

SEPT - DEC 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.

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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 realise the cost of following Jesus and consider if we're prepared for that.

OVERVIEW

In today's passage Jesus is talking to an extremely large crowd, some of whom were there simply because they were following others, not because they were serious about what Jesus had to say. Putting this into context helps us to understand why Jesus uses such disturbing language, saying the people should cast aside their family and friends in order to follow him. Following Jesus is an all or nothing invitation. Jesus calls people to a kind of discipleship that is not cheap, not easy, and not to be entered into without deep consideration of the consequences and costs. This passage reminds us of the importance of commitment and loyalty to Jesus over all other competing loyalties, including family, self-interest, and possessions.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we pray for the confidence to follow you, knowing that we are fully prepared to commit to living out our faith and sharing the good news of you and your Kingdom with those around us. Amen

ALL AGE TALK

Play a short clip from the 2016 animated film Trolls; roughly 17.43 minutes into the film when Poppy knocks on Branch's bunker, all the way through to the end of the scrapbook scene (around 21.40), just before the song starts.

In this clip we see that Chef Bergen has discovered the location of the Trolls after years of them being in hiding and captures some of them to take back to Bergen Town. Princess Poppy seeks help from Branch, but he isn't prepared to face the potential cost of what's involved in the rescue mission. Princess Poppy sets off on her own to rescue the captured trolls, going through the possible scenarios in her head via the scrapbook, including paying the ultimate cost... being eaten by a Bergen.

If we were to watch more of the film you would see that she doesn't let this potential outcome stop her and keeps on going. As Princess Poppy ventures off to Bergen Town she struggles and faces difficulties along the way, almost meeting a sticky end, until Branch appears just in time to help. He had finally considered the cost of helping Poppy rescue her friends and decided it was worth it, however he accuses Poppy of thinking 'Life is all cupcake and rainbows'. Poppy's response shows Branch that she knows it isn't, but she chooses to adopt a positive mindset which helps her to tackle the challenges that life throws at her.

Our Bible passage today forces us to consider the true cost of following Jesus. A lot of people today say that they want to follow Jesus; they join the church and for a while you will see them every week, but when they find out how much it is going to cost, they fall away. Being a true follower of Jesus is not always easy, but it is always worth it, if you are willing to pay the price. With lots of challenges and struggles involved, are we prepared for the cost of being Jesus' disciples? And when we make that decision, are we going to be more like Branch or Poppy? Will our approach be full of fear, worry and negativity, or will it be one of hope, trust and confidence?

SONG

[The Cost \(Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)

SET THE SCENE

Show the children a selection of pictures, or the actual pieces of equipment required for a hobby (e.g. football boots, tennis racket, violin, etc), a clock, some money and something to represent energy, such as a battery. Ask the group to guess what connects these items together. When we take up a hobby we must consider the full cost before we begin. These costs are things like buying equipment, time, the financial cost of lessons and our energy. We don't usually mind the cost of pursuing our hobbies, so why do we sometimes begrudge the cost of pursuing Jesus?

DISCUSSION

Tell the Bible story using a figure to represent Jesus and lots of circular items to represent coins / the crowd (these could be actual coins, tiddlywinks, or discs cut out from paper or card, etc).

*Place Jesus down on the floor. **Jesus was travelling and crowds of people would follow him.** Sprinkle coins on the floor surrounding Jesus. **Really large crowds.** Add more coins. **Super large crowds.** Add more coins. **How do you think Jesus felt? My guess is, he was disappointed that although lots of people came to see him, only a few people were committed enough to do what was required to be his disciples and follow him properly. Jesus tested the people by saying. "If you want to follow me you must be willing to give up your father and mother!"** Remove some of the coins. **"You must be willing to give up your brother and sister."** Remove some of the coins. **"You must be willing to give up all of your friends and family."** Remove some of the coins. **"You must be willing to give up everything."** Remove some more of the coins so that only a few remain. **What's Jesus left with? The people that truly want to follow him!***

It seems like Jesus was being quite extreme here, however he was showing the crowds that they couldn't just 'be' his followers; they needed to put a lot more time and energy into learning and practicing the things he was teaching them. He wasn't really saying we have to give up everyone and everything in our lives, but he's pointing out that God must be our number one and we must be prepared for what's involved in having Him as our main priority. Jesus said that we wouldn't start building a house without first knowing how much it would cost to complete it, therefore we need to be aware of the cost of following him.

ALTERNATIVE

Invite the children to show you (or describe) any skills that they have learned, for example, whistling, playing the piano, a card trick, or spinning a ball on their finger. Talk about how if we want to learn something and be really good at it, we have to dedicate time to practicing it - we can't just do it. Jesus says that it's the same with being his disciples. We have to dedicate ourselves to following Jesus and if we do take the time to learn what Jesus taught, then eventually, we will become more and more like him. Then we will be able to share God's love and forgiveness with other people too.

TAKE HOME

Stained Glass Cross Create a stained glass cross using sticky back plastic, coloured tissue paper and a cross shaped border in black card. See here for further instructions: ([285](#)). [Pinterest](#)

Be reminded of the Bible verses for today where Jesus told the people that if they wanted to follow him, they had to count the cost. He said they had to be willing to take up their cross daily and follow him. Invite the children to put their stained glass crosses up on a window at home so that when the sun shines through them and highlights the beautiful colours, they can be reminded that the cost of following Jesus is always worth it.

RESPONSE

Cross Necklace Provide the children with the materials they need to make a cross on a necklace. You could either purchase cross shaped beads, or see the link here for instructions on how to make a cross out of pony beads: [How to Bead a Cross \(Fun Christian Craft!\)\(catholicicing.com\)](https://www.funchristiancraft.com/2014/08/10/how-to-bead-a-cross/).

Remind the children that Jesus said, "Whoever is not willing to carry his cross and follow me cannot be my follower." Invite the children to respond to what they have heard today by deciding whether or not to wear their cross necklace. If they are not ready, they can take the necklace home so they can choose to put it on another time if they wish.

ACTIVITY

Cake Decorating Challenge Split the children into teams and provide each group with a cake, and the items needed to be able to decorate it, for example frosting or buttercream, sweets, sprinkles and another edible embellishments. Blindfold one or two members of each team. They must decorate their teams' cake by listening to the instructions from the rest of the group. Allow the children some time to complete this challenge before inspecting their efforts and then rewarding them with a piece of their cake (be mindful of any allergies). This challenge was very difficult and even though the cakes might not have been perfect, they still tasted great. The cost of following Jesus might not be easy but the reward is always sweet!

GAME

Take Up Your Cross Give the children small wooden crosses, or crosses cut out of thick card, which they must balance on their heads. Set up an obstacle course in your room, using chairs, tables, hula hoops and other items. Challenge the children to carry their cross on their heads as they journey through the obstacle course. If the cross falls off their head, they must start at the beginning of the obstacle course again. If they make it to the end of the course, (or show they are persistent in trying hard) they receive a reward. Following Jesus won't always be easy but if we give it all of our effort, it is always worth it.

ALTERNATIVE

Provide a large cross, (either one you have drawn or a physical cross you can lay down on the floor). Give each child one of the 'coins' used in the discussion section. Ask the group if they think the cost of following Jesus is worth it. After a time of reflection, if they think 'yes' encourage them to place their coin on the cross.

ALTERNATIVE

Set up a number of different activities around the room and allow the children the choice of what they would like to do. Examples include a craft activity, construction, puzzles, small world play. After a period of time, gather together and discuss what it feels like to choose. Jesus wants us to choose to follow him!

ALTERNATIVE

Play the game four corners where the children have to guess which corners of the room will **not** be eliminated from the game in each round. As you play, secretly select a corner that is never chosen to be 'out'. Eventually the children will realise that there's something special about choosing that particular corner. When they do, stop the game and talk about how there's something special about choosing Jesus.

4TH SEPTEMBER
2022

COST TO
FOLLOW

LUKE 14: 25-33

LET'S CHAT

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

What kinds of things are you committed to? Work, education, financial commitments, friends and family, etc.

Have you had to give anything up to follow Jesus?

LET'S PRAY

Find some different coins and spend some time looking at them. What things are the same on each of the coins? What things are different? Each choose a coin and hold it whilst you think about something you need to let go of to make more time for Jesus. Say the following prayer together and on 'Amen' let go of your coins:

Dear Jesus, help us to understand how to be a loyal disciple, putting you first before all of our other things and commitments in our lives. Amen

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Aim: To realise that God never gives up or stops looking for us when we get lost.

OVERVIEW

Today's Bible passage precedes what is known as one of Jesus' most familiar parables, the lost (or prodigal) son. Jesus loved to show people what His Father is like. He knew better than anyone that God is a wonderful, loving, faithful and merciful God. But as Jesus travelled and taught, he saw that many people didn't understand God and their wrong ideas often came from the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. At this moment, the tax collectors and the sinners were drawing near to Jesus because they wanted to listen to him, however the Pharisees criticised Jesus for accepting these people as it went against the social norms of the time. Here we focus on the parables of the lost sheep, and the lost coin. In Jesus' day, people were generally poor and so one coin or a sheep would be very valuable to them. In the same way, all of God's children are valuable and these stories illustrate how much we matter to Him.

PRAYER

Father God, we thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to save those who are lost. We are sorry for the mistakes and the bad choices that we make - forgive us and help us to return to you. Amen

ALL AGE TALK

Use your church's lost property box, or use some examples of lost things on social media, for example, on the Facebook 'Lostbox': [\(2\) Lostbox | Facebook](#). Go through some of the items and discuss how the owners might be feeling without them. Would they want their lost item back or would they have already replaced it? Have you ever lost anything important to you? Share some stories about precious things that have been lost and then found. If the congregation don't have any examples, you will be able to find some stories online, for example: [Reader's Digest | 5 Amazing Stories of Things Lost, Then Found \(rd.com\)](#).

In today's Bible passage, the religious leaders were upset that Jesus was often seen associating with sinners and they were very critical of this behaviour. Jesus told them a story to help them to understand! "Suppose one of you had a hundred sheep and you lost one of them," Jesus said. "Wouldn't you leave the ninety-nine who were safe, and go and search for the lost sheep? And when you found the lost sheep, wouldn't you joyfully put it on your shoulders and carry it back home? Wouldn't you be so happy that you would tell all of your friends about finding the lost sheep?" Understanding that sheep were very valuable I imagine that the religious leaders had to agree that they would do just as Jesus had suggested. Then Jesus said to them, "In the same way, there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent." The lost sheep in Jesus' parable is like a sinner who has wandered far away from God. He feels lost and thinks there is no shepherd to care for him. The Pharisees didn't want anything to do with those who sinned (even though the Pharisees were sinners, too!). But Jesus is the Good Shepherd who won't stop looking for his lost sheep. That's why he spent so much time hanging out with sinners, eating with those the Pharisees hated, and teaching the people who never thought they could be part of the kingdom of God. If we are lost, it's not because God lost us. It's because our sin has caused us to wander far away from Him. God will never stop loving us, even if we run away from Him. And He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on a cross to pay the price for our sins so we can be found.

SONG

[Amazing Grace \(My Chains Are Gone\) - Chris Tomlin - YouTube](#)

SET THE SCENE

Before the children arrive, hide something that belongs to you in the room. Tell the children that you have lost something and ask if they can help you to find it. Search the room together until someone finds your missing item. Talk about how it feels to have found the thing you had been looking for. Have the children ever experienced losing something? How did it feel? Was the lost item found again? Discuss how it feels to find something that you thought was lost.

DISCUSSION

Present with children with lots of sheep, a shepherd, a coin and a woman. These might be in picture form, or if you have toy figures, that would work too. Spread these things out in front of the children and ask them to guess the two parables that you are going to be talking about today.

Invite the children to use the props and their existing knowledge to tell you the story of the two parables. At the end, sum up each story (*see below*) to affirm or correct what they have said. If your children don't have enough Bible knowledge to be able to recount the parables, you could begin by telling the stories or watching a video (*suggested links to YouTube below*) before asking them to retell what happened in each story.

[The Parable of the Lost Coin - YouTube](#)

[The Lost Sheep - YouTube](#)

Parable of the Lost Sheep: a man has 100 sheep and loses one. He makes sure he finds the lost sheep and when he returns, tells all his friends, rejoicing. The same is true of God when someone repents and returns to Him.

Parable of the Lost Coin: A woman has ten coins and loses one. She looks everywhere and sweeps the house carefully until she finds it. When she does she calls her friends and neighbours to rejoice. The same is true of God; he never stops searching for us and celebrates when someone repents.

Two parables, with the same message. God loves and cares about us, and rejoices when we turn back to Him.

ALTERNATIVE

With younger children, read the book "The Day the Crayons Came Home" by Drew Daywalt: [The Day the Crayons Came home - Books Alive! Read Aloud book for children - YouTube](#)

We see the crayons that have been lost, scattered around the world, communicating with the little boy Duncan that they want to come home. Upon their return, Duncan makes a special home for them and celebrates that they have been found again. We are God's children, but sometimes we get lost. When that happens, God doesn't give up on us. He searches for us and he won't stop until we are found. The Bible even says there is celebration when the lost are found and return home!

TAKE HOME

Pebble Painting Provide each child with a light coloured pebble. Invite the children to paint one side of their pebble with either the image of a sheep or a coin. On the other side of their pebble (the bottom), ask them to write a few words to describe how they feel when something that was lost has been found. They might choose words such as happy, joy, relief, excited, etc. Suggest that the children take their painted pebbles home and hide them in the garden (or somewhere else suitable). When they find their pebble again in the future they can be reminded of today's parables and how God responds when someone who has been lost returns to Him.

RESPONSE

Sheeple This group response activity is just like the dice game 'Beetle'. You can either use the activity sheet attached or create your own. The main objective of the game is to make the sheep in the least number of turns. Each roll of the dice will allow the children to 'collect' a certain element of their sheep to draw on a separate piece of paper. Before the next player takes their turn to roll the dice, they must answer the question that come with each sheep body part.

ACTIVITY

Edible Sheep Snacks Make edible sheep to share as a snack. You will find lots of inspiration online, however we suggest combining 1/2 cup peanut butter and 1/2 cup honey in a saucepan. Bring to the boil and stir continuously for 1 minute, then take off the heat and stir in 3 cups of hoop shaped cereal. Once the cereal is fully coated, use an ice cream scoop to transfer balls of the mixture into cupcake cases. Whilst the mixture is sticky, add chocolate matchsticks for the sheep's legs and mini marshmallows for a head. Be careful, as they will be hot! Chill to set before eating. As always when using food, be mindful of any allergies.

GAME

Find It Before the session hide lots of small pictures of sheep and coins around the room. Divide the group into Team Sheep and Team Coin; the teams have to find as many sheep or coins as possible depending on their team name. Only one member of each team is allowed to search at a time, meaning they must return to their team when they have found one of their missing items before another team member can search. If anyone appears to be struggling to find something, encourage them not to give up looking. After an appropriate amount of time, stop the game and see which team has collected the most of the thing they were searching for.

ALTERNATIVE

In advance, prepare a large sheep cut out of black paper. Encourage the children to dip a coin (e.g. 2p) in white paint and print it onto the sheep (to make the fleece) as a promise not to give up on Jesus even when they drift away from him and feel lost.

ALTERNATIVE

Provide the children with crayons of all different shades, shapes and sizes. Invite them to draw pictures of the parables that you have been listening to today. Explain that although we all come in different shapes, shades and sizes, God is always with us and will always come looking for us and welcome us back when we get lost.

ALTERNATIVE

If you have an outdoor, or larger indoor space, play hide and seek. One child will be "IT" (the Shepherd) and all other children will be the sheep and will run and hide. If you have one, you may like to provide your shepherd with a costume or a prop, such as a shepherd's staff. Each time the "shepherd" finds a "sheep", they must celebrate enthusiastically!

Sheeple

When the game Beetle meets sheep!

Roll the dice to draw your sheep. You can't start until you've rolled a six. With every roll, draw the corresponding sheep part on your piece of paper and answer the question. The first person (or team) to draw a complete sheep, wins.



Body



Q: Have you ever been lost?
How did it feel?



Head



Q: What helps us to return
to God when we've been
lost?



Tail



Q: Have you ever lost
something? Did you find it?
How did it feel?



Front legs



Q: Why does prayer help us
to move closer to God?



Back legs



Q: What can cause us to
drift away from God?



Ears



Q: How can we learn to
listen to God?

11TH SEPTEMBER
2022

LOST AND FOUND

LUKE 15: 1-10

LET'S CHAT

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

Have you ever been lost? Share your story.

How does it feel knowing that God always wants to draw us back into His arms?

LET'S PRAY

Play a game of hide and seek, either hiding yourselves as people, or take turns at hiding an object for the others to find. Reflect together on your feelings when something is lost, and then how it feels when something is later found. Afterwards say the following prayer:

Father God, thank you for always being willing to search for us, Help us to keep trusting you even, when we feel lost. Amen

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Aim: To discover the importance of making shrewd choices with the gifts that God gives us.

OVERVIEW

The parable of the shrewd manager is sandwiched in Luke's Gospel between the parable of the prodigal son and the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Similar to the prodigal son, the manager in the story has squandered the money and resources that he had been entrusted with. This parable can seem a little confusing at first, particularly as the manager does not repent like the prodigal son does, but is commended for responding shrewdly to difficult circumstances. Despite the manager being a sinner who continues to be only interested in things that benefit himself, his actions demonstrate that a bad situation can be transformed into something that benefit himself and others. At the end of his parable, Jesus highlights that the key message is, "No servant can serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and worldly riches."

PRAYER

Father God, help us to make wise choices so that we can make the most of the resources that we have been given. Show us how to transform situations so that your glory will be revealed to others and they come to know you. Amen

ALL AGE TALK

For today's talk you will need a bag / rucksack, an empty (clean!) dustbin, and a selection of items that may or may not be useful if you were going on a journey (for example, a map, a compass, walking shoes, waterproof coat, a hat, food, water, a box of matches, pen and paper, toilet roll, hair brush, a houseplant in a pot, etc.)

Today we will play a game called 'Bring It or Sling It?' We will be collectively making a decision on which of the things I have brought would be needed if we were going on a journey. Show each item and ask the congregation to help you decide whether to 'Bring It' (put it in your bag) or 'Sling It' (put it in the bin*). After you have made your choices, reveal that packing restrictions mean that you have too many items in your bag, and you will therefore have to make some shrewd / wise choices to narrow down the number of items. Which of the things that were believed to be important enough to pack can be removed from your bag?

In today's Bible passage we find one of Jesus' most challenging parables, the Parable of the Shrewd Manager; a story about a rich man who had a manager who was using the rich man's money for himself. When the manager is fired, he goes around to all the people who owe his employer money and reduces their debts so that they will be hospitable to him after he loses his job. Surprisingly, the employer commends the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. Even though the manager has been dishonest, his actions model behaviour that we can learn from - making shrewd/wise decisions in every situation, especially where a negative situation can be transformed into something positive that benefits others. Jesus is all too familiar with our mistakes and is encouraging us not to give up, even when we are to blame for our own hardship.

*Make it clear that the items that were categorised as 'Sling It' would not really be put in the bin, so as not to be seen to be condoning wastefulness. This is simply a way to visually illustrate that some items were not seen to be appropriate to pack in the bag!

SONG

[Shine \(from the inside out\) by Nick Jackson - Actions for church - YouTube](#)

SET THE SCENE

Provide a selection of small toy animals, plastic bottle tops and dried food (e.g. dried peas or lentils). Instruct the children to give each animal a bottle top which is their food bowl. They must then share out the dried food so that all the animals have something to eat. When all the food has been shared, introduce another animal and ask the group to re-distribute the food so that this animal can be included. What is the best way to go about doing this? Whilst the children are busy sharing out the food you have given them, introduce the idea of sharing things for the benefit of others.

DISCUSSION

Use the items from 'Set the Scene' to help you tell the Bible story. There was once a rich man (*pick an animal to represent the rich man*) who had a dishonest manager (*pick an animal to represent the manager*) who had been wasting his assets. The man fired the manager and demanded that he returned all of the accounts and records relating to his finances. Worried about his future, the manager had to make a decision, and quick. He went to one of the rich man's debtors and asked how much they owed (*go to one of the toy animals and remove half the food from their bowl and put it to one side*) and then halved the man's debt. Then he went to another debtor and asked how much they owed (*go to another toy animal and remove half the food from their bowl and put it to one side*) and he reduced their debt too. The manager hoped that by doing this he would gain favour with his master's debtors and they would help him. When the rich man heard about this he applauded the manager because he had turned his bad situation into an opportunity to do something to benefit both himself and others. Jesus was not approving of dishonesty but was pointing out that the manager had acted cleverly when he was facing a crisis.

The Bible passage ends with Jesus saying that we can't serve both God and money. Money in itself isn't a bad thing, but our attitude to money sometimes isn't helpful. It's easy to think of it as 'my' money, but if we believe that everything we have is a gift from God, then as God's stewards, we must look after everything from money to the environment. Making shrewd/wise choices with the things we have means that we use them to serve God and each other and shows that we can be trusted to do the right thing.

ALTERNATIVE

Some people are obsessed with money and are always thinking about what they can do to have more. There's no need for us to be so money-focussed because God gives us lots of other gifts which we can use for his glory. Things like our talents and our time which we can use for good purposes. These things cost nothing and yet they make us rich in other ways! Read 1 Timothy 6:6-12. When we focus our energies on things like money, we usually end up being disappointed. Instead we should focus on all the blessings that God gives us and being thankful for what we have.

TAKE HOME

Money Biscuits Make money biscuits with the children. Depending on the facilities and the amount of time available, you could bake the biscuits and then ice them, or simply use edible gold spray to make shop-bought biscuits look like coins. See the links here for examples:

[\(302\) Pinterest](#)

[\(302\) Pinterest](#)

Invite the children to take some biscuits home to share with other people as a reminder to share what we have to benefit those around us. With older children, ask them to think about how they can share what they have wisely and responsibly - not just thoughtlessly giving everything away to the first person they encounter!

RESPONSE

Shrewd Money Boxes Provide each child with three small jars or containers which will be used to make three money boxes. On one money box write the word 'Give', on the second write 'Spend', and on the third write 'Save'. Ask: What would be a wise thing to give their money to? What would be a wise way to spend their money? What would be a wise thing to save up for? Ask the children to write down their ideas on slips of paper and put them inside their money boxes. The children can take the money boxes home and when they get pocket money they must decide which jar to put it in, remembering what they wrote down during your session.

ACTIVITY

Managing Money Allocate each child a different imaginary budget and give them some time to decide how they will spend what they have been given. They can use it for whatever they want in this pretend scenario. Provide some catalogues for shops where they may decide to make purchases (e.g. toy shops) or supervise internet access to help them look up the prices of things they might want to buy. Afterwards, review and discuss their imaginary spending. How wise were their choices? Did anyone decide to save some of the money they had been given. Did anyone, after realising they hadn't all started with the same amount, offer to share their money with someone else?

GAME

Wrapping Relay Divide the group into teams and provide them with some empty boxes, wrapping paper (or unwanted newspapers), scissors and tape. When the game starts, the children have to run forward one at a time as a relay, and wrap a box as if it were a gift. Once their box is wrapped, they should give it to someone on one of the other teams and run to the back of their team's line. The aim of the game is to wrap and give away as many gifts as they can so that at the end of the game (when you say time is up, or when you have run out of boxes) their team has the least number of presents gifted to them by other teams.

ALTERNATIVE

Jesus said that those who can be trusted with small things can also be trusted with big things. As a group, position lots of grains of rice (small) on a piece of black paper to create a bigger picture. Pray together asking God to help you to be honest and make the right choices.

ALTERNATIVE

English monetary notes have pictures of famous historical people on the back, such as Winston Churchill. Challenge the children to design a new monetary note. Instead of having a picture of a famous person, their note should have an image that reminds people to share what they have to benefit others.

ALTERNATIVE

Play a game of Pictionary, where someone draws a picture and everyone else must try to guess what it is. In this version of the game, all items drawn must be things that can be shared with others.

LET'S CHAT

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

What things have you been trusted to be responsible for? What are the small things and what are the big things? Are you trustworthy?

It is easier to have a worldly view on money or Godly view? Why?

LET'S PRAY

Talk about how when we are thankful for what we have, and focus on Jesus, there's no time for getting hung up on things we don't need. As a family select a charity to donate to or raise money for. This doesn't need to be a large amount or you could consider donating something other than money, such as clothes you no longer wear. If you already give to a charity regularly, discuss why you do it. Afterwards, say the following prayer:

Father God, help us to be generous stewards with the gifts you have given us and show us how to serve you and not material things. Amen

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It is easier to have a worldly view on money or Godly view? Why?

LET'S PRAY

Talk about how when we are thankful for what we have, and focus on Jesus, there's no time for getting hung up on things we don't need. As a family select a charity to donate to or raise money for. This doesn't need to be a large amount or you could consider donating something other than money, such as clothes you no longer wear. If you already give to a charity regularly, discuss why you do it. Afterwards, say the following prayer:

Father God, help us to be generous stewards with the gifts you have given us and show us how to serve you and not material things. Amen

Aim: To understand that we need to wake up and listen to God before it's too late.

OVERVIEW

This story that Jesus shares with the crowds follows on from the parable of the shrewd manager that we looked at last week. It reminds us of God's message that that we cannot serve both God and money. The story features two contrasting characters to highlight the difference between those who store up treasure in heaven and those who store up treasure on earth. Even after death, the contrast continues, but now the roles are reversed. Lazarus is now living in luxury and the rich man is living in torment. Ironically, he continues to be referred to as the rich man even though he now has nothing. Jesus points out that God had already warned everyone about the dangers of self-indulgence, however some people don't ever listen even when Jesus (and his miracles) are right in front of them. The story serves as a warning to those that aren't paying any attention to the needs of others, reminding us that attitude has no place in God's kingdom.

PRAYER

Father God, forgive us for the times when we have ignored things that we shouldn't have. Help us to be compassionate towards the issues that need our attention. Amen

ALL AGE TALK

In the style of the television programme 'Countdown' display nine random letters (a mixture of vowels and consonants) and ask the congregation to make up as many words as possible using the letters that you have given them. You may wish to provide pencils and paper for people to use, either working individually or in small groups. Alternatively, you could invite two people to come to the front who feel they're good at word games and challenge them to compete against each other. When the 'countdown timer' has run out, see who has come up with the most words and find out who has identified the longest word. You may wish to have some of your own word suggestions up your sleeve to add to the congregations offerings.

Sometimes, it is easy to see what's in front of us, and sometimes, something is there that we just don't see. During the Countdown game, we all saw different words even though we were all presented with the same nine letters. In the Bible passage that we're focusing on today, the rich man that ends up in hell asked Abraham to allow Lazarus to go back to earth and warn his five brothers so that they would not end up in hell with him, but Abraham said, "No" because if they had not paid attention to the information that had already been given, they would never listen!

During Jesus' time on earth, many people saw him and even witnessed his miracles but didn't really see and take on board the message that he was bringing to them. The same can happen today, so Jesus warns us to wake up and see what's in front of us and then to do something about it. How do we treat "Lazarus-like" people? Do we treat people like the rich man did? Do we have the resources but refuse to give them? Are our hearts hardened towards those in need? We can't ignore issues like the rich man did - we must take action, before our time runs out.

SONG

[I'm All In | Cave Quest VBS Music Video | Group Publishing - YouTube](#)

SET THE SCENE

As the children arrive, give half of the group a coin, for example a ten pence piece. The other half of the group receive nothing. What is the children's response to this? Talk about their attitudes to money. Does their attitude to money and material possessions mean that they neglect other things? If the children were present for the session last week when you looked at the story of the shrewd manager, ask if this has changed their perspective about money? Have they done anything differently as a result of last weeks teaching?

DISCUSSION

Use the two groups of children (*those who were given a coin as they arrived, and those who were not*) to help you dramatise the Bible story. The children who were given a coin will represent the rich man, and those who were not will represent Lazarus.

Jesus tells us a story about a rich man (*the children with the coins should cheer enthusiastically*) and a poor man covered in sores that lived at the gates of his house, called Lazarus (*the children with no coins should cheer half-heartedly*). The rich man ignored the needs of Lazarus for many, many years (*tell the 'rich men' to walk past the 'poor men' begging and ignore them*). When both the men die, the rich man didn't end up in heaven where he thought he would be. Instead he was suffering (*the 'rich men' should act massively disappointed*). Lazarus on the other hand wasn't suffering; he was in heaven (*the 'poor men' should pretend to celebrate*). You see, the rich man had been a slave to his money and his possessions and he wasn't able to show any compassion to Lazarus who had been in need and on his doorstep.

Should the rich man have helped Lazarus? Yes, of course he should! This story is a powerful reminder that we must pay attention to what God is asking us to do whilst we're here on earth. Sometimes we get distracted and busy and we forget to make God our number one focus. More often than not, we put ourselves first and make everything about what we want and need but that's not what the Bible teaches us to do. Putting God first means we need to follow the example that Jesus set for us where we love and care for those in need around us. When we put God first, he makes sure that everything else falls into place.

ALTERNATIVE

If you have very young children, create for them a sensory box containing a selection of hard and soft items. The children must organise the box to separate the hard things from the soft things. Sometimes we say or do 'hard' things; words and actions that hurt and upset others. God much prefers it when our words and actions are 'soft'; when we say and do things that comfort, help and encourage others instead. This can be a challenge but if we put God first in our lives, he will help us to do it.

TAKE HOME

Leaf Bowl Help the children to each roll out a lump of air drying clay so it's 3-4mm thick, then press a large leaf into it. This should leave an impression of the leaf on the clay. Using a butter knife (or similar) cut around the shape of the leaf, then curl it up at the edges. This activity works best with leaves from a sycamore, hazel, birch, beech, field maple or alder tree. Once the clay is dry, the children can paint it at home if they want to. Remind the children of the phrase 'turning over a new leaf'.

When they use their bowl they can think about 'turning over a new leaf' and remembering to put God first in their lives. <https://craftinvaders.co.uk/air-dried-clay-leaves/>

RESPONSE

Turn Over Give each child a blank piece of paper. Ask them to reflect on if they are ready to turn over and start again, giving God their full attention? If the answer is yes, they can turn over their piece of paper. This is a private decision and as the paper is blank you won't see who has done this. Encourage the children to take the piece of paper home and doodle on it as they spend time giving God their full attention. What do they think God might be saying to them through their doodles?

ACTIVITY

Mind Maps In advance of the session, prepare three large sheets of paper; one with an image of a coin in the middle (to represent what the children own), one with an image of a gift (representing their skills and talents) and the other with a picture of a clock (to represent what they spend their time doing). Ask the children to write or draw what they have and what they spend their time doing around the images on the pieces of paper. Then around the 'whats', ask them to write or draw the 'hows' How could they use those things to help others? Allow the children to freely move around the three sheets of paper adding their contributions. Afterwards, talk together about their thoughts and ideas.

GAME

Too Late! Hide an alarm clock somewhere in your room, where you have set the alarm to sound approximately 2 minutes after the game has started. Challenge the children to search the room to find the alarm clock before it's 'too late' (before the alarm sounds). You could play the game several times, changing the length of time they have before the alarm sounds each time. Remember how the message from today's story was to wake up and do as God asks us to do before it's too late!

ALTERNATIVE

Set an alarm to sound in a few minutes time. Ask the children to sit quietly and reflect on the things that they 'turn a blind eye to' or pretend not to notice. When the alarm sounds, this signifies that it's time to 'wake up' and do something about those things. How might they do something to help in those situations?

ALTERNATIVE

In the Bible passage today we heard that Lazarus died and went to heaven. Invite the children to paint or draw pictures of what they think heaven is like. Encourage them to think about this from the perspective of what they know about God, rather than a personal interpretation, such as 'heaven is a room full of sweets'!

ALTERNATIVE

There are lots of board games that feature a countdown timer. Examples include Screwball Scramble, Pass the Bomb and Five Second Rule. Choose one of these games and play it together. Afterwards, talk about what it was that they had to do before the time ran out - before it was too late. What was Jesus saying we need to do before it's too late in our Bible passage today?

LET'S CHAT

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

What are the things that you ignore, that you should probably do something about?

How can we stop focusing so much on ourselves and our immediate family, and start thinking about others?

LET'S PRAY

Go for a walk around your local area together. Look carefully as you travel and think about some of the needs of your community? Rather than ignoring them, what could you do to help? Make a commitment to do so, and say the following prayer together:

Father God, help us to see the needs of others around us and equip us to be able to help. Amen

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