

MAY - JUL 2022



# weekly@

LECTIONARY RESOURCE



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## 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.

## GUEST WRITER



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Sarah is passionate about children knowing Jesus for themselves. She is the founder of Adventures With Jesus seeking to equip children and their grown ups to explore faith and encounter Jesus in exciting, engaging ways. Sarah has over 20 years of experience working in churches, schools and summer camps, and is currently the Early Years Lead at Vinelife Church, Manchester. She is married with three children and loves running, gardening and baking brownies! You can subscribe to receive her inspiring emails [here](#).



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 believe in and receive the Holy Spirit today!

## OVERVIEW

Today we are focusing in on more of Jesus' final words before he would die, rise again and go back to Heaven. Jesus wanted to prepare his followers for the huge shift that was coming in their lives. He wanted them to know the truth, that they had experienced God with them and to know that even though Jesus wouldn't be with them physically anymore the Holy Spirit would be with them, guiding them, teaching them and living in them. God's family could continue to grow as his people continued to believe, to pray, to be deeply connected, to spread the good news and more! Today is also Pentecost Sunday, when the church remembers the coming of the Holy Spirit to Jesus' followers in Acts 2. This sparked the start of the church, which we are part of today!

## PRAYER

Thank you, Jesus, that we can believe in you and really know our Father God. Thank you that we can see you do incredible things through us. Thank you, Holy Spirit, that you are here today to fill us, guide us and empower us. Amen

## ALL AGE TALK

Begin by challenging the congregation with this: 'Do you have to see something to believe it?'

**Silly Sights:** Have some people primed to come up and tell crazy stories about things that may have happened, for example, there was green rain last Wednesday, a rabbit jumped through a flaming hoop, a pig flew over the park, a carrot grew overnight in a greenhouse! Then they admit they didn't actually see these things for themselves with their own eyes - they may have heard a rumour from the other side of the shelves in the supermarket or a cousins, sisters, uncles, grandpa may have had a dream about it...

**Eyewitness Accounts:** Then have some people ready to pretend to be a couple of the disciples sharing some of the things they really DID see with their eyes. A lame man walked, a wild storm stopped with one word from Jesus, 5000 people were fed with a tiny lunch. How do we actually know these things really happened?

In today's Bible passage, Jesus is reassuring his disciples that faith in him is faith in God... seeing is believing! Read out today's passage and invite the congregation to stand up or raise their hands every time they hear the word 'believe'. In John 14:9, Jesus says, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father!" The disciples had seen Jesus do all these incredible things, so Jesus was telling them that through those, they had actually seen the Father! Believing is very important to Jesus.

- We can believe Jesus is God because of eyewitness accounts.
- We can believe God loves us because of what Jesus said and did.
- We can believe the Holy Spirit is for everyone.
- We can believe God is still working because of people's testimonies and changed lives
- We can see and believe and pray and see the kingdom of God grow!

## SONG

[Spirit Move \(Official Lyric Video\) - Josie Buchanan .|. BRIGHT ONES - YouTube](#)

## SET THE SCENE

In advance of the session, hide flame shaped pieces of paper with one letter on each around the room. The letters should spell JESUS, FATHER GOD and HOLY SPIRIT. As the children arrive explain that there's a treasure hunt for them to find some flames. When the pieces of paper that you have hidden have all been collected, challenge them to work together to spell three words out of them. (You can make it easier for little ones by writing the letters for each word in different colours.) Help the children if they get stuck! Afterwards tell them that you are going to explore a story with flames of fire in today!

## DISCUSSION

In today's bible passage Jesus promised his disciples that God the Father would send the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God with us; he is the helper, comforter, the Spirit of truth. Jesus knew that his followers would need help after he had gone back to heaven, so he sent the best help possible - God himself!

Today is Pentecost, when we remember the Holy Spirit filling the disciples for the very first time! Father God and Jesus had kept their promise to send him! Tell the story of the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost from Acts 2 in an interactive way. You could use the flames from the 'Set the Scene' section and other props and sound effects. There are some good re-telling's in children's story bibles or watch: [God Sends the Holy Spirit - YouTube](#)

The Holy Spirit changed people! The fearful, cowering disciples were suddenly full of courage, wisdom, and power. And many people became followers of Jesus for the first time. It was the start of the church! The Holy Spirit helped the disciples to trust and believe in Jesus, and to live for him.

Do you believe in Jesus?

Do you believe his words are true?

Do you believe Holy Spirit is for you?

You might like to offer the children opportunity to choose to become forever friends with Jesus and/or to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus always chooses us, he died and rose again for all the mad, bad and sad stuff in our lives that gets in the way of us and God. *(You could use a heart cushion or a child to demonstrate Jesus coming near to us.)*

## DISCUSSION CONT.

He comes close to us and says we can be his forever friend. And we get to choose to believe and say YES to Jesus and receive his love and friendship. You may have already said YES to Jesus. You can be filled with the Holy Spirit, so you have all you need to live for God. He never wants us to do it on our own!

Allocate a quiet corner that the children can go to if they'd like to respond. Help them to know that it is always their choice. Pray for the children. Be expectant and believe Jesus is at work in their lives. Explain that they may feel, hear or see something from God, or they may not. But ANYTIME we say YES to him he answers and is with us! Celebrate new life in Jesus!

## TAKE HOME

**Binoculars** Supply the children with two cardboard tubes which they can stick together to make their own binoculars. Alternatively, use a piece of A4 card and roll both the short ends into the middle, then secure in place with tape. Decorate the binoculars with stickers, felt tips and key words like 'believe' 'Jesus' and 'Holy Spirit'. Suggest the children take their binoculars home and when they look through them, they can be reminded that Jesus said if we'd seen him, we'd seen the Father. What is the Father like from what we know of Jesus?

## RESPONSE

**Spot it!** Print out copies of John 14:8-13 to give to the children, either one each, or they can work in pairs. Challenge the children to use bright colours to circle / highlight all the words in the passage to do with believing and seeing. Once they are done, ask what they noticed. Depending on the confidence and age of your group, encourage an open-ended chat where everyone's views are welcomed. Ask: What do you believe about Jesus? What difference does he make to your life? Encourage the adult leaders to share their beliefs too.

## ACTIVITY

**Holy Spirit Flames** Provide the children with several different sizes of flame shaped pieces of card, tissue paper and crepe paper in appropriate colours. The children can start with the largest flame shape and add layers of smaller ones with glue to create a Holy Spirit flame. Stick the flames onto a strip of card to either fit around their head as a headband, or to enable it to stand up. You could give older children a selection of different textured papers and card, plus bright pens to create their own design of Holy Spirit flames. Can they find Bible verses about Holy Spirit to write on their flames too? If you think the children might struggle with this, you could provide them with some Bible references to look up to help them.

## GAME

**Circle Whispers** Sit your group in a circle. Think up a silly message such as 'I like tickling slimy slugs.' Pass it around the circle by whispering. When you get to the last person, they should say the message out loud for everyone to hear. Did the correct message get through? Then choose an encouraging message to send round such as 'The Holy Spirit is for everyone.' Play this a few times with different people choosing the message to send around, alternate between silly ones and encouragements. You could also help the children to listen to Holy Spirit for a partner. Often when we ask the Holy Spirit to speak it is the first thing that pops into our heads. They could have a go and then whisper his messages to each other. We need to listen carefully to God's messages - they come through the bible, eyewitness accounts and through the Holy Spirit.

## ALTERNATIVE

Following the time of discussion, give out a special card to anyone who responded that says 'I became forever friends with Jesus today' and write the date on it. You could add a key Bible verse such as Acts 16:31: 'Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved'

## ALTERNATIVE

Make simple Holy Spirit pinwheels (windmills). The children could decorate them like in the example here, making spots by dipping their fingers in red, orange and yellow paint: [Garden Pinwheel Craft for Kids from Recycled Artwork - Make and Takes](#)  
When we walk with the Holy Spirit as our helper, we produce good fruit in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23).

## ALTERNATIVE

Ask the children to lie on their backs on the floor. They are going to work together to keep several flame coloured (red, yellow, orange) balloons up in the air. Gently pat a few balloons towards the children - they must pat them up towards the ceiling if any come near them in order to keep them from touching the floor. You can gradually add more balloons to make the game more challenging!

## LET'S CHAT

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

What we believe about Jesus is really important. Share two things that you believe about Jesus with each other.

Have you ever been filled with the Holy Spirit? Tell each other about that experience.

## LET'S PRAY

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Find an opportunity today, or this week to play some 'full and empty' games. This could be during bath time, when cooking, or when having a drink. Talk about how the Holy Spirit wants to fill us up with the love of God so we can believe in him. Afterwards, say the following prayer together:

***Thank you, Jesus, that we can believe in you and in your words. Thank you, God, for sending the Holy Spirit to be with us every day! Holy Spirit come and fill us up so we can see God's kingdom keep on growing. Amen***

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Aim: To learn that the Holy Spirit is the truth teller, and we can trust in him.

## OVERVIEW

Today is Trinity Sunday: a special day to celebrate the oneness of God in three persons. The Trinity can seem like a mystery that is hard to fully comprehend, however, Jesus spent lots of time explaining it to his followers and today's passage is no exception. Jesus had already shared who the Father was: if you've seen me, you've seen him. Who the Holy Spirit was: the counsellor, comforter, truth teller. And who he was: the son, the sent one. Today we are continuing to explore some of these final important words of Jesus before he was arrested, tried and crucified. Jesus is promising that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, will continue to be with them after he's gone back to Heaven. They will not be left alone, but rather will have God himself, the Truth Teller, with them to constantly guide, encourage and speak to them.

## PRAYER

Thank you, Holy Spirit, that you lead us into ALL truth. Please set us free from any lies that we are believing about you, ourselves, or others. Lead us into the wonderful truth of God. Thank you we can build our lives on you, the Truth Teller! Amen

## ALL AGE TALK

Start your talk by introducing the concept of God's truth through a fun game of Two Truths and a Lie. You may need to prime a few people in advance so they have time to think about the three things that they will say about themselves, with one being a lie. Can the congregation work out which statements are the lies? There are some good ideas and top tips on playing this game well here: [Two Truths and a Lie: 100 Great Lie Ideas & How to Play \(parade.com\)](https://www.parade.com/100-Great-Lie-Ideas-How-to-Play).

Ask the congregation: Was it easy to work out the lie? How did you know which was the truth? Were you tricked by the lie? That was a fun game but whether we build our lives on truth or lies really matters.

Today's passage is about Jesus telling his followers that the Holy Spirit will come to be with them and will continue to speak his words to them after he's returned to Heaven; that ultimately, he will lead them into ALL TRUTH. Jesus didn't want his disciples to be confused or tricked into believing lies, and it's the same for us today.

God's truth is a solid foundation for our lives. His truth doesn't change. Do we believe in the truth? If we believe that water boils at 100 °C we will know how to make the perfect cup of tea. If we believe that gravity is true, then we will be careful not to fall off a ten-foot ladder. If we believe in Jesus' words and who the Holy Spirit is, it will have an influence on our lives, on the choices we make, on the words we say and so on...

Provide the congregation with pieces of card and some pens to write with. Ask people to think of a word to describe the Holy Spirit and write it in big letters on their card. Then ask everyone to hold up their cards and then read them out. Chat through these words and be excited about who the Holy Spirit is and the fact that the Holy Spirit is with us today and wherever we go during the week. The Holy Spirit will guide us into ALL TRUTH! God's truth remains the same and we can build our lives on it.

## SONG

[Kids Version - Reckless Love \(Official Lyric Video\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

## SET THE SCENE

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Ask the children if they trust you. Would someone like to prove it? Blindfold this child and say that you will guide them through an obstacle course. They need to listen to your instructions very carefully. You could demonstrate beforehand and keep your instructions simple such as move forward two steps, turn to the left, one side step right. Once they have successfully reached the end, ask your volunteer if they trusted that you were telling the truth? Today, we will be finding out that we can trust in God's truth. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would lead us into ALL truth!

## DISCUSSION

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Help the children to understand a little about the Trinity as you start. You could show some toothpaste that has three different colours in it. Each one of these colours is still toothpaste, but each one has a different toothpaste job to do; cavity protection, whitening teeth, freshening breath. Similarly, each part of the Trinity is still God, but each has a different God job to do.

Give some quick examples of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. If you have older children, you could unpack the Trinity some more by thinking about different aspects of each person of the Godhead. You might like to draw them as three interlocking circles and write in their characteristics.

The Holy Spirit is God with us. Jesus said he will help us believe the truth about God, ourselves, and others! He would lead us into ALL TRUTH. John 16:13

Have some cards with truths and untruths written on them - some from everyday life, some from the bible and some that are silly. Examples include: if I jump up, I will come back down (gravity), socks are always smelly, water freezes at 20°C, the Holy Spirit is God, frogs are always green, Jesus is always with me, I will never be good enough, the sun rises each day, I am loved by Jesus, the moon orbits the earth, God doesn't forgive everything... If appropriate you could include some truths/lies your group may be struggling with.

Place the cards upside down and invite the children to take it in turns to take one, read it and decide if it is true or not.

## DISCUSSION CONT.

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As part of your discussions, draw out that there are many things that are certain and true. Which do we want to believe? What happens when we believe a lie? What happens when we believe God's truth?

We can trust the Holy Spirit to lead us into ALL TRUTH. Just like \_\_\_\_\_ got around the obstacle course at the start of our session by listening and trusting, we can listen to and trust in God's truth. We can build our lives on it!

## TAKE HOME

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**Truth Bunting** Provide each child with a set of large bubble letters on paper that spell out the word TRUTH. You may need to cut these out in advance for younger children and older children could draw and cut them out for themselves. Decorate each letter with truths about God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Or simply use bright stickers, glitter pens or stampers and ink. Once you have finished decorating them, attach each letter onto a long piece of string to make bunting or you could stick them onto card vertically or horizontally to create a collage. Encourage the children to put their bunting / collage up at home somewhere to be reminded of God's truth.

## RESPONSE

**Adventure Time** Let's ask the Holy Spirit to help us see, hear and feel Jesus now. Let's have an Adventure Time, and use our imagination for good to meet with him. Help the children to get comfortable and relax. You could play some quiet music. Speak slowly with lots of pauses. In John 16:13 Jesus says, 'When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.' Thank you, Holy Spirit, that you lead us into all truth. Help us to see, hear and feel Jesus now. Imagine that you are in your favourite place and Jesus comes to be with you. See his happy face when he looks at you. Jesus wants to play Follow the Leader with you. What do you do? What is Jesus doing? Who is leading? What is Jesus showing You? Explore with him...

Give time for the children to be with Jesus. Afterwards, help them to share: Tell me about your Adventure Time. Be sure to validate their responses. If you have time, the children could draw or write about their Adventure Time.

## ACTIVITY

**Trinity Wristbands** Ask the children to choose three different colours of thread or wool and knot them together at one end. To make it thicker, have a few strands of each colour. Stick the knotted ends to the edge of a table with tape to hold it securely. Show the children how to twist or plait the strands to bring them together. They could thread beads onto their wristbands too. When the wristbands are a suitable length, tie a knot and then tie the two ends together. You may want to prepare a few beforehand as examples. For younger children you could provide three strips of card that are long enough to go round their wrist. They can decorate them, stick together lengthways, then wrap around their wrist loosely and secure with tape. Here's one way to make this: [Paper Wristband](#)

## GAME

**Blindfold Game** Play some more blindfold games such as pin the flame on the disciple's head. Prepare a cut out of a flame with Blu-tac on the back and draw an outline of a disciple's head on large paper. Each child can take it in turns to be blindfolded and have a go at sticking the flame in the correct position. Mark where each child's flame was before the next person has a turn so you can determine who was the closest.

## ALTERNATIVE

Offer lots of different colours of play dough to the children and ask them to take a small piece of the colour that they feel represents them. Ask everyone to place their pieces of playdough together to create one big ball. You now can't separate the different colours; they have become part of one whole piece. Think about the Holy Spirit, asking God to increase your understanding.

## ALTERNATIVE

We love this trinity spinner from Flame Creative Ministry: [Flame: Creative Children's Ministry: Holy Trinity Spinners \(flamecreativekids.blogspot.com\)](http://Flame: Creative Children's Ministry: Holy Trinity Spinners (flamecreativekids.blogspot.com)) Allow the children to make their own version of the spinner as a reminder that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit; three in one.

## ALTERNATIVE

In advance of the session, prepare images of groups of three things that are linked in some way, e.g. an envelope, a stamp, writing paper (a letter), water, ice, steam (H<sub>2</sub>O). Hide the images around the room. Challenge the children to find all of the images and then group them in the correct sets of three.

12TH JUNE 2022

## THE TRUTH TELLER

JOHN 16: 12-15

### LET'S CHAT

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

There are lots of truths that we build our lives on each day. Can we think of two of them?

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would lead us into all truth. I wonder what truth he wants us to believe today. Share your ideas with each other.

### LET'S PRAY

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Play a game of dominoes together. Look at the zig zag path that the dominoes have made and walk your fingers along it. Jesus promised that Holy Spirit would lead us into all truth. No matter the path or way ahead of us, he is with us and will guide us. Say the following prayer together:

***Thank you, Holy Spirit, that you will lead us into truth! Help us to hear, feel and see you so we can follow you. Help us when we don't know what to do, feel worried or confused. We trust you to guide us. Amen***

12TH JUNE 2022

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JOHN 16: 12-15

### LET'S CHAT

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***Thank you, Holy Spirit, that you will lead us into truth! Help us to hear, feel and see you so we can follow you. Help us when we don't know what to do, feel worried or confused. We trust you to guide us. Amen***

**Aim:** To learn that Jesus' power is unrivalled. He came to set people free, and he is still doing so.

## OVERVIEW

Today's passage happens immediately after Jesus had told his disciples they were going across the lake of Galilee. They'd set out and there had been a fierce storm, but Jesus had calmed it and they'd continued on their way. See Luke 8:22-25. Jesus had a plan to set someone free: the man who was being troubled by the enemy. Nothing was going to stop him doing this. Not even a storm. We can trust that God has a plan and that his power is unrivalled. No storms, enemies, opposition, or distraction will stop him from achieving his goal for freedom. Ultimately, this plan took Jesus to the cross, to face death and separation from his Father. But not even death could stop him - his plan is for freedom for everyone!

## PRAYER

Thank you, Jesus, that you are unrivalled. You have the victory over all things. We receive the victory you won on the cross for us today. Amen

## ALL AGE TALK

Begin with an arm-wrestling contest! Invite two people to come up and sit either side of a table at the front. Count to three and they can engage in the arm wrestle, keeping their elbows on the table. In the contest, the winner stays on, so after a couple of goes, have someone who likes to work out primed to come up and they quickly become undefeated. Then invite a small child to play against this person and they actually win! They are the unrivalled champion! Today's Bible passage shows that Jesus is the ultimate champion. His power is unrivalled, and nothing can stop him! Jesus overcame many obstacles to set the demon-possessed man free:

- The storm prior to crossing the lake.
- The enemy bothering the man.
- The 'strength' of the man - he was feared by everyone.
- The trickiness of the demons.
- The fears/complaints of the people.

The ultimate result was a life completely transformed. Talk about how the man was before and after he encountered Jesus! He now had a purpose, a testimony, freedom and hope... Jesus' unrivalled power was not just for 2000 years ago - he is still setting people free today! We can see the reality of Jesus' victory in our lives today. Often, we have our own testimony/story of what Jesus has done in our lives and the freedom we have experienced. This can encourage others and allow them to become free of the same things! Provide the congregation with pieces of card and pens to write on them with. Ask people to write on their piece of card anything they have overcome through Jesus' power and love. Have some suggestions if needed: loneliness, debt, fear, addictions... You could have someone ready to share a short testimony here if possible. Then ask people to listen to the Holy Spirit for anything they feel God wants to release victory over today.

Pray simply to help with this: 'Holy Spirit show us what Jesus wants to bring freedom to in our lives today.' Give time for people to jot these things down on their card.

If the congregation are willing to share, gather up the cards and read some of them out. Then pray and release the unrivalled victory of Jesus over these things. If you have opportunity for people to receive more prayer for anything brought up today - ensure they know where to go for this.

## SONG

[What A Beautiful Name Lyric Video - Hillsong Kids - YouTube](#)

## SET THE SCENE

Set the children a series of challenges which start off easy but become increasingly more difficult and end up being impossible. For example, hold two bibles, then add more and more. Stand on one leg for 10 seconds; now stay like that for the whole morning! Do 20 star jumps, now only move around by doing star jumps! Stand on your head for two hours, bend this metal bar... Despite having a brilliant go at these challenges, there were some things that were too hard for us! Did you know there's nothing too difficult for Jesus, especially if it is to do with helping and loving someone!

## DISCUSSION

Today's story shows that Jesus' love and power can overcome anything, and he will let nothing stop him from setting someone free! Tell the story from Luke 8:26-39 in an interactive way. If you can give time to the telling of the story, it would be helpful to include the calming of the storm account from Luke 8:22-25 as this happens immediately before today's passage, and it is often helpful for the children to see the full context of the story they are exploring. The storm passage shows that Jesus had intentionally set out to cross the lake to free the man and not even a storm was going to stop him.

You could make your story interactive by choosing some actions to do altogether for key words or phrases, giving the children different roles to play with simple props or by asking the children to show you facial expressions for key emotions in the story.

Afterwards, talk about how Jesus cared so deeply for the man who was suffering and being bothered by the enemy, that he wasn't going to let anything stop him setting the man free. What obstacles did Jesus face? Can the children think of any? You could write these things on card and stick them on skittles. Some suggestions include the fierce storm, the enemy bothering the man, the strength of the man, the trickiness of the demons, the crowd's fear and complaints... Jesus overcomes them all to set the man free. Roll a ball or throw bean bags to knock down the skittles!

Nothing can stand in the way of Jesus! Did you know that? He is the same today as he was when he walked the earth 2000 years ago. Jesus wants each of us to live a free life. He died and rose again, beating even death, for us!

## ALTERNATIVE

For 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 1 of series one is all about how the man filled with bad spirits was transformed by Jesus. Each episode of Bible Podlets has accompanying discussion 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](http://bdeducation.org.uk)  
([bdeducation.org.uk](http://bdeducation.org.uk))

## TAKE HOME

**Freedom Crosses** Provide materials so the children can make FREEDOM crosses out of card. You could either print different cross designs on card that they can cut out themselves or show them how to use two strips of card and stick one across the other to make a cross shape. Alternatively, you could buy wooden crosses that have magnets on the back or that can be hung up with ribbon. Encourage the children to decorate their crosses on both sides with felt tips, glitter pens and stickers, etc. Ask them to write 'Freedom in Christ' on their cross and jot on anything else they want to celebrate from today's session. Suggest that the children hang their crosses up at home as a reminder of freedom in Jesus.

## RESPONSE

**We Can Live Free** Jesus said we could live a full free life of joy, peace, hope... See John 10:10. What things are stopping us from living this full life now? Help the children to think about anything that bothers them or causes them worry, fear, uncertainty, or where they feel stuck. Be sensitive to your group and the ages of the children. Be ready to make some suggestions if they are not forthcoming with answers, such as nightmares, unkind thoughts, worry about a particular subject at school, friendships, family... Write anything the children share on pieces of paper and stick these on the skittles that were used in the Discussion section. Remind the group that Jesus' power is unrivalled, which means nothing is stronger than him and nothing can stop him bringing freedom to us. Pray for everyone to experience the victory Jesus won for them on the cross - speak victory and freedom over these things! Then invite the children to knock down the skittles with balls or beanbags!

## ACTIVITY

**Drawing Challenge** Give each child a hardback book, a piece of paper and pencil. Challenge them to draw different things on the paper, but they have to do it with the book balanced on their head and the paper on top of it! Suggestions of things to draw include a cat, a house, a heart, a happy face, the word Victory! Look at everyone's results and chat about whether they found the challenge easy or hard. Were you able to draw clearly? It was a hard thing to do, wasn't it? Did you know that nothing is too difficult or is impossible for God?

## GAME

**Strength Games** Put your group into two or three teams depending on numbers. Allow them to choose a name for their team and encourage them to be super supportive. Present them with different challenges where they will choose which member of their team will compete. They need to choose carefully as each person can only compete once! Suggestions for challenges include:

- Each player holds a tray out in front of them whilst you add different items to the trays one at a time. Who can hold their tray out for the longest?
- Do 6 press ups / 10 sit ups.
- Hold a squat for 45 seconds.
- Who can do the most star jumps?
- Stand on one leg for 30 seconds.

There are lots of things that we are not strong enough to do on our own but we can always ask God to help us because nothing is too difficult for him.

## ALTERNATIVE

Prepare some strips of paper with different Bible verses written on them which talk about Jesus' power that transforms. Place these in a box. Invite the children to put their hand into the box and pull out a mystery Bible verse for them to read and pray about at home.

## ALTERNATIVE

Provide some uninflated modelling balloons. Point out that the balloons are currently shapeless and empty. Sometimes we can feel a bit shapeless and empty too, but Jesus has the power to transform our lives, giving us shape and form. Blow up the balloons and have fun transforming them into fun balloon model shapes.

## ALTERNATIVE

Split the group into small teams and give each team a length of string or paracord with lots of knots in it. The teams have to race to untie and untangle all of the knots. The first team to do so is the winner. Talk about how the challenge might have initially seemed impossible but nothing is impossible for God.

## LET'S CHAT

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

Chat about today's Bible story. What intrigued you? What do you have questions about?

The Bible says Jesus is victorious over all things. Can you think of two things Jesus has victory over?

## LET'S PRAY

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Share stories of any times you have experienced freedom from something, such as bad dreams, worries, pain or sadness. It's good to share our victories. We can also help others to experience these things too. Pray together:

***Thank you, Jesus, that you are unrivalled! Nothing is too difficult for you. We thank you that you can set us free from \_\_\_\_\_. We believe in you and receive the freedom you want to give us! Amen***

## LET'S CHAT

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

Chat about today's Bible story. What intrigued you? What do you have questions about?

The Bible says Jesus is victorious over all things. Can you think of two things Jesus has victory over?

## LET'S PRAY

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**Aim:** To learn that following Jesus costs us everything but he is worth more than anything!

## OVERVIEW

When this passage occurs in Luke's Gospel, the disciples had already been with Jesus for a long time. They had seen and experienced many incredible occurrences such as people being miraculously healed, life changing teaching, food being multiplied, the enemy being defeated and cast out of people's lives, Jesus' glory being revealed on the mountain. They had also seen Jesus' radical love for those rejected by their society, but they still sometimes missed what Jesus was all about! When opposition came to the disciples in today's passage, it was being rejected by people in a Samaritan town and they wanted to retaliate with fire from heaven rather than love from their hearts. The disciples still had lots to learn about the cost of following Jesus. We too need to consider and count the cost of being Jesus' followers. It is a life of fullness and joy but also one of sacrifice.

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you that you gave up everything for us: your place in heaven and deep connection with God the Father. You suffered and died so that we can be free and forgiven. Help us to count the cost of following you. Give us strength and courage to be all in and say YES to you. Amen

## ALL AGE TALK

Set up a silly skit with someone dressed up as a sports fan. If it is not too contentious choose something that is a big deal in your area to catch people's attention. The fan is wearing all the right gear and can talk about their team and how they love to support them.... but then they admit that they only follow the team when they are winning or when they are positioned in the top 3 of the league table... Hmm, would you say this person is a proper fan?

Following something properly, even a sports team or athlete, means we support them when it's going well and also as when it's not - in fact they need our support even more then, don't they? Let's think about how we follow Jesus. He's far more important than a sports team! Do we follow him only when things are going well for us? Do we follow only some of his commands? Perhaps the ones that we like or understand the best? Do we only love some people not all people? Or do we follow him only when we are feeling like it?

In today's passage, Jesus challenges his followers to count the cost of following him! It's uncomfortable reading which we may find challenging, but it is important for us to consider the way we follow Jesus... Jesus has given everything for us. There are a few things that illustrate this listed below and do add your own. These could be displayed on a screen for everyone to see. Let's think of what Jesus has done for us. He left the glory of heaven and chose to live on earth. He was rejected, despised, and misunderstood. He died and was separated from his Father so we could be free and be friends with God.

Jesus is worth more than anything. And he is worth our everything...

- We can give him our YES.
- We can be ALL IN for him.
- We can follow him no matter what.
- We can know forgiveness when we mess up or make excuses, and try again with his empowering strength.

Will you say YES to Jesus today?

## SONG

[Cheeky Pandas - Oh Wow! \(Awesome God\) \(Music Video\) - YouTube](#)

## SET THE SCENE

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Provide some pick and mix sweets for the children to choose from and enjoy (be mindful of any allergies, etc.) Chat with the children about making choices based on the sweets. Which do they like most? Why did you choose those particular sweets? We choose the ones we like best, don't we. But did you know that we can't do this when following Jesus. We can't have pick and mix faith! Choosing only some aspects of following him but not others. The people in today's bible account were doing just that - saying they really wanted to follow Jesus but then not willing to give everything to him.

## DISCUSSION

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Look at a selection of precious things together. These could simply be things like a shell from a great holiday, a photo of a loved one, a piece of jewellery, a favourite book... You lay them out on a table with a nice cloth for them to explore whilst you chat about what makes them special and valuable to you. Ask the children to share things that are precious to them too. Introduce the concept that Jesus is even more precious than any of these things. He is the most precious thing in our lives!

You might like to expand on this by looking at the Pearl of Great Price from Matthew 13:45-46. Either read it from the Bible, a children's Bible story book or watch this short video: [THE PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE AND THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE / Bible Story / Bible Stop Motion - YouTube](#)

Because Jesus is so precious, we can choose to follow him with everything! The people in today's Bible passage had excuses for not following Jesus fully. They may have sounded like good reasons, but Jesus saw through to their motives and challenged them to be like him, to not look back, to not be half-hearted, to be ALL IN and share God's kingdom with others...

But I wonder what it means for us today to follow Jesus. Unpack this in a way that is relevant to the children's lives:

- Do we only follow Jesus on Sundays?
- Do we only love our friends?
- Do we only read our Bibles once a month or at church?
- Do we only pray for those who are kind to us?
- Do we give up when things get tough?

## DISCUSSION CONT.

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Jesus is worth our everything because he gave everything for us. He is so precious, and he wants us to have his best for our lives not to pick and choose - remember the sweets we had earlier in the session? Jesus wants our hearts to completely love and follow him! There's a great promise attached to this - he will meet all our needs when we seek him first. Matthew 6:33 says, 'But put God's kingdom first. Do what he wants you to do. Then all those things will also be given to you.' (NIRV)

## TAKE HOME

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**Fill Your Heart** Give each child a large heart shape cut out from A4 card and a selection of sweet shapes (*see additional sheet with this week's materials*). Label the sweet shapes with things such as LOVE, JOY, PRAYER, FORGIVENESS, MERCY, FREEDOM, BIBLE, LISTENING TO GOD... Encourage the children to include their own ideas too. Ask the children to cut out their sweet shapes and stick them on to their card heart. Chat about all the wonderful things that Jesus gives us and wants our hearts to be full of. Suggest that the children display their creation at home so they can be reminded of these things.

## RESPONSE

**Full Hearted?** Stick up two large paper hearts shapes on the wall at either side of the room - one is folded in half, and one is fully open. Explain to the children the difference between being ALL IN: full-hearted, and HALF-HEARTED: picking and choosing only some parts of following Jesus. Do we want to be half-hearted or full hearted (all in) when following Jesus? Let the children think about this. They can respond by choosing to stand by one of the hearts. You might want to have leaders ready to go and pray with those who have responded, asking: How can I pray for you? When do you find it hard to follow Jesus? Where do you need help? **Or** simply pray for the children to be filled with Holy Spirit, to be ALL IN. They could whisper YES to Jesus if appropriate.

## ACTIVITY

**Following Jesus' Footprints** Give each child a piece of coloured card and a pencil. Ask them to draw around their feet on the card and cut them out. Encourage them to decorate each one and write their name on them. Then give the children a strip of paper with this sentence to complete written on it: 'I can follow Jesus when\_\_\_\_\_.' The children can fill in the sentence and then attach it to their footprint, like the strap of a sandal. For younger children, you could simply write, 'I will follow Jesus' on the sandal strap. Invite the children to stick their footprints up somewhere in your space/on a display board to remind them next time that we can choose to follow Jesus each day!

## GAME

**Follow the Leader** Play a variation of the game 'Duck, Duck, Goose'. Sit in a circle and nominate one person to be 'on'. They should move around the circle and gently tap one person's head in turn for each word of the phrase: 'I can follow Jesus'. On the word 'Jesus' the person who is tapped jumps up and chases the person 'on' around the circle and back to the space they vacated. They are then the person who is 'on' and they start from where they were sitting. Continue till everyone has had a go. Talk about Jesus being a great leader. He loves us and we can follow him each day!

## ALTERNATIVE

Ask the children to make a list of things that are important in their lives. Can they put them in order of priority? Where does Jesus come on their list? Reflect on Jesus asking us to make him our priority. Our number one. The top of the list of importance. The thing we make the most time for. Remember that once we put Jesus first, there is room for everything else as well.

## ADAPTATION

Make a colourful group picture on a large piece of paper using everyone's feet. Paint the children's feet and make their footprints on the paper - this is a lovely sensory experience for them. Around the feet (once the paint is dry) encourage everyone to write or draw ways they can walk with Jesus every day.

## ALTERNATIVE

Have fun playing a follow the leader rhythm game with everyone sitting in a circle. The leader can choose to clap, tap or finger-click a simple rhythm that everyone has a go at copying. Allow the children to take it in turns to be the leader.

## LET'S CHAT

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

In today's Bible passage, people had different excuses for not following Jesus. What excuses might we have for not following Jesus today?

How do we follow Jesus each day? What does it look like in our family?

## LET'S PRAY

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Collect precious things from around your home and talk about why they are special to you. Then talk about why Jesus is even more precious than these things. That's why we should follow him with our whole lives, hearts, minds, strength. Say the following prayer together:

***Thank you, Jesus, that you call us to follow you. Help us to not pick and choose but to fully follow you with our whole hearts. Show us one thing we can do today to choose you.  
Amen***

## LET'S CHAT

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# Sweet Shapes for Take Home Activity

