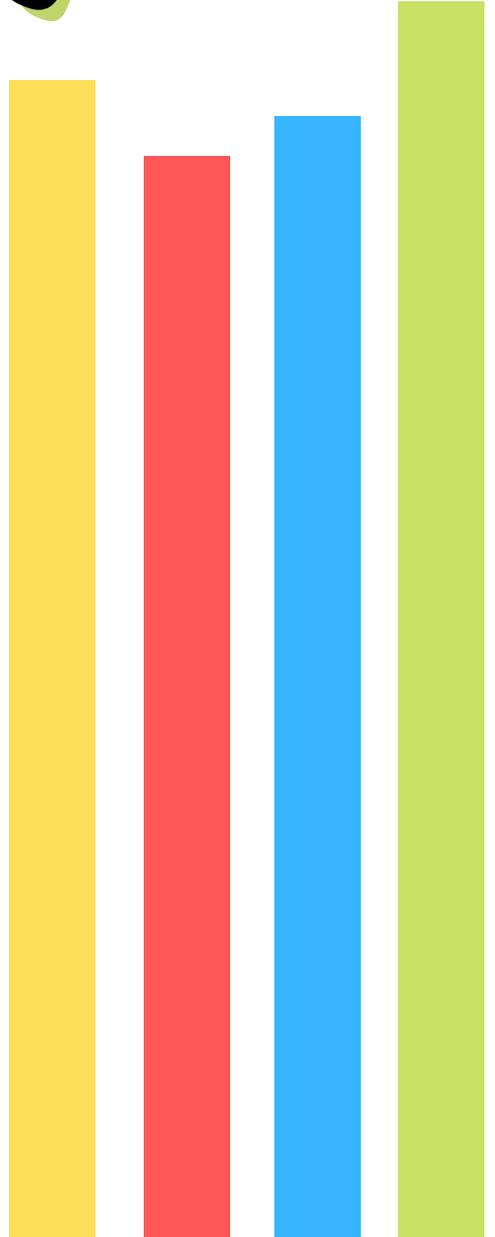


MAY - JULY 2021



weekly@

LECTIONARY RESOURCE



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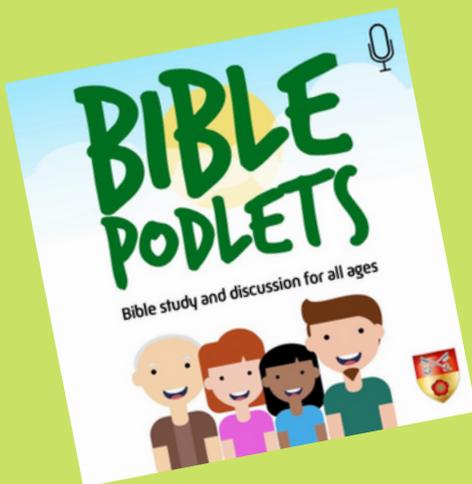
LECTIONARY RESOURCE

WELCOME

Welcome to our Weekly@ lectionary resource which has been created to support your children's ministry by providing ideas which sit along side the themes within the weekly gospel lectionary reading.

You will find that many of our suggested activities come with adaptations, which vary from age adaptations, to budget and even location adaptations, making sure you're fully equipped to be able to modify Weekly@ to suit your group context.

IF YOU LOVE THIS RESOURCE....



If you love our Weekly@ materials then don't forget to head over to the resources area of our website where you will find lots more free resources, including Bible Podlets, our children's Bible study and discussion podcast, a series of e-booklets with ideas for under 5s and seasonal specials such as our summer holiday club!

Products – Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education (bdeducation.org.uk)



We love seeing the way you use this resource so make sure to share with us on Facebook and tag us in @BDBEUpdates.

Aim: To understand the importance of staying connected to Jesus.

OVERVIEW

In today's passage, Jesus described himself as the true vine. Although some of us may never have seen a vineyard, they would have been a very familiar sight in Jesus' time. People would often pass vineyards as they walked from place to place, and some people would own their own vineyard, or work in a vineyard. Because of this, they would be able to identify fruitful branches and separate them from branches that would drain the vine's energy. The unfruitful branches would be pruned off and burned which renewed the vine's vitality. Useless vines drain the plant's strength, so to leave them in place serves no purpose, and reduced the value of the vineyard. The message to us is clear. Being unconnected to Jesus is akin to being cut off from the source of life. Without our connection to Jesus, we are completely dependent on our own resources, which will bear little or no fruit, so although our own resources might produce growth, that growth is likely to serve no purpose.

PRAYER

Dear God, help us to stay connected to Jesus so we can produce amazing fruit for you. Amen.

ALL AGE TALK

Start your talk this morning with a quiz. Share with the congregation pairs of words that can be connected by inserting a single common word in between them, for example if the two words were Traffic and Tart, the connecting word would be 'Jam' - Traffic Jam / Jam Tart.

- 1) Funny / China (Bone)
- 2) Times / Cloth (Table)
- 3) Blue / Bank (Bottle)
- 4) Dandelion / Work (Clock)
- 5) Pine / Pie (Apple)
- 6) Cricket / Stick (Match)
- 7) Tennis / Gown (Ball)
- 8) Wind / Cleaner (Pipe)

How did everyone get on? Did anyone manage to find the word that connected every pair? In today's Bible reading Jesus told his followers that he was the true vine and the source of life for all people. He also said that his followers were the branches and they were called to bear good fruit for his Father's glory. People in Jesus' time would have been very familiar with grapevines - they grew everywhere! Jesus is the vine and has roots that go deep down into the ground. All of the branches are connected to the vine and cannot produce leaves and fruit by themselves. If you break a branch off an apple tree and keep it in your house, are apples going to grow off that branch? Of course not! The branch cannot grow fruit unless it is attached to the tree and grapes don't grow unless the branch is attached to the grapevine. So we can only grow and bear fruit when we are attached to Jesus.

When we choose to follow Jesus, we are drawn into a life-giving relationship with him. We are like branches that Jesus calls to bear good fruit... not grapes, but the good fruit of living lives that honour him.

SONG

[Planet Shakers - Dance \(Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)

SET THE SCENE

As the children are arriving, play a game of 'Who am I?' Have the names of some people that the children will know (e.g. footballers, singers, actors, etc.) written on sticky notes. Put a sticky note on each child's forehead without them seeing the name written on it. They must then take turns asking the rest of the group questions which can only be answered with a 'Yes' or 'No' answer in order to find out the name of the person they have been given. In today's story Jesus said, "I am the true vine".

DISCUSSION

Play a game where you hunt around your room, or look out of the window to find things that are alive (people, plants, trees, animals), used to be alive (feathers, twigs, shells, dry leaves) and things that have never been alive (toys, mobile phone, stones). You could either gather the items together and categorise them, or you could make a chart. Talk about how the things that used to be alive are no longer connected to their source of life (the animal, or the plant / tree) so cannot live and grow.

Bring out a plant pot with a stick 'planted' in the soil. Pretend that you've been trying to grow a tree for a while but nothing has been happening. You've watered it, given it plenty of light, but nothing. What could the problem be? Eventually 'realise' the fact that the branches get all the nutrients that they need from the tree. They can't live or grow without it, so you're never going to get any fruit/flowers/leaves on your stick because it's been separated from the tree.

The same is true for us and our life with Jesus. Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." If we keep our lives connected to Jesus, we will get what we need to grow. Our lives will produce beautiful leaves and delicious fruit, but if we are separated from Jesus, our leaves will wither and die. See if the children can interpret what this means.

It means that Jesus wants us to do good things, like being kind, generous and showing love to other people, just like he does. But we can't do this properly on our own so we have to stay connected to Jesus so we can produce the 'fruit' that God wants us to.

ALTERNATIVE

An alternative, helpful, illustration would be to show the children a lamp and 'wonder' why the light isn't working when you switch it on. The children will be very quick to point out to you that it's because it isn't plugged into the socket! Plug the lamp in and show them that now the lamp is connected to a power source, the light works. It's impossible for the light to shine if the lamp isn't plugged in. The Bible story for today shows us that we can't 'shine' unless we stay connected to Jesus.

TAKE HOME

Keeping Connected Give the children an outline of the grapes on the vine printed onto thin card, along with some purple sticky dots. Talk about what they can do to stay connected to Jesus (reading their Bible, coming to church, praying, being friends with other people who believe in Jesus, etc.). Suggest that each time they do one of those things, they can add a sticky dot to their vine on the card. The children can take these home and see how the fruit on their card multiplies each time they do things that help them stay connected to Jesus

RESPONSE

Good Fruit Help the children to look up Galatians 5:22-23 in the Bible and then discuss what sort of fruit they think Jesus wants each of them to make. Offer each child a purple balloon and invite them to blow it up whilst they reflect on the passage for a moment. Once the balloons are inflated and knotted, ask the group to choose one fruit of the Spirit and write it on their balloon. Then help them tie their balloons together so they look like a large bunch of grapes.

ACTIVITY

Paper Chain Display As a group, make a long paperchain representing a vine out of brown strips of paper. Fix this to a wall or display board. Then ask the children to draw around their hands on green paper and cut them out. These will be the leaves; fix these to the display along your paperchain vine. Next create bunches of grapes using strips of purple paper and making paperchains where the loops are clustered together. Hang these so they are attached to your paperchain vine too. Finish your display with the words, 'Jesus said I am the true vine (John 15:1)'.

GAME

Holding Hands Divide the group into two equal teams and ask them to line up with each person holding hands with the people either side of them, so that their fingers are woven together. Place a bowl of 10 grapes at one end of each line, and an empty bowl at the other end. The children must pass the grapes from one end of the line using their clasped hands, down to the other end of the line and into the empty bowl. The first team to transfer all of their grapes down the line is the winner. If a grape is dropped onto the floor it must be returned to the bowl at the beginning of the line.

ADAPTATION

Ask the children to help you cut out lots of different fruit shapes out of coloured paper and then write the fruits of the spirit on the fruit (one word such as 'joy' or 'kindness' on each). Ask them to choose one or more pieces of fruit to take home as a reminder to pray for that gift from God.

ADAPTATION

Draw or paint a vine on a piece of paper. Then use circular shaped stamps cut out of potato halves dipped in purple paint to print a bunch of grapes. If you are feeling especially creative, you could experiment with potato printing other fruit shapes too!

ADAPTATION

Play a word association game where everyone must take turns in saying a word that is connected in some way to the word said by the previous player. For example, if you started with the word 'branch' the chain might go: branch, stick, match, tennis, net, fish, etc. Try to make the longest chain of connections you can.

LET'S CHAT

Ask your child what they did and tell them what you learned in church today!

What happens if a branch doesn't stay connected to a tree or vine?

What good fruit do you produce as a family for God?

LET'S PRAY

As a family, make a fruit salad together using some of your favourite fruit. Whilst you are doing this, notice that lots of fruit contain pips or seeds. Jesus modelled for us what it looks like to show love, to have joy, to be patient and kind, and lots of other good things too. When we accept Jesus into our lives, God plants those seeds within us and they begin to grow! Pray together:

Father God, help us show others your love by teaching us your ways and growing us as your children. Please help us to show love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in our day to day lives. Amen

LET'S CHAT

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Aim: To think about how we follow Jesus' example and love one another.

OVERVIEW

The passage for today follows directly on from last week's verses where Jesus described himself as the true vine. Here Jesus is preparing for his death by giving some final instructions and words of advice to his disciples. Jesus was aware that his followers would come across resistance and even hatred when they tried to tell people about him, but in spite of this opposition, the disciples were called to love each other and the people that despised them. Loving others as God loved us is the heart of Christian discipleship. When we love each other, we experience the joy of obeying God, and also allow the Holy Spirit to dwell and grow in us. How it grows will depend on our connection to each other, to God and to his church. The stronger our faith, the more we will do, and it is the things that we do for Jesus and for others that bring glory to God and strengthen the Holy Spirit within us.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you for showing us what real love looks like by laying down your life for us. We ask that you put love in our hearts so we can love other people as you have loved us. Amen

ALL AGE TALK

Begin by showing the congregation some pictures of some famous pairs of best friends from film and television. Suggestions include:

- Harry Potter and Hermione Granger
- Woody and Buzz Lightyear
- Scooby Doo and Shaggy
- Rachel Green and Monica Geller
- Bart Simpson and Milhouse
- Kristoff and Sven (Frozen)
- Han Solo and Chewbacca
- Peter Parker (Tom Holland) and Ned Leeds

See if the congregation can tell you the names of each pair, and then afterwards, ask if they can guess the connection. They are all best friends! Best friends are always there for each other, they trust each other and accept each other just as they are. Some of the fictional best friend that we have just looked at love each other so much that they risk their lives for each other, and I'm sure we could find some real life examples of that too.

Jesus showed his love for us by dying on the cross for our sins, and he tells us to love other people too. I'm sure we all recognise that some people are easier to love than others. It can be a lot of work, but that's fine because God knows that we can do this work, and he knows that what we do will enrich both our lives and the lives of those we serve. When we love one another, we act as God's hands and feet to those that we meet. It sometimes takes time, effort and money to be a good friend, but the blessings outweigh the costs.

When we love one another, we fulfil the second of Jesus' two Great Commandments. When we love Jesus, he becomes our true best friend.

SONG

[God So Loved - Hillsong Kids \(with Lyrics/Subtitles\)](#)
[\(Worship Song\) - YouTube](#)

SET THE SCENE

As the children arrive, show them a selection of pictures of things that symbolise love, such as a love heart, love birds, wedding rings, a locket, red roses, a row of X's (like kisses on a card), the cross. Ask the group if they can tell you what connects the things in the pictures - they all represent love. Talk about why each picture represents love. Write a list of other things that can they think of that symbolise love? e.g. someone helping someone else, a hug, etc.

DISCUSSION

Before the session, write down the qualities of love as described in 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 on pieces of paper and hide them around your room. Add in some 'red herrings' such as 'Love is all around', 'Love never dies', 'Love is in the air', etc. Challenge the children to find the pieces of paper and then see if they can tell you which are from the bible and which are not. The verses from 1 Corinthians 13 are great for explaining what it means to love someone, but it doesn't tell us who we should love. Thankfully, we can find that out from our Bible passage for today.

Read the verses from a children's Bible or suitable translation.

So, what have we learned from our passage today? Jesus commands us to love each other, and by each other, he means everyone! The other thing is that Jesus commands us to love exactly like he loves! That's pretty big, I mean, is that even possible?! Truthfully the answer is no. We are all sinners who make mistakes and Jesus is perfect so we can never match up to him. But, that doesn't mean we shouldn't try!

The verses from 1 Corinthians 13 told us what love is, but what does love look like in action? Discuss their ideas. You may find it helpful to watch this YouTube video together which shows some children talking about love to get the conversation started.

[Cute Kids Answer--What is Love? - YouTube](#)

You could even make your own video where your children talk about what they think love is, which could be shared with the wider congregation. Make sure you obtain parental consent as appropriate before you do so.

ALTERNATIVE

If you have younger children you could focus on the concept that God's love is bigger than any other love. Ask them to stretch their arms out as wide as they can... God's love is wider than that! Stretch up their arms as tall as they can... God's love is taller than that! Jump in the air as high as they can... God's love is higher than that! Make the biggest tower they can out of bricks... God's love is bigger than that! Make the longest train track that they can... God's love is longer than that! The Bible tells us to love one another, just as God loves us. How can we show others that we love them?

TAKE HOME

Make heart shaped biscuits using heart cookie cutters for the children to take home and give to someone they love. You will find lots of recipes online so you can choose a simple one which suits the equipment and amount of time that you have. Alternatively, you could make the biscuits in advance and ask the children to ice / decorate them. If you don't have access to a kitchen, you could make small heart shaped peppermint creams, or you could simply provide the children with a small packet of Love Heart sweets to take away to give to someone, along with a little message saying why they chose that person.

RESPONSE

Floating Heart Prayers Provide everyone with a piece of paper and ask them to draw and cut out two love heart shapes. Ask the children to think about a person who it might feel difficult to love, for example someone at school who they haven't been getting on with. Write their name, or draw a picture of that person on one of the hearts. Then ask them to think of a person who they love very much and who loves them. Write their name, or draw a picture of that person on the other heart. Fold the two curved sections plus the point at the bottom of the heart into the centre. Float the folded hearts on the surface of some water in a container (flaps facing up) and pray for the people on them whilst you watch what happens.

ACTIVITY

Memory Spinners Give each child two discs of thin card and a drinking straw. On one piece of card, ask them to draw a love heart in the centre and colour it in. On the other piece of card, they are going to write a memory verse from today's passage around the edge of the circle; Jesus said, "love one another as I have loved you." Show the children how to tape the straw to the back of the disc with the heart on it - ensure that the picture is the right way up if you hold the straw like its a lollypop! Next, glue the disc with the writing on it so it is back-to-back with the heart disc and the straw is sandwiched in the middle. Demonstrate how, by holding the straw between your palms and rubbing them together, the pictures spin and look as if they have become one.

GAME

Bubble Battle Divide your group into two teams. Give half of the children a small bottle of bubbles, with a bubble wand and explain that on the count of three, you want them to blow as many bubbles as they can. The other team however will be tasked with popping the bubbles that have been blown. Give the children a couple of minutes to do this before calling 'time' and then see how many bubbles are left. Blow bubbles again, this time giving both teams bottles of bubbles and see how many bubbles they can make collectively in the same length of time. We can think of the bubbles as representing love, but the bubbles can be destroyed when people come along and don't behave the way that God wants us to. When we follow Jesus' commandment to love one another and are all blowing bubbles together, there is more love to go around.

ADAPTATION

Give each child a strip of paper and ask them to write the word 'LOVE' on it in bubble letters, then decorate it. Get the children to help you stick their word art onto a larger piece of paper to form the shape of the infinity symbol. Talk about how love is limitless - no matter how many people we love, there is always more love in our hearts.

ADAPTATION

To help younger children to explore the concept of love, you could read the book 'Guess How Much I Love You' by Sam McBratney together. There are a selection of activities to go with the story to choose from on this website: [Guess How Much I Love You Activities](#)

ADAPTATION

Play a memory game where the first person says, "I love you more than..." and then names something that they love, for example holidays. The next player says, "I love you more than holidays and..." and then adds something of their own. Continue with this so that your list grows and becomes more challenging to remember each time.

LET'S CHAT

Ask your child what they did and tell them what you learned in church today!

Talk together about the people that you love, and the people that love you.

How do you like to feel love? By being hugged, or by someone spending time with you, etc.

How do you like to show your love for other people?

LET'S PRAY

Look at some photographs of family and friends and spend some time talking about those people. Think about how you got to know them and what you noticed about them when you first met. What loving qualities do these people show? Talk about how someone may look different than us – such as being a different age, speaking a different language, or looking different – but we should love every person because they are all special in their own way. Pray together:

Dear Father, help us to remember that Jesus taught us to love one another just as you loved him and as he loved us. Show us how to love every person and help us to recognise loving qualities in others. Amen

LET'S CHAT

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Dear Father, help us to remember that Jesus taught us to love one another just as you loved him and as he loved us. Show us how to love every person and help us to recognise loving qualities in others. Amen

Aim: To understand that followers of Jesus are called to continue the work that he started.

OVERVIEW

The Bible passage for today is part of a bigger picture which begins with Jesus washing his disciples feet (John 13) and concludes with this prayer for his disciples. The reason that Jesus gives for this prayer is that these disciples are his - he sees them as a gift from his Father. He has spent several years with them, and knows them intimately, so they are very precious to him. Knowing that he must leave these friends behind, Jesus commends them to his Father's care. As part of this prayer, Jesus explicitly mentions those who will come to follow him based on the testimony of the disciples, making it especially relevant for us today. As Christians we should not isolate ourselves from the world, but by maintaining a loving relationship with Jesus we can be in the world, but not of the world. We can be fully involved in life knowing that God offers us protection.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, as followers of you, show us how to continue the work that you have started. Help us to stand out in this world as someone that is working for your glory. Amen

ALL AGE TALK

When someone dies, usually that person's Last Will and Testament expresses how their important, precious items should be distributed to special people in their lives. This might include land, money, jewellery, or items of personal significance. Some items that have been left in wills, however, are quite odd, no matter how you look at it. Here are some examples:

- Napoleon Bonaparte, who died in 1821, instructed that on his death his head was to be shaved and his hair distributed among his friends.
- Comedian Jack Benny, who died in 1974 made arrangements via his will for a long stemmed red rose to be delivered to his wife every day for the rest of her life.
- A man left his cousin (who he didn't get on with) his kidney stone.
- A grandfather left each of his grandchildren a chocolate bar.

When Jesus was preparing for his death, he didn't leave his friends his cloak or his carpentry tools - instead he prayed and asked for three things for his disciples (and that includes us). First he prayed for unity so that just as Jesus and the Father are one, and Jesus reveals to the world something of God, his disciples are as one and choose the way of Jesus. Second, he prayed that his disciples would be **in** the world but not **of** the world. This can be a hard concept to understand. He is saying that we must live in this world, but Jesus has called us to be separate so we remain the person God made us to be. We are called to form meaningful relationships with non-Christians, but at the same time we must be willing to be rejected because of our faith as we tell others about Jesus. Finally, Jesus prays that his disciples are sanctified, or set apart. He wants us to be able to stand out in the world knowing that if we are firmly rooted in a foundation of God's word, we find strength in that truth. This is certainly a powerful prayer and as well as providing us with instructions for how Jesus calls us, as his followers, to live, it can be our prayer for other Christians too.

SONG

[Our God - Chris Tomlin \(with lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

SET THE SCENE

Organise a relay race in your space, or go outdoors with the children, using a cardboard tube as a baton. Alternatively, you could watch this video which shows amateurs passing a baton for a relay and highlights the contrast between this, and the technique and speed of professional athletes.

[PASSING BATON SKILL \(AMATEUR VS PROFESSIONAL\) - YouTube](#)

Jesus came into the world to tell people about God's love for them, and then passed the baton onto his disciples (including us) to carry on that work.

DISCUSSION

Read out the following story. When you say a direction, e.g. left or right, the children must turn their bodies the appropriate way.

Sammy was about to set off on a journey. She put the directions into the map app on her phone and off she went, trusting the map at every turn! First she had to turn left, then right straight away. After a while she slowly took a left-hand bend which then weaved to the right, and then weaved to the left. Sammy eventually reached an area that was a complete unknown! This map had better be going the right way!! Sharp right, a sudden sharp left, then she spun around and around and around; caught on a roundabout! Finally Sammy found the exit, to the left, and at last she had reached her destination.

There are times when we all need to follow a guide or instructions in life. Each day we have to make decisions and it is sometimes difficult to know which way to go. We might sometimes choose the wrong path and come to a dead end, or might get stuck on a roundabout! When that happens we need to try again. Jesus knew that life is difficult, which is why he prayed for his disciples when he knew that the time had come for him to leave this world. This was because he knew that when he was gone, he would have passed the baton onto his disciples so that they could continue the work that he had started - sharing the good news about him and telling people how to live God's way. He asked for God to protect the disciples (and us!) and keep them safe. How do we find our way in the world? We can put our trust in God who will help to show us the way. We have his word (the Bible), and we can talk to him in prayer at any time. It may not always be easy, but with God leading the way, we know that we won't get lost.

ALTERNATIVE

As an alternative, go for a walk around your local area. You will need parental consent to do this together as a group, or you could set this as a task for families to do together before your session. Plan a short route in advance that starts and ends at your church building. Provide a map and a list of landmarks they need to look for to guide them on their journey. Afterwards, discuss how it felt when they were following the guidance. How do we find our way in this world? We put our trust in God and he shows us the way. To help us we have his word in the Bible and any time we don't know which way to turn, we can talk to him in prayer and ask him to guide and protect us.

TAKE HOME

Sensory Bottle Give everyone a clear water bottle and half fill them with water. Add a few drops food colouring and mix. In a jug, mix some baby oil with an oil-based food dye, (water based ones won't colour the oil) and mix. Pour the oil into the bottles until they are almost full. Secure the lid by taping them on, or sealing with a glue gun before the children take them home. When we look at the bottles we can remember that the oil and the water remain separate from one another. Even when we shake the bottle, they never really mix and soon are visibly separate again. Just as this coloured water remains separate from the oil, Jesus wants us to be separate from the world so we can live as God wants us to, sharing his love with others.

RESPONSE

Perfectly Placed Provide the children with a map of your local area to share, and give them each some coloured sticky dots. Ask them to stick a dot on all of the different places on the map that they have visited this week, such as school, the park, the shops, the leisure centre, etc. Talk about how Jesus places us in situations where we have opportunities to talk to others about him. Spend some time praying about how you can stand out in each of those places.

ACTIVITY

Colourful Relay Baton Make colourful relay batons using hard cardboard tubes from foil or kitchen roll and decorating them with squares of tissue paper and PVA glue. Layer up the tissue paper until you can no longer see the cardboard underneath. Once the batons have dried fully, the children can take them home and you can encourage them to use them in a relay race. As followers of Jesus, we are called to take the baton and continue the work that Jesus started whilst he was on Earth. That means passing on God's word to others!

GAME

Find Your Way Create a maze in your space for your children to navigate through. This could be done in a variety of ways so you can be as creative as you like. Perhaps you could mark something out using masking tape on the floor? Or you could arrange your furniture to make paths to follow? Or how about creating a string maze that they have to follow using their hand? Finding your way through life can be a lot like finding your way through a maze. Each day we have to make decisions and it is sometimes difficult to know which way to go. We may choose the wrong path and end up at a dead end. When that happens, we have to back up and start over again. Jesus knew that life in this world can be difficult but with God leading the way, we know that we will never get lost.

ADAPTATION

Alternatively, you could ask the children to each write a list of the places they have been this week. They can even include places they have visited digitally (e.g. a zoom call). How might they talk about Jesus in some of those environments? Remember that when they do, they aren't alone - God is with them.

ADAPTATION

Linking in with the games that use mazes below, your activity could be to get the children to create their own maze, either drawn on paper, using play dough in a shoe box lid so you can use a marble, or they could even have a go at making one digitally using an online maze generator.

ADAPTATION

If you'd rather do something on a smaller scale, you could challenge the children to race at finding their way through a maze on paper, or if you have the game, they could take turns at navigating their way through 'Screwball Scramble'. See who finished in the quickest time after everyone has had a go.

16TH MAY 2021

IN THE WORLD

JOHN 17: 6-19

LET'S CHAT

Ask your child what they did and tell them what you learned in church today!

Think about a task that someone has passed on a task for you to complete. How good were you at carrying it out?

How do you feel about the invitation to pass on God's words to other people?

LET'S PRAY

Do an activity together where you have to follow a sequence of actions in order to create the end result, for example, making a sandwich requires you to first, take out the ingredients, second, butter the bread, third, put the filling on, finally, put the 'lid' on the sandwich. Then think about this sequence: first God gave words to Jesus, second, Jesus shares those words with his disciples, then, the disciples pass on God's words to others. Pray together:

Father God, thank you for your words that you gave to Jesus. Help us to listen to those words and show us how to share them with others. Amen

16TH MAY 2021

IN THE WORLD

JOHN 17: 6-19

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How do you feel about the invitation to pass on God's words to other people?

LET'S PRAY

Do an activity together where you have to follow a sequence of actions in order to create the end result, for example, making a sandwich requires you to first, take out the ingredients, second, butter the bread, third, put the filling on, finally, put the 'lid' on the sandwich. Then think about this sequence: first God gave words to Jesus, second, Jesus shares those words with his disciples, then, the disciples pass on God's words to others. Pray together:

Father God, thank you for your words that you gave to Jesus. Help us to listen to those words and show us how to share them with others. Amen

Aim: To understand that God sent his Holy Spirit to guide us and to help us achieve great things for him.

OVERVIEW

The words that we read in today's Bible passage were spoken by Jesus in the 'Upper Room' when he met with his disciples for the last time prior to his arrest and crucifixion. Jesus knew that soon after his resurrection he would be leaving them, and recognised that his disciples would face rejection and even hostility as they go out into the world as his witnesses. Jesus promised them that the 'Helper' (the Holy Spirit) would be sent to them in order to give them the grace to carry out his work without him. Unfortunately, the disciples could hardly believe that Jesus was actually going to be arrested and crucified and so in this moment, they paid little attention to his promise of the Holy Spirit. Today is the day of Pentecost where the disciples finally received the helper that Jesus promised to them. You can read about what happened in Acts 2.

PRAYER

Father God, fill us with your Holy Spirit and transform us so we can fulfil our purpose and do great things for your glory. Amen

ALL AGE TALK

Prior to the service you will need to get a bag of popcorn kernels and some popped corn so you can show the 'before' and 'after' state of the corn. Better still, if you have access to a popcorn making machine, you could actually make some popcorn during your talk and everyone can enjoy the wonderful smell!

Today is the day of Pentecost when we celebrate the disciples receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit that was promised to them in our Bible passage. We can think of the disciples as being like these hard corn kernels - they were ordinary people and quite insignificant. The disciples were in Jerusalem celebrating the Jewish festival of Pentecost, which involved thanking God for the harvest and remembering the giving of the 10 commandments. God chose this day for a new start. There was a roaring wind and the disciples saw what looked like small flames appearing above each of their heads - they were filled with the Holy Spirit! God's presence entered into them and began to work through them, even allowing them to speak in different languages. They were so excited that people thought they were drunk.

If we take these hard kernels and introduce them to some heat, they puff up and are transformed into something wonderful! This can remind us of the Holy Spirit that came with flames and the disciples were transformed which allowed them to do great things and fulfil the plan that God had for their lives. The Holy Spirit is here for us too - we might feel ordinary and insignificant but when God's Spirit is at work within us, we can fulfil our purpose and do great things too! The other thing we can think about is that a handful of corn kernels are small compared to the volume of popcorn that they produce. This is like how the Holy Spirit takes what we have and magnifies it so it becomes much greater. Whenever we feel insignificant or not good enough we can remember that God fills us with his Holy Spirit and provides everything we need for us to be able to serve him.

SONG

[Citipointe Live - You Reign \[With Lyrics\] - YouTube](#)

SET THE SCENE

Tell the children that you have brought something really important to show them. See if they can guess what it might be, then show them an empty glass jar. Ask them to tell you what is in the jar. Although it appears to be empty, it is filled with air, which contains oxygen. As Christians we need the Holy Spirit to live as God wants us to, just as much as we need oxygen. Today is Pentecost when we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit.

DISCUSSION

As part of the discussion, you might like to use some pom-poms and a empty squeeze condiment bottle as part of your illustration. On a hot summers day, a fan can really help to us to keep cool, but how does it do this? It keeps us cool by moving the air to create a breeze. How can we tell if a fan is working? We might see it moving things, we can feel the air blowing against our skin us and we can hear the sound it makes.

Today is a special day called Pentecost. On this day we remember when Jesus' followers were all gathered together in one place (*put some small pom-poms on the floor to represent the disciples*) and God sent the Holy Spirit to give them the power to teach others about Jesus. They couldn't see the Holy Spirit, so how did they know it was there? Let's see what happens to our disciples when we squeeze this bottle in next to them (*use an empty condiment bottle to blow air towards the pom-poms causing them to move*). We can hear the noise that the bottle makes when it's squeezed, we can see the pom-poms moving and if we direct the nozzle towards us, we can feel the air moving. The Bible says the disciples heard a mighty sound of rushing wind from heaven (*squeeze air from the bottle towards the pom-poms*), they saw flaming tongues of fire resting on their heads (*blow the pom-poms*) and they could feel its power (*blow the pom-poms*). When they were filled with the Holy Spirit they could speak in different languages so they could tell others about Jesus.

In today's Bible reading (John 15: 26-27) Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to be a special helper for his disciples. The Holy Spirit is with us today. We can't see it, but we can feel it as the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts, we can see it moving in our lives, and we can feel it's presence, guiding us through each day.

ALTERNATIVE

If you have older children, today might be a good opportunity to find out more about the Holy Spirit by looking closer at what it says in the Bible. Write some of the different Bible verses down but make each of them a different puzzle, so for example using different codes and ciphers, using invisible ink and a UV torch, or cut one up into a jigsaw, etc. As a starting point, some verses to include are:

- John 15: 26-27
- Luke 12:11-13
- John 16:13
- Romans 15:13
- Ephesians 3:16
- John 14:27

The Holy Spirit can seem like a bit of a mystery so you can use your best detective skills to find out more by solving the different puzzles and codes. Talk about what you have learned together.

TAKE HOME

Balloon Experiment If you can, watch this time lapse video which captures how long it takes for a balloon to deflate.

[How long does it take balloons to deflate? 4k Time Lapse Experiment - YouTube](#)

Give everyone a balloon to take home and see if they can conduct their own experiment to see it for themselves. Perhaps they could record it by taking a photograph of their balloon every day? We can have the Holy Spirit inside of us but it doesn't last forever - we deflate over time like the balloon! It's important that we keep 'topped up' by regularly asking God to fill us with His Spirit again and again.

RESPONSE

Matchbox Prayers Give everyone a plain matchbox (these can be sourced online or from craft shops) and ask the children to decorate the outside using 'flame colours' (red, orange, yellow). Then give everyone a strip of paper and invite them to write the words, 'I would like the Holy Spirit to help me to....' followed by their response. The children can roll or fold the strips of paper up and put them in their matchbox. You may like to spend a little bit of time praying for the things that the children have written, although it's fine if they don't want to share them out loud. They can take their matchboxes home as a reminder to keep praying.

ACTIVITY

Wind Powered Cars Invite the children to build cars using Lego - you will need to make sure you have plenty of wheels in your brick collection! Advise that they will need to incorporate into their design a hole that they can stick the end of a balloon through. When the cars are ready, place them on the 'starting line' and give everyone a balloon to inflate. Show the children how to hold the end of the balloon tightly whilst they feed it through the hole in their car, so the neck of the balloon points out of the back (a bit like an exhaust)! On 'GO' they can release their balloons and see whose car travels the furthest. If you have time, allow them to modify their designs to see if they can improve on their previous distance.

GAME

Flame Throwing Divide your group into teams. Each team selects one person to wear a shower cap, which is then covered with shaving foam. Team members take it in turns to throw cheese puff crisps (aka the flames) which must stick to the shaving foam. After 60 second, the team that has the most 'flames' stuck to their shower cap wins. You can do this outside or put a tarpaulin down to minimise any mess. For younger children, recruit a leader to wear the shower cap.

ADAPTATION

Ask the children to write or draw things they want the Holy Spirit to help with on strips of paper. Roll the paper up so it is snug, but not tight around a drinking straw. Tape the end so it becomes a tube, then fold over one end and tape that down also. Slot it onto the end of your straw and then blow into the other end of the straw to shoot it off like a rocket.

ADAPTATION

See the instructions the website here to make a simple kite out of a paper plate. [How to Make a Paper Plate Kite for Kids | The Country Chic Cottage](#)
God's Holy Spirit is like the wind. We can't see it, but we know that it's there because we can see the effects of its power in our lives.

ADAPTATION

As an alternative, give the children a balloon and a balloon pump. Give them 30 seconds to pump up their balloons as much as they can, then on the count of three, release the balloons and see how far they travel. The Holy Spirit helped the good news of Jesus travel around the world.

23RD MAY 2021

WIND AND FLAMES

JOHN 15: 26-27,
16: 4B-15

LET'S CHAT

Ask your child what they did and tell them what you learned in church today!

What do you think it would have been like to be there when the Holy Spirit came to the disciples as wind and fire?

Can you think of a time when you have relied on the Holy Spirit to help or guide you?

LET'S PRAY

Make an effort to light a candle when you sit down to have a meal together every day this week. Pentecost is the birthday of the church when we celebrate how the Holy Spirit came down and rested on the disciples as wind and fire. Remember that the same Holy Spirit that came to help the disciples tell others about Jesus, rests on you too! When you have finished eating pray together. You can all blow the candle out on 'AMEN'!

Dear God, thank you for sending your Holy Spirit to be our teacher and guide. Amen

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Aim: To know that our God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit and it's ok to have questions about that.

OVERVIEW

Today's Bible passage is about the Pharisee, Nicodemus' visit to Jesus in the night. Pharisees were a group of Jews who were fastidious in keeping the letter of the Law and often opposed Jesus' teachings. Nicodemus was also a member of the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem - the ruling body of the Jews. The passage does not provide a reason for Nicodemus choosing to visit Jesus under cover of darkness. It is speculated that it was because he didn't want to be disturbed, or that he was ashamed to be seen by others talking with Jesus. We do know that Nicodemus would have spent a lot of time studying Scripture, praying, and making sacrifices because Jews thought God would accept them if they did the right things. Jesus immediately confronts Nicodemus with the truth that he "must be born again" by the Holy Spirit, demonstrating that although we are physically alive; we breathe and move, without Jesus we are spiritually dead and separated from God.

PRAYER

Thank you God that you are three in one. Thank you Father for sending Jesus to die on the cross so that we can be born again by your Spirit. Amen

ALL AGE TALK

Before the service you will need to prepare two clean, dry plastic water bottles. Make a small hole in one of them near to the base - this will be yours. You will also need two small pieces of tissue paper. [The Empty Bottle - Free Science Experiments — Sublime Science](#)

Invite a volunteer up to the front who will help you to demonstrate a simple task. Give them a piece of tissue paper and tell them to roll it into a small ball. Do the same with your piece of tissue paper. Demonstrate how to, holding the bottle horizontally about 10 cm away from your mouth, you can sit the tissue paper ball in the neck of the bottle and with a good puff of air, blow it inside. Hopefully, you will find that with your secretly customised bottle it works every time! (You may want to practice this yourself in advance - the hole you have made helps to equalise the air pressure so will stop the paper being pushed back out the bottle neck). Your volunteer, on the other hand, is likely to have difficulty completing the task because of the difference in air pressure. They may be inclined to blow harder which won't help at all! The volunteer and the rest of your congregation are sure to have lots of questions about how you are able to perform the task but the volunteer cannot.

In today's Bible passage, a religious leader called Nicodemus had lots of questions for Jesus so he went to see him in the night. Just like it was difficult to understand how I was able to blow the paper into the bottle when my volunteer could not, Nicodemus found it difficult to understand what Jesus meant when he told him he had to be 'born again'. Nicodemus was confused about the difference between spiritual things and physical things but Jesus wanted Nicodemus to understand that he had to allow God's Holy Spirit to wash him clean so that he could start a new life where he lived differently. Another thing is that the Holy Spirit is often thought of as being like the wind - we can't see it, but we can feel its effects. Nicodemus wanted life with God and he thought he could earn it by doing right things, but Jesus told Nicodemus about God's plan. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3: 16).

SONG

[Chris Tomlin - How Great Is Our God \[with lyrics\] - YouTube](#)

SET THE SCENE

Challenge the children to write a list of as many things they can think of that have three parts (e.g. a triangle has three sides, an egg is made up of the shell, the white and the yolk; a Jaffa Cake is made up of the chocolate, the cake and the orange jelly). They can either do this individually, or you could do it collectively as a group. Explain that today is Trinity Sunday when we remember that our God is three in one (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

DISCUSSION

Explore today's Bible story by allocating actions to some key words as follows:

Nicodemus: stand up and look thoughtful

Jesus: raise your arms and shout 'hurray'

Born: curl yourself up into a small ball

Wind: wave your arms and make a noise like the wind

Invite the children to practise the actions first, and then get them to join in as you tell the story using an age appropriate Bible, or use the version below:

Nicodemus was a respected teacher and a member of the Jewish Council, but he had some questions that he wanted to ask **Jesus**. However, **Nicodemus** was afraid of what people might think if he was seen with **Jesus**, so **Nicodemus** went to visit **Jesus** at night. When **Jesus** told **Nicodemus** that in order to be part of God's kingdom he would have to be **born** again, **Nicodemus** was rather confused! **Nicodemus** asked how on earth it was possible for someone who was old like him to be **born** again! But **Jesus** meant that he would have to go right back to the beginning, forget all he had learned, and start again. **Jesus** told him that following God is not always straightforward. It is like trying to find out where the **wind** comes from. The **wind** is like the Spirit; you can't see it but you know when it is at work. Finally, **Jesus** told **Nicodemus** that God loves the world so much that God gave us his only Son, so that anyone who believes in him will have eternal life. What an incredible message! Sometimes the things that we read in the Bible can seem confusing - like Jesus saying that Nicodemus had to be born again, and the concept of the Trinity - God being 'three in one' - but if we pray before we read the Bible, and know that we can ask questions like Nicodemus did, God will help us to find meaning in his words.

ALTERNATIVE

As an alternative way to present your Bible Story and discussion today, take a look at our children's Bible story and discussion podcast, Bible Podlets. Episode 7 of series one is all about Nicodemus and how his life was transformed when he met Jesus. Each episode of Bible Podlets has accompanying notes to help adults guide children through the story and activities. You will find more information on our website here:

[Bible Podlets - Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education \(bdeducation.org.uk\)](http://bdeducation.org.uk)

TAKE HOME

Trinity Flexagons Check out this brilliant printable template to make Trinity Flexagons:

[Flame: Creative Children's Ministry: Trinity flexagon- print out, make and play! \(flamecreativekids.blogspot.com\)](http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com)

They are a little fiddly to make but are worth the effort! The children can take them home and see Jesus represented with images that point to his birth and crucifixion, the Father represented with images showing he is our Creator and King and the Holy Spirit represented as flames and a dove.

RESPONSE

It's a Mystery Have a look in some newspapers, or at the news online, and think about some of the things that are going on in the world. You are likely to find lots of stories about violence, suffering and segregation which can be difficult to understand. The Trinity is also a mystery and we often wonder why God doesn't do anything to address the hurt and suffering which takes place. Reflect on how through the Trinity, God creates and loves us, Jesus liberates and saves us and the Spirit encourages and strengthens us. The Trinity is a community of love and life that we are invited to be part of share and in, trusting God's plan for us and all people.

ACTIVITY

Strong Structure Provide the children with cocktail sticks and mini marshmallows / gum drops / balls of blu tack and ask them to use these items to build a tower or bridge. When everyone has finished, test the strength of their constructions by finding out if they will hold weight and remain standing if you subject them to an 'earthquake' by giving them a gentle shake! Hopefully, you will find that the structures that are based around triangles are the strongest. You may want to talk about how triangles are widely used in the construction of real buildings and bridges because they create strength and stability. Remind the children that our one God is made up of three parts; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and can help us to be strong.

GAME

Make a Pretzel Children can either do this individually, or you can divide the group into teams. Give each person or group some salt or play dough. They must race to work out how to create a correctly twisted pretzel out of their dough. If you're feeling generous you could provide a picture of a pretzel to help them. The first person or team to correctly form a pretzel shape wins the challenge. Pretzels have been around for almost 1,400 years since a baker in a monastery twisted leftover strips of bread dough into the shape of a person's arms crossed in prayer. Monks began offering the warm, doughy treats to children who had memorized their Bible verses and prayers. The three holes represented the Father, Son and Holy Spirit so they were used to help children understand the Christian Trinity.

[How to Twist a Pretzel \(with Pictures\) - wikiHow](#)

ADAPTATION

Encourage the children to write or draw their own answers to complete the following sentences:

Thank you, God the Father, that you are...

Thank you, God the Son, that you are...

Thank you, God the Spirit, that you are...

ADAPTATION

Make fidget spinners decorating each 'arm' of the spinner to represent Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The tri-spinner design can remind the children that our God is three in one.

[Easy Fidget Spinner DIY \(Free Template\) - Science Fair Project Idea - Red Ted Art - Make crafting with kids easy & fun](#)

ADAPTATION

Have a quiz where the questions vary in levels of difficulty, so that some are very easy and others difficult. Afterwards, talk about how Nicodemus went to Jesus with questions and it was ok that he didn't know all the answers. It's ok if we have questions too - there are people around us and the bible that can help us look for answers!

30TH MAY 2021

THREE IN ONE

JOHN 3: 1-17

LET'S CHAT

Ask your child what they did and tell them what you learned in church today!

Where do you go when you have questions about different things? Who / what helps you to find the answers?

What is your understanding of being 'born again'? Explore this phrase together.

LET'S PRAY

If you have the book, read the story of The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle. If you don't have it, you could watch this animated version of the story together:

[The Very Hungry Caterpillar - Animated Film - YouTube](#)

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." When the caterpillar came out of his cocoon, he was a totally new creation. A butterfly! That's the way it is when we are born again and let Jesus come into our hearts. He makes us a new creation too! Pray together:

Father God, we praise you that in Jesus we are a new creation; we ask you to change us with your Spirit and make us new. Amen

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