes pictures as well. Then engage them in what kind of pants or clothes they'd like to draw: stripy or spotty or zig-zaggy – moving the focus.

Linking Lines:

Look at the wonderful art you have done making your chalk bodies look colourful. All of our bodies are important and precious to God – even when sometimes bodies don't work the way we wish they did – that can happen sometimes. God has given our bodies life so that we can live in God's good ways. 'Your sins are forgiven' Jesus told the person who couldn't move. That means – You were made for living God's good ways. Off you go!

PIPE CLEANER PEOPLE

You will need:

- Chenille stems (pipe cleaners) in an assortment of colours,
- Fabric strips

Show the group that you are going to make a person.

Do a simple loop and twist for the head and then bend out his feet at the bottom.

Then show the group that your person has a problem. He can't stand up!

Give each person the opportunity to make a person.

Let them try to make the person stand up.

Give each person a small piece of fabric to put their person on, lying them down.

Linking Lines:

In the Story of Jesus from the Bible, there was a person who couldn't stand up no matter how they tried. They had to lie down on their mat, all the time. How frustrating!

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Choosing Box

At the end of the session each day, remind everyone of the conversation starter page and bring out a 'choosing' box and invite each person (including parents and carers and bystanders) to choose something from the box to take home to remind them of the time together today.

Encourage taking the item home to talk about in the family, or to hold quietly later when they want to remember the Story of Jesus from the Bible.

CHOOSING BOX

In the Choosing Box today: Rolled up little colourful Mat

You will need:

- Some thick colourful fabric cut into 15x10cm pieces -one for each person

Fray the short ends to give a fringed carpet effect

Stickers saying 'Forgiven' or 'Going God's Good Ways' stuck to the inside of each mat

Roll up the mat and secure with a loom band.

Linking Lines:

To remind us of our story, take a little rolled up mat. What might this remind you of from the story? Maybe of the person who couldn't do everything he wished his body could do? Maybe of his helpful friends?

Maybe it can remind you of how Jesus sent him off – able to walk – to go in God's good ways. And how no matter what our bodies can and can't do we can go in God's good ways too.

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DAY 2

PRIMARY

Session 2 : Who can forgive sins?

Forgiveness can replace frustration

EVIL IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus can deal with the things we do wrong and with the things done wrong to us.

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Legless volleyball
- Carry your friend
- Who's Legs?

2. Context:

- Through the Hole Challenge
- Wondering About the World
- Pick-a-Part Houses

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: Hole in the Roof Reading
- Opening the Bible: Got It
- Opening the Bible: Key Phrase
- Opening the Bible: Paint as You Go

4. Consider:

- Claymation
- Wire and Wool Action People
- Paralysed Person
- Shadow Puppets
- Weave a Mat
- Concertina Fold Legs

5. Consequence:

- Top Ten or Top Five
- Where Are You? Decision Houses
- Choose a path Board Game
- Hypotheticals – What would you do?
- Corner of the Mat Prayers

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

LEGLESS VOLLEYBALL

You will need:

- Flour or ropes or sports cones
- Rope or net – hardware stores sell cheap garden netting that comes in long lengths
- Volleyball or soft alternative

Divide into two teams and play a game of Volleyball, with all participants sitting on the ground.

Have two helpers – either leaders or group participants who would rather not play, hold a rope or net between the teams. Boundaries can be easily marked with rope or plain flour. Create simple fun rules that suit the emotional and physical capabilities of the group you are working with. Several short rounds in which teams can win quickly are healthier than one long epic struggle. Re-mixing the teams between rounds also helps even out the experience for a group that might have one or two particularly strong players.

Linking Lines:

You all did a great job playing volleyball without using your legs. I loved seeing you using team work and helping each other, even when it was frustrating! Later today when we crack open the Bible we'll see a bunch of people who used team work like this with one of their friends who was disabled. When Jesus saw this teamwork, he got on board too.

CARRY YOUR FRIEND

You will need:

- Large piece of strong cardboard (e.g. whitegoods carton) that will support the weight of the average person in your group.

Form a team of 5: the four largest team members carry the smallest member of the team on the cardboard 'mat' a specified distance.

Variations

- Time this and compare with other teams.
- Time the first 'run' and then try to better it in subsequent runs
- If you have more than 5 people in your group, substitute in new team members



- Try to have all the people in your group carry a leader
- Create a simple obstacle course of objects to manoeuvre around or over.

Safety notes:

- This activity is actually easier with a mat that is slightly smaller than the person being carried, than using a mat that is too large. The slightly smaller surface is easier to stabilise.
- Include a leader in each team to help 'manage' the safety of the person being carried. If the group looks like it might drop the mat, this leader can intervene and support the person being carried so they don't hit the ground.
- This activity works with groups of any age, but the bigger they come the harder they fall – the smaller they are the more hilarious their teamwork.

Linking Lines:

Great Teamwork. I loved how you communicated and looked out for one another to move safely. When we get to open the Bible today, we'll see the story of a little group of friends who managed to get their paralysed friend on a mat, down the street and up a ladder onto the roof of a house with great teamwork like this!

WHO'S LEGS?

You will need:

- Tarp or large piece of cardboard – big enough for 3 people to stand behind unseen.

Make sure everyone in the group has been introduced to everyone else. Choose 3 volunteers. These people take off their socks & shoes and roll their jeans up to the knees (if in long legged pants). Everyone else turns their back and looks the other way. The 3 players stand in any order behind a sheet of cardboard or a tarp held up to cover everything except their legs.

The rest of the group then turn around and have to guess which legs belong to which person. When they have guessed successfully, choose another 3 people and repeat the process.

Linking Lines:

You did a great job working out whose legs belonged to who. Everyone has different legs – and that's great! Long legs, hairy legs, fast legs, muscly legs, dancing legs, bony legs. All wonderful. When we open the Bible together in a bit look out for what Jesus does for someone's legs...

CONTEXT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

THROUGH THE HOLE CHALLENGE

You will need:

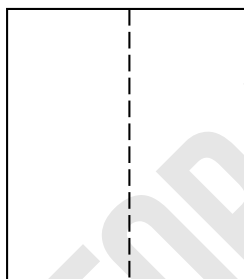
- Pieces of newspaper

Invite the group to form into pairs, and support this process so everyone is included – use a leader to form a pair if needed. Give each pair one sheet of newspaper. Announce the challenge is for each pair to make a hole in the newspaper large enough to get a person through it.

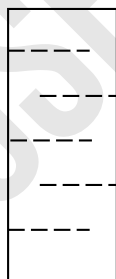
Set them to the task – and keep an encouraging commentary going as they attempt the challenge. Encourage even small achievements – like being able to get a hand or leg through.

After the pairs have done their best – emphasise how difficult a task this was – and affirm their creativity and cleverness.

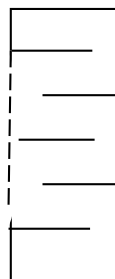
Demonstrate the solution following the pattern of folds and tears below.



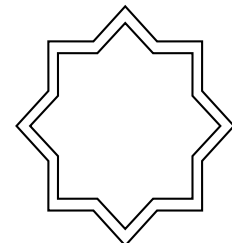
fold



tear



tear



unfold

Linking Lines:

Great job having a go at that challenge – that was really hard! You showed a lot of patience and creativity there. Somethings can be really hard. When we get to open the Bible today there are lots of things that are hard for different people; there are four friends who have the challenge of getting their sick friend on a stretcher up onto the roof; Jesus has the challenge of what to do when this sick person lands in front of him; the people watching have the challenge of working out what is going on!

WONDERING ABOUT THE WORLD

(watch the visual content for under 7s)

You will need:

- Styrofoam ball >10cm diameter (or premade paper Mache balloon globe) painted ocean blue
- Pre-cut pictures from old global awareness magazines (e.g. National Geographic, Time, Really Useful Gift Catalogue) Use a mix of 'natural wonder' and examples of struggle or human pain – don't include graphic or traumatising images.
- Glue sticks

Invite your group to sit in a circle – and place the pre-cut pictures and glue sticks in the middle with easy access for all.

Explain that you are going to cover the 'globe' with pictures filling it with different pictures of things. – both wonderful and sad that happen in the world.

Invite participants to look at the pictures and choose one to stick on the globe. Begin to pass the globe around – so each person can stick their picture on.

In this activity the **Linking Lines** are integrated into the activity.

As the group chooses their pictures and passes the globe around for gluing, invite those who are waiting for their turn with the globe and glue to tell the group what is in their picture. If a child is not sure how to describe the picture coach them with easy prompts like *"Tell us some of the colours"*; *"are there any people?"*; *"Tell us how the picture makes you feel"* to get them going.

Encourage those who have already glued on their picture to choose a second, and continue around the circle until the globe is covered. (If this takes too long you can leave blue patches as ocean between the pictures representing continents.)

Handle the discussion sensitively. You don't need to answer questions - questions are our linguistic device for expressing our pain.

Listen out for what children are really struggling with. Most conversations about suffering – even if they are set in 'why?' questions, are really pastoral conversations. The call in mission is to accompany children and young people and families in their encounter with God – not to deliver apologetics.

Here are a selection of things you might say in the midst of discussion – be ready with responses that point people to Jesus - and use any of these that are appropriate at the time. Our engagement with sin and suffering is a life-long process.



We can see that some parts of our world are really wonderful, and there are other places where things have gone wrong, not everything is good for everyone.

In the Bible there are many stories in which things have gone wrong, or there is suffering. In different stories bad things happen for different reasons – there’s not just one simple reason sometimes – but whatever happens God is concerned and involved. When things have gone wrong – God stays close and helps.

Just like us, people in the Bible wonder ‘Why is this happening? Why is it like this?’ In the midst of a complicated world God gives all of us the freedom to choose the most important things – how we treat other, what we value, being loving and truth telling.

Sometimes people use their freedom to be generous and helpful and kind, but others choose to use their freedom to be greedy, violent, selfish, evil, and this brings suffering. The Bible has a word for everything on the earth that goes against God’s ways of love and generosity and justice: The Bible’s word for everything against God’s good ways “Sin”. But just because something has gone wrong for a person doesn’t mean that person is to blame. Sin doesn’t work like that.

In the Story of Jesus from the Bible we are going to hear today, someone is completely paralysed, and we can see how some people around him are helpful and merciful and others are stuck thinking about themselves. Jesus makes it clear that his sins aren’t the cause of his disability. Jesus calls him forgiven and heals his body. Jesus deals with the things we do wrong, and the things wrong done to us.

PICK-A-PART HOUSES

See **Appendix 2.1** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Set of Cards using the pictures in Appendix 2.1. Stick to strong card or laminate for durability

Tell the group that the cards form pictures of different kinds of houses. The aim of the game is to pick up and put down cards until they have collected a set of four cards that belong together to make a picture of a house.

Deal each player 4 cards. Take turns to swap, put down, pick up as in the



game of fish until they have a complete set of one whole matching house.

The first person to create a complete house wins.

Linking Lines:

(do this as you play) Which of these houses do you think looks most like the house you live in? Where in the world, or when in history might you find these houses? Our Bible bit today happens inside, outside and on the roof of a house. The stories about Jesus and his friends in the Bible happened 2000 years ago in the Middle East in Israel and Egypt, around Syria and Greece and Italy. Which of these houses might look most like the house of that time?

CONTENT...

CONNECT CONTEXT **CONTENT** CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

OPENING THE BIBLE: HOLE IN THE ROOF READING

See **Appendix 2.2 & 2.3** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- A simple house made from a cardboard box (photocopy paper box/wine box is ideal).
- On the inside paste the text from Mark 2 in various pieces on the walls, and floor (see Appendix 2.2).
- Cut out a door, 3 windows and a hole in the roof. Paint rough brick work/wood work/sandpaper on the outside, and add a few plants.
- Check that all of the pieces of the reading can be seen by looking through one of the windows/doors/opening in the roof. It should be a fun challenge but not impossible.

Pass the box around the group and ask each person to look in through either the door, window or roof to read some verses. Keep the turns short and the house moving around the group. As the house is being passed, use the time to check understanding of what was just read, and review the story so far, by asking those who have read to remind the group of their part of the story.

If your group is not up to reading sentences then paste either selected words or pictures of the selected words (Appendix 2.3) in the house.



Use the box like 'Pass the Parcel' and explain that as you read from the Bible, you will pause on certain words and the person holding the house at that time, looks in through the doors and windows and roof to find the word you have paused on in the story.

Linking Lines:

That was tricky to see inside to read! You did well finding different ways to see in to the house. Did you notice in the story we just read how different people got in to meet Jesus in different ways? Some easier than others. Did you also notice that Jesus wasn't worried by people breaking in the roof? He was more concerned with other things that were wrong. Did you pick up what they were?

OPENING THE BIBLE: GOT IT

You will need:

- Sign post to Capernaum
- house
- mat
- paralysed man (use an action man doll wrapped securely in a blanket)
- cardboard door
- large google eyes on a piece of card

Place the following items featured in Mark 2 in the middle of your group. Explain that you will read from the Bible. If you mention anything that can be seen in the middle of the group, anyone who notices can reach in and grab that item and call "got it!" Return items to the middle and read on.

Items: Sign post to Capernaum, house (also applies to 'home'), mat, paralysed man (use an action man doll wrapped securely in a blanket), cardboard door, large google eyes on a piece of card (applies to see, saw, seen).

Return all items to the middle and read again – this time perhaps making the rule that a person can't grab two items in a row, to even out participation.

Linking Lines:

You were fantastic at jumping in to grab the things you heard in the story. Quick reflexes and wonderful enthusiasm! I think the four who brought their paralysed friend to the house, up the ladder onto the roof, dug through and lowered him down were really quick thinkers too, ready to grab the opportunity to help their buddy. Jesus was ready to grab the opportunity to set some wrong things right – like the blaming of the people standing around, and to show that the paralysed person wasn't suffering because he'd done anything wrong.

OPENING THE BIBLE: KEY PHRASE

¹Jesus went back to Capernaum, and a few days later people heard that he was at **home**. ²Then so many of them came to the **house** that there wasn't even standing room left in front of the door. Jesus was still teaching ³when four people came up, carrying a **paralysed man** on a **mat**. ⁴But because of the crowd, they could not get him to Jesus. So they made a hole in the roof above him and let the **paralysed man** down in front of everyone. ⁵When Jesus saw how much faith they had, he said to the **paralysed man**, "My friend, your **sins** are **forgiven**." ⁶Some of the teachers of the Law of Moses were sitting there. They started wondering, ⁷"Why would he say such a thing? He must think he is God! Only God can **forgive sins**." ⁸Right away, Jesus knew what they were thinking, and he said, "Why are you thinking such things? ⁹Is it easier for me to tell this **paralysed man** that his **sins** are **forgiven** or to tell him to get up and pick up his **mat** and go on **home**? ¹⁰I will show you that the Son of Man has the right to **forgive sins** here on earth." So Jesus said to the **paralysed man**, ¹¹"Get up! **Pick up** your **mat** and go on **home**." ¹²The man got right up. He **picked up** his **mat** and went out while everyone watched in amazement. They praised God and said, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Explain the following key phrases from the passage and their actions.

Home – arms up, bent at the elbows crossed overhead to form a flat roof.

mat – lie flat and face down on the ground

paralysed man – lie on your side

sins – double thumbs down

forgiven/forgive – double thumbs up

pick up – do a haul over the shoulder

Practice the actions a few times, and then read the passage and allow everyone to join in the actions. Divide into pairs, giving each pair a copy of the text. One person reads, the other person does the actions. Let them swap roles and do it one more time.

Linking Lines:

Double thumbs up for everyone – great acting and great reading. There was a lot of up and down in that story – did you notice how in the middle of the story some of the people listening to Jesus got stuck on the thumbs down idea that this paralysed person had done something wrong? Thumbs down – in the Jewish culture they use the word “sin” for things that are against God’s way. Did you also notice how Jesus replaces thumbs down – sin – with thumbs up – forgiveness. The paralysed person had a whole new way of living – which is what it’s like when we find God’s forgiveness – thumbs up.

OPENING THE BIBLE: PAINT AS YOU GO

You will need:

- 8 glass coffee jars and eight paint brushes
- Paint in the 8 basic colours – Brown orange red blue green purple yellow black
- Butchers paper or flipchart on a board
- Copies of the passage

Give each person in the group a jar/cup containing only a small amount (less than a centimetre) of one colour paint and a paint brush. Each person should have a different colour. As with any painting, smocks, a drop sheet, soapy water and towel at the ready are always a good idea. This shouldn't be a messy activity – but you never know....

Clip a large piece of butcher's paper onto a board. As you read the Bible passage invite individuals to come up to the paper, one by one, and paint the part that you have just read about using their colour. For example:

¹Jesus went back to Capernaum, *(The person with brown paint draws a street sign)*

and a few days later people heard that he was at home. *(The person with orange paint adds a house.)*

²Then so many of them came to the house that there wasn't even standing room left in front of the door. *(The person with blue and red paint add crowd outside the house)*

Jesus *(The person with green adds Jesus)*

was still teaching ³when four people *(The person with purple adds the four people)*

came up, carrying a paralysed man on a mat. *(The person with yellow adds the paralysed man)*

⁴But because of the crowd, they could not get him to Jesus. So they made a hole in the roof *(person with brown adds a roof, person with black adds the hole)*

above him and let the man down in front of everyone. ⁵When Jesus saw how much faith they had, he said to the paralysed man, "My friend, your sins are forgiven." *(person with red draws a big pile of red sin, person with yellow puts a cross through it for forgiveness)*

⁶Some of the teachers of the Law of Moses were sitting there. *(person with blue adds some more people sitting)*



They started wondering, *(person with green adds question marks above their heads)*

⁷"Why would he say such a thing? He must think he is God! Only God can forgive sins." ⁸Right away, Jesus knew what they were thinking, and he said, "Why are you thinking such things? ⁹Is it easier for me to tell this paralysed man that his sins are forgiven or to tell him to get up and pick up his mat and go on home? *(Person with orange adds extra question marks over Jesus' head)*

¹⁰I will show you that the Son of Man has the right to forgive sins here on earth." *(People with blue & green add a planet earth)*

So Jesus said to the man, ¹¹"Get up! Pick up your mat and go on home." ¹²The man got right up. He picked up his mat and went out while everyone watched in amazement.

They praised God and said, "We have never seen anything like this!" *(Person with yellow draws man walking)*

Linking Lines:

What fantastic painting you have all done, and how wonderfully you've worked together. Great team painting. I love the way you made space for each other and worked together. Did you notice the team work in the story? Four friends who brought their friend to Jesus? And did you notice the people who didn't make space for others, and the way Jesus made space for the paralysed person?

CONSIDER...

CONNECT | CONTEXT | CONTENT | **CONSIDER** | CONSEQUENCE

Choose one or perhaps two of these activities to give space to your group to have thinking and processing time for the Bible story. Invite them to talk about the way they can connect with the story using the 'Has anything like this ever happened to you?' prompts suggested below.

Be respectful and careful not to over direct the children's responses or to try to turn the experience of the Bible story into a comprehension exercise or an exegesis session or 'teaching' time. In missional Bible engagement we are praying that children, young people and families will meet Jesus, and encounter God, and we trust the Holy Spirit to be working as we make opportunity for this and come alongside to share in the process.

Has This Ever Happened To You?

- *You tried to see someone famous but couldn't get in?*
- *You were really sick for a long time?*
- *You climbed up on the roof?*
- *You've helped a friend who was a bit stuck?*

Several of the 'Consider' activities focus on the idea of action or movement. An idea to explore is the paralysing effect of evil. Evil stops things from working well, it frustrates us. E.g. Food is meant to get to those who are hungry, but sometimes the evil of war sabotages it.

CLAYMATION**You will need:**

- Camera
- Plasticine
- Cardboard boxes
- Twigs, stones, leaves etc
- Paper and markers

Give each person some plasticine, and work on making the cast of the story. Use cardboard boxes and some found natural objects, like stones/leafy twigs to add a bit of scenery. Try making a short animation of the man getting up picking up his mat and walking, and the crowd being surprised. Each person is responsible for moving their figure just a little, as you take a series of pictures to form the animation. In between moves, when you are actually taking the shot ask everyone to have hands on heads, so there are no hands in the images. When you have taken the photos watch them all quickly in succession. If you have the technology and are able to save your animation to USB, this would make a great gift to give each kid – or to publish on your team website! As you capture every movement, consider how precious every movement must have been to someone who had been paralysed.

Linking Lines:

Has anything like this ever happened to you? Anything like what happened in the story? Were you ever sick for a long time – or couldn't move – like the paralysed person. Have you ever helped a friend who was stuck? What was that like?

Who has climbed up on the roof? What was going on?

There's lots of action going on in this story – things going right and things going wrong...which things are a bit like something that has happened for you? Which person in the story do you understand the best?

WIRE AND WOOL ACTION PEOPLE

You will need:

- Craft wire/Chenille stems
- Coloured yarn
- Modelling clay
- Strong card squares
- Wire coat hangers (Optional)
- Fishing line (Optional)

Provide plenty of pipe cleaners or craft wire and wire snips. Encourage making people in lots of different action poses. Once the basic shape has been formed in wire, wind wool around the wire covering the 'skeleton' and thickening it (use double strands to work faster).

This activity can be extended by either:

- making the people into a mobile, hanging them with fishing line from a coat hanger (remember to fold the hook right over the form a loop for safety.)
- mounting the action figures on a piece of wood or card with a small blob of modelling clay.

Linking Lines:

Has anything like this happened to you – that you haven't been able to move part of your body normally? – or what is the most amazing movement your body has learned to do?

Imagine not being able to move well, and then suddenly being able to move. I wonder what that might be like? What would you want someone to do or say if that happened to you?

PARALYSED PERSON

You will need:

- Old stockings 2 pairs per person
- Newspaper
- Coloured wool
- Markers
- Fabric scraps
- Buttons/goggle eyes

Give each person 2 pairs of old stockings/pantyhose. Cut one pair at the knees and tie off the ends (these will be the arms). Scrunch up newspaper to fill the stockings. Join together at waists. Scrunch newspaper to fill one of the cut off bits to make a head, attach to the body. Decorate face with goggle/

button eyes, felt mouth, wool hair. Your budget may stretch to supplying a pair of shorts & t-shirt (child sizes will work fine) from the op shop, or perhaps from your own supply of cast offs at home. Put the word out early at church for a collection and you might find you are over supplied!

Linking Lines:

Has anything like this ever happened to you? – you had to be carried somewhere? You couldn't get into a house and had to go in a different unusual way?

You've wondered why some people have difficulties – moving or hearing or seeing or speaking – and wondered if that is fair?

If this person that you are making – who needs to be carried to get places – was your friend, what games do you think you would like playing together?

What would be fun about having a friend like this?

SHADOW PUPPETS

See **Appendix 2.4** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Split pins
- Bamboo skewers
- Template (app 2.4)
- White sheet *
- Rope * (to hang sheet)
- Pegs * (to hang sheet)

(*Optional)

Make shadow puppets with split pin joints and bamboo skewers operating as rods.

Give each person a template from Appendix 2.4. Children younger than Grade 4 may benefit from having the pieces pre-cut, as a time saving measure. Show the group how to assemble the joints with split pins and attach skewers to the limbs.

On a sunny day, you can use natural light and a sheet of white cloth to make a shadow puppet theatre to demonstrate your moving puppets.

Linking Lines:

These puppets can't move unless you make them! You can decide which characters in the story you want to make them, and give them words and actions and feelings. If you make your puppet the paralysed person what will he do or say – what's his character like?

If you make your puppet Jesus – what will he be like? What will he say and do?

WEAVE A MAT

You will need:

- Pre-cut frames – A4 coloured card with slices ~1cm apart from top to bottom, leaving a strong 3cm frame all the way around(a)
- A4 Coloured Paper cut in 1cm strips (a)
- Cloth cut in 1cm strips (b)
- Card mat (b)
- Cardboard loom - A5 sized card with slits cut along top and bottom edges 1cm apart(c)
- Coloured yarn (c)

Choose one or more of these methods of weaving a mat:

Method a) Give each person an A4 Paper frame, and show them how to weave paper strips in and out across the frame

Method b) Give each person an A4 card frame and show them how to weave cloth strips in and out across the frame

Method c) Use coloured yarn.

Give each person an A5 card. Wind strong string around each slit from top to bottom up and down to create the warp strands on a cardboard loom. Secure firmly, and slightly bend the card to make threading the wool strands across easier. Thread individual lengths of yarn in and out, creating a pattern. (This will take a long time.) Be prepared to give a zip lock bag of spare yarn to take home to complete this. Be sensitive to the kids who will get absorbed in this activity, and those whose attention won't last as long and have an alternative on standby.

Linking Lines:

In the Story of Jesus from the Bible the paralysed person was carried by friends on his mat. When Jesus speaks to him, he tells him to get up and to carry his mat home. This is the reversal, the opposite of how he arrived: the mat carried him, now he carries the mat! Jesus shows his power to change things – to reverse things that are wrong to make them right, to replace frustration – being stuck, with forgiveness that helps us move on.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

TOP TEN OR TOP FIVE

You will need:

- Butcher's paper/Flip chart and markers.

This can be done in pairs as a competitive game, or as a simple whole group activity (which is recommended). If you need the element of 'competition' to rev this up, make it a 'if we get to 10, we'll open a bag of chips to share amongst us' challenge. The challenge is simply to call one category, e.g.: 'Top ten ways of entering a house' and 'Go!!' The group starts to call out ideas. Perhaps use a piece of butcher's paper to scribble them down to keep track. You may even like to use a timer to record your best time. Other examples include:

- things you can do with your legs
- ways of entering a house
- ways of carrying a paralysed person
- ways of drawing a crowd
- ways to get famous
- actual words you can remember from the Bible reading nouns verbs adjectives, adverbs only

Linking Lines:

These are really fantastic Top Five/Ten lists – There are lots of great ways of doing things. Some ways are really wrong – and we can tell what they are because they aren't fair for everyone, or they hurt someone. But that still leaves lots of top ways of living well. Jesus welcomes us whatever way we find to get to know him. I wonder what your top five ways of getting to know Jesus are?

WHERE ARE YOU? DECISION HOUSES

You will need:

- Cardboard box house (see Content activity for instructions)
- Chenille stems or plasticine

Use a box to make a basic house. Cover with bits of wood-grain contact, or sand paper or paint with paint containing glue and sawdust.

Reuse the house from the Opening the Bible Content activity above, or if you did a different Content activity, have the group make a house together. As you talk through the different responses to Jesus.

Each person also makes a 'mini-me model for themselves, either out of chenille stem or plasticine.

Invite each person one by one to place their 'mini-me' somewhere in or on or around the house, to indicate what they are thinking/feeling about Jesus right now.

- In the crowd outside: not particularly interested in Jesus, but I don't mind him.
- Going in through the door: I want to find out more about Jesus.
- On the roof: I'm really keen to get closer to Jesus and have him as my friend
- Inside lying on the floor: I know Jesus can help me

Linking Lines:

As we read the stories of Jesus from the Bible we see that people come close to Jesus or move away – wherever you are and whatever is going on and whatever your questions or problems are, Jesus is interested and cares about making what is wrong right.

CHOOSE A PATH BOARD GAME

See **Appendix 2.5** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Print out of board game (enlarged) App 2.5
- Plasticine
- Dice

Give each person a piece of plasticine and invite them to make a 'mini-figure' of themselves to use as their token to move on the board. Place all tokens at 'start'. Take turns to roll dice and move forward the number of spaces shown. When a player gets to a fork in the path, read the choices of the two paths and let them decide which one to take.

Play as a game first and don't make too much of the weight of the decisions.

After finishing the game, review the different paths and invite each person to move their token to the place they really think is for them now.

Linking Lines:

In our game we got to choose different paths, depending on what we think about Jesus. In our lives we get to choose for real – if we're not sure about Jesus and think he's weird we can watch and ask questions; or we can hang out with other people who are learning more about Jesus. If we want

to know Jesus as a friend we can choose that – and maybe we can ask a friend who already knows Jesus to help us. Some days we might be a bit more like one thing or another. That's ok! But Jesus is always ready to welcome us or answer our questions, or remind us that evil is not the boss

HYPOTHETICALS – WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Set up the following hypotheticals. Explain what a hypothetical is – a story you have to put yourself inside and think about what would be the right thing to do in the situation, and whether you would do it. In each scenario, start with letting every one wrestle with thinking about it from the 'you' perspective indicated in the description; then move to challenging particular people with taking on the perspective of the other characters.

E.g. Sam, you are a teacher at school, and you hear about the bully being sick. What do you hope will happen? What will you say when he comes back to school? Etc...

Scenario 1 extra roles: doctor, the paralysed friend, paralysed friend's family

You have a friend who has been paralysed from birth. You hear that there is someone who could cure him, but you will have to find 3 other people to help you, and carry him there yourselves...would you do it?

Scenario 2: the brother, the bully, your mum, your teacher at school

There is a terrible bully who picks on everyone, including you, at school. One day on the way home from school he suddenly becomes sick and collapses on your front door step. Your older brother brings the bully in, but he has to go out to footy training, so he asks you to look after the sick bully and give him food and water to make him better. Do you look after your enemy, or leave him to suffer?

Scenario 3

You have had an illness that has made you unable to move around. Your friends say they know someone who can help and offer to carry you there. When you get there, they say they have to take you up a ladder on to the roof, and then let you down through a hole into the roof. Do you agree to them doing this?

CORNER OF THE MAT PRAYERS

See **Appendix 2.6** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Large piece of A1 white card
- blue, black and red paint
- Brushes,
- Tub of soapy water, drop sheet, old towel, smocks/old shirts/garbage bags
- Potato cut in half and question mark hollowed out on both cut surfaces
- Glue sticks
- Glitter
- String or yarn

Prepare the piece of card by drawing in lines with black marker to mark out the 4 sections as pictured (See appendix 2.6).

Set out the materials to be used for each section around the card.

Sitting with your group around the card explain that you are going to make a prayer mat with four different prayers, shown in four different patterns on the mat.

Go through each of the prayers – and explain the pattern that can be added to that part of the mat.

Invite each person to choose which section of the mat they would like to work on.

As you create the patterns remind the group of the prayers in each section, and invite them to think about which prayer they would like to pray.

When the mat is finished, place the mat on the ground and invite the whole group to gather around it. Then invite them to move to stand along the side closest to a prayer that they would like to pray.

- **I am amazed by Jesus power – glitter flashes**
- **I am puzzled by what Jesus says –blue potato print Question marks**
- **I hope Jesus will help me with my struggles - tangled yarn dipped in black paint**
- **I want Jesus to help my friend/someone I know in need –red hand prints**

Linking Lines:

when we talk to God – we call it prayer – and prayer can be lots of different things: prayer can be words, feelings, actions, silence. In the Bible story some people talked to Jesus directly with their questions, some people sat quietly and watched, some people acted in a bold way to show Jesus that they trusted in his power to make bodies better and to replace frustration with forgiveness.

DAY 2

TEENS

Session 2 : Who can forgive sins?

Forgiveness can replace frustration

EVIL IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus can deal with the things we do wrong and with the things done wrong to us.

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Carry Your Friend...
- Guessing Game: Who's Legs
- Through the Hole Challenge

2. Context:

- Paralysis Challenges

3. Content:

- Reflections

4. Consider:

- Claymation
- Top Ten

5. Consequence:

- Ways to get to Jesus
- Hypotheticals

CONNECT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Take turns in the group to name a time when we had to forgive or when someone had to forgive us.

Was it easy or tricky? Did it take a long time to happen?

CARRY YOUR FRIEND

In teams of 5: your team must carry the smallest member of the team on a cardboard 'mat'. Use large fridge box/washing machine box sides. Note that this activity is actually easier with a mat that is slightly smaller than the person being carried, than if the mat is too large.

Round 1: Simple endurance; all teams start at the same time and begin carrying their mat. If the paralytic is dropped at all (even one corner) the team is eliminated. The last team to be still going is the winner.

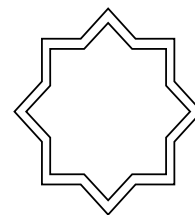
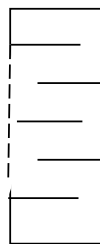
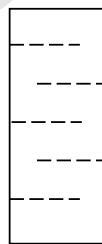
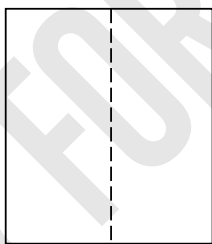
Round 2: Obstacle race

GUESSING GAME: WHO'S LEGS?

Make sure everyone in the group has been introduced to everyone else. Choose 3 people. These people take off their socks & shoes and roll their jeans up to the knees (if long legged pants). Everyone else turns their back and looks the other way. The 3 players stand in any order behind a sheet of cardboard or a tarp held up to cover everything except their legs. The rest of the group then turn around and have to guess which legs belong to who. When they have guessed successfully, choose another 3 people and repeat the process.

THROUGH THE HOLE CHALLENGE

Work in pairs. Give each pair one sheet of newspaper. The challenge of this activity is to make a hole in the newspaper and get each person through it. (The trick is to tear in the following pattern...)



CONTEXT...

CONNECT — **CONTEXT** — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

What does being a paralytic mean for us now?

What would being a paralytic have been like in Jesus' day?

PARALYSIS CHALLENGES

As a whole group see what it's like to try to be paralysed.

- a) Time how long you can go without a person moving.
- b) Choose just two people to be paralysed while the rest of the group has something to eat and drink. Encourage the group to be helpful to them, but keep track of how tricky this is. You might want to just do this with one leader to start with so that no one gets humiliated.

Wrap this up with unpacking the social difficulties as well as the practical difficulties of being paralysed. It's hard to seem really cool when someone else is spilling your drink over you.

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

The Gospel of Mark is not concerned with every fact and detail, but telling a story of how Jesus' life was important. What in this story tells us something about Jesus?

What would be three important things that we need to know about you?

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

What do you think was happening in verses 6 to 7?

Have you ever seen something and not believed your eyes? What was it?

CLAYMATION

Give each person some plasticine, and work on making the cast of the story. Use cardboard boxes and some found natural objects, like stones/leafy twigs to add a bit of scenery. Try making a short animation of the man getting up, picking up his mat and walking, and the crowd being surprised. Each person is responsible for moving their figure just a little, as you take a series of pictures to form the animation. In between moves, when you are actually taking the shot, ask everyone to have hands on heads, so there are no hands in the images. When you have taken the photos, watch them all quickly in succession. If you have the technology, and are able to save your animation and burn it to disks, this would make a great gift to give each young person or to publish on your team website! As you capture every movement, consider how precious every movement must have been to someone who had been paralysed.

TOP TEN

This can be done in pairs as a competitive game, or as a simple whole group activity, which of course is recommended. If you need the element of 'competition' to rev this up, make it a 'if we get to 10, we'll open a bag of chips to share amongst us' challenge. The challenge is simply to call one category. e.g.: 'Top Ten ways of entering a house' and 'Go!!' The group starts to call out ideas. Perhaps use a piece of butcher's paper to scribble them down to keep track. You may even like to use a timer to record your best time.

Top Ten:

- things you can do with your legs
- ways of entering a house
- ways of carrying a paralysed person
- ways of drawing a crowd
- ways to get famous
- actual words you can remember from the Bible reading: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs only

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER **CONSEQUENCE**

Do you ever confess your sins to God? Do you ever say sorry to God? How do you do it? What do you say?

What does it mean to be forgiven by God?

What difference does it make to know that you are forgiven?

Jesus taught us a prayer called the Lord's Prayer, and one of the lines is:

'Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.'

What is the connection between being forgiven by God and forgiving others?

WAYS TO GET TO JESUS

In this story people find some imaginative ways to get to Jesus; obviously going through the roof takes the cake! Across history people have come to Jesus in a number of different ways ... through reading the bible, through a vision, through the experience of a Christian community or family, through hearing preaching, through the compassion and just actions of others, through a miraculous event.

Set up a cross in the middle of your space. Using coloured strips of paper, create as many paths as there are people in your group heading in towards the cross. Ask each person to pick a path. Give them a blob of coloured plasticine or modelling clay to make their own little avatar or 'mini-me'. Ask them to think about what kind of path has led them to Jesus. Ask them to put themselves somewhere on a path, and to name the kind of path it has been.

HYPOTHETICALS

Explain what a hypothetical is: a story that you have to put yourself inside of and think about what would be the right thing to do in the situation, and whether you would do it.

Set up the following Hypotheticals. In each scenario, start with letting every one wrestle with thinking about it from the 'you' perspective indicated in the description, then move to challenging particular people with taking on the perspective of the other characters. E.g. "Sam, you are a teacher at school, and you hear about the bully being sick. What do you hope will happen? What will you say when he comes back to school?"

Scenario 1: extra roles: doctor, the paralysed friend, paralysed friend's family

You have a friend who has been paralysed from birth. You hear that there is someone who could cure him, but you will have to find three other people to help you, and carry him there yourself. Would you do it?

Scenario 2: the brother, the bully, your mum, your teacher at school

DAY 2

PARENT CONVERSATION

FORGIVENESS CAN REPLACE FRUSTRATION

What's the Story?

“They started it!”

“It wasn't me!”

“It's your fault...”

Blame games. How often do you hear these words fly around between your kids?

But it's not just the kids is it? Our kids are just like the rest of us, but with the filters off.

They say things out loud, but we all have the same impulse.

Blame: It's almost a human addiction. When there is something awry we want to know why. Our curiosity wants a cause, an explanation. Our sense of justice wants it settled. We want to find the one to blame, and – let's be honest – we want to make sure it isn't us.

But there are lots of situations in which we can't just tick one person's blame box. So much of life is complicated:

- Why is one person sick and another well?
- Why did I lose my job when I was more dedicated than my co-worker?
- Why one of my kids is struggling with maths and the other is blitzing it?

Looking for someone to blame can grip us and hold us down, paralyse us. We get stuck with this one question going around and around inside us – always frustrating, never answered. Maybe you've seen this in your kids – stuck on feeling wronged and wanting someone to blame, they withdraw and lose out on life, feeling miserable.

Helping our kids learn the value of forgiveness, and modelling it for them in our own relationships is challenging but a powerful tool for helping them deal with frustration and get their mojo back.

Forgiveness isn't validating what someone did. It isn't saying that something wrong doesn't matter. It isn't excusing injustice.

Forgiveness is refusing to be defined by the wrong that was done to us. Forgiveness is not letting the wrongs that we encounter leave labels on us.

Blame is about labels, and we can waste hours of our lives trying to peel the labels off ourselves and stick the blame on someone else, only to have them try to peel it off and stick it back on us. I bet you've seen your kids do that.

Forgiveness doesn't depend on someone saying sorry. It doesn't depend on someone owning up. Forgiveness is the wise way through.

Forgiveness says, 'Wrong has been done. But let's not allow fear from that wrong in the past take control and freeze up our future.'

Forgiveness says, 'Wrong has been done, but let's not keep doing it. Let's turn the page...'

(continued...)

Share Your Story

- What are the situations that bring out the blaming in your household?
- Which things in family life are easy to forgive? Hard to forgive?
- Has there been a time when you've seen your kid labelled and treated unfairly or been limited by the label?

What's God's Story?

Forgiveness is totally on brand for God - it's one of God's catchphrases. Forgiveness comes in two flavours:

1. God's offer of forgiveness to us, when we've messed up. Phew.
2. The forgiveness we have for others when they mess us up.

God knows we need both kinds.

There are stacks of stories in the Bible where God shows up with forgiveness for people who have seriously messed things up. Sometimes it's tough for them to accept that God is coming at them with love and forgiveness, with open arms of welcome, and a way to heal what has been broken. Sometimes it's tough for others around them to accept that God's basic deal is forgiveness, not bolts of lightning and smiting.

There's a story of Jesus in the Bible where a paralysed person is lowered through the roof by some friends in a daring 'Mission Impossible' style break-in bid to have him healed. Jesus is taken by this. He looks at this guy, immobile on a pallet, and he realises that the crowd around are thinking, 'Ah! His illness or disability is punishment for some terrible wrong.' And Jesus will have none of that. He says to the guy, 'You're forgiven' – and that causes the yogurt to hit the fan in the crowd. To back it up, Jesus also heals his illness, and he gets up and walks home. What were the judgey crowd meant to think now?

How about us? Do we look for a payback-smiting-you'll-get-yours kind of universe and a God that Rules it? Or do we dare to accept that life offers us second and third and fourth chances and a God that never gives up on loving us?

In the ancient world there were plenty of cultures that honoured gods that were bent on punishment. But the ancient Jewish clans living along the Jordan, and the first century Christians spread across Roman Empire, left us stories and faith in a different God – a cosmos creator, a life giver – who loves human beings. When we are most stuck and paralysed by fear, God comes at us with forgiveness and a fresh start.

Hear/Read More Mark 2:1-11

DAY 2

BIBLE DRAMA

Characters:

- Story Teller
- 4 Carriers
- Sick person (this person should be the smallest, lightest person you have available.)

Props:

- Stretcher
- Wheelbarrow
- Sleeping bag
- Bible



18

Story Teller speaks in a loud, expressive declamatory voice, like a circus spruiker. The story is read from the Bible; it is appropriate for the story teller to have a bible in their hand. Story teller must differentiate between spruiking the story and the asides to the friends and the crowd.

Story teller: Gather in! Gather in! There's an amazing story to be heard. Gather in! Gather in! Just like the day 2000 years ago when people in a little city called 'Capernaum' heard that Jesus was teaching in a house, in a street, in their little city. It's a story from the Bible. Jesus went back to Capernaum, and a few days later people heard that he was at home. Then so many of them came to the house that there wasn't even standing room left in front of the door.

4 friends enter with 5th person on piggy back

4 Carriers: Excuse me ... excuse me ... sorry, oops, sorry, sick friend on a stretcher, excuse me. Is this the way in to see Jesus? Sorry for interrupting"

Story Teller: *(to carriers)* That's ok, all forgiven. *(to audience)* Back to our story. But because of the crowd, they could not get him to Jesus.

4 friends enter with 5th person in wheelbarrow. One friend wheels barrow, others go ahead and move crowd away.

4 Carriers: Sick friend in a wheelbarrow. Ladies and gentlemen, a man in a wheel barrow, that's it, move aside, thankyou, wheelbarrow coming through. Step aside, please, sick man in a wheelbarrow..."

Story Teller: *(slightly frustrated)* What are you doing?

Carriers: Our friend is paralysed – he can't move a muscle, so we're trying to bring him to Jesus. We reckon Jesus will be able to do something to help. Sorry for interrupting,

Story Teller: That's OK. All forgiven, but there's no point coming this way – the place is chockers – full as a goog, maxed out, packed to the rafters.

Carrier 1: The rafters? ... packed to the rafters ... that's it ... packed to the rafters!
We'll get him in through the roof!

Carrier 2: That's it the roof! To the roof! Ditch the wheel barrow.

Carrier 3: We're going up buddy!

(4 friends roll the sick man onto a mat and being pulling him along the ground feet first)

Sick man: What? No! The roof? Not the roof? I'm the one who has to go through it!
Don't do this to me! I'm paralysed!

Carrier 4: It's for your own good.

Carrier 1: You won't feel a thing!

Carrier 2: It'll be worth it to get you to Jesus.

Sick man: What if I don't make it?

(friends all exit behind back drop)

Story Teller: So they made a hole in the roof above Jesus and let the man down in front of everyone.

(from behind the backdrop "Ahhhh!")

Story teller looks around behind backdrop

Story Teller: (describing what they see behind the backdrop) There he goes – everyone duck! He's about to land ... phew!

(sound effects: crash)



19

Story Teller: When Jesus saw how much faith they had, he said to the crippled man, "My friend, your sins are forgiven." Some of the teachers of the Law of Moses were sitting here. They started wondering, ⁷"Why would he say such a thing? He must think he is God! Only God can forgive sins." Right away, Jesus knew what they were thinking, and he said, "Why are you thinking such things? Is it easier for me to tell this crippled man that his sins are forgiven or to tell him to get up and pick up his mat and go on home? I will show you that the Son of Man has the right to forgive sins here on earth." So Jesus said to the man, "Get up! Pick up your mat and go on home." The man got right up. He picked up his mat and went out while everyone watched in amazement.

Sick man walks happily out from behind backdrop and through the crowd.

Sick man: Sorry for interrupting

Story Teller: That's Ok. All forgiven – right?

Sick man: All forgiven!

Story Teller: They praised God and said, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Four friends stagger out from behind backdrop with aching backs.

Four friends: Hey! Wait for us, we're your friends remember!

(seeing the abandoned props)

Four friends: I bags the wheelbarrow! *(all race to wheelbarrow – one person makes it first, but gets left behind by others who refuse to wheel them)*

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DAY 3

Who touched me? Why bother?

THEME WORDS

Jesus uses his power to help those who need it most.

Hope can replace helplessness

Trouble is not the boss

BIBLE

Mark 5:21-43

Jesus heals a young girl and an older woman

SONGS

Who Can Trust in Jesus (C)

Oh Have You Heard? (S)

Busy Busy Busy Busy (S)

INTRODUCTION

Why trouble the teacher? You can hear what's going on in these guys' minds – Why trouble the teacher? It's too late - too much trouble, she's only a girl, not worth his attention – why trouble him, it's too much trouble. He's already been interrupted, there are many more crowding around. Too much trouble, and she's a lost cause, an insignificant girl, and beyond help. Trouble.

But trouble is not the Boss – Jesus is the boss. Nothing is too much trouble, there are no lost causes, no one not worth it, no one beyond help, no one beyond hope. Wherever trouble is, Jesus is up for it. If it's far down the road, or so close it snags his clothes, if it's old and wrinkly or young and fragile, if its bleeding or gasping, withering or fainting, if its grasping or slipping through our fingers ... Jesus feels trouble, senses need, knows the extent of the damage, the progress of death and the power needed to turn trouble on its heels and send it in the opposite direction. It's where he directs his power; to where help and hope are needed most.

MARK 5:21-43

A Dying Girl and a Sick Woman (*Matthew 9.18-26; Luke 8.40-56*)

²¹Once again Jesus got into the boat and crossed Lake Galilee. Then as he stood on the shore, a large crowd gathered around him. ²²The person in charge of the Jewish meeting place was also there. His name was Jairus, and when he saw Jesus, he went over to him. He knelt at Jesus' feet ²³and started begging him for help. He said, "My daughter is about to die! Please come and touch her, so she will get well and live." ²⁴Jesus went with Jairus. Many people followed along and kept crowding around. ²⁵In the crowd was a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶She had gone to many doctors, and they had not done anything except cause her a lot of pain. She had paid them all the money she had. But instead of getting better, she only got worse. ²⁷The woman had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him in the crowd and barely touched his clothes. ²⁸She had said to herself, "If I can just touch his clothes, I will get well." ²⁹As soon as she touched them, her bleeding stopped, and she knew she was well. ³⁰At that moment Jesus felt power go out from him. He turned to the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹His disciples said to him, "Look at all these people crowding around you! How can you ask who touched you?" ³²But Jesus turned to see who had touched him. ³³The woman knew what had happened to her. She came shaking with fear and knelt down in front of Jesus. Then she told him the whole story. ³⁴Jesus said to the woman, "You are now well because of your faith. May God give you peace! You are healed, and you will no longer be in pain." ³⁵While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from Jairus' home and said, "Your daughter has died! Why bother the teacher anymore?" ³⁶Jesus heard what they said, and he said to Jairus, "Don't worry. Just have faith!" ³⁷Jesus did not let anyone go with him except Peter and the two brothers, James and John. ³⁸They went home with Jairus and saw the people crying and making a lot of noise. ³⁹Then Jesus went inside and said to them, "Why are you crying and carrying on like this? The child isn't dead. She is just asleep." ⁴⁰But the people laughed at him. After Jesus had sent them all out of the house, he took the girl's father and mother and his three disciples and went to where she was. ⁴¹⁻⁴²He took the twelve-year-old girl by the hand and said, "Talitha, koum!" which means, "Little girl, get up!" The girl got right up and started walking around. Everyone was greatly surprised. ⁴³But Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened. Then he said, "Give her something to eat."

DAY 3

TEAM STUDY

Session 3: Who touched me? Why bother?

Hope can replace Helplessness

TROUBLE IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus uses his power to help those who need it most

Opening the Bible: Key words - 'crowd' and 'touch'

Give each person a copy of the Bible passage (Mark 5:21-43) and announce that there are two key actions in this reading. Whenever the word 'CROWD' occurs, everyone must bunch together. Whenever the word 'TOUCH' occurs, every person must touch the back of another person's t-shirt. (This doesn't have to be in a neat circle; random is ok). The last of these is in verse 33. So ask the group to sit down and relax during the rest of the reading.

Touch:

Appropriate safe touch is really important for human nurture and health. Start your session with a group shoulder rub circle, a group hug, or (if you're uncomfortable about those) pass the peace and shake hands with everyone in the group.

There is particular significance in both the woman touching Jesus and in Jesus taking the little girl's hand. The woman's bleeding made her ritually impure, so anyone coming into contact with her was defiled. (Lev 15:25) If the little girl was, as everyone believed, dead, then Jesus was defiling himself in touching a corpse. (Num 19:11) In small groups consider: was Jesus made ritually unclean? Is it possible for Jesus to be unclean?

Where else in the bible are there suggestions that Jesus was defiled?

What purpose was served, and effect made by Jesus being 'touched' or touching someone who is impure?

Prayer.

Trace your hand onto a piece of paper. Pray through the following ideas suggested by the passage:

How you are impure, unclean or dead?

Who are you called to reach out to?

If you were lying down, close to death, all hope gone, and Jesus took your hand, what would he say to you?

Pray for the young and the old who are needing Jesus' touch today.

Pray for faith (and write it across your hand one letter on each knuckle)

Ages and Stages:

Make a time line of all of your team's ages, from the youngest to the oldest. Share with one another what the challenges in following Jesus are at your particular age.

What is easier at your age, do you think, than at another stage of life?

Do you think there are certain ages at which you are more useful to God?

Are there assumptions in our culture about what ages are more valuable?

The little girl was pre-pubescent, so before child bearing years; and the woman, because of her bleeding, was infertile. In terms of the value of women in ancient cultures both of these people are on the fringes, or really left out. To not be able to bear children was to have no value as a female. Jesus affirms and restores these people whom others would consider 'wasted'.

Barbie Dolls

(may not be appropriate for some teams)

In terms of the value of women in ancient cultures, both of these people are on the fringes, or really left out. To not be able to bear children was to have no value as a female. For the young girl to have died before bearing children, and to be just about to reach child bearing age, was a colossal waste of a uterus in ancient thinking. Jesus values her, though we get the feeling that it's not just so she'll go on to make Jairus a happy and honoured grandpa.

Divide into small groups and give each group a barbie doll. Barbie dolls have become an icon of the female image in our society.

- What is symbolic about Barbie?
- Who is she?
- What things are valued about women in our society? How does this image of women harm or reduce the biblical vision of maleness?
- How would Jesus reform us?

DAY 3

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Hope can replace Helplessness

Summary: Jesus uses his power to help those who need it most

Bible: Mark 5:21-43 - A Dying Girl and a Sick Woman

Questions: Who touched me? Why bother?

Song Line: Trouble Is Not The Boss

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Town Mat Play
- Doctors and Dolls

2. Context:

- 'Who touched me?' Game / Heads Down Thumbs Up
- Chant

3. Content:

- Story Time

4. Consider:

- Crowd Pasting
- Band Aid Care and Prayer

5. Consequence:

- Choosing Box

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Free Play

Playdough, blocks and quiet book corner can be offered every session for routine and stability, rotating a couple of other 'theme' activities for interest and variety. Offer a few or all of the following free-play options. Each of these can become a teaching/storytelling opportunity as well. After the Mat time, you may invite children back to one of these 'free-play' activities and allow them to tell/imagine the story with you...

TOWN MAT PLAY

You will need:

- Street map rug (many church playgroups have them) or vinyl tablecloth; if these can't be borrowed paint a street map on a large groundsheet or piece of card.
- Blocks
- Leafy twigs, plasticine or plastic trees
- Toy cars/ambulance/trucks

Using the street map rug or ground sheet, add blocks for houses, May be some larger blocks as a hospital, plastic trees or real snippets of foliage (use plasticine to help them stand up) and small toy cars to create a town.

Engage children with the cars, putting them on the mat, and taking them off the mat. Let the children one by one choose some cars to take off until all the cars are gone.

Linking Lines:

in Jesus time there were no cars, and ambulances, and no proper doctors to help sick people

DOCTORS AND DOLLS

(Also used in Day 2)

Put some sick 'dollies' in cardboard box beds with blankets. A doctor's play set would add some fun, but if you don't have one, this can easily be improvised with a case and a few small bottles, a Berocca tube, a few teaspoons, a paddle pop stick thermometer, a small squishy ball or hardly blown up balloon as a blood pressure pump, and of course, a pack of Band Aids! 3 year old heaven.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Mat Time: Songs and Rhymes and Games

Use one or more of the familiar group songs or games to gather the group together and create a culture of listening and participating together. Encourage parents/carers to join in with their children.

‘WHO TOUCHED ME?’ GAME/HEADS DOWN THUMBS UP

You will need:

- Ground mat or clean clear space for children to kneel down.

One child and one leader stand up and everyone else put their heads down, with their eyes closed and thumbs sticking up. The two left standing must then creep around the group and gently touch one person each on the thumb. Everyone is then told to open their eyes and the children who were touched stand up and try to guess who touched them – the child or the leader. With this age group, it doesn't matter if they guess right or wrong. Have another turn choosing a different child (and same leader) as the taggers.

CHANT

You will need:

- Soundtrack to 'Jesus Has the Power to Heal and Help' (suvic.org.au/click)

Jesus has the power (Clap, Clap)

Jesus has the power (Clap, Clap)

Jesus has the power to heal and help (Clap, Clap)

He healed the old woman, (bend over as if your back is hurting)

He healed the little girl (crouch down low then jump up high)

Jesus has the power to heal and help (Clap, Clap)

Linking Lines:

You have used your bodies to pretend to be an old woman and an little girl We are going to hear a story about both an old woman and a young girl today. I wonder what is wrong with them? I wonder how Jesus will help them? I wonder who he will help first?

CONTENT...

CONNECT | CONTEXT | **CONTENT** | CONSIDER | CONSEQUENCE

Story Time

See 'Plasticine Story files' for visuals.

Ask another leader or parent to hold the pictures while you use your whole body in full dynamic expression in storytelling. Invite participation.

STORY TIME

Here is a story about some bodies
 Everybody is a body
 Everybody is somebody
 Jesus is God's life as a human body

*

There were thirteen bodies in a boat
 Jesus and his gang of twelve buddies.

They pulled up at the port of Capernaum
 A town with about a thousand bodies

And there were bodies everywhere, crowding the streets
 Big Bodies, broken bodies, burly soldier bodies, begging bodies, beautiful
 bodies, baby bodies.

The branches of the trees were bending low with the bodies of boys and girls
 monkeying about.

Carts full of bundles of vegetables with bulging bending bottoms and bent
 neck donkeys bearing bags of barley ground through the streets. Everyone
 moving back and forth. And Jesus and his gang of twelve buddies, bumping
 shoulders with everybody.

Oops! Sorry, beg your pardon.

The crowd parted in front of Jesus, making way for the important body of
 Jairus, the Leader of Meetings. Jairus was a really big Somebody. But Jairus
 bowed his body, bending low before Jesus' feet and begged:

"My daughter is dying; please come and place your hands on her to give her
 body health and life."

Jesus agrees and they set off: Jairus in front, Jesus behind with his gang of
 twelve buddies and crowds of bodies all around.

But there was another body. A woman, whose body had been bleeding for
 12 years. She was bleeding in her belly, in the part of her body where babies'
 bodies grow. She went to doctors – but they were baffled. Nobody could help
 her.

But maybe Jesus might be somebody who could help her bleeding body.
 Jesus wasn't a doctor, but Jesus brought life where ever he went.



In the bustling crowd, she bent forward and brushed her fingers against the fringe of Jesus clothes.

And Jesus stopped. Jairus stopped. The buddies stopped. Everybody stopped.

“Who touched me?” Jesus asked

His buddies shake their heads, and roll their eyes. “Look at the crowd of bodies all bumping along together?

How can you ask who touched me? Everybody is bumping into every body!”

But Jesus said “Yes, but somebody touched my clothes for a reason, and my body felt it.”

He looked at the crowd of bodies around. Who could it be?”

The woman, knew she’d been busted. So she bowed before Jesus and told him of her bleeding and the doctors and her bid to be healed by touching him in the crowd. Her body shook with fear.

But Jesus smiled and called her “Daughter” - as if they belonged in the same family. “Daughter, your bit of faith has made your whole body and being well. Peace be with you.”

And it was. She was no longer bleeding – she felt it in her belly - and who knows what her body might begin to do?

But just then, breaking through the crowd came more bodies. People from the home of Jairus, bearing bad news.

“Your beloved daughter has died. Too late. Don’t bother Jesus coming now.”

Jesus shook his head – “No fear! Believe me, she’s not dead. My three best buddies and I will come.”

And so on through the crowd of bodies they went.

At the house of Jairus, were more bodies: nosey bodies and noisy bodies who had heard the bad news that the girl had died and made it their business to be bursting out in loud crying and banging things.

Jesus breaks it up: “Everybody calm down. Nobody has died. The girl is just asleep.”

All those who had been crying and wailing were suddenly laughing at Jesus. They didn’t believe him. So he bailed them out of the house like a boss.

Jesus cares for our tears and sadness – but nobody there was crying for real,



for love, for this girl.
 Except for her mother and Jairus her father.
 Jesus went to where the girl lay on her bed, her body looking lifeless, and took her hand and spoke to her simply and gently, "Girl; I'm speaking to you: up you get!"

And she did – her body was alive, her body moved: Time for breakfast! said Jesus.

There she was with bread in her belly and life in her bones. As Jesus got up to go, he said,

'Don't tell anybody.'

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Exploring in Craft

Some children will prefer to go back to free play in this time, and not continue with a structured craft. This is normal and a valid choice.

CROWD PASTING

You will need:

- Cut outs of people from magazines. Watch for body image appropriateness, use National Geographic, not just women's magazines. Don't put out the whole magazine – these are often really inappropriate for children, (and not that great for grown women either). Ask some volunteers to go through the magazines and pre-cut appropriate 'people' pictures for you.
- Paste or glue sticks
- Butchers paper or A4 paper
- Sticky tape

Invite children to create a crowd of many people by sticking the cut outs onto one large piece of butchers paper, or by filling their own A4 page with people and then sticking these together with sticky tape.

Linking Lines:

Lots of people wanted to see Jesus, because they had heard of the amazing things he had done. There was such a big crowd, but Jesus really noticed the person who most needed his care

BAND AID CARE AND PRAYER

You will need:

- Box of band aids – any kind but check with your participants for allergies
- Coloured paper per person.
- Option – pre-cut the coloured paper into a generic ‘gingerbread person’ shape.

Give each child a piece of paper or paper body and help them peel open band aids and place them on the paper/body. Use the language of caring. If using the body shapes, you might suggest that one side is the woman who was bleeding, and the other side is the young girl. You can also turn this into a prayer activity. Inviting children to stick a band aid down as they think of or say someone who they know needs some of Jesus’ care and help. Band aids can also be added to the children’s arms or legs for fun too, and affirming that Jesus cares for them.

Linking Lines:

Jesus has the power to help lots of different things in different ways. When we pray we let Jesus know what’s worrying us, and ask him to help. We listen to what he says about what we can do to. Stick a band aid on your page for things that you want Jesus to take care of.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Choosing Box

At the end of the session each day, remind everyone of the conversation starter page and bring out a ‘choosing’ box and invite each person (including parents and carers and bystanders) to choose something from the box to take home to remind them of the time together today.

Encourage taking the item home to talk about in the family, or to hold quietly later when they want to remember the Story of Jesus from the Bible.

CHOOSING BOX

In the Choosing Box today: Fringed Prayer Card

You will need:

- For each child/family in your group, a card printed with the message “Bother Jesus”
- A piece of fringed material wrapped around and glued to the edge of the card. You can buy fringed brocade from fabric stores, or use a loose weave fabric and pull out the bottom few centimetres of cross threads to create the fringe yourself. The aim is to create a sensory item for prayer focus.

Linking Lines:

To remind us of our story, take a fringed card. What might this remind you of from the story? Maybe the prayer fringe that Jesus wore that the woman reached out to touch for help? Was Jesus bothered by her doing this? Was he bothered by going to the house where the little girl was sick? Jesus is never bothered when we want to say what’s bothering us. Maybe when you touch the fringe on this card it can remind you to tell Jesus what is bothering you.

DAY 3

PRIMARY

Session 3: Who touched me? Why bother?

Hope can replace Helplessness

TROUBLE IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus uses his power to help those who need it most

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Dr Dr Jokes
- 'Who Touched Me?' Game / Heads Down Thumbs Up
- Guess What's Changed?
- Old/Young woman 'optical illusion'

2. Context:

- Time Line
- First Century Medicine
- Location and Set design
- Who touched the red Jelly Baby?

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: Key Words - 'Crowd' and 'Touch'
- Opening the Bible: Bingo Story Cards
- Opening the Bible: Read the 'ing' Words

4. Consider:

- Puzzle
- Beading
- Beanbag Person
- Finger print art: Five-Character Glove puppets

5. Consequence:

- Band Aid Prayers
- Finger print prayers
- Hand in clay prayer
- Emoji responses
- Chant

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

DOCTOR DOCTOR JOKES

See **Appendix 3.1** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Doctor Doctor Joke Cards App.3.1
- Kids Joke book with Doctor Doctor jokes.

Spend some time telling Doctor Doctor Jokes. Have some printed on cards for kids who don't know any.

Linking Lines:

You are all hilarious comedians! Great joke tellers – I've loved listening to your jokes, and we've all had a good laugh at these ridiculous situations... But we know that when people are really sick, and really need help, it's not funny at all. Today's story includes two people who were very unwell in different ways that even sensible Doctors couldn't help.

'WHO TOUCHED ME?' GAME

(Heads down, Thumbs up)

You will need:

- Space for your group to spread out a little and kneel on the ground.
- Optional ground mat or tarp to cover the ground, if wet, muddy or rough.

Two children are chosen to stand up and all the others kneel on the ground and put their heads down (in "child's pose"), with their eyes closed and thumbs sticking up. The two left standing must then creep around the group and gently touch one person each, on the thumb. Everyone is then told to open their eyes and the children who were touched stand up and try to guess which of the two children touched them. If they get it right the children swap places, if not the children have another go.

Linking Lines:

Good job taggers and good job guessers! As we get into a story from the Bible today we'll see someone tags Jesus when he's not looking.

GUESS WHAT'S CHANGED?

You will need:

- Space for your group to spread out in pairs.

Explain to your group that in this activity you will work in pairs, and begin standing face to face with a partner. Everyone has 30 seconds to look carefully at their partner, trying to notice all the details. The partners then turn back to back and each change one thing slightly about their appearance. When both are ready, turn and stand face to face again. Both people have to try to guess what has been changed by the other person.

Examples of changes: undo one shoe lace, turn one collar up, swap a wrist band to the opposite arm, push up one sleeve.

Linking Lines:

You were all really clever at finding secret things to change about yourselves, and also in noticing each other's changes. Well done. Some changes are really obvious, and sometimes changes can be impossible to see at the time – but are still important. In our story today a woman is healed after a long illness – and no one can tell from the outside. But Jesus noticed.

GUESS WHAT'S CHANGED?

See **Appendix 3.2** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Optical Illusion image from Appendix 3.2

Show the Optical Illusion from Appendix 3.2. Tell the children that the bible story is about whatever this picture is. What do they see... allow the ambiguity of the responses to surface.

Linking Lines:

Many times when we hear a story, there is actually more than one story going on – often two or more stories are told together, and like looking at our picture, we shift from it being about one person to another. This is what happens in our story from the Bible today. Two stories are happening at once. The story is both about a little girl and an old woman – and it shows Jesus care and power over sickness for both young and old.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

TIME LINE

You will need:

- Long scroll of paper – marked out in years, months and weeks, up to 12 years
- Coloured Markers
- Band aids
- Tissues
- White plasticine
- Pink sponge
- Globby red paint

As a group roll out the time line and lay it along the ground. Go through the way the time line is set out with the group to make sure they understand the concept of the time line. Then invite them one by one to mark the longest time spans that they have been sick or injured (e.g. broken bone in a cast) on the timeline, with markers and adding a band aid if they wore one, globby red paint splodge if they bled, or a tissue if they had a cold, or some sponge lungs if they had asthma, or a plasticine cast if they had a broken bone...etc.

Someone may have had a cold for a week in Grade 2, someone else might highlight a 6 week stretch of having a broken arm in a cast in Grade 3. Someone else might remember 2 weeks with tonsillitis. Some kids have asthma all the time.

Be sensitive about this for kids. Some of it touches on things that do take the edge off childhood. Do use the opportunity to show compassion, but to be positive about each person. Affirm that having things go wrong with our bodies – injuries and sickness – is a normal part of being human.

Linking Lines:

All of us get sick or injured along the way in our lives. Hopefully it doesn't last long and we can get some help from a doctor. In the time of our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, the doctors weren't reliable, and sometimes did more harm than good. It's really hard for anyone to be sick for any time. One of the people in the story was sick for 12 years. A long time to suffer.

FIRST CENTURY MEDICINE

See **Appendix 3.3** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Excerpt from 'The Enemies of Jupiter' by Caroline Lawrence, Book 9 in Roman Mysteries

Or

- Other information on First Century Medicine
Eg. Horrible Histories, Rotten Romans (Terry Deary)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lXgG88Xx8Q>

The Roman Mysteries series 'Enemies of Jupiter' (Book 9) by Caroline Lawrence, contains a great description of the diversity of doctoring methods available to sick people in the first century. The best section runs pages 78 -90. It is worthwhile reading a few sections aloud to your group, as it is quite well researched, but also quite humorous. See Appendix 3.3 for a very short excerpt to give you a taster. Most community libraries will have this book...look in the junior fiction section under LAW.

If this is not available, you could read some other information about ancient medical practices – perhaps from Horrible Histories.

Linking Lines:

Did you see the look on each other's faces when you heard what the doctor thought was healthy? No way!!! I'm glad you could tell that wasn't going to help.

FIRST CENTURY MEDICINE

You will need:

- Packet of Jelly Babies
- Toothpicks

Make a pile of Jelly babies on a plate, making sure there is only one red Jelly baby.

There should be as many Jelly Babies as you have people in your group, and a few extra. Give each person a toothpick

The aim is to remove all of the Jelly Babies without the red one moving. (a bit like pick-up sticks). Each person takes a turn at picking out a Jelly Baby while the rest of the group keep watch to make sure it doesn't disturb the red one. Any Jelly Babies that are successfully removed may be eaten! If the red Jelly Baby is disturbed, that person misses their turn. Play as many rounds as you like!

Linking Lines:

Great job with your steady hands and concentration getting the Jelly Babies. When everything is all crowded together like that it's hard not to bump everything and to know which Jelly Baby you were going for. In our story from the Bible today, we see what happens when Jesus is in a big crowd and two different people need his help in different ways. Even with lots of people around, Jesus could tell who was in trouble, and knew how to help.

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

OPENING THE BIBLE: KEY WORDS - 'CROWD' & 'TOUCH'**You will need:**

- Copies of the Bible Passage Mark 5:21- 43

Give each person a copy of the Bible passage (Mark 5:21- 43) and announce that there are two key actions in this reading. Whenever the word 'CROWD' occurs everyone must bunch together. Whenever the word 'TOUCH' occurs, every person must touch the back of another person's t-shirt. (This doesn't have to be in a neat circle, random is ok). The last of these is in verse 33. So ask the group to sit down and relax during the rest of the reading.

OPENING THE BIBLE: BINGO STORY CARDS

See **Appendix 3.4** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Set of laminated 'Bingo' cards - one per person (Appendix 3.4)
- Buttons – enough for 9 per person

Give each person a laminated bingo picture card (see appendix 3.4) and 9 buttons or markers. Explain that you are going to read the story from the Bible – and that some of the pictures on the card are things mentioned in the story. If you think you see something on the bingo square and it is mentioned in the story – you place a button on that square. If you get 3 straight in a row in any direction (vertical/ horizontal/diagonal) call 'bingo'. If someone calls bingo, they

retell the story (to that point) according to the pictures they have marked. Keep going with the story to the end. At the end invite anyone who wants to tell the whole story pointing to the pictures on the bingo card to do so.

Linking Lines:

Wonderful story telling! And you were great noticers - you were quick to notice the pictures that matched the story. I wonder if you noticed how Jesus was a noticer – he noticed the women who just touched the fringe of this clothes, and he noticed that she needed hope and help and he noticed that the little girl wasn't fully dead beyond help – even though everyone else had lost hope.

OPENING THE BIBLE: READ THE 'ING' WORDS

You will need:

- Copies of the Bible Passage for each person
- List '-ing' words
- Packet of Smarties
- Jar

Give each person a copy of the Bible passage. Explain that today's Bible reading is sponsored by the sound 'ing'. For each word read that has an 'ing' sound, the group must jump up and act out that word. If everyone demonstrates the 'ing' word, a Smartie will be paid into the jar in the middle. At the end of the reading the Smarties will be divided among the group. If you have 8 people in your group each person will be given 2 Smarties each at the end.

The ING words are:

meeting, anything crying carrying [on]
 begging, crowding speaking bleeding getting[better] making walking
 something
 bleeding, crowding
 crying, shaking

By following along with the passage the group will be able to better work out what some of the actions should be from the context, but help them out if they need a hint. e.g. 'Carrying' is really 'carrying on' meaning continual dramatising of grief.

Linking Lines:

What great action heroes you are – demonstrating all of the ing words, all the things that happened in the story from the Bible. I loved your enthusiasm for getting involved. In the Bible the stories of Jesus are action packed – things are always happening, and even when Jesus tells stories or sits and talks with people – his words are full of action too. Jesus gets involved and takes action. He brings hope and he doesn't leave people helpless.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT **CONSIDER** CONSEQUENCE

Has This Ever Happened To You?

- *You were interrupted on the way somewhere for something important?*
- *Something really sad happened in your house?*
- *You were in a really, really big crowd?*
- *You thought, 'Why bother?'*

GIANT CROSS WORD

See **Appendix 3.5** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- 181 10x10cm cards with letters of the alphabet as per list in app. 3.5
- 36 cards with puzzle words as per list in app. 3.5
- Clear space

Hand out a stack of random letters to each person, and invite them to place the letters out in any order – not making words – in the space on the ground. Next explain that this is a giant crossword challenge. Each person is going to be given a word to make from the letters. Set directions of vertical and horizontal in your space and some boundaries so the puzzle doesn't get too big.

One by one give the participants a word card: if they can link their word to another person's word they get a point each (keep track of the scores on your own list). Once they have completed a word they can be given another word. As the puzzle evolves more words will connect up and may need to be moved or rearranged – encourage this initiative and problem solving. Whenever a word is linked to another word both people get points. Solve as much of the puzzle as possible, but if it gets too hard allow a natural ending. There are many ways the words could be connected, but one possible solution is in app.3.5

Linking Lines:

This is really difficult to figure out and you are all doing a great job connecting up the words. It's taking a really long time, and you might feel like giving up hope. We've had to interrupt and re-work the plan a few times. Those are lots of ways that people felt in the Story of Jesus from the Bible that we heard. I wonder if anything like this story has happened to you – being in a large crowd and feeling embarrassed or being put on the spot? Feeling like you try and try and try with something and nothing helps it get better? All of these things are part of Jesus' story.

BEADING

See **Appendix 3.6** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Coloured Beads
- Alphabet Beads
- Keyring
- Thread – coloured nylon or fishing line – but not yarn that will fray

Use coloured beads either to bead-weave a person on a key ring (see appendix 3.6 for a pattern) or simply to thread a necklace or bracelet. You might try to get alphabet beads (these are more popular with boys than regular beads) and make a 'TROUBLE IS NOT THE BOSS' bracelet.

Linking Lines:

You are doing a great job with making these bead-people. It's taking a long time, and some of us are having trouble – it's not easy! You are showing real care. Has anything like this ever happened to you? – have you ever had to wait a long time for help? Is there a time you thought "Why Bother? – This is hopeless." What helps you not give up?

BEANBAG PERSON

See **Appendix 3.7** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Per person, Two pieces of fabric cut from the template in App 3.7 and pre-sewn together leaving a small opening as marked.
- Rice/small dried beans
- Craft glue, stapler & staples
- Craft scraps; google eyes, foam shapes, buttons, wool, fake fur, fabric etc...

With your group, provide plenty of rice to fill the bean bags to 3/4 full. Do not over fill! You may find making a simple paper funnel will help with filling the bean bags

Help each person glue the opening closed and staple several times to hold it while the glue dries.

Encourage personalising the beanbag character by gluing on craft scraps for face and hair and clothes.

Bean bag people are quite good at looking sick, or bent over with pain. Have a go at a few positions.

Variation: make the bean bag two sided: one side the little girl in bed, and the other side the bleeding woman.

Linking Lines:

I love how creative you've been in making your bean bag people – they all look wonderful. You can have a go at standing up your beanbag person, but you'll see how bent over it looks, perhaps like the woman whose body had been bleeding for 12 years. Or perhaps lie your bean bag person down, like the little girl, so sick in bed that her family were sure she was dead. Whatever happens to us, whatever position we're in, Jesus can help and bring us hope.

FINGER PRINT ART: FIVE-CHARACTER GLOVE PUPPETS

- Thumb -woman who is bleeding
- Pointer - Jesus
- Middle finger – Jairus
- Ring finger – sad person in Jairus' family
- Pinky finger – little girl

Other hand - crowd.

You will need:

- Disposable gloves – 2 per person
- Coloured permanent fine markers (e.g. sharpies)
- Sample glove with five characters
- Sample glove with five random 'crowd' characters

Show the group your sample glove with the five key characters from the story and ask them to guess which 'finger' is which person in the story. Also show them the other 'crowd' glove.

Give each person in the group two gloves and invite them to create their own set of characters in order to be able to tell the story

Linking Lines:

Thinking about the characters in the story that you are making, I wonder if anything that happened to any of them has ever happened to you? Have you ever been in a really big crowd? You could show how it feels by making up things for your crowd finger puppets to say. If something really sad has ever happened in your family you will know how the Jairus puppet and the sad person in his family will need to act. Maybe there are some other things in the story that you know about and you can show those in your finger puppet actions too.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER **CONSEQUENCE**

BAND AID PRAYERS**You will need:**

- Band aids
- Sharpie permanent fine line markers

Use permanent marker on band aids to write some things you want Jesus to help with. Stick these on your arms or legs.

Linking Lines:

Today our story showed two ways of asking Jesus for help – one person talked to Jesus and asked in words; and one person just reached out to get closer to Jesus; she asked using actions. Jesus listened to the man who asked for help for his little girl, and noticed the woman who reached out to him to be healed. Jesus listens to us, and notices us, and doesn't ignore us when we tell him what's happening. We are using these band aid to remind



us of Jesus' care for us and for the people we care about too. You can use words to pray, or you can just use actions. You can write or draw – or ask a leader to write a word on a band aid to show what you want to say to Jesus today, or you can just quietly stick a band aid on as you think about something that needs help.

EMOJI RESPONSES

You will need:

- Large 'emoji' signs for
 - thumbs up
 - thumbs down
 - smiley face
 - sad face
 - angry face
 - thinking face or add some random extras like music notes, stars, hearts etc

This activity gives each person the chance to think about and respond to various parts of the bible story for themselves.

Show the large emoji signs to the group and let volunteers choose to hold any sign they want – for no particular reason. Ask them to spread out in a circle, leaving a one metre meter gap between participants.

Tell the group that you are going to ask them to pick an emoji by moving to stand behind the emoji that fits how they feel or what they think about various statements

Begin with a couple of practice light hearted practice statements like:

- 'Lasagne for dinner every night this week', or
- '[name of leader] shaving his head',

Invite the group to move to their emoji response.

All responses are valid and to be affirmed, and you should be careful to make sure there is no coercion or peer pressure to respond in a particular way.

Even in the fun/practice rounds set a strong culture of encouraging a range of responses.

Move on to the statements that connect to things that happened in the story from the Bible. Choose as many of these as you think are appropriate for the

vibe of your group

- You get stuck in a large crowd
- Jesus comes to your house
- Two people need your help at the same time
- Someone in your family is really sick
- A huge crowd of strangers all turn and stare at you
- People are being really loud and upset yelling and crying around your house
- You really need someone's help but you have to wait while they help someone else
- Asking Jesus for help
- Hearing that Jesus is powerful and caring.

Linking Lines:

When we read the stories of Jesus from the Bible there are often lots of things going on at once, and different people think different things about Jesus. Jesus connects with each person as themselves, however they are reacting or whatever is going on for them. Jesus is listening and caring for you, whatever emoji you are today.

CHANT

You will need:

- Audio device and music track 'Jesus Has the Power' (suvic.org.au/click)
- (Optional) Costume pieces/materials to make poster board signs

Jesus has the power (x x)

Jesus has the power (x x)

Jesus has the power to heal and help (x x)

He healed the old woman,

he healed the little girl

Jesus has the power to heal and help (x x)

Use this simple chant/song as the basis to develop a performance piece that gives members of your group a chance to respond in various ways.

Listen to the track and then invite the group to volunteer to sing/speak lines, arranging group/solo contributions; choreograph movements; add body percussion (clap/slap/stamp/thump/click etc...); add drama, costumes, poster board signs, art; Develop some alternative lyrics/extra verses replacing the fourth and fifth lines with other things that describe Jesus.



Workshop this incorporating as many ideas with as much variety as possible to create a dynamic performance piece. Keep in mind that the end product is not actually important, nor is it recall the 'response' itself. The value and the response is in the process you all take together in producing the performance.

Affirm all your group members in their suggestions, and encourage them to share their ideas and the thoughts they have that prompt their suggestion.

Linking Lines:

Which parts of the story are the most interesting to you? Which parts of the story do you think show us what Jesus is really like? If you needed help from Jesus would you be a bold upfront asker like the father, or reach out quietly like the woman? What impression of Jesus does this story give you? If you needed help do you think Jesus could help you?

The Big Question Mark

'Who touched me?' ...

... 'Why Bother Jesus?'

Put these two questions on either side of your big question mark:

- *How were they answered in the story?*
- *How would they be answered today?*

Remind the children that when the lady reached out to Jesus for help, he felt it. He asked this question, but he knew who had touched him and what she needed. When we ask Jesus for help, he notices, and he knows who we are and what is going on for us. So it's no worry to bother Jesus. He wants to come home and be in our house, our family and help us with new life, a fresh start, being strong and healthy. It's no bother to him. Why bother Jesus? – because nothing is ever hopeless to him.

DAY 3

TEENS

Session 3: Who touched me? Why bother?

Hope can replace Helplessness

TROUBLE IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus uses his power to help those who need it most

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Who touched the red Jelly Baby?

2. Context:

- Time Line

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: Key words - 'crowd' and 'touch'

4. Consider:

- Jesus Diary

5. Consequence:

- Thoughts about Jesus

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Have you ever needed healing? What is it like to be sick for a long period of time?

WHO TOUCHED THE RED JELLY BABY?

Make a pile of Jelly Babies (as many as you have people in your group, and a few extra) on a plate, making sure there is only one red Jelly Baby. The aim is to remove all of the Jelly Babies without the red one moving (a bit like pick-up sticks). Each person takes a turn at picking out a Jelly Baby while the rest of the group keep watch to make sure it doesn't disturb the red one. Any Jelly Babies that are successfully removed, may be eaten! If the red Jelly Baby is disturbed, that person misses their turn.

Play as many rounds as you like! If this turns out to be too easy, take it to the next level and do it using chopsticks to pick up the Jelly Babies (no stabbings!).

CONTEXT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

There were certain illnesses which people had in Jesus' day which meant no one would go near them, let alone touch them. Are there diseases now which mean people are rejected and not welcomed?

TIME LINE

Make a timeline marked out in weeks months and years. It only needs to be as long as the age of the oldest person in your group. For example: twelve A3 pages marked off into fifty-two weeks with another colour marking the months, and the years labelled at the start of each page.

Go through the way the time line is set out with the group to make sure they understand the concept of the time line. Then invite them one by one to make the longest time spans that they have been sick or injured (eg broken bone in a cast). Someone may have had a cold for a week in grade 2, someone else might highlight a 6 week stretch of having a broken arm in a cast in year 7. Someone else might remember 2 weeks with tonsillitis. Some children have asthma all the time; be sensitive about this; some of it touches on things that do take the edge off childhood. Do use the opportunity to show compassion, and to be positive about each person.

Use this timeline to help set the perspective of how terrible it would be to have any sickness that lasted 12 years.

CONTENT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Read verses 30-33. Imagine you were the woman.

What would have been going through your mind? What do you imagine she said?

OPENING THE BIBLE: KEY WORDS - 'CROWD' & 'TOUCH'

You will need:

- Copies of the Bible Passage Mark 5:21- 43

Give each person a copy of the Bible passage (Mark 5:21- 43) and announce that there are two key actions in this reading. Whenever the word 'CROWD' occurs everyone must bunch together. Whenever the word 'TOUCH' occurs, every person must touch the back of another person's t-shirt. (This doesn't have to be in a neat circle, random is ok). The last of these is in verse 33. So ask the group to sit down and relax during the rest of the reading.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Why do you think Jesus chose these two women to heal?
What can we learn from this passage about what was most important to Jesus?

JESUS DIARY

In pairs, ask the group to fill in what Jesus' diary might look like on a regular day today. What kind of things do you think Jesus is doing today: stopping wars? Healing people?

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — **CONSEQUENCE**

How does this passage change what you thought about Jesus?

DAY 3

PARENT CONVERSATION

HOPE CAN REPLACE HELPLESSNESS

What's the Story?

There is a saying in politics that any publicity is good publicity; even bad publicity. And there's a common wisdom in the teaching and child care profession that if a child can't get positive attention, they will go for negative attention – getting in trouble, even being punished or yelled at, is better than being ignored, neglected, or feeling abandoned.

Most developmental psychologists would agree with this, though it's hard to remember when we're in the thick of it, parenting and juggling all the balls that we've got in the air, when our kids deal out behaviour that makes us want to put them on eBay, or even Gumtree for free! It's hard to recognise our kid's challenging behaviour – their anger tantrum, their defiance, their task refusal, even sometimes their words saying, "I hate you", or "You're the worst dad in the world" – as their way of putting up a giant billboard saying, "I need you."

This isn't guaranteed to solve every situation, but chances are, whatever is going on, if we stop and pay attention to the child – not just the behaviour – something will shift for the better. We know this in other settings and about ourselves as adults too. We want to be seen as a human person, not just as a number or a case or a problem.

When I was at school it was considered a bad thing to be an 'attention-seeker'. I now look back and wonder how many times we missed seeing a kid's hurt or struggle. It motivates me to make sure that I pay attention – stopping, pausing, noticing, eyeball to eyeballing, heart to hearting – with my kids.

Share Your Story

- What are some of the ways your kids have of getting your attention when they need something? Are they subtle? Over the top?
- How do you work out who gets your attention in the competing demands of family/work/life?
- What are some of the best times you've had giving your kids your full attention?

What's God's Story?

There's a story in the Bible in which Jesus has just arrived in a town, he's on the street amongst a bustling crowd and a high profile community leader approaches him. He asks Jesus to come to his house to see his gravely ill daughter. Jesus has no reason to refuse and every reason to agree – compassion for a young girl and a respect for a person of influence. It's what any of us would do, right?

But as he moves along in the crowd a woman with a gynaecological problem – incessant menstrual bleeding for 12 years – reaches out and touches a fringe on Jesus' clothing.

Jewish men all wore these prayer cloths with tasselled fringes as part of their spiritual practice, a reminder that God is as near as our own skin. So imagine this woman - she's incurable, unmarryable in the culture, in fact untouchable according to their religion. In her culture, a woman with no possibility of bearing children was a nobody, a waste of human flesh. And she's touched Jesus' prayer fringe. The way the story is told suggests that she was hoping not to be even noticed, but to perhaps sneak some small dose of healing.

What even is that? Creepy? Mysterious? Desperate? Daring?

Whatever it was, Jesus notices, turns and directs his attention to her.

He pauses. He allows this interruption. Jesus stops and pays attention to the person nobody rates, for a cause that nobody cares about, for a problem nobody thinks can be helped.

He asks, 'Who touched me?' He wants to meet them, eye to eye, person to person.

Meanwhile – you can feel the tension – the high profile community leader is kept waiting, and by the time Jesus is ready to move on, the news comes that the girl has died.

But Jesus has no regrets – giving this attention to the woman right there in front of him, the woman people thought was a lost cause, a nobody, was worth it. She leaves in peace and wellness.

When he get to the next place, there is a huge scene being made – but again, he ignores the crowd, stops, and pays attention to the girl everyone has given up on. Looking closely, he sees she's not gone. He pays attention. It's what makes a difference.

Here's a challenge, and maybe a comfort for us. If we stop for moment and pause, we'll find that God is paying close, caring attention to us.

Hear/Read more: Mark 5:21-43

DAY 3

BIBLE DRAMA

Characters:

- Young girl
- Older woman
- Remy Remedy (Remedy seller)
- Rupert Rippoff (Remedy seller)

(set to comedy music, the two remedy sellers race on to the stage; by-pass each other once, twice, run backwards, shake hands and ankles, put down their suit cases, run around the backdrop and out again with a small table each and then begin setting up their wares from their suit cases. Music fades ... but continues quietly behind dialogue)

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Remy: Step right up, gather round folks, get your remedies here, for anything that ails you, whatever sickness, pain, fever, complaint it may be. I can guarantee to sell you something!

Rupert: Medicines, treatments, ointments and cures. I have them all here! That's right! Step right up.

Remy: Amazing cures. Amazing prices!

Rupert: That's right folks. Step right up, step right up.

Remy: Allow me to demonstrate - with a volunteer *(choosing a child)*. Yes young man – Sore ears is it? Wear this toad on your head for 3 days.

Rupert: *(choosing another child)* and you – hold out you hands – wiggle your fingers. Yes as I thought; a case of wiggly fingers. Never fear - Rupert Rippoff is here. Wear these rubber gloves filled with green jelly all day.

(Girl and Woman wander in with shopping baskets from either side)

Remy: A sore nose - try my rotten raspberries

Rupert: Wheezy chest – carry this chicken under your shirt.

Remy: Try my wonder worms

Rupert: Or camel droppings

(Hold up an array of gross looking concoctions eg: spaghetti in blue food dye, chick peas in tomato sauce, a plate of chocolate honeycomb as wombat droppings – and eat a sample!)

Remy: Lovely lady, step right up, and see my amazing cures. You look flushed – are you unwell?

Woman: No, I'm in the best of health; the best I've ever been. In fact I was sick, but Jesus...

Rupert: *(cuts in)* I knew it! I could tell you were sick, definitely – I knew what was wrong with you the minute I saw you.

Woman: How could you? I'm not sick now. I was, but it was a kind of on the inside sickness ...

Remy: *(stops her from speaking and gets down and listens to her tummy)* That's it – inside sickness - and I have the treatment right here that will see you restored to full vigour, brimming with energy. *(Opening a bottle)*

Woman: But I tell you, I'm already well. Jesus ...

Rupert: Yes that's right. This medicine is so powerful that merely taking the lid off the bottle has begun to have a healing effect on you.

Woman: No! *(grabs the bottle and throws it away.)* Listen, I was unwell, but Jesus healed me; not your dodgy 'wonder worms'.

Girl: You were healed by Jesus? So was I!

Remy & Rupert look at each other and pull a face

Girl: I was so sick I was close to death.

Remy: I thought you looked pale.

Girl: Listen, Jesus came in a boat and crossed Lake Galilee.

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Girl pulls out a large map and shows lake & boat –gives this to R&R who continue to puzzle over it.

Girl: As he stood on the shore, a large crowd gathered around him. My dad who is in charge of the Jewish meeting place was also there. His name is Jairus, and when he saw Jesus, he went over to him. He knelt at Jesus' feet and started begging him for help. He said, "My daughter (that's me) is about to die! Please come and touch her, so she will get well and live." Jesus went with him. Many people followed along and kept crowding around.

Woman: I was in that crowd. I had been bleeding for twelve years. I had gone to many doctors, and they had not done anything except cause me a lot of pain. I had paid them all the money I had. But instead of getting better, I only got worse. I'd heard about Jesus, so I came up behind him in the crowd and barely touched his clothes. I said to myself, "If I can just touch

his clothes, I will get well." As soon as I touched them, my bleeding stopped, and I knew I was well. At that moment Jesus felt power go out from him. He turned to the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" His disciples said to him, "Look at all these people crowding around you! How can you ask who touched you?" But Jesus turned to see who had touched him. I knew what had happened to me. I came shaking with fear and knelt down in front of Jesus. Then I told him the whole story. Jesus said to me, "You are now well because of your faith. May God give you peace! You are healed, and you will no longer be in pain."

Girl: While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from my home and said, "Your daughter has died! Why bother the teacher anymore?" Jesus heard what they said, and he said to my dad, Jairus, "Don't worry. Just have faith!" Jesus did not let anyone go with him except Peter and the two brothers, James and John. They went home with Jairus and saw the people crying and making a lot of noise. Then Jesus went inside and said to them, "Why are you crying and carrying on like this? The child isn't dead. She is just asleep." But the people laughed at him. After Jesus had sent them all out of the house, he took my father and mother and his three disciples and went to where I was. He took me by the hand and said, "Talitha, koum!" which means, "Little girl, get up!" I got right up and started walking around. Everyone was greatly surprised. But Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened. Then he said, "Give her something to eat."

(During this, Remy & Rupert have quietly begun to sneak away)

Woman: Where are you going?

Girl: What about your remedies?

Remy: We know when we're beat.

Rupert: We can't match Jesus

Remy: He's got real power

Rupert: He can really help

Remy: We can sell you a trick in a bottle – but what Jesus did – that's real hope.

Rupert: Camel droppings for the road?

Remy: Don't mind if I do... *(R & R exit)*

(Woman & Girl begin to exit other side)

DAY 4

Why are you trying to trap me?

THEME WORDS

Jesus shows us that God is more important, (and trustworthy) than anything

God can replace greed

Money is not the boss

BIBLE

Mark 12:13-17

Jesus answers a tricky question about money

SONGS

One Thing (S)

The Birdy Song (S)

The Whistle Song (C, S)

INTRODUCTION

Jesus handles gratuitous flattery and provocative questions with a style that is as cool as a cucumber. The inquisitors pull out the curliest of questions combining the double trouble topics of money and power. Most of us struggle with these, and not just in hypotheticals. Money pulls and power pushes and we are caught in the middle. But look at Jesus. He just bats it off. There's no struggle, no power play, no seduction, no enticement, no "if only".

This is a simple one – money is money and God is God. No competition. You're not comparing apples with apples. Pay your taxes to Caesar – its stupid not to. You'll get 'taxed' if you don't. But God – there's no paying God anything – you can't owe God anything – its all God's to start and finish with. God is in a completely different class. Caesar has gold a-plenty and the keys to political success. God has love unlimited and the keys to life. God is the antidote to greed. How could anyone be greedy after encountering the abundance of God?

MARK 12:13-17

Paying Taxes (*Matthew 2.15-22; Luke 20.20-26*)

¹³The Pharisees got together with Herod's followers. Then they sent some men to trick Jesus into saying something wrong. ¹⁴They went to him and said, "Teacher, we know that you are honest. You treat everyone with the same respect, no matter who they are. And you teach the truth about what God wants people to do. Tell us, should we pay taxes to the Emperor or not?" ¹⁵Jesus knew what they were up to, and he said, "Why are you trying to test me? Show me a coin!" ¹⁶They brought him a silver coin, and he asked, "Whose picture and name are on it?" "The Emperor's," they answered. ¹⁷Then Jesus told them, "Give the Emperor what belongs to him and give God what belongs to God." The men were amazed at Jesus.

DAY 4

TEAM STUDY

Session 4: Why are you trying to trap me?

God can replace Greed

MONEY IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus shows us that God is more important, (and trustworthy) than anything

Paying your dues:

If you had \$1000 and were asked to settle your personal debts to people who had invested in you in some way over your life – people you owed something to – who would those people be? Decide for each of them how much proportionally you owe them out of your \$1000. For example you might give someone who had really believed in you and encouraged you \$20, someone who had taught you a skill \$40, your grandma \$100 just for being around and loving you.

Opening the Bible - T words on gold coins: S words demand payment

(Key 'T' words are: together, trick, teacher, treat, teach, truth, tell, taxes, trying, test)

Give each person a copy of the text in the CEV with the T words removed.

Pass around a money bag containing 10 chocolate gold coins. Each of these coins has one of the key T words written on it in black permanent marker. Every second person takes one coin/word until they are all gone. Explain the reading process: as you read the passage if you come to a T word, the person who has that word calls it out, and (providing they are correct) they can then eat the chocolate! When you come to a word beginning with S, all of the people in the group who weren't given a coin must pay tax with some random item. (Appoint someone to collect these – items like pens, spoons, shoes are all acceptable. Some people will resort to stealing to pay their tax – which is quite appropriate.) Allow the cries of 'Unfair' and agree, yes it is unfair; that is how life was in Jesus' time, and still today. We are given so much more than others; how terrible, and so unfair. We must remember how rich we are. Debrief the taxing of those who had nothing, and the need to steal.

Being like Jesus

Discipleship is all about following Jesus and becoming like him, living his ways, taking his agenda and priorities.

In verse 14 Jesus is described as having 3 obvious characteristics, even by his enemies.

What are they? Write each one up on a piece of card and display them in an obvious place. How do you feel about this being your mission statement/manifesto for the day? Choose one aspect of being like Jesus that you want to be your focus, and ask someone to pray for you in that. (Pray in pairs)

Song to listen to/watch/learn/pray

Steve Curtis Chapman: Yours

Play this song (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-ERm0_tuKM) as a part of silent prayer and reflection. Encourage people to have their eyes closed as they listen and turn it into a prayer. We recommend you play the audio only as the images prove to be somewhat distracting in this context.

DAY 4

EARLY CHILDHOOD

God can replace Greed

Summary: Jesus shows us that God is more important, (and trustworthy) than anything

Bible: Mark 12:13-17 Paying Taxes

Questions: Why are you trying to trap me?

Song Line: Money Is Not The Boss

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Playdough
- Shops
- Measuring and Pouring Tub

2. Context:

- One potato, Two potato

3. Content:

- Story Time

4. Consider:

- Crowns
- Stamping

5. Consequence:

- Choosing Box

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Free Play

Playdough, blocks and quiet book corner can be offered every session for routine and stability, rotating a couple of other 'theme' activities for interest and variety. Offer a few or all of the following free-play options. Each of these can become a teaching/storytelling opportunity as well. After the Mat time, you may invite children back to one of these 'free-play' activities and allow them to tell/imagine the story with you...

PLAYDOUGH

You will need:

- Playdough
- Plastic coins
- Smooth sturdy surface
- Plastic knives, small rolling pin stick

Hide some plastic coins in the playdough today for a surprise! Once they've been found, the coins can also be used to make 'prints' in the playdough.

SHOPS

You will need:

- Cardboard boxes
- Toy cash register or old laptop keyboard, simple large button calculator
- Green supermarket bags
- Empty bottles, packets, cartons to 'sell'
- Handbags/purses
- Fake money
- Fake credit cards

Set up a shop using the boxes, a low table or some chairs as shelves for the items for sale.

Create a counter with the cash register/keyboard/calculator.

Engage the children in imaginative social play buying and selling, counting money.

Remember that at this age, getting the counting correct is not the focus, familiarity with the use and process of numbers is the foundation being set. Children also will not necessarily play 'with' one another but in parallel in the social space. This is perfectly healthy and lots of great work is being done in this kind of play.

Linking Lines:

We've had a lovely time playing in our shop. Everyone had lots of good things to buy and money to pay! In our story of Jesus in the Bible today some people ask Jesus a tricky question about money.

MEASURING AND POURING TUB

You will need:

- Dry rice or small pasta – these can be dyed and redried ahead of time for a colourful activity, or left their natural colour, to keep focus on texture and movement and sound.
- Large tubs – have two so that children can choose parallel play with one tub or have space for solo play in another.
- Plastic cups, scoops, sieves, lengths of tubing, cardboard rolls, medium containers
- Plastic ground mat (doing this activity on a plastic mat will enable you to easily tip spilled rice and pasta back into the tub when the supply is depleted).

Encourage and facilitate measuring and pouring play. Children will naturally engage in pouring or scooping things from one container to another. Introduce the idea of sharing ‘one for you, one for me, one for Sammi, one for Grandpa...’ by modelling in your own play.

Linking Lines:

You have discovered lots of wonderful ways of pouring and measuring and sharing today. You are doing lovely counting, and lovely helping. There was lots for everyone, which is a great way to play. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, some people are grumpy about whether there was enough money for everyone. They use their grumpiness to try and trick Jesus into being selfish. But Jesus has a different way of thinking about things.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT | **CONTEXT** | CONTENT | CONSIDER | CONSEQUENCE

Mat Time: Songs and Rhymes and Games

Use one or more of the familiar group songs or games to gather the group together and create a culture of listening and participating together. Encourage parents/carers to join in with their children.

SONGS AND RHYMES AND GAMES

"One Potato, Two Potato"

One potato, two potato,
three potato, four.
Five potato, six potato,
seven potato more.

"Johnny Works With One Hammer"

Johnny works with one hammer (*hammer with one hand*)

One hammer one hammer

Johnny works with one hammer,

Then he works with two.

Jenny works with two hammers (*hammer with two hands*)...

Jimmy works with three hammers (*hammer with two hands and one leg*)...

Janey works with four hammers (*hammer with both hands and both legs*)...

Georgie works with five hammers (*hammer with both hands, both legs, and head*)

Five hammers five hammers

Georgie works with five hammers

All our work is DONE!

(Replace the names Johnny etc with the names of the people in your group. Take as many verses as you need to include everyone)

Linking Lines:

You are really hard workers! Look at your strong muscles. Our Story of Jesus from the Bible today comes from a time when most people had to work very very hard – growing things to eat (One potato, two potato) or building things (Johnny works with one hammer), which was really hard work – and meanwhile the Emperor - the boss – took more and more money. Is that fair? In our story we find out what Jesus thought about this.

CONTENT...

CONNECT CONTEXT **CONTENT** CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Story Time

See 'Plasticine Story files' for visuals.

Ask another leader or parent to hold the pictures while you use your whole body in full dynamic expression in storytelling. Invite participation.

STORY TIME

Here is the mighty emperor
He rules across the land
He sends his soldiers out with swords
To show he's in command

What a mighty emperor
He rules across the sea
He sends his soldiers out in boats
Says "bring back things for me!"

More! More! Says the emperor
More lands more slaves more things
More fame, more cities, more for me!!
Of all more power brings

The Emperor says "make the money
everyone must use
And print my face on every coin
So no one gets confused

All the coins belong to me
So when you buy or sell
Anything to anyone
And I get some as well

All through the land where Jesus lives
The emperor takes taxes
So people work and sweat while he
just kicks back and relaxes

Would this make you grumble
Would this make you want to fight
Would it make you want to just give up
Or try to put it right?

There were some men – the Pharisees
Wanting different rules instead
Back to the good old fashioned ways
Let's call them Team Red

Some other men did not agree
Herodians by name
"You can't stop progress" said Team Blue
"Get with the money game!"

Now normally these Blues and Reds
Would fight each other furious
But Jesus taught such different ways
Both teams were mad and curious

Jesus didn't preach up profit
So he wasn't with Team Blue
But the Red Team didn't like how he said
"God can make things new"

So Reds and Blues combined
To do some shady Purple business
And sent some question-askers round
To trick Jesus with some quizness

Jesus knows these guys don't really
Care for right or wrong
They are paid to try and trap him
So he just plays along.

They pull out scorching questions
So he'll say something that offends
About money and the emperor
And make him lose his friends

"Should we pay the taxes?
- That's the Emperor-made rule
Or keep our cash and feed the poor
That surely is less cruel?"

Hmm, that is a tricky one

Follow the rule
or
Don't be cruel

Obey the law
or
Be kind the poor

Risking arrest
or
good people blessed

Jesus cracks a cheeky grin
“Well, here is my suggestion:
Have you got a coin?
Cos that will help answer your question.

“Tell me now - whose face
is pictured there in the silver gloss?
And who has put their name on it
To say who thinks they’re boss?

The Shady asks answer
“The Emperor. The Emperor it is.”
Then give the Emperor the coin
As clearly it is his

The money and the soldiers
and the violence all belong
to the Emperor who uses them
for things both right and wrong

But everything upon the earth
and out beyond the skies
The whole universe belongs to God
Whose ways are just and wise

So give to God all that is God’s
For how great is that giving!
Give God your heart your mind your self
Trust God with your whole living

God is not an emperor
God is more than we can see
God gives life and breath and love
to everything for free.”

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Exploring in Craft

Some children will prefer to go back to free play in this time, and not continue with a structured craft. This is normal and a valid choice.

CROWNS

You will need:

- Flexible card in 50 cm lengths (join 2 A4 lengths) and 7cm widths
- Gold paper and silver foil cut in 2 cm diameter circles
- Green crepe paper or thin fabric cut in leaf shapes
- Thin Purple ribbon or curling ribbon
- Glue sticks
- Staplers

Show the group how a strip of card is going to go around their head and the ends joined to make a crown head band – but first, lie the card flat to decorate it.

Add plenty of leaves and Gold and silver coins.

Loosely coil some pieces of purple ribbon around the headband and staple in place.

Measure each child's headband around their head and staple the overlapping ends together.

Linking Lines:

In the time of our Story of Jesus from the Bible, the kings and emperors didn't wear gold crowns but leafy crowns, and wore a special purple cloth too. And we heard in the story how the Emperor loved making money – gold and silver coins, and made sure lots of money came to him.

You look like wonderful emperors and kings and queens – What rules would you make and what would you do with the money if you were the King? Jesus wasn't an emperor or a king and he wasn't greedy for money like the emperors. Jesus points to God – Kings rule certain countries, but everything really belongs to God - who generously gives us all we need.

STAMPING

You will need:

- Paper pre-cut in roughly the size of \$5 notes in different 'money' shades (blue, purple, orange)
- Assortment of rubber stamps (anything will do – money can have some very bizarre pictures) pictures and numbers
- Inkpads
- Examples of [fake copy] Australian notes

Show the examples of Australian money to the group – identifying the different images of animals or plants or things, the faces of important people, and the number that shows how much money it is.

Invite children to use the stamps to make their own money – deciding which pictures, and numbers and faces will go on them. Let them make as much money as they want! Perhaps they will think of giving it away.

Linking Lines:

Money has to be specially stamped by the government so we know that it's real money. Sometimes the Queen or the Prime-Minister puts their face on the money to show how important they are. In Jesus day, the Emperor – the King, thought he was really important and made everyone have money with his face on it! But God says – You are all important! Not because of how much money we have, but because we belong to God, because God loves and cares for us all.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — **CONSEQUENCE**

Choosing Box

At the end of the session each day, remind everyone of the conversation starter page and bring out a 'choosing' box and invite each person (including parents and carers and bystanders) to choose something from the box to take home to remind them of the time together today.

Encourage taking the item home to talk about in the family, or to hold quietly later when they want to remember the Story of Jesus from the Bible.

CHOOSING BOX

In the Choosing Box today: Chocolate coin

You will need:

- Gold wrapped chocolate coin for each person. Have a backup for any child who is not allowed to take chocolate – Carrot "dollars" wrapped in gold foil are a great healthy and non-allergenic substitute.

Linking Lines:

To remind us of our story, take a coin. This is for you to take home, and to choose what you will do with it.

You might keep it for yourself. You might keep it somewhere safe for later.

You might give it to someone else, or share it. You are the boss of it – and you can choose. What might this remind you of from the story? Maybe

it reminds you of the trickers who asked Jesus about money. Maybe it reminds you of the Emperor and all the money that belonged to him. Maybe it reminds you that everything belongs to God, and how we all belong to God.

DAY 4

PRIMARY

Session 4 : Why are you trying to trap me?

God can replace Greed

MONEY IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus shows us that God is more important, (and trustworthy) than anything

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Heads or Tails
- Coin Rubbings
- Be a Smartie

2. Context:

- Be a Roman Emperor for the Day
- Clothes Shopping
- Board Games

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: T Words on Gold Coins
- Opening the Bible: Suit coat pockets
- Opening the Bible: Picture Book
- Opening the Bible: Caesar Code around a Stick

4. Consider:

- Mosaics
- Coin through the Paper Trick
- Bag tags
- Credit Cards

5. Consequence:

- Clay statues
- Pay Your Taxes - Card Game
- Labelling everything that belongs to God

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

HEADS OR TAILS

Each person in the group must choose heads or tails by putting their hands either on their heads or on their 'tails'. When everyone has chosen one or the other position toss a coin. All those the same as the coin stay in; others are out. Keep going until you have one person left.

Linking Lines:

In the time of Jesus, the Roman emperor had the power in the world to say who was in and who was out. For simple villagers in Israel, this could be scary, and really felt unfair. The Emperor's decisions could seem as random as heads or tails.

COIN RUBBINGS**You will need:**

- Selection of coins (including foreign coins as well if you have them)
- Paper
- Crayons or pencils

Remember there are two sides of a coin to rub! The tails sides on the coins have all kinds of different things, animals/mountains/ buildings etc... but all coins have the head of the Ruler of the country – to show who is in power.

Linking Lines:

Coins were really important in ancient times, in the time of our story from the Bible. Coins always had a picture of the Emperor or Caesar on one side, which reminded everyone constantly who was boss and who had the most money, and who they had to pay their taxes to.

BE A SMARTIE**You will need:**

- Packet of smarties
- Coloured buttons
- Plastic cups

The Pharisees wanted to trick Jesus into saying something wrong. In this activity everyone is given five smarties in a cup. The aim is to keep all your smarties, but to try and trick others so you get their smarties. Everyone in the group must make conversation without saying 'YES' or 'NO'. If you are tricked into saying yes or no, you must give one of your smarties to the person you are talking to. If you lose all your smarties, you can still keep playing and try to win some back by tricking others. As you finish the game, everyone sits down to eat their smarties.

Linking Lines:

You are a very very clever bunch – some of you were really really good at



being tricky, and asking tricky questions. Some of you were really clever at not being caught by the tricky questions! You are a bunch of smarties. Our story from the Bible today comes from a time when the Roman Emperor was the absolute boss – no question. But there were some other people called Pharisees, who thought they were pretty good ‘smarties’ especially when it came to what was right and wrong. In today’s story we see how Jesus is more than just a smartie-pants, he answers wisely, because he knows that God is the boss, not the emperor, not money.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT **CONTEXT** CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

BE A ROMAN EMPEROR FOR THE DAY

You will need:

- White sheet
- Green leafy wreath (can be made from chenille stems and crepe paper leaves/cardboard cut-out)

Linking Lines:

Our Story of Jesus from the Bible is in the time of the Ancient Romans: The Romans had taken over most of the countries around them, and their King was the boss of everyone. They called their king, or Emperor, ‘Caesar’ which actually means ‘Hairy’. In those days being hairy was thought to be really manly and impressive and a sign of strength. The Caesar was really powerful and could do whatever he wanted. I wonder what you would do if you were Caesar – for a day. If you were the roman Emperor?

Invite the group to take turns dressing up in the white sheet and wearing the wreath, pretending to be the Roman Emperor/Caesar and making a grand speech.

Each person takes a turn at introducing themselves saying

‘Friends, Romans, Countrymen, I am Caesar [fill in their name]. As Emperor I would...’

Begin by modelling this yourselves as leaders – with over the top voices and gestures to inspire creativity and silliness and remove inhibition within the group.

Invite those who are keen to take a turn; be sensitive to those who are uncomfortable, and allow them to opt out of dressing up or speaking, but continue to involve them, by asking them to give a thumbs up or a thumbs down for whether they would vote for the Caesars as they present themselves.

CLOTHES SHOPPING

See **Appendix 4.1** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Position in Society Cards from App. 4.1
- Table or clothes rack for market stall
- Costumes:
 - Roman Emperor: White sheet toga, purple cloak, laurel wreath
 - Roman Soldiers: helmet/ breastplates, short red cloak
 - Pharisees & Herod's followers: long coloured Robes, head gear
 - Jesus the Peasant: Simple brown rough robe, cloak
 - Slaves: Same as peasants!

Set up a 'clothes shop' or market stall, on a table or with some clothes racks if you have them. Tell the group that they are going to buy some first century Middle Eastern clothing. At this time, as in many times in history, you were only permitted to wear certain clothes according to your position in society. Everyone must first determine their class – how rich or poor they were. Naturally, a person doesn't get to choose this, it's just the luck of the draw, as to what kind of family you are born into. Hand out cards to each person in the group, giving them their position in society.

Then allow them to step up to the clothes stall and show them their clothes.

Linking Lines:

The people around Jesus were mostly poor – most of his friends and his family were very poor. Sometimes he was invited to dinner with richer people – or they came to ask him questions. Jesus would talk or eat with anyone and his message was that we all belong to God – that God's love is for everyone.

BOARD GAMES

You will need:

- Monopoly
- Mouse Trap

Play a round of Speed Monopoly: Deal out all of the properties (this is what the emperor of Rome would do – take over all of the land then divided it up between his favourite generals or family members). Set a limit of three turns each, played really quickly... probably after three rounds (or even 10 rounds) played this way most people are still as well off as they were at the start. If you own the property, you will be in control. Jesus and most of his friends

weren't given a place to live by the emperor of Rome, they had to live on other people's land and pay rent and taxes, whenever they were told to. It could seem that money was the boss.

Mouse Trap Game: If you have the Mouse Trap game, this is a really fun one – and shows how much effort we can go to just to try and trap someone else. Set the whole mechanism up first, and then just play several rolls of the dice until someone is caught.

Linking Lines:

Games with competition where we have winners and losers can be great fun if we don't take them too seriously. But in the time of our story from the Bible today things were very harsh, and the Emperor, or Caesar, who ruled everyone always won. The people like Jesus and his friends who were poor and worked hard, always came last and often didn't have enough. Some people had questions about this – what would God say to the Caesar? What would God say to those who are poor? We'll find out what Jesus thought about this...

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

OPENING THE BIBLE: T WORDS ON GOLD COINS

You will need:

- Copies of Mark 12:13-17 with the key words beginning with T removed.
- Money bag
- 10 chocolate gold coins or gold coin sized discs (spray paint bottle caps or cover card with gold foil)

(Key 'T' words are: Together Trick Teacher Treat Teach Truth Tell Taxes Trying Test).

Give each person a copy of the text with the key 't' words removed. Pass around a money bag containing 10 chocolate gold coins. Each person takes one coin/word.

As you read the passage if you come to a blank, the person who has that word calls it out. They can then eat the chocolate! If you have a group of five, each person can take two. If you have a number between 6 and 9, you decide who gets extra. Allow the cries of 'unfair' and agree – yes it is unfair – is there a way we can make it fair?



After one reading – lay out the gold coins (or their wrappers) and read the passage again with everyone joining in on all the words beginning with the letter T.

That's how life was in Jesus time, and still today. We are given so much more than many others around the world...how terrible, and so unfair. We must remember how rich we are.

Linking Lines:

Jesus lived in a time when most people in his country were very poor. They had been taken over by the Romans and had to pay hard taxes to the emperor. The people who ask Jesus this question were trying to trick him. Anyone saying the taxes were wrong was breaking the law. But anyone one saying the taxes were right was saying that the emperor had a right to be greedy. Jesus doesn't have much to say about the Emperor; instead he reminds people of God's great love which is given freely to everyone – no matter if you have lots or a little.

OPENING THE BIBLE: SUIT COAT POCKETS

See **Appendix 4.2** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Suit coat
- Pieces of the text (printed from App 4.2)
- Choc gold coins
- Handkerchief
- Shopping list (leeks, hommus, bread, olives, oil, fish)
- Glasses case
- Tie
- Old mobile phone

Prepare a suit coat with the text from App. 4.2 cut into pieces and folded into all the various pockets (and perhaps pin one bit into the lining). Add some chocolate gold coins in the pockets (share these out equally no matter who finds them.) Fold one piece of text inside a hanky, another on the back of a shopping list, another inside a glasses case.

Show the coat to your group and ask what kind of person would wear a coat like this? What kind of job might they do?

Allow several different suggestions, welcoming and affirming all ideas as possibilities.



Ask if Jesus would wear a coat like this? Why/why not? (Some possible things to develop in this discussion are: He lived 2000 years ago when men's fashions were really different – suit coats are for business men or rich people, and Jesus wasn't rich.)

Invite volunteers one by one to reach into a pocket or lining of the coat and find an item that has part of the Story of Jesus from the Bible for today. As each piece is found, let the child read it out, or offer to read it for them.

After collecting all of the pieces of text from the pockets and hearing what they say, work out together the order they go in (be helpful and smooth this process along) then re-read each part in order and hear the whole story together.

Linking Lines:

Some questions come from being curious, or being interested, or from wondering, but the questions that these people asked Jesus today came from trying to trick Jesus into saying something that would get him in trouble. You know those kinds of questions? They are unfair and horrible. But Jesus isn't trapped or tricked or troubled by the question. He turns it around away from the unfair taxes of the Emperor, and his answer points people back to God's great love and care for us all.

OPENING THE BIBLE: PICTURE BOOK

See **Appendix 4.3** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Enlarged print-outs of the cartoon illustrations in app. 4.3 on card or laminated, and bound together to create a sturdy book.
- Copy of the passage Mark 12:13-17

Use the pictures in Appendix 4.3. With the pictures read the passage.

Take your time as you read it, and ask wondering questions like, "I wonder what's in their pockets?", "I wonder what they hoped Jesus would say?" "I wonder whose idea it was to ask Jesus a question?" "I wonder who else was interested in Jesus answer?" "I wonder if Jesus had any money with him?"

OPENING THE BIBLE: CAESAR CODE AROUND A STICK

See **Appendix 4.4** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- 12 pieces of dowel that are 8mm in diameter (or pencils)
- Appendix 4.4 - cut out the marked strips of paper with text.
- Clear sticky-tape

The Roman Caesars used this method to send coded messages their enemies couldn't de-code. Using Appendix 4.4 cut out the marked strips of paper with text.

You will need 12 textas or pencils or pieces of dowel that are 8mm in diameter. Give each person in the group one strip of paper and ask them to try to work out the message. Ask if anyone can guess what we need to do to be able to read this.

Explain that this is a method that was used by the Roman Caesars to guard their secret messages if they thought their enemies might be plotting against them (which happened quite a lot.) Give out the 8mm sticks/pencils/textas. See if anyone in the group can guess what to do. If not show the group how to wrap the strips around the sticks and read the message. A small piece of clear sticky tape on the starting end will help keep everything steady. Read the messages as they are ready and then put them in order and see if you can read the entire passage.

Linking Lines:

In the time of Jesus, Roman Emperors, or Caesars, used this tricky method to send secret messages to people in code, in case their enemies were plotting against them – which happened a lot. They wanted to know who was on their side and who belonged to their enemies. It's pretty tricky and confusing isn't it?

But also – in the time Jesus, God sent us all a clear message that he loves us all, and we all belong to him. Jesus kept sharing and showing that message clearly all the time, no tricks.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT **CONSIDER** CONSEQUENCE

Choose one or two of these activities to give space to your group to have thinking and processing time for the Bible story. Invite them to talk about the way they can connect with the story using the 'Has This Ever Happened To You?' prompts suggested below.

Be respectful and careful not to over direct the children's responses or to try to turn the experience of the Bible story into a comprehension exercise or an exegesis session or 'teaching' time. In missional Bible engagement we are praying that children, young people and families will meet Jesus, and encounter God, and we trust the Holy Spirit to be working as we make opportunity for this and come alongside to share in the process.

Has This Ever Happened To You?

- *You had to make a really hard choice?*
- *You decided getting money was not as important as something else to you?*
- *Someone tried to trick you?*

MOSAICS

You will need:

- Pre-cut 1 cm squares of different coloured paper in containers or zip lock bags
- Glue sticks
- 3-4 large poster cards with outlines of pictures – use nature themes
- Spare card
- Black markers

Invite your group to choose a picture to fill in with mosaic squares, or to draw their own outline and fill that in. Affirm the process of working on a picture together in teamwork, and how all the small pieces added by everyone create one beautiful big picture.

Linking Lines:

Mosaics were very popular in the homes of rich people in Jesus' day. All the little pieces made really beautiful art. Many mosaic artists were slaves and we don't know most of their names. The Emperor treated every person as someone to be taxed – someone he could take money from. When people asked Jesus if he thought that was right, he answered from a different view. Jesus reminds us how God sees us – not as people to be taxed but every person as a beautiful and precious and important part of God's big picture. We all belong to God.

COIN THROUGH THE PAPER TRICK

You will need:

- 20 cent coin
- A4 paper
- scissors

A 3cm diameter 20 cent coin can pass through a 1.5 cm diameter hole in a piece of paper. Fold a sheet of A4 paper in half. Cut a 1.5 cm semi-circle on the fold. Open up the piece of paper and show the group that the hole is much smaller than the coin. Re-fold the paper and place the coin inside the paper. Gently hold the bottom folded corners and pull apart. The coin will ease through the hole and fall to the ground. Open the paper again to show that the hole is still the same size, smaller than the coin. Give each person a piece of paper and a coin to try the trick. You might want to use plastic play coins rather than real 20 cent pieces, but these don't have the same weight and the help of gravity.

Linking Lines:

This is a great trick to practice with a coin – at the start you have 20 cents and at the end you still have 20 cents. I wonder if anything like this has happened to you: have you ever seen a trick with money? Maybe a magician that tears up a Ten Dollar note and then it reappears again all back together? What did you think of the way the people in our Story of Jesus from the Bible today tried to trick Jesus with money?

BAG TAGS

See **Appendix 4.5** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Plastic container lids (e.g. ice cream containers – softer pliable plastic is better)
- Coloured permanent markers (e.g. 'sharpie' or 'Posca' markers)
- Hole punch
- Cable cords

Use the template shapes in appendix 4.5 and trace the shapes on ice cream container lid. Pre-cut the shapes from the template. Let the children choose the shape they want, and provide coloured permanent markers or Posca pens for decorating and naming the tags.



Linking Lines:

I love how you are making your bag-tags creative and unique – showing that they belong to you. When people came to Jesus asking tricky questions about who should get the most money, Jesus gave this answer – everything belongs to God. God is generous and shares everything with us.

CRAFT: CREDIT CARD**You will need:**

- Plastic container lids cut into 'credit card' shape and size – enough for one per person.
- Dymo label
- Silver or holographic contact
- Small stickers (random)
- Fine permanent markers

Give each person a 'credit card' cut from the lid of a plastic ice cream container. Each person adds their name clicked out in Dymo label (the raised kind), and a strip of random numbers. Put a strip of holographic contact across the back. Add some other small stickers for bank 'logos' – thinking of creative names for their bank to go with the logo. With a fine line permanent marker, each person signs their name on the back.

Linking Lines:

Your credit cards look great – and you can pretend spend as much as you like! Credit cards are the way we have these days of borrowing money to buy things if we don't have enough money at the time, and then paying it back later.

In the time of Jesus, hardworking poor people would often end up owing money because they couldn't afford even basic everyday food, or tax. Often it was very unfair and things would go from bad to worse with them never being able to pay. The Caesar kept asking for taxes – and didn't care what happened to people. No wonder the Pharisees asked Jesus if he thought this was fair.

Jesus doesn't want anyone to have a hard time because of a bossy Caesar, or because they have let money become too important. Jesus says – don't forget – everything belongs to God, and God lovingly shares everything with us.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

CLAY STATUES

You will need:

- White clay (keep in an airtight tub with a moist sponge to keep pliable)
- Wire for cutting
- Sturdy surfaces for working e.g. long wooden trestle table top, laminated A4 cards, Masonite boards
- Cardboard or wooden off cut blocks for mounting
- Wooden skewers

Use white clay, giving a lump to each person (white salt dough would also work, but be less realistic). Show them how to shape a basic head and shoulders. Then let each person make their own statue of a famous person, perhaps an emperor, a prime minister, or a sporting hero/rock star. Along the base at the front sculpt in the words 'Not the Boss' using a wooden skewer.

Linking Lines:

What a bunch of champions we have here! All the people who are in charge of things, who are top of their game, people who influence others – all amazing people. It's great to have heroes – but Jesus reminds us that no human is the ultimate boss. All of us, every human, is equal – all made by God, all belonging to God who doesn't boss us around like a king or like Caesar, but loves us all with kindness and fairness.

PAY YOUR TAXES - CARD GAME

You will need:

- Standard pack of cards – no joker
- Ground mat or tarp to sit on

This is a well known card game that goes by another name.

Deal out the entire pack equally between your group.

Each player keeps their cards face down.

All cards throughout the game are played onto the central pile in the middle.

Left of the dealer goes first.

Player 1 turns over the top card on their pile and places it face up in middle, the second player then does the same, placing their card on top of the first, and so on.

This continues until someone over turns a "Caesar" Card (Ace, King, Queen, Jack).



The player following that player must pay tax to the player who put down the “Caesar” card. An Ace requires 4 cards tax, King – 3 cards, Queen -2 cards, Jack-1 card. When the tax has been payed, the person who had played the initial Caesar Card picks up all of the cards, both the tax and the pile, places them underneath his own pile.

The “Caesar” then starts again, overturning the card on the top of his pile and placing it in the middle. The only way to avoid paying a tax is if in overturning your cards to pay the tax, you draw a Caesar card yourself, in which case, that Caesar card cancels out the first one, and the next player along now must pay whatever the tax due from the new Caesar card.

Linking Lines:

Great game! Good fun to play and well done to all the lucky ones who became Caesar. It was pretty unlucky if you never turned up a Caesar card – nothing you could do about it. Did you see how once you started winning, it was easy to keep winning and once you began to lose things just went from bad to worse. It really isn't fair. How does it feel to keep losing and losing? How does it feel when things aren't fair?

Jesus is for fair. Jesus wants his friends and followers to be for fair too.

LABELLING EVERYTHING THAT BELONGS TO GOD

You will need:

- ‘Dymo’ labeller
- OR
- Page of printable stickers pre-printed with ‘This.....belongs to God’

Remind your group of Jesus answer to the trick question: ‘Give to God what it God’s’. What belongs to God? Surely...pretty much everything!

Tell your group that you are going to try and label as many things as you can that belong to God. Start with each person first and affirm that we belong to God – in a great way - he’ll never let us go. So make a sticky label that says ‘This (NAME) belongs to God’. Following this, ask what else belongs to God and stick some labels on trees, rocks, bricks, the scissors box, your car! There are a couple of ways to do this activity.

If you have a Dymo labeller, power it up and give each person a go! The older style labellers that click the letters in also reasonably cheap, so you might consider putting one on your Christmas list!

Linking Lines:

When some people challenge Jesus about whether he thinks that taxes are fair, Jesus gives a really clever answer, and a really true answer to the men who are trying to trap him. He says to give Caesar what is his (so pay the taxes if that's what is fair) but give to God what is God's. This makes us get out another question mark, and ask the question – What does he mean by what belongs to God? What does belong to God? How would we answer this?

DAY 4

TEENS

Session 4 : Why are you trying to trap me?

God can replace Greed

MONEY IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus shows us that God is more important, (and trustworthy) than anything

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Heads or Tails
- Be Roman Emperor for the Day
- Play a round of Speed Monopoly

2. Context:

- Law vs God

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: T Words on Gold Coins
- Opening the Bible: Tricky Question Simulation

4. Consider:

- If everything belongs to God...

5. Consequence:

- Reverse Taxing
- What would you put your money on?

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Has someone ever tried to trick you in to saying or doing something you didn't want to do?

HEADS OR TAILS

Each person in the group must choose heads or tails by putting their hands either on their heads or on their 'tails'. When everyone has chosen one or the other position, toss a coin. All those the same as the coin stay in; others are out. Keep going until you have one person left.

In the time of Jesus, the Roman emperor had the power in the world to say who was in and who was out. For simple villagers in Israel, this could be scary, and really felt unfair. The Emperor's decisions could seem as random as heads or tails.

BE ROMAN EMPEROR FOR THE DAY

The Ancient Romans had impressive titles for their Emperors or Caesars. Caesar literally means 'Hairy', but in that time 'hairy' was a way of saying 'big macho guy'. Augustus means 'Revered'.

Today we are going to introduce ourselves as if we were the Roman Emperor for the day. So stand up and say, "Friends, Romans, Countrymen. I am Caesar/Augustus. As Emperor I would ..."

Each person takes a turn at filling in their name and what they would do as Emperor.

PLAY A ROUND OF SPEED MONOPOLY

Deal out all of the properties (this is what the emperor of Rome would do – take over all of the land then divided it up between his favourite generals or family members.) Set a limit of three turns each, played really quickly. Probably after 3 rounds (or even 10 rounds) played this way, most people are still as well off as they were at the start. If you own the property, you will be in control. Jesus and most of his friends weren't given a place to live by the emperor of Rome; they had to live on other people's land and pay rent and taxes, whenever they were told to. It could seem that Money was the boss.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

How important do you think obeying the law is versus doing what God commands us to do?

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Would you have felt sorry for Jesus if you had been there? What do you think the Pharisees thought Jesus would say?

OPENING THE BIBLE: T WORDS ON GOLD COINS

(Key 'T' words are: together, trick, teacher, treat, teach, truth, tell, taxes, trying, test)

Give each person a copy of the text with the key 't' words removed. Pass around a money bag containing 10 chocolate gold coins. Each of these coins has one of the key 't' words written on it in black permanent marker. Each person takes one coin/word. As you read the passage if you come to a blank, the person who has that word calls it out. Providing they are correct, they can then eat the chocolate! If you have a group of 5, each person can take 2. If you have a number between 6-9, you decide who gets extra. Allow the cries of 'Unfair' and agree – yes it is unfair; that is how life was in Jesus' time, and still today. We are given so much more than others; how terrible and so unfair. We must remember how rich we are.

OPENING THE BIBLE: TRICKY QUESTION SIMULATION

Explain that this story is about some people who ask a question not to find out stuff, but to try to trap Jesus into saying something wrong. A Leader is going to read the passage, and everyone else can ask questions, and the leader has to try and answer them.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

The passage says that the Pharisees' mouths hung open at what Jesus said. Why do you think this was?

Exercise: tell the group something true about yourself that will surprise or shock them.

IF EVERYTHING BELONGS TO GOD...

Jesus gives a really clever answer, and a really true answer to the men who are trying to trap him. He says to give Caesar what is his (so pay the taxes if that's what is fair) but give to God what is God's.

This makes us get out another question mark, and ask the question, What belongs to God? How would we answer this? Give your group a go at this? What belongs to God? Pretty much everything! So get out a labeller and make some 'This.....belongs to God' – filling in the blank. Start with each person first and affirm that we belong to God – in a great way - he'll never let us go. So make a sticky label that says 'This (NAME) belongs to God'. Following this, ask what else belongs to God and stick some labels on trees, rocks, bricks, the scissors box, your car! There are a couple of ways to do this activity. If you have a Dymo labeller, power it up and give each person a go! The older style labellers that click the letters in are reasonably cheap, so you might consider putting one on your Christmas list!

As you do this, there are some good questions to raise:
If everything belongs to God, how should we treat the things around us?
Should God be a bit more careful in looking after the world, if it belongs to him?

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER **CONSEQUENCE**

What do you know about what else Jesus said about money?
How much do you think about money?
How much time should we spend thinking about money?
What difference would it make if we acknowledge that all our money belongs to God?

REVERSE TAXING

Recently the Australian Government decided to do a little taxing in reverse and gave many households \$750 in a 'stimulus' package. Perhaps this happened in your house. What did you spend it on? What would you spend it on? What would Jesus spend it on, if he believes everything belongs to God?

WHAT WOULD YOU PUT YOUR MONEY ON?

Give each person a fake \$10 note. Introduce the phrase 'put your money on' as a betting term, but emphasise that it means you are really sure about something if you 'put your money on' it. It's the thing that you have faith in. In our lives, it's impossible not to put our money on something. Everyone puts their faith in something. Some people 'put their money on' money and being rich as the thing that is most important or secure or worthwhile in life; for others it's education or friends or a sense of justice or what comes around goes around, or doing the right thing. Jesus invites us to put our money on him, to trust in him, put our faith in him. That means giving him the last say in our decisions, and in trusting that if he says we're ok, it means we're really ok.

So what are we going to put our money on? What is the bottom line for us – the ultimate thing? Each person is invited to place their \$10 note in a pile and as they do, to name the thing they think is worth putting their money on and trusting. They can do this either by writing it on the back of the note, or by saying what it is. Let people choose and make it clear that no one has to say their thing out loud if they don't want to. If people have named Jesus, invite them to speak to you after to chat about what this looks like in your life.

DAY 4

PARENT CONVERSATION

GOD CAN REPLACE GREED

What's the Story?

Kids can ask the darndest questions sometimes. And they can catch us unprepared, or at awkward times, with those big questions like, 'Where does money come from?', 'What's tax?', 'Why can't I have a gazillion dollars?' or, 'How do you become the Prime-Minister?'

That's a lot of deep breaths – you're probably hyperventilating even without trying to answer them!

The thing is - awkward as these questions are – they are great opportunities for us to give our kids a sense of our values. How important is money to us? Do we want our kids to appreciate what taxes are for? Chances are our kids have used public parks, driven down roads and across bridges, thrown out garbage or recycling to be collected, and go to school: all of these are funded by tax dollars. What qualities in a leader do we hope our kids will learn to look for from the way we speak about our politicians?

One thing I learned from my kids is that long speeches explaining things never went down well, and didn't make much of an impression. What did have an impact – and this was for better or for worse – were my throw away lines, my reactions to everyday situations, my attitude to money, to public services, to political leaders, religious leaders, institutions and systems.

My kids were watching closely: whatever answers I spouted when put on the spot with a question, it was my attitude and actions in life that showed my kids my values.

Share Your Story

- Who are the leaders that you'd like your kids to look up to?
- How do you give your kids a sense of respect for leadership?
- What kind of values do you want your kids to have when it comes to politics?

What's God's Story?

Jesus had a strange approach to the politics of his time. One that exasperated his enemies and frustrated his friends. Mostly he kept to the back blocks, to the small towns and stayed among the common rumble; after all they were his people.

There are a few occasions he did come face to face with government or authority or the upper crust – but it was never a comfortable situation. Jesus wasn't going to pander to power, but he didn't start a protest movement either. It was hard to really pin Jesus' politics

down. And I think that's a good thing. We should be wary of any party that claims exclusive rights to God.

There's a great moment in the Bible where Jesus is cornered by a few of the leading political party representatives and challenged on whether he supported the Roman taxation policy. The taxes owed to the Romans were enforced with swords and spears – so it would be a brave backwater Jew who'd argue against it. But it was oppressive and unjust and kept his people in poverty. How can he say that's ok? Devil and the deep blue sea; damned if you do, damned if you don't. It was a political set-up, like lots of stuff that's flying around the media today. There's no easy answers. But there are plenty of set-ups that try and corner people to one side or another.

Jesus has a different way: he says – 'Sure, pay your tax to Caesar, you know there's no option out of that. But don't forget you are not just a slave to the emperor, not just a political pawn. You are a human person – you belong not to Israel or to Rome, not to a political party, not to poverty or to privilege. You belong to God.' We all – all of us equally – belong to God. A power higher than any politics. And so whoever we are, however much tax we pay, we owe one another great dignity, respect and care. We all belong to God.

Our kids will grow up to have their own political minds, and I know I won't have much of a fortune to leave to my kids. But I think I'd be happy about leaving my kids with a sense of treating everyone with the greatest dignity possible, including themselves.

Hear/Read more: Mark 12:13-17

DAY 4

BIBLE DRAMA

Characters:

- Jesus
- 2 disciples
- 3 Roman soldiers
- 2 Priests

Props:

- Large Silver coin (at least 1 meter diameter) with head of emperor.
- Lots of small silver coins (e.g. Silver card discs)

Characters walk across the stage each flipping a coin

Roman Soldier: Heads or tails, Heads or tails

Priest: Heads or tails, Heads or tails

Follower of Jesus (Jeans & T shirt):
Heads or Tails, Heads or Tails.

Roman Soldier: *(second time around, still flipping coin)*
Heads or Tails, Heads or tails, Heads or tails.
Boys & Girls, Ladies and Gents
It's time for you to choose
We'll flip a coin to see
who will win and who will lose.
Heads (Demonstrate hands on heads) or tails (Demonstrate
hands behind you)

*(Soldier leads a game of heads and tails, until everyone is out. During the game
distribute roman 'coins' throughout the audience)*

Roman soldier: Here in the Roman empire you've got to use your head. And if
you don't have money, you lose. Old Caesar as it all stitched
up. He's got his own money everywhere in the empire, and it all
belongs to him. Even in back water Israel here. They have their
own money, but it doesn't count with Caesar – so use your head.

*(2 Other Roman soldiers Roll in a Giant Coin with Caesar's head on it. And remain in
background, leaning on Coin)*

Roman Soldier: Right you lot, it's time to pay your respects to the emperor. And
I mean PAY!!! Firstly today there's a tax for wearing an SUFM
T-shirt.
And there's a tax for anyone who was awake at 6:30 this
morning.
And there's a tax for anyone who has had fish & chips this week,
and extra tax if it was eaten on the beach!
All taxes must be paid in Roman Coins!

Enter Jesus & 2 Disciples (in team t-shirts) and 2 Priests from opposite side. They meet in the middle and begin to circle around Jesus as they speak. Disciples stand to one side.

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Priest 1: Jesus! Good to see you
Priest 2: What an honest fellow you are
Priest 1: You teach the truth of God
Priest 2: And you treat everyone with respect.

(Stopping on either side of Jesus, facing in towards him, confronting)

Priest 1: Tell us
Priest 2: should we pay tax to the emperor?
Priest 1: or not?

*(Roman Soldier coughs loudly)
 (Priests lean over and stage-whisper in front of Jesus)*

Priest 1: A brilliantly tricky question!
Priest 2: This is sure to get him in trouble.

(Disciples at the side)

Disciple 1: Oh no, a brilliantly tricky question.
Disciple 2: Oh dear, this is sure to get Jesus in trouble.

Jesus: Why are you trying to test me? Show me a coin!

(Priests dig in their pockets and Roman Soldiers roll big coin forward.)

Jesus: Whose picture and name are on it?

Priests: *(fumbling, can't answer)* Um, er....

Disciple: Can anyone help them out? *(take answer – the Emperor)*

Jesus: *(again to the priests)* Whose picture and name are on it?

Priests: The Emperor's.

Jesus: *(Rolls the Coin back to the Soldiers)* So give the Emperor what belongs to him, *(walks into the audience)* and give God what belongs to God.

Roman soldiers: Amazing answer. But what belongs to God?

Priests: Amazing answer. Everything belongs to God

Disciples: Amazing answer – girls and boys, grownups – we all belong to God.

Jesus: (*flipping a coin*) Heads or Tails – you choose who is the boss of you – money? taxes? A greedy emperor? Or a loving God? Heads or Tails – you choose.

Priest: Heads or Tails, Heads or tails, Heads or tails ... Jesus says some strange things...

ONLY FOR USE BY SU VICTORIA

DAY 5

*What do you want with us?
Have you come to destroy us?*

THEME WORDS

Jesus came to destroy things that are messed up.

Calm can replace confusion

Chaos is not the boss

BIBLE

Mark 1:21-28

Jesus frees a man from a messed up spirit

SONGS

The Pop Song (C)

On & On (S)

Jesus Cares About Me (S)

INTRODUCTION

Life is messy. Life is messy everywhere. In our homes, and our schools, our churches and our own heads and hearts. This is the first ‘ministry’ story of Jesus in Mark’s gospel – Jesus has been baptised by John, affirmed by God and tempted by Satan, and gathered his first followers.

Jesus, a devout Jew, goes to the synagogue on the Sabbath. He begins his ministry close to the heart of his people, their prayers and their scriptures. But among the faithful worshippers not all is well. A man has an unclean spirit. He’s messed up. And Jesus clears away the garbage. That simple. All of Jesus miracles are signs of the kingdom.

And this is his opening sign: even those who earnestly seek God, who are drawn to prayer and the scriptures, can be messed up, have disruptions to their spirits.

Notice that Jesus doesn’t make this into a platform for judgement or commentary on the synagogue. That’s not the deal here. This is an everyday reality. The human condition – even the God-seeking and Lord-Loving human condition can be beset with mess.

In other stories Jesus encounters demonic forces – Legion, that’s something different. And there are times when he heals a ‘Moonstruck’ lad, with epileptic seizures, and that is something different again, and we mustn’t lump all of these into one category, but pay close attention to the unique character of each affliction and the way Jesus addresses it.

We all need Jesus’ ministry of cleaning us up. Of dealing with the tangles of spirit and being that make us fear destruction. The messed up spirit in this devout Capernaum Jew expected the Holy One to destroy him. Jesus comes not to destroy but to restore. As a first sign this powerfully defines who Jesus is and what his ministry is about.

MARK 1:21-28

Jesus frees a man from a messed up spirit

²¹ Jesus and his disciples went to the town of Capernaum. Then on the next Sabbath he went into the Jewish meeting place and started teaching. ²² Everyone was amazed at his teaching. He taught with authority, and not like *scribes. ²³ Suddenly a man with a messed up spirit in him entered the meeting place and yelled, ²⁴ “Jesus from Nazareth, what do you want with us? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are! You are God’s Holy One.”

²⁵ Jesus told the messed up spirit, “Be quiet and come out of the man!” ²⁶ The spirit shook him. Then it gave a loud shout and left.

²⁷ Everyone was completely surprised and kept saying to each other, “What is this? It must be some new kind of powerful teaching! Even the messed up spirits obey him.”

²⁸ News about Jesus quickly spread all over Galilee.

DAY 5

TEAM STUDY

Session 5: What do you want with us? Have you come to destroy us?

Calm can replace confusion

CHAOS IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus came to destroy things that are messed up.

Notes for reflection and background

Life is messy. Life is messy everywhere. In our homes, and our schools, our churches and our own heads and hearts. This is the first 'ministry' story of Jesus in Mark's gospel – Jesus has been baptised by John, affirmed by God and tempted by Satan, and gathered his first followers.

Jesus, a devout Jew, goes to the synagogue on the Sabbath. He begins his ministry close to the heart of his people, their prayers and their scriptures. But among the faithful worshippers not all is well. A man has an unclean spirit. He's messed up. And Jesus clears away the garbage. That simple. All of Jesus miracles are signs of the kingdom.

And this is his opening sign: even those who earnestly seek God, who are drawn to prayer and the scriptures, can be messed up, have disruptions to their spirits. Notice that Jesus doesn't make this into a platform for judgement or commentary on the synagogue. That's not the deal here. This is an everyday reality. The human condition – even the God-seeking and Lord-Loving human condition can be beset with mess.

In other stories Jesus encounters demonic forces – Legion, that's something different. And there are times when he heals a 'Moonstruck' lad, with epileptic seizures, and that is something different again, and we mustn't lump all of these into one category, but pay close attention to the unique character of each affliction and the way Jesus addresses it.

We all need Jesus' ministry of cleaning us up. Of dealing with the tangles of spirit and being that make us fear destruction. The messed up spirit in this devout Capernaum Jew expected the Holy One to destroy him. Jesus comes not to destroy but to restore. As a first sign this powerfully defines who Jesus is and what his ministry is about.

**Note the change from the CEV translation 'teachers of the law of Moses' which I have replaced with the more accurate 'scribes'. The Greek text has one word here 'grammateus' which was a generic word for scribes; there is no mention of Moses or the Law in the text. Mark's gospel is not setting up a contrast between Judaism and Jesus, but rather showing has a different kind of authority that is not based on education, but on the Spirit of God.*

**note the change from the CEV text which called the spirit 'evil', whereas the Greek text uses the term 'unclean' for this particular person's spiritual condition.*

Connect: Domino Effect

Divide your team into 5 groups. Give each team a pile of dominoes. (this will be easier, and make a good visual effect if the five sets of dominoes are visually distinctive from one another. Name each group: 1. Physics 2. Psychics 3. Ethics. 4. Logics 5. Somatics.

Chalk or tape a circle on the ground roughly 1.5 m in diameter.

Each group is challenged to set up their dominos in a line within the circle – but all working at the same time.

There will be chaos. Dominoes will fall. Lines from one group will take out others.

After a few minutes of this invite the groups to all step back and survey the scene.

Being a human is a complex task.

All of us from day dot have all of these processes

- our engagement with the physical world (a cheer for the Physics)
- our relationship to our developing self (a cheer for the Psychics)
- our negotiations with others around us (a cheer for the Ethics)
- our thinking processes and intellectual meaning (a cheer for the logics)
- our constantly changing and growing and active body (a cheer for the somatics)

These systems all interact within our one being. And a clear path for one process can help others work freely, just as a break down in one can take collateral damage in others. Most of us are familiar with all of this within ourselves – though there is always more to become aware of.

Our spiritual life encompasses all of this - not as a separate line but what brings meaning, healing, wholeness, and right ways in God to all of it.

The greatest commandment Jesus endorses points to this – Loving God is not one part of our life, but the spiritual reality that connects and unifies and heals all of us as we love God with all our heart, soul/self, mind and strength – and our neighbour as our selves.

In the passage today the ‘unclean’ or ‘messed up’ man is the whole circle – just like for all of us.

Context: Sabbath rest and Synagogues

Depending on the body comfortableness of the group try either of the activities in which the whole group sit in a tight circle on each other's knees, or lying on the ground with one's head on another's diaphragm forming a 'laughing circle' – or if health restrictions make these inappropriate describe or watch a quick video clip of this activity.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPauhLDmp4I>

This is picture of the relationship between sabbath and synagogue. No one can be made to work on the sabbath – not even cooking breakfast. So this means at meeting time, everyone can be present (men, women, children, slaves, workers) so as well as the common prayers and engagement with scripture, the community issues – Is the well working? Does anyone need help clearing a field? Martha is sick – who can give a hand in that household with the children? Jakov's ox is stuck in the ditch – we'll all have to pitch in to gently pull the old girl out. So Sabbath includes rest and wellness and justice and equality. No one is excluded from the decision making. We note in the passage that the man who is messed up is at the synagogue meeting – of course he was. EVERYONE was there. Isn't this how God wants our communities to work?

- What does that mean in urban environments where villages aren't small and well defined?
- What principles from this vision of Sabbath are helpful for you in organising the way your small group will run?

Content

Print the passage Mark 1:21-28 onto an A3 page in large print that will fill the whole page.

Tear the page into roughly half the number of people you have in your team. Scrunch these up and place them in a container.

Ask the group to get into pairs and pass the container around, each pair taking a piece of the passage, which they unscrunch and flatten out as best they can.

Go around the group asking the pairs to read their piece (may be a collection of half phrases) – these will be all out of order.

Now challenge the group to reassemble the text placing the pieces together – bluetack them to a backing board to hold them in place.

Now read the text through 'as written' but invite those who had the individual pieces to join in on the words they had on their original scrunched up piece of the text.

Consider: Some points of reflection

- Note that the text has been messed up and restored. Even when it was in many pieces it was still the text. Still the scripture. Remind the group that in fact this is how our texts have come to us – in many cases different fragments found in caves, and jars, and rubbish heaps and libraries have been reassembled to make the scriptures that we have in whole pages in one book today.
- God is no stranger to being able to bring torn up messed up pieces together.
- This idea of the text still being nothing but the text even when it is shreds is part of the message of our humanity that is held in the story. Even when we are messed up and in tatters – physically, emotionally, cognitively, relationally we are still our very selves: still 100% human, and still irreducibly made in the image of God. No matter how broken. This informs how we see others – always holding their precious whole humanity; and how we regards ourselves – always knowing our own worth as God's own no matter how messed up.
- Our ministry and mission is to the whole child. The whole young person. The whole adult. The whole family. We are called not just to the 'spiritual' part of them – there is not 'spiritual part', but to facilitating them as whole human beings meeting God in the Bible.
- The Sabbath is a day of Shalom – this means of course rest, but more accurately it means wholeness: that is healing, restoration, peace, renewal. Sabbath is for the wholeness of whole human beings, in whole creation.

Consequence: Pair to pair share and prayer.

Ask the pairs to reclaim their piece of the text again, and joining with another pair, ask them to reflect and discuss these two questions about each of their pieces of text.

1. What really significant part of the story is held in this 'piece' – what angle catches your attention?
2. What would be lost or changed from the theology of the story if your piece was missing?

Pray for one another as whole humans – precious and in pieces, and pray for the children, families and young people in your area – pray for their whole being to be met by the peace of God.

DAY 5

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Calm can replace confusion

Summary: Jesus deals with a messed up man

Bible: Mark 1: 21-28 Jesus frees a man from a messed up spirit.

Questions: What do you want with us? Have you come to destroy us?

Song Line: Chaos Is Not The Boss

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Skittles
- Scrubbing Dinosaurs

2. Context:

- Pop Song
- Sleepy Snails – Game

3. Content:

- Story Time

4. Consider:

- Cleaning on the inside
- Whiteboard wiping (a simpler version)

5. Consequence:

- Choosing Box

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Free Play

Playdough, blocks and quiet book corner can be offered every session for routine and stability, rotating a couple of other 'theme' activities for interest and variety. Offer a few or all of the following free-play options. Each of these can become a teaching/storytelling opportunity as well. After the Mat time, you may invite children back to one of these 'free-play' activities and allow them to tell/imagine the story with you...

SKITTLES

You will need:

- 6 empty soft drink bottles
- Rice or sand
- Nuts and bolts, nails, wires, dirt
- Coloured paper
- Markers
- Sticky Tape
- Large soft ball

Place 2-3 cm of rice or sand in the base of each bottle. Completely fill one bottle with the nuts and bolts/nails/wires and dirt etc... Replace the lids on each bottle, closing tightly and sealing with strong tape. Add strips of coloured paper around the top and middle thirds of the straight part of the bottle to create a character. Use the markers to fill in details of face, hair and clothing. (e.g. buttons, pockets, tie, belt).

You can have a set of these prepared ahead of time, and ready to play, as well as some spare materials ready to make extras for children who prefer.

Help the children set the six bottle characters up in a triangle – this may be a slapstick comedy game in itself, as they fall over and knock each other down.

Take a few paces back from the bottles and let each person take a turn at bowling the ball along the ground to try and knock down the skittles.

Linking Lines:

Oh dear! All our bottle people kept falling over, and knocking each other down. They all had trouble when the ball came rolling their way. And what about the one bottle person that was filled up with all that junk? What a mess. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, there are some people who are worshipping God together. And one of them is a bit messed up in himself. He has a messed up spirit. When he sees Jesus he thinks Jesus is coming like the big ball to knock them all down. What do you think? Do think Jesus wanted to knock people down? No – that's not Jesus' way. Jesus helps clean up the messed up one, and helps them all stand together firmly.

SCRUBBING DINOSAURS

You will need:

- A collection of medium sized plastic dinosaurs
- Tubs of soapy water
- Old plastic tooth brushes (soak these in Methylated Spirits to clean)
- Towels

Young children love this simple activity of giving the dinosaurs a foamy bath and scrubbing them with a tooth brush. The bubbles are fun, the sound of the scrubbing is exciting, the water is soothing, the different shapes of the dinosaurs are fascinating, and work the hand and finger muscles in lots of engaging ways.

Provide several tubs so that children can choose to parallel scrub or work solo. And a few centimetres of water and a squirt of body wash will foam up and be plenty for this activity.

Towelling the dinosaurs dry is also part of the process.

Linking Lines:

You have done a wonderful job giving our dinosaurs a lovely bath! They do look very happy to be so fresh and clean – before they go back in the swamp! They are super clean on the outside: In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, there is a man who is clean and calm on the outside – but in his feelings he felt a terrible mess.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT | **CONTEXT** | CONTENT | CONSIDER | CONSEQUENCE

Mat Time: Songs and Rhymes and Games

Use one or more of the familiar group songs or games to gather the group together and create a culture of listening and participating together. Encourage parents/carers to join in with their children.

POP SONG (SU VIC CLICK)

You will need:

- A link to the track "Pop Song" (suvic.org.au/click)

This song describes lots of things being messed up – and has easy playful actions. The key line in the chorus is ‘God can make good things happen out of all our mess’. Teach this line first. There are ‘pops’ (finger in your cheek style) in the chorus too, which the soft muscles of toddlers can’t manage but it’s great fun for them to try. Practice your own popping ahead of time – which will be of great fascination and humour for the children.

SLEEPY SNAILS – GAME

(This game is similar to ‘Dead Ants’ or ‘Dead Soldiers’, but focussed on sleeping and waking not trying to catch people moving.)

Tell the group that you are all going to pretend to curl up like sleepy snails and stay as still and calm as you can. Show the group how they can curl up on their knees with their heads poking out with their fingers like snails eyes on stalks. Then show them how to tuck in their ‘eyes’ and heads to become sleepy snails.

Explain that in this game, when you call “Sleepy snails”, everyone tucks their heads in and stays still. Then you will move around the group and whisper to each one at a time “Wake up, sleepy snail”. As a person is whispered to, they slowly start to lift their head and uncurl, standing up into a stretch.

Linking Lines:

You were all very still sleepy snails and I really liked how you uncurled when you woke up! In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, the story takes place on a day of the week when everyone had a rest – everyone got to be relaxed and sleepy as snails. One person found it hard to stay calm, and Jesus helped him.

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Story Time

See 'Plasticine Story files' for visuals.

Ask another leader or parent to hold the pictures while you use your whole body in full dynamic expression in storytelling. Invite participation.

STORY TIME

Jesus lived in a time
When towns were small
And there could be rules
That were good for all.
One of those rules
Was to keep a whole day
For resting and joy
And finding God's way

The Sabbath rule said
"Everyone needs to rest
a whole night and day
and a night
will be best."

So let's hear of one Sabbath
How relaxed are you feeling?
Are you restful and ready
For this story of healing?

Twas the night before Sabbath
The sun had gone down
Not a creature was stirring
all through the town

Nobody cooked
Nobody shopped
Nobody travelled
Everything stopped

A stranger in town
Would be fed and made stay
So they would not travel
the very next day

They'd cooked up a feast
Baking double or more
Then they'd eat the left-overs
From the night just before

So everyone's tucked into bed
With full tummies
And tomorrow is no work
Just left-over yummys

But there is one man
Still up in the night
He just couldn't settle
There was something not right

Something inside him was
Making him twitch
It was like that a part of his brain
Had an itch

Something inside him
Made him want to scream
As if he was stuck
In a very bad dream

Something inside him
Made him want to run
And hide far away
From everyone

Something inside him
Made him boil with such fear
Fear of every thing
and of every one near

But most of the time
You wouldn't have known
It was something he carried
Inside him alone

Twas the morning of Sabbath
When everyone snoozed
To restore all the strength
That the working week used

But this man was up
he was washed he was dressed
We was clean on the outside
But his heart was still messed

Families were yawning
and stretching and rising
no idea that this rest day
would be quite surprising

The sun risen high
the wind is blowing
Look at the townsfolk
where are they going?

The whole of the town
gathered for prayer
and heard God's word spoken
and check that things were fair

Women and Men
And the children took part
As they sang "Love God
with your whole self, strength and heart

Jesus and friends had been staying in town
And rested and slept when the sun had gone down
enjoyed lazy breakfast of leftover grub
and joined the community gathering hub

Remember the man
By chaos oppressed?
He was there too
seeking God, like the rest

When he looked at Jesus
Fear marched through him like an army
And the words burst out of him
Like a sudden Tsunami

"I know who you are
You are the Holy One
Have you come to destroy us
For the bad things that we've done?"

If you know the stories
of God from ancient days
you'll know that he was wrong
About God's Holy ways

God isn't one who sends us harm
Or seeks our destruction
God creates, restores and heals
gives wise, just instruction

But Jesus didn't argue
Or debate him on his error
Or shout him down or scoff
But showed compassion for his terror

Jesus looked and saw
His sorely suffering mind
Messed up with many thoughts
so confused and unkind.

Jesus replied and spoke
direct to the trouble
As if the 'something' was a person
Not the man but his double

"Be silent! And Get out!"
Jesus' authority was sure
The 'something' shook him with a cry
And then – it was no more

The 'something' messed inside him
Whatever it had been
And wherever it came from
It had gone now, left him clean

Left him clear of troubled rumbling
Left him free from anguish past
Left him steady, left him peaceful
Sabbath rest for him at last

Those gathered at the meeting
Were amazed at what they'd seen
This was the sabbathiest Sabbath
That has ever ever been

You can bet the word spread quickly
Of this troubled-spirit breaker
Of this Sabbath-wholeness bringer
News of Jesus the peace-maker

CONSIDER...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT **CONSIDER** CONSEQUENCE

Exploring in Craft

Some children will prefer to go back to free play in this time, and not continue with a structured craft. This is normal and a valid choice.

CLEANING ON THE INSIDE

You will need:

- Transparent Jars (glass or plastic) and lids with an opening large enough to reach inside
- OR
- One large glass mixing or salad bowl (for an all-in group activity)
- Tray
- Permanent markers
- Old cloths
- Methylated spirits

Prepare the jars ahead of time by drawing on both the inside and outside of each jar. You could draw faces on the outside, as well as messy scribble. Close the jars.

If using the glass bowl, do this same process of scribbling on both the inside and the outside of the bowl, then turn it upside down on a tray.

Show the children the jars or the bowl and invite them to help you clean. Give them a cloth sprayed with a little methylated spirits and let them start wiping the outside of the jar – or taking turns to wipe the outside of the bowl.

Soon, they will be able to see that the scribble is coming off the outside, and going onto the cloth. But some of the scribble isn't coming off.

Engage the children in thinking about why this might be. They may or may not suggest that the scribble is on the inside, but give them a chance to come up with this idea.

Then show them with one jar, taking off the lid and looking in the jar or turn the bowl over: see if they can tell that the mess is inside. Invite them to try to clean the inside – again if using the bowl, taking turns at wiping, until it is clean in and out. Respray the cloth sparingly with methylated spirits if necessary.

Linking Lines:

Well done – cleaning on the outside and on the inside. At first it was hard to tell where the mess was wasn't it. Some times when we are feeling messed up in way it can be hard to tell where the trouble is – or if we meet someone who yells and shakes and shouts in a scary way like the man that shouted at Jesus – it can be hard to tell what's going on. We can be careful not to



judge people just from the outside.

Jesus cares about our whole body on the outside and our feelings and thinking on the inside and has the power to help good things to happen and calm to come out our mess.

WHITEBOARD WIPING (A SIMPLER VERSION)

You will need:

- Sheets of A4 card or paper - laminated
- White board markers
- Old cloths for wiping

Give each person a laminated card and invite them to draw whatever they like – perhaps where they live or their family. Then ask them to make the picture as messy as possible.

When the page couldn't get messier, provide a soft cloth to wipe the card clean and start again.

A variation: with a permanent marker, draw a gingerbread shape body. Then invite the children to add their own 'mess' inside the body. When this is done, again, offer the soft cloth and let them clean up the 'body'.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Choosing Box

At the end of the session each day, remind everyone of the conversation starter page and bring out a 'choosing' box and invite each person (including parents and carers and bystanders) to choose something from the box to take home to remind them of the time together today.

Encourage taking the item home to talk about in the family, or to hold quietly later when they want to remember the Story of Jesus from the Bible.

CHOOSING BOX

In the Choosing Box today: Lavender Pockets

You will need:

- Dried lavender
- Small squares of breathable material 10x10cm (e.g. cotton, muslin, cheesecloth)
- Twine

Make up enough small packages of dried lavender for each person. Place a tablespoon of lavender – flower buds or leaves – on the centre of a square of cloth. Draw the edges of the cloth together and tie securely with twine just above the lavender forming a small bundle.

Linking Lines:

To remind us of our story, take a little bundle. Give it a little sniff. How does it smell? Take a nice big deep breath – in – wait – and out.

Does it help you feel restful and calm? What part of the story might these remind us of? Maybe the people who spent a whole day being restful each week? Maybe the way the man with the messed up spirit felt calm after Jesus spoke to him? Some people like to put lavender like this in their pillow case to help them have restful sleep. Other people like to put it in the drawers with their lovely clean clothes so when they put their clothes on they smell the lavender and feel calm.

Maybe it can be a reminder to you to tell Jesus when you don't feel great inside, when you don't feel calm and are a bit messy. Maybe you can share it with someone else in your place when they are feeling stress or a mess!

You can ask Jesus to help them too.

DAY 5

PRIMARY

Session 5: What do you want with us? Have you come to destroy us?

Calm can replace confusion

CHAOS IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus came to destroy things that are messed up.

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Shout-o-meter
- Domino Effect
- Untangles

2. Context:

- Kerplunk
- Chaos tag
- Breath power – balloon racing

3. Content:

- Scrunched up scribe sentences
- Town of Capernaum Blocks
- Balloon reading
- Removable tape reading

4. Consider:

- Messy Art
- Calming bubble bottles
- Calm yarn
- Spread the news report

5. Consequence:

- Calm and quiet time
- Prayer Boxes
- What would Jesus destroy? (Tin Can Knockdowns)
- Black board prayers

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

SHOUT-O-METER

You will need:

- Phone or Tablet with a decibel meter e.g. **Decibel X**
- Wide open space away from other people (but remember to stay in full view)

Explain to the group that you have Decibel meter that measure how loud things are. Begin by inviting people to say Hi and say their name in their everyday voice to get a 'normal' reading. Then invite each person to shout

their name as loud as they can. Tell them their decibel reading. If you like someone could keep a chart. Then invite the whole group to yell at once to see how loud you are combined.

Linking Lines:

You have mighty voices! Who would have thought you could yell so loud. I love your good loud shouting, though not everyone loves noisy voices. We were having fun yelling loudly and there are times when people yell loudly for fun – can you think of an example (footy; cheering for your house sports; yelling encouragement to someone; screaming on the rollercoaster). But sometimes people yell not for fun but with other feelings – like being angry, or afraid something bad is going to happen, or to warn someone.

DOMINO EFFECT

You will need:

- Packs of dominoes
- Large sturdy surface (e.g. a trestle table top lying on the ground, or a concrete pathway)

Linking Lines:

You had to have really steady hands to set that up, and as we saw it didn't take much to tip one piece over and then – disaster! - All of the others fell. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, there is a person who is messed up with fears inside and when he meets Jesus he worries that Jesus is going to destroy him – and all his community. Instead Jesus brings him peace and this starts off a chain – not of destruction but of people sharing hope all across the countryside.

UNTANGLES

Everyone stands in a circle and places both hand in the centre, and grabs hold two other hands (make sure they are of different people).

The goal is to untangle the arms by people going under (or over if necessary) other arms until everyone is standing in a circle -still holding hands with the people next to them.

Linking Lines:

Great team work – thinking through what you needed to do to sort out the tangles. It was a bit frustrating at time, but you did well staying calm. Sometimes things are really hard to sort out, and it's hard to keep calm.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT **CONTEXT** CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

KERPLUNK™

You will need:

- 'Kerplunk'™ board game, or similar eg. 'Tumbling Monkeys'™
- Sturdy surface – a low coffee table would be ideal so the group can sit or kneel around and everyone can see the Kerplunk tower.

Play as the game instructs, making sure everyone gets a turn. If it tumbles early, reset and have a second go.

Linking Lines:

There were some anxious tense moments there! I was amazed at your steady hands and keen eyes – doing so well at not Kerplunking. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible there are some really tense moments, as Jesus meets a man who is confused and afraid and messed up on the inside. He had a messed up spirit – It says. Hard to know what exactly means, but I reckon it's something like having your thoughts and feeling inside you like Kerplunk sticks and marbles – and any moment they are going to crash down. Whatever a messed up spirit meant it doesn't sound great.

CHAOS TAG

You will need:

- Open space for running
- Sports markers or flour to set the boundaries.

At the beginning of the game, everyone is "It", and the game finishes when there is only one person left who is "It".

Stand the group as spaced out as you can around the boundary edge of the playing space.

On 'go' everyone must run into the playing space and try and tag another person.

A person who is tagged must bob down or kneel on the spot - and they keep watch of the person that tagged them.

When the person that tagged them is tagged and bobs/kneels down, they can get up and re-join the game and keep trying to tag others.

If two people tag each other at exactly the same time they play "Paper-Scissor-Rock" and the loser bobs down/kneels and watches for the other person to be



tagged again.

The game is won when only one person remains.

Linking Lines:

Well played! It was confusing being "It" and trying to escape being tagged at the same time. Well done keeping an eye on the person that tagged you – well done tagging others. That was a lot of chaos and confusion – and a fair amount of yelling. It was really hard to work out what was going on. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today there is a guy who is full of confusion inside – it says he has a messed up spirit. He yells out because he can't work out whether he's afraid and wants to run away from Jesus or he can see Jesus is from God -the one who brings peace. He's really messed up.

BREATH POWER – BALLOON RACING

You will need:

- String tied between two stable points (eg. two chairs) and stretched tight.
- Straw threaded on to the string.
- Tape
- Balloons

Working together as a team, set up the string, threading the straw, getting two pieces of tape ready, and blowing up a balloon, and keeping the end closed, but not tied.

When everything is set up, hold the inflated balloon steady and tape it to the straw, still holding the mouth of the balloon closed.

Get ready and count down from 10 or 5 and then let the balloon go and watch it race along the string.

Repeat with a fresh balloon, for as many children as want to blow up a balloon and have a turn.

Linking Lines:

In the Bible there is a word that has two meanings – the same word for 'breath' is the word for 'spirit' the thing that makes us alive. And makes us move. Like the breath made the balloon move. In the Bible 'Spirit' can be a gentle thing like breath or it can be powerful and scary, like a hurricane. It makes sense because our breathing does keep us alive – but there's more to us than just our breath, and that what the other meaning of the word is – Spirit. In the Bible it is God's Spirit that brings life to everything.

CONTENT...

CONNECT CONTEXT **CONTENT** CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

SCRUNCHED UP SCRIBE SENTENCES

See **Appendix 5.1** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Print-out of App 5.1 enlarged to A3. Stain the paper with tea to 'age' it. Tear it into about 10 pieces and scrunch it into individual pieces, as if thrown in the bin.
- Whole piece of A3 or larger card
- Glue sticks

Linking Lines:

Intro - In the twenty first century, in our time, if we want a copy of something to read we might hit copy and paste, control C and control V and then print on a laptop. Or we might grab a pencil and paper and write it out ourselves. But in the time of the Bible in the first century most people couldn't write and there were no computers or printers. To get a copy of something you would take it to a person called a scribe. And this was his whole job – writing things. Especially making copies of things. Scribes were often the only person in a town or village who could read. So people would listen to them read things to learn sometimes. But they mostly read things that other people had already written and they had copied.

For our Story of Jesus from the Bible today – these scribes are mentioned – so listen out for them. But find the story in the first place.

Here is our story here: we are going to imagine that the scribe that copied out the story messed up quite a bit and has thrown it in the bin in pieces.

Invite the group to flatten out the pieces of paper, and reading what they can of the writing on each piece. Try to put them together. When you have them sorted, invite each person to stick their pieces in place on the backing cardboard – reading as much as you can as you go.

When all pieces are glued in place read through the passage.

Linking Lines:

We don't know what job the person with the messed up spirit did – maybe he was a scribe – it doesn't say. He was just an ordinary person in the meeting place. Lots of things can make us feel a mess inside. Although he yells and is afraid, Jesus brings him calm.

TOWN OF CAPERNAUM READING

See **Appendix 5.2** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Print out of App. 5.2, cut into sections as marked
- Set of at least 18 wooden blocks of various shapes and sizes
 - Tape a section of text from App 5.2 onto each block
 - Choose a few larger blocks and label them 'Synagogue', 'Fish market', 'Soldiers barracks', 'Bakery' (these are buildings that have been identified in archaeological work from the first century C.E.)
 - If you have enough leave some blocks blank
- Flat working space
- Piece of blue material or cellophane
- Small leafy twigs

Place the blocks, twigs, and blue material in the middle of your group. Tell the group that the Story of Jesus from the Bible today happens in a town called Capernaum which is next to a lake where there is lots of fishing. Invite them to spread out the lake and make roads for the town and set out the buildings and trees along the roads.

As each person picks up a block help them to read the words, and take note of the number on the text before placing it somewhere in the village. When all of the blocks have been placed and all of the words read, ask the group if they can work out what happened in the story.

They may have pieced it together, or it may be a jumble. Either outcome is fine, as this step in the process enables people to articulate some part of the text that they are familiar with – even if it is not yet in context.

After hearing the parts of the story in this way, invite the group to work from the first numbered block, reading the story in order. If a child or number of children in your group are not able to read confidently and fluently, simply ask them to find the blocks in order for you to read.

Linking Lines:

Well done town planners! You've made a wonderful village of Capernaum. This is a place where Jesus visited a lot. It was a place he met all kind of people, some of them keen to follow God's ways, and some of them with troubles of all different kinds, come of them with questions – Jesus didn't mind at all: but wherever there was confusion or concern he brought calm.

BALLOON READING

See **Appendix 5.3** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- 14 balloons
- Print out of App. 5.3 cut into sections, rolled up and placed into the balloons. Don't blow up the balloons

Give each person in your group a balloon and invite them to blow it up and just hold it closed while everyone gets ready. Prepare to count down together – three – two – one – go! On go everyone lets go of their balloon and chases it around trying to catch it. Everyone picks up their own balloon.

With a group of half a dozen you should be able to repeat this with a second set of balloons.

When all the balloons have been found, sit down in a circle and ask the group to peel back the balloon and take out the printed paper inside.

REMOVABLE TAPE READING

You will need:

- Large piece of sturdy cardboard
- Removable tape
- Paint
- Salt
- Sand
- Sticks
- teaspoons
- Smocks – old shirts or garbage bags with holes cut for head and arms
- Tub of soapy water and towel

OR

- Thick textas/crayons/oil pastels

In preparation:

- Write out the text of Mark 1:21-28 in 1cm letters in lines across the cardboard.
- Leave at least 3cm between lines.
- Making sure that the ink is dry, place a length of removable tape over each line of text. Fold one end of tape under itself to enable finding the end to remove it when the time comes.

Place the prepared card in a place that is accessible to everyone in the group. Invite them to smock up and get to work making as big a mess of paint on



the card using their fingers, drizzling with teaspoons, messing with sticks, sprinkling salt or sand, scribbling through the paint with sticks.

When you have reached optimal mess, set the card to one side to dry a little, while you clean up and wash hands.

Return to the messy card and use the linking lines.

Give each person a turn at peeling one row of removable tape off and reading the words underneath (or someone else read for them if they don't want to read.)

Linking Lines:

Our Story of Jesus from the Bible today is underneath all this mess. Jesus meets someone who is a bit messed up in himself, he doesn't sit quietly in the meeting room, and he yells out and is a bit scary. Let's find out the story under this mess.

Jesus isn't worried by this man who is messed up, but the messed up spirit in him is afraid that Jesus will destroy him. Jesus is not into destroying – but into making peace.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Choose one or perhaps two of these activities to give space to your group to have thinking and processing time for the Bible story. Invite them to talk about the way they can connect with the story using the 'Has anything like this ever happened to you?' prompts suggested below.

Be respectful and careful not to over direct the children's responses or to try to turn the experience of the Bible story into a comprehension exercise or an exegesis session or 'teaching' time. In missional bible engagement we are praying that children young people and families will meet Jesus, and encounter God and we trust the Holy Spirit to be working as we make opportunity for this and come alongside to share in the process.

Has This Ever Happened To You?

- *Something amazing happened and the news spread really fast?*
- *You felt really messed up inside and then became calm again?*
- *Someone you know started acting very strangely and messed up?*

MESSY ART FRAMES

You will need:

- Cardboard picture frames – premade from card and spray painted gold, backed with card, one side left unstuck so something can be placed in the frame.
- Yellow plasticine
- Gold glitter
- Junk craft scrap pieces – e.g. bottle tops, defunct ear phones, burnt matches, bits of electronic circuit boards (break these into small pieces) small nuts and bolts, buttons, zippers, ring-pulls, straws, bread tags, wire twists, small sticks and stones, fabric scraps, steel wool etc.

Give each person a frame and a lump of plasticine. Place the assortment of scrap items on a tray in the centre of the group for easy visibility and access.

Show the group how to press a piece of plasticine flat onto the surface of the frame and embed junk items into the plasticine. Fill as much of the frame as desires, then sprinkle gold glitter onto any exposed bits of plasticine.

Linking Lines:

Has anything like this ever happened to you? – have you ever felt really messed up inside and then become calm again? Have you ever felt like other people around you were messed up and it made it hard for you to stay calm too?

What do you think of the way Jesus treated the man who was yelling and afraid and messed up in his spirit?

CALMING BUBBLE BOTTLES

You will need:

- One empty, clean bottle, label removed, per person (~400ml)
- Water
- Pouring jug; funnel; dessert spoon
- Hair gel
- Small water beads
- And/or glitter/sequins
- Strong craft glue/duct tape

Give each person a bottle.

Half fill each bottle with water.

Add two heaped spoonful's of hair gel.

Cap the bottle and let each person give the mix a through shake.



Open the bottle and invite each person to add some water beads, glitter, and/or sequins to the bottle.

Fill the bottles almost to the top.

Place glue around the rim and close the lid tightly.

Add duct tape for extra sealing.

Allow time for the children to observe the way the mixture moves.

Linking Lines:

These bottles are called calming bottles and are often used to help people calm their big emotions. Maybe you've used one before at school or somewhere else? Has there been a time when you felt really messed up inside and then became calm again? Or when someone around you started acting very strangely and messed up? It can be unsettling when that happens to us to someone around us, but Jesus wasn't bothered by it at all – he brought calm and peace to the situation. Jesus knows our big feelings and that things around us and inside us get messed up. When we feel that way we can tell God – even if we feel like yelling at God because things are so messed up. That's not too scary for God, and God can help us deal with our messy feelings.

CALM YARN (POM-POMS, FINGER KNITTING)

You will need:

- Pieces of strong card ~10cmx5cm
- Yarn in various colours
- Scissors

Pom Poms

Give each person a piece of card and some yarn and show them how to wind the yarn around and around the card over the sort edge. The yarn should work from one end to the other, back and forth, but leave at least a centimetre and a half on either end clear.

This process should take some time: colours can be changed as desired, no need to tie ends. When a large amount of yarn has been wound on to the card, take another piece of yarn and pass it crossways under the wound on wool on one side of the card. Carefully pull the loops of yarn wound onto the card off one end, moving all of the wool in this direction, keeping it on the cross thread as it comes off the card. When all the warn loops are off the card, use the cross thread to wind tightly around the centre of the loops, several times over pulling it in tightly. Knot the cross thread secure leaving long threads hanging out, and knot these together at the end.



Cut through all the loops top and bottom. This should form a Pom Pom. Swing it around by the tied handle a few times to help it shape. If there are some odd long threads trim them with scissors.

As you do this...invite children to have a 'yarn' and to tell their stories of big emotions or feeling messed up.

Finger knitting

Many Children already know how to finger knit.

Make a loop with a slip knot. Place this on your non-preferred hand.

With your preferred hand, wind the yarn around the finger closer to the nail than the slip knot. Pull the slip knot loop over the front loop.

Wind the next bit of yarn around your finger and pull the back loop over the front loop – continue like this!

As you do this...invite children to have a 'yarn' and tell their stories of big emotions or feeling messed up.

Linking Lines:

Many people find working with yarn – with wool - really helps them to calm down when something is troubling them, they are afraid or stressed about things.

As well as yarn meaning 'wool', to 'tell a yarn' means to share stories. Sharing our stories of feeling messed up also really helps. I wonder if that's why this story – of someone with a messed up spirit being calmed and set at peace by Jesus – comes right at the start of the stories of the things Jesus said and did. What do you think?

SPREAD THE NEWS REPORT

You will need:

- China dinner plates – at least one per person and a few spares
- Dry-erase markers
- Water (room temperature – not cold or hot)
- Small pouring jug/cup
- Tea towel

Give each person in the group a dinner plate. Ask them to hold on to the plates and watch as you write on your dinner plate with the dry-erase marker. Write "Good News".

Then gently – gently! - Pour the water on to the edge of the plate so that it fills



the plate from the side: it should lift the letters off the surface of the plate and they will float on the water.

Say to the group – “Who has their plate ready for me to pass the ‘Good News’ on to them”. Choose a volunteers and carefully tip the letters on to their plate. Then see if they can pass the ‘Good News’ on to the next person. Keep passing the ‘Good News’ around until it comes back to your plate.

Let the group all dry their plates with a tea towel and invite them to each write on their plates and pour the water to float the letters and see if they can pass their words on to others. Use the spare plates to catch the words if everyone else’s plate is still full.

Linking Lines:

Has anything like this ever happened to you? – Something amazing happened and so many people talked about it that the news spread really quickly? When people saw that Jesus brought peace to the man with the messed up spirit and they heard Jesus speaking about how God was near they began spreading the news.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

CALM AND QUIET TIME

You will need:

- Quiet space, blanket or tarp

Linking Lines:

Today we have heard a lot about a man with a messed up spirit. The word in the Bible for spirit – the thing that makes us alive – is the same as the word for breath. And there are many places in the Bible where God makes something alive and breathing well.

When we feel confused and anxious our breath gets messed up – but breathing quietly can be really peaceful.

Let’s spend just a minute lying still and peaceful breathing in and out slowly, and feeling the calm that comes from our breath.

PRAYER BOX

See **Appendix 5.4** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Box with all six sides intact. Tape the box securely along all the edges. Cut a door in each of 5 sides ~10cmx10cm that can open and shut. Paint each side a different colour or cover with paper.
- Stick the illustrations of the characters in App. 5.4 one on each side of the box.
- Stick the corresponding prayer on the inside of the door behind each character.
- Make a 'handle' on each door – using a pony bead and chenille stem.

Review the characters of the story with the group, using the pictures on the cube as a prompt – identify the following characters and their main role in the story:

Jesus' Disciples – Finding out and following Jesus

Crowds – Amazed by Jesus

Scribes – Making sure no one breaks the rules

Messed up spirit man – Messed up in his feelings and needing peace

Jesus - Bringing peace and calm to confusion and chaos

Tell the group that behind each of the character's door is a prayer. Explain that they can volunteer to pick a door and open it. Either they can read the prayer inside if they want to or you can read it to the group.

Jesus Disciples – Dear Jesus, I want to keep finding out more about you

Crowds – Dear Jesus, You are amazing!

Scribes – Dear Jesus, I like it when no one breaks the rules. Please help me to keep the rules that are important.

Messed up spirit man – Dear Jesus sometimes I feel messed up in my feelings and need your peace.

Jesus – Dear Jesus please bring peace and calm to places where there is confusion and chaos in the world.

WHAT WOULD JESUS DESTROY? (TIN CAN KNOCKDOWNS)

You will need:

- 10 Empty clean tin cans
- Plain sticky labels or post-it notes
- Markers

With the group, using the linking lines below, label the tin cans with things that



Jesus did come to destroy.

Set the cans up in a pyramid, then give each person a turn at throwing a scrunched up newspaper ball to knock them down.

Linking Lines:

When the man with the messed up spirit saw Jesus he was afraid that Jesus had come to destroy them. He recognised Jesus as God – but his idea of God must have been that God is wanting to destroy us. Jesus showed him that he had come to bring peace, not destruction. Still I think there are some things that Jesus does want to destroy – not people but things like this man’s scary feelings.

We are going to label these tins with some of those things and then see if we can knock them down. Some of the things Jesus came to destroy are: injustice, wrong, shame, people being afraid, violence...

BLACKBOARD PRAYERS/WHITEBOARD PRAYERS

You will need:

- Small blackboards or one larger blackboard
- Chalk in different colours
- Duster

OR

- Whiteboard or laminated A4 cards
- Whiteboard markers
- Cleaning cloth

Invite the group to name situations that are confusing or messed up or stressful. For each thing they name they can draw a scribbly mess on the black/whiteboard. These can be personal feelings or global situations or anything in between. Fill the board with mess.

Then invite each person to have a turn at cleaning a section of the board as you pray:

Dear Jesus thankyou that you care about the things that get messy for us. Please bring peace and calm and take away fear. Amen.

Linking Lines:

Whatever mess we feel, or find ourselves in, or if others around us are confusing, or the world is confusing and messed up, we can tell God about how that feels and ask God to bring peace.

DAY 5

TEENS

Session 5: What do you want with us? Have you come to destroy us?

Calm can replace confusion

CHAOS IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus came to destroy things that are messed up.

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Flash Mob
- Puzzle Races

2. Context:

- Interruptions

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible

4. Consider:

- Reflecting

5. Consequence:

- Putting Things Right

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

FLASH MOB

As a group quickly come up with a group action designed to distract all those around you at the same time. It might be all pointing at one point in the sky at the same time to have everyone wondering what you are looking at, or all gather around a spot on the ground like there is something interesting at that point. Go and do it.

PUZZLE RACES

Get a simple puzzle (20 – 30 pieces) and form teams to see who can complete the puzzle the quickest. Today we are looking at God being bigger than Chaos and Jesus restoring order to messed up lives and situations.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Tell of a time when you were in a setting where something totally out of place happened that interrupted everything. It could be funny, shocking or inappropriate - like someone farting in the middle of a wedding, a loud comment made by a child, accidentally walking into the wrong change room etc.

What do you think of when you hear of 'Demon Possession'?

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Read the Bible text aloud as four characters. One person be the Narrator, another Jesus, another the Demon possessed man and the rest are the crowd members. Read through the reading with each reading their parts. Read through twice.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

This happens right at the start of Jesus public ministry life. What do people learn about Jesus through this situation?

How do you think the Teachers of the Law (or Scribes) might have reacted to a messed up person interrupting their ceremony?

What Chaotic messed up things in this world do we need Jesus to put right?

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Jesus calls us to follow him, this is an invitation to join him in his work of putting things right. What can you work to put right as an act of Christlikeness?

Play the song 'Grace' by U2. Have everyone close eyes and reflect on the words as a prayer of gratitude for God's grace in Jesus' ongoing work of bringing peace and order to our lives.

DAY 5

PARENT CONVERSATION

CALM CAN REPLACE CONFUSION

What's the Story?

Community understandings and responses to mental illness across history, in different cultures and in our own community are constantly changing. Just like physical illness, mental illness is a normal part of human life. There are mild forms and extreme forms, chronic and acute cases. Some mental illness comes and goes in a single episode, like the measles, and some are long term conditions, more like asthma. There are many different causes and multiple approaches that can help.

Over the past few decades, taboos around mental health have been challenged and our children are growing up in a culture that holds greater acceptance, compassion and understanding for the experience of mental illness.

Mental health concerns come at us as parents from several directions at once – from the people and stories our kids encounter that raise questions for them; from the times when our kid's own headspace is a scary mess; from our own journey managing depression, anxiety, mental health challenges..

The reality is that everyone has some experience of this at some time or another. Just because mental illness is common doesn't make it any less complex. Many factors contribute to health and wellbeing, to stability and coping. As we parent in community, with our precious children, conversations about mental health need to be compassionate spaces of solidarity and support, careful listening and respect for a person's own way of managing themselves.

In parenting there are no formulas, no one quick fix, and no silver bullets. But a great starting place for almost every situation is listening. Just really listening. Sometimes our kids will need a listening space that we aren't part of. That's not because we're not important to them, or they don't trust us. We mustn't take that personally. And we mustn't take our kid's struggles personally either. Our children are human: we might be the best parents in the world, and they will still encounter road bumps, stresses and struggles.

More and more we are seeing the value of helping a child, young person or adult choose and create their own best practices for addressing times of struggle and keeping well. Less and less we are opting to jump in and rescue someone - making a person who already feels fragile even more powerless.

For our kids, we hope to grow in them a sense of their own capability and coping skills. And to give them a strong, safe, trustworthy community they feel confident they can reach out to and ask for help when their own capacity isn't enough. We trust that our kids will know it's ok to feel not ok, it's ok to ask for help, and to feel ok with being a kind and calm friend when others are not ok.

Share Your Story

- How have you helped your kids understand and respect mental illnesses?
- How do you help your kids deal with their strong feelings, tangled or troubled thoughts and dark emotions?
- What are your strategies for keeping your own head together in the midst of a crazy world?

What's God's Story?

One of the first stories we hear about Jesus in the Gospel of Mark – the earliest collection of stories about Jesus in the Bible – is a story in which he visits the village meeting house, the synagogue. Among the locals gathered there for prayer and community is a man who is described as having an 'unclean' or 'messed-up' spirit. He's an ordinary member of the community and participating in his faith practices along with others. Then, as now, difficult mental health experiences are woven in amongst everyday life, in the supermarket, on the train, in church, at the local library, in our mums group, at the pub, and most of the time are barely seen by others. People with various conditions are often seasoned experts in managing their symptoms, finding their own wise ways to live with who and how they are.

But in this incident in the Bible, it escalates suddenly and quickly, as he is somehow triggered when Jesus arrives. He cries out and there's a scene. This man asks, 'Have you come to destroy us?' We can hear how the voice of fear, the voice of despair, the voice of destruction has taken over this man.

At other times Jesus meets people who are described in other ways – sometimes tormented by demons, sometimes literally 'moonstruck', sometimes this messed-up spirit. Although we can't make direct parallels of diagnoses with the way we name various mental illnesses now, we can see that the ancient world had the wisdom to realise that not all these things had the same cause. Some were seen as a physical thing, others psychological and others spiritual. We are whole human beings, even in our troubled currents.

Whatever the source of trouble in a person's life, Jesus met them with compassion, looked past the confusing expression it took, and saw the person within with full human dignity. I hope I can do the same for others in their darkest tangles or deepest pit, and I hope, whenever the black dog comes barking round my own door that I'll remember that God sees me with compassion and dignity.

Hear/Read more: Mark 1:21-28

DAY 5

BIBLE DRAMA

Characters:

- A, B and C: three team members preparing to present the Bible Drama in team t-shirts and plain pants.
- Danni the Dance coach
- Cosi the Costume designer
- Soni the Sound Engineer

Props:

- 3 prayer shawls – these should all be the same – and very simple: white or beige with a couple of blue stripes.
 - Inside one is lines with strips of newspaper and thick black marker scribble to symbolise the ‘messed up’ spirit.
 - Inside one is fabric evoking creation – land and oceans, clouds, sun, moon and stars, trees and plants etc. to symbolise Jesus’ divinity as the Holy One – maker of heaven and earth.
- Soundtrack: ‘God Sent Jesus to Make Peace with Us’ from Welcome Mat (suvic.org.au/click)

Enter three team members – one by one as they say their lines

A: *(pumped)* Hey – so it’s time for a Story of Jesus from the Bible.

B: Which we are going to do in drama – ta da! *(with a theatrical flourish)*

C: And I’ve got the script here *(carrying 1 bunch of papers which they lose control of and drop everywhere)*. Oh I’m sorry – it’s a bit of a mess now.

A and B help pick up the papers.

A: That’s ok – happens to all of us.

B: *(Dramatically)* This is the story of the Five year mission of the Starship Enterprise... No – hang on. I messed that up. Um... This is the *(begins singing Brady Bunch theme song)* Story of a lovely lady who was...No no no. Oh I messed that up again. This is the story of Jesus from the Book of Mark in the Bible. Chapter One.

A: That’s right. *(Reading off the script)* “Jesus and his disciples went to Capernaum; and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught.”

C: The people were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Commotion from back of audience, as Danni the Dance Coach enters. Every movement should be exaggerated choreography, interacting with audience as they make their way through to the front. The constantly count “and 5, 6, 7, 8” and call other dance moves “and turn”; “and pivot” etc.

A: Oh no what’s going on?

B: Who is this?

C: I know who you are – you’re the Danni the Dance Coach!

A: *(Horrified)* Dance coach????!!

B: *(Equally Horrified)* No! This is a Bible Story! Have you come to destroy us?

C: What are you going to do to us?

Danni: *(very calmly and kindly)* No, no, no; sh, sh, sh; everything will be ok. I’m here for us to work together and make the whole thing great. So listen: Just in your intro there – “Jesus and his Disciples went to Capernaum” – I want a lovely four steps forward.

A, B and C walk forward four steps

Danni: And then “when the Sabbath came”, it’s sunshine hands.

Danni demonstrates hands with fingers spread, up in front of chest, and then up and out either side of body at shoulder height; which A, B and C copy.)

Danni: “He entered the synagogue and taught.” Hands point to the right, and its four step to the right.

A, B and C copy hands and walk across four steps

Danni: See. Easy. Everyone can do it.

Danni motions for the audience to stand up and join in as A, B and C repeat the lines and do the steps.

A/B/C: “Jesus and his disciples went to Capernaum; and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught.”

Danni: Wonderful! Time for a rest! You can sit down. What’s next?

A: *(Checking script)* “They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

B: This is going to be hard, I’m so stressed

C: I’m going to mess this up for sure.

Danni: Chill, this bit is easy. “They were astounded at his teaching” – this whole bit is just both hands up in the air vibing little pumps of Yay! (*Danni demonstrates*)

A: (*as everyone air pumps along*) “They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

B: Oh wow. That was cool. I was sure Danni was going to be scary.

Danni: Great work, gotta keep moving but don’t stop grooving! (*Exits*)

C: Can we go over all that again? (*All three and audience repeat the story/actions so far.*)

A/B/C: (*Four steps forward*) “Jesus and his Disciples went to Capernaum (*Sunshine hands*) and when the Sabbath came, (*Hands to the right, four sideways steps to the right*) he entered the synagogue and taught. (*Air pumping hands*) They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

C: Ok, next, let me sort out the papers – oh they are all out of order.

B: Here I’ve got it: “Just then there was in their synagogue a man with a messed-up spirit, and he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.’”

A: So...what do we do? More dance steps? And 5, 6, 7, 8...

(*A, B and C take four steps in different directions and crash into each other*)

A: Not such a great idea.

Commotion from back of audience, as Cosi the Costume Designer enter, carrying armfuls of colourful clothing, interacting with audience as they make their way through to the front. The constantly are commenting randomly over people ‘fabulous colour on you’; ‘T shirts are so stylish this season’; ‘Accessorise, accessorise, accessorise!’

A: Oh no what’s going on?

B: Who is this?

C: I know who you are – you’re the Cosi the Costume Designer!

A: (*Horrified*) Costume Designer????!!

B: (*Equally Horrified*) No! This is a Bible Story! Have you come to destroy us?

C: What are you going to do to us? I’m not wearing sequins.

Cosi: *(very calmly and kindly)* No, no, no; sh, sh, sh; everything will be ok. I'm here for us to work together and make the whole thing great. So look, they are in the synagogue - it's the meeting place for prayer. So here I have a prayer shawl for you – just round the shoulders ok? *(Gives A the prayer shawl.)*

Cosi: “Just then there was in their synagogue a man with a messed-up spirit,” *(to B)* So here for you – this prayer shawl, just like the other one, same on the outside, but on the inside all messed up.

(Opens up the shawl to show torn strips of newspaper and black marker scribble on the reverse 'inside' of the shawl, gives it to B, who puts it on, clean side showing out.)

Cosi: “And he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?’” *(to C)* So here for you – you're going to be Jesus – so another prayer shawl – same as the others, but on the inside is the whole of the universe – because he's the Holy One of God. *(Gives C this prayer shawl.)*

A: *(wrapping the shawl around them)* “Just then there was in their synagogue a man with a messed-up spirit,”...

B: ... “and he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?’”...

C: ... “Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.”

Cosi: Great work, I've gotta move along, but keep going strong! *(exits)*

A: Right, back to the beginning

All three and audience repeat the story/actions so far.

A/B/C: *(Four steps forward)* “Jesus and his Disciples went to Capernaum *(Sunshine hands)* and when the Sabbath came, *(Hands to the right, four sideways steps to the right)* he entered the synagogue and taught.

(Air pumping hands) They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

A: *(wrapping the shawl around them)* “Just then there was in their synagogue a man with a messed-up spirit,”...

B: “...and he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?’”

C: “...Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.”

A: Phew. This is coming together ok.

B: But what's next?

C: I know! After Danni the Dance Coach and Cosi the Costume Designer. Is it Arty the Artist or Rocky the music director or...

A: I hope it's Katie the Caterer.

B: I meant next in the Story of Jesus from the Bible. Jesus has come to the synagogue the meeting place and taught and met this messed up person who is shouting at him. Thinks Jesus has come to destroy him. So what will Jesus do, I wonder?

C: *(has been sorting through papers and finds the place)* "But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!' And the messed up spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him."

B: *(very quietly and slowly)* Wow!!!! Be Silent – and it worked

A: *(continues)* "They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, 'What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the messed up spirits, and they obey him.' At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee."

Commotion from back of audience, Soni the Sound Engineer enters. Soni carries a crate of leads and speaker parts, headphones, and other sound gear. And walks like they are listening to music.

A: Oh no what's going on?

B: Who is this?

C: I know who you are – you're the Soni the Sound Engineer

A: *(Horrified)* Sound Engineer????!!

B: *(Equally Horrified)* No! This is a Bible Story! Have you come to destroy us?

C: What are you going to do to us?

Soni: *(very calmly and kindly)* No, no, no; sh, sh, sh; everything will be ok. I'm here for us to work together and make the whole thing great. So you're up to the part where they've seen Jesus bring peace to this messed up guy right? That's really suddenly quiet. But they are all amazed. And Jesus fame begins to spread. We are going to amplify that!

So you read the lines – but in between each line, we are going to start soft saying "They were all amazed" but get a little louder each time. I'm going to crack the volume up here on my virtual sound desk: Let's try it.

(As the text is read and everyone is responding, the track of 'God Sent Jesus to Make Peace With Us' is played, beginning softly and increasing in volume along with the shouting, though never drowning out the shouting. This is mostly a building instrumental riff, and finished with one line "God sent Jesus to Make Peace with us" and ends abruptly.)

A: “They were all amazed,”

B & C join with Soni and Audience

B/C/Soni/Audience: (*whispered*) They were all amazed,

A: “and they kept on asking one another,”

B/C/Soni/Audience: (*soft voices*) They were all amazed,

A: “What is this?”

B/C/Soni/Audience: (*normal conversation voices*) They were all amazed,

A: “A new teaching—with authority!”

B/C/Soni/Audience: (*loud voices*) They were all amazed,

A: “He commands even the messed up spirits, and they obey him.”

B/C/Soni/Audience: (*louder voices*) They were all amazed,

A: “At once his fame began to spread...”

B/C/Soni/Audience: (*almost shouting*) They were all amazed,

A: “...throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.”

B/C/Soni/Audience: (*Shouting*) They were all amazed.

Soni: Great work, let’s pull this all together, with everyone, the whole community, all of us!

Danni and Cosi return, inviting everyone to stand up and join in as rehearsed:

All: (*Four steps forward*) “Jesus and his Disciples went to Capernaum (*Sunshine hands*) and when the Sabbath came, (*Hands to the right, four sideways steps to the right*) he entered the synagogue and taught. (*Air pumping hands*) They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

A: (*wrapping the shawl around them*) “Just then there was in their synagogue a man with a messed-up spirit,”

B: (*wrapping the shawl around them with a large movement so the inside shows*) “...and he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?’”

C: (*wrapping the shawl around them with a large movement so the inside shows*) “Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.”

(Everyone remains very still)

C: *(quietly)* “But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’ And the messed up spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.”

(Cue music)

A: “They were all amazed,”

B/C/Soni/Audience: *(whispered)* They were all amazed,

A: “and they kept on asking one another,”

B/C/Soni/Audience: *(soft voices)* They were all amazed,

A: “What is this?”

B/C/Soni/Audience: *(normal conversation voices)* They were all amazed,

A: “A new teaching—with authority!”

B/C/Soni/Audience: *(loud voices)* They were all amazed,

A: “He commands even the messed up spirits, and they obey him.”

B/C/Soni/Audience: *(louder voices)* They were all amazed,

A: “At once his fame began to spread...”

B/C/Soni/Audience: *(almost shouting)* They were all amazed,

A: “...throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.”

B/C/Soni/Audience: *(Shouting)* They were all amazed!

Applause from cast - exit

DAY 6

*What were you arguing about?
Who is the greatest?*

THEME WORDS

Jesus sorts out his disciples' ambitions with a child.

Humility can replace huge egos

Fame is not the boss

BIBLE

Mark 9:33-37

Jesus affirms children

SONGS

Hey Ho! (C)

Who Can Trust in Jesus (C)

The Sneeze Song (C, S)

INTRODUCTION

Jesus' disciples are crowding in front of the lens and blocking the view. Like great clumsy oafs they argue, 'I'm the greatest', 'No me!', 'No, I'm the greatest.' If we weren't paying attention we might be fooled into thinking, that was the whole deal – Jesus and those 12 blokes. But, reading carefully as Mark wants us to, we become aware that although those 12 are totally legends in their own lunch boxes, and completely pre-occupied with their own existence, there are others in orbit around Jesus, and he knows and notices that they are there. What's more, these others are not just more of the same, messiah schmoozers and apocalypse now wannabes. They are in a different class altogether.

Jesus is hanging out with children; see – there's one, just right there when he needs to set the disciples straight. When we look attentively, we may be surprised how many times we see a child not too far from Jesus. Jesus says to the grown up, 'look be like a child!', and if he were walking the block today he'd be saying to children, 'For goodness sake, don't become like adults'.

MARK 9:33-37

Who Is the Greatest? (*Matthew 18.1-5; Luke 9.46-48*)

³³Jesus and his disciples went to his home in Capernaum. After they were inside the house, Jesus asked them, "What were you arguing about along the way?" ³⁴They had been arguing about which one of them was the greatest, and so they did not answer.

³⁵After Jesus sat down and told the twelve disciples to gather around him, he said, "If you want the place of honour, you must become a slave and serve others!"

³⁶Then Jesus had a child stand near him. He put his arm around the child and said, ³⁷"When you welcome even a child because of me, you welcome me. And when you welcome me, you welcome the one who sent me."

DAY 6

TEAM STUDY

Session 6: What are you arguing about? Who is the greatest?

Humility can replace huge egos

FAME IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus affirms children

Opening the Bible 'Disciple' Style.

Choose 8 volunteers. Give each person a copy of the text with a section highlighted and an instruction for how to read it (see below). The rest of the group is not to know the instructions so it comes as a surprise.

Each person reads their highlighted part of the text in the attention seeking mode given on their copy.

Read normally

³³Jesus and his disciples went to his home in Capernaum.

Read more dramatically than anyone else

After they were inside the house, Jesus asked them, "What were you arguing about along the way?"

Read more loudly than anyone else

³⁴They had been arguing about which one of them was the greatest, and so they did not answer.

Read more reverently than anyone else

³⁵After Jesus sat down and told the twelve disciples to gather around him, he said,

Read tougher than anyone else

"If you want the place of honour, you must become a slave and serve others!"

Read more beautifully than anyone else

³⁶Then Jesus had a child stand near him.

Read with more pentecostal passion than anyone else

He put his arm around the child and said, ³⁷"When you welcome even a child because of me, you welcome me.

Read for a higher point in the room than anyone else

And when you welcome me, you welcome the one who sent me."

Sum up with a discussion about the ways we try and outdo each other. Allow some reflection from the group about our culture and what is meant to make us greater. This happens in Christian culture as well, and sometimes we cover it over with a veneer of being holy or servant like when all we are really doing is being attention seeking.

Jesus says, "Stop arguing about who is the greatest. Stop trying to outshine each other. Look at this child"

At the time when Jesus was on earth, children were not highly rated in that culture; children were without status or prestige. Yet if you welcome even a child (a person with no status) in Jesus' name, you receive Jesus and the Father. Jesus is implying that anyone associated with Him has access to God. In the Kingdom of God, Jesus' disciples are not any more special than people with no status (children).

In what ways are we like the disciples?
How can we be like children?

Arguments, disagreements, conflict, contention?

Arguments, disagreements, conflict, contention? Surely there's none on your team – or in your church? OK, let's be honest. There are lots that Christians have argued about over the centuries and it seems we're not done yet.

Get people to write down the most contentious issues that they have felt conflict over, either in the team or perhaps in another Christian group. Do this on pieces of paper with a separate piece of paper for each issue/argument. Clear a space on the floor or on a central table and ask each person to bring their 'conflict' to the space and place it in a circle (forming a shape like a donut).

Read the text of Mark 9:33-37

How does Jesus resolve his disciple's conflicts? He places a child in the middle of them; a visible parable. Note: children in that time and culture were not highly regarded; they had no status or prestige. Jesus is implying that anyone associated with Him had access to God. In the Kingdom of God, Jesus' disciples are not any more special than people with no status (children).

Put a large photo of a child (or some one who has no status in our culture) into the centre of your argument donut. Sit with this in some quiet time and ask people to think about what difference it makes to have a person with no status

- involved in that argument
- affected by it
- watching it
- ignored because of it.

In small groups ask people to talk about how Jesus' visible parable affects their issue.

Prayer

In prayer Triplets each person chooses one thing to pray about from the following:

- Pray for team unity and the hosing down of arguments.
- Pray for the children and families to be welcomed as Jesus welcomed.
- Pray for opportunities to serve the community you are in, to become as a slave.

Champions Posters

What does True Greatness look like? Jesus has given us an answer by pointing to those who serve, those who are forgotten and children. What do you think? Look together at some suggestions of greatness among the followers of Jesus. Print out pictures of various people that Jesus would champion (Ordinary people, marginalised, children, women, overlooked, down trodden). String up a piece of twine/rope/nylon washing line between a couple of trees or poles. Invite the group to peg the posters along the line with clothes pegs. As you do this, engage with the characters, and imagine what their story might be. Invite comments and reflections from the group.

Sing/Pray:

In song or prayer (or both) meditate on these words from the song, 'Jesus all for Jesus':
'All of my ambitions, hopes and plans I surrender these into your hands'

DAY 6

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Humility can replace huge egos

Summary: Jesus sorts out his disciples ambitions with a child

Bible: Mark 9: 33-37

Questions: What are you arguing about? Who is the greatest?

Song Line: Fame is not the boss

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Sorting
- Teddy/Soft Toy Train

2. Context:

- Song : Star in God's Eyes
- Musical Mats

3. Content:

- Story Time

4. Consider:

- Head in the Hole board
- Message Balloons

5. Consequence:

- Choosing Box

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Free Play

Playdough, blocks and quiet book corner can be offered every session for routine and stability, rotating a couple of other 'theme' activities for interest and variety. Offer a few or all of the following free-play options. Each of these can become a teaching/storytelling opportunity as well. After the Mat time, you may invite children back to one of these 'free-play' activities and allow them to tell/imagine the story with you...

SORTING

You will need:

- A tray of various types of items, with multiples of each item: spoons, pegs, bottle lids, small blocks, farm animals, strips of cloth, pebbles, pom poms, gum leaves, pink chenille stem
- Containers, one for each 'kind' of thing in the collection

Invite the children to sort the items into individual containers. Remember that the small and gross motor skills of this sorting are an engaging process for young children – the outcome is less important.

Linking Lines:

Which container would a koala/cook/farmer/Bob the Builder/Peppa Pig choose as the greatest? Imagine if a Koala and a cook got into an argument about which was the best box – the leaves or the spoons? Sometimes people do argue about what is best. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today there are some grownups arguing about who is the greatest. And Jesus has an answer. I wonder what Jesus' answer was?

TEDDY/SOFT TOY TRAIN

You will need:

- Cardboard boxes - photocopy paper/wine boxes are about the right size but they need not be all the same size.
- Teddies and soft toys of different sizes and types
- Coloured paper, scissors, glue sticks, marker.

Make a 'train' from boxes (photocopy paper/wine boxes are about the right size) string the boxes together. Put teddies or soft toys in the carriages. You can make the train fancier with coloured paper cut out shapes glued on for wheels, headlamps, front catcher guard, numbers (like the engines in Thomas the Tank Engine).

Linking Lines:

Which teddy goes first? Shall we put the biggest teddy in the front? Or the smallest teddy? What order shall we put them in? In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today we will find out who Jesus would put first – who does Jesus think is important I wonder?

CONTEXT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Mat Time: Songs and Rhymes and Games

Use one or more of the familiar group songs or games to gather the group together and create a culture of listening and participating together. Encourage parents/carers to join in with their children.

STAR IN GOD'S EYES – SNACK MUSIC

A really energetic song with star jumps and lots of positive affirmation of Jesus' love for children.

<https://www.snackmusic.com.au/songs/star-in-god's-eyes>

MUSICAL MATS – GAME

You will need:

- Enough mats -carpet squares or 20cm rounds of strong fabric will do – for one per person
- Music – played on your device with a Bluetooth speaker – choosing songs from the program playlist, or a team member with a ukulele would also be fun
- Sports cones/marker (or use two teddies!)

Place the mats in a line with the markers a metre away from the last mat on either end.

Make sure there is one less mat than there are people playing. As the music plays everyone dances around the mats and the markers at either end. When the music suddenly stops everyone runs to sit on a mat – one person is left. There is no need to keep taking chairs/mats away to increase the competition or for children to go out. Keep all the children in the game, as this is more fun, especially for the kids who aren't the natural winners. Simply have one place less than the number of children and encourage whoever is last to keep trying. Leaders should play as well, so you can then help make sure the same child isn't always left out by where you place yourself.

Linking Lines:

This is a fun game to play – everyone tries hard not to be last and left out. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today Jesus chooses the person that everyone thought would lose every time – a little child and said that everyone – even the biggest strongest grownups weren't ahead of kids like this for Jesus. Jesus loves kids – no one gets left out of Jesus' love.

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Story Time

See 'Plasticine Story files' for visuals.

Ask another leader or parent to hold the pictures while you use your whole body in full dynamic expression in storytelling. Invite participation.

STORY TIME

In this story, there is something for you to do.

There is a lot of talking; you know – “Blah blah blah”... (Demonstrate with your hand making a ‘mouth’ and signalling the “Blah Blah Blah”). Every time there is this “Blah Blah Blah”, you can join in with your mouth and your puppet hands: both of them talking at once. You'll see why. Let's practice: “Blah blah blah.”

Excellent.

Let's start our story.

“Blah blah blah blah blah blah”

Hear that? Did you know what's going on?

Nope. Me neither.

The grown up guys are talking.

Blah blah blah blah blah blah

Blah blah blah blah blah blah

Can you work out what they are talking about?

Nope. Me neither.

Of course, they are talking plenty loud enough.

BLAHBLAHBLAHBLAHBLAHBLAH

And they are talking all at once.

Blah blah blah blah

Let me listen again:

Blah blah blah blah blah.

Oh! The grown up guys are all talking about the same thing.

It goes like this:

Blah blah blah – ME!!!! (point to self with thumbs proudly into chest)

Blah blah blah – Greatest!!! (strong arms out)

Blah blah blah – ME!!!! (point to self with thumbs proudly into chest)

Blah blah blah – Greatest!!! (strong arms out)

Who do these grown up guys think they are ?

In fact who actually **are** these grown up guys?

Blah blah blah blah blah.

I'm sorry to say – they are the close follower friends of Jesus

They are his gang of twelve best buddies

They are his L Plate Learners.

But listen to them now

Blah blah blah blah blah.

Blah blah blah – ME!!!! (point to self with thumbs proudly into chest)

Blah blah blah – Greatest!!! (strong arms out)

Blah blah blah – ME!!!! (point to self with thumbs proudly into chest)

Blah blah blah – Greatest!!! (strong arms out)

Oh dear.

So they are out on the road, and they are

Blah blah blah – ME!!!! (point to self with thumbs proudly into chest)

Blah blah blah – Greatest!!! (strong arms out)

And then they come to the busy town streets, and they are still

Blah blah blah – ME!!!! (point to self with thumbs proudly into chest)

Blah blah blah – Greatest!!! (strong arms out)

And they arrive at a friend's house to visit, and they are STILL

Blah blah blah – ME!!!! (point to self with thumbs proudly into chest)

Blah blah blah – Greatest!!! (strong arms out)

Do you think Jesus has been listening to all this "Blah blah blah"

Nope. Jesus has been watching and listening to all of God's world growing and hurting and trying and living and moving and being around him as he walks along.

But now Jesus looks at his follower friends and says.

"Great Muttering Moses!!! What was all that 'Blah blah blah blah' about."

Awkward. Silence.

"I mean, Saint Disco-dancing Dave, what were you all talking about?"

No blah blah blah now.

They didn't know what to say.

They were embarrassed now about their

Blah blah blah – ME!!!! (point to self with thumbs proudly into chest)

Blah blah blah – Greatest!!! (strong arms out)

They didn't know what to say.

But Jesus knew what to say.

"Let's sit down. All of us. On the same level.

All of that back there - that

'Blah blah blah – ME!!!!' (point to self with thumbs proudly into chest)

'Blah blah blah – Greatest!!!!' (strong arms out)

That is all it is. Just blah.

Talking loud – Peter; Talking over the top of someone – John; Talking down to someone-Barth; Talking up yourself – Andrew; Winning the argument – Phil; Winning Words – Jude; Winning approval – Matt; none of that makes you great.

In God's ways, if you want to be number one, put yourself at the end of the line and serve others first.

None of this

'Blah blah blah – ME!!!!' (point to self with thumbs proudly into chest)

'Blah blah blah – Greatest!!!!' (strong arms out)"

"But – if we all want to be first; and so we all race to the back of the line and try to be the greatest by serving..." Thomas was a thinker.

"That's right", says Jesus. "That's just more

'Blah blah blah – ME!!!!' (point to self with thumbs proudly into chest)

'Blah blah blah – Greatest!!!!' (strong arms out)"

Look around you. Have you noticed there are other people here?

See the women, the kids, the beggars they've brought in for the night, the man from across the border, the old slave whose bones are crumpled.

All these other people around you:

And you guys were all so "Blah blah blah" you missed them – all of them.

When you missed them – you missed seeing where God's greatness really is."

Jesus looks across at the doorway where a little girl is standing holding the basket for her older brother to shell the beans. And Jesus gets up and picks her up and carries her back on his shoulders stooping his head under the low mud roof. He kneels down among his friends and holds her as she chews on a bean.

"See this little one?

This is the way to know greatness in God's ways.

How you notice her, how you see her, how you treat her, how you care for her, how you listen to her, how you serve her, how you welcome her – as an equal – is what matters.

If you can't respect her, your God words are just Blah Blah Blah.

God isn't impressed by your

'Blah blah blah – ME!!!!' (point to self with thumbs proudly into chest)

'Blah blah blah – Greatest!!!!' (strong arms out)"

How you welcome her says everything God needs to know about who you really are. Think of it this way – welcome a child like her, is how you welcome me, is how you welcome God.

Talking to God – needs no “Blah blah blah”

Talking to God is as easy as talking to this little one. Simply, genuinely, that’s how to get to know God. That’s pretty great!”

And the grown up guys had nothing to say.

Who would have thought a little girl with chewed bean pod would have the last word on what is greatness to God?

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Exploring in Craft

Some children will prefer to go back to free play in this time, and not continue with a structured craft. This is normal and a valid choice.

HEAD IN THE HOLE BOARD

See **Appendix 6.1** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Large piece of white-goods carton card

In preparation, use the image in App 6.1 as a guide to cut out three face holes at toddler height.

Draw in bodies of the kids doing playful things, and add the Jesus figure squatting to interact with the children. Paint brightly.

With your group invite a few children and parents at a time to pose behind the board with their faces showing, while others watch. If families would like someone to take a photo on their own device for private use, that can be facilitated.

Linking Lines:

This board shows the way Jesus loves and values little children, just the way they are - being themselves: we heard this in the Story of Jesus from the Bible. He loves and values grownups too – just for being simply themselves, like a child.

MESSAGE BALLOONS

You will need:

- Balloons
- Tarp

Blow up some balloons of different colours and draw a face on each one. With this age group don't blow the balloons too large – keep them about the size of your head so there is less chance of popping – which can distress some children.

Play a game of 'Bifty' in which you tap the balloons to another person, calling out their name and saying 'Tara – Jesus thinks you're great!' Try to keep all the balloons up and drifting as much as you can, and within the area of the tarp.

Linking Lines:

Jesus thinks you are great – just as you are as a kid. I love the way you included everyone and the way you all used each other's names and reminded each other that Jesus includes kids as his friends.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER **CONSEQUENCE**

Choosing Box

At the end of the session each day, remind everyone of the conversation starter page and bring out a 'choosing' box and invite each person (including parents and carers and bystanders) to choose something from the box to take home to remind them of the time together today.

Encourage taking the item home to talk about in the family, or to hold quietly later when they want to remember the Story of Jesus from the Bible.

CHOOSING BOX

In the Choosing Box today: Thumbs up on a stick

You will need:

- Print outs of 'thumbs up' graphic on card
- Pop-sticks



Linking Lines:

To remind us of our story, take a thumbs up sign. This is to remind us of what Jesus thinks of kids. Jesus give kids a big thumbs up. And maybe this can remind you that Jesus told grownups that were worried about who is the best: be like a kid. Just be yourself. You're terrific. Thumbs up for you! Maybe you can give an encouraging thumbs up to the grownups in your house: thumbs up to the mums and dads and grans and poppas for just being themselves. Jesus says – you're great just as you are.

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DAY 6

PRIMARY

Session 6: What are you arguing about? Who is the greatest?

Humility can replace huge egos

FAME IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus affirms children

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Who is the Greatest?: Line Up in Order
- Musical Chairs
- The Great Sorting

2. Context:

- Matthew Mark Luke John
- Progressive Drawing
- Guinness Book of Records

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: Jump in Jump out
- Opening the Bible: A Words & S Words
- Opening the Bible: Quick draw

4. Consider:

- Trophies
- Straw Dot/Pointillism Painting:
- Video clip & vox pop
- Kids Faces

5. Consequence:

- Prayer Mazes
- Message Balloons
- What would you choose
- Rate these faces

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

WHO IS THE GREATEST?: LINE UP IN ORDER

See **Appendix 6.2** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Set of cards printed from App 6.2

Using the cards from App 6.2 with 'Who is the Greatest?' on one side and

different categories on the other, invite one person in the group to choose a card and then organise the group into order from greatest to least in the category chosen.

The person who is at the end of the order or 'the least' in the category then gets to pick the next card and organise the group into order according to that category. Repeat as many times as desired.

Categories

- Height
- Birthdays
- Darkest hair
- Number of brothers and sisters
- Dark to light clothing
- How long they've been on holidays (at your location)
- Alphabetised name order

Linking Lines:

Wow! You've been the greatest, and you've been the greatest and you've been the greatest too. In our Story about Jesus from the Bible, Jesus' friends want to be the greatest and are arguing about who is the best – but Jesus has a really different answer that surprises everyone.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

You will need:

- Chairs or small mats – enough for one per person in your group (minus one)
- Two sports cones or markers
- Music playing device or live music (a little bit of ukulele would be fine)
- Coloured pegs

Place the chairs or mats in a double row, back to back, and the markers at least one metre away from the chairs at either end. Make sure there is one less chair/mat than people playing.

Explain to your group that while the music plays they are to walk/skip/dance around the row of chairs, and around the outside of the markers on either end. When the music stops, they race to sit on a chair/stand on a mat – leaving one person who misses out. This person has a peg put on their shirt sleeve or hem.

The music resumes and everyone moves around again.



Don't take chairs/ mats away to make children to go out. Keep all the children in the game, as this is more fun, especially for the kids who aren't the natural winners. Simply have one place less than the number of children and encourage whoever is last to keep trying. Leaders should play as well, as you can then help make sure the same child isn't always left out by where you place yourself.

Linking Lines:

Some of you are very fast. Some of you are really competitive and take this super seriously! Some of you are really great dancers. Well done everyone for how you joined in. As we hear a Story of Jesus from the Bible today, we'll see Jesus's friends arguing about who is the best among them. They've turned following Jesus into a competition. Jesus says that's not what is important. Knowing that we are all loved by God just as we are is what is important in following Jesus.

THE GREAT SORTING

You will need:

- An assortment of 4 different types of things that come in different sizes (E.g.: spoons, bottles, toy cars, wooden blocks). Try to find 8 - 10 different sizes of each of the items.

Put your group into partners or teams. Place all of the items in a pile on a tarp or rug in the middle of your space. Each team/pair chooses a base an equal distance from the pile. Allocate a different item to each team. On 'go' one person from each team runs to the centre pile and finds one item from their category and takes it back to their base. The next person runs to the pile and finds another item, and takes it back to the base, and so forth until all of their items have been gathered. The items must now be sorted into order from largest to smallest. This can be started while the other person is running. When all of the items are in order call, 'Done.' Everyone must freeze when the first 'Done' is called so that the order can be checked to see if they are in fact the winning team. If the order is not correct, call, 'Play on', to correct the order; giving another team the chance to call done.

Linking Lines:

Great team work! You were fast and fierce in sorting things into order. It's easy to work out the order of things like spoons or blocks - from largest to smallest. In a bit we'll see in our Story of Jesus from the Bible today that Jesus' friends were trying to put themselves into order from the most important or greatest to the least important. Who might Jesus think is the greatest? – Actually, Jesus isn't into it. People aren't meant to be sorted like that. Jesus shows us God loves everyone the same.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

MATTHEW MARK LUKE JOHN

See **Appendix 6.3** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Name tags printed from App 6.3 with string/lanyards attached
- At least 6 players (you may wish to join with another group for this game)

Everyone sits in a circle (including leaders, of course). Pick one person to be 'Matthew'; the person to their left is 'Mark'; the person to Mark's left is 'Luke'; then John; then '1'; '2'; '3'; and so on. Give Matthew Mark Luke and John nametags to wear.

The aim of the game is to become Matthew (who of course thinks he is the greatest). The whole of the game is played to the rhythm of all players slapping their knees then clapping in time. "knees, clap, knees, clap, knees clap." Don't start too fast!

Once this rhythm is established Matthew begins and calls 'Matthew' – and picks someone else (Mark, Luke John 1, 2, 3 or as high as the numbers go). Let's say he called 'Matthew – 2'.

'2' must immediately respond with '2' and call another name or number, keeping time with the clapping rhythm.

Let's say '2' calls '2-John'. John responds, still keeping in time, not missing a beat 'John –Mark' &etc.... A player must repeat their own name or number first, and cannot call straight back to the person who called them. Eg: John -3; 3-John is not allowed.

If someone falters or doesn't respond in time, or calls back to whoever called them, they become the last number, and move to the end of the circle, and everyone else moves up the order one place, and takes on a new name/number. For example if John made a mistake in a circle with up to number 4, John becomes 4, 4 becomes 3, 3 becomes 2, 2 becomes 1 and 1 becomes John. Matthew, Mark and Luke remain the same.

Linking Lines:

Did you know that this game uses the names of some of Jesus followers or disciples. In fact four books of the Bible are named after these guys. In some ways they are a bit famous now, but sometimes they behaved in ways that Jesus didn't think was great. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today we'll see how these guys got into arguments about who was the greatest, and how Jesus sorted them out and showed them a different way.

PROGRESSIVE DRAWING

You will need:

- Blank A4 paper (at least one sheet per person)
- Coloured markers

Give each person a piece of blank paper and show them how to fold it in half widthways and then in half widthways again, creating four sections down the page.

Explain to the group that they are going to draw their design of someone who is absolutely the greatest in every way:

On the top fold each person draws a head – it can have as many super features as they like. Give a time limit of about a minute to this. Then each person folds their ‘head’ back, so it can’t be seen and carefully passes it on to the next person.

In the next section each person draws from the neck to the belly button – including the arms – of their greatest super person. Once they have completed that section, it is also folded back so it can’t be seen and passed on to the next person.

This third section is from the belly button to the knees, also folded back and passed on to a fourth person, who completes the greatest knees to toes section.

The paper is passed on one more time to a fifth person who then unfolds it to reveal the greatest super featured identity.

Take time to look and laugh at how the drawings have turned out. Invite people to explain the super features they have included.

Linking Lines:

Your super drawings were really super – colourful, creative and clever. It’s fun imagining how cool it would be to have these amazing super powers. But in real life, we all can have different ideas about what makes a person great. Sometimes we try to become things that we’re not because we think that would be better. Jesus friends had this problem too – trying to be better than each her. But Jesus set them straight and showed them how even the smallest, quietest, most unnoticeable, uncelebrated person can be the greatest, because of God’s loving welcome for us all.

GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS

You will need:

- Guinness Book of Records – any year

Introduce the 'Guinness Book of Records' to your group, and give the background of it being a book published every year that has world records in it for many different things. It tells the stories of people who have been the greatest at something.

Book mark a few really quirky 'greatests' ahead of time to share with the group, and then allow suggestions for categories of greatness from the group to look up. Ask your group to think about what they would like to be in the Guinness Book of Records for being the greatest at.

Linking Lines:

We have seen in this book, how people can have different ideas of what is great, and that people will go to amazing lengths to try and impress others with 'greatness'. After a while, though, we can see how ridiculous those attempts are and they don't represent true Greatness. We need to get out some more question marks and ask, 'what is true greatness - what does it look like to be truly great?' Jesus had a great way of answering this question.

CONTENT...

CONNECT CONTEXT **CONTENT** CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

OPENING THE BIBLE: JUMP IN JUMP OUT

You will need:

- Copies of Mark 9:33-37 for each person
- Rope or flour or chalk for marking ground

Give each person a copy of the passage.

Create a two metre diameter circle on the ground. Invite your group to sit around the outside of the circle.

Explain that in the part of the Bible you're about to read together Jesus' followers – the disciples - were having a huge argument over who was the greatest.

“When there is an argument, and emotions get heated, people tend to jump in with comments and points of view over the top of another person, cutting them off without letting them finish.”

Invite, welcome and affirm comments from your group of times when they might have seen this happen – especially among grown-ups. If a child shares something that sounds like a serious situation close to them, don't focus on this, or make any comment of judgement. Simply affirm them and say *'that doesn't sound like its much fun for you'* or *'it's no good for anyone when adults get stuck in arguments like that.'*

Explain to your group that you are going to read this part of the Bible together, where Jesus friends are arguing with each other, reading it like an argument. Anyone can interrupt anyone else, by 'jumping into the circle. If you are in the circle reading and someone else jumps in, you have to jump out of the circle and let them keep reading. But you can jump back in at any time! Anyone can jump in anytime. No one has to read if they don't want to. You can jump in as many times as you want, there is no order.

Before you start, let the group hear the passage read calmly and slowly by a leader. Then let them stand up around the circle and start the 'argumentative' reading.

Read the whole passage twice like this, to give everyone a chance to participate.

Linking Lines:

Great reading! Some of you are very good arguers, and some of you are very patient and wonderful at staying calm. Did you notice how Jesus cut off the argument of his followers by reminding them they don't need to prove who is the greatest – Jesus says you can't any greater than just being a little child – just being yourself – because God loves you just as you are.

OPENING THE BIBLE: A WORDS & S WORDS

See **Appendix 6.4** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Copies of Mark 9:33-37 for each person with words beginning with A and S highlighted in different colours
- Stickers printed from App. 6.4 Enough for one of each sticker per person

Give each person a copy of the passage. Divide the group into two teams: The A team and the S(uper) team. Give each person in each of the teams a sticker printed from Appendix 6.4 to stick on their top/hand/forehead!



Tell the “A” team of course they are the greatest because A is the first letter in the alphabet, an A is that best grade you can get in school. A is just all round the best.

Tell the “S” Team of course the “S” team are the greatest, because we all know that “S” stands for “Super” – as in Superman – he can leap tall buildings in a single bound, more powerful than a locomotive ... so the “S” team is totally the greatest.

Let this stir a little bit of friendly debate then move on.

It’s hard to decide who is the greatest so we’re going to settle it with a competition. ‘A’ team will read all the words beginning with the letter A, and the ‘Super’ team will read all of the words beginning with the letter S (and the leader reads all the other words so the passage makes sense).

Encourage the teams to be really enthusiastic and dynamic in calling out the words when they come to them.

Read the passage again, but swap the teams over so the A team becomes the S Team – reading the words beginning with S and vice-versa. Give every one another sticker for the new team they are in.

Linking Lines:

Wow – both teams were awesome no matter what letter you were given! Some of you are a bit competitive – I love your enthusiasm! And some of you are great team players – good for you, that’s the way. . But it’s ridiculous for us to argue who the best team is or who the greatest person is. Did you notice how Jesus’ stopped his disciples from arguing about this by saying that a little kid was greater than all of them – that if they wanted to be great they should become like a child – because God loves you just as you are, and always will.

OPENING THE BIBLE: QUICK DRAW

You will need:

- Scrap paper
- Markers
- Copies of Mark 9: 33-37

Give each person a copy of the passage and a supply of scrap notepaper and a texta. Read the passage and pause on key words (that are easy to draw) and call, ‘Quick Draw’. Each person must do a lightening quick sketch of the word you have just read (you may need to repeat it as it can easily get lost in the



excitement.). The first person to complete their drawing (this should be about 3 seconds) calls, 'quick draw' and holds up their drawing. Take a moment to check out the drawing and affirm it, and also give attention to the other drawings, affirming creativity, simplicity and extra features.

Then keep reading on and pause on another key word – again calling 'Quick Draw', and affirming the sketches. Keep reading through the passage in this way until you get to the end. Then invite the group to tell the story back to you, using their pictures as a prompt. Encourage everyone to contribute some part of the story.

Linking Lines:

Fantastic quick-drawing! Some of you were champions at being fast – some of you were champions at being creative – some of you were champions at drawing things realistically – some of you were champions at listening – some of you were champions at encouraging other people. But imagine if we started having an argument about who was the champion out of all of those? That's not going to do any good. But can you believe it - that's what Jesus' followers were doing? Arguing who is the greatest. Jesus is not into it at all. He points to a child – a kid like one of you – and says "There you go – there's how to be the greatest – just be yourself. God loves you just as you are."

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Choose one or two of these activities to give space to your group to have thinking and processing time for the Bible story. Invite them to talk about the way they can connect with the story using the 'Has This Ever Happened To You?' prompts suggested below.

Be respectful and careful not to over direct the children's responses or to try to turn the experience of the Bible story into a comprehension exercise or an exegesis session or 'teaching' time. In missional Bible engagement we are praying that children, young people and families will meet Jesus, and encounter God, and we trust the Holy Spirit to be working as we make opportunity for this and come alongside to share in the process.

Has This Ever Happened To You?

- *You heard grown-ups arguing?*
- *You helped solve a grown-up argument?*
- *You found yourself in the middle of something strange?*

TROPHIES

You will need:

- Pre-sprayed plastic goblets (gold paint)
- Wooden block off cuts
- Craft glue
- Small cardboard plaques 'The Greatest Serves'

Pre-spray-paint enough plastic goblets in gold paint.

With your group use craft glue to mount the goblets on wooden blocks (use off cuts). Add a small cardboard plaque on the front of the wood block saying 'The Greatest Serves'.

Linking Lines:

I wonder what kinds of things you have seen trophies for – or maybe you or someone in your household has been given a trophy for something

When someone does well it is really great to encourage them. It's really awesome to get a trophy or a prize for being the fastest runner or the best on the field or writing the best poem. But there are lots of other things that we don't give trophies for that are really important too.

Jesus says we don't need to be the best of the fastest or do anything to impress God – God loves us full on just for being ourselves. But the greatest thing we can do, is serving others.

STRAW DOT/POINTILLISM PAINTING

You will need:

- Drinking straws or sticks of a similar size and diameter
- Paint – various colours in individual jars (just a centimetre or two in the bottom a jar is a good way to contain spills.
- Paper/Card
- Sturdy surface – trestle table top, laminated cards, Masonite boards
- Prepare sample painting

Show the group how to make a painting from dipping the end of a straw or stick into paint and making dots over the page to form the shapes and colours. This painting technique is sometimes called pointillism, and there are different kinds of art in many cultures and times that have used the technique.

Encourage the group to create their own a picture. If you need some inspiration of what to paint, perhaps a welcome sign is a good start. This reminds us that Jesus welcomes us, just as we are, and also reminds us to be accepting and welcoming of others.

Linking Lines:

In this kind of painting no one dot is more important than the others. They are all small, but all contribute to how awesome the painting looks. When the painting is complete it is impossible and pointless to tell which dot was first, and which was last – it doesn't matter. There are so many people in the world, all completely precious to God. It is impossible, but also not important, to know who is first and who is last.

VIDEO CLIP & VOX POP**You will need:**

- Video clip from *Surf's Up* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1xm3wngg24>
- Dummy microphone


If you have the capacity to screen a video clip, watch the short scene from “Surf’s Up” where the young penguins are interviewed about what makes someone a great surfer, cross-cut with Tank’s opinions of why he’s the greatest.

Develop this into your own vox pop, interviewing your group members with the question of what makes someone really great. Using a big inflatable microphone (the kind from the \$2 shop) can make this extra fun, and fits in well with the theme of ‘greatness’ and over exaggeration.

Linking Lines:

Thanks for sharing your views on what makes someone great. In the movie ‘Surf’s Up’ Tank is always thinking about himself, and putting other people down. It’s hilarious because of course the more he thinks he’s so great, the less other people think of him. And those little penguins, the kids – they really had it right didn’t they – just like you; and Jesus agree. Jesus says kids are great just being themselves. And people who put themselves first are missing what is really great in life.

KIDS FACES**You will need:**

- Round Marie biscuits
 - Icing
 - Mixed lollies
 - Licorice or sour straps
 - Spreading knives (plastic or popsticks will do)
 - Paper plates
 - Stapler
- 

Give each person a round Marie biscuit. Ice the biscuits and add lolly eyes, nose, teeth and sour strap or liquorice hair. Use this part of the process to affirm how precious each child is to Jesus. Give everyone a second and third biscuit to decorate. Put these on paper plates and staple a second plate over the top to take home.

Linking Lines:

Your face biscuits look very creative and very delicious. I love the expressions on the faces. There are some things about being a kid that are really great – fun, creativity, making biscuits, enjoying simple things. You can take your extra face biscuits home to the grown-ups in your family – and let them eat them, and become like a child again! You can remind them that knowing God’s love and care is as simple as being a child. You don’t need to prove you’re the greatest at anything for God to totally love you as you are.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

PRAYER MAZES

See **Appendix 6.5** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Print outs of Prayer Maze from App 6.5
- OR
- Large groundsheet/industrial plastic enlargement of prayer maze from App 6.5
- Markers/Highlighters
- OR
- Craft glue and coloured wool cut into 1 metre lengths

Introduce the prayer maze to your group, either giving each person their own copy of the maze or gathering the group around the large ground sheet: Show the group the starting and finishing points – and explain how they can choose a path that goes to any of the prayers they want to pray today, and miss any of the prayers that aren’t for today. They can either trace their path with the highlighter, gluing wool in place along the path, or walk from prayer to prayer across the ground mat.

Go through each of the prayers so that those who are not strong readers know what they are.



Give everyone time to find their way through the things they want to say to Jesus.

Linking Lines:

You can choose a prayer path like this anytime you like. Jesus doesn't need fancy words or great big long prayers. He says just being yourself, a child, is greater than anything. You can take your prayer maze home and keep talking to Jesus anytime, any way you like.

MESSAGE BALLOONS

See **Appendix 6.6** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Balloons, enough for at least one per person
- Print out of App 6.6 cut into thin strips. Roll these tightly and place one inside each balloon.
- Permanent markers
- Safety pins, sticky tape, scissors

Discuss how the phrase “they’ve got a big head” is a way of saying “that person thinks too much of themselves and thinks they are better than other people”.

Tell the group that inside each balloon is a message for a person who has a big head – who thinks too much of themselves.

Give each person in your group a balloon. Ask them to blow it up – like someone’s head getting bigger and bigger. When they are ready, tie the balloon closed for them and invite them to draw a face on it with permanent marker.

Be sensitive to children having different responses to the popping of balloons – for some children it’s exciting and fun, and for other children intolerably terrifying – the whole range is absolutely normal. Negotiate among the group how each person will pop the ‘big head’ of the balloon- some children can move away from the main group; some might choose to cut just behind the knot with scissors – as this won’t make a large noise; other could choose to make a sticky tape patch on the balloon and pop with a safety pin through the sticky tape which also doesn’t make a loud noise

Blow up one balloon as a demonstration. Let each person blow up a balloon if they can. Let them choose how they want to pop the balloons and find the



note inside which will say:

“You don’t need to prove how great you are; Jesus loves you more than you can ever imagine. He thinks you’re great just as you are.”

Linking Lines:

Great job blowing up your balloon heads and popping them – thank you for being thoughtful to others with your balloon popping – that was great. It’s much better when we don’t think of ourselves as more important than anyone else. Sometime people can just think themselves as super important - the best, the greatest. What does Jesus say to people who think a lot of themselves and have a ‘big head’?

WHAT WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

You will need:

- Rope or three sports cones

Set out a triangle in rope on the ground or use the cones to mark three points of a triangle and ask the group to stand in the middle of it. Explain that you are going to ask them a question and they have to choose a corner to stand at that shows their answer. Demonstrate with this example; “If you could only choose to have one of these, what would you choose - Great brains, Great beauty, Great Friends”? Show clearly which corner to go to as they choose their response.

Give time for every person in the group to choose a corner – you may need to remind them that there are no wrong answers to this – and that different people will have different reasons for choosing their response, which is ok. Allow a little bit of discussion from those who feel comfortable. Some kids will really want to tell you why they have chosen their corner – so welcome their response, and don’t pressure anyone who is happy to keep their own thoughts to themselves. Invite everyone back into the middle of the triangle and repeat the process again with the following choices:

- Live in a different country, live in a different family, live in a tent
- Always be famous, always have friends, always know I’m safe

Linking Lines:

Great thinking and choosing! I loved hearing your different reasons for choosing which corner you were in. We saw that there are lots of different ways of being great. Jesus reminds us that whatever happens to us, and whatever we choose, God’s way of seeing us isn’t based on us being great, on our achievements, or where other rate us, but on God’s own great love for us.

RATE THESE FACES

See **Appendix 6.7** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Print out posters of the ten faces from App 6.7
- Poster of one team member

Display the ten faces from the Appendix 6.7, and remember to include at least one leader. Ask one volunteer to arrange the faces in order of greatness. This should create plenty of discussion and alternate points of view from the others in the group. Help this along with questions about greatness. When they are finished, invite the arranger to defend their order of greatness.

Then try a group 'ordering' of the faces. Highlight how difficult it is to establish who is ahead of who – but are there any clear agreements about what greatness isn't or is? What order do you think Jesus would put people in?

Linking Lines:

I loved hearing which of these people you thought were great and why. Thanks for sharing your ideas – that was really interesting and you were really good listeners too, letting others have a turn and going first. These are all pictures of people who are thought to be great in different ways for different reasons. Jesus says anyone can be truly great, because to be really great is to put others ahead of yourself. This is the kind of greatness Jesus showed.

DAY 6

TEENS

Session 6: What are you arguing about? Who is the greatest?

Humility can replace huge egos

FAME IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus affirms children

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- 'The Great Gonzo'
- Who/ Newspaper Egomania

2. Context:

- Guinness Book of Records...

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: Jump In, Jump Out

4. Consider:

- Champions Faces

5. Consequence:

- What would you choose?

CONNECT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Have you ever heard the saying, the first shall be last and the last shall be first?

Have you ever thought about what it means?

Exercise: play a quick 'knockout' game of rock, paper, scissors. Tell the group there will be a prize at the end. Then once the game is over, give a whole bag of lollies to the loser, several lollies to the second last person, and a few lollies to the third last.

'THE GREAT GONZO'

The aim of this activity is to practice the opposite of humility! For each person in the group come up with a really over the top title; for example 'super-cool, super-sensational Suzie', 'magnificently, madly, mega, molto, magnus Matt'. Our culture is pretty good at hype. We build up the reputation of people beyond what is reasonable, and then watch them fall.

WHO/ NEWSPAPER EGOMANIA

Pass around some Who magazines or Sports sections of the newspaper and give people highlighters to mark where the paper has gone over the top in the way they've portrayed a person as 'legendary' or 'genius' or 'awesome'. Report back to one another, and see how much debate there is about whether the person deserves the title.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT — **CONTEXT** — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Talk about the kind of status children had in Bible times compared to now. (At the time when Jesus was on earth, children were not highly rated in that culture; children were without status or prestige.)

How does this differ to your experience of childhood? Were you given quite a say in your childhood years in your family or were you to be 'seen and not heard'?

Exercise: read some funny quotes from children.

GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS...

If you have a Guinness Book of Records (any year will do as a snap shot of what people claimed to be great at the time, even if it has been surpassed now) spend some time with your group browsing through it looking at the kinds of ways people try to be great. Book mark a few really quirky ones ahead of time to spur along the interest. Wrap up with highlighting how many people have different ideas of what is great, and how people will go to amazing lengths to try and impress others with 'greatness'. After a while, though we can see how ridiculous those attempts are, and they don't represent true Greatness. We need to get out some more question marks and ask 'What is true greatness - what does it look like to be truly great?' Jesus had a great way of answering this question...

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Jesus says, “Stop arguing about who is the greatest. Stop trying to outshine each other. Look at this child” Why do you think Jesus used the example of being like a child when he was trying to teach his followers about being great people?

OPENING THE BIBLE: JUMP IN JUMP OUT

Give each person a copy of the passage. Explain that the disciples were having this huge argument over who was the greatest. When you have an argument, and emotions get heated, people tend to jump in with comments and points of view over the top over another person, cutting them off without letting them finish. That is how we are going to read the bible today. Anyone can jump in at anytime and start reading, cutting another person off. The rules are, if someone else starts reading, you must stop. You must wait a minimum of 2 words before jumping in on them and cutting them off. No one has to read if they don't want to. You can jump in as many times as you want, there is no order.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Can you imagine Jesus as being the kind of guy who would hang out with children?

At the time when Jesus was on earth, children were not highly rated in that culture; children were without status or prestige. Yet if you welcome even a child (a person with no status) in Jesus' name, you receive Jesus and the Father. Jesus is implying that anyone associated with Him has access to God. In the Kingdom of God, Jesus' disciples are not any more special than people with no status (children).

In what ways are we like the disciples? How can we be like the children in this story?

CHAMPIONS FACES

What does True Greatness look like? Jesus has given us an answer by pointing to those who serve, those who are forgotten and children. What do you think? Look together at some suggestions of greatness among the followers of Jesus. Print out pictures of various people that Jesus would champion (Ordinary people, marginalised, children, women, overlooked, down trodden). String up a piece of twine/rope/nylon washing line between a couple of trees or poles. Invite the group to peg the posters along the line with clothes pegs. As you do this, engage with the characters, and imagine what their story might be. Invite comments and reflections from the group.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

How did Jesus see children? If you saw other people like Jesus does, what difference would it make to you? Do you ever think you're better than other people? How can we be more humble and less proud and self-centred?

One of the facts of life is that whatever we 'worship' or think is the greatest we start to become like. At first that sounds awesome. If I think Jonathan Brown is a great footballer, I will start to become like him –fabulous. However it is a bit more complex than that, because there are other parts of being like Jonathan Brown that are not as fabulous, but that's part of the deal. If you choose Jesus as the greatest - you will start to become like him; that's great, but we need to be prepared for the kind of Greatness Jesus offers – serving others, putting them first.

WHAT WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Set out a Triangle in rope on the ground and ask the group to stand in the middle of it. Explain that you are going to ask them to choose a corner to stand at. Show clearly which corner is which as you ask "If you could only choose to have one of these, what would you choose

- Great brains, Great beauty, Great Friends

Give time for every person in the group to choose a corner. Note: there are no wrong answers; different people will have different reasons for choosing. Allow time for discussion. Repeat the process with the following choices:

- Live in a different country, Live in a different family, Live outside
- Always be famous, Always have friends, Always know I'm safe

DAY 6

PARENT CONVERSATION

HUMILITY CAN REPLACE HUGE EGOS

What's the Story?

In my first year as a teacher, I remember sitting in the staff room between classes and the welfare co-ordinator, a teacher of incredible compassion, experience and grit, burst through the door and made for the coffee saying, 'They are only 12 years old – how can they make me feel like this?' We actually all knew the answer to this: they could make her feel like this because they were vulnerable and she cared.

I have often remembered this when I've felt my kids pressing my buttons. We tend to think the most powerful people in the world are leaders of nations, social media influencers, and CEOs of large corporations. But I reckon nothing outranks the impact of hearing our kids cry or seeing our kids struggle. It gets us like nothing else. And nothing cuts as deep as when our kids say *that* thing that shows us who we are in the mirror of their minds.

Sometimes our kids can stop us in our tracks in a way that our partner, our boss, or even a wise counsellor can't. When our kids see our less noble side, when we realise they can hear us arguing, when they innocently count empty bottles or boxes that add up to evidence of our dependence or excess – it can be the thing that turns us around.

My kids have a way of showing me the truth about myself in a way I find confronting. Not like an adult who is judging or correcting or controlling me, but by being a child who doesn't need me to be anything except myself – to accept myself and accept belonging with them.

Share Your Story

- What have you learned from your kids?
- How does having a child in your life help you see things differently?
- Are there things that you argue about that you wouldn't want your kids to see?

What's God's Story?

You might be familiar with the image of Jesus saying, 'Let the children come to me'. For decades there have been paintings and prints in church halls of Jesus with a child on his knee and others around him.

There is a classic part in the Story of Jesus from the Bible where Jesus' followers – the blokes, it seems – were arguing with one another. The topic was their rankings. Who was the top dog? The guy who had been following Jesus from the start? The guy who had given up a lucrative career? The guy Jesus seemed closest to emotionally? The guys so good at the power play they were known as 'Thunder Sons'?

The answer to all of them is 'Nope.' 'Nope.' 'Nope.' 'Nope.' 'Nope.'

But Jesus doesn't even bother. In fact Jesus doesn't get drawn into this kind of theatrical

posing debate at all. Let's face it – a lot of our newsfeeds are crammed with this kind of empty self-promoting jostling, and it gets us nowhere.

Jesus takes another angle – he calls a child over and stands the child among the grown men. You can see instantly how this will play out. Those ridiculous grown men are shown up by this child. The kid doesn't have to do anything. He just stands there. And that is Jesus' point.

Our kids call out our BS just by being around us.

Because we don't love our kids on the basis of any achievements or skills, but on the basis of just being themselves. And they pitch that right back at us too. Our kids amazingly love and accept us just for existing, despite all our grown-up anxieties about getting it wrong or winning the game or losing face: our kids don't care. They just like us being around, because we are who we are; because we belong with them.

Jesus says, 'Here's the deal: become like a child. See yourself as someone of value, someone worthwhile just for being alive. This is God's way of being the greatest.'

Hear/Read more: Mark 9:33-37

DAY 6

BIBLE DRAMA

Characters:

- Jesus
- Disciples
- Paparazzi x 11
- Child

Props:

- Cameras

Paparazzi with cameras (a couple of team members and some kids)



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Paparazzi 1: Ok so, here they come. Here comes Jesus and his disciples. Let's get some pix of Jesus...

Disciples all push in front of Jesus and then in front of each other. Each with a line claiming importance.

Paparazzi 1: I'll go in front

Paparazzi 2: I'm first

Paparazzi 3: I think I'm the most important

Paparazzi 4: No, I'm the top disciple

Paparazzi 5: Well I was the first disciple

Paparazzi 6: Well I'm the smartest

Paparazzi 7: But I'm the richest

Paparazzi 8: And I'm the strongest

Paparazzi 9: But I'm the cleanest

Paparazzi 10: I'M THE LOUDEST!!!

Paparazzi 11: ...and I'm the humblest

(finally Jesus follows along – shaking his head)

Paparazzi don't take photos of the disciples, and gradually move away and miss Jesus at the end.



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All disciples and Jesus go behind backdrop ...

Bible Reader: Jesus and his disciples went to his home in Capernaum. After they

were inside the house, Jesus asked them, "What were you arguing about along the way?" They had been arguing about which one of them was the greatest, and so they did not answer. After Jesus sat down and told the twelve disciples to gather around him.

Disciples all scramble for chairs like musical chairs. One misses out - so Jesus gets up and gives his seat to them – as he speaks – dusting it off for them, and making them feel comfortable.

Jesus: If you want the place of honour, you must become a slave and serve others!

Bible Reader: Then Jesus had a child stand near him. He put his arm around the child and said, "When you welcome even a child because of me, you welcome me. And when you welcome me, you welcome the one who sent me."

As reader says this, Jesus points to a child, motions for them to come forward, moves the disciple off his seat, and stands the child up on the chair. Disciples get up and walk slowly away.

Bible Reader: *(to Child)* So – Who's the greatest?

Child: Jesus is the greatest.

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DAY 7

Who do you say I am?

THEME WORDS

Jesus shows his purpose.

**Friendship with Jesus can
replace fakes**

What everyone else is doing is
not the boss

BIBLE

Mark 8:27-31

Jesus' disciples realise he is from
God: Jesus predicts his death

SONGS

Making Up My Own Mind (C)

God In a Bod (C)

Who Can Trust in Jesus (C)

INTRODUCTION

When I hear the discussion between Jesus and his closest followers, it sounds to me like a conversation about the secret identities of action heroes. 'Who do people say I am?' Jesus asks. Some say, 'Clark Kent, mild mannered reporter', others say, 'Bruce Wayne; a philanthropic millionaire'; still others say, 'he's Dash Incredible – didn't you hear about the walking on water?' Is this the moment of Jesus revealing his secret identity?

I don't think so. He was seriously misunderstood and not consistently recognised by others, but I don't think Jesus was ever intentionally trying to obscure who he really was. Even when he had to ask people not to go around blabbing, it was to keep his identity plain and honest, and to avoid becoming a super hero, celebrity, fame victim.

Here's what's great about who Jesus really is – he's not a superhero, he's no celebrity. He's the only true totally real human person who has ever lived and he's the only true and totally real ever living God. Both at the same time. Not with one identity stashed away secretly in a phone booth or bat cave somewhere. He wore his true identity on his skin, and all the way through to his core, his Spirit. So let's stop making him into an undies-on-the-outside parody and acknowledge him not for party tricks and narrow escapes, but for living a true and real life – and offering us the same.

MARK 8:27-31

²⁷Jesus and his disciples went to the villages near the town of Caesarea Philippi. As they were along, he asked them, "What do people say about me?"

²⁸The disciples answered, "Some say you are John the Baptist or maybe Elijah. Others say you are one of the prophets." ²⁹Then Jesus asked them, "But who do you say I am?" "You are the Messiah!" Peter replied. ³⁰Jesus warned the disciples not to tell anyone about him. ³¹Jesus began telling his disciples what would happen to him. He said, "The nation's leaders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law of Moses will make the Son of Man suffer terribly. He will be rejected and killed, but three days later he will rise to life."

DAY 7

TEAM STUDY

Session 7: Who do you say I am?

Friendship with Jesus can replace fakes

WHAT EVERYONE ELSE IS DOING IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus shows his purpose

Will the real Jesus please stand up?

Who do people think Jesus is? Share the impressions that your friends and acquaintances have of Jesus. Where do these ideas come from? Do they need correcting? If so how? You might display some popular images of Jesus to get people thinking.



Jesus Songs

Sing a collection of 'Jesus' songs, eg: Holy & Anointed one; Jesus what a beautiful name. Think carefully about the portrait that is being painted of Jesus. While you sing have a piece of paper/whiteboard on which the team can write the things that are said about Jesus in the song. Now read Mark 8:27-31 again. What does it mean for Jesus to be the messiah? Suffering, powerlessness and death, but also resurrection. Do our songs which glorify Jesus also accurately represent what he understood to be the important parts of being the Messiah?

Opening the Bible: Who?

Read the passage; each time a name is mentioned the group calls "Who?" and the name is repeated. Eg:

²⁷Jesus

Who?

Jesus and his disciples

Who?

His disciples went to the villages near the town of Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them, "What do people say about me?"

Who?

me. ²⁸The disciples

Who?

The disciples answered, "Some say you are John the Baptist

Who?

John the Baptist or maybe Elijah

Who?

Elijah. Others say you are one of the prophets

Who?

A prophet." ²⁹Then Jesus

Who?

Jesus asked them, "But who do you say I am?" "You are the Messiah!"

Who?

The Messiah. Peter

Who?

Peter replied. ³⁰Jesus

Who?

Jesus warned the disciples

Who?

Disciples not to tell anyone about him. ³¹Jesus

Who?

Jesus began telling his disciples

Who?

disciples what would happen to him. He said, "The nation's leaders

Who?

The leaders, the chief priests

Who?

The chief priests, and the teachers

Who?

teachers of the Law of Moses

Who?

Moses will make the Son of Man

Who?

Son of Man suffer terribly. He will be rejected and killed, but three days later he will rise to life."

This is then the central question of Mark's gospel – Who is Jesus? And perhaps it's the central question of our mission. Pray for the community you are serving – pray that they will come to know who Jesus is – and come to know Jesus.

SONG

Casting Crowns: Who am I? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rT8Re1EIQc>

Knowing who Jesus really is also helps us keep perspective on ourselves. Use this song as a background to prayer, encouraging the team to seek to know who Jesus is and to have an accurate sense of themselves in relation to Jesus

HYPOTHETICAL

You've been reading Mark 8 with your small group and a 7 year old says:

How might you respond? What response will help this child, who is clearly being drawn to Jesus, to continue seeking and getting to know Jesus? How important is it for them to say that Jesus is God at this point or at any point? What do you think the child is saying about God?

"You know Jesus is pretty cool. He's a really good person, wise and powerful and loves everyone and he was really different to how normal selfish people are. But I don't think he's God, 'cos only God can be God."

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DAY 7

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Friendship with Jesus can replace fakes

Summary: Jesus' disciples realise that he is from God.

Bible: Mark 8:27-30 Jesus predicts his death

Questions: Who do you say I am?

Song Line: What everyone else is doing is not the boss

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Dress ups and Costumes
- Super Hero Action figures
- Mr. Potato Head

2. Context:

- Song: O Have You Heard
- Guess Who? – Game

3. Content:

- Story Time

4. Consider:

- Bunting
- Jesus Jigsaw

5. Consequence:

- Choosing Box

CONNECT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Free Play

Playdough, blocks and quiet book corner can be offered every session for routine and stability, rotating a couple of other 'theme' activities for interest and variety. Offer a few or all of the following free-play options. Each of these can become a teaching/storytelling opportunity as well. After the Mat time, you may invite children back to one of these 'free-play' activities and allow them to tell/imagine the story with you...

DRESS UPS AND COSTUMES

You will need:

- Costumes for dressing up; Super hero costumes: pieces of material for capes, sunglasses, masks, hats, belts, wrist bands, bibs are excellent for little people to manage. King/Queen Costumes: Crowns and plastic bling jewellery

Provide lots of costumes, including some pieces that could be Superhero/ Royalty pieces, if you have them, and encourage imaginative role play. As you interact with the children dressing up, pretend to not recognise them, and to try and guess their secret identity.

Linking Lines:

Sometimes it's hard to work things out. In our Story from the Bible about Jesus, we see people trying to work out things about Jesus.

SUPER HERO ACTION FIGURES

You will need:

- Action figures (Ninja turtles, Mr Incredibles, Rescue Hero figures, etc.) Op shops always have supplies of these from McDonalds Happy meals.
- Blocks
- Plasticine

Encourage action hero play.

Use the blocks to build high towers to leap over or to leap from top to top. Use plasticine to 'disguise' them e.g. giving Superman a blond wig of long hair; giving Spiderman a long black beard and curly hair and a big fat tummy; putting green monster feet and large ears on Wonder Woman.

Linking Lines:

We've had fun playing with some pretend super heroes. Jesus is powerful and he is real. He's not a superhero. Let's find out more about him.

MR. POTATO HEAD

You will need:

- Mr. Potato Head pieces

Invite children to have fun creating their own Mr. Potato head character, changing things about him, swapping pieces.

Linking Lines:

Mr Potato Head has so many different faces! Sometimes he looks like a grumpy greedy grabber, and sometimes he looks like a silly sunny surfer and sometimes he looks like a happy hearty helper. Who is the real Mr. Potato head!? In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, many people were saying lots of different things about Jesus – but his friends worked out who he really was.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Mat Time: Songs and Rhymes and Games

Use one or more of the familiar group songs or games to gather the group together and create a culture of listening and participating together. Encourage parents/carers to join in with their children.

SONG: O HAVE YOU HEARD (SNACK MUSIC)

<https://www.snackmusic.com.au/songs/oh-have-you-heard>

This song may seem a bit wordy for this age group, but the echoes make it easy, and just have an 'absolutely cool' time in the chorus with lots of dancing! Use the link to view other resources for the song, include suggested actions.

GUESS WHO?

See **Appendix 7.1** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Coloured Print outs of the 6 characters in Appendix 7.1
- Sturdy display board

Sit your group where they can see the pictures.

Tell them that you have chosen one of the pictures in your mind – and are thinking about that person. The group can take turns to try and guess who it is, by asking questions like

Do they have curly hair?
Are they wearing stripes
Have they got buttons?
Are they a girl?
Etc...

This reasoning/deduction exercise will be a stretch for some little ones – we all develop our plethora of thinking skills at different rates. The focus here is on the mystery and the guessing and the fun!

Alternatively, play this using the people in the group. Sit in a circle where everyone can be seen and silently choose someone. Let the group try to work out who it is with the same kind of questions.

Linking Lines:

In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, lots of people heard about things Jesus had done, or had seen Jesus in a crowd, or heard his stories. They were curious to find out more him – but they weren't really sure who he was. They were guessing – a bit like we were.

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Story Time

See 'Plasticine Story files' for visuals.

Ask another leader or parent to hold the pictures while you use your whole body in full dynamic expression in storytelling. Invite participation.

STORY TIME

Jesus and his friends
go travelling back and forth
They cross the lake towards the east
They roam around the north
The wander over westwards
And they visit in the south
And word of Jesus gets around
From mouth to ear to mouth

The women at the well say
"Did you hear that what Jesus did?
How he shut down grown men ranting
And said 'Cool it! like this kid'"

The men around the vineyard
Say "He made a storm go quiet
And walked - cool calm collected -
through the middle of a riot."

The children in the market place
Put on a theatre show
Acting out how Jesus made
A woman's sickness go

The city in the north
called Caesarea Philippi
Was named after the Emperor
I'm sure you can see why:

It was so every time somebody
used the city's name
They advertised the Emperor
and he increased in fame

The Emperor demanded to be
centre of attention

And it made him feel more powerful
each time he got a mention

You know, this was the opposite
Of Jesus vibe and style?
He'd heal and share God's stories
Then disappear a while

But wherever Jesus travelled
There were whispers of his doings
And sometimes cheers and calls for help
And some plots against him brewing

Jesus wasn't stupid
and he knew about the chatter
But to him the gossip twitter
just really didn't matter

But in Caesarea Philippi
Though he didn't care a gram
He asked his friends "What do folk say?
Who do they think i am?"

His friends reply
"Well, Jesus, they think
You're lots of kinds of great
But all in different ways
So we will give it to you straight:

They say You are an activist
Like the prophets long before
Who stood up to the greedy Kings
When they oppressed the poor

The say you're like Elijah – a prophet
Come back from the dead
Or your cousin wild-man John
Before the king chopped off his head

They see you standing with the poor
But not afraid of Kings
You laugh and dance, don't care for wealth
you live by simple things."

"I see" said Jesus "Fair enough
And what have you to say?
You've travelled north and south with me
And seen me night and day.

You see me day and night
When I'm happy tired or cranky
You've heard me speak,
you've watched my life
Seen people hate and thank me?"

"Who me?" says Simon loud and bold
"I think you are the One
You live and breathe God's power and love
God's true and living Son."

"You've worked me out" said Jesus
"and from this strong rock solid friending
You'll build a new community
of hope and love unending

You're right - showing the greatness
of God's love is why I'm here
And soon I'll suffer for each wrong,
injustice, pain and fear.

For humans dear of every kind
For fragile creatures living
For all the universe that aches
For all that needs forgiving

I'll die to show God takes all blame
and wipes away division."
But Simon flew into a fit
"Jesus this plan needs revision!

You shouldn't die
You've done no wrong
I simply won't allow."
But Jesus turned his back on him
And said "No. This is how.

This is God's world, God won't let go
God keeps the cosmos spinning
God's love goes to the very end
And will bring a new beginning."

CONSIDER...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT **CONSIDER** CONSEQUENCE

Exploring in Craft

Some children will prefer to go back to free play in this time, and not continue with a structured craft. This is normal and a valid choice.

BUNTING

You will need:

- String
- 'Bunting' triangles of coloured paper – 10cm x 20cm
- Sponge shapes
- Black paint in shallow containers
- Tub of soapy water, smocks, towel
- Glue stick
- Scissors
- Paper shape-punchers
- Sticky tape

Give each person a pile of triangles to decorate.

This can be done in three ways:

1. Fold the paper over 3 or 4 times and then cut some small random shapes along the folds. Ask the child to do the folding and hold the paper as the grown up does the cutting. Then let the child unfold the triangle and see the pattern formed. Stick this to a contrasting colour triangle backing. Hang on the string with sticky tape along the short edge.
2. Place the paper triangle on a sturdy surface and help the children press down with paper shape-punchers. Stick this to a contrasting colour triangle backing. Hang on the string with sticky tape along the short edge.
3. Help children use sponge shapes dipped in a little black paint to create a pattern on a triangle. Spots, stripes, zig-zags can also be done with plain round sponge. Hang up on the string with sticky tape along the short edge.

Set the three variations up in different places, around a common hub, so that small numbers of children can be assisted in each of the activities, empowering them as much as possible and containing chaos. Hang up the string once you have one or two flags on it and watch it grow. Include five flags with one letter of J E S U S on each, spread between the other flags.

Linking Lines:

Wow! I love all the different patterns you are making on your flags. So many lovely ideas – different ideas – that come from your amazing creativity. We

heard in our Story of Jesus from the Bible, how Jesus spent lots of time with different people – and they had different ideas about who Jesus was. We are adding the letters of Jesus name in among our flags to remind us that even though Jesus was God – more important than any emperor or king – he stayed close among ordinary people as friends, caring and helping, showing God’s ways. Can you see which flags are the letters of his name? Maybe one of them is next to one of your flags. Whether it is or not, Jesus really is near to us all.

JESUS JIGSAW – 9 PIECES

See **Appendix 7.2** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Picture of Jesus from App. 7.2 EC Enlarged onto a piece of A1 poster card. Paint with water colours in plenty of time to be dry, then cut along lines to make nine jigsaw pieces

With your group bring out the pieces one by one, giving them to a child to place them on the ground. Direct them where to put the pieces so that the puzzle comes together quickly. As they do this ask the group to guess what the puzzle might show.

After assembling all of the pieces together, ask each person to pick up a piece and then to run several meters away (perhaps to a tree or wall and back) and then swap their piece for someone else’s. Now gather the group again sitting down and ask each person in turn to put their piece in place. This will be harder! Give help before a child gets frustrated, but let them try unassisted at first.

Linking Lines:

In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today some of Jesus friends were just working out who Jesus really was. It was like they were gradually recognising him from bits of a puzzle and seeing that he was from God. We are doing this too – as we hear more about Jesus in all the different stories we are learning and seeing who Jesus is more and more.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — **CONSEQUENCE**

Choosing Box

At the end of the session each day, remind everyone of the conversation starter page and bring out a 'choosing' box and invite each person (including parents and carers and bystanders) to choose something from the box to take home to remind them of the time together today.

Encourage taking the item home to talk about in the family, or to hold quietly later when they want to remember the Story of Jesus from the Bible.

CHOOSING BOX

You will need:

- Pre-wrapped packets for each person, three Jelly Babies in each packet. Use small zip lock bags or cellophane and sticky tape, remembering to wear masks and use food handling gloves in preparation.

Linking Lines:

To remind us of our story, take a little pack of Jelly Babies. There are three in there? What might this remind you of from the story? Maybe it reminds you of Jesus and how people were wondering who he was? You might give names to your Jelly Babies! One Jelly Baby is for Jesus talking with his friends. One Jelly Baby is for what Jesus knows is going to happen to him – that he will be killed. One Jelly Baby is for you, because you can get to know Jesus too. Maybe the Jelly Babies will remind you that Jesus is a real friend, who you can get to know, and who already knows you and loves you.

DAY 7

PRIMARY

Session 7: Who do you say I am?

Friendship with Jesus can replace fakes

WHAT EVERYONE ELSE IS DOING IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus' disciples realise that he is from God. Jesus predicts his death

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Clinkers
- What's Your Nickname?
- Celebrity Heads

2. Context:

- Who is Jesus ? – The Info We've Gathered So Far
- Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?
- Colours of New Life Replacing Darkness - Three Day Project – Day One
- Scarecrow Tiggy

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: 'Fake' Words
- Opening the Bible: Who?
- Opening the Bible: Snap

4. Consider:

- Mask Making
- Coke Bottle Labels
- Surprising Identities: Mr Potato Head

5. Consequence:

- Coke Bottle Labels – Extension
- Starting Out
- Which Picture of Jesus...

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

CLINKERS

You will need:

- Bag of 'Clinkers' chocolates (or no-name equivalent)
- Plate

Place the clinkers on a plate so that children can take one for themselves without touching the others.

Each person, in turn, takes a clinker, looks at it carefully, and before biting into it guesses what colour it is on the inside. After telling the group what colour they think it will be, the person bites one end off, and reveals what colour it really is inside. If they have guessed correctly they get an extra clinker. If they are wrong, they keep eating the chocolate they've already bitten into, and the next person has a turn.

Linking Lines:

Some of you were very good at guessing what colour was inside your clinker – how can you tell? Amazing. It's hard to tell what something is like just from the outside. We are not always a good judge of who a person really is on the inside. Some people didn't get who Jesus was, because he looked like an ordinary guy.

WHAT'S YOUR NICKNAME?

Invite your group to sit in a circle.

Each person around the circle says their full name;
then go around the circle again as each person says what their parent/s calls them;
then go around the circle a third time as each person says their nickname that their friends call them.

After 3 goes around, ask if anyone else has anymore nick names.

Linking Lines:

In the Story of Jesus from the Bible, we hear that Jesus has quite a few different names, that aren't his real name.

CELEBRITY HEADS

See **Appendix 7.3** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Scrap paper
- Markers
- Post it notes

Play a few rounds of celebrity heads, using identities that the group suggest. Give each person 3 pieces of paper to write the names of celebrities/famous people on, and gather these up.

Pick two people to play against each other.
Behind their line of sight, write the name of the celebrity on a post it note clearly and stick it on the player's forehead.
If it falls off (from 'natural' causes before they guess it) they win.

Be discerning about which names you choose from the kids suggestions. Remember that the players can only ask questions that have a yes or no answer.

Before you start, go through a list of helpful questions in getting to know someone, these develop the idea of what goes into a person's identity, and will help speed the game along.
See Appendix 7.3 for a suggested list of questions.

Linking Lines:

Some people can be really famous, but we don't really know them, we only see the outside. Jesus was famous, but not everyone really knew who he was. And now lots of people have heard of Jesus but don't really know about him or know him. Maybe that's you...that's ok. We'll get to know a bit more of Jesus today.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

WHO IS JESUS ? – THE INFO WE'VE GATHERED SO FAR

See **Appendix 7.4** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Large poster sketch of Jesus. – draw this freehand, or use the one in App. 7.4
- Coloured markers

Draw a large sketch of Jesus on a piece of butcher's paper (or enlarge the one in Appendix 7.4). Write the heading 'What people think about Jesus'. Provide plenty of coloured textas and ask the group to write, draw or tell you everything they have heard about Jesus so far – even if they are not sure if it's true.

This can be drawn from things they've heard at SUFM, school, in their families, seen on TV or movies or social media.

Because you are doing this under the heading of ‘what people think...’ there are no wrong answers here. Accept all points of view. If something is blatantly inaccurate like ‘he had two heads’ or ‘He was born in Iceland’ or ‘He was a cannibal’ include it on the poster, but you can frame this with phrases like “Wow! I’ve never heard that before” or “I didn’t know some people thought that” or “I wonder how they would know that about Jesus.” In this way the activity both mirrors the process of the story in which people were guessing (some inaccurately and others closer to the truth) about Jesus. It also allows you to address some of the things about Jesus’ identity that kids might have picked up from less reliable sources than reading the Bible!

The focus is not to discredit less reliable idea but to centre on the most real and true thing we know of Jesus – that he was God. Everything else is far less significant, even if it is true.

Linking Lines:

People say lots of things about Jesus. People have believed lots of things about Jesus and there’s been lots of imaginings about Jesus. Some of what we know of Jesus life is clear, but there’s also lots we don’t know for sure. The one thing that is clear in the Story of Jesus from the Bible is that Jesus is God.

WILL THE REAL JESUS PLEASE STAND UP?

See **Appendix 7.5** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Jigsaw of Jesus containing true and false statements about him, printed onto card and cut out.
- Container
- Sturdy working surface

Place all of the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle in the container and place the container several meters from the group gathered around the sturdy working surface. Explain that in the container are pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. All of the pieces say either something true or false about Jesus.

Each person will take a turn to run to the container, take one puzzle piece, and race back to the circle. They place their puzzle piece in the middle and tag another person to run.

While each runner in turn gathers more pieces, the group can try to assemble the puzzle. Some of the puzzle pieces will not fit, because they contain information about Jesus that isn’t true. When the puzzle is complete, work



through the information on the puzzle.

Note: the following statements are true - Jesus was Jewish, Jesus' family were refugees, Jesus grew up in a small country village, there were lots of other people with the same name 'Jesus', Jesus wasn't married, Jesus relied on other people's generosity for food and shelter, he seemed not to have money of his own, Jesus was attacked by a mob and nearly killed, Jesus spoke more than one language.

Linking Lines:

Great teamwork running and sorting out the puzzle pieces and figuring out which bits of the puzzle went together and which bits weren't real. People have lots of different ideas about Jesus and who he really is. As we hear more things about Jesus it's good to check if they are true or not. All of the things in the puzzle pieces that fit together are real things about Jesus. Were there any that surprised you or maybe you had never heard before? Maybe there are some things that you had thought the opposite was true. We keep looking in the Stories of Jesus from the Bible to find out who he really is.

COLOURS OF NEW LIFE REPLACING DARKNESS - THREE DAY PROJECT – DAY ONE

You will need:

- Blank white paper or card
- Bright coloured paints
- Brushes and jars
- Tub of soapy water, towel, drop sheet
- Black crayon
- Wooden skewers or popsticks split in half

Day 1. (Today): With brightly coloured watery paints, paint pictures of the life of Jesus. Completely cover the sheet of paper with paint.

Day 2. (Tomorrow): Cover the page entirely in black crayon.

Day 3. (Following Day): Scratch out the words 'Jesus is risen' and a picture of the empty tomb, allowing the colour to show through. Surround these words with extras patterning so that more of the colour is seen.

Linking Lines:

Today we have heard more of the Story of Jesus from the Bible, and how people were wondering who he really was. They had seen and heard lots of things about Jesus that made him famous and talked about.



Tomorrow we will see a darker side to what happened as people spread stories about Jesus – so we'll be working more on this project tomorrow and the next day.

SCARECROW TIGGY [ANY AGE]

You will need:

- Sports markers or cones/flour to mark the boundaries of your playing area

One person is 'it' and the others spread themselves around the playing area. On 'Go', the person who is 'it' tries to catch the others by tagging them. When tagged, players must stand still with their legs apart and their arms stretched out like a scarecrow. To be freed, another player must crawl under their legs from behind. Note: whilst under a scarecrow, neither player can be tagged; however, once they separate they can be.

Linking Lines:

Well done taggers and rescuers! In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today we are going to hear how many people had ideas of who Jesus was and what he should do, but Jesus knew that he had to do a special task of rescuing but it will mean he is captured himself. If that sounds confusing – don't worry – it was confusing to people at the time. It took them a while to see who Jesus really was.

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

OPENING THE BIBLE: 'FAKE' WORDS

You will need:

- Copies of Mark 8:27-31

Give each person a copy of the passage to follow along. Explain that as you read, you are going to put in some 'fake' words that aren't really in the Bible. If they hear a fake word, they call out "fake!" and then suggest what the next word should have been

Use random words like lemon, Batmobile, curly , plastic, yodelling, zebras, TikTok, pine cone, dictionary, zoom, plug, skateboarding, tsunami, cauliflower, etc.

Linking Lines:

When people were getting to know Jesus, some of them had ideas about who he was that were fake, and when they talked about him they spread these rumours of his fake identity. But Jesus' closest friends figured out who he really was – that he really was God. I wonder how they worked it out? How do you know who someone really is? How can you tell?

OPENING THE BIBLE: WHO?**You will need:**

- Copies of Mark 8:27-31
- Optional "Who?" sign on a stick

Read the passage; each time a name is mentioned the group calls "Who?" and the name is repeated. This will work particularly well if there is a leader reading and another leader familiar with the passage, who can lead the group in the questions of 'Who?'

If you are leading this without another leader actually in the group with you, make a little 'Who?' sign on a stick to hold up at each point as a cue for the group.

Read the passage through like this once, then read again in the same way, but at each 'Who?' stop and explain a little bit of background on the character.

Eg:

Jesus

Who?

Jesus

and his **disciples**

Who?

his disciples

went to the villages near the town of Caesarea Philippi. As they were along, he asked them, "What do people say about me who me?"

The **disciples**

Who?

The disciples

answered, "Some say you are **John the Baptist**

Who?

John the Baptist

or maybe **Elijah**

Who?

Elijah .

Others say you are **one of the prophets**

Who?



A prophet."

Then **Jesus**

Who?

Jesus

asked them, "But who do you say I am?" "You are **the Messiah!**"

Who?

The Messiah.

replied **Peter**

Who?

Peter

Jesus

Who?

Jesus

warned **the disciples**

Who?

The disciples

not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus

Who?

Jesus

began telling his **disciples**

Who?

what would happen to him. He said, "The **nation's leaders,**

Who?

the **chief priests,**

Who?

and the **teachers of the Law of Moses**

Who?

will make the **Son of Man**

Who?

The Son of Man

suffer terribly. He will be rejected and killed, but three days later he will rise to life."

Linking Lines:

People around Jesus had lots of different opinions about him. Some were interested in his stories, others focussed on his miracles, others noticed how he treated people of different backgrounds, and some saw that he lived God's good ways of Love and Justice. I wonder what you find most interesting about Jesus?

OPENING THE BIBLE: SNAP

See **Appendix 7.6** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Print out, cut out and laminate the cards from App. 7.6. Make three copies of each card.
- Copies of Mark 8:27-31

The cards are pictures of the different characters in the passage and the game will help to identify the characters as the passage is read.

The Leader has one set of cards (which should be set in order), and the other sets are shuffled together and dealt equally around the group. The children pick up and look at their cards.

Begin reading the passage aloud. When you come to a character that has a card, place the card face up in the middle of the group. Anyone who has a matching card to the one placed in the centre must place their card on top and call 'Snap'. The first person to do this collects both cards, and play resumes...

Mark 8:27-31 – Card characters highlighted.

Jesus and his disciples went to the villages near the town of Caesarea Philippi. As they were along, he asked them, "What do **people** say about me?"

The **disciples** answered, "Some say you are **John the Baptist** or maybe **Elijah**. Others say you are one of the **prophets**." Then **Jesus** asked them, "But who do you say I am?"

"You are the **Messiah**!" **Peter** replied. **Jesus** warned the **disciples** not to tell anyone about him. Jesus began telling his **disciples** what would happen to him. He said, "The **nation's leaders**, the **chief priests**, and the **teachers of the Law of Moses** will make the **Son of Man** suffer terribly. He will be **rejected and killed**, but three days later he will rise to life."

Linking Lines:

Jesus was such an amazing person and also a controversial person - people had lots of ideas about his identity. Some wondered if he was like some of the famous heroes and celebrities from history who helped people listen for God and follow God's ways. Jesus did sort of match the ancient heroes, but he was different too. Some people, who watched him closely and got to know him could see that he really was God.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT **CONSIDER** CONSEQUENCE

Choose one or two of these activities to give space to your group to have thinking and processing time for the Bible story. Invite them to talk about the way they can connect with the story using the 'Has This Ever Happened To You?' prompts suggested below.

Be respectful and careful not to over direct the children's responses or to try to turn the experience of the Bible story into a comprehension exercise or an exegesis session or 'teaching' time. In missional Bible engagement we are praying that children, young people and families will meet Jesus, and encounter God, and we trust the Holy Spirit to be working as we make opportunity for this and come alongside to share in the process.

Has This Ever Happened To You?

- *You found out something new about a friend that you didn't know?*
- *Someone thought you were someone else, or you mistook someone for someone else?*
- *You found out that people were saying things about you?*
- *You discovered something about Jesus that made you think differently about him?*

MASK MAKING

You will need:

- Blank masks (Any style of mask will be suitable - a basic masquerade mask (covering the eyes only); a half face; a full face mask in plastic; or in papier-mâché (this last kind is fairly expensive).
- Water colour paints, brushes
- glitter, sequins, streamers, ribbon, stickers, feathers
- craft glue

Encourage each person to style and decorate their mask as creatively and elaborately as possible. And let them go all out trying to be as showy and impressive as possible. On the inside of each mask write... "Jesus really knows you and really loves you".

Linking Lines:

Has anything like this happened to you? Some people mistook Jesus for being someone else, and people said lots of things – rumours and stories – about him. Has that ever happened to you? Someone thought you were someone else, or you mistook someone for someone else? You found out that people were saying things about you? In different situations people can



get all kinds of impressions of us. Jesus is God – and so he knows who you really are, and really loves you as you really are. Jesus wants you to really get to know him too.

COKE BOTTLE LABELS

See **Appendix 7.7** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Empty soft-drink bottles, labels removed, one per person
- Print out of 'Jesus the real thing' labels from App. 7.7 (either printed on paper - in which case you will also need clear contact, or printed on sticky label paper)
- red markers
- Bottle of Coke with actual label

Extension for Consequence activity

- clear cellophane cut in 2cm wide strips
- permanent fine line markers

Give each person a soft drink bottle, empty, rinsed and dried, and the label removed. (This is another of the things your church community can help you with). Give each person a copy of the label form Appendix 7.7. You will also need a bottle of Coke with a proper label on it, so that the correct design that you are imitating can be seen. Each person colours in the red parts around their label saying 'Jesus, the real thing'. When the colouring is done, peel of the backing and apply to the bottle, or if done on paper, wrap around the bottle and stick down with a length of clear contact to hold it in place.

Extend this activity in the Consequence section: Invite each person to suggest things that they think are really true about Jesus – have some ideas yourself to get ideas going:

e.g. "Jesus noticed people who others didn't care about"; "Jesus lived God's way"; "Jesus had power to change things"; "Jesus was Jewish"

Write each of these things on 2cm wide strips of clear cellophane – write a copy for anyone who wants to add it to their bottle because they agree it is who Jesus really is. Invite everyone to write their own ideas of things that are really true about Jesus on cellophane, and offer assistance to those who need it.

Roll these strips of cellophane up and deposit them in the bottle. Give the bottle a shake to unroll the cellophane inside so the words can be read.

Each person then will fill their bottle with statements about Jesus that they believe are the real thing. Add some blank strips of cellophane as well, for the things that we still are yet to discover about Jesus.

Keep a healthy and positive dialogue among the group as statements are made.

People can put whatever they want to in their bottle – and people are free not to add a statement from someone else if they don't agree with it.

Linking Lines:

Has anything like this ever happened to you? – you've found out something new about a friend you didn't know? Or you discovered something new about Jesus that made you think differently about him. When we hear things about Jesus – perhaps in a story from the Bible, or something that someone says. It's good for us to think about whether we think it's really true – is that who Jesus really is?

SURPRISING IDENTITIES: MR POTATO HEAD

You will need:

- Potatoes
- Craft eyes and noses (the type with a stalk in the back to press into the potato are best)
- Chenille stems/straws
- Sticks
- Cloth scraps
- Wool/fake hair/fake fur
- Blu tac

Make some surprising identities out of plain potatoes. Give each person a washed raw potato. Provide a selection of craft eyes and noses to create a face. Add chenille stems, straws or sticks as arms and add ties or clothes from scrap fabric. Wool or fake fur hair, or crazy spiky hair from shorter pieces of pipe cleaner are quite stunning.

Linking Lines:

Not everyone who met Jesus realised he was God. They often thought they knew him but didn't really. One of the reasons not everyone worked out Jesus' true identity was because he looked just like an ordinary guy. Although he did some amazing things, healing and showing care for people, he mostly didn't go around making a scene. He kept away from the big cities. A kind of plain potato, so to speak.

Has this ever happened to you – that you were mistaken for someone else? Or you thought you knew someone and they turned out to be different to who you thought?

Have you ever changed your mind about someone after getting to know them better? Have you ever changed your mind about Jesus?

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

COKE BOTTLE LABELS – EXTENSION

You will need:

- Coke bottles with 'Jesus - the real thing' labels made in the **Consider** section (see above)
- clear cellophane cut in 2cm wide strips
- permanent fine line markers

With each person holding their 'Jesus the Real thing' Bottle, tell the group that you are going to fill the bottle with ideas we have about who Jesus really is. Invite each person to suggest things that they think are really true about Jesus – have some ideas yourself to get ideas going:

e.g. "Jesus noticed people who others didn't care about"; "Jesus lived God's way"; "Jesus had power to change things"; "Jesus was Jewish"

Write each of these things on 2cm wide strips of clear cellophane – write a copy for anyone who wants to add it to their bottle because they agree it is who Jesus really is. Invite everyone to write their own ideas of things that are really true about Jesus on cellophane, and offer assistance to those who need it.

Roll these strips of cellophane up and deposit them in the bottle. Give the bottle a shake to unroll the cellophane inside so the words can be read.

Each person then will fill their bottle with statements about Jesus that they believe are the real thing. Add some blank strips of cellophane as well, for the things that we still are yet to discover about Jesus.

Keep a healthy and positive dialogue among the group as statements are made.

People can put whatever they want to in their bottle – and people are free not to add a statement from someone else if they don't agree with it.

STARTING OUT

See **Appendix 7.8** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- 4 Posters of the four children described on pages 4 and 5 of Starting Out App. 7.8
- Ground mat or tarp.
- Copies of *Starting Out*



Use pages 4 and 5 of Starting Out (or Appendix 7.8) to work through what each of the four children on the posters thinks about Jesus with the whole group

Start with gathering your group in the middle of the tarp and placing one poster at each corner.

Linking Lines: *In our Story of Jesus from the Bible we heard about different people who had different thoughts about Jesus. In the four corners of the tarp are four friends who also have different thoughts about Jesus, which is great. We are going to find out a bit about each of their ideas, and then you'll get a chance to decide your own thoughts about Jesus.*

Move the whole group over to the first corner, and talk through the poster of the child who has always known Jesus as their friend.

Move onto the other three corners one at a time, taking the group with you each time.

It is important that the whole group have already moved comfortably to each corner, before being asked to choose.

After working through the 4th poster, say something like:

"As you think of Jesus, I wonder which of these you are most like? Let's find out. It is important to remember that what anyone else thinks is not the boss. So you can make up your own mind, and go and stand at the poster that best shows what you feel about Jesus."

It is important at this point for the leaders to remain neutral, unless you have enough leaders to go one to each corner... even in this situation it is often the case that a child will choose the corner with the leader they are most comfortable with, so let the children choose first then have a leader go and stand with them. If you have enough leaders for one per corner, give the groups time to sit and talk about their choice in their corners. You can use the pages from Starting Out to guide your conversation with your group. Otherwise, after everyone has chosen a corner re-gather the group on the tarp and let people say why they chose the corner they did. Affirm every response that is shared and encourage each person.

You might also ask a leader to tell a bit of their own story of how the way they have thought about Jesus has changed over time as they have gotten to know Jesus better.

Linking Lines: *Throughout the Bible there are stories of people having all kinds of ideas about God. They change their minds and find out more, they listen and learn from others, and things happen to them that change how they understand God. This is happening to us all as well. It is all part of the adventure of being alive in God's world. We get to choose what we think and how we trust God. Jesus shows us most clearly what God is like.*

WHICH PICTURE OF JESUS...

You will need:

- Roughly 10 -12 different pictures of Jesus. Some good collections can be found here:
 - <https://others.org.au/image/w-869/h-499/scribe/sites/others.org.au/files/Features/facesofjesus.jpg>
- and
 - <https://cpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/myriad.northampton.ac.uk/dist/8/2945/files/2013/11/87655941-7939-4db0-b4c4-3b054261e22fwallpaper-20cqtta.jpg>

Display the images of Jesus creatively in your space. Perhaps in an open common area that several groups can visit like a gallery. Invite the children to choose which of these pictures

- Seems to most accurately represent Jesus to them
- Is the picture they like the best

Give plenty of opportunity and attentive listening to each child as they find words to respond to the images. Welcome and affirm all responses. Finally, invite each person to respond by saying one thing to the image of Jesus they are most drawn to.

Linking Lines:

If you were face to face with Jesus today, what is one thing you'd want to say to him?

DAY 7

TEENS

Session 7: Who do you say I am?

Friendship with Jesus can replace fakes

WHAT EVERYONE ELSE IS DOING IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus' disciples realise that he is from God. Jesus predicts his death

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Who's News
- Clinkers
- Celebrity Head

2. Context:

- Faces of Jesus

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: Who?

4. Consider:

- Champions Faces

5. Consequence:

- What would you choose?

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

If people had to say who you were in one sentence what would they say?
Exercise: Describe Jesus in three words.

WHO'S NEWS

Give each person one complete broadside of a newspaper and a pair of scissors, glue stick and a sheet of paper. Set a time limit of 5 minutes in which each person must find 10 words (or mini phrases, max 3 words) that describe themselves), and cut them out and stick them on their sheet of blank paper. When they are done, collect up the papers and shuffle them all. Lay them out where everyone can see them. Each person then takes a turn at asking one other person, "Who do you say I am?" The other person has to try to guess which page is theirs. Allow each person to ask a max of 3 people. Then move on. If someone guesses correctly tell them, otherwise after 3 tries that person remains a mystery to the group until the end. Eventually by natural attrition everyone will be identified.

Link to the passage: Lots of people were talking about Jesus; he was hot news, but people were confused about who he was. Some of the ways he was described made people think he was a prophet, Elijah or John the Baptist. Eventually, though, his disciples figured out that he was the one they'd been waiting for, the chosen messiah, a special person sent from God; in fact, the son of the Living God.

CLINKERS

You will need a bag of Clinkers (or no-name equivalents). Each person in turn takes a clinker, looks at it carefully, and before biting into it guesses what colour it is on the inside. After telling the group what colour they think it will be, the person bites one end off, and reveals what colour it really is inside. If you are right, you get an extra clinker. If you are wrong, you just keep eating the one you've already bitten into. Use this to introduce the idea that we are not always a good judge of who a person really is on the inside. Some people didn't get who Jesus was, but some did.

CELEBRITY HEAD

Play celebrity head, using identities that the group suggest. Give each person 3 pieces of paper to write 3 celebrities/famous people on. Pick 2 people to play against each other. Write the name of the celebrity on a post it note clearly and stick it on the player's forehead. If it falls off (from 'natural' causes before they guess it) they win. Be discerning about which names you choose from the suggestions. Remember that the players can only ask questions that have a yes or no answer. Jesus was famous, but not everyone really knew who he was.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT — **CONTEXT** — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Jesus told his followers he had to die and that he would rise from the dead after three days. Have you ever been to a Good Friday church service? In what ways is Good Friday a bit like what was happening in this passage?

FACES OF JESUS

Display the different images of Jesus from an internet search. Ask the group to spend some time looking at them and to each decide which image of Jesus is most like the one they imagine Jesus to be. Allow some time for sharing and discussing these. A second phase of this activity could be to ask what image of Jesus would they like to have? Respectfully allow people to have their opinion, but it's always worth asking the question, "Where did you get that idea, do you think?" Ask if it comes from the bible, or from history books, or from gossip, or from Hollywood.

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

What might have been going through the disciples' minds as they heard what Jesus had to say about his death?

OPENING THE BIBLE: WHO?

Read the passage; each time a name is mentioned the group calls "Who?" and the name is repeated. E.g.

²⁷Jesus

Who?

Jesus and his disciples

Who?

His disciples went to the villages near the town of Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them, "What do people say about me?"

Who?

me. ²⁸The disciples

Who?

The disciples answered, "Some say you are John the Baptist

Who?

John the Baptist or maybe Elijah

Who?

Elijah . Others say you are one of the prophets

Who?

A prophet.

..... keep reading to verse 31.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Has someone ever told you something you didn't want to hear?
Has someone ever said, 'Do you want the good news or the bad news?' What do you prefer?

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — **CONSEQUENCE**

The disciples kept following Jesus even though they knew he was going to have to die.
Do you think following Jesus would make life easier or harder in the long run?
Why?
Who is Jesus to you, right now?

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DAY 7

PARENT CONVERSATION

FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS CAN REPLACE FAKES

What's the Story?

I once did an exercise in which I had to draw how I saw my family characters. I'm a middle child. I drew my younger sister in bright yellow as Little Miss Sunshine. And my older brother as a big black Darth Vader. I love my siblings to bits – but we are all really different to one another.

And that's good, right? I wonder how the members of your family are their own character? It's a really important joy in parenting to encourage our children to grow and flourish in their own identity, to become more and more comfortable and easily confident in who they are.

One of the challenges to our kids developing a strong healthy sense of self can be the power of others judging them, stereotyping them, or creating rumours about them. It's really tough for kids who are still figuring themselves out to withstand hostile voices, telling them they are this or that, or even well-meaning voices telling them they should be this or that.

I wish we were better able to shut down the bullying, the vulnerability to social media pile-on, and the power of rumours and labelling that our kids are exposed to. We should do everything we can to keep those social spaces – real and virtual – as 'emotionally hygienic' as we can. Unfortunately, we can't guarantee that our kids will never be subject to rumours, or put in a box based on one aspect of who they are, or feel attacks on their identity. But we can proactively equip them with armour that will help.

Research continues to point to parents and families still being the strongest influence over a child's self-esteem, confidence, values and character. Other groups – media, peers, teachers do shape our kids, and assail them at times, but the words and actions and modelling of parents are far more powerful. So that's good news. The unconditional love and complete acceptance of family make great foundations. We can make sure they have a voice at home, encourage them to speak their mind and work themselves out in the watertight security of our relationships. If our kids know that there is nothing they can do or say that can stop us loving them, it gives them space and strength to find their mojo and be themselves in the wider world.

Share Your Story

- How do you help your kids grow their self-confidence?
- What do your kids individual personalities help us see in family life?
- What experiences have you had of supporting your kids deal with rumours and gossip?

What's God's Story?

It didn't take long for the rumour mills to start churning out gossip and commentary on Jesus. He attracted crowds but he was also enigmatic.

Most public figures spend a lot of energy crafting their image and message, making sure they project in the best light. Jesus comes across as intentional in interactions with people, but a bit careless in honing his brand. He says things that are confusing – he speaks in vivid but ambiguous stories and cracks jokes about religion. His homeboys are peasants, but he also accepts invitations to dinner with the respectable classes when they are curious about him. He breaks social taboos with illness, with mental illness, with women, with people holding political hand grenades. It gets to the point where there are lots of different opinions flying around about him.

During the months of Covid-19 Lockdown our political leaders and health advisers have become the subject of diverse commentary. We've all heard and read what's been said about our leaders and their leadership.

It goes with the territory; public opinion projected all kinds of reputations on Jesus. So how did he handle it? Jesus hears what people are saying about him, but he doesn't get sucked into any of it. It seems Jesus doesn't mind what the rumour mill thinks.

But he looks his friends in the eye and asks, 'What about you? Who do you think I am?' Because this is what matters.

And his friend says, 'You're the one – you are the Living God here in flesh and bone, right in front of me, being my friend.'

Scandal and sensation, mobbing and muck-raking continue through Jesus' life. But he doesn't care what flies around in public. Jesus' concern is with how he treats each person he sits with and talks to or meets on the road, and whether they get that they are a valued, respected human being, connected to the God of the Universe by unbreakable love.

Hear/Read more: Mark 8:27-31

DAY 7

BIBLE DRAMA

Characters:

- Jaz
- Baz
- Gaz

(This drama could work with two team members in t-shirts, or as two clowns, or two whacky characters)



20

Baz: Hi Jaz (*high fives all around*)

Jaz: How you going Baz?

Baz: Sure, I'm great Jaz!

Jaz: Excellent!

Baz: How are you?

Jaz: Bazman – I'm thirsty - so thirsty. Do you have a can of Coke?

Baz: Absolutely – here (*hands over a can of no-name cola*)

Jaz: Baz- this isn't real Coke, it's fake! You know I only drink real Coke.

Baz: Aw, gee I'm sorry... maybe if you kind of shake it up a bit it'll taste better and more fizzy

Jaz: (*suspiciously*) Right – maybe you can show me

(*Baz takes the can and shakes it up and opens it. Do this away from the audience and away from sound equipment. Jaz doubles over laughing*)

Jaz: Baz – that was really fizzy, but I can't drink that now – have you got some money you could lend me so I can go buy a drink?

Baz: Of course- anything for you Jaz – here. (*Baz pulls some monopoly money out of his pocket*)

Jaz: (*taking the money enthusiastically – but then her face drops*) Baz - this is monopoly money - it's fake – it isn't real - I can't use it to buy anything

Baz: Yeah – yeah you can – you can buy houses on Mayfair and Park Lane

Jaz: (*frustrated*) Baz! I wonder if I've got time to go home and get a drink – do you have the time?

Baz: Yep, look. *(Shows Jaz his watch – also fake)*

Jaz: *(Jaz looks in really close from several different angles)* Baz – your watch – it's not real is it?

Baz: No, I ... II got it in a McHappy meal in 2003.

Jaz: Baz –

Baz: Well do you wanna borrow my mobile – *(pulling out his toy phone happily)*

Jaz: Is it a real one?

Baz: *(sadly)* No.

Jaz: Baz – Do you have anything that isn't fake, that's the real thing?

Baz: Let me see: er....um....

Jaz: Baz – you are a complete fake. Do you have anything that's real?

Baz: Well – well - well- I know Jesus!

Jaz: Jesus? He's totally real.

Baz: Yeah I know.

Jaz: Baz I don't suppose you've got a Bible?

Baz: Yeah of course.

Jaz: A real one?

Baz: Yeah - what you think I am? Here.

Jaz: Baz do you want to do a story from the bible?

Baz: Only if it's a real one.

Jaz: Sure . *(Looking through the Bible)* OK- let's do this one : Mark chapter 8

(Baz & Jaz both crowd over Bible)

Baz: I'm going to get Gaz

Jaz: OK... Here we go - a real bible story:

(Baz & Gaz walk across the open stage purposefully but when they get to the middle they keep walking on the spot.)

Jaz: "Jesus and his disciples went to the villages near the town of Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them, 'What do people say about me?'" (Do they know who I really am?) "The disciples answered, 'Some say you are John the Baptist...'"

Gaz: *(Hand up in urgency)* Is Jesus really his cousin John the Baptist in disguise?

Baz: No, No , no, he's not a fake John the Baptist

Jaz: "...or some say maybe Elijah."

Gaz: *(Hand up again, bouncing on the spot)* Oo Oo Oo I know who that is – Elijah was an ancient godly guy hundreds of years before Jesus.

Jaz: That's right. But Jesus wasn't a fake Elijah either.
(continuing) "Others say you are one of the prophets."

Gaz: One of the prophets? A prophet? One of the other prophets? Really?

Baz: No.

Gaz: Really?

Baz: No. *(hands up to lips...)* No!

Jaz: "Then Jesus asked them, 'But who do you say I am?'"

Baz: Who is Jesus really?

Jaz: "'You are the Messiah!' Peter replied."

Gaz: Really – the Messiah?

Baz: You don't know who that is, do you?

Gaz: Not really.

Baz: The one from God who will show us God's way.

Jaz: "Jesus warned the disciples not to tell anyone about him. Jesus began telling his disciples what would happen to him. He said, 'The nation's leaders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law of Moses will make the Son of Man suffer terribly. He will be rejected and killed, but three days later he will rise to life.' Then Jesus explained clearly what he meant."

(Baz mimes with Gaz Trial & Death while Jaz is talking)

Gaz points at Baz with accusing finger,

*Gaz stage slaps Baz (no contact) across face
Gaz hold ups each of Baz's hands and 'hammers' it into place as a crucifixion shape.
Baz hangs his head, slowly crumples down. Then stands again, strong and beaming
Gaz scratches his head*

Gaz: Wow – Jesus knew that was going to happen to him?

Baz: It's why he came

Jaz: To show us God is really alive,
to show us God really loves us,
to show the world who's really Boss

Baz: He's the real thing.

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DAY 8

*What shall I do, then with the one you call
the King of the Jews?*

THEME WORDS

Jesus willingly dies

Jesus' love can replace anything

People are not the boss

BIBLE

Mark 15
Jesus' trial and death

SONGS

Oh Have You Heard? (S)
Romans 8:38 from the Bible (S)
Digging Deep (C)

INTRODUCTION

“What shall I do with the one called the king of the Jews?” This is a crunch time question for Pilate, and for us. We’re down to the business end of Mark’s gospel and discipleship is now more than sailing through storms, watching the roof cave in or rubbing the coin in our pockets and thinking, ‘Nice one, Jesus!’ And it’s more than saying - ‘You’re the one we’ve been waiting for...’ or ‘Jesus you’re obviously the top guy – can I stand next to you and be your 2IC?’ Discipleship now looks like this: running away, discovering that all your ideas about success are on the garbage heap, failing and knowing it and feeling it hit you full on in the face, standing by helpless and devastated, grieving and wondering how it came to this. Discipleship is watching Jesus die alone, and as you wonder how he got there, you realise your own hand in it – to some extent you put him there, and then you realise that he is doing something much bigger. It was not just a conspiracy of people who put him there – people are not the boss. All of the political manoeuvrings are stopped in their tracks as we realise that a far stronger purpose is shaking us and tearing our fabric from top to bottom. The purposes of God’s love. Discipleship is finding yourself appalled at the state of the world, at what it’s done to God, but overwhelmed by God’s unrelenting capacity to love beyond all reasonableness ... even death on a cross.

MARK 15

Pilate Questions Jesus

¹Early the next morning the chief priests, the nation's leaders, and the teachers of the Law of Moses met together with the whole Jewish council. They tied up Jesus and led him off to Pilate. ²He asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Those are your words," Jesus answered. ³The chief priests brought many charges against Jesus. ⁴Then Pilate questioned him again, "Don't you have anything to say? Don't you hear what crimes they say you have done?" ⁵But Jesus did not answer, and Pilate was amazed.

The Death Sentence

⁶During Passover, Pilate always freed one prisoner chosen by the people. ⁷And at that time there was a prisoner named Barabbas. He and some others had been arrested for murder during a riot. ⁸The crowd now came and asked Pilate to set a prisoner free, just as he usually did.

⁹Pilate asked them, "Do you want me to free the king of the Jews?" ¹⁰Pilate knew that the chief priests had brought Jesus to him because they were jealous. ¹¹But the chief priests told the crowd to ask Pilate to free Barabbas. ¹²Then Pilate asked the crowd, "What do you want me to do with this man you say is the king of the Jews?" ¹³They yelled, "Nail him to a cross!" ¹⁴Pilate asked, "But what crime has he done?" "Nail him to a cross!" they yelled even louder. ¹⁵Pilate wanted to please the crowd. So he set

Barabbas free. Then he ordered his soldiers to beat Jesus with a whip and nail him to a cross.

Soldiers Make Fun of Jesus

¹⁶The soldiers led Jesus inside the courtyard of the fortress and called together the rest of the troops. ¹⁷They put a purple robe on him, and on his head they placed a crown that they had made out of thorn branches. ¹⁸They made fun of Jesus and shouted, "Hey, you king of the Jews!" ¹⁹Then they beat him on the head with a stick. They spit on him and knelt down and pretended to worship him.

²⁰When the soldiers had finished making fun of Jesus, they took off the purple robe. They put his own clothes back on him and led him off to be nailed to a cross. ²¹Simon from Cyrene happened to be coming in from a farm, and they forced him to carry Jesus' cross. Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus.

Jesus Is Nailed to a Cross

²²The soldiers took Jesus to Golgotha, which means "Place of a Skull." ²³There they gave him some wine mixed with a drug to ease the pain, but he refused to drink it.

²⁴They nailed Jesus to a cross and gambled to see who would get his clothes. ²⁵It was about nine o'clock in the morning when they nailed him to the cross. ²⁶On it was a sign that told why he was nailed there. It read, "This is the King of the Jews." ²⁷

²⁸The soldiers also nailed two criminals on crosses, one to the right of Jesus and the other to his left. ²⁹People who passed by said terrible things about Jesus. They shook their heads and shouted, "Ha! So you're the one who claimed you could tear down the temple and build it again in three days. ³⁰Save yourself and come down from the cross!" ³¹The chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses also made fun of Jesus. They said to each other, "He saved others, but he can't save himself. ³²If he is the Messiah, the king of Israel, let him come down from the cross! Then we will see and believe." The two criminals also said cruel things to Jesus.

The Death of Jesus

³³About noon the sky turned dark and stayed that way until around three o'clock.

³⁴Then about that time Jesus shouted, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" ³⁵Some of the people standing there heard Jesus and said, "He is calling for Elijah." ³⁶One of them ran and grabbed a sponge. After he had soaked it in wine, he put it on a stick and held it up to Jesus. He said, "Let's wait and see if Elijah will come and take him down!" ³⁷Jesus shouted and then died. ³⁸At once the curtain in the temple tore in two from top to bottom. ³⁹A Roman army officer was standing in front of Jesus. When the officer saw how Jesus died, he said, "This man really was the Son of God!" ⁴⁰⁻⁴¹Some women were looking on from a distance. They had come with Jesus to Jerusalem. But even before this they had been



his followers and had helped him while he was in Galilee. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joseph were two of these women. Salome was also one of them.

Jesus Is Buried

⁴²It was now the evening before the Sabbath, and the Jewish people were getting ready for that sacred day. ⁴³A man named Joseph from Arimathea was brave enough to ask Pilate for the body of Jesus. Joseph was a highly respected member of the Jewish council, and he was also waiting for God's kingdom to come. ⁴⁴Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead, and he called in the army officer to find out if Jesus had been dead very long. ⁴⁵After the officer told him, Pilate let Joseph have Jesus' body. ⁴⁶Joseph bought a linen cloth and took the body down from the cross. He had it wrapped in the cloth, and he put it in a tomb that had been cut into solid rock. Then he rolled a big stone against the entrance to the tomb. ⁴⁷Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph were watching and saw where the body was placed.

DAY 8

TEAM STUDY

Session 8: What shall I do, then with the one you call the King of the Jews?

Jesus' love can replace anything

PEOPLE ARE NOT THE BOSS - Jesus willingly dies

Who's the boss?

Who exercises power or control over Jesus?

Read through the passage (break it into chunks for small groups to work on) and list all of the people who seem to exercise power or control over Jesus or boss him around.

There are a whole bunch of different characters, all very proactive in this text and Jesus by comparison seems overwhelmed and passive. Is that what is really going on? Who are the characters?

Why does Jesus let this happen?

- Because he is really weak and powerless?
- Because he chooses to be weak and powerless?
- Because there soon will be a vindication of who he is?

Question Time?

"Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Don't you have anything to say?"

"Don't you hear what crimes they say you have done?"

"Hey, you king of the Jews!"

"He saved others, but he can't save himself. 32If he is the Messiah, the king of Israel, let him come down from the cross! Then we will see and believe."

"Let's wait and see if Elijah will come and take him down!"

"My God, my God, why have you deserted me?"

"This man really was the Son of God!"

Lots of people are asking Jesus questions here, or implying a critique of Jesus, and Jesus even asks a few of his own. What questions would you ask of Jesus from this text or in these situations? Write down these questions on an A4 place mat on a table. When everyone has written some questions, everyone gets up and moves at least 5 places away, sits down and looks at the question in front of them. With the people around them, discuss the question and come up with an answer to write on the placemat. When you are done, display your question and answers where the responses can be viewed.

Community Crucifixion

It's a whole community event, the death of Jesus. Everyone plays a part, makes their contribution to him being killed. What part did each of these people play?



Pilate, Chief Priests, Nation's leaders, Teachers of the law of Moses, Barrabas, Crowd, Soldiers, Simon of Cyrene, People who passed by, Criminals being co-crucified, People standing around, Roman army officer, Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of the younger James and Joseph, Salome.

And what about you?

Make a cut out strip of people to represent these characters, write your responses on them.

Prayer: We stand at the Foot of the Cross

Image: Use Page 58 in Top 10 stories from Mark (**Appendix 8.1**)

Music: At the Foot of the Cross (Don Moen)

Enlarge this picture to A1 size. While you play/sing the song, At the foot of the cross, ask each person to come forward and draw themselves in the picture. Pray together saying, "thankyou" to Jesus that his death is for us. Don't be melodramatic about this. Simply affirm that we can imagine ourselves there because Jesus died for everyone in the world, to deal with everything that is wrong in the world. You may also like to invite the group to add some other people they care for, draw their family, their small group, or a country that they know is in trouble or the whole planet. There is plenty of room.

Crucifixion Dramatic Reflection

This is a different approach, more reflective and contemplative, but suitable for a team worship or study time so long as you aren't rushed.

Depending on your context you may adapt this for presentation in an upfront program. Divide into 8 groups and give each group a copy of the dramatic reflection script below. Each group's section will have one section of lines 2 – 9 highlighted to read and discuss together and to prepare to bring to the cross. Give all of these instructions at the start, and then after 10 or so minutes of reflections and discussion, begin line 1, strongly and deliberately as the cue for the rest of the lines to unfold.

Setting

A large wooden cross with 7 nails pre-nailed in at random intervals with at least 2cm extended. Hammer, and 7 pieces of red paper each with one of the following statements printed on it, and a hole punched in the top.

Each speaker comes to the cross and delivers their line while 'nailing' the red card to the cross. Provide a stool if needed for the higher beams. 'Nailing' means hanging the card on the pre-driven nail, and doing 'dummy' strikes with the hammer. The point is the sound effect, not to drive the nail in further. Remember to intersperse the hammering between your phrases. Don't actually speak and hammer at the same time. Keep the delivery clear and the strikes deliberate.

This can be performed by:

- just 2 people: one for part 1 and one other for parts 2-9
- or by 9 people as numbered below
- or by fewer people, with one person for part 1, one person for part 9 and the other parts shared between however many people you have covering a few parts each.

- 1: *(walking around the cross looking at 'Jesus')*
How did he get here? Why was Jesus crucified? *(Stands to the sides and observes others)*
- 2: *(While 'nailing')* Because he had it coming. He was a political threat, tortured and executed by Roman Military
- 3: *(While 'nailing')* He had it coming. Pilate judged him innocent, but washed his hands under a stream of public pressure.
- 4: *(While 'nailing')* He had it coming. The crowds were stirred up against him by the fears of local Jewish leaders
- 5: *(While 'nailing')* He had it coming. He broke the Sabbath, healing numerous children and adults.
- 6: *(While 'nailing')* He had it coming. He healed an enemy Roman's slave.
- 7: *(While 'nailing')* He had it coming. He ate with sinners, tax collectors and spoke openly with women
- 8: *(While 'nailing')* He had it coming. He came from the hill country in Galilee preaching and teaching good news
- 1: *(from the side)* Surely it was our grief and our sorrows he carried?
- 9: *(While nailing; beginning with force and accusation...)*
He had it coming. He was **smitten**... and **stricken**... and **wounded**... and crushed... *(turn and kneel with recognition and humility)* for our sins. By his wounds we are healed.

DAY 8

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Jesus' love can replace anything

Summary: Jesus willingly dies

Bible: Mark 15 Jesus' Trial and Death

Questions: What shall I do with the one you call the King of the Jews?

Song Line: People Are Not The Boss

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Water Painting

2. Context:

- Song: Romans 8:38 From The Bible
- Squashed Tomatoes

3. Content:

- Story Time

4. Consider:

- Potato Print Poster

5. Consequence:

- Choosing Box

NOTE: Sharing the Crucifixion Story with Toddlers

Don't overwork the messages in this session. The Crucifixion has a lifetime of depth and meaning – and to develop good theology we need to pay close attention to the text. At this age, children are still gathering the narrative threads – and we can trust them to be processing those with the Holy Spirit as they go. Be careful not to push meanings that aren't yet useful, or can't be supported by their knowledge of the text yet, because the experiences of colonial violence and religious factionism aren't yet meaningful to a small child.

In mission settings we must also support the healthy bond of attachment of the child with their parents and not throw parents in the deep end by giving a child vocabulary that a parent can't support. The text is our great gift in this – any parent, regardless of their faith can go back to the text with their child – and we know that God will meet them there.

For example, the notion of sacrifice is not one that is apparent in Mark's narrative, it's not part of a three or four year old's cultural field, it doesn't have cognitive



traction for a child. The provenience of Jesus' death for them doesn't depend on their apprehension of it. We must be really clear with ourselves that the gospel story is a gift to children, and not use it to make demands on them that satisfy our own theological extensions.

And we must be very clear that none of us come to faith on the basis of understanding or knowledge but on the sheer glorious grace and gift of God. We share the precious story as it is because we trust in its own truth and power and God's grace.

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Free Play

Playdough, blocks and quiet book corner can be offered every session for routine and stability, rotating a couple of other 'theme' activities for interest and variety. Offer a few or all of the following free-play options. Each of these can become a teaching/storytelling opportunity as well. After the Mat time, you may invite children back to one of these 'free-play' activities and allow them to tell/imagine the story with you...

WATER PAINTING

You will need:

- Small tubs of water (1kg Hummus or Yogurt tubs are ideal)
- House Painting brushes
- Fence, Brick wall, piece of Masonite board (a sturdy vertical surface)

Give each person a paint brush and share a tub of water between 2 or 3 children. Show them how they can 'paint' with water on the surface. They will be able to see what they have painted for a bit but then it will dry and disappear – and they can paint again.

You might like to 'paint' some people figures – these are Jesus' friends.

Linking Lines:

When something bad happened to Jesus, his friends all ran away and disappeared.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Mat Time: Songs and Rhymes and Games

Use one or more of the familiar group songs or games to gather the group together and create a culture of listening and participating together. Encourage parents/carers to join in with their children.

SONG: ROMANS 8:38 FROM THE BIBLE

Song: Absolutely Nothing Can Separate Us From God's Love – Snack Music

https://www.snackmusic.com.au/songs/romans-8_38-from-the-bible

This is a wonderfully repetitive song – using only the words from Romans 8:38. Although it's a mouthful for little ones – the rhythm and repetition carries it. There are actions on Snack Music's website (demonstrated in the link below) which are great to use, but don't get hung up on the little ones being able to do them. Freestyle dancing is the best!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYF1cqYQefA>

SQUASHED TOMATOES

You will need:

- Red hat (or a can of diced tomatoes)

This is a silly game that will bring lots of laughs.

Sit in a circle and tell the group that in this game someone has to be the Tomato and wear the red hat (or hold the can). The tomato is only able to say one thing 'Squashed Tomatoes'.

Everyone else takes turns at asking the Tomato questions and they have to answer 'Squashed Tomatoes' and try not to laugh.

If they laugh someone else becomes the Tomato.

Some starter questions:

Who is your favourite footy team?

What do you brush your teeth with?

What is the beach made of?



Linking Lines:

You were very clever at answering the questions – but what a silly thing you had to say! Some of the questions were silly too.

In the Story of Jesus from the Bible today, Jesus is being asked questions by people who are saying he's done something wrong – but he hasn't. He doesn't answer with squashed tomatoes, in fact he just stays quiet and doesn't answer at all because the questions aren't fair. We'll see what happens to him.

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Story Time

See 'Plasticine Story files' for visuals.

Ask another leader or parent to hold the pictures while you use your whole body in full dynamic expression in storytelling. Invite participation.

STORY TIME

Jesus eating
 Jesus singing
 Jesus hiking
 Jesus crying
 Jesus alone
 Jesus dobbed in
 Jesus arrested
 Friend violent
 Jesus healing
 Jesus taken
 Jesus accused
 Jesus silent
 Jesus innocent
 Jesus questioned
 Jesus truthful
 Jesus denied
 Jesus knowing
 Jesus imprisoned
 Jesus bullied
 Jesus bashed
 Jesus disputed
 Murderer released

Jesus condemned
 Jesus forced
 Jesus falling
 Jesus crucified
 Jesus thirsty
 Jesus suffering
 Jesus mocked
 Jesus forgiving
 Jesus dying
 Jesus seen
 Jesus God

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Exploring in Craft

Some children will prefer to go back to free play in this time, and not continue with a structured craft. This is normal and a valid choice.

POTATO PRINT POSTER

You will need:

- Large poster, prepared with a black cross pre painted or drawn in thick marker, and the silhouette of Jesus on it – not graphically, but it must be clear that Jesus is on the cross
- Blue paint on sponges in shallow containers
- Potatoes, cut in half and a sad face or angry face or laughing face carved into the flat surface
- Red tissue paper hearts
- Glue sticks

Invite the group to gather around the poster. Ask 'I wonder what is on this poster? I wonder who this is?'

And allow answers to come – accept and affirm all suggestions 'it could be...that's a great suggestion...I can see you're thinking about this carefully/creatively' etc.

Move on, saying – 'This is Jesus – he's on the cross and he's dying. He's been put there wrongly. There are some other people around watching. I wonder how they are feeling?'



And allow answers to come – accept and affirm all suggestions ‘Some people could be feeling like that...’

Continue by showing the potato faces to the group and explain that they can surround Jesus with the faces of people watching. Some are sad, some are angry, some are laughing meanly at him.
Help the children dab a potato on the paint sponge and then print on the poster. They can get two or three prints from the one paint dab.

When the poster is filled up say ‘We can see what the people watching Jesus are feeling – I wonder what Jesus is feeling?’
And allow answers to come – accept and affirm all suggestions.

Continue by bringing out the red tissue hearts and say ‘Jesus was probably feeling all of those things – we heard some of that in our story – but there is one thing that we know didn’t stop, no matter what was going on, no matter how he was feeling. Jesus kept loving everyone – with God’s strong never-runs-out love. He loves us too, no matter what is going on – with God’s strong never-run- out love.
To show this on our poster we are going to use the glue sticks to make it sticky in between the faces and stick on lots and lots of these hearts.’

Facilitate this addition – if there is enough wet paint still on the poster you might not need the glue sticks. The aim is to cover the poster with many hearts.

Remember with this age group, it is the process of creation that is the significant space of faith formation, not the end product!

When you are finished you might write the names of the participants who helped create the poster in black marker around the edge.

Consider if there is a way you can display this at future sessions adding it to a gallery of artworks from your program that can be viewed and discussed as a further point of connection with participant children and families and the broader community passing by.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — **CONSEQUENCE**

Choosing Box

At the end of the session each day, remind everyone of the conversation starter page and bring out a 'choosing' box and invite each person (including parents and carers and bystanders) to choose something from the box to take home to remind them of the time together today.

Encourage taking the item home to talk about in the family, or to hold quietly later when they want to remember the Story of Jesus from the Bible.

CHOOSING BOX

In the Choosing Box today: Heart Stickers

Linking Lines:

Choose a Heart Sticker to stick to your hand and take home. I wonder what this can remind us of from our time together today? The heart is to remind us of God's love that nothing can stop or wipe out or replace. The sticker sticks to us and reminds us of how nothing can take God's love for us away. Later, when you are at home, the sticker might remind you to ask God some questions, or pray, and tell God what's on your mind.

DAY 8

PRIMARY

Session 8: What shall I do, then with the one you call the King of the Jews?

Jesus' love can replace anything

PEOPLE ARE NOT THE BOSS - Jesus willingly dies

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Jive On Over
- Rescue the Prisoner

2. Context:

- Match up
- Who Durnit Modelling Clay

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: Fuzzy Felt Boards
- Opening the Bible: Serial Story Style
- Opening the Bible: Top Ten Bible Stories from Mark

4. Consider:

- Marbling
- Colours of New Life Replacing Darkness
- Replacement Recipes!

5. Consequence:

- We Stand at the Foot of the Cross
- Cross Prayers (Beaded God's Eyes)

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

JIVE ON OVER

You will need:

- (optional) ukulele

The players start sitting in a circle. The leader stands up and "jives" or dances around the inside of the circle. If you have a leader that can play ukulele add some joyful music. Otherwise use body percussion (clicking and clapping) to create a funky vibe. As they jive around inside the circle the leader 'Wiggles

points' at someone and says "start jiving now". This person joins in jiving inside the circle. The leader gradually invites people one by one to start jiving, and these people keep jiving until the leader calls 'jiving's over' and freezes on the spot. Everyone who has been jiving runs back to their places in the circle. The last one there becomes the new leader.

Linking Lines:

Jesus invited lots of people to follow him and learn to live in his good ways, and lots of people did. Lots of people loved being Jesus friend when he was having dinner, telling great stories, healing sick people or standing up against bullies. But in our story today, when Jesus is arrested and killed all of his friends and followers desert him – they run away. Jesus has to face the worst things alone.

RESCUE THE PRISONER

COMBINE WITH ANOTHER GROUP FOR THIS

You will need:

- Rope
- Chalk/flour

The group is divided in half and a line of rope is placed down the middle between the two teams. About three meters behind each team a large square (prison) is drawn on the ground using chalk or flour. Each team picks one person to be the prisoner of the other team (usually someone who can run fast). Then each team tries to free their prisoner by sending a team member to the prison through the opposing team to bring him/her back without getting captured by a member of the opposing team. If the person attempting to rescue their own prisoner makes it into the prison through the opposing team without being caught, he/she is safe while in the prison and could pick their own time to run with the prisoner back to their own side of the line. If the team member is caught by the opposing team, they also became a prisoner needing rescue. So each team is busy both trying to rescue their own prisoners and protect the prisoner(s) from the opposite side from getting rescued. The team with the most prisoners wins.

Linking Lines:

That was hard work, back and forth trying to rescue your prisoners and not get caught at all. I loved how brave and fast and sneaky you were. Great job. Today as we hear more of the Story of Jesus from the Bible, Jesus becomes a prisoner, even though he has done nothing wrong and another prisoner who was guilty is set free. Jesus is right in the middle of things that aren't fair He knows what that's like.

All the people of his country are under the rule of another country and are not really free either. More unfair things that Jesus is right in the middle of.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

MATCH UP

COMBINE WITH ANOTHER GROUP FOR THIS

You will need:

- pencil, paper, wooden spoon, saucepan, sock, shoe, bat, ball, letter, letterbox, lunch box, lid, brush, dust pan, picture of Jesus saying 'a person who's never done anything wrong', cardboard box prison cell.

Place all of the items in a wide circle around the group, in random order. Explain to the group that when you say "go" everyone runs to pick up one item. They must then run around the circle and look for an item that goes with it. When they have found the matching item they run back and sit in the centre.

Most people will find matching items, but if they mismatch, send them back to the outer circle to put at least one item back. It is quite likely that Jesus and prison will be left because they are seen to be a mismatch. A leader should pick up these and return to the centre if no one else does. When all the items have been matched, and everyone is returned, invite each person to show the rest of the group their two items and explain how they go together.

Linking Lines:

Here are the last two things that match together – Jesus and a prison. That's a surprising match isn't it? Jesus is someone who never did anything wrong, and yet as we look at the Story of Jesus from the Bible, we see that Jesus was arrested, and imprisoned...and then many more terrible and unfair things happened to him. Things he didn't deserve. We'll think about why Jesus would suffer unfair things – when we know he could have stopped them from happening to him.

WHO DUNNIT MODELLING CLAY

See **Appendix 8.2** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Plasticine or Modelling clay in various colours.
- Description cards of the following characters: Roman soldiers, King Herod, Priests, Peasant farmers, Prisoner, Mum, Fisherman. Printed from App. 8.2

Place the plasticine in the middle of your group and invite everyone to take a piece and begin making a person while you explain the rest of the instructions.



Explain that you are going to give each person a description of someone to make their plasticine person into. These characters are all suspects in Jesus' death. Read out the card descriptions – but without saying the name or title of the character and either let children volunteer for that character, or assign them.

While the children work on adapting their characters to fit the descriptions, offer encouragement and engage them in conversation about what they are doing and what they imagine the 'backstory' of their character to be.

When they have finished, do a line-up of the characters, and reveal the identity of each character. Admire and affirm the creativity of each person's work.

Ask the group to try to guess who killed Jesus.

Linking Lines:

Roman soldiers, King Herod, Priests, Peasant farmers, Prisoner, Mothers, Fisher man. All of these people were part of the story of how Jesus was killed. None of them were directly responsible: even the soldiers were carrying out government orders, but also none of them stopped his death. As we listen to more of the Story of Jesus' death from the Bible we can think about why Jesus was treated this way when he didn't deserve it. All of Jesus life showed God's love for the world – let's think about how his death showed that too.

CONTENT...

CONNECT CONTEXT **CONTENT** CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

The Bible passage for this session is much longer than any other – but it is important not to reduce or edit it. There is meaning and significance in all of the parts of the final days of Jesus' life for us to share in. In the following Opening the Bible activities the group is invited to have hands on encounters with the story as a whole, but not reading word for word the entire text.

Along with these activities, though, we recommend reading Mark 15 aloud, to your group as you would a chapter book serial story, like Harry Potter. Practice this beforehand so that you read with expression, suspense, impact and sensitivity to the emotion and meaning that is layered through the story.

Don't replace the text with a paraphrase 'story book' version. Trust the Bible.

OPENING THE BIBLE: FUZZY FELT BOARDS

See **Appendix 8.3** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- A4 sized pieces of cardboard covered with flannelette on one side
- Zip lock bags
- Felt shape pieces cut from App 8.3 - a set for each person in the group.

Give each person a small fuzzy felt board, made from a square of card and a slightly smaller square of flannel glued smoothly to the card. (Cutting the fabric with pinking shears will give you a better finish.) Give each person a zip lock bag to keep their felt pieces in as you distribute them.

Explain that the story is a long one with many people and things that happen. As we hear the story, you will get some fuzzy felt pieces to put on the board to tell the story. (See Appendix 8.3 for fuzzy felt shapes.) Use the natural pauses as the pieces go on to add your own comments or draw responses from the group.

STORY OUTLINE

It's night time, Jesus is in a garden with his friends, but his friends are asleep. Soldiers come and arrest him even though he hasn't done anything wrong.

His friends run away.

He is taken to the Judge who isn't fair.

In the morning, he is beaten and put on a cross where he will die.

Soldiers are watching. One soldier says – “look he really was God”.

Jesus dies. The sky goes black. His friends are sad.

He is buried in a cave with a big rock closing it up. Soldiers stand guard.

All through the night and all the next day.

But the day after...here comes some of Jesus friends to visit the grave, the soldiers aren't there. The rock isn't there. Jesus isn't there! A messenger in white is there and says, go back home to the beach where you first met Jesus. He'll be waiting for you there – he's alive and he wants to give you a new start too.

Linking Lines:

You can see on your felt boards that so many different things happen to Jesus – and lots of them are very sad, and most of them aren't fair. The suffering in Jesus life was very real. Being God didn't stop that. In the end none of them stop the most important thing about Jesus – that he is God; that his love for us goes on and on.

OPENING THE BIBLE: SERIAL STORY STYLE

With this particular story, which is quite long and detailed but also quite sobering, it can be very effective to simply read it out loud, as you would a Harry Potter book to a class in school. You may be surprised by how much of an impact this makes.

A few tips: you must be really prepared for this. Practice reading the whole story out loud several times. Listen for where the dramatic climaxes are, work out where to read more slowly or more quickly – vary the volume as well. There is a real art to this, and it's a good one to learn. Record yourself practicing and listen to it. When you read to the children, be confident enough and go slowly enough that you can look up at them from time to time and make eye contact. This is also a skill that needs practice.

While simply reading the text seems less involved than some other ideas for Opening the Bible - don't slack off. If you do this well the impact and connection with the kids will be amazing. If you don't prepare it will crash and burn badly.

Linking Lines:

I wonder what part of this story surprised you? What part hadn't you heard before? What part really sticks with you, or is especially meaningful to you?

OPENING THE BIBLE: SIX POSTERS WITH READINGS AND ACTIONS

See **Appendix 8.4** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Print/enlarge the six posters in App 8.4
- Six sturdy places to display the posters around your area
- Black watery paint in a jam jar (only 1/3 full)
- Thick brush
- Towel
- White sheet or strips of cloth
- Rock

Explain to your group that the Story of Jesus from the Bible today is about Jesus death and lots of things happen in different places with different people. It's a sad and difficult story so to help everyone listen well, it's been broken up into six posters and your group will walk from poster to poster. At each poster there are some instructions that will help the group read as well. And each poster names a terrible unfair thing that happens to Jesus.

Remember that questions are always welcome.



Mark 15:1-4**Pilate Questions Jesus - *Being accused of doing wrong when you haven't***

¹Early the next morning the chief priests, the nation's leaders, and the teachers of the Law of Moses met together with the whole Jewish council. They tied up Jesus and led him off to Pilate. ²He asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Those are your words," Jesus answered. ³The chief priests brought many charges against Jesus. ⁴Then Pilate questioned him again, "Don't you have anything to say? Don't you hear what crimes they say you have done?" ⁵But Jesus did not answer, and Pilate was amazed.

Use a stick to point to the people on the poster that are mentioned as you hear the story. Pass the stick to different people in the group to point to the different people on the poster as they hear their name in the story.

The Death Sentence - *Everyone gangs up on you*

⁶During Passover, **Pilate** always freed one **prisoner** chosen by the **people**. ⁷And at that time there was a **prisoner** named Barabbas. He and some others had been arrested for murder during a riot. ⁸The **people** now came and asked **Pilate** to set a **prisoner** free, just as he usually did. ⁹**Pilate** asked them, "Do you want me to free the king of the Jews?" ¹⁰**Pilate** knew that the chief **priests** had brought Jesus to him because they were jealous. ¹¹But the chief **priests** told the **people** to ask **Pilate** to free the **prisoner** Barabbas. ¹²Then **Pilate** asked the **people**, "What do you want me to do with this man you say is the king of the Jews?" ¹³They yelled, "Nail him to a cross!" ¹⁴**Pilate** asked, "But what crime has he done?" "Nail him to a cross!" they yelled even louder. ¹⁵**Pilate** wanted to please the **people**. So he set the **prisoner** Barabbas free.

Demonstrate actions for each of the four 'characters' highlighted in the text, practicing with the group, then read the text as everyone listens for the four characters and joins in the actions each time they are mentioned.

- *Pilate – hands on head like a crown – fingers pointing upwards*
- *Prisoner – arms crossed at the wrist, hands made into fists held in front of face*
- *Priests – hands clasped in front of them as if in prayer*
- *People – arms waving over head*

Soldiers Make Fun of Jesus - *Being hurt and humiliated*

Then Pilate ordered his soldiers to beat Jesus with a whip and nail him to a cross.

¹⁶The soldiers led Jesus inside the courtyard of the fortress and called together



the rest of the troops. ¹⁷They put a purple robe on him, and on his head they placed a crown that they had made out of thorn branches. ¹⁸They made fun of Jesus and shouted, "Hey, you king of the Jews!" ¹⁹Then they beat him on the head with a stick. They spit on him and knelt down and pretended to worship him.

²⁰When the soldiers had finished making fun of Jesus, they took off the purple robe. They put his own clothes back on him and led him off to be nailed to a cross. ²¹Simon from Cyrene happened to be coming in from a farm, and they forced him to carry Jesus' cross. Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus.

Listen in silence

Jesus is Nailed to a Cross - People making fun of you when you're in trouble and pain

²²The soldiers took Jesus to Golgotha, which means "Place of a Skull." ²³There they gave him some wine mixed with a drug to ease the pain, but he refused to drink it.

²⁴They nailed Jesus to a **cross** and gambled to see who would get his clothes. ²⁵It was about nine o'clock in the morning when they nailed him to the **cross**. ²⁶On it was a sign that told why he was nailed there. It read, "This is the King of the Jews." ²⁷⁻²⁸The soldiers also nailed two criminals on **crosses**, one to the right of Jesus and the other to his left. ²⁹People who passed by said terrible things about Jesus. They shook their heads and shouted, "Ha! So you're the one who claimed you could tear down the temple and build it again in three days. ³⁰Save yourself and come down from the **cross**!" ³¹The chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses also made fun of Jesus. They said to each other, "He saved others, but he can't save himself. ³²If he is the Messiah, the king of Israel, let him come down from the **cross**! Then we will see and believe." The two criminals also said cruel things to Jesus.

Listen for the word 'cross' and each time you hear it, spread your arms out wide to make a cross.

The Death of Jesus - Everyone abandoning you

³³About noon the sky turned dark and stayed that way until around three o'clock. ³⁴Then about that time Jesus shouted, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" ³⁵Some of the people standing there heard Jesus and said, "He is calling for Elijah." ³⁶One of them ran and grabbed a sponge. After he had soaked it in wine, he put it on a stick and held it up to Jesus. He said, "Let's wait and see if Elijah will come and take him down!" ³⁷Jesus shouted and then died. ³⁸At once the curtain in the temple tore in two from top to bottom. ³⁹A Roman army officer was standing in front of Jesus. When the officer saw how Jesus died, he said, "This man really was the Son of God!" ⁴⁰⁻⁴¹Some women were looking on from a distance.

They had come with Jesus to Jerusalem. But even before this they had been his followers and had helped him while he was in Galilee. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joseph were two of these women. Salome was also one of them.

As you read from the top of the poster down, invite a different person in the group to paint across the section of the poster with a broad brush and thinly mixed black paint. But the time you get to the end of the section, the poster should be covered in black-wash, with the outline of the picture showing through.

Jesus Is Buried – Losing all hope

⁴²It was now the evening before the Sabbath, and the Jewish people were getting ready for that sacred day. ⁴³A man named Joseph from Arimathea was brave enough to ask Pilate for the body of Jesus. Joseph was a highly respected member of the Jewish council, and he was also waiting for God's kingdom to come. ⁴⁴Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead, and he called in the army officer to find out if Jesus had been dead very long. ⁴⁵After the officer told him, Pilate let Joseph have Jesus' body. ⁴⁶Joseph bought a linen cloth and took the body down from the cross. He had it wrapped in the cloth, and he put it in a tomb that had been cut into solid rock. Then he rolled a big stone against the entrance to the tomb. ⁴⁷Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph were watching and saw where the body was placed.

At the end of this reading, take the poster down and wrap it in a white cloth or strips of cloth, and place it under a rock.

Linking Lines:

There were a lot of parts to that story. Lots of unfair and terrible things happened to Jesus. I wonder which part impacted you the most? Or if there's a bit you have a question about? Or a part you'd like to hear again.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Choose one or two of these activities to give space to your group to have thinking and processing time for the Bible story. Invite them to talk about the way they can connect with the story using the 'Has This Ever Happened To You?' prompts suggested below.



Be respectful and careful not to over direct the children's responses or to try to turn the experience of the Bible story into a comprehension exercise or an exegesis session or 'teaching' time. In missional Bible engagement we are praying that children, young people and families will meet Jesus, and encounter God, and we trust the Holy Spirit to be working as we make opportunity for this and come alongside to share in the process.

Has This Ever Happened To You?

- *Your friends really let you down?*
- *You had to answer some really hard questions?*
- *You were accused wrongly of something you didn't do?*
- *A group turned against you?*
- *You didn't give up even though it was really hard?*

MARBLING

Over 7s (under 7s use finger painting for a similar effect)

You will need:

- Smocks (old shirts or garbage bags with holes cut for head and arms)
- Disposable ground covering (newspaper)
- Tub of soapy water and towel for washing
- Methylated spirits
- Paint in two different colours
- Tub half filled with water (for marbling)
- ¼ cup vinegar
- Spray bottle of water
- Sticks
- A4 paper

Child 1 & 2: Add a small amount of methylated spirits to a couple of colours of paint.

Child 2 & 3: Stir the paint thoroughly.

Child 4: Half fill a rectangular tub with water and add ¼ cup of white vinegar.

Child 5 & 6: Gently pour the two colours of paint onto the surface of the water.

Child 7: Carefully swirl them together with a stick. Do not over mix.

Each person takes a sheet of paper and carefully places it on the surface of the water/paint for a second, then lifts it off, allowing any excess paint to run back into the tub.

Place the painted paper on a flat surface to dry. You may wish to run a stick through the surface of the paint between papers to create a different pattern, but less is more when it comes to mixing. Another great effect can be obtained by lightly spraying water on the surface of the paint.



Linking Lines:

This is pretty messy, and it's hard to say exactly how it's going to turn out. Perhaps that was how Jesus' friends felt, or even Jesus himself, being arrested and sentenced to death, when he had done nothing wrong. Jesus knew there was a purpose to his suffering, but in the middle of it, I bet it was hard to see how it would work out. Still Jesus was willing to keep going... because people – no matter how cruel are not the boss. And God's love is what will last.

COLOURS OF NEW LIFE REPLACING DARKNESS – THREE DAY PROJECT – DAY TWO

You will need:

- Blank white paper or card
- Bright coloured paints
- Brushes and jars
- Tub of soapy water, towel, drop sheet
- Black crayon
- Wooden skewers or popsticks split in half

Day 1. (Yesterday): With brightly coloured watery paints, paint pictures of the life of Jesus ... Completely cover the Sheet of paper with paint.

Day 2. (Today): Cover the page entirely in black crayon.

Day 3. (Tomorrow): Scratch out the words 'Jesus is risen' and a picture of the empty tomb, allowing the colour to show through. Surround these words with extras patterning so that more of the colour is seen.

Linking Lines:

Today we have heard more of the Story of Jesus from the Bible. His life was full of hope, showing God's love for everyone in his actions and stories. His death – such a sad and terrible story was cruel and unfair. So we are going to cover over all the bright colourful paintings of Jesus' life with black. All of his friends thought it was the end – most ran away, some women stayed and watched sadly, and some came to see that he was properly buried.

Tomorrow we will hear more – because death was not the end for Jesus, death is not the boss.

But for today, we will cover the life of Jesus pictures with black to remember that Jesus knows how the very worst, cruel and unfair things feel.

REPLACEMENT RECIPE - DAMPER

You will need:

- Flour
- Water
- Mixed peel
- Salt
- Sugar
- Milk (powdered milk is fine)
- Choc drops
- Butter/margarine
- Mixing bowls
- Cups and spoons
- Baking tin and aluminium foil

In this activity the Linking Lines are woven into the process of making damper. The mixing will be done together, then a portion of the dough given to each person to shape into a cross, and placed in the baking tray to be cooked later – and brought back the following day.

Jesus asks us to give up our sin - our wrong and fear and hate - and he will replace it with forgiveness and friendship with God

Start with a recipe for Damper...

3 cups of flour, 1 cup of water, 1 cup of mixed peel, a pinch of salt

Give each person one item (give the 3 cups of flour to 3 separate people) and others the mixing bowl and mixing spoons, and baking dish so that everyone has something.

Jesus death on the cross wasn't just for him – it was for us. He asks us to give up things like hate and envy and lying and jealousy, and replaces them with forgiveness and love, friendship with him, hope and new life. Let's see what you might be willing to give up, and have replaced?'

What if I ask you to give up one cup of your flour...but replace it with my cup of sugar?

What if I ask you to give up your water for my milk?

What if I ask you to give up your mixed peel for choc drops?

What if I ask you to give up your pinch of salt for a pat of butter?

Let the children respond to the offers – the recipe will work either way so genuinely let them choose. Make the exchanges that they agree to and allow



the children to add their new ingredients and mix them together. This should form a strong dough that is not too wet to handle.

Sprinkle some extra flour on each person's hands and give each person a piece of dough to form into a cross. Put the crosses into a greased baking tin and cover with alfoil. (You are going to cook these later and bring them back tomorrow).

Jesus died on the cross, he was buried...and we'll see what becomes of our replacement damper tomorrow!

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

WE STAND AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

See **Appendix 8.4** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Poster 5 from Appendix 8.4 enlarged to A1 size backed with sturdy card
- Thick Coloured markers
- Glue sticks
- Cut out people from global awareness magazines. E.g. National Geographic (nb. not celebrities, but a diverse range of ordinary people from different places and cultures around the world.)

Introduce the poster of Jesus on the cross, and invite the group to identify some of the people standing looking at him, and how they are feeling: the women are sad; some people are laughing at Jesus' suffering; the soldiers are ignoring him; one soldier is giving Jesus a salute – saying he believes Jesus is God.

Continue with the **Linking Lines:**

We've seen in the Stories of Jesus from the Bible, how all through Jesus life, he was always doing things for others – his life was about other people, not just about him. And now today we've heard how when Jesus was killed, it wasn't because he had done anything wrong – it wasn't about him really at all. It was for everyone – it was for us. It was showing God's concern for all the wrong that has ever been done to us and by us and how much he loves us. So we have a chance to add ourselves and some other people around this poster. Draw yourself on the poster showing what you think of what Jesus is doing – perhaps you could draw yourself near some other people that you feel the same as – perhaps you are sad that Jesus was killed unfairly like the women or maybe you don't care, like some of the soldiers or maybe you feel like the other people – or something different altogether. It's up to you.

Ask each person to draw themselves in the picture.

You might invite the group to pray, simply saying 'thankyou' to Jesus that his death is for us. Don't be melodramatic or force this. Kids have great imaginations.

Simply affirm that we can imagine ourselves there because Jesus died for everyone in the world, to deal with everything that is wrong in the world.

Invite the group to add some other people they care for, draw their family, or a country that they know is in trouble or the whole planet, and glue on the cut out people from magazines. There is plenty of room.

CROSS PRAYERS (BEADED GOD'S EYES)

You will need:

- Large coloured beads: write the words 'Thanks', 'Please', 'Sorry', 'Wow', 'Help', 'Why?', 'Show me' on the beads in permanent fine line marker. There should be enough beads for each person to have a whole set of all the words.
- Sticks (roughly 30 cm long and 1cm diameter). If you are in an outdoors setting with trees, go for a short walk with your group and let them each gather two sticks to use. Remember to stay in full view of the whole team.
- Coloured yarn cut into 50cm - 1 metre lengths.

Each person makes a cross out of two sticks. Help each person begin winding on coloured wool to make a traditional 'God's eye' or Ojo de Dios pattern, stretching the yarn from one 'spoke' to the next, winding it behind and around that spoke, then on to the next spoke and behind and around that spoke and so forth. Once a few rounds have been established show the group how they can add a prayer word on by threading it onto the yarn, then keep winding it as before.

Encourage them to change colours of yarn if they want to. Suggest that different colours could show the different feelings we have in our prayers, and remind that the words on the beads start a prayer that they want to say or think to Jesus. Give some examples of your own, just naturally as you go.

Linking Lines:

Today we have heard of how Jesus died, how he suffered lots of terrible things that were not fair. Tomorrow we will hear of Jesus' resurrection – showing that even death doesn't stop God's love and power. We can use these God's eyes as a way to help us pray and talk to God about anything – even terrible things or wonderful things that are happening to us.

DAY 8

TEENS

Session 8: What shall I do, then with the one you call the King of the Jews?

Jesus' love can replace anything

PEOPLE ARE NOT THE BOSS - Jesus willingly dies

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- "Passion of the Christ" [MA 15+]

2. Context:

- Crucifixion

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: Body of the Line

4. Consider:

- Who Dunit Modelling Clay

5. Consequence:

- What will you do with Jesus?

CONNECT...

CONNECT | CONTEXT | CONTENT | CONSIDER | CONSEQUENCE

Watch a few minutes of the crucifixion/death scene of "The Passion of the Christ" [MA 15+] (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoiF8skHYAc>). What is your reaction?

CONTEXT...

CONNECT | CONTEXT | CONTENT | CONSIDER | CONSEQUENCE

Jesus told his followers he had to die and that he would rise from the dead after three days. Have you ever been to a Good Friday church service? In what ways is Good Friday a bit like what was happening in this passage?

CONTENT...

CONNECT CONTEXT **CONTENT** CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Isaiah 53:6 (The Message) says, 'And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on him'.

Consider how Jesus was taking on the sins (all that is wrong and evil) of the whole world.

What does this mean to you?

OPENING THE BIBLE: BODY ON THE LINE

(Mark 14-32-15: 47) In this activity the whole group is required to make a shape by lying on the ground. Do a few practices with easy shapes (triangle/square) or letters. Now give each person a copy of the bible passage, and explain that as you read through this story of Jesus' death you are going to stop on certain words and call 'body on the line'. This is the signal for the whole group to lie on the ground and form the shape of whatever the last word was. (Sample words to be called: sword, rooster, crown, skull, cross, temple, tomb, body)

As we read the story of Jesus' death, we need to realise that Jesus was a real human, with a body that felt pain and suffering. And he put this body on the line for us. If you ask God the question, "What will you do with the King of the Jews?" he will answer, "I'm going to put his body on the line, allow him to be killed for all the evil of the world – and demonstrate my power and purpose for the world by resurrecting that body."

What will you do with the king of the Jews?

CONSIDER...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT **CONSIDER** CONSEQUENCE

People passing along the road jeered at Jesus, "If you're really God's Son, come down from that cross!" But Jesus did not – he chose to die. Spend a few minutes re-reading the passage and quietly reflect on this.

WHO DUNNIT MODELLING CLAY

Give each person some modelling clay in a few different colours and give them a description of a character in the story (without saying the names) and ask them to mould that character. When they have finished, do a line up of the characters. Ask the group to try to guess who killed Jesus.

Characters: Roman soldiers, King Herod, Priests, Peasant farmers, Prisoner, Mum, Fisher man.

Discussion can incorporate the idea that none of these people were responsible, because Jesus knew this was the plan, to show God's power and love for the world. But also none of these people stopped Jesus from being killed either.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

What does Mark 15 tell us about who Jesus is and why he died?
What do you want to do in response?

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS?

This story shows a number of different responses to Jesus. People want to do different things with Jesus...

Jewish leaders: get rid of him	(delete)
Pilate: ask questions to find out more about him	(?)
Disciples: give up on him	(esc)
Peter: pretend he's nothing to do with you	(Shift)
Women: preserve him as a memory	(Caps lock)
Criminals: laugh at him/mock him	(!)
Soldiers: torture him	(ctrl)
Jesus himself: live life to the full with you	(&)

Make a large mat or poster divided into 9 squares (like noughts and crosses)

In each square write one of the people and their response from the list above and add the suggested symbol from a keyboard. If you can pull an old keyboard apart and just put those keys on the squares, even better. Leave the middle square blank. But put some pens and small pieces of paper in that square.

Go through the list with the group and connect the responses to the characters, and use the keys to summarise the responses.

Now invite the group to work out which response they identify with at the moment. Allow the idea that they might be in the process of moving from one square to another, which is ok. Invite everyone to pick up a pen and a strip of paper and write their own name on it. And then put it in a square that best represents either where they are with Jesus, or where they want to be. Either is fine. If they want to fold up their paper so others can't see their name that's ok. (If you have access to lots of keyboards and can get a bunch of each of the keys, you could allow people to take one key of whichever kind they identified with as a reminder of their choice.)

ONLY FOR USE BY SU VICTORIA

DAY 8

PARENT CONVERSATION

JESUS' LOVE CAN REPLACE ANYTHING

What's the Story?

Failure – no one likes it.

And isn't it heartbreaking to see our kids deflate when they feel they have failed?

Failure comes in all shapes and sizes, and all of the language of failure is horrible. 'Failed businesses', 'failed marriages', 'failure to thrive' – terrible labels for such complex human experiences.

It stirs up all kinds of voices in us. The 'That wasn't fair' voice. The 'I've let everyone down' voice. The 'How can I show my face?' voice. The 'What happens now?' voice.

Whether the stakes are big or small, when we don't meet expectations, when we don't make the grade, the impact can be devastating.

I reckon failure itself is not as hard on our kids as the sense of shame or humiliation that often comes with it. Losing is one thing; feeling like a 'loser' is another thing again.

It is a hearty challenge for us as parents to help our kids accept the times when they will lose as a fact of life. Every Grand final has a losing team – a team who have been at the top of their form to get there. Failure is inevitable for any one with enough courage to give something a go.

We want to be sure that our kids can fail and know that they are not a failure; they can lose and not be a loser.

Share Your Story

- When have your kids found failing hard to handle, and how have you helped them?
- Are there times you are afraid of failing as a parent?
- Do you find it helpful to tell your children your own stories of struggle and failure?

What's God's Story?

The last days and hours of Jesus life can appear to some like a train wreck of failure. One gut-wrenching bad turn after another – they just keep coming until he is executed in public, naked, open wounds, in tortuous agony, a pathetic public spectacle, a jeering bloodthirsty crowd taunting him for a laugh as he struggles for breath. No loyal followers, all have disowned him, everyone who believed in his vision for justice and peace now disillusioned. Just a few women giving solace to his mother, watching from a distance. He dies alone among criminals, childless, property-less, penniless. The soldiers on duty gamble for his clothes, the only possession he has.

Failure. Complete failure. Nothing is left of his message or followers.

Doesn't it make you wonder why this part of Jesus' story was even included in the Bible? Even more intriguing because the records we have of Jesus' death weren't written by those who executed him. These gruesome and pitiful details come from his followers. Why would those who continued his teachings and practices for decades after keep the memory of his this? When we turn the page, we see Jesus is raised to life – what a plot twist! You'd think the story keepers would just skip ahead to this bit.

But they didn't edit this out. This is a necessary part of the story of who Jesus is. Of who God is. The early followers of Jesus who kept his story held on to this bit, because it really mattered. As much as all the great teaching and healings and wonders of Jesus' life, this mattered to them. Many of them ended up in prison, beaten up, thrown out of town, failures themselves. Jesus' own story was relatable content.

The whole point of Jesus' life is to show us the big picture and the nitty gritty reality that God is with us in every part of being human. God gets it. Not looking down from a safe distance. Not even from just alongside us. But God gets every bit of being human from the inside.

This is why God is a credible God for me, a person who has chalked up a fair score card of failures in life. Because God doesn't expect anything more of me than he himself endured.

God doesn't offer cheesy sayings, rubbish like 'it's all for the best' or 'this will make you a stronger person' or 'everything happens for a purpose'. When we fail, and this goes for every kind of fail you can think of, God can look us in the eye and says:

"Yep: I know.

I know that stone in the gut.

I know that freeze in the mind.

I know that torrent of tears.

I know that spike through the soul.

I know that rip across the heart.

I really know failure and shame."

There is more – the plot twist! – but in the Gospel of Mark, the earliest recorded accounts of Jesus life, 1400 words are spent on the description and details of his suffering and death – his epic fail in human terms – and only 140 on the resurrection.

I'm grateful that the Bible considers failure worth talking about, that it holds failure with compassion and respect.

Hear/Read more: Mark 15

DAY 8

BIBLE DRAMA

Characters:

- SUFM Leader 1 (in a SUFM T-shirt)
- SUFM Leader 2/Bible Reader (also in SUFM T-shirt)
- Judas & Soldier
- Pilate & prisoner
- Several leaders in crowd
- Soldiers x 3
- Joseph

Props:

- Bible: with string hanging out. The string is curled up inside the Bible, so when it is pulled it extends out several meters before pulling out a card with the question, “What shall I do with Jesus?”

NB: The Bible passages have been slightly edited to keep this presentation to a suitable length.

SUFM Leader 1: Every day at SUFM we’ve been asking questions. All kinds of questions. Lots of our questions have come from the bible – which is choco-block full of questions. And today we are going to pull another question out of the bible.

SUFM Leader 2: I’ve got my Bible right here. I wonder if someone would like to come and help me pull a question out of the Bible (*choose a volunteer to come and gently pull the string. When the Card comes out, read the question out to the volunteer and ask them to tell everyone what the question is.*)

SUFM Leader 1: What shall I do with Jesus? That’s a great question. I think lots of people in the Bible had to decide how to answer this question. Look! Here comes someone now ... it’s Judas, one of Jesus’ friends and followers. I wonder what he’s thinking.

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(Enter Judas)

Judas:

What to do? What to do? The Jewish leaders have offered me money to betray Jesus, to lead them to him so they can arrest him. What shall I do with Jesus? I’ve been his friend and follower – but things aren’t working out the way I’d imagined. I get disappointed with Jesus – I thought he would be stricter – stick to the rules more – I can see he’s from God – but I thought he’d do things more the normal way. So what shall I do with Jesus? Shall I hand him over to be arrested? Or shall I stick with him? What shall I do with Jesus?

SUFM Leader 1: What will Judas do with Jesus? Does anyone know? (*take answers*)

SUFM Leader 2: Well let's check it out in the Bible...
 "Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders."


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Mime – Freeze
Judas enters, points at (imaginary) Jesus. A soldier with sword drawn moves forward to 'seize' Jesus and both freeze.

"Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead Him away under guard." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. The men seized Jesus and arrested him."

SUFM Leader 1: Judas betrays Jesus. He let's him down; and so do all of Jesus' other friends. He is taken to court and then brought before the Governor Pilate.

(Enter Pilate. Freeze)

SUFM Leader 2: So now it's up to Pilate – what will Pilate do with Jesus?

"During Passover, Pilate always freed one prisoner chosen by the people. And at that time there was a prisoner named Barabbas. He and some others had been arrested for murder during a riot. The crowd now came and asked Pilate to set a prisoner free, just as he usually did."

Mime - Pilate circles slowly around Prisoner, who stands still with his hands bound. Pilate lifts up Prisoner's hand. Freeze

"Pilate asked them, 'Do you want me to free the king of the Jews?' Pilate knew that the chief priests had brought Jesus to him because they were jealous. But the chief priests told the crowd to ask Pilate to free Barabbas. Then Pilate asked the crowd, 'What do you want me to do with this man you say is the king of the Jews?'"


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SUFM Leader 1: So Pilate might set Jesus free – he's giving him a chance. But he doesn't really want to make up his mind – he wants to go with the crowd.

SUFM Leader 2: So now it's up to the crowd of people? What will they do with Jesus?

Mime - Several leaders (and a few kids with them) stand up in the middle of the audience and punch into the air 8 times then freeze - fist up

"Pilate asked the crowd, "What do you want me to do with this

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man you say is the king of the Jews?"
They yelled, "Nail him to a cross!"
Pilate asked, "But what crime has he done?"
"Nail him to a cross!" they yelled even louder.
Pilate wanted to please the crowd. So he set Barabbas free. Then he ordered his soldiers to beat Jesus with a whip and nail him to a cross."

SUFM Leader 1: Look at that – the crowd, once so amazed and impressed by Jesus' power and teaching, has turned against him in a flash.

SUFM Leader 2: So now it's up to the Roman Soldiers. What will they do with Jesus?
"The soldiers led Jesus inside the courtyard of fortress and called together the rest of the troops. They put a purple robe on him, and on his head they placed a crown that they had made out of thorn branches. They made fun of Jesus and shouted, "Hey, you king of the Jews!" Then they beat him on the head with a stick."

*Mime - 2 Soldiers laugh, spit, punch, kick at 'imaginary' Jesus.
A Third soldier watches*

SUFM Leader 2: "They spit on him and knelt down and pretended to worship him. When the soldiers had finished making fun of Jesus, they took off the purple robe. They put his own clothes back on him and led him off to be nailed to a cross."

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The third soldier gradually moves further and further away from other two.

SUFM Leader 2: "The soldiers took Jesus to Golgotha, which means "Place of a Skull". They nailed Jesus to a cross and gambled to see who would get his clothes."

Two soldiers bend down and mime hammering. Stand back and look at cross, then sit down and keep joking, laughing, drinking, etc

"It was about nine o'clock in the morning when they nailed him to the cross. About noon the sky turned dark and stayed that way until around three 'clock. Then about that time Jesus shouted and then died. A Roman army officer was standing in front of Jesus."

Third Soldier looks up at (imaginary) cross then kneels.

"When the officer saw how Jesus died, he said, "This man really was the Son of God!""

SUFM Leader 1: Some soldiers cruelly tortured Jesus. Some carried out their order to execute him. And some realised who Jesus was – the

Son of God.

SUFM Leader 2: So now who is it up to? It's up to someone to take him down and bury him.

(Enter Joseph of Arimathea)

"It was now the evening before the Sabbath, and the Jewish people were getting ready for that sacred day. A man named Joseph from Arimathea was brave enough to ask Pilate for the body of Jesus.

Joseph was a highly respected member of the Jewish council, and he was also waiting for God's kingdom to come. Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead, and he called in the army officer to find out if Jesus had been dead very long. After the officer told him, Pilate let Joseph have Jesus' body."

Joseph: enters slowly carrying 'body'.

"Joseph brought a linen cloth and took the body down from the cross. He had it wrapped in the cloth, and he put it in a tomb that had been cut into solid rock. Then he rolled a big stone against the entrance to the tomb."

Kneels down, holding body, laying it in grave.

Leader 1: So now who is it up to? It's up to death. What will death do with Jesus? Well with most people it would be all over ... but not with Jesus. With Jesus it's never over, it's never the end. Even death can't win against Jesus ... because he is God, who gives life to all, and who is life. Jesus didn't stay dead – he's alive. (We'll hear more about how that happened tomorrow) He's alive – and so now it's up to us. What will we do with Jesus?

Leader 2: We could ignore him, or get to know him. We could talk to him, ask him our questions, trust him, follow him, live like him, be his friend forever. What will we do with Jesus?

DAY 9

Who will roll the stone away?

THEME WORDS

Jesus is alive

A new beginning can replace a terrible end

Death is not the boss

BIBLE

Mark 16:1-8
Jesus' Resurrection

SONGS

Jesus is Alive (C)
Making Up My Own Mind (C)
Thank You God for Loving Me (S)

INTRODUCTION

Who will roll the stone away? What a question! The Roman soldiers are under orders not to, the disciples are too gutless, Joseph and Nicodemus are too grief stricken, so it's left to the women, who are not strong enough. Doesn't this sum up just about every predicament that we suffer and that we need a major stone-rolling event to reverse the trajectory of death and bring us up into light and life again? Just as we were ready to write a eulogy and an epilogue, Jesus is up and alive, starting something new. Quick, get going! There's more following to be done – Jesus is ahead of us, and he's calling us to start a fresh with him. Get to the beach and find him. Whatever the past has been, he's still around, engines roaring with new life and second (third, fourth, fifth, whose counting?) chances. The women, the first to hear this invitation, were rightly freaked out, astonished and shaken. Perhaps, as we tell this Good News we'll be shaken up too! Bring it on Jesus.

THEOLOGICAL SIDEBAR

Talking about the Resurrection

Our Christian tradition – including many hymns and songs - articulates the resurrection of Jesus in various ways.

Jesus came alive again
Jesus rose from the dead
Jesus conquered death
God raised Jesus from death
Jesus was raised to life again
Jesus is risen from the dead

Some of these are more common in scripture than others. Some don't appear at all (for example the 'conquered death' line). That is not to say we can't use them in communicating with children, young people and families under a Scripture Union banner, but it should prompt us to ask why we would use non-biblical language. The core ethos of Scripture Union places great trust in engaging with the Bible as the process by which children, young people and families will meet God. It's our first and last word.

In the Bible the most common way the resurrection is framed is this: **Jesus was raised from the dead** or **God raised Jesus from the dead** or **Jesus has been raised from the dead**.

Why is this an important phrase for the foundation of our faith?

In speaking of Jesus being raised by God, we make it clear that Jesus wasn't just an extraordinary man who did something unusual under his own strength. Jesus as a



human and as a person can never be separated from the divine nature; from God. When Jesus is born in Israel, God is with us; When Jesus is being tortured and crucified, God is suffering. When Jesus is raised from death, God's power is the active agent making this happen.

As we keep this language of 'Jesus was raised' and 'Jesus' resurrection' as our default expressions it should point us constantly back to Jesus' inseparability from God. 'Indivisible' divine and human nature: this is how the church thinkers who formed the creeds and the canon expressed it.

The resurrection of Jesus
Jesus was raised from the dead.

Let's try to use these preferred biblical terms. If children or young people are unfamiliar with the word resurrection, teach it to them – with no apology or condescension. People, especially children learn new words all the time, without difficulty.

"The word resurrection means 'rising again'. So when we talk about the Resurrection, we are meaning the time when Jesus was raised to life again. Saying that whole thing in one word: resurrection."

MARK 16:1-8

Jesus Is Alive

¹After the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary the mother of James bought some spices to put on Jesus' body. ²Very early on Sunday morning, just as the sun was coming up, they went to the tomb. ³On their way, they were asking one another, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance for us?" ⁴But when they looked, they saw that the stone had already been rolled away. And it was a huge stone!

⁵The women went into the tomb, and on the right side they saw a young man in a white robe sitting there. They were alarmed.

⁶The man said, "Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was nailed to a cross. God has raised him to life, and he isn't here. You can see the place where they put his body. ⁷Now go and tell his disciples, and especially Peter, that he will go ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you."

⁸When the women ran from the tomb, they were confused and shaking all over. They were too afraid to tell anyone what had happened.

DAY 9

TEAM STUDY

Session 9: Who will roll the stone away?

A new beginning can replace a terrible end

DEATH IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus is alive

Who will roll the stone away? What a question! The Roman soldiers are under orders not to, the disciples are too gutless, Joseph and Nicodemus are too grief stricken, so it's left to the women, who are not strong enough. Doesn't this sum up just about every predicament that we suffer, and that we need a major stone-rolling event to reverse the trajectory of death and bring us up into light and life again? Just as we were ready to write a eulogy and an epilogue, Jesus is up and off, back to the start again. Quick, get going! There's more following to be done. Jesus is ahead of us, and he's calling us to start a fresh with him. Get to the beach and find him. Whatever the past has been, he's coming round again, engines roaring with new life and second (third, fourth, fifth, whose counting?) chances. The women, the first to hear this invitation, were rightly freaked out, astonished and shaken. Perhaps, as we tell this good news we'll be shaken up too! Bring it on Jesus.

Inside the Tomb – Parachute

(Obviously, you will need a parachute to do this activity)

Do a few practice lifts and drops, and encourage teamwork. Practice raising the parachute and getting everyone inside sitting down, holding the edge behind them, like sitting inside the tomb. Read the text and do your study inside the tomb. At the end relish the experience of freedom and fresh air as you come out of the parachute. We actually get used to the temperature and clammy air inside the parachute, and it's only when we come out into the open air that we realise how stifling it was. It's like that with sin, which we acclimatise to so readily; but it nevertheless stifles us.

Spirals

Everyone joins hands in a circle. Then one person releases the hand of their neighbour and pulling the giant human rope behind, begins to walk around the outside of the circle. The other people who broke hands remain in position on the end person. The chain of people spirals around and around the stationary person, drawing people tighter and tighter in a coil until all the people, still holding hands, are wrapped around each other. The best way to unfold the spiral is from the centre. Still holding hands, the person in the middle ducks down, and the rope of people follows.

When you are all wound up have someone from outside the spiral read the two passages from Romans 5: 6-7 and Romans 6:5-11.

As the spiral unwinds emerging from the middle. say something like, "We are called by Jesus to resurrected new life, free from the tangles and strains of sin."

Romans 5:6 ⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 6:5-11 ⁵If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. ⁶For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— ⁷because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. ⁸Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Opening the Bible: eating your way through!

Great for supper time. (Check for allergies)

Give each person a copy of the bible passage (Mark 16) and explain that as a group you are going to eat your way through the story. Use the natural pauses as you distribute the edible items at each place as a time to check for understanding or ask questions, or clarify what is happening in the text, also encourage questions from the group.

¹After the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary (**3 Jelly Babies**) the mother of James bought some spices (**spicy bbq shapes**) to put on Jesus' body.

²Very early on Sunday morning, (**ticktock biscuit**) just as the sun was coming up, they went to the tomb.



³On their way, they were asking one another,
 "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance for us?"
⁴But when they looked, they saw that the stone had already been rolled away.
 And it was a huge stone! **(Choc Honey Comb)**
⁵The women went into the tomb,
 and on the right side they saw a young man in a white robe **(Milk Bottle)**
 sitting there. They were alarmed.
⁶The man said, "Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth,
 who was nailed to a cross. God has raised him to life, and he isn't here.
 You can see the place where they put his body.
⁷Now go and tell his disciples, **(11 Jelly babies)**
 and especially Peter, that he will go ahead of you to Galilee.
 You will see him there, just as he told you."
⁸When the women ran from the tomb, they were confused and shaking all over.
 They were too afraid to tell anyone what had happened.

Roll away stone prayers.

Revise each of the themes/stories from the beginning of your program in the following way.

Take one sheet of newspaper and revise the first day, asking one person to draw a boat or a storm cloud or waves in thick black texta on the paper. Write 'FEAR' in big letters as well.

Say something like 'Whatever we fear, Jesus is can deal with it. He dealt with death and came back to life again. He can take away our fear and give us faith'.

Now ask the person who drew, to scrunch up the paper into a ball.

And add a sticker saying 'FAITH' onto a brightly coloured gift box.

Take a second sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw the man lying on the mat. Ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of the healing of the paralytic. Write 'EVIL' in big letters as well.

Say something like, 'There is evil in the world because of people's choices, but Jesus can deal with it. He dealt with death and came alive again. He can replace our frustration with forgiveness'.

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'FORGIVENESS' onto the gift box.

Take a third sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw a hand reaching to touch Jesus' cloak; ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of the healing of the old woman and the little girl.

Write 'TROUBLE' in big letters as well.

Say something like, 'There are troubles that come to our lives, but Jesus can deal with it. He dealt with death and came alive again. When we are helpless he gives us hope'.

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'HOPE' to the gift box.

Take a fourth sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw a coin; ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of the tricky questions about money. Write 'MONEY' in big letters as well.

Say something like, 'Money sometimes starts to control people and we become greedy and selfish, but Jesus can deal with it. He dealt with death and came alive again. Loving God can replace greed.'

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'GOD' to the gift box.

Take a fifth sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw a child, ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of Jesus disciple's arguing. Write 'I'M THE GREATEST' or 'FAME' in big letters as well.

Say something like, 'Sometimes people try to make themselves important and famous and put other people down as they do, but Jesus can deal with it. He dealt with death and came alive again. When we are proud he gives us humility.'

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'HUMILITY' to the gift box.

Take a sixth sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw Jesus; ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of the healing of the old woman and the little girl. Write 'FAKES' in big letters as well.

Say something like, 'Sometimes it's hard to know who to trust; some people turn out not to be real friends, but Jesus can deal with it. He dealt with death and came alive again. No matter what anyone else thinks, Jesus is a great friend.'

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'FRIEND' to the gift box.

Take a seventh sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw a cross; ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of Jesus ' death. Write 'THE END' in big letters as well.

Say something like, 'No matter what happens to us, even the very worst thing we can't even imagine, Jesus can deal with it; he can deal with anything. He dealt with death and came alive again, and he gives us a new beginning' .

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'NEW START ' to the gift box.

Now you should have a huge paper 'Stone'. Ask the group what happened to the Stone keeping Jesus tomb closed. It rolled away. We are going to roll this stone full of all the stuff that Jesus can deal with away. Get your whole group around the 'stone'; everyone's hands on it somewhere, and count '1, 2, 3' and roll the stone away (make sure it goes along the ground, not through the air.)

Go back to the gift box and check out the stickers on it. Use this as the basis for prayer. Ask each person to choose something that connects for them and to make that into a prayer, either silent or shared.

DAY 9

EARLY CHILDHOOD

A new beginning can replace a terrible end

Summary: Jesus is alive

Bible: Mark 16:1-8 Jesus' Resurrection

Questions: Who will roll the stone away?

Song Line: Death Is Not The Boss

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Aromatic Playdough
- Never ending scarf box

2. Context:

- Open Shut Them
- Song: On and On
- Where are you?

3. Content:

- Story Time

4. Consider:

- Gingerbread Jesus – Dead and Alive!
- Bean Sprouts

5. Consequence:

- Choosing Box

CONNECT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Free Play

Playdough, blocks and quiet book corner can be offered every session for routine and stability, rotating a couple of other 'theme' activities for interest and variety. Offer a few or all of the following free-play options. Each of these can become a teaching/storytelling opportunity as well. After the Mat time, you may invite children back to one of these 'free-play' activities and allow them to tell/imagine the story with you...

AROMATIC PLAYDOUGH

You will need:

- Batch of Playdough divided into three parts
- 3 fragrances e.g. Vanilla essence, Lavender Oil
- 3 sturdy, clean, work surfaces
- 3 clean containers

In preparation, place a few drops of fragrance in each of the three lumps of playdough and work thoroughly. Roll each of the three lumps of playdough into 3-4 smaller balls and store all of the balls of the same fragrance in the one container.

With the children, invite them to choose a container and help them open it. The aroma should be initially quiet strong when they open up the container. Wonder with them about the smell. What does it remind them of? Is it a nice smell? Is it a cooking smell or a garden smell or a person smell?

Invite each person to take a ball of playdough and work with it in their hands in the usual way.

After a little while ask them to smell their hands – which will now smell like the playdough.

Open the other containers in the same way as the children are ready, or more children join – and enjoy the different smells.

Linking Lines:

These are lovely smells to sniff. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, there are some women who begin the day by going shopping for oils and powders that had beautiful smells like this. They had a special thing they wanted to do...I wonder what it was?

NEVER ENDING SCARF BOX

You will need:

- A4 sized box with lid
- 25(approx.) colourful scarves (silk/lightweight polyester)

Cut a small 3cm hole in the lid of the box, and another the same size on one side near the base. Tie all of the scarves corner on corner to form a continuous length. Place all of the super long scarf into the box, threading one end of the scarves out the side hole and, placing the lid on the box, the other end of the scarves up, out through the hole in the lid. Tie these two ends together. Pull a little more of the scarf length through.

Now the Box is ready for play. Invite a child to pull a scarf out of the box...

Linking Lines:

Where is the end? There is no end! It just keeps going. When Jesus dies, his friends thought it was the end, but it wasn't. God's love never ends.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Mat Time: Songs and Rhymes and Games

Use one or more of the familiar group songs or games to gather the group together and create a culture of listening and participating together. Encourage parents/carers to join in with their children.

SONG: ON AND ON

<https://www.snackmusic.com.au/songs/on-and-on>

See the video tutorial for actions.

OPEN SHUT THEM

Open shut them
Open shut them
Give a little clap
Open shut them
Open shut them
Lay them in your lap

Roll them Roll them
Roll them Roll them
Roll them way up high
Sprinkle Sprinkle
Sprinkle Sprinkle
Give a wave goodbye

Linking Lines:

Lots of great opening and shutting your hands! In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, after he had died they shut his tomb, with a stone - show me your shut hands - but when his friends came back later - it was open! - show me your open hands - The stone had been rolled away! Show me your rolling hands. Jesus friends were going to sprinkle spices and oils with beautiful smells on his body - show me your sprinkles - but Jesus wasn't dead anymore - he was gone - and a messenger man told them to leave and tell others. Show me you waving goodbye!

WHERE ARE YOU?

You will need:

- At least 3 cardboard boxes large enough for a child to hide in

Place the boxes in a row and show the group how they are all empty. Turn the boxes so that the openings are facing away from the group.

Explain that one person is going to hide in one of the boxes while everyone else face the other way.

Choose a hider, and ask everyone to turn away. Have a leader stand the direction the group is facing to keep their attention, while a second leader supervises the child choosing the hiding box.

Don't close the child in the box!

When they are ready, everyone turns around and looks at the backs of the empty boxes

Let the children volunteer to choose which box they think the hider is in.

One child says which box they guess, then go and check. If they are wrong, they wait on the other side, while another child has a turn. After two guesses – everyone can go around the other side of the boxes and see where they were hiding.

Repeat a few times.

An alternative is to hide a teddy in one of the boxes, which will be simpler than a wiggly human, but not as fun!

Linking Lines:

I'm glad we found everyone. You were great hidiers and good finders. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, three women who were friends of Jesus went looking for him, after he had died – and been put in a cave behind a rock. They didn't think it would be hard to find him. But it was! We'll hear more about that soon.

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Story Time

See 'Plasticine Story files' for visuals.

Ask another leader or parent to hold the pictures while you use your whole body in full dynamic expression in storytelling. Invite participation.

STORY TIME

This is a lively rhyme with some repetition that you can use to actively engage young children.

Before telling the whole story, prepare the group for these ways of participating

Practice some actions for

- *Listen Up*
- *Waking up*
- *Following up*
- *Picking up*
- *Going up*
- *Walking up*
- *Turning up*
- *Looking up*
- *Jesus up*
- *Shaken up*
- *What's up*

Practice an action for 'Resurrection' (bob down and spring up – hands in the air)

Repeat this a couple of times between some of the verses as well.

Go through the names of the women

Mary -Mag (Short for Mary Magdalene – some of the children might have 'short for' version of their names e.g. Beth = Elizabeth; Sam = Samuel)

Mary-Jo (Mary the mother of Jesus, she was known by who her son was)

Sal – short for Salome.

Establish them as the characters of the story, and that they were the only friends of Jesus still left.

Practice holding up 1 - 2 - 3 fingers when their names are mentioned in the rhyme.

Make the 'three' women move across in front of you towards your other hand in a fist as the grave.

Story:

Listen up here's a story
If you're got a little time
Gonna have you jumping
It's the Resurrection Rhyme

Waking up Three women
In the morning time
They start the day with sadness
It's the Resurrection Rhyme

Following up Jesus
Was how they'd spent their time
But he died on a cross
It's the Resurrection Rhyme

Mary Mag and Mary Jo
And Sal are the three
They're the women who go

And the women who see

Picking up their baskets
It's early shopping time
Buy some sweetly spices
It's the Resurrection Rhyme

Going up to the grave
Its body wrapping time
Feeling sad for Jesus
It's the Resurrection Rhyme

Walking up the city road
Wondering all the time
how they'll roll back a rock
It's the Resurrection Rhyme

Mary Mag and Mary Jo
And Sal are the three
They're the women who go
And the women who see

Turning up at the tomb
What a shocking time
Jesus' grave is open
It's the Resurrection Rhyme

Looking up see a man
Messaging time
Jesus is alive
It's the Resurrection Rhyme

Mary Mag and Mary Jo
And Sal are the three
They're the women who go
And the women who see

Jesus up and alive
It's good news telling time
His friends need to know
It's the Resurrection Rhyme

Shaken up and amazed
Both at the same time
The women are running
It's the Resurrection Rhyme

Mary Mag and Mary Jo

And Sal are the three
They're the women who go
And the women who see

What's up next?
Meeting Jesus time
Alive now forever
It's the Resurrection Rhyme

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Exploring in Craft

Some children will prefer to go back to free play in this time, and not continue with a structured craft. This is normal and a valid choice.

GINGERBREAD JESUS – DEAD AND ALIVE!

You will need:

- Gingerbread man biscuits – at least one per person
- White icing, thickly made into a rollable texture
- Cinnamon – in several pepper containers
- Edible Gold sprinkles
- Paper plates
- Spoon

Give each person a gingerbread 'Jesus'. On a paper plate. Explain that they are going to decorate one side as Jesus when he died and was wrapped in cloths and sprinkled with spices, and the other side as Jesus Alive again forever.

Scoop a small piece of rollable icing for each child and show them how to roll it into 'snakes' and then flatten it onto the gingerbread Jesus. Give out extra pieces to add as they are needed to criss-cross over the body. Then show the group how to shake a little cinnamon onto the biscuit. Encourage them to sniff the cinnamon and enjoy the smell.

Turning the gingerbread Jesus over scoop another small piece of icing for each person and show them how to roll it into a circle and press it into Jesus' chest. Shake out a little quantity of gold sprinkles onto each person's plate so they can add the sprinkles to the icing on Jesus' chest.

Linking Lines:

You can tell today's story with your Gingerbread Jesus – Jesus died – and was buried and this is the way his friends expected to find him. Instead he was alive again. Nothing – not even death – is more powerful than Jesus.

BEAN SPROUTS

You will need:

- Mung Beans - dried
- Mung Beans – pre-soaked overnight and rinsed
- Mung Beans -sprouted (takes 2-3 days)
- Water
- Spoons
- Jars (enough for one per child – clear glass or plastic jars are ok.)
- Rubber bands
- Loose weave cloth or clean (new) wash cloth, cut into squares to fit well over opening of the jars

Show your group the dried mung beans and let them hold a few in their hands. Discuss how they feel – dry, and solid, not growing, not alive.

Show your group a prepared jar of sprouted mung beans, and let them hold a few in their hands.

Discuss how the beans are now – explaining that three days ago they were hard and dry and solid just like the dry beans just examined.

Give each person a jar, and invite them to spoon some pre-soaked mung beans into their jar (about 1cm depth or less)

Help them cover the jar with a piece of cloth and secure with rubber band.

When this step is complete, peel back the cloth and pour a little water into the top of each person's jar, resealing the cloth afterwards.

Invite each person to carefully tip their jar away from them and let the water drain onto the ground.

Tell the group that they will need to water their seeds like this twice a day. And then in a few days their seeds will sprout and grow like the ones in your jar.

After a few more days of watering, the beans can be eaten (only a few at a time, unless cooked into a soup or stir-fry) or planted in the garden to grow into larger plants.

Linking Lines:

Jesus friends saw him die, and buried. They didn't expect that he would be raised to life again, but after a night and a day and a night – almost three days, he was alive again! God brings everything to life – like these seeds – and Jesus life shows God's amazing power, and that his love never ends.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER **CONSEQUENCE**

Choosing Box

At the end of the session each day, remind everyone of the conversation starter page and bring out a 'choosing' box and invite each person (including parents and carers and bystanders) to choose something from the box to take home to remind them of the time together today.

Encourage taking the item home to talk about in the family, or to hold quietly later when they want to remember the Story of Jesus from the Bible.

CHOOSING BOX

In the Choosing Box today: Round Stone

You will need:

- Round smooth stones – e.g., river pebbles or unpolished pebbles one per person

Linking Lines:

To remind us of our story, take a stone. This is for you to take home. I wonder how this might remind you of something in the story.

Maybe it reminds you of the rock they used to close the tomb, but how the women found it empty because Jesus was risen. Or maybe it reminds you of how this was a hard and sad time for Jesus friends.

Perhaps you might hold this stone when you feel sad, and pray – Jesus knows all about very sad and terrible things, but is always alive and shows us God's love that goes on and on. That's something to hold on to. Solid as a rock.

DAY 9

PRIMARY

Session 9: Who will roll the stone away?

A new beginning can replace a terrible end

DEATH IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus is alive

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- 'Dead Body' Outlines
- Rock Hockey
- Freaky Dead Ants
- Spirals

2. Context:

- Sunrise, Spices, Rock
- Mummy Mummy: Toilet Paper Wrapping
- Dead body wrapping

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: What has Happened Here?
- Opening the Bible: Bible Scrapping.
- Opening the Bible: Eating your way through!
- Opening the Bible: Storyboard Cards

4. Consider:

- Colours of New Life Replacing Darkness - Three Day Project – Day Three
- Rock Art
- Grave Stones
- Feeling Box
- Collage Plaque
- Suncatcher Pictures

5. Consequence:

- New Beginning Prayer Chair
- Roll Away Stone Prayers
- Empty Tomb Nature Hunt

CONNECT...

CONNECT | CONTEXT | CONTENT | CONSIDER | CONSEQUENCE

'DEAD BODY' OUTLINES

You will need:

- Large (body sized) piece of sturdy card
- Markers or thick crayons in different colours



One at a time invite each person to lie down on the card 'as still as if they were dead' while their outline is traced by another person.

Coach respectful and careful treatment of bodies, checking in with the person lying down that they are ok and feeling comfortable. Remind them that they can take a break if they need to, so that each person knows and feels that they are still in control of their own body.

If each person adopts a different position, this activity will be more effective. You should end up with one piece of card with about half a dozen outlines juxtaposed on it. See if the group can identify each 'body' from the outline.

Linking Lines:

Well done lying as still as a dead person to have your outline traced – you did well and showed care for one another's bodies in this activity. Yesterday we heard about Jesus' terrible death. That would normally be the end of the story of a person's life. When there's an accident, the police sometimes trace around the body on the ground, before it is taken away, so they can see what had happened. They can do this, because they know that the body isn't going to change position or move. It's dead. But today, we'll see how when Jesus' friends came back to where the body was left. They wanted to show care and respect for Jesus' body even after he was dead. But – when they got there, it had changed position! It wasn't even there.'

ROCK HOCKEY

You will need:

- Scrunched up taped up newspaper in a ball shape as the 'rock'
- Two newspapers rolled lengthwise and taped securely to make a hockey sticks
- Two cardboard boxes or plastic tubs as goals

Make two teams in lines to form the borders of your playing field. Space the teams out as much as you need to in order to create a length of playing field.

Set a cardboard box at each end as the goals.

Number off each team, starting at the opposite ends, and designate which goal end is which team. Lay the sticks down on front of the 'rock' in the middle of the space.

Explain the playing rules and demonstrate in slow motion with two leaders – this is both really helpful for children who aren't used to these kinds of games and seeing it happen to fast is scary, and also quite hilarious.

Call a number; the person designated that number from each team run in and



pick up a stick and start trying to hit the 'rock' into their goal. After a minute or two of play, call another number to change players, even if no one has scored yet. Keep changing players and keep the game lively.

Linking Lines:

That was a lot of fun – you ran fast and tried hard to keep up with that rolling rock! It was hard to keep under control. And there were some surprising moments. Well done jumping in and playing well together. As we continue the Story of Jesus from the Bible today there's running, there's some surprises and a rock that doesn't stay under control.

FREAKY DEAD ANTS

You will need:

- Tarp or ground mat

In this version of dead ants, the whole group lies on the ground. One person is the spotter. Choose a child to be a spotter, so that as a leader you can supervise the whole group and keep people engaged. The challenge is not to make people move, but for the dead ants on the ground to change position without the spotter seeing them do it. If they are seen moving they are 'out' and stay on the mat, but sit up, making it more challenging for the spotter to see.

Linking Lines:

Great job to all you not so dead bodies, and to our clever spotter. Dead bodies are not supposed to move. As we continue the Story of Jesus from the Bible today, some of Jesus' friends discover that his dead body has moved, and they wonder what the deal is with that? Perhaps we might wonder along with them too.

SPIRALS

You will need:

- Large open space
- Leader at each end of the spiral

This activity works best with a larger number of people 20+, so co-ordinate with other groups to do this

Everyone joins hands in a circle. Two leaders should be standing together in



the circle, holding hands. The leaders release hands while everyone stays connected and one leader, begins to walk around the outside of the circle, pulling the giant human chain with them. The other leader who broke hands remains in position as the end person. The chain of people spirals around and around the stationary person, drawing people tighter and tighter in a coil until all the people - still holding hands are wrapped around each other.

The best way to unfold the spiral is from the centre. Still holding hands, the person in the middle ducks down, and the 'chain' of people follows.

Linking Lines:

Great work staying connected – we see in Jesus life how connected he was to people, and that the things he did weren't for himself, but for others, including for us. We are all connected into the story of Jesus' life and death and coming alive, because he did that to show us that even death is not the boss. We are going to start with the person in the middle, and they are going to bob down and carefully crawl out from under the all of you – and make their way out of the tomb – staying connected – keep holding hands until everyone is out.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

SUNRISE, SPICES, ROCK

This game works like 'Paper-Scissors-Rock', but with the key elements of the story.

Invite your group to pair up and play a quick trial run of paper-scissors-rock which many will already be familiar with. Then introduce the new actions and words:

Sunrise – 'Jazz hands' beginning side by side in front of you and moving up and outwards

Spices – both hands out in front of you 'sprinkling' action

Rock – fist clenched on top of clenched fist

Allow some practice time then invite the group to pair up again and play using the new words.

Rock beats Sunrise – Rock rolled away before sunrise

Spices beats rock – Women with Spices didn't have to move the rock

Sunrise beats spices – Sunrise happened, then the women with Spices came

Linking Lines:

What a great bunch of champions you are – so many combinations, so many winners! So many times you did the same action as your partner. Great fun. After all that, I wonder if we've got the order that things happened straight – the rock rolls away, the sun rises, the women arrive with spices at the tomb. You've got it! But there is more to explore in this story...

MUMMY MUMMY: TOILET PAPER WRAPPING**You will need:**

- 2 rolls of toilet paper
- Container for collecting up the paper – see consider activity
- Timer

Divide your group into two teams. Ask each team for a volunteer to be wrapped up in toilet paper; or have a leader take this role for each team.

Prepare the teams with instructions to wrap the volunteer/leader as quickly and as completely as they can. Emphasise that it is both a race against time, but also of quality, so they should be careful to try not to break the toilet paper.

Set the timer and go!

When the teams are finished, inspect the wrapping and award gazillions of points for finishing first and gazillions of points for team work and gazillions of points for neatness.

Linking Lines:

You worked together wonderfully to wrap up the body! Thanks for taking care and showing great teamwork and respect as you did that. It was pretty challenging a live body that moved a bit. In many cultures and times in history, dead bodies were wrapped in strips of cloth before they were buried. This has happened to Jesus' dead body at the end of the story yesterday, and today we hear about his friends and family coming to finish doing this, and adding spices and oil into the cloth.

DEAD BODY WRAPPING**You will need:**

- Roll of toilet paper
- Strips of yellow/golden cellophane
- Container or dry sand
- Old pillow with outline of a person drawn in permanent marker



Explain to your group that you are going to practice wrapping your 'pillow man' in the way that dead bodies were wrapped in many middle eastern countries 2000 years ago – at the time Jesus died.

The toilet paper is for long strips of white cloth, which will be layered round and round the body. In between the cloth they poured oil – which the yellow slippery cellophane is going to represent. As well as the oil, spices were sprinkled on the body and all through the wrappings to make the body not smell so bad – little handfuls of sand is what we can use for this.

Encourage team work, let people choose which parts of the process they would like to do.

Linking Lines:

It takes a lot of care and patience to do the ancient process of wrapping a body for burial – great work team! We've had a lot of fun doing this, but imagine if it was your friend and you were really sad as you were doing this job. I think this body is looking well wrapped and oiled and spiced now. In our story today we pick up after Jesus' dead body has been taken from the cross at evening time on a Friday, and there wasn't too much time to do all the layers of wrapping that were usually done. The next day Saturday or Sabbath was a day when no one was allowed to work and everyone rested, so it was early Sunday morning when Jesus friends and family went back to the tomb with spices to continue the wrapping.

CONTENT...

CONNECT CONTEXT **CONTENT** CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

OPENING THE BIBLE: WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE?

See **Appendix 9.1 & 9.2** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Three sets of foot prints
Make these by copying the template in Appendix 9.2 on to brown card. Cut the smaller shapes (ball and heel of the foot and toes) from sand paper and stick on the larger shape. Or, if pressed for time, spread glue over the larger shape, sprinkle with sand or dirt and allow to dry. Ten of each of the right and left would be a great number, more can only help!
- Spilt spices
Leave some piles of strong smelling spices (eg: cumin, cardamom, nutmeg) on a silk scarf.

- Sign
(on the ground; a bit mangled) DO NOT MOVE THIS STONE: DEAD BODY INSIDE
- Body shaped pile of cloths
- Alfoil/cardboard silhouette of a person:
Make a life sized silhouette of a person covered in Alfoil: Message written across the body "Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was nailed to a cross. God has raised him to life, and he isn't here. You can see the place where they put his body."
- Question Marks (coloured card cut-outs) on the ground all around and leading off down the road.
- Sign post
Set up a sign post that points to City of Jerusalem (West) Galilee Beach (North) Mount of Olives (East) Egypt (South)
- Leader on the Beach with Bible

**NB: if you don't have a beach handy, create one with a blue tarp, some hessian and (if you're adventurous) a bucket of sand*

**A team parent, director or co-ordinator could step into this role if you are short on leaders*

Before the session begins set out the clues along a safe track through and around your gathering area. Remember that your group should always remain in full view of the rest of your program.

Give each person a copy of the text (print from Appendix 9.1)

Linking Lines:

Today we are going on a quest – a question walk - as a group. There are some questions around the Bible story and there will be some mystery clues to look for that will help us think about the questions together. We can ask other questions together as we go along, as well.

Stop #1

How many sets of foot prints are there?

Who do they belong to?

Which direction are they heading?

Clue: Footprints

Stop #2

What is that smell?

What was this smelly stuff going to be used for?

Why didn't it get used?

Clue: Spilled Spices

Mark Chapter 16

After the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary the mother of James

bought some spices to put on Jesus' body. Very early on Sunday morning, just as the sun was coming up, they went to the tomb.



Stop #3

What is missing?

Where should it be?

Who could have moved it?

Clue: Sign 'Do not move this stone: dead body inside'

On their way, they were asking one another, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance for us?" But when they looked, they saw that the stone had already been rolled away. And it was a huge stone!

Stop #4

Who is this mysterious shining person?

What does he have to say?

Clue: Alfoil/cardboard silhouette of a person

The women went into the tomb, and on the right side they saw a young man in a white robe sitting there. They were alarmed. The man said, "Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was nailed to a cross.

Stop #5

Is anything still wrapped up in the strips of cloth?

Clue: Body shaped pile of cloths

God has raised him to life, and he isn't here. You can see the place where they put his body.

Stop #6

Where is Jesus?

On the road?

In the tomb?

Clue: Question Marks

Now go and tell his disciples, and especially Peter, that he will go ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you."

Stop #7

Where would you go to find Jesus from the directions given to the women?

Clue: Sign post (North/South/East/West)

When the women ran from the tomb, they were confused and shaking all over. They were too afraid to tell anyone what had happened.

The clues will eventually lead to the 'beach'.

The leader on the 'beach' [real or simulated] greets the group as they come to the end of their questing. This person should be ready to hear the answers



to their mysteries and also to prompt further questions about what this means about Jesus.

Linking Lines:

Well done on following the questions of the final chapter of Question Mark. Jesus' friends did find him, right where he said he'd be. In Galilee, their home, fully alive! They talked with him and ate with him and walked with him, right there where they lived. Jesus was alive again – he had not been beaten even by death – because he is God. Jesus is still alive today – he never died again and never will. That's why we can fully trust him. And keep asking him our questions. After talking with his friends for a while – Jesus said goodbye, and became the invisible God he had always been. But his friends knew he was with them, just as we know he's with us today. We can talk to Jesus anytime, anywhere.

OPENING THE BIBLE: BIBLE SCRAPPING

You will need:

- Large print copy of Mark 16:1-8 on A3 paper, stuck in the middle of an A1+ piece of card or butcher's paper on firm backing, leaving a wide margin all the way around.
- Markers
- Wide assortment of various natural and manufactured crafting material/bits and pieces:
 - e.g. rocks, spices, strips of cloth, leaves, goggle eyes, yellow & orange cellophane, gold tinsel, wire, corks, plasticine, pipe cleaners, (& general crafty junk) and textas.

Invite your group to sit in a circle around the printed Bible text.

Set out the assortment of materials to create visual responses around the text.

Explain that you will tell the story from the Bible slowly – or invite those who would like to, to read some lines.

As the group listens invite them to try and imagine the story in their minds. When you have read it through once, read it again, and this time invite the group to choose any of the materials to stick around the edge of the story to illustrate something from the story.

Encourage choosing something in the story that interests them to make or draw; perhaps one of the characters, or a map of where it happened, or write a question they are thinking about. After the second reading, survey what each person has begun to do.

After giving some time to the creative process, read the story a third time



and mention each of the creative expressions the group has done into your reading.

E.g.: “After the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary...*look at our three beautiful women that Sally is making with their coloured head scarves.*”

When you have finished take a photo of the illustrated text as a reminder of the story.

Linking Lines:

You have done a wonderful job of making the story come alive with your creativity, using all the things you could see and touch and feel. You know, after the women told Jesus’ other friends and followers about the empty grave and the stone and the messenger, they had trouble understanding and didn’t really take it in. In some other parts of the Bible, there are stories that come after this one, and Jesus other friends see and touch Jesus - alive again for real: it helped them believe what the women had said had happened.

OPENING THE BIBLE: EATING YOUR WAY THROUGH!

**Check for allergies and make sure there is a non-food option activity that a child can join.*

You will need:

- Signage and communication notes to let parents know that your activity includes food
- Copies of the Bible passage for each person.
- Small paper bag for each person
- Jelly Babies
- Spicy BBQ Shapes
- Tick Tock biscuits
- Choc-coated honeycomb
- Milk Bottle lollies

Give each person a copy of the Bible passage (Mark 16) and a small paper bag. Explain that as a group you are going to eat your way through the story – and their paper bag is for collecting the foods in.

Invite those who would like to read a short section to do so, or read the sections yourself, if there aren’t confident readers in the group

Pause at the places indicated below to distribute the food – the first time through have the children collect the foods in their bags, and ask them to wait to eat them in a minute.



Use the natural pauses as you distribute the edible items at each place as a time to check for understanding or ask questions, or clarify what is happening in the text; also encourage questions from the group.

After reading through once, and distributing the foods, invite the group to look through their collection and tell the story back to you, using the food items as prompts.

Finally, read through again – asking different members of the group to remind you of the food that corresponds to each phrase, and allow them to eat whichever items they want, or save them and take them home.

¹After the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary (**3 Jelly Babies**) the mother of James bought some spices (**spicy BBQ shapes**) to put on Jesus' body.

²Very early on Sunday morning, (**Tick-Tock biscuit**) just as the sun was coming up, they went to the tomb. ³On their way, they were asking one another,

"Who will roll the stone away from the entrance for us?"

⁴But when they looked, they saw that the stone had already been rolled away. And it was a huge stone! (**Choc Honeycomb**)

⁵The women went into the tomb, and on the right side they saw a young man in a white robe (**Milk Bottle**) sitting there. They were alarmed.

⁶The man said, "Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was nailed to a cross. God has raised him to life, and he isn't here. You can see the place where they put his body.

⁷Now go and tell his disciples, (**at least 11 Jelly babies – spread these around the group**)

and especially Peter, that he will go ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you."

⁸When the women ran from the tomb, they were confused and shaking all over.

They were too afraid to tell anyone what had happened.

Linking Lines:

I've really enjoyed eating our way through the story of Jesus' resurrection – yum!!! It was like a party. At the end of the story the women are confused and afraid by the empty grave – could Jesus really be alive? When they found Jesus alive – what a great celebration that was! Death is not the boss. Best party ever.

OPENING THE BIBLE: STORYBOARD CARDS

See **Appendix 9.3** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Story board cards from App 9.3, printed, cut and laminated or backed with card.

Shuffle the cards and deal them all out equally among the group.

Each person may look at their own cards.

Explain that you will read the passage from the bible and if someone recognises that they have the card that matches that part of the story, they call 'I'm part of the Story' and place their card in the middle.

As the story continues it should build up the pictures in the correct sequence.

If a card is missed on the way, don't go back. Read the story again, and it can be added. Read the story as many times as it takes to get all of the cards out in the correct order; it might only take one time, which is ok.

Once all the cards are in place, invite the person who has placed down each card to tell what is happening in that part of the story.

Linking Lines:

You were great at putting the story cards in order and telling the story of Jesus' resurrection yourselves. This is a great story that starts in the Bible – in the book called 'Mark' - but keeps going on and on – as Jesus is alive today and we are part of his great story. A story in which death is not the Boss.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Choose one or two of these activities to give space to your group to have thinking and processing time for the Bible story. Invite them to talk about the way they can connect with the story using the 'Has This Ever Happened To You?' prompts suggested below.

Be respectful and careful not to over direct the children's responses or to try to turn the experience of the Bible story into a comprehension exercise or an exegesis session or 'teaching' time. In missional Bible engagement we are praying that children, young people and families will meet Jesus, and encounter God, and we trust the Holy Spirit to be working as we make opportunity for this and come alongside to share in the process.

Has This Ever Happened To You?

- *Something terrible has turned into something great?*
- *You got up really early and saw the sunrise?*
- *You have cooked with spices and smelled their strong smell*
- *You have been given a new start?*

COLOURS OF NEW LIFE REPLACING DARKNESS – THREE DAY PROJECT – DAY THREE

You will need:

- Blank white paper or card
- Bright coloured paints
- Brushes and jars
- Tub of soapy water, towel, drop sheet
- Black crayon
- Wooden skewers or popsticks split in half

Day 1. (Yesterday): With brightly coloured watery paints, paint pictures of the life of Jesus ... Completely cover the Sheet of paper with paint.

Day 2. (Today): Cover the page entirely in black crayon.

Day 3. (Tomorrow): Scratch out the words 'Jesus is risen' and a picture of the empty tomb, allowing the colour to show through. Surround these words with extras patterning so that more of the colour is seen.

Linking Lines:

Today we have heard more of the Story of Jesus from the Bible. We might have thought that his death – such a sad and terrible story yesterday might have been the end. We covered over all the bright colourful paintings of Jesus' life with black. But today we hear that death was not the end for Jesus, death is not the boss. Jesus was raised to life again – and his life goes on and on now. As we write 'Jesus is alive', scratching away the black crayon we can see Jesus beautiful life, full of love for everyone again showing through.

ROCK ART**You will need:**

- Polished or unpolished river stones – unpolished are much cheaper and show the contrast of rough stone and smooth paint to good effect. They come in larger sizes and can be easier to paint than the polished kind.
- Paints, thickly mixed
- Glitter (optional)
- Small brushes
- Tub of soapy water, drop sheet, towel



- Scrap pieces of paper to name and rest rocks on to dry and transport home
- Coloured plasticine (Alternative)

Give a rock a new start!

Give each person a fair sized rock. Smooth, but not polished will be the easiest to paint. Smock up, and have some soapy water and a towel to hand, and work on a disposable surface (Newspaper is still the classic eco-friendly choice here). Provide paints and brushes, perhaps in fluoro or glitter colours. Glitter can also be added after painting, while the paint is still wet.

Alternatively, use smooth or polished river stones, but decorate with modelling clay/plasticine. Only small amounts of plasticine are needed but a variety of colours will work best. Darker stones with brightly coloured clay is especially effective. Add rainbow stripes, leafy and flowery vines, spots, swirls, faces or animal legs/tails/antennae etc.

Linking Lines:

You've made these rocks look fantastic – you've given them a new start. I am thinking about the stone that was used to close up Jesus tomb – a grave stone, a death rock. When Jesus was raised to life again and came out of the tomb, the stone was moved away. I wonder what happened to it? Now it wasn't needed as a death rock? In one of the other books of the Bible that tells this story, the messenger in white that tells the women Jesus is alive sits on the stone! It becomes a messenger stone-throne. The stone wasn't the only thing that was given a new start when Jesus came alive again – Jesus resurrection means a new life and second chances for everyone.

GRAVE STONES

You will need:

- White clay (kept in a large airtight container with a moist sponge)
- Wire for cutting
- Working surfaces (eg Masonite boards, 2 or 4 litre plastic container lids, laminated A4 card)
- Wooden skewers or split popsticks
- Scrap card or paper for naming and transporting home

Using the wire, cut each person a block ~ 5x10 cm of clay. Demonstrate how to smooth and shape the clay into a tombstone shape, perhaps with an arched top. Give time and acknowledgement to the sensory experience of working the clay – that is excellent processing time, and opens up deeper conversation.

With a tooth pick, the words JESUS - NOT HERE - RISEN can be carved or dotted into the clay. Other decorations can also be added around the words.



Linking Lines:

When the women who were friends of Jesus found the grave stone rolled away from the tomb they weren't sure what had happened – it left them wondering, afraid, and with questions about Jesus. Sometimes being a friend of Jesus is exciting, sometimes scary and sometimes it sets you wondering. As you make your grave stone from clay and write the words 'Jesus – Not Here – Risen' you might have some wonderings about Jesus too. This is a time you can wonder quietly or share your thoughts out loud.

FEELING BOX**You will need:**

- 20x30x30 cm cardboard box (e.g. wine or A4 paper boxes are ideal)
- River stone, sandpaper, sponge, large nails, cloth strips, small plastic cup, twig of leaves

Make a 'Feeling Box' by firmly gluing the following textural items to the base and walls of a cardboard box. Cut a fist sized hole close to the bottom, and firmly seal the top.

Invite people, one at a time to put their hand in the box and feel around. When everyone has had a turn, ask people about their experience.

Ask each person to specifically describe what they felt. Allow the variation, uncertainty and also certainty and conviction, to be expressed. Ask if they can match up the thing can feel with something in the story of Jesus death and resurrection?

Linking Lines:

This is how it was for the friends and followers of Jesus as they heard about the empty tomb. Even when some of the disciples met Jesus, they still were not sure what it all meant.

COLLAGE PLAQUE

See **Appendix 9.4** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Sturdy card – either one large pieces or enough smaller pieces for each person in your group to have one.
- App 9.4 copied onto an A3 sheet and backed with card, or on A4 if doing one for each person in the group. This will be more effective if you cut around the outline of the words – but his step isn't essential.
- Strong craft glue, containers and brushes or popsticks to apply it with

- Containers of small stones, spices, small nails*, strips of white cloth, small fake flowers/leaves, glitter

This activity can be done as a whole group on one large 'body sized' card, or if you are near the beach, by writing in the sand, or as an individual activity distributing a

"Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was nailed to a cross. God has raised him to life, and he isn't here. You can see the place where they put his body"

Use prepared sheet from Appendix 9.4 with verse written in body outline. Provide containers of small stones, spices, small nails, strips of white cloth, small fake flowers/leaves and strong craft glue. Children glue patches or patterns of any of the materials around the body shape.

Alternatively, if you are near a beach, make a full body size outline, by drawing around a person in the sand. Gather larger stones, garden matter, and spices (**Don't use small nails in this version, as they will be too hard to remove from the environment afterwards – however half a dozen really large nails would be effective.*)

Linking Lines:

Haven't we seen some wonderful creativity here!? It's been great seeing the way each of you have filled the outline of the body shape with different things that are reminders of the Jesus' story.

SUN CATCHER PICTURES

See **Appendix 9.5** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Plastic transparency sheets prepared with pictures from App 9.5
- (set of three per person, cut into separate pictures)
- Coloured permanent markers (e.g. Sharpies) or cotton buds and glass paints
- Hole punch
- Fishing line
- Piece of A4 black paper per person
- Steady working surface (eg clipboards, Masonite boards, laminated A4 card)

Give each person in the group a set of three transparency pictures and invite them to add colour using the markers or glass paint. As they are colouring, work around the group to help them punch a hole in the top and bottom of each picture and thread them together vertically with fishing line, knotting at



the bottom hole of each piece to hold in place. Tie a loop at the tip so that it can be hung in a window to catch the sun.

Linking Lines:

Your colouring is making these story-pictures really beautiful. They show how the story of Jesus turns from a terrible ending into a surprising new start. If you lay the pictures on a piece of dark paper, it's hard to see the story at all. When you hang the pictures up in the sunlight it shows the full story. The women who went to the tomb couldn't see anything hopeful about their friend Jesus' death – but in the sunrise they discovered more of Jesus story- that he was alive showing his power over death – that he really was God among us. You can find a bright sunny window or space to hang your pictures at home and be reminded that Jesus is still alive and his story goes on – inviting more people to be his friend.

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

EMPTY TOMB NATURE HUNT

You will need:

- Outdoor space with trees and plants
- A container to collect your findings

Go for a walk with your group looking for seed pods that have opened up and released their seeds to grow into new living plants. Make a collection together. Then sit in a circle and examine the pods carefully noticing the way their different parts and the way they work.

Extension activities:

- Use the pods to spell out the word ALIVE in large letters in a clear space.

Linking Lines:

Seed pods that have opened up and let go of their seeds to grow into a new plant remind me of the empty tomb in Jesus story. Before his death, Jesus himself spoke about his life being like a seed that would fall into the ground and come to life again, bringing life to others.

ROLL AWAY STONE PRAYERS

You will need:

- Old Newspapers
- Stickers with the following words written, one on each sticker
 - FAITH
 - FORGIVENESS
 - HOPE
 - GOD
 - HUMILITY
 - FAKES
 - THE END

Revise seven of the themes/stories from the beginning of your program in the following way:

Take one sheet of newspaper and revise the first day, asking one person to draw a boat or a storm cloud or waves in thick black texta on the paper. Write 'Fear' in big letters as well. Say something like *'Whatever we fear, Jesus is can deal with it -he dealt with death and came again...he can take away our fear and give us faith.'*

Now ask the person who drew to scrunch up the paper into a ball. And add a sticker saying 'FAITH' onto a brightly coloured gift box.

Take a second sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw the man lying on the mat, ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of the healing of the paralytic. Write 'evil' in big letters as well. Say something like... *' There is evil in the world because of people's choices, but Jesus can deal with it – he dealt with death and came alive again... he can replace our frustration with forgiveness.'*

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'Forgiveness' onto the gift box.

Take a third sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw a hand reaching to touch Jesus' cloak; ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of the healing of the old woman and the little girl. Write 'Trouble' in big letters as well.

Say something like... *'There are troubles that come to our lives, but Jesus can deal with it – he dealt with death and came alive again...when we are helpless he gives us hope.'*

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'HOPE' to the gift box

Take a fourth sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw a coin; ask questions and give reminder s to revise the story of the tricky questions about money. Write 'Money' in big letters as well.

Say something like... *'Money sometimes starts to control people and we become greedy and selfish, but Jesus can deal with it – he dealt with death and came alive again...Loving God can replace greed.'*



Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'GOD' to the gift box.

Take a fifth sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw a child, ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of Jesus' disciple's arguing.

Write 'I'm the Greatest' or 'Fame' in big letters as well.

Say something like... *'Sometimes people try to make themselves important and famous and put other people down as they do, but Jesus can deal with it – he dealt with death and came alive again....when we are proud he gives us humility.'*

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'HUMILITY' to the gift box.

Take a sixth sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw Jesus; ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of Jesus asking the disciples who people say that he is and then telling them what will happen to him. Write 'FAKES' in big letters as well.

Say something like... *'Sometimes it's hard to know who to trust, some people turn out not to be real friends, but Jesus can deal with it – he dealt with death and came alive again....no matter what anyone else thinks, Jesus is a great friend.'*

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'FRIEND' to the gift box.

Take a seventh sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw a cross; ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of Jesus' death.

Write 'The End' in big letters as well.

Say something like... *'No matter what happens to us, even the very worst thing we can't even imagine, Jesus can deal with it; he can deal with anything – he dealt with death and came alive again ... and he gives us a new beginning.'*

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'NEW START' to the gift box.

Now you should have a huge paper 'Stone'. Ask the group what happened to the Stone keeping Jesus' tomb closed – it rolled away. We are going to roll this stone full of all the stuff that Jesus can deal with away. Get your whole group around the 'stone', everyone's hands on it somewhere, and count '1, 2, 3' and roll the stone away (make sure it goes along the ground, not through the air.) You might like to organise a spare person – a team parent /co-ordinator - to pick it up and put it in the bin for you. Go back to the gift box and check out the stickers on it. Use this to pray and say thank you to Jesus. Ask each person to pick one thing they are thankful for, and to call that thing out in the prayer.

NEW BEGINNING PRAYER CHAIR

You will need:

- Old metal or plastic chair
- Tarp and newspapers
- Bright coloured/Fluoro spray paints
 - if you are uncomfortable with using aerosol spray cans make up paint in pump action spray bottles (eg window cleaner or bathroom products)
 - for younger ages use ordinary acrylic paint with brushes

Linking Lines:

See this chair? It's had a tough life, and I found it abandoned where no one wanted it. But we are going to give it a new beginning, spraying it with bright coloured paints.

Lead your group in taking turns one at a time, to spray blobs or squiggles on the chair, gradually transforming it and giving it a new start, a second chance.

When each person's had a few turns, pause and say:

Now we are going to make this a prayer chair. This time as you have your turn, pray while you spray and ask Jesus to help you with making a new start, or ask him to forgive you, or ask him for hope or help, or ask him to take away your fear, or ask him to be your friend.'

When everyone has had a turn, the leader finishes by praying 'AMEN'.

Possible prayers

1. Help me make a new start in something that's gone wrong
2. Forgive me for the things I wish I hadn't done
3. Please give me hope
4. Please I need help
5. Take away my fear
6. Please be my friend

DAY 9

TEENS

Session 9: Who will roll the stone away?

A new beginning can replace a terrible end

DEATH IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus is alive

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- I Didn't Expect To See You

2. Context:

- Ha Game

3. Content:

- Opening the Bible: Eating Your Way Through!

4. Consider:

- Good News

5. Consequence:

- Roll away stone prayers
- New Beginning Prayer Chair

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Has someone close to you died in your lifetime?

What was it like after they died?

How did you start to feel hope again?

I DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU

Divide the group into two teams. Both teams sit on the floor facing each other. Make sure everyone knows everyone else's name. Hold up a blanket between the teams so that none of the players of either team can be seen by the others. Each team silently selects one person to move quietly to the front position right at the blanket. When both teams have a person in place a leader calls '1, 2, 3' and the blanket is dropped. The two players from each team must try and say the name of the other person more quickly than the other person says their name.

Link this game to the expectations that the women had in going to the tomb; they expected to see Jesus, but expected him to be dead. They didn't expect to see a strange messenger from God.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

What would it have been like for the women to arrive at the tomb and see the stone had been rolled away?
And then to have an angel speak to them?!

HA GAME

Use this activity to demonstrate how the news of Jesus' resurrection spread bit by bit, but was transformational. Have the first person lie on the floor, and a second person lie with their head on the first person's stomach. A third person lies with their head on the second person's stomach, and so on so everyone is lying on the floor with their head on someone's stomach. The first person starts with a 'ha' – which the second person repeats – then the third, and so on.

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Without reading on in Mark 16, what do you imagine the women did next?

OPENING THE BIBLE: EATING YOUR WAY THROUGH!

Give each person a copy of the bible passage (Mark 16) and explain that as a group you are going to eat your way through the story. Use the natural pauses as you distribute the edible items at each place as a time to check for understanding or ask questions, or clarify what is happening in the text, also encourage questions from the group.

¹After the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary (**3 Jelly Babies**) the mother of James bought some spices (**spicy bbq shapes**) to put on Jesus' body.

²Very early on Sunday morning, (**ticktock biscuit**) just as the sun was coming up, they went to the tomb.

³On their way, they were asking one another, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance for us?"

⁴But when they looked, they saw that the stone had already been rolled away. And it was a huge stone! (**Choc Honey Comb**)

⁵The women went into the tomb, and on the right side they saw a young man in a white robe (**Milk Bottle**) sitting there. They were alarmed.

⁶The man said, "Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was nailed to a cross. God has raised him to life, and he isn't here. You can see the place where they put his body.

⁷Now go and tell his disciples, (**11 Jelly babies**) and especially Peter, that he will go ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you."

⁸When the women ran from the tomb, they were confused and shaking all over.

They were too afraid to tell anyone what had happened.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Have you ever heard really, really good news? How did you respond?

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — **CONSEQUENCE**

Have you ever heard really, really good news? What did you do with it? Read Mark 16: 1-8. Death is not the end; Jesus rose again. He is alive! What does this mean?

What difference does it make?

ROLL AWAY STONE PRAYERS

Revise each of the themes/stories from the beginning of your program in the following way.

Take one sheet of newspaper and revise the first day, asking one person to draw a boat or a storm cloud or waves in thick black texta on the paper. Write 'FEAR' in big letters as well.

Say something like *'Whatever we fear, Jesus is can deal with it. He dealt with death and came back to life again. He can take away our fear and give us faith'*.

Now ask the person who drew, to scrunch up the paper into a ball.

And add a sticker saying 'FAITH' onto a brightly coloured gift box.

Take a second sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw the man lying on the mat. Ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of the healing of the paralytic. Write 'EVIL' in big letters as well.

Say something like, *'There is evil in the world because of people's choices, but Jesus can deal with it. He dealt with death and came alive again. He can replace our frustration with forgiveness'*.

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'FORGIVENESS' onto the gift box.

Take a third sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw a hand reaching to touch Jesus' cloak; ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of the healing of the old woman and the little girl.

Write 'TROUBLE' in big letters as well.

Say something like, *'There are troubles that come to our lives, but Jesus can deal with it. He dealt with death and came alive again. When we are helpless he gives us hope'*.

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'HOPE' to the gift box.

Take a fourth sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw a coin; ask questions and give reminder s to revise the story of the tricky questions about money.

Write 'MONEY' in big letters as well.

Say something like, *'Money sometimes starts to control people and we become greedy and selfish, but Jesus can deal with it. He dealt with death and came alive again. Loving God can replace greed.'*

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'GOD' to the gift box.



Take a fifth sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw a child, ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of Jesus' disciple's arguing.

Write 'I'M THE GREATEST' or 'FAME' in big letters as well.

Say something like, *'Sometimes people try to make themselves important and famous and put other people down as they do, but Jesus can deal with it. He dealt with death and came alive again. When we are proud he gives us humility.'*

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'HUMILITY' to the gift box.

Take a sixth sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw Jesus; ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of the healing of the old woman and the little girl. Write 'FAKES' in big letters as well.

Say something like, *'Sometimes it's hard to know who to trust; some people turn out not to be real friends, but Jesus can deal with it. He dealt with death and came alive again. No matter what anyone else thinks, Jesus is a great friend.'*

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'FRIEND' to the gift box.

Take a seventh sheet of newspaper and give it to another person, asking them to draw a cross; ask questions and give reminders to revise the story of Jesus' death.

Write 'THE END' in big letters as well.

Say something like, *'No matter what happens to us, even the very worst thing we can't even imagine, Jesus can deal with it; he can deal with anything. He dealt with death and came alive again, and he gives us a new beginning'.*

Now ask the person who drew to add their paper around the first ball of paper and scrunch it up. Add a sticker saying 'NEW START' to the gift box.

Now you should have a huge paper 'Stone'. Ask the group what happened to the Stone keeping Jesus' tomb closed. It rolled away. We are going to roll this stone full of all the stuff that Jesus can deal with away. Get your whole group around the 'stone'; everyone's hands on it somewhere, and count '1, 2, 3' and roll the stone away (make sure it goes along the ground, not through the air.) Go back to the gift box and check out the stickers on it. Use this as the basis for prayer. Ask each person to choose something that connects for them and to make that into a prayer, either silent or shared.

NEW BEGINNING PRAYER CHAIR

Find a really old rusty looking chair, (maybe in a dusty storeroom at your church.)

Place the chair on a spread of newspapers. Ask the group “– Who likes the chair? It’s had a tough life, and I found it abandoned where no one wanted it. But we are going to give it a new beginning.” Give each person a turn with a can of fluoro spray paint (about 3 colours should be plenty). When each person has had one turn, pause and say, ‘Now we are going to make this a prayer chair. This time as you have your turn, pray while you spray and ask Jesus to help you with making a new start, or ask him to forgive you, or ask him for hope or help, or ask him to take away your fear, or ask him to be your friend. (You might like to have these options displayed on a piece of card.) When everyone has had a turn, the leader finished by spraying ‘AMEN’.

DAY 9

PARENT CONVERSATION

A NEW BEGINNING CAN REPLACE A TERRIBLE END

What's the Story?

One of the tough calls to make as a parent is to know when to hold 'em and know when to fold 'em.

Sometimes our kids need us to just keep walking along beside them, cheering them on, helping them have the grit and resilience to make it through a tough season.

But other times, our kids need us to pull the plug, to help them exit a situation that is never going to get better, and help them start over.

One of my sons needed a school change. I watched him sink into a darker and darker depression, shutting down his creativity, giving up his music, his marks falling through sheer neglect, his social circle shrunk down to barely one other person.

I had put some support strategies in place and I know they meant a lot to him. But they weren't enough to halt his downward spiral.

But to suggest a school shift? As parents, we all know how massive that is. What message would that send him? I wanted to him to know that I believed in him, that I wasn't just swinging in as a rescuer because I didn't have faith in his resilience.

But you know, it wasn't a matter of him needing more resilience. He was in a place that wasn't life-giving for him. A healthy teenage boy on the outside, but it was killing him on the inside.

When we moved him to a new school, it was like him coming back to life – he picked up his music; he stepped into student leadership and became a house captain; he played the lead role in the musical – phew. Right call.

Of course it was a decision he made too. He was ready to leave the darkness behind, and give life a go.

Lots of life is about putting one step in front of the other and making it through dark valleys. But there are times – important times – when terrible things just need to end, and a new life begin.

Share Your Story

- Have you had to coach your kids through a difficult transition?
- How do you help your kids pick up and keep going after disappointment?
- Has there been a time your child really needed a fresh start?

What's God's Story?

Many people have found faith to be a great resource of comfort and strength in hard times. The sense of God being with us; the assurance that the God at the centre of all existence sees and knows and loves us through the dark nights of the soul, can help a heavy heart endure through suffering.

But at the very centre of the story of Jesus in the Bible is the story of death and new life. The core of Christian faith isn't a stiff upper lip, stoic trudging and making the best of a bad lot.

The cross has become iconic as a Christian symbol, but in the early centuries of Christianity, Christians identified themselves as people following the Risen Jesus, as people of Life. The defining feature of the Christian story is new life. It's letting the things die that aren't ok. Letting life start afresh.

Hear/Read more: Mark 16:1-8

ONLY FOR USE BY SUVA TONGA

DAY 9

BIBLE DRAMA

Characters:

- TV presenter – speaks with plum in mouth tone
- 3 crew members – boom operator, camera man, director

Props:

- Camera, clapper board, leads, large grave stone (grey with gothic writing), large 'pyramid' block (sandy, with hieroglyphics).

A little bit of 'setting up' rolling out of cables, testing camera angles murmured going over script. Hold up "History Buffs and Boffins".



Cue theme music

TV Presenter:

Tonight's 'History buffs and boffins' topic is 'Historical tombstones and ancient graves'. We will see several fascinating examples of stones where people are dead. Our first fascinating example is the ornately detailed marble grave stone of Lady Hilary Shtrozen-Duffleburger, a Bavarian princess of the 18th century. She died in 1794 of fatal causes. RIP. Hmmmmm. Fascinating.

Director:

Cut. Excellent ...

Presenter:

How was that? Did you get my best side?

(Move location to a different side of audience: Large pyramid block)

TV Presenter:

Next – we move on to a larger feature. The tomb of Pharaoh Rama-nefe-tutenkamen-lilypad. The second. It is extraordinarily... I arge ... that's it - back up the camera ... back up ... back up That's it. Yes it's 500 feet tall –an Egyptian pyramid. Hmmmmmmm. Fascinating.

(walking on to a different location)

... And on to our final historical grave site we see the tombstone, a large rough moss coated round boulder, at the entrance of a cave, the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth, seen here at my right ...

(Looking around)

What? Where? How? What? You what? You lost it! What do you mean – cut, cut, cut!!!!

(walks off, whispers animatedly with film crew, then returns)

TV presenter: *(clearing throat)* Right, well it appears that we won't be showing you the tombstone of Jesus of Nazareth of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John gospel fame. No - we won't be showing you his tomb stone on account of it not being ... available.

Besides, it is debatable whether it qualifies for a tombstone, technically, as the person whose tomb it belongs to is no longer – dead. Tombstones are for dead people. And we have it on good authority that Jesus is not dead. Was, but isn't anymore.

Hang on a minute ... cut cut cut!!!!!!

(to the crew) I don't get it – how could he have a tombstone if he isn't dead, and how can he not be dead if he was dead. Isn't death final? Just run me through it one more time.

Crew tell story from bible with 'improvised' props and actions from the crew and kids. Use the bible, and have the presenter follow along ... ask for some parts to be done again, for clarity.

TV Presenter: Was dead – now alive – all I can say is Hmmmmm. Fascinating.

ONLY FOR USE BY SU VICTORIA

DAY 10

What is God's Kingdom like?

THEME WORDS

Jesus tells a story to help us see the way God works

God's ways can replace waste

Big is not the boss

BIBLE

Mark 4:30-32

Parable of the Mustard Seed

SONGS

Digging Deep (C)

Excited to be Invited (S)

The Birdy Song (S)

INTRODUCTION

Jesus – in the vibrant earthy culture of his day, and as an uneducated peasant from the northern back hills of Israel – never preached doctrinal sermons. He spoke in pithy, witty, cheeky, sensory, grounded everyday images. He told stories and jokes, and had great one liners. He painted word pictures and sometimes pictures in the dust with this finger. He spoke in poems and quoted the songs and sayings of his tradition. He constantly drew on the created world to reconnect people with their loving creator and life-sustaining God. Sometimes he was shocking and scandalous, sometimes scathing and sometimes sobering. His ways of speaking were never trite or obtuse or theoretical: always whole hearted, always holding what mattered, always connecting spiritual reality with the material world – which expresses the love and justice of God.

As we seek to stay connected into God's kingdom, as we grow our own vision of how God is at work in the world, and as we invite others to join too, we best follow Jesus' example. We stay close to what matters, to reality, to the ways God has made a world – both material and spiritual that is whole – shalom – in which every part is important. Where even the smallest things flourish, where hospitality and grace connect all living things in mutual dependence. Where the justice and love of God hold us together, rooted and growing in Christ.

MARK 4:30-32

Parable of the Mustard Seed

Finally, Jesus said:

"What is God's kingdom like? What story can I use to explain it? It is like what happens when a mustard seed is planted in the ground. It is the smallest seed in all the world. But once it is planted, it grows bigger than any garden plant. It even puts out branches that are big enough for birds to nest in its shade."

DAY 10

TEAM STUDY

Session 10: What is God's Kingdom like?

God's ways can replace waste

BIG IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus tells a story to help us see the way God works

Jesus – in the vibrant earthy culture of his day, and as an uneducated peasant from the northern back hills of Israel – never preached doctrinal sermons. He spoke in pithy, witty, cheeky, sensory, grounded everyday images. He told stories and jokes, and had great one liners. He painted word pictures and sometimes pictures in the dust with this finger. He spoke in poems and quoted the songs and sayings of his tradition. He constantly drew on the created world to reconnect people with their loving creator and life-sustaining God. Sometimes he was shocking and scandalous, sometimes scathing and sometimes sobering. His ways of speaking were never trite or obtuse or theoretical: always whole hearted, always holding what mattered, always connecting spiritual reality with the material world – which expresses the love and justice of God.

As we seek to stay connected into God's kingdom, as we grow our own vision of how God is at work in the world, and as we invite others to join too, we best follow Jesus' example. We stay close to what matters, to reality, to the ways God has made a world – both material and spiritual that is whole – shalom – in which every part is important. Where even the smallest things flourish, where hospitality and grace connect all living things in mutual dependence. Where the justice and love of God hold us together, rooted and growing in Christ.

Brainstorming Inside Jesus' Brain

Display the following items where they can be seen by the whole group as a visual prompt:

- Pile of salt
- pile of yeast
- net
- small seeds
- small candle
- coin
- pearl
- banquet invitation

(continued...)

Jesus mind was full of creative images for the kingdom of God.

Invite your group to brainstorm as many images Jesus used for the kingdom of God as they can.

Note that some of Jesus parables begin with 'To what shall I compare the Kingdom of God.' Or 'What is the kingdom of God like?' but some parables he doesn't introduce in this way -they are 'anti-parables' – they describe the world as it is – often with injustice and violence – (for example, the Talent parables are not 'kingdom of God' pictures). Those parables help us compared that ways of the kingdom of God with the Kingdom of Rome/the world.

Word Play

Here's a list of some of the tried and true devices that are used in speech:

See if someone can give a quick example of each

- Alliteration (words beginning with the same sound)
- Rhyme (words ending with the same sound)
- Juxtaposition (two mismatched things put together)
- Repetition
- Humour
- Delay
- Imagery
- Comparison
- Rhythm

The arts and smarts of communication use lots of different technical "devices" – tricks to reinforce meaning and keep our attention and embed in the memory.

Both rural and urban first century Mediterranean communication was highly developed in the live art of oral culture. Speech was more important than writing.

Politics and Religion and Entertainment and Education were all primarily oral endeavours: things that mattered were done in spoken word. Writing was for menial tasks.

Jesus uses all of these and more in the quick parable today. It's a joke – and it's a poem – there's imagery.

Some of the best rhymes disappear in translation.

e.g.

'large branches' (klah-dooss-megah-looss)

'all the seeds of ' (pan-tone-tone-sperma-tone-tone)

'Upon the earth' (eppie-tayss-gayss) – which Jesus repeats twice.

Opening the Bible

Divide your group into four teams: **Bold**, *Italic*, Underlined, and **UPPERCASE**

Read Mark 4: 30 - 32 together with one person reading all of the text, but the teams joining on those words that align with their font style:

Bold words starting with G

Italic words beginning with P

Underlined words beginning with S

UPPERCASE words beginning with B

What is **God's** kingdom like? What story can I use to explain it? It is like what happens when a mustard seed is *planted* in the **ground**. It is the smallest seed in all the world. **BUT** once it is *planted*, it **grows BIGGER** than any **garden plant**. It even *puts* out **BRANCHES** that are **BIG** enough for **BIRDS** to nest in its shade.

Read again a second time with only the team words

God's story seed *planted* **ground** smallest seed **BUT** *planted* **grows** **BIGGER** **garden** *plant* *puts* **BRANCHES** **BIG** **BIRDS** shade.

Give the group some time to pair and discuss what impact it had taking out all the extra words and just hearing the highlighted words. Note that the Greek text for this passage is only 55 words. The NRSV is 71, the King James Version 76, and the NIV 59.

Jesus' language is clever and punchy, earthy and direct, relatable stuff, but jam packed with meaning. And Jesus doesn't break it down in explanation. He respects his audience enough to let them do their own maths, their own meaning making, their own application.

This is a good prompt for us to think about how we go about communicating with others especially when we are doing it in Jesus' name.

Prayer Tree: Outdoor Activity

You will need:

- A living growing tree of any kind. Preferably (but not essentially) an Australian native.

Take your group to examine a tree that is growing, and prompt them to share what they notice. Encourage them to look at every aspect of the tree's **ecological**

community – and discuss how the tree is home to birds and insects, perhaps there is evidence (droppings) beneath the tree that possums live there too. The insects are food for some birds, but the tree provides food for the insects.

Seeds from the tree fall to the ground and are also a **food sources** for birds and animals.

Notice if there are places where **branches have broken off** and holes are left in the tree – these are important **habitats and food sources** for small animals.

The tree draws in **light and moisture from the air**, it transforms the air to cool it and freshen it for other living things to breathe.

Note how the tree has bark and leaves, **old and new growth wood**, seed pods and perhaps flowers.

The **vascular system** of the tree is just beneath the bark and runs right up the tree and through the branches just like the blood in our veins. If you cut all the way around the bark of a tree it will die.

See if you can find a place where a **branch has broken** and see the extra growth the tree has given (sending extra growth hormones) to that place to heal it.

Note how underneath the tree the **ground is soft and cool** and the old leaves and pods from the tree are being **composted** into the ground, which fertilises and nourishes the tree as it continues to put out new branches and leaves and seeds.

Notice that there **are roots that go down deep and wide** under the ground that are an important part of the tree. If the tree has a wide canopy the roots will go out as far as the branches do. Notice how **much of the tree is hidden**, but still important.

Ideally, the group will lead these observations – try to **prompt with questions** of what they notice and see going on, and nurture their own wondering and reflection. Some team members will have particular insight, and others detailed knowledge of eco-systems. Welcome and affirm all the contributions that the group offers.

Prayer

As you stand around the tree reflecting on how the whole system works to care for lots of different kinds of living things, **turn this into prayer** – invite people to pray, perhaps giving thanks for the way God's Kingdom is a living community of care and justice for all; perhaps praying for your own team life as a community of the kingdom and the needs of the team; perhaps praying for the community in which you are ministering – for the Good News to reach out its branches to everyone, and for families and individuals to make their home/nest within the kingdom community of God; perhaps praying for your churches or local churches to be healthy and growing.

DAY 10

EARLY CHILDHOOD

God's ways can replace waste

Summary: Jesus tells a story to help us see the way God works.

Bible: Mark 4:30-32 Parable of the Mustard seed

Questions: What is God's kingdom like?

Song Line: Big Is Not The Boss

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Birdseed Sensory Tub

2. Context:

- The Birdy Song
 Song: Kookaburra Sits in the Old Gum Tree
 Seed-Sprout-Tree

3. Content:

- Story Time

4. Consider:

- Mustard Tree mural

5. Consequence:

- Choosing Box

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

Free Play

Playdough, blocks and quiet book corner can be offered every session for routine and stability, rotating a couple of other 'theme' activities for interest and variety. Offer a few or all of the following free-play options. Each of these can become a teaching/storytelling opportunity as well. After the Mat time, you may invite children back to one of these 'free-play' activities and allow them to tell/imagine the story with you...

BIRDSEED SENSORY TUB

You will need:

- Packet of wild birdseed
- Tub
- Cups, scoops, sieve, ladles, etc

Place a packet of birdseed in a large tub along with all the scooping implements. Young children are natural sensory explorers and will enjoy scooping and pouring and sieving the seeds, as well as feeling the texture with their hands.

Linking Lines:

Seeds are really amazing – do you know what could happen to one of these seeds? It could grow into a large tree or plant. Amazing! These black seeds will grow into big yellow sunflowers - they look beautiful and are good for food. These little seeds will grow into a different kind of tree. Jesus tells a story about this – about how the things God does are really amazing and good.

CONTEXT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Mat Time: Songs and Rhymes and Games

Use one or more of the familiar group songs or games to gather the group together and create a culture of listening and participating together. Encourage parents/carers to join in with their children.

SONGS

Song: The Birdy Song

<https://www.snackmusic.com.au/songs/the-birdy-song>

Song: Kookaburra Sits in the Old Gum Tree

Song: The Old Black Crow – Colin Buchanan

(first verse and chorus)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7qGFDq9qdk>

For this age group, this song is all about the actions.

Practice some wing flapping of arms out full spread, and hands tucked under armpits flapping. Practice some beak pecking using a hand as a pointy beak and the other hand behind as a tail feather.

Linking Lines:

Jesus spent lots of time outside, and often made poems and stories about nature, trees and plants and birds and animals. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today, he tells a poem about birds safely and happily nesting in a tree.

SEED-SPROUT-TREE

Show your group the following actions and invite them to imitate you

- Seed – curl up in a ball, kneeling on the ground
- Sprout – still in a ball, put one hand up
- Tree – stand up, arms out as branches
- Leaves – wriggle fingers
- Nest – hold hand cupped

Then mix them up in order.

Then ask each person to choose one and show the group, and the group will guess which it is.

Then ask them to remember what order the actions go in, asking questions like ‘Can a bird build a nest on a sprout?’ or ‘Can leaves grow on a seed?’

Linking Lines:

In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today there is a tree that grows from a little seed. The good way that nature works helps us to understand God’s care for every living thing. Everything is precious to God.

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

Story Time

See ‘Plasticine Story files’ for visuals.

Ask another leader or parent to hold the pictures while you use your whole body in full dynamic expression in storytelling. Invite participation.

STORY TIME

Jesus and his friends sit in the shade of a large old sprawling fig tree leaning back against its solid trunk that is thick like five fat grey uncles. They reach up into the sturdy branches strong enough to hold a man, and they pick the sweet juicy fruit. Children are swinging in the large leafy branches above them.

“Hey Jesus” – says Fun-loving Phillip

“Tell us another of your stories!”

“Spin us a yarn, mate.”

“Slam us a poem, man.”

“Rip us joke, buddy”

- They all say.

“One of those ‘Empire’ (and they all struck a mighty pose) Jokes.”

“Those ‘What is the Empire of God is like?’ jokes!”

They all struck a mighty pose again and then collapse laughing.

“Oh! They are hearty hil-air-ious!” shouts youngster Jake

“Yet they fill my heart with hope...” says shy Levi

“And help me find a new way to live.” adds Thoughtful Thaddeus

“What is the [cough cough] Empire (as they all strike a mighty pose) of God like?” – Jesus says and scratches his chin with a curious look in his eye.

His friends burst into laughter – they know about Empire – it’s the way the Romans run things with soldiers and swords and slaves and taxes and tough work and bribes and injustice and the poor getting poorer.

By now they knew that wherever Jesus went
and whatever Jesus did
and whenever Jesus spoke of God’s ways – it was the opposite of the Empire.

So they loved it when Jesus would start:

The Empire of God is like...

Jesus always had a surprising answer that would first of all set them all in stitches, and then he’d speak of God’s ways – not an empire, but something amazing that made them remember that they were human and they were loved by God and the world was meant to work wonderfully together, not just work.

Hmmm, what are God’s good ways like?

Jesus looks across at the town.

What are God’s ways like...?

He watches the women hauling up huge jars of water from the well.

He hears a wrinkled diver in the market place haggling with a buyer for the price of a pearl he’s found in the deep part of the sea.

He looks at the mud walled houses, and the young girls sweeping the dust out the door.

There is the Meeting house, the gathering place, the synagogue. It’s the second largest house in the town, funded by the governor after the war, so

there's no hard feelings. Round the back is the big brick oven where the women and the soldier's slaves are kneading dough and adding globs of yeast to rise the bread.

Further over is the Roman Centurion's house – beautiful gleaming white, where he lives with his dear faithful slave. The rest of the Soldiers are just across the border in the next town, so they don't stir trouble here when they get bored.

Down the hill is the beach and the boats are in, and the fishing families are spreading their huge nets along the shore for cleaning before nightfall.

Others are working with baskets of fish and bags of salt, a layer of fish, a layer of salt, a layer of fish, a layer of salt, a layer of fish, a layer of salt.

Across behind the olive trees a farmer walking through the fresh furrowed fields and scattering seed as he goes. It flies in every direction and lands on the soil, among the rocks, in the thistles, on the path, and a flock of birds follow along, gleefully picking up the grain.

And he looks up at the children hanging upside down.

Jesus claps his hands together and begins:

“Right!

What is the Empire (and he pauses while his friends all strike a mighty pose) of God like?

It is like – a tree!

The children above him all squeal and cheer.

“Like this tree? This grand old sycamore fig tree?” asks Burly Bartholemew

“No,” says Jesus chortling – “it's far too impressive.”

Jesus looks down into the dirt and picks up a speck.

“I'll start again.

What is the Empire of God like?

It's like a tiny mustard seed.”

And as Jesus holds the tiny speck of a seed up to the sunlight to show his friends

They burst into laughter.

Here he goes – saying how God's ways are found in such small things!
He cracks us up! God – the creator of the whole universe – the maker of heaven and earth, the mighty sun and the enormous oceans, the life giver

of all things – God of great power and wonder – God’s ways found in small things?!!!

It makes us laugh.

But then, Jesus says more. And we realise he’s serious.

“The empire of God? – God’s ways are not like an empire at all. They are like a mustard seed – the smallest of seeds on the earth.

But...when it is planted on the earth it grows wild and wide with welcoming branches that hold nests for the birds to make their home.”

“There.” – said Jesus. “What do you think?”

Jesus looks at his friends for a moment and then looks out past the field and his friends realised that he is looking at a mustard tree. Out past the olive trees and the vineyards and the farm – out on the edge of the wilderness – growing wild, just as he said.

“But a mustard plant!” splutters Simon the sensational.

“it’s a weed! a pest! That grows in the wilderness, and no one wants it in their garden. Do you really mean God’s ways are wild?”

“Yes.” - says Jesus with wink of his eye. “God’s ways are wild and wonderful. You can’t fence God in, or try to keep God under control. The ways of God are the ways of freedom.”

The gang all cheer – arms up, fist pumping the air. They love hearing this word - freedom. Though they hope the Roman Centurion didn’t hear them.

“But” – said Jude the most serious dude – “it’s not really even a proper tree is it? Probably can’t say it’s much more than a shrubbery. Look what a tangle of branches it has. So many of them – and they are everywhere – and all going in different directions. Not like a palm tree that has a bottom and a middle and a top up high. And the branches and fruit are at the top. Almost everything is spread around not far from one another.”

Jesus smiles – “You’re totally getting it, Jude.”

“Palm trees are like the Roman empire. All the stuff, all the fruit at the top – out of reach!” added Andrew the adventurer.

Just then a flock of fifty sparrows flew into the mustard tree, and disappeared. But from their nests, songs rose up and filled the air with joy.

“There.” said Jesus, “That’s what the not-an-Empire of God is like.”

Above them the upside down children who had been listening to Jesus’ story began singing.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT **CONSIDER** CONSEQUENCE

Exploring in Craft

Some children will prefer to go back to free play in this time, and not continue with a structured craft. This is normal and a valid choice.

MUSTARD TREE MURAL

You will need:

- Large Piece of strong card
- Real leaves
- Paper cut out leaves
- Paper bark
- Oil pastels
- Feathers
- Hessian cut into small nest shapes
- Glue or Blu tac

With your group, draw a line three quarters of the way up from the bottom of the card – this is the 'ground level'. Invite the children to stick on some seeds under the ground level. From one of the seeds, draw a sprout growing up, and many branches out from this one seed, thickening the trunk.

Then invite the children to fill the tree, sticking on leaves (real or paper), covering the trunk/branches with strips of paperbark. Encourage imagination for adding all the things that might be found in and around the tree – insects for the birds to eat – perhaps a spider web. Add the hessian nests in the branches, and add some feathers for birds.

Linking Lines:

Isn't our mustard tree full of wonderful growing things. It's a beautiful home where everyone is safe and there is plenty to eat. Jesus says this is the way God has made all of life to work – being in community, working and sharing, being safe, with plenty for everyone

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER **CONSEQUENCE**

Choosing Box

At the end of the session each day, remind everyone of the conversation starter page and bring out a 'choosing' box and invite each person (including parents and carers and bystanders) to choose something from the box to take home to remind them of the time together today.

Encourage taking the item home to talk about in the family, or to hold quietly later when they want to remember the Story of Jesus from the Bible.

CHOOSING BOX

In the Choosing Box today: Feather

You will need:

- For each person a feather attached to a piece of yarn and a loop to wear on their wrist

Linking Lines:

To remind us of our story, take a feather. You can wear it on your wrist. What might this remind you of from the story? Maybe it reminds you of the birds that Jesus talked about, living in the mustard tree that grew from a tiny seed. Maybe the feather will remind you to look out for birds, to watch them and see how they are cared for in the wonderful world God has made. Maybe the feather remind you to talk to God about how things can work – for everyone to be well cared for and joyful as the birds.

DAY 10

PRIMARY

Session 10: What is God's Kingdom like?

God's ways can replace waste

BIG IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus tells a story to help us see the way God works

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Plasticine Tiny-Town/Tiny-Terrain
- Mancala – Seed Game
- Who's Rules? – Tag Game

2. Context:

- Everyday Stories
- Eye-Spy Bottles
- Trees of the Forest Game

3. Content:

- Open the Bible: Lift the flap tree poster
- Open the Bible: Lima bean seed-spiral.
- Open the Bible: Poem

4. Consider:

- Nest building
- Birds craft
- Mustard seed art in clay
- Bark art

5. Consequence:

- Prayer tree
- Mural
- Big and small prayers

CONNECT...

CONNECT | CONTEXT | CONTENT | CONSIDER | CONSEQUENCE

PLASTICINE TINY-TOWN/TINY-TERRAIN

You will need:

- Plasticine in various colours
- Small plastic or cardboard boxes with lids (e.g. margarine containers)
- Permanent markers

Give each person a small container with a few pieces of different coloured plasticine inside. Invite them to use the plasticine to create a 'tiny-town' or 'tiny-terrain' inside the frame of the box (laid on its side). Suggest they create

a place reflecting the way they want the world to be. As they are developing their town/terrain introduce the language of 'kingdom' using the linking lines below. Use the permanent markers to label the containers 'The Kingdom of [child's name]'.

Linking Lines:

Your tiny-towns and tiny-terrains are awesome - I love how much care and creativity you have shown in making all the little details. Sometimes people think 'Bigger is Better' – but you have shown that 'Tiny is Terrific'. In our Story of Jesus from the Bible today we'll hear Jesus telling stories and poems about the way God wants the world be. Listen out for what Jesus says about things that are small or start small. You have made your own 'kingdom' – a place that is the way you want things to be. Jesus told stories and poems about the Kingdom of God – a kind of poetic way of saying 'things being the way God wants – the ways of Love and Justice.'

MANCALA – SEED GAME

You will need:

- Egg cartons (dozen egg sized)
- Small smooth beans (e.g. red kidney beans; black beans)

Prepare the Mancala playing boards by removing the lids from the egg cartons and cutting lids in half. Place the two cut pieces of lid beneath the lower 'cupped' tray and pull ends outwards to form an extra compartment at each end of the tray. Tape firmly in place. The compartment at each end are called "Stores"; in between are the two rows of six "Pits".

Make a number of boards so that everyone can play; or put your group into two teams and have people take turns at moving the seeds for their team. A player/Team sits on either side of the board, and their store is the end on their left hand side.

To begin the game place four seeds in each of the twelve pits. Player/Team 1 chooses a pit and picks up all the seeds in it and 'sows' them, one into each pit going along the row from the pit they started at (leaving it empty) in an anticlockwise direction. Players take turns doing this.

Don't place a seed in the other Player/Teams store if you get to it.
Do place a seed in your own store if you get to it.
If your last seed falls into your store you get another turn.

If the Player/Team places their last seed in an empty pit, they take the seeds in



the pit opposite and that seed and place them in their own store. The game ends when all of the pits on one side are empty. The player/team whose side is empty takes the seeds from the other side and adds them to their store.

The Player/Team with the most seeds in their store wins.

Linking Lines:

Great game! That took a lot of concentration. This is a really ancient game going back thousands of years, and found in many countries in the Middle East and Africa, even in the country Israel where Jesus lived, and in Egypt where Jesus lived as a little boy. I wonder if he ever played this game? Or other games with seeds? In the Bible today we'll see how Jesus made a poem about seeds: common everyday items everybody knew about – seeds were for planting, eating, playing, learning to count, making jewellery – and, as we see in the Bible today, making poems to help us think about how God wants us to live.

WHO'S RULES? – TAG GAME

You will need:

- General open space for running
- Markers for boundary lines
- A few random pieces of sports equipment.

Set up a standard game of tag. One person is 'It', there's a defined boundary and when you are tagged you are out.

Start the game – then after a short while, stop and say 'we are going to keep playing but we're going to play by someone else's rules'.

Invite a leader to add a rule e.g. 'Whenever I call "rabbits" everyone must start hopping for three seconds. Invite another leader, or a child, to add a new rule, this new rule and all previous rules must continue to be followed. Invite another leader or child to add a new rule.

Linking Lines:

That was fun and confusing – your crazy new rules were amazing. But how tricky did it get when all the different rules from everyone got added together. In the time of our Story of Jesus from the Bible today Jesus and his friends lived in a country which had its own rules and ways of doing things for thousands of years. Starting with Jewish rules called Torah; and then after being invaded and taken over by other countries who also brought their own rules and ways. Jesus gives his friends a poem that helps them think about what God's ways, God's kingdom, is like...

CONTEXT...

CONNECT **CONTEXT** CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

EVERYDAY POETRY SLAM

You will need:

- Cloth bag
- 10 (approx.) random everyday items e.g. teaspoon, key, jar of vegemite, glove, water bottle, torch, apple, toy car, fidget spinner, stone.

Sitting in a circle with your group introduce the idea of a poetry slam. This is where each person will have a turn at pulling an everyday item out of a bag – without looking – you will try to make up a bit of a poem about that thing, Give an example, taking one item from the bag: e.g. ‘teaspoon’
*“I have in my hand a shiny little spoon
 and I hope I can eat some ice cream soon”*

Draw the group into participation by giving them space to suggest lines, or fill in words like ‘spoon’ and ‘ice-cream’ (or whatever) that are easy and obvious. Everyone can take a turn at pulling something out of the bag: make the process of creating the poetry collaborative so there is not pressure on any individual. Welcome, accept and affirm all suggestions!
 Keep track of the best lines and try to work a series of lines together.
 Use rhythm and body percussion for impact and groove.
 No need to use all of the items.

Linking Lines:

You are great slam poets – so creative and hilarious. You were amazing at thinking of ideas quickly and turning these everyday items in poetry for fun. Jesus loved making up stories and poems about everyday things – we’re going to hear one from the Bible today. He used his everyday things stories for fun AND for helping people think about how God wants us to love.

EVERYDAY POETRY SLAM

You will need:

- Plastic soft drink bottle
- Rice or fine dry sand
- 10-20 (approx.) small items e.g. 5 cent coin; marble; small gumnut; pen lid; small plastic animals; shells, crayon, interesting buttons, paperclip, dice, small peg, bolt and nut, jigsaw puzzle piece, jingle bell

Sitting in a circle with your group, introduce the I-Spy-Bottle. Explain that there



are lots of little things hidden in the bottle. Each person can have a turn at holding the bottle and turning it over and around and naming something they can see. Keep passing the bottle from one side of the circle to the other, until everyone has had a turn.

If there is still time and enthusiasm, give people a second turn.

Linking Lines:

There were lots of little things hidden in the bottle and you were all great at noticing them – excellent I-Spy work. As hear our Story of Jesus from the Bible today there are some small things, tiny things to notice. Jesus is also big on noticing small things, and he has a great way of reminding his friends the small things are important in showing us how to live in God's good ways.

TREES OF THE FOREST GAME

You will need:

- Chart of trees and actions
- Space for moving freely

This is a version of the simple game of elimination.

You will need an extra leader to be the 'decider'.

Explain that there are four different trees in the forest; pine trees, gum trees, oak trees and mustard shrubs. Each tree has an action – teach the following actions.

Pointy Pine Trees – feet together arms forming point above your head

Shady Gum Trees – arms out wide fingers hanging down, fluttering like leaves

Strong old Oak Trees – arms out sideways, elbows bent with hands up in fists

Wild Mustard Shrubs – kneel down, arms out and crossed with fingers interlocked

Explain that all trees start as seeds so, the whole group will begin the game crouched and curled up on the ground. When you call 'trees of the forest grow' each person 'grows' into one of the four trees – which ever they choose.

The 'decider' also begins as a seed, but doesn't grow until everyone else has become a tree. When all the trees have grown, call "Decider!" The decider grows into one of the trees without looking at the rest of the group. Those who are the same tree as the decider are 'out'. And all the trees left return to being seeds, and repeat the process.

Keep eliminating until there is only one tree left.



Linking Lines:

You were very mighty trees – and well done surviving in the forest. Some trees were definitely more popular than others. When we read the Story of Jesus from the Bible today we will see which of these trees, which kind of tree Jesus says can help us think about the way God wants us to live together.

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

OPENING THE BIBLE: LIFT THE FLAP TREE POSTER

See **Appendix 10.1** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Tree poster made from App 10.1 enlarged onto A1 sized card. Cut flaps to open, and stick to backing card, sticking the phrases of the passage behind the corresponding flaps.
- Coloured crayons

Invite different members of your group to open the flaps, one by one, in numbered order and read the words inside if they can. Let them choose coloured crayons and draw in colour a bit of detail of the tree where the flap they opened was.

For example #1 is the question of what God's kingdom is like – this flap is at the top in the sky, so blue sky and clouds and sun might be added here.

OPENING THE BIBLE: LIMA BEAN SEED-SPIRAL**You will need:**

- 200 dried lima/broad beans. Write one word of the text of Mark 4:30-32 on each of the beans and leave the others blank. Put the beans with words in one container and the blank beans in another
- Copies of Mark 4:30-32

Show your group the container of blank beans. Invite them to guess what they are (seeds) and what they might grow into if they were planted. Welcome and affirm all suggestions, encouraging imagination and lateral thinking.

When plenty of ideas have been put forward, tell the group the kind of seeds/beans they are.

They are really big beans – but they only grow into a flimsy vine about as tall as a person, not a large tree.

Invite each person to take a handful of blank beans and invite them to take turns placing them on the ground with approximately 5 cm gaps between them creating a large spiral on the ground. Make sure there is a wide enough path between the laps of the spiral for people to walk easily. When everyone has had a turn at putting out their beans they can take a second handful and continue to enlarge the spiral.

When the spiral of blank beans is complete, show the group the container of beans with writing. Explain that Jesus created a story-poem about seeds that grew – not large seeds that grow into a small shrub, but a tiny seed that grows into a large shrub.

Invite each person to take a handful of beans and help them read the word on each bean.

Explain that, as a group, you are going to try to put all the words of Jesus' story poem in order. Starting from the middle of the spiral, whoever has the first word "Jesus" counts three beans from the centre, then picks up the fourth blank bean and replaces it with their "Jesus" bean. The person with the next word "said" counts along another three beans and replaces the next bean with their "said" bean. The blank beans that are removed can be added on to the end of the spiral.

This may take some time, but don't expect the group to sit passively as each person takes a turn. Line up three people in a row and let them into the spiral at once, while you organise a few more to be ready in order.

The activity should have the sense of creativity and play. Once all the words are in place invite a volunteer to start in the middle of the spiral and read as they walk outwards.

If your group aren't yet strong readers, modify the activity to only use about 10 key words from the passage. Eg: God's Story Seed Ground Smallest Planted Bigger Branches Birds Nest Shade.

Linking Lines:

Beautiful work making our spiral. I loved how careful you were in placing the seeds. Sometimes when we are getting to know God it's really loud and exciting – but sometimes getting to know God happens in quiet thinking times. Did you also see how our story began very small with a seed in the centre, and then got bigger and bigger as the spiral grew? God's kingdom is like this too – there is always more to discover and know of God – and of course God's love goes on and on and on and on.

OPENING THE BIBLE: POEM

See **Appendix 10.2** (suvic.org.au/question-mark)

You will need:

- Copy of Mark 4:30-32 from App 10.2 on one colour card and the poem phrases on another colour card; cut all the phrases into sections as marked
- Recording device

Lay out the cards with the phrases of the reading, sorting them into order according to the passage for reference.

Next, spread the rhyming cards in a jumble.

Use the linking lines to explain the background of the poetry of this passage then challenge the group to find the matching lines that will rhyme with the actual lines of poetry from the passage.

Practice the couplets as they form (doesn't matter what order they are found in to start with). Finally put the whole poem together, and practice with stamps, clicks, claps and beat box sounds. Assign solo and group lines as people feel enthusiastic – try to take a recording and play it back.

Linking Lines:

In this part of the Bible Jesus performs a poem to his friends and followers. Like a poetry slam. It's a poem about how God's ways include everything and work for good not wasting anything, like a tree system.

The poem has been translated into English from the language that was spoken in Jesus country thousands of years ago – called 'Koine Greek' which is a bit like the Greek spoken in Greece today but not exactly the same. In the language that Jesus spoke there are lots of cool rhymes and repeated phrases that don't sound as good in English. For example, he repeats this line that sounds like this:

Eppee-tayss-ghayss in means 'on the earth'

And when he says 'big branches' it rhymes like this klad-dooss-megah-looss There are lots of other rhymes as well that show how Jesus was having a bit of a poetry slam day.

We are going to try to turn the English words into a poetry slam.

What is God's kingdom like?

What picture can I strike?

What story can I use
to explain it?

What poem can I choose?

In my brain bit

It is like what will happen
when a mustard seed
is planted in the earth.

So people start clappin'

It is the smallest seed
in all the earth.

Once it is sown,
it grows bigger
than any plant in the patch
It even puts out

Branches that are big
Big enough for birds
to nest in its shade
to nest in its shade
to nest in its shade

This is well know
big big bigger
no vegie can match
this will make you shout

Big big big
Let me hear the words
repeat to fade
repeat to fade
repeat to fade

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

Choose one or two of these activities to give space to your group to have thinking and processing time for the Bible story. Invite them to talk about the way they can connect with the story using the 'Has This Ever Happened To You?' prompts suggested below.

Be respectful and careful not to over direct the children's responses or to try to turn the experience of the Bible story into a comprehension exercise or an exegesis session or 'teaching' time. In missional Bible engagement we are praying that children, young people and families will meet Jesus, and encounter God, and we trust the Holy Spirit to be working as we make opportunity for this and come alongside to share in the process.

Has This Ever Happened To You?

- *You made up a poem*
- *Someone helped you feel like you really belonged*
- *You watched a seed grow into a whole big plant*
- *You have seen how birds in a tree communicate with one another and help each other find food*

NEST BUILDING

You will need:

- Small sticks
- Dry grass
- Straw
- String
- Craft wire
- Small feathers

Show your group how to make a nest, about the size of your hand. Don't try to make too large a nest! Begin with a circle of wire. Attach several pieces of wire to the circle, winding them along for a centimetre or so, then training the wire downwards and in a clockwise direction. Twist the ends of each of these wires together forming a basepoint.

To this wire frame add as many sticks and grasses and straws and strings as you need, weaving in and out through the wires and around one another to form the nest. Create a softer layer of grass inside the nest and add a few small feathers.

Linking Lines:

In Jesus poem about the way God wants us to live, he speaks of a big sprawling shrubby tree that is a community where every creature and bird has a safe home. Birds are fragile and small, but very strong and clever and they build incredibly beautiful safe warm nests. Jesus says God's way of living means everyone – no matter how small or vulnerable – can make a safe and warm home.

BIRDS CRAFT

You will need:

- Long strands of grasses/straw (straw for craft can be bought in art/craft shops, but gathering long grasses like crows foot grass or orchard grass from an unmown lawn and left to dry will be just as good.)
- Coloured yarn
- Small sticks
- Feathers
- Pumpkin seeds
- Craft glue

Take a large fistful of grass/straw and bend it in half, keeping the bend rounded, and being careful not to break the grass.

Wind some yard about 2-3 cm back from the bend, forming the neck and head of the bird.



Shape the next section of the grass to curve a little and form the body of the bird, winding more yarn about 6 cm along to form the body, and let the ends of the grass fan out to create the tail.

Wind more yarn around the body, to attach feathers for wings, and to add some feathers to the tail.

Glue two pumpkin seeds on either side of the head for eyes (add a dot with black permanent marker if you like.)

Poke two short sticks into the underside of the body for legs.

Poke one stick into the front of the head to form a beak – a slightly curved stick looks really effective.

Linking Lines:

Quite a few times in Jesus' poems and stories he mentions birds – they remind us of how living things can be fragile and strong and clever and creative and needy all at the same time. Birds – even small birds are very important parts of the environment that keep things healthy and growing. They spread seeds and pollen, eat insects that would damage the plants, and fertilise the ground. In this poem - of the mustard seed that grows into a tree and becomes a shelter for birds - Jesus reminds us that knowing and loving God means being part of a wonderful community where everyone is precious, everyone is important – even the small and fragile - and everyone belongs.

MUSTARD SEED ART IN CLAY

You will need:

- Small seeds – either store bought e.g. mustard seeds, poppy seeds, linseeds, or gathered from the pods around trees e.g. wattle, eucalyptus seeds
- Terracotta clay (keep in an airtight container with a damp sponge; slice with wire)
- Toothpicks/skewers/sticks
- Sturdy working surface

Give each person a small fist sized lump of terracotta clay and invite them to work the clay into a smooth 'tablet' on their working surface. Encourage them to experiment with using the skewers/sticks to create patterns in lines or marks on the clay, and to press the seeds into the clay surface to create a design. You might suggest creating an image of a tree with birds in it.



Linking Lines:

It's quite tricky working with such small seeds – it's even easy to lose them. Jesus compares the way God works with a tiny seed. Sometimes it can be hard to see how God is working but sometime the small things that God is doing, can make a big difference for us and for the world around us.

BARK ART**You will need:**

- Various kinds of bark, sticks, grasses, leaves, seed pods (eg Gumnuts, Currajong pods, Banksia cones)
- Optional
 - Strong card
 - Craft glue
 - Sturdy working surface

This activity can be done in two ways – and you might find it worthwhile doing both:

- a large common project set out on the ground that everyone contributes to and works together to create.
 - individual bark pictures glued onto card.
1. Invite the group to use the various natural items to create the shape of a tree set out on the ground, starting with the largest sticks and pieces of bark first to make the basic shape, then adding leaves and smaller bits and pieces - seedpods and smaller sticks, bark shapes etc to create nests, birds, animals, etc...
 2. Show the group how to glue small pieces of bark in different colours and layers to create a picture on a piece of card. This is small, fiddly work and much harder, but great effects can be achieved using the natural shapes and textures of the materials.

Linking Lines:

Great team work building such a wonderful tree picture on the ground. I loved watching it grow and get bigger, and then seeing all the interesting details you added in. It really does reflect the joyful creative community that is in Jesus poem about the way God wants us to live together.

CONSIDER...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT **CONSIDER** CONSEQUENCE

PRAYER TREE OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

You will need:

- A living growing tree of any kind. Preferably (but not essentially) an Australian native.

Take your group to examine a tree that is growing, and prompt them to share what they notice. Encourage them to look at every aspect of the tree's ecological community – and discuss how the tree is home to birds and insects, perhaps there is evidence (droppings) beneath the tree that possums live there too. The insects are food for some birds, but the tree provides food for the insects.

Seeds from the tree fall to the ground and are also a food sources for birds and animals.

Notice if there are places where branches have broken off and holes are left in the tree – these are important habitats and food sources for small animals.

The tree draws in light and moisture from the air, it transforms the air to cool it and freshen it for other living things to breathe.

Note how the tree has bark and leaves, old and new growth wood, seed pods and perhaps flowers.

The vascular system of the tree is just beneath the bark and runs right up the tree and through the branches just like the blood in our veins. If you cut all the way around the bark of a tree it will die.

See if you can find a place where a branch has broken and see the extra growth the tree has given (sending extra growth hormones) to that place to heal it.

Note how underneath the tree the ground is soft and cool and the old leaves and pods from the tree are being composted into the ground, which fertilises and nourishes the tree as it continues to put out new branches and leaves and seeds.

Notice that there are roots that go down deep and wide under the ground that are an important part of the tree. If the tree has a wide canopy the roots will go out as far as the branches do. Notice how much of the tree is hidden, but still important.

Ideally, the children will lead these observations – try to prompt with questions of what they notice and see going on, and nurture their own wondering and reflection. Some children will have particular insight, and others detailed knowledge of eco-systems. Welcome and affirm all the contributions that the group offers.



As you stand around the tree reflecting on how the whole system works to care for lots of different kinds of living things, turn this into a simple prayer – giving thanks for the way God’s kingdom is a living community of care and justice for all. Invite the children to think about their part in the community they live in and to ask God to help them grow in his good ways.

Linking Lines:

All of you are welcome and belong in God’s wonderful community. No one is too small. Everyone is important. In God’s ways no one is wasted.

MUSTARD SHRUB MURAL

You will need:

- Large sturdy surface to paint – e.g. either: 1) securely tape four A1 poster boards to a wall or fence. Masking tape/duct tape around the edges to avoid paint bleeds, or 2) cover a large whitegoods box in butcher’s paper and secure against trees or a wall.
- Drop sheet
- Paint in jars, one colour per jar, one brush per jar
- Smocks, old shirts or garbage bags with holes cut for head and hands
- Tub of soapy water and towel

Invite your group to create a mural beginning with one small seed – a dot near the bottom edge of the mural (leave space for roots to be added). From this seed everyone adds many large spreading branches, painting in lots of details of leaves and berries, birds, nests, other small tree animals and insects. Encourage creativity and for children to engage in narrating what they are painting to others to create a rich conversation of how the mustard-seed Kingdom of God works.

When this is finished stand back and reflect on the whole mural, turning it into a prayer. Invite children to show the group which parts of the mural they painted. Then invite each person to choose a part of the mural that they like the most.

Linking Lines:

Our mustard shrub began with just a small seed – and has turned into a beautiful big amazing wild community. Just like Jesus says, the ways of God in the world start with just small simple things that grow. Loving God thank you for your way of welcoming us and giving us a community where we belong.

SMALL PRAYERS

You will need:

- Tin cans
- Vinyl magnets cut into small pieces – slightly smaller than a lima bean
- Lima beans pre-written with 'Hey' 'Please' 'Help' 'Yuck' 'Sorry' 'Wow' 'Hurry' – one word per bean; enough for each person so have a complete set.
- Blu tac
- Coloured sharpie markers
- Small pieces of coloured paper just a little larger than the lima bean.

Give each person a tin can. Show the group how to roll a small piece of blu tac and use it to stick a piece of vinyl magnet to the back of a bean. Invite each person to create a set of bean magnets, and decorate the words with coloured markers.

Show the group how the magnet-beans will hold to the outside of the tin can. Each of these words is a really small prayer they might want to say to God. They can also pray a small prayer for someone else they care or are concerned for by writing their name on a piece of paper and putting it in the tin. Bean-magnets can also be stored in the tin while not in use.

Linking Lines:

Jesus told lots of stories and poems about things that were small – but that made a big difference - as a way to help us understand how God's ways work. Jesus' little mustard seed poem encourages us that small prayers are good prayers too. We can pray these small one word prayers. And trust God. Let's pray for small things to make a big difference. And for big things not to get in the way of important small things.

DAY 10

TEENS

Session 10: What is God's Kingdom like?

God's ways can replace waste

BIG IS NOT THE BOSS - Jesus tells a story to help us see the way God works

THE 5 Cs

Choose one activity from each category:

1. Connect:

- Noticing

2. Context:

- Seed Gathering
- Seed Grazing

3. Content:

- Bible Jam

4. Consider:

- Reflecting

5. Consequence:

- Little Things

CONNECT...

CONNECT | CONTEXT | CONTENT | CONSIDER | CONSEQUENCE

Tell of a time when you have not noticed or overlooked something that turned out to be really important?

Look at the trees around you. What do you notice about them?

CONTEXT...

CONNECT | CONTEXT | CONTENT | CONSIDER | CONSEQUENCE

SEED GATHERING

Pair up and venture out for 10 minutes to collect as many different seeds as you can. Upon return see how many different seeds were collected over all. Is anyone able to point to the tree or shrub that the seeds came from? Remember Pine Cones and Gumnuts are also seeds.

SEED GRAZING

Pass around a collection of seeds (remember to consider if people have allergies) for snacking on. These can be pumpkin seeds, poppy seeds, sesame seed, sunflower seeds to name a few. As you taste them chat about what the plant looks like that they come from, what the flowers look like.

Isn't it interesting that seeds are all around us, even in our diets yet we seldom stop to look at a simple seed and acknowledge its potential to be a big or small, striking or ugly plant.

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

BIBLE JAM

"Bible Jam" to Mark 4:30-32

1st round – one person reads the passage through out loud

2nd round – everyone reads the passage, a verse each around the group (people can pass if they really seem uncomfortable)

3rd round – someone starts, and the next person picks up when/where the first stops ("handing over")

4th round – "cut in" on (interrupt) one another – mid-verse or wherever!

5th round – anyone cuts in OR hands over to each other

6th round – read only the dialogue (leave out narration or thoughts)

7th round – reading random verses, phrases of words that stand out to them until someone reads the last verse

Mark 4:30-32 - Parable of the Mustard Seed

Finally, Jesus said:

"What is God's kingdom like? What story can I use to explain it? It is like what happens when a mustard seed is planted in the ground. It is the smallest seed in all the world. But once it is planted, it grows bigger than any garden plant. It even puts out branches that are big enough for birds to nest in its shade."

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

How might the people listening to Jesus be interpreting what he is saying?

What people would be encouraged by this parable?

What people might feel threatened by his teaching?

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — CONSIDER — **CONSEQUENCE**

Brainstorm the little things in your life that add up to a big part of how you live - smiling at others, washing, picking up litter, riding the train, visiting elderly, etc. Pray into these little things asking God to help you do little things well so they will add up to a huge impact.

Identify someone overlooked or forgotten in your circle of influence (child, elderly, etc). What are some practical ways you can champion the significance of this person?

ONLY FOR USE BY BISHOP VICTORIA

DAY 10

PARENT CONVERSATION

GOD'S WAYS CAN REPLACE WASTE

What's the Story?

Kids love stories and rhymes and songs and jokes. Using words in playful ways – just like they use colours and cardboard boxes and action figures in playful ways - is a natural process for children. It's a great way to spend time with kids: a serial story read aloud; singalongs in your own family version of Carpool Karaoke; a big guffaw over a joke book – or even better, let your kids freelance improvise their own jokes – hilarious.

There are lots of great reasons to joke and rhyme and sing and story with our kids. I spent a lot of time reading to my boys when my husband would work late and I was done being a good mum by dinner time. I couldn't keep up positive chit chat anymore, so I'd grab a book and read while they ate dinner. And when I felt my frustration rising and I was losing my patience in the long hours at home, dance music was my go-to. When I was sick of being the grown-up and keeping it together, I'd turn up the music for sing-a-long and dance-a-thon and I could take a legitimate break from adulting and mumming while the boys burnt off some energy and had words put in their mouths from the songs – which gave me some relief from 'Mum...mum...mum...can I have a...he won't give me the...'
I'm sure you get the picture. Or I'd put them in the bath and we'd read the joke book. Silly laughs and splashing around – a great stress circuit breaker.

It's also an important communication builder, this kind of playful use of words in jokes and poems and stories, as it develops a child's skills in forming emotional connections through words. It grows their understanding of how words have an emotional impact, so that they learn to discern what is behind what a person is saying. Are they joking? Are they sad? Are those words meant to offend, or to be taken with sincere compassion?

I know I want my sons to be able to listen well to others, to be able to connect and communicate, and to speak up and have their own voice.

Share Your Story

- What are some of the favourite stories or songs or poems that your kids come back to over and over?
- What has helped you find your voice as a parent?
- What do you do to reset the vibes in your household?

What's God's Story?

Jesus was a joker. He told outrageous stories that always had a plot twist. He riffed some of his material in poems. He had a stack of one-liners.

If we've only ever heard Jesus' material read in sombre tones with a dead-pan expression

in church, we might miss the humour, wit and cheeky glint in Jesus' eye. As we all know, a comic or a storyteller needs great material, but it's how you tell it that makes it zing. Sadly, some of us are more used to hearing Jesus' jokes and stories finished with 'This is the word of the Lord: Thanks be to God', when he was actually gunning for a Ba-doom-tish!

Here's an example: The big deal of the day is the Roman Empire. Its grinding taxes, military efficiency and absolute power of the emperor define the daily reality for Jesus and his Jewish followers.

But Jesus rolls out these stories: he takes a bit of the branding spin of the Roman Empire and makes scathing satire on the one hand, and gives people an alternative of hope and dignity on the other. It's not that hard to take the mickey out of indulgent politics. So Jesus tells stories grabbing the 'Empire' branding of the Romans, and he starts talking about a thing called the 'Empire of God' or the 'Kingdom of God'. It's a joke but it's also a challenge to the Empire brand.

So when Jesus has a shot at the Empire – he goes to extremes and he says things like, 'Let me tell you what the kingdom of God is like – it's like – wait for it...'

His audience are trying to imagine what's coming. They know what Empire looks like – swords, soldiers, slaves, war, taxes and corrupt local leaders.

'The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed...'

His audience is on the floor.

'It's the smallest seed on the earth...'

They know that mustard plants are a weed, a pest, that grows wild and out of control.

'It's the smallest seed on the earth, but when it's planted in the earth – buried, invisible, hidden...'

This kingdom is NOT like the Roman-in-your-face-Empire, his listeners are thinking.

'When it is planted it grows into a large shrubbery...'

By this time, just like Monty Python fans, the people are holding their sides with laughter. Not even a tree. A shrubbery. This is the most ridiculous Empire ever.

And then Jesus lands it: 'and in its large branches, all of the birds of the forest come and make their nests'.

See what Jesus did there?

He's given his people a good laugh at the idea of Empire, and then he's followed up by showing them that the way God works is just nothing like an emperor or a king or a kingdom. Instead God's way of life is like a large wild community of freedom – birds making their nests, not ruled by anyone. That's God's idea of life. Not a kingdom of power and violence and rip offs, but a sustainable community of freedom and peace, nurture and growth.

DAY 10

BIBLE DRAMA

Characters:

- Lead Poet – Strong, Straight, confident leader
- Responder – Funky, Cheeky, Playful, Rhymes ALL the time.
- Illustrator – does real time sketches of the mustard seed growing into a tree, with nests and birds, but distribute over about 9 pages which, when assembled together make one picture.
- Assistant - supports the illustrator by taking the sketches and choosing audience members to hold up the sketches.

L and R enter from opposite sides of the space

L: *(to the audience projecting loud over the top enthusiasm)* Hello girls and boys!!!

R: *(to the audience projecting loud over the top enthusiasm)* Let me hear you make some noise

L: Hello visitors and locals

R: Let me hear those vocals

L: Hello beautiful crowd

R: Let me hear you good and loud.

L: *(turns to R)* hang on, are you deliberately rhyming with what I say?

R: *(Holds up a large sign saying “Hey!” and points to sign three times)* Hey! Hey! Hey!

L: *(a little exasperated)* Ok, look you just did it again

R: *(just to L, pretending to be innocent)* Really? What? When?

L: Are you going to rhyme all through this?

R: Not a phrase will I miss!

L: Can you put your hands over your ears

R: Yes but it may bring me to tears *(covers ears so R doesn't hear and rhyme the next sentence)*

L: *(to audience)* What am I going to do? I'm out here to tell you a Story of Jesus from the Bible – how am I going to do that if everything I say gets turned into a poem?

Enter Illustrator carrying large sketch board pad and black marker.

Illustrator: Hey, what's going on?

(R takes hands off ears)

L: I'm here to tell a Story of Jesus from the Bible

R: My rhymes are so reliable.

Illustrator begins sketching Bible and Jesus on the sketch board

(Assistant chooses a person from the crowd, who comes forward and holds up the picture just drawn. Every time the Illustrator draws a picture, the assistant chooses another audience member to hold it up around and through the audience.)

L: just to be clear, are you going to draw everything I say?

Illustrator instantly sketches speech bubble and paper and marker with a tick in each.

R: I think they may!

L takes some deep breaths, and prepares – during the next section as the poem unfolds, the illustrator produces pictures that will form the tree, with branches and nests and birds.

L: What is God's kingdom like?

R: What picture can I strike?

L: What story can I use?

R: What poem can I choose?

L: To explain it?

R: In my brain bit

L: It is like what will happen

R: So people start clappin' *(begins clapping, and gestures to audience to join)*

L: When a mustard seed
Is planted in the earth.
It is the smallest seed
In all the earth.
Once it is sown,

R: This is well known

L: It grows bigger

R: Big big bigger

L: Than any plant in the patch

R: No vegie can match

L: It even puts out

R: This will make you shout

L: Branches that are big

R: Big big big

L: Big enough for birds

R: Let me hear the words

L: To nest in its shade

R: Repeat to fade (*getting softer*)

L: To nest in its shade (*getting softer*)

R: Repeat to fade (*getting softer*)

L: To nest in its shade (*getting softer*)

R: Repeat to fade. (*getting softer*)

(Pause)

L: *(starts applauding)* That was great!!! Look what you did with your voices and this pen!

R: They were so amazing. Can we please do it again.

L: This started off as just as small Bible bit...

R: and got bigger and bigger just look at it! *(pointing to the pictures)*

L: Ready?

R: Setty!!

(During this time through the illustrator and assistant gather the people with pictures together to form an image of one tree with many branches and birds and nests.)

L: What is God's kingdom like?

R: What picture can I strike?

L: What story can I use?

R: What poem can I choose?

L: To explain it?

R: In my brain bit

L: It is like what will happen

R: So people start clappin'

L: When a mustard seed
Is planted in the earth.
It is the smallest seed
In all the earth.
Once it is sown,

R: This is well know

L: It grows bigger

R: Big big bigger

L: Than any plant in the patch

R: No vegie can match

L: It even puts out

R: This will make you shout

L: Branches that are big

R: Big big big

L: Big enough for birds

R: Let me hear the words

L: To nest in its shade

R: Repeat to fade (*getting softer*)

L: To nest in its shade (*getting softer*)

R: Repeat to fade (*getting softer*)

L: To nest in its shade (*getting softer*)

R: Repeat to fade. (*getting softer*)

(Pause)

L: Thanks for all being a part of this together. That got a bit wild and out of control.

R: I know – it was great we just got on a roll!

L: Actually that's how a mustard shrub grows

R: Small and sprawly but spreading welcome as it goes

L: This is a famous Joke-poem-story with a serious and deep meaning that Jesus told to help people understand God's ways of living together.

R: Jesus told lots of these Joke-poem-stories – and they always pointed to God's ways, where everyone is welcome, and nothing goes to waste.

L: Hey – that didn't rhyme!

R: It's the end of poem time.

(exit)

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MULTI-AGE WORSHIP

Multi-Age Missional Worship Service

Get the Road Ready – Mark 1:1-8

Introduction

This session is an 'extra' to offer something different to the material you would use normally in a 'holiday gospelling' context. If you are on a beach mission – these resources can be used to develop an open-air worship service, or resource a team contributing to a local church service.

Multi-age missional worship expressions have the potential to be beautifully authentic and inclusive. Participation, rather than a formal performance culture is the engine of these events. As you consider how to use these ideas, look for the opportunities for community, contribution and interaction.

Remember that the 5 C's; Connect – Context – Content – Consider – Consequence, provide a good framework for structuring any event; a small group session, a parent coffee conversation or a service of worship. If you look closely many church services would fit this pattern – whether using the prayer book or a Pentecostal 'free-worship' type.

Tips for Leading

Our Christian culture is full of strangeness: we often over-explain simple things we are doing, and then assume everyone understands other things that can be quite obscure to the uninitiated.

If you are leading in Multi-age Missional worship, think firstly about what the people there will be doing. Design your leading and instructions around their actions, rather than your own thoughts.

Model what you expect to see.

Keep good eye contact with everyone – a leader can still show their passion for worship with their eyes open!

Avoid jargon terms like 'praise and worship', 'the word', 'sermon', 'Bob is going to come and bring us the...' 'enter into a time of...', 'come before God and...'

Best to stick to concrete verbs that everyone knows: 'Sing', 'Read', 'Think', 'Move around', 'get up and talk to someone' 'Bob's turn to talk now'

Remember that we are simply formed over time by what we do: giving a long theological reason for something doesn't make an action any more valid, or speed up the process. For the families that may choose to join us, even though they are not regular attenders of a church, just being there is a significant spiritual step, a formative experience and undoubtedly a delight to God.

ORDER OF SERVICE**Pre-service**

- Labyrinth

Welcome, Songs and Opening Prayer

- The Kingdom of God
- Let your kingdom come

Connect

- My Favourites – an intro to John the Baptist

Context

- 'Are you Ready?' story

Song & Dance

- 'God Sent Jesus to make peace with us'

Content:

- Bible Readings x3
1. Plain memorised presentation
 2. Interactive, responsive reading with prophetic shouts
 3. Drama sketch with road signs

Consider

- Short talk/reflection
- Cross and road signs

Consequence

- Straightening the road of the labyrinth
- Prayer cards
- Song: Bring Heaven to Earth

Song

- Mighty to Save

Sending Prayer and invitation to trace feet

** Prepare a one page service sheet with the lyrics of the songs, the sending prayer, the Bible reading and a word of welcome.*

Sample welcome:

Welcome from the McCrae SUFM team.

We are a team of volunteers formed from a number of churches in Victoria under the banner of Scripture Union. We invite you to join us in worship today. All of us are outside of our normal patterns and places of worship today. Things might be a little unusual or unexpected for us all, but we gather simply to honour God and hear his Words of life.

LABYRINTH AND MUSIC**Instructions for Labyrinth**

Using 50cm x 1.5, 2.0, 2.5 and 3 meter lengths of industrial black plastic construct a maze/labyrinth. It should have plenty of dead ends and symbolic obstacles (swords/monsters/pay \$6m/swamp of despair) blocking the way, as well as several large (beanbag) hills. Note: wrap the bean bags in black garbage bags to keep them clean and add to the effect.

This labyrinth is to be ready at least 15 minutes before the service begins, and people are invited to try it before the service.

Towards the end of the service, the congregation will be invited to help dismantle the crooked and confusing streets and to make the way straight.

- They will also be invited to add prayer cards to the road.
- This takes place while the band plays 'Bring Heaven to Earth' which names lots of ways that we might want to see things made right. Some people may choose to sit and sing the song or listen and reflect on the words.
- At the end of the service the invitation is given to trace our feet on the path of following Jesus straight and fair and good ways (oil pastels)

Music

Musical worship is not always easily accessible to many people in Australian society. Below there are suggestions for some of the music. Remember to have multiple things happening during the song – so there are visual and active ways to participate, even if you're not a comfortable singer.

The music suggested here is a mix of traditional hymn, contemporary song, and specifically written for SUFM mission music. Our teams are usually drawn from a variety of different Christian communities with diverse cultures and traditions. Our public worship will be all the more authentic if we represent that, selecting each song intentionally, than if we replicate just one churches style. We should remember that



the general public have many different encounters with churches and denominations, and these carry both positive and negative associations. Spend some time in your team worship learning the songs together, so at least the team are all familiar with the music and lyrics.

Hymn: "The Kingdom of God is Justice and Joy"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olOvlgrdN5s>

This is a well-known traditional tune with words that match John's announcement of the Kingdom in Mark 1:1-8.

- Sing the first verse acapella
- As this song is sung, pause and repeat the phrases at the end of the first line of each verse
 - "Justice & Joy"
 - "Mercy & Grace"
 - "Challenge & Choice"
- Prepare large protest placards highlighting phrases in the song. During the singing of the song, these are placed around the front of the gathering space – prepare some team members to do this, but to invite volunteers to add them.
 - "Justice & Joy"
 - "Mercy & Grace"
 - Captives Freed"
 - "Outcasts welcomed!"
 - "Hope in despair!"
 - "Challenge & Choice"
 - "Love for Us"
 - "Good News"
 - "Repent! Rejoice!"
 - "God's Kingdom is come!"
 - and non-verbals/emoticons

"God Sent Jesus To Make Peace With Us"

– memory verse track from Welcome Mat CD (suvic.org.au/click)

- Have a couple of leaders prepare a simple but energetic and building choreography for this track, mirroring the building anticipation of the long intro – and the punch of the single phrase 'God Sent Jesus to Make Peace With Us' as the big finish.

"Mighty To Save"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-08YZF87OBQ>

"Let Your Kingdom Come"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kjMaYqhQnw>

"Bring Heaven to Earth" (see Consequence activity)

https://andyflannagan.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/we_are_blessed.mp3

CONNECT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

MY FAVOURITES

I have a box of Favourites chocolates here, because we are about to hear about my Favourite person in the Bible. But first, we are going to find out some of our favourite things.

You are going to have the chance to ask the person next to you about some of their favourite things.

The first favourite thing to ask about is our favourite landscape – maybe it's a mountain or a beach, or a forest or a garden. Ask the person next to you what their favourite landscape is.

(Give 30-40 seconds for people to do this)

Let's hear some favourite landscapes – a chocolate for anyone who is brave enough to tell us. *(Take two of three answers)*

Time for our second topic. Favourite piece of clothing or favourite thing to wear. Ask the person next to you about their favourite clothing.

(Give 30-40 seconds for people to do this)

Let's hear some favourite clothing – a chocolate for anyone who is brave enough to tell us. *(Take two of three answers)*

And our final favourite thing is your favourite thing to eat that is sweet and crunchy

(Give 30-40 seconds for people to do this)

Let's hear some favourite sweet and crunchies – a chocolate for anyone who is brave enough to tell us. *(Take two of three answers)*

Haven't we learned a lot! We're a quirky bunch!

I'm not going to tell you my favourite things, but instead I'm going to tell you the answers my favourite person from the Bible would give to those questions.

My Favourite person from the Bible is a person called John the Baptist.

And his favourite landscape was the desert wilderness – that's where he grew up and lived.

And his favourite thing to wear was camel hair clothes. I guess that is ok in the desert, but it's pretty rough and a bit odd.

Finally, John's favourite thing to eat that was sweet and crunchy was...wait for it...bugs and honey.

Let's hear his story now. *(Context: Are you Ready?)*

CONTEXT...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER CONSEQUENCE

'ARE YOU READY' STORY

Simply present this story with the pictures

<https://ctm.uca.edu.au/children-and-families/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2020/08/John-1-19-28-Jesus-and-John-the-Baptiser.pdf>

Are you ready?
 Are you ready for a story?
 Are you ready for surprises?
 Are you ready for something new?

*

Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah
 get a strange message from God

“Time to get ready!
 Ready for something new.
 Ready for surprises!
 You are going to have a baby!”

*

Mary and her fiancé Joseph
 get a strange message from God

“Time to get ready!
 Ready for something new.
 Ready for surprises!
 You are going to have a baby!”

*

When Elizabeth said
 “I’m having a baby!”
 Her friends were shocked and surprised.

“You’re too old!”
 they said.

*

When Mary said
 “I’m having a Baby!”
 Her friends were shocked and surprised.

“You’re too young!
 (and not yet married)”

they said.

*



But Elizabeth said

“It’s ok.

This is something from God.
It will be scary and wonderful
and difficult and amazing for us all.
So let’s get ready for God.”

*

And Mary said

“It’s ok.

This is something from God.
It will be scary and wonderful
and difficult and amazing
for us all.
So let’s get ready for God.”

*

Elizabeth has baby John and he is...
unusual

*

He grows up and lives in the desert.
He wears camel hair clothes
and eats locusts and honey.

*

And he calls out
“Time to get ready.
Ready for surprises,
ready for something new.
Time to get ready for God!”

*

People come to hear what he says.
“How shall we get ready?” they ask.
“Make the crooked straight
and the rough places smooth.”

(Get fair, don’t be bullies, give others a shot, share stuff around.)

*

Mary has baby Jesus and he is...
an ordinary kid.

*

He grows up and lives in the village,
he wears regular clothes
and eats the food that everyone likes.

*



But soon comes the time when Jesus gets ready.
 He hears John calling out
 “Time to get ready.
 Ready for surprises.
 Ready for something new.
 Time to get ready for God!”
 *
 Jesus says “I’m ready.”
 Are we ready?

CONTENT...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — **CONTENT** — CONSIDER — CONSEQUENCE

THREE READINGS OF MARK 1:1-8

There are three Bible readings, all of the same passage, enabling the passage to be heard and explored in three different ways.

Repeating the Bible reading in this way emphasises the Bible as the foundation of our gathering, not a musical style or a liturgical tradition.

Bible Reading 1

Mark 1:1-8

- *One person delivers this passage from memory, naturally, as if a ‘first telling’. This takes about 90 seconds.*

Bible Reading 2

- *A reader reads the passage and pauses for interjections from the audience of prophetic affirmation – ‘Thus saith the Lord’; ‘Preach it Sister’; ‘Word’; ‘The Word of the Lord’ whenever there is reference to the message of God, or a prophet, or the coming of God. These are marked in the text below with a [☺]. Prepare the team to be enthusiastic in this to encourage others.*

Intro: We are going to hear that part of the Bible again now – but this time there is a chance for you to join in. This part of the Bible, right at the beginning of the Story of Jesus, announces the message of Good News, the Gospel.



So each time there is mention of this message, or the messenger – called a prophet – or the voice of the messenger – I’m going to pause, and raise my hand. And this is the cue for you to dig deep and find your inner prophet or your inner Gospel preacher or even your inner James Brown and call out “Thus saith the Lord” or “Preach it Sister/Brother” or “Word” or “The Word of the Lord”.

Let’s practice that now.

(Raise your hand, and lead a practice – repeat if necessary to establish the routine)

From the Bible from the Gospel according to Mark, Chapter 1.

This is the good news [☺] about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

It began just as it had been written by Isaiah the prophet, [☺]

“I am sending my messenger [☺]

to get the way ready for you.

a voice shouting [☺] in the desert

‘Get the road ready

for the Lord!

Make straight paths

for him.” [☺]

So John the Baptist showed up in the desert and told everyone, [☺] “Be baptized! Turn back to God! Forgiveness of sins!”

From all Judea country and Jerusalem city crowds of people went to John and were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

John wore camel’s hair and a leather strap around his waist and ate grasshoppers and wild honey.

John also told the people, [☺] “Someone more powerful is going to come. [☺]

And I am not good enough even to stoop and untie his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with Holy Spirit!” [☺]

Bible Reading 3 – Road worker Drama Script

Summary: A troop of Road Work Safety Officers set up a series of ‘road signs’ which illustrate the ‘landscape’ of the text of Mark 1:1-8

Following straight on from the previous reading, three road workers (A, B and C) enter in Hi-Viz vests, hard hats, etc., traffic cones and a pile of road signs (perhaps in a wheelbarrow), and engage with the previous Reader 2.

During the reading they put up road signs that represent different actions in the text.



Make sure you have worked out the logistics of the signs. One way of managing this would be to quietly invite an audience member to come forward and hold up each sign.

*

A: Excuse me, but did I hear something about a road?

Reader 2: Yes, we were just reading from the gospel of Mark that John the Baptist told people to ‘get the road ready...’

B: *(cutting in)* Stop right there – do you have a roadworks permit for this Bible reading?

Reader 2: No, but we’re just...

C: *(cutting in)* No excuses – we can’t have this kind of thing. If there are going to be road works, we need roadwork safety.

Reader 2: I really don’t think that’s necessary, we are just reading the Bible together, we aren’t going to actually build...

A: Ah I’ve been in the business a while, you say you’re just reading the Bible and you’re not going to do anything but I think that’s highly unlikely. Whoever reads the Bible without wanting to put it into action!!??

B: No – you’re lucky we’re here. We’ll take care of all the road work safety signs for you.

C: Don’t you worry - we’re professionals.

Reader 2: Ok, well. If you really think it’s necessary...

A: Here, give me that Bible...

“This is the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It began just as it had been written by Isaiah the prophet,

B: Ah – you see – written about beforehand by Isaiah – that’s the kind of thing you need- advance warning! Road works ahead. –



C: We’ll just put up a few signs just to make it clear.



[B & C begin putting up some 'Road Work Ahead' 'God at Work' signs]

A: "I am sending my messenger to get the way ready for you."
(breaking off from reading the text) – Right, see what you'll need here are some 'clear way' signs. Lads!!!



B & C: We're on to it

A: (continues with the reading) "A voice shouting in the desert - 'Get the road ready for the Lord! Make straight paths for him.'"

B: Straight paths did you say?

A: Yeah, got a sign for that?

C: Already on it!



A: So John the Baptist showed up in the desert

C: The Desert? Got an 'Unsealed road' sign, mate?



B: Yeah – over here.

A: "And told everyone, "Be baptized!" Be baptised! What is that?!

Reader 2: In ancient times people would be plunged under water, just for few seconds, as a sign that they wanted a fresh start with God.

A: Baptised – under water, eh? Better get a flood warning.



(returns to reading) John told everyone, "Be Baptised! Turn back to God!"

C: U turn sign?



B: Bedwy!

A: John told everyone, "Be Baptised! Turn back to God! Forgiveness of sins!"

B: (scratching their head) Hmm... Forgiveness of sins?

Reader 2: Forgiveness of sins means when God makes broken things work like new again.

C: Gotcha!



A: "From all Judea country and Jerusalem city crowds of people went... "

B: (cutting in) from the city and the country? Merging traffic.



C: Crowds of people? Heavy traffic ahead.

A: "From all Judea country and Jerusalem city crowds of people went to John and were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

"John wore camel's hair and a leather strap around his waist and ate grasshoppers and wild honey."

No comment, B&C add wildlife signs.



Reader 2: "John also told the people, "Someone more powerful is going to come. And I am not good enough even to stoop and untie his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with Holy Spirit!"

A: Well, there you go I think you're all ready now with all the signs you need for your Bible reading.

Reader 2: This is the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It began just as it had been written by Isaiah the prophet, "I am sending my messenger to get the way ready for you. A voice shouting in the desert:

'Get the road ready for the Lord!
Make straight paths for him.'"

So John the Baptist showed up in the desert and told everyone, "Be baptized! Turn back to God! Forgiveness of sins!"

From all Judea country and Jerusalem city crowds of people went to John and were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

John wore camel's hair and a leather strap around his waist and ate grasshoppers and wild honey.

John also told the people, "Someone more powerful is going to come. And I am not good enough even to stoop and untie his sandals I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with Holy Spirit!"

Reader 2 reads straight through, expressively, while the Road workers move along the row of signs in order as they correspond with the text. Then leave.

Segue to Consider...

CONSIDER...

CONNECT — CONTEXT — CONTENT — **CONSIDER** — CONSEQUENCE

SHORT REFLECTION

During this talk a couple of team members attach street signs with the names of the streets mentioned to a wooden cross.

'Lost all Hope Street'

'Smashed by the Romans Road'

'Crooked Deals Drive'

'Given up on God Boulevard'

'War Road.'

'Poverty Way'

'Revenge Crescent'

'Greedy Grove'.

At the time that John the Baptist lived his weird ways in the wilderness, the Jewish people, God's people, had suffered many misfortunes. They had been conquered and enslaved and made captives and put to forced labour and invaded again, so many times in the centuries before. And they had also had their own problems, not holding well to justice among their own community, and being unfaithful to the good ways God had given them to live.

They felt like they were living on

'Lost all Hope Street'

'Smashed by the Romans Road'

After going down

'Crooked Deals Drive'

And 'Given up on God Boulevard'

And they had been a long time on

'War Road.'

'Poverty Way'

And sometimes they just wanted to find the way to

'Revenge Crescent'

Maybe a few of them might manage a place on 'Greedy Grove'.

They needed and wanted to set things straight, but they were unable to do it themselves.

In their sacred writings there were prophets who spoke about getting ready for someone who would know and live God's ways so well, so completely.

Could there really be someone like that?



When John the Baptists began speaking in the wilderness, he said, 'Get ready, he's nearly here...'

Get ready for God – put things right, give up crookedness and short cuts.

John was right. Jesus came. He was the one to set things right.

How did he set things right?

By the way he lived, and the way he died.

And Jesus says to us all; Join me on the road of living God's way. The road to being right with God, the highway of hope, the way of love.

Segue to Consequence: Straightening the Road

CONSEQUENCE...

CONNECT CONTEXT CONTENT CONSIDER **CONSEQUENCE**

STRAIGHTENING THE ROAD

*Before the service begins, a **Labyrinth** of 'roads' is set up:*

This is constructed of pathways of black industrial plastic, sign posts, random objects, swords, 'ruins' made from cardboard boxes, road blocks, garbage bags of rubbish.

As people arrive they are invited to travel the labyrinth.

*

At this point in the service following the Consider Short Reflection, invite people to respond to the story of John and the invitation to make the road straight and get ready for God, by deconstructing the labyrinth, and making one long straight road through your space.

Provide prayer cards and markers for people to write and add prayers for God's ways to come in situations in our world and in our lives.

During this time, the musicians sing 'Bring Heaven to Earth', by Andy Flanagan which names lots of ways that we might want to see things made right. Some people may choose to sit and sing the song, or listen and reflect on the words, or use the words as a prompt for their prayers.

Before the final sending prayer, invite people at end of the service to trace



around their feet with oil pastels on the straight black plastic road as a sign of their intention to follow Jesus on the path of God's good ways of love and justice, as they go.

Sending Prayer

Our Great and Loving God,
You call us into your kingdom
of Justice and Joy,
Mercy and Grace,
Challenge and Choice
Love and Service
You make us right with you
And reconciled with one-another.
Make us ready!
Make us ready with words of hope
For those in valleys of despair
Make us ready with truth
to make crooked straight,
and ready with grace
to make rough places smooth.
Let us go in peace to love
and serve the world In the name of Christ,
Amen.