

40. Power



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Mark 4:35-41

Jesus calms the storm



AIMS

To help the children understand who Jesus is and that he has great power.

To help them to understand that because Jesus is God, those who trust in him need not be afraid.

Jesus showed who he was, and demonstrated his amazing power, by calming the storm when the disciples were afraid. He has power to save us too, even when life is scary.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passage for this session and reflect:

- What are you afraid of?
- How has knowing God helped you in times of fear or anxiety?
- What truths about God help you when you are afraid?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

► Fears Quiz

You will need: paper and pens to make signs, Blu-tack

See if the children can identify the objects of fear from the names of some common phobias. Stick up signs labelled A, B and C around the room and get them to move to the letter they think is correct for each one.

Arachnophobia

- a) fear of wasps, b) fear of spiders, c) fear of hospitals
Answer: b) fear of spiders

Claustrophobia

- a) fear of small spaces, b) fear of claws, c) fear of Santa
Answer: a) fear of small spaces

Aerophobia

- a) fear of wind, b) fear of flying, c) fear of chocolate
Answer: b) fear of flying

Glossophobia

- a) fear of light, b) fear of paint, c) fear of public speaking
Answer: c) fear of public speaking

Monophobia

- a) fear of being alone, b) fear of failure, c) fear of heights
Answer: a) fear of being alone

Alektorophobia

- a) fear of electricity, b) fear of fire, c) fear of chickens
Answer: c) fear of chickens

Globophobia

a) fear of travelling abroad,
b) fear of balloons, c) fear of
choking

Answer: b) fear of balloons

Nyctophobia

a) fear of darkness, b) fear of
doctors, c) fear of falling

Answer: a) fear of darkness

▶ **People, Shelter, Storm**

This game works well with a
larger group and a large space
such as a gym hall.

Get the children to divide into
groups of three. Within each
group, two people form the
shelter by standing facing one
another and extending their
arms up towards one another
so that their palms are touching
to create the roof of the shelter.
The final member of the group
sits or crouches between them
as the person hiding in the
shelter.

To play the game, there are four
commands you can give:

People: the people have to
come out from their shelters
and run to find a different
shelter, while the shelters stay
in place

Shelter: the people forming the
shelters have to break apart
and run to find a new person to
build a shelter over, while the
people stay in place

Storm: everyone leaves their
position and runs around as
though they are being blown
about by the storm

Stop: everyone has to form a
new group of three as before
with two people being the
shelter and one being the
person inside. The role each
person takes can be different
from the one they had in the
previous round.

Give the commands in a random
order (but always following
“Storm” with “Stop”) and let the

children get used to them.

If you want to add to the
challenge, you could introduce
the rule that when “Stop” is
called, the person who is the
caller has to join in and become
part of a group of three while
the person who is left without a
group becomes the new caller.

▶ **Beetle Drive Boat**

*You will need: pens or pencils,
dice, sheets printed from
additional document: Beetle
Drive Boat*

This game is similar to the
traditional game Beetle Drive,
but it involves drawing a picture
of a boat, tying in the with story,
rather than a beetle!

Give each child a sheet (*from
additional document: Beetle
Drive Boat*) and a pen or pencil.
If you have a large group, divide
them into smaller groups of
four or five to play, and give
each group a dice.

Each child rolls the dice in turn
and they can then draw the part
of the picture that corresponds
to the number they get as listed
below:

- 6 – boat
- 5 – mast
- 4 – sails (2)
- 3 – waves (2)
- 2 – Jesus
- 1 – disciples (2)

However, they have to have
their boat drawn before they
can draw anything else, so they
must roll a 6 to start, and they
must have their mast drawn
before they can draw their sails.

Where two of the same item
need to be drawn (sails, waves,
disciples) they can only draw
one when they roll that number
on the dice, so they must roll
these numbers twice to
complete their picture.

The child who manages to
complete all the items on their
picture first is the winner.

▶ **Obedience Games**

There are also some games on
the theme of obedience in
Session 3 of One Big Story,
which you could link in with the
story and the fact that the wind
and waves obeyed Jesus.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ **Recap / Intro**

**Last term, we began thinking
about the life of Jesus – we
talked about his birth and his
baptism, we learned about how
he resisted temptation, how he
called his disciples to follow
him, and how he began healing
people, fulfilling the words that
had been written about the
Messiah by the prophets long
ago. This term we’ll be thinking
some more about some of the
things Jesus did and what he
taught.**

**In the part of the Bible we’re
looking at today, we’re going
to hear about a time when
Jesus’ disciples were afraid.**

▶ **Jesus Calms The Storm Story**

*You will need: spray bottles
filled with water, thunder maker
(optional - search for thunder
maker on Amazon etc. It is a
percussion instrument, like a
drum with a long spring coming
from it which vibrates and
produces very effective
thunder noises. If you grab the
spring you can make the sound
stop very suddenly, which is
particularly effective for telling
this story.)*

Choose a child to be Jesus and a
few to be disciples to help act
out the story.

**One day, Jesus got into the
boat with his disciples to sail**

**across to the other side of the
lake.**

(Get the children playing Jesus

and the disciples to sit as if they are in a boat, either on the floor or on chairs.)

Jesus was very tired so, as they sailed off, he settled down in the boat to have a nap while the disciples rowed. The sea was calm and the boat was rocking gently from side to side.

But as they got out into the middle of the lake, it began to rain.

(Get the rest of the children to make rain noises by tapping on their legs or on the floor.)

It started off gently, but it got heavier and heavier.

The wind started to blow too, stronger and stronger, there was thunder and lightning (get the children to make the noises of wind and thunder – use the thunder maker if you have one) **and it was becoming a really wild storm.** (Have someone spray the children in the boat with water sprays.) **The boat was swaying violently from side to side, and water was beginning to come into the boat. The disciples were terrified!**

(If the children are particularly enthusiastic about the sound effects, you might need to settle them down at this point so that they can hear the story. Get them to imagine that all the noise is continuing.)

They thought the boat was going to sink and they were all going to drown. Even Peter, James, John and Andrew, who were fishermen and used to being out in a boat in all conditions, were terrified. There was only one person who wasn't scared and that was Jesus. He was still fast asleep, and the storm didn't worry him.

The disciples went to him and they shook him to wake him up. They shouted, "Jesus, help

us. We're going to drown!"

Jesus said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Don't you have faith?"

The storm was still raging all around them - rain, wind, waves, thunder and lightning. (Get sound effects and water spray going again.)

Then Jesus got up and stretched his hands out over the sea. He said, "Wind, be quiet, waves, be still!" (If you are using a thunder maker, grab the spring at the bottom to silence it suddenly.) **And immediately the storm stopped, and the sea was calm.**

The disciples were terrified and amazed. They wondered who Jesus was and why he had such power.



REFLECT & RESPOND

► Discussion

Ask the children to imagine they were one of the disciples in the story. How do they think they would have felt - first of all when they were in the middle of the storm, and then when Jesus stopped the storm?

It seems like the disciples were in a very scary situation. The storm was so fierce that they thought they were going to drown.

Why do you think Jesus told them they didn't need to be afraid?

In the Bible, God often tells his people not to be afraid, and, when he does, he often reassures them by reminding them of what he is like.

Give an example: in Isaiah 41:10, God says, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help

you."

Depending on your group, you could ask if they can think of anything else they know about God which would mean they don't need to be afraid: e.g. God cares for his people, God is powerful, God has a plan for good...

Even though the storm was scary, the disciples didn't need to be afraid, because Jesus was with them, and he was more powerful than the storm.

► Prayer Activity

You will need: a piece of wool or string for each child, Bible, printout(s) of 1 Peter 5:7 (either one printout of additional document: Bible Verse, or one copy for each child from Bible verse - small), glue sticks (optional)

Ask the children to think about some things that people might be afraid of. (If you used the Fears Quiz intro activity, you could refer back to some of the fears mentioned there.)

Give the children a piece of wool or string each.

All of us have things that we are afraid of and sometimes it can feel like fear, anxiety and worry can tie us up in knots. Get them to think of some of the things that make them feel fearful or anxious and to tie some knots in their piece of wool/ string as they do so.

Show the children 1 Peter 5:7 which says, 'Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.'

Christians believe that God cares for us and that, if we are trusting in him, we don't need to be afraid, because he is with us and will help us.

You could either let the children lay down their pieces of wool or string on the large sheet with the Bible verse to represent giving their worries and fears to

God, or you could give them each a small copy of the verse and let them glue their piece of wool or string around the edge to take home as a reminder.

Lead them in prayer.

As you close, mention to the children that if there is something they are very worried or fearful about, they should also talk to an adult they trust like a parent or teacher, or even the SU Group leader. Prayer is important but there are also other things that can help with fear and anxiety, and it is not something we should try to deal with alone.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ Who Is Jesus?

You will need: large sheet/roll of paper, pens, glue stick, pictures from additional document: Who is Jesus pictures

This is an activity that can be used as part of every session in this term of One Big Story to help the children build up a picture of who Jesus is. There is a picture that corresponds to each week's story - each week you could add the picture to your large sheet of paper and get the children to write some words around it that describe who Jesus is or what they have learned about him.

By the end of term, you will have a frieze that gives a summary of all they have learned.

(If you are adapting One Big Story to include other stories and you still want to use this idea, the images provided are all from <http://christiancliparts.net>, so you

could search for additional images there.)

▶ Saddleback Kids Video

You will need: equipment to play video

This short video (2 minutes) could be used to tell or recap the story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYLHqdSO90Y>

▶ Songs

You will need: equipment to play music

These songs tie in well with today's theme:

Only A Prayer Away: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fq_BSFkxHys

Fully Rely On God: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5fqK35DEiQ>

41. Needs



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Mark 2:1-12,
Romans 3:23-25a

Jesus heals the paralysed man and also forgives his sin



AIMS

To encourage the children that God knows, and cares about, our needs.

To help them understand that our deepest need is for our sin to be dealt with, and that God has met that need by sending Jesus to die for us.

Jesus met the obvious need of the paralysed man by enabling him to walk, but he also met his deeper need of forgiveness. We can ask God to help with the things we need too, but we all have the same ultimate need to receive his forgiveness.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- Why do you think Jesus talked of forgiveness before meeting the man's obvious need for healing?
- How have you known God meeting your needs?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Jelly Baby Obstacle Course

You will need: jelly babies, cloths/ napkins, timer (optional), equipment to make an obstacle course, masking tape (optional)

Set up an obstacle course. Depending on what you have available you could have tables to crawl under, objects to walk around or climb over, hoops to go through etc, or you could use masking tape to mark out a course on the floor.

Get the children to find a

partner and give each pair a cloth or napkin and a jelly baby. Their challenge is to see which pair can complete the obstacle course the fastest, but they must do it with each of them holding one side of the cloth and the jelly baby lying on top. If the jelly baby falls, they must start again.

Depending on numbers and the space you have, you could do this with each pair of children racing separately and being timed or you could have a few pairs racing against each other. If you have a large group, you might want to divide the children into teams and do it as a relay race.

▶ Hula Hoop Challenge

You will need: hula hoop(s), timer (optional)

Get the children to stand in a circle. Give one child the hula

(continued overleaf)

hoop and get them to put it over one arm. Then everyone in the circle should join hands. Their challenge is to work together to make the hula hoop travel right round the circle until it is back where it started without letting go of one another's hands. You could time the children and then let them have another go to see if they can do it faster. Alternatively, if you have a large group, you could divide them into smaller groups to do the game and see which group is able to complete the challenge first.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

► What Do They Need?

You will need: pictures from additional document: People in need

Show the pictures to the children and ask them to suggest what each of the people might need. For some pictures the answers will seem very obvious, and for others it will be much less clear. Sometimes there are needs that we can't see.

Today we are going to hear about someone who came to Jesus because he needed help, but as well as his obvious need there was something much deeper that Jesus could see that he needed.

► Jesus Heals The Paralysed Man Story

You will need: 4 strips of cardboard, joined together with paper fasteners.

You can use the strips to make different shapes to correspond with the words and phrases that are underlined as you tell the story. For some ideas of how to make the different shapes using the strips of card, see the additional document: Paralysed Man Story Strips.

There was a man whose legs didn't work properly. At the time this story took place, there were no wheelchairs, so the man just had to lie on a mat every day. He wasn't able to do much, but, fortunately, he had 4 good friends.

One day Jesus came to town. A crowd of people followed him, and Jesus began speaking to all the people who had gathered at his friend's house. However, because this story takes place in Israel, the house had a flat roof and it had steps up the side.

The 4 friends had a good idea. They had heard about Jesus and that he could do miracles, so they decided to take the man whose legs didn't work properly to meet Jesus to ask if he could help him. They carried him across town on his mat. But when they got there, the house was so crowded that there was no way they could get in.

They didn't want to give up because they were sure Jesus could help their friend, so the 4 friends came up with a bold plan. They climbed up the steps on the side of the house onto the flat roof and they started making a hole. Then they tied some rope on to the bed mat and let the man down through the hole on the rope so that he landed at Jesus' feet.

Jesus saw the man whose legs didn't work properly, and he saw his 4 friends. He could see that they trusted him. Jesus spoke to the man lying on the mat, and he said, "Your sins are forgiven."

Some of the people who were there - the religious leaders and teachers of the law - got annoyed. "Jesus can't say that," they said. "It's only God who can forgive sins." But Jesus said, "I'll prove that I have the power to say this."

Then he spoke to the man and he told him, "Stand up, pick up your mat and walk."

The man jumped up. He folded up his mat, and he walked home on legs that worked properly, praising God all the way.



REFLECT & RESPOND

► Discussion

Talk together:

What was the obvious need that the man had when he came to Jesus?

What was surprising about the first thing Jesus said when he saw the man?

Jesus didn't deal at first with the obvious need that the man had, which was to be healed so that he could walk. Instead the first thing he did was to deal with his deeper need - to have his sins forgiven.

Why do you think the religious leaders got so angry about this?

It was because they believed that only God could forgive sins, and they didn't understand who Jesus was. Jesus showed his power and revealed again that he was the Messiah by both healing the man's legs and forgiving his sins.

► Prayer Activity

You will need: printout of Romans 3:23-25a (from additional document: Romans 3) - optional, large sheet of paper, pens or pencils

In advance, stick the printout of Romans 3 in the middle of the large sheet of paper, or write the verses out by hand. Fold each end of the piece of paper into the middle, so that the two

ends meet in the centre, concealing the Bible verse inside.

The size of paper you need will depend on the size of your group. If possible, it should be large enough that all the children can write or draw on it at the same time. If you have a large group, you may want to have multiple sheets and allow the children to work in small groups.

Ask the children to take a moment to think: **what do you need today?**

We all come to Jesus with different things that we think we need. Some of us might be feeling sad or worried or lonely. We might be feeling ill or know others who are struggling with illness. There might be situations with family or friends where we need God's help. Or we might be feeling happy and just feel that we need someone to share that with or to say thank you to God.

Get the children to suggest some of the things that they, or others, might need, and get them to write or draw their prayers.

God cares about all those things and he wants to help us with those needs, but he also sees that, like the man in the story, all of us have a deeper need.

Open out the sheet of paper to reveal the verses from Romans and read them out.

The Bible tells us that we have all sinned and that creates a barrier between us and God. We need something to be done about that so that we can know God and be friends with him, and God provided exactly what we need by sending Jesus to die on the cross to deal with our sins so that we can be forgiven.

Give the children a moment to think about what they want to say to God in response to that. It might be to say thank you, or to ask a question. Let them write or draw their prayers on the sheet around the Bible verse.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ God's Story / Max 7 Videos

You will need: equipment to play video

One of these videos could be used to tell or recap the story:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWDgdPiNpz0&list=PLactIIEFMk_IOLqO5DebtTLDjFcLajXGB&index=39&t=0s

<https://www.max7.org/en/resource/crippledman>

▶ Story Strips

You will need: cardboard, scissors, paper fasteners, printouts of additional documents: Paralyse Man Story, and Paralyse Man Story Strips

If you have time, you could let the children make their own set of strips that they can use to tell the story. You could give them a copy of the story and the sheet showing them how to make the different shapes so that they can practice and tell the story to others.

42. Impossible



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Luke 8:40-56

Jesus heals a woman with bleeding and raises Jairus' daughter from the dead



AIMS

To help the children understand the greatness of Jesus' power, that it is even greater than death, and that nothing is impossible with God.

Jairus' situation seemed impossible as his daughter died before Jesus was able to heal her, but Jesus showed that his power was even greater, and that he can do the impossible, when he raised her from the dead.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passage for this session and reflect:

- What would it have been like to be in Jairus' position and to witness this miracle?
- Where have you seen God working in situations that seemed impossible?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Impossible challenges

You will need: paper (optional)

Give the children a list of challenges, and get them to guess whether they think they are possible or impossible. They may want to try some of them to see whether they can do them.

Tickle yourself - impossible

Circle your leg in a clockwise direction - at the same time draw a number six in the air with the same hand - impossible for most people

Rub your head and pat your tummy at the same time - possible

Lick the tip of your elbow - impossible for most people

Sneeze with your eyes open - impossible

Fold paper in half seven times - impossible with a normal piece of paper

(there are some stories here: <https://www.scienceabc.com/eyeopeners/can-you-really-fold-a-piece-of-paper-only-7-times.html>) of people managing to fold a piece of paper in half 12 or 13 times, but that was using a piece of toilet paper at least 1.2km long!

Touch your nose with your tongue - possible for some people

Put your left hand where your right hand can't reach it -

possible (put it on your right elbow)

▶ Cereal Box Challenge

You will need: cereal boxes, scissors

Choose some volunteers to take part in the challenge (or allow your whole group to take part if you have a small group) and give each volunteer a cereal box.

They must place it on the floor in front of them and then pick it up using their teeth. As they do this, their feet are the only part of their body that are allowed to touch the floor.

Once they complete it, cut a few centimetres off the cereal box and get them to try again.

Continue like this, eliminating any child that fails to pick up the cereal box at each stage and gradually making the cereal box smaller and smaller. The last child left in is the winner.

▶ Minute To Win It Challenges

Provide the children with some challenges they have to complete in one minute. Some examples are listed below, and you can find several more ideas here:

<https://birthdayinspire.com/minute-to-win-it-games/>

To add to the drama, you could use a timer video which you can find online, for example:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6Zmo5Q0AZO&t=>

Shake It Out

You will need: empty tissue box(es), ping pong balls, string/wool, Sellotape, timer

In advance, attach a piece of string or wool to the bottom of an empty tissue box. Make sure the string/wool is long enough to be tied round someone's waist. Fill the tissue box with ping pong balls.

Choose a volunteer to take part

in the challenge and help them to tie the string around their waist so that that box is at the back. Their challenge is to shake all of the ping pong balls out of the box in less than a minute. They are not allowed to touch the box with their hands but must do this by jumping up and down/ shaking their body etc.

If you have space, you could have a few children taking part in the challenge at the same time.

Ping Pong Bounce

You will need: six paper or plastic cups, six ping pong balls, timer

Lay out the cups in a row on a table. Choose a volunteer to take part. Their challenge is to get a ping pong ball in each of the six cups in less than a minute by bouncing them on the table and into the cups.

Card Shoot

You will need: three playing cards, three wooden clothes pegs, elastic bands, timer

Attach a clothes peg to the bottom of each of the playing cards and then stand them up in a line on a table. Choose someone to take part in the challenge and get them to stand a short distance away from the table. Provide them with a supply of elastic bands. Their challenge is to shoot the elastic bands at the playing cards and to knock down all three in less than a minute.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ Recap/ Intro

We have talked a lot over the last few weeks about Jesus' power. Can you remember some of the miracles we've heard about? He healed a blind man and a paralysed man,

showing his power over illness, he showed his power over a storm when he stopped it just by speaking to it, and last time we heard that he has power over sin and the power to meet our needs.

Today we're going to think about another story of his power. If you think the other things you have heard about him are amazing, this one actually sounds impossible!

▶ Jairus' Daughter Story

You will need: printout of words for characters (from additional document: Jairus' Daughter Words)

Tell the story of Jairus' daughter. You could have children acting it out.

Choose people for speaking parts - Jairus, Jesus, Woman and Servant - and give them copies of their words. Also choose people for non-speaking parts - Little girl, Mother

Allocate one side of the room to be Jairus' house. Get the little girl to lie down there as if she is ill in bed with her mother looking after her. Get Jairus and the servant to stand at that side of the room as well. Get Jesus and the woman to stand at the opposite side of the room, and ask the children to act out the story as you tell it. Prompt those with speaking parts to say their words at the appropriate moments.

One day Jesus got into a boat with his disciples and they sailed across to the other side of the lake. When he arrived, a large crowd gathered around him on the shore.

As Jesus was teaching the people, suddenly a man called Jairus, who was a leader in the local synagogue, rushed up to Jesus and fell at his feet crying:

"My daughter is ill. She's only 12 years old and she's dying. Please will you come and heal her so she can live."

So Jesus went with Jairus and started heading towards his house. Many of the people in the crowd followed to see. But before they got there, something else happened.

There was a woman in the crowd who was also ill. She had suffered from bleeding for 12 years. She had been to every doctor she could find, she had tried every cure there was, and she had spent all the money she had on doctors and medicine, but she wasn't any better - she had become worse. She had heard about Jesus and about some of the miracles he had done. She knew he could make her well, but she was scared to go and talk to him. Because of her illness she was an outcast in the town, but she was desperate for him to help her. Maybe, she thought, if I just go and touch the edge of his robe I'll be healed. So she went with the crowd and tried to stay close to Jesus, and when she got the chance, she reached out and touched the edge of his robe.

At once, she felt different. The bleeding stopped and she was well again!

But Jesus stopped walking. He had felt healing power go out from him, and he turned around to the crowd and said, "Who touched my robe?"

His disciples told him not to be silly. With the huge crowd all pressing in trying to get close to him, somebody had probably just brushed against him by accident. But Jesus kept on looking at the crowd, waiting for the person who had touched him to step forward. The woman was terrified. At first, she tried to hide and blend into the crowd but

eventually she came forward. She was trembling as she fell on her knees at Jesus' feet and spoke to him: "I touched you. I wanted you to heal me."

Jesus smiled at her, took her by the hand and helped her up and he said, "Your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

The woman went off home to tell everyone what had happened. (Let the child who is playing the part of the woman go and sit down.)

Meanwhile, Jesus and the others were about to carry on their journey to Jairus' house when one of Jairus' servants came rushing up to his master with some news: "I'm sorry, but your daughter has died. There's no need to bother Jesus any more."

Jairus was heartbroken but Jesus had heard what the servant said, and he came over to Jairus and said, "Don't be afraid. Have faith."

Jesus stopped the crowd and he wouldn't let anyone else go with him apart from Jairus and three of his disciples - Peter, James and John.

When they got to Jairus' house the girl's mum was inside with her and there was another crowd outside, weeping and wailing. Jesus sent the crowd away and he went into the room with the girl's mum and dad and his three disciples. He went over to where the girl was lying, took her hand and said, "Little girl, get up."

Immediately she stood up and she walked around. She was alive, and she was completely well again! Her mother and father were amazed. Jesus told them not to tell anyone about what had happened.

▶ Story with images

You will need: images printed out or on PowerPoint

An alternative way to tell the story is to use this set of images from Free Bible Images: <http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/jairus-daughter/> If you click on the "Story Planner" you will find a suggested script to accompany the images.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Discussion

Talk about the story together.

Was there anything that stood out to you?

Do you have any questions?

Why do you think Jairus went to Jesus instead of asking someone else to help his daughter?

How do you think Jairus would have felt at the point where Jesus was helping the woman? What about when the servant arrived with the news?

He knew that Jesus could help someone who was sick, but it seemed like it was too late for his daughter. Then Jesus proved his power was even greater, and that he could do something that seemed impossible. Christians believe that God's power is even greater than death, and that was shown when Jesus rose from the dead. (We'll think some more about that closer to Easter.)

This doesn't mean that Jesus will make everyone who has died come alive again like he did here. Some of us probably have people we love who have died, and maybe we wish that would happen, but the Bible only tells us about three people Jesus raised from the dead and even they must have died again at some point. (We'd have heard about it if

there was someone who was 2000 years old who was still alive today.)

The Bible teaches that Jesus came to give eternal life - life that goes on forever in heaven - so these stories of people being raised from the dead are a bit unusual, but they show that God's power is stronger than death, and that he can do things that are impossible for people. These stories also give us a little glimpse of what heaven will be like because the Bible says there will be no more suffering, pain, death, or sadness.

You could refer back to the verses from Revelation 21 which were used in Session 38 of One Big Story (see Session 38 additional document: Revelation 21).

▶ **Prayer activity**

You will need: potatoes, plastic straws (straight, not bendable)

Ask the children if they think they can get a straw to go through a potato. You could let one or two of the children have a try. Unless they know the secret of how to do it, they will probably quickly come to the conclusion that it is impossible.

Remind them that in the story today, Jairus' situation seemed impossible, but Jesus had an answer.

Hold the potato in one hand, with your hand on the sides of the potato, not the top or bottom. Take a straw in your other hand, placing your thumb over one end of the straw so that no air can escape. Jab the straw straight down into the potato and it will go completely through. (Try this at home first to make sure that it works with the straws you have and that they are not too flimsy.)

The Bible says that "Nothing is impossible with God." (Luke 1:37)

Pray, giving thanks for God's power and that nothing is impossible for him. You may want to include a moment of silence for the children to individually pray for situations where they would like to ask God for help.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ **Song - Nothing's Too Big, Big, Big For His Power**

You will need: equipment to play music

This song fits well with today's theme: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bsEgggn344>

43. Teacher



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Matthew 7:24-29,
Matthew 5:43-48,
Matthew 6:14-15,
Matthew 7:12

Jesus teaches the crowd about how they should live and about the importance of obeying his teaching



AIMS

To help the children understand why it is important to listen to Jesus' teaching and to obey it, and to reflect on steps we can take to do that today.

Jesus used a parable about two builders to teach his followers about the importance of listening to him and acting on his words.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- Which of the two builders do you most identify with, and why?
- What are some steps you could take to make sure you are living wisely, building your life on Jesus' teaching?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Jenga

You will need: Jenga bricks

Play a game of Jenga to illustrate the importance of a firm foundation if a structure is going to stand. If you have a large group, you will need to have multiple sets of Jenga and split the children into small groups to play.

▶ Marshmallow Houses

You will need: marshmallows, cocktail sticks

Let the children work in pairs or small groups to see who can create the best house

from marshmallows and cocktail sticks.

Give them a short time to complete the challenge, then look at the houses and choose a winner. You could discuss the importance of a strong foundation for a house to be able to stand.

What do you think it would be like if your real house was made of marshmallows?

It sounds like a fun idea. It would be soft, and good if you fancied something to eat, but not so good in the rain when it might get soggy, or in the hot sun when it might melt! When we're building something, we have to think about it carefully.

▶ Port, Starboard

This game will work where you have a large space for the children to run around.

Explain to the children that for this game they need to imagine the room is a ship. The left hand side of the ship is Port and the right hand side is Starboard, and the front of the ship is Bow and the back is Stern. Point out to the children which side of the room each of these will be. When you call one of these words, they have to run as quickly as they can to that point in the room.

There are also other commands that you can give throughout the game with actions to accompany them, for example:

Captain's coming: stand up straight and salute

Scrub the deck: crouch down and mime scrubbing the floor

Climb the rigging: mime climbing a rope ladder

Submarine: lie on the floor with one leg in the air

Hit the deck: everyone has to lie on the floor on their stomachs as fast as they can

There are several different versions of this game, so you, or the children, may know other commands to include.

Gather the children in the middle of the hall. Call out parts of the ship or other commands in a random order, and the children have to respond as quickly as possible by running to the correct part of the room or doing the correct action.

Once they have got used to the commands you could eliminate the last child to respond to the command each time until you have a winner.

You could point out to the children that to succeed in this game, there were two things they had to do – they had to listen, and they had to be quick to act on what they heard.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

► Intro/ Recap

Over the last few weeks we've heard a lot about the things Jesus did as we've learned about some of his miracles and the people he helped. He was also very famous for being a wise teacher, so for the next couple of weeks, we are going to think about some of the things he taught.

► Jesus' Teachings Activity

You will need: cards printed from additional document: Jesus' Teachings

Before the session, hide the cards around the room.

Explain to the children that you are going to look at some of the things Jesus taught. In the book of Matthew, there is a section in chapters 5, 6 and 7, which includes some of Jesus' teaching. We don't have time to look at it all, but we are going to learn about a few of the things he taught.

Tell the children that there are eight cards hidden around the room. Each one contains half a sentence from Jesus' teachings. Their task is to find the cards and then to match them up to make four complete sentences.

Depending on the numbers in your group you may want to let all the children search for the cards, or it may be better to choose eight children to find one each.

Once they have found the cards, help them sort them out to form the sentences:

Love your enemies.

Do good to those who hate you.

Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Do to others as you would have

them do to you.

Ask the children what they think of these instructions and what they might find easy or difficult about following them.

► Wise and Foolish Builders Story

You will need: equipment to play video, Bible

When Jesus taught the people, he often used stories - a special kind of stories called parables. A parable is a story that is told to make a point or to teach something. We have lots of the parables that Jesus told included in the Bible, and we won't have time to look at all of them, but this week and next week we are going to look at two of his parables. The one we are thinking about today follows on from what we have been learning about Jesus' teachings.

Show the video from Max7 website, <https://www.max7.org/en/resource/WiseFoolishBuilders> telling the parable of the builders, then read the passage in the Bible from Matthew 7:24-29.

Discuss what Jesus is trying to teach through this story - see if the children can explain what Jesus is saying about the wise man and about the foolish man.

Then summarise: **he's using the example of building houses to talk about how people build their lives, or, more importantly, what they build their lives on.**

The wise man is someone who listens to Jesus' teaching and who takes it seriously, who lives his life doing his best to follow it. The foolish man is someone who hears it but ignores it and doesn't put it into practice.

Jesus is saying that following his teaching is like building

your life on something secure and solid, while ignoring his teaching is just as foolish as building a house on the sand, where it has no strong foundations and can easily be washed away. Someone who does that might get on okay with life for a little while, but then things get difficult and it all collapses.

▶ **Storytelling using strips of card**

You will need: four strips of card joined with paper fasteners

If the children enjoyed the story of the paralysed man being told using the four joined strips of card in Session 41, there is a version of this week's story using the same technique which you can find here: <https://methodistchildrencreativeministry.org/tag/wise-and-foolish-builders-2/>



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ **Reflection**

Talk together about the passage and what it means for us today.

If you have time, you could do this as the children make a cardboard house (see Craft Activity below) to help them remember the story.

What would it mean for us to be like the wise man - how can we follow Jesus' teaching?

Allow the children to give some answers and try to bring out the following points:

First we have to know what Jesus says - we have to find out by reading the Bible, coming to SU Group, asking questions...

Then we have to do it, with God's help. We have to think

about it, remember it, and let it change how we live our lives.

Sometimes it can be hard work. Just like it would be much easier to build a house on sand than on rock, sometimes following Jesus means making hard choices. It can mean being different from others - choosing to do what God wants rather than what other people want.

For Christians, building our lives on Jesus' teaching is like building them on the rock. It is something solid and strong. All of us have difficult times in life - a bit like the storms in the story - but Christians believe that Jesus is the one who can help us through those times.

▶ **Craft Activity**

You will need: house templates printed on card (from additional document: House Craft), coloured pens or pencils, scissors, glue sticks

Give each of the children a house template. Get them to cut out and decorate the house and the roof, then fold along the dotted lines and glue the tabs to stick the house together. Finally they should fold the rectangle with the Bible verse in half and glue onto the house as the roof.

▶ **Prayer Activity**

You will need: stones, permanent markers

Give the children a stone each and ask them to think about something about God that they want to remember and hold onto. They could draw something or write a word, e.g. Jesus, power, faithful, true...

Encourage them to keep the stone somewhere they will see it regularly as a reminder. Pray, asking for God's help to be like the wise man and to build our lives on God's truth.

44. Growing



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Mark 4:1-25,
Galatians 5:22-23

Jesus tells the parable of the sower, and explains it to his disciples



AIMS

To help the children understand the different ways people respond to God's Word.

To help them reflect on how they are responding to what they hear, and how they would like to grow in faith or understanding of God.

Jesus used a parable about seeds growing on different types of ground to teach his followers about different responses people have (consciously or subconsciously) to hearing his words.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- Which type of soil best represents how you are responding to God's Word just now?
- How would you like to ask God to help you grow?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Corners Game

You will need: pens and paper, Blu-Tack, equipment to play music

Make up signs saying path, rocks, weeds and soil, and put one up at each corner of the room. Tell the children that they are going to be the seeds in the game. Play some music and let them dance or move around. When you stop the music and shout, "Scatter!" they have to choose one corner to go to. Get a leader who is not looking to call out either path, rocks, or weeds. The seeds in that area die so

the children there are eliminated from the game.

Repeat this until you have a winner. The children may have noticed that while the path, rocks, and weeds were called out at different points in the game, the soil was never called out. If they haven't noticed, you could point this out to them and explain that the soil was the one place where the seeds were able to grow.

▶ Seed Challenge

You will need: sunflower seeds, bowls, chopsticks, timer

Choose a few children to take part in a challenge. Give each of them a bowl containing sunflower seeds, an empty bowl and a pair of chopsticks. See who is able to transfer the most seeds from one bowl to the other in a minute, using the chopsticks.

You can find a minute timer here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebvtJCu33vM>
or else, simply use a timer on your watch or phone.

▶ Seed Scattering Game

You will need: large sheet with areas representing the different types of ground in the parable of the sower (there is one to print out at this website: <https://christiangamesandcrafts.com/items/view/152> or you could design your own), seeds, blindfolds

Each child in turn is blindfolded, given a handful of seeds, then spun around a couple of times. They then scatter their seeds across the ground. Give them points for the number of seeds that fall on the good soil, and see who is able to get the highest score.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ Recap/ Intro

Last time we talked a bit about Jesus teaching the people and we thought about one of the stories he told. See if the children can remember the story of the wise and foolish builders and what it meant.

Both builders in the story listened to Jesus' teaching, but he said the one who put it into practice was wise and would be equipped to deal with stormy times, while the one who didn't put it into practice was foolish.

We're going to think some more about that today, and to do that we're going to learn about another parable Jesus told.

See if the children can remember what a parable is, and remind them that it is a story with a meaning, used to teach or to make a point.

▶ Parable of the Sower

You will need: equipment to play video, Bible, images printed out or on PowerPoint (as detailed below)

First we'll watch a video that will show us the story Jesus told.

Show the video from the Max 7 website, telling the parable of the sower.
<https://www.max7.org/en/resource/ParableSower>

Then read Mark 4:3-8

This is the story Jesus told. I wonder if you have any idea what he could have been trying to teach the people? (Allow the children to give some answers.)

Jesus' disciples didn't understand, so later on they asked Jesus to explain it.

He said the seed represents God's Word and the farmer is someone who is taking it to others, so the different types of ground the seed fell on tell us about different ways people respond when they hear about God.

Use pictures 3-6 from this set of Free Bible Images, either printed out or displaying them on a laptop/ PowerPoint as you explain:

<http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/parable-sower/>

First, there was seed that fell on the path. Because the path was so hard, the seed could never sink into the ground and grow. It just sat there on the path until the birds came and ate it.

That is like people who hear about God but it doesn't really sink in. Maybe they aren't really listening or paying attention, or they don't really want to know. What they hear about God makes no difference to them at all and they quickly forget about it.

Then there is the seed that fell on the rocky soil. The seeds there sank into the ground and the plants grew up quickly, but they weren't able to grow deep roots because of all the rocks underneath the soil, so, before long, they withered and died.

That is like people who hear about God and at first they are excited and enthusiastic, but then there are problems- maybe someone makes fun of them for being a Christian or for going to SU Group to find out more, or they have some other kind of difficulty that puts them off - and they aren't interested any more.

The third type of ground is the thorn bushes. The plants here grow at first but, as they grow up, the thorns grow around them and choke them. That is like someone who hears about God and is interested at first but then lots of other things get in the way - family, friends, sports, activities, things they have to do. There's nothing wrong with any of those things but for some people life gets so busy that they don't have any time to think about God and they lose interest.

Finally there is the good soil where the crops grow well. That is like people who pay attention to God's Word and keep going when it is hard and make time to find out more. People like that grow in their faith. They learn to know God more and trust him more, and they are able to help other people understand as well.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection

You will need: pictures (printed from additional document: Crops Pictures), pens or pencils

All of us are in this story, because all of us are people who have heard something from God's Word, the Bible. Some of you might have heard a lot if you have family who are Christians, or you go to church, or you've been coming to the SU Group for a long time. Others of you might only have been coming for a few weeks so you've only heard a little bit. But all of us decide what our response is going to be.

Show the children the picture of a barren field (*from additional document: Crops Pictures*) and ask them:

What kind of things can make it difficult to be a Christian/ to keep finding out more about God? What things can get in the way of that?

Write their answers in the space around the picture.

Then repeat the exercise with the picture of the flourishing field, asking:

What kind of things can help us to keep growing in faith or to find out more about God?

Depending on the stage your group is at, you could point out that what we are like on the inside is shown by what we are like on the outside. What we do and say reflects what we value. What do people see in what you do and say? (You could give the children a moment to think about this individually.)

▶ Prayer Activity

You will need: flower for each child (printed from additional document: Prayer Activity), pens or pencils, Blu-Tack

Give each child a paper flower and give them a moment to think about what they have heard about God, what they know about him, and how they want to respond.

Maybe there is a question they want to ask, maybe they want

to ask God for help to grow in faith or keep learning about him, maybe they want to say thank you to God for something they know about him.

Give them a moment to write down their response. They could then use Blu-Tack to stick them to the wall to create a field of flowers.

Lead them in prayer asking God to help them keep growing in knowledge of him.

45. Worship



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Matthew 20:17-19,
Matthew 21:1-11,
Zechariah 9:9

Jesus rides into Jerusalem
and is welcomed as King



AIMS

To help the children think about worship – to understand why the people worshipped Jesus on Palm Sunday, and why Christians worship him today.

Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and the people worshipped him and welcomed him as King. Christians today also worship Jesus because of who he is.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- What are some of the reasons why the people worshipped Jesus on Palm Sunday?
- How do you worship him today? Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Bible Verse Game

You will need: palm leaves with words from Matthew 21:9 (from additional document: Bible Verse Game)

In advance, cut out the individual palm leaves and hide them around the room. If you have a larger group, you may need to do multiple sets and get the children to work in smaller groups. If you do this, you could print them on a different colour of paper for each group, or mark the leaves with a colour/ symbol for each group so that the sets don't get mixed up.

Get the children to hunt for the leaves and then to try to arrange them into the right order to find out what the crowd in Jerusalem shouted to welcome Jesus: Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

▶ Post-It Game

You will need: post-it notes prepared in advance with the name of a famous person or character the children are likely to be familiar with written on each one

Stick a post-it note on each child's back. They have to work out which name is on it by asking others questions that can only be answered yes or no, e.g. Am I a man? Am I American? Am I a singer? See who can work out their identity the quickest.

▶ Buckaroo

You will need: Buckaroo game(s)

(continued overleaf)

Children take turns to load an item onto the mule, trying not to be the one who causes the mule to buck, knocking the items off. If you have a larger group, you will need to divide the children into small groups to play this game.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ Recap/ Intro

You will need: Bible

So far this term, we've thought about Jesus' life - his miracles and some of the things he taught. Over the next few weeks, we are going to be thinking about some of the events in Jesus' life leading up to Easter.

All of Jesus' teachings and miracles took place over about three years from when he was around 30-33 years old, so the events we're going to think about now happened at the end of that time.

Jesus and his friends were planning to go to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, and Jesus spoke to his friends, telling them what was going to happen to him there.

Read Matthew 20:17-19

It sounds like a strange thing to say- I don't think Jesus' disciples fully understood what Jesus was talking about at the time. It sounds strange to go to a place if you know that is what's going to happen, but Jesus knew it was part of God's plan.

We'll think more about that later on but today we're going to think about what happened when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem.

▶ Palm Sunday Story

You will need: paper palm leaves (from additional document: Palm Leaves), Bible,

donkey toy or hobby horse (optional)

Ask the children if they have ever met somebody famous. Who did they meet? How did they feel about meeting that person? Share your own experience if you have met someone famous.

The people in Jerusalem had heard that Jesus was coming, and they were very excited. He was someone really famous. Back then they didn't have TV or the internet or social media, but the things Jesus did were so amazing that the word had spread. Everyone was talking about his miracles and the stories of the things he had done.

Imagine you had heard about someone who had healed sick people, calmed a storm just by speaking to it and even raised people from the dead, and now you were going to get the chance to meet that person. How would you feel? The people were so excited that a huge crowd gathered to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem.

You could get the children to act out what happened with one child as Jesus and the rest being the crowd. Get the children to stand in two lines, facing one another as if they are standing along the two sides of the road. Get the child who is playing Jesus to go to one end of the road and to be ready to enter when you tell him. If you have a toy donkey or hobby horse, you could give it to him; otherwise you could just get him to pretend he is riding on a donkey as he enters.

Before you get Jesus to enter, prepare the children who are the crowd for their role in the drama. Give out paper palm leaves (*from additional document: Palm Leaves*) and encourage them to wave them and throw them down on the ground when Jesus enters. The

people threw their robes down on the ground too. It was as if they were making a special carpet, just like we might put down a red carpet to welcome someone special.

Explain that as Jesus came into Jerusalem, the people shouted, "Hosanna!" This means, "Lord, save us!" They also shouted, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" The people were recognising that Jesus was the Messiah, the one who had been promised all throughout the Old Testament, and that he was the one who could save.

Get the child playing Jesus to travel down the road as the rest of the children re-enact the crowd's welcome.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, it was something that had been written about in the Old Testament, hundreds of years earlier.

Show the children the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9: "Tell the people of Jerusalem, "Look, your King is coming to you. He is humble, riding on a donkey."

This all happened on a day which Christians remember as Palm Sunday, and which they celebrate on the Sunday before Easter Sunday.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection

See if the children can remember what the people shouted as Jesus entered Jerusalem: Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

When they did that, they were recognising him as someone very special and honouring him as their King. They were

worshipping Jesus.

Part of being a Christian today is worshipping Jesus - realising that he is God and praising him for that. Christians today worship by singing and praying to God thanking him for the things he has done and for what he is like- that he is loving, forgiving, powerful etc. Worship is also about living in a way that shows that Jesus is our King and that we want to follow him.

▶ Prayer Activity

You will need: paper palm leaves (from additional document: Palm Leaves – you can use the same ones you used to tell the story), pens or pencils, Bible verses (from additional document: Praise Verses), equipment to play music (optional)

Show the children the verses (from additional document: Praise Verses). Explain that these are some words we have in the Bible that people used to praise God. Discuss the different kinds of things they are praising God for.

Give the children a palm leaf and a pen or pencil each. Give them a few minutes to write or draw their response to God on it. They might want to copy out one of the Bible verses, or part of one, or they might want to use their own words to talk to God.

As they do this, you could play the song “You are my King” in the background. You can find it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avJ4IDnZWRU>

Pray together. Depending on time you could ask some of the children to volunteer to read out the prayers from their palm leaves, or a leader could pray.

Encourage them to take their palm leaves home as a reminder.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ Lumo Project Video Clip

You will need: equipment to play video

This video clip could be used to recap the story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hR62e1pYG4>. It includes the verses being read from the Bible while actors bring the scene to life. The section of the clip covering the Palm Sunday story runs from the beginning of the clip to 1.30.

▶ Palm Crosses

You will need: palm crosses (these can be purchased online, for example: <https://www.eden.co.uk/palm-crosses-50-pack/>)

You could give the children a palm cross to take home as a reminder of today's story, and also to remind them that this story was only the beginning of this significant week in Jesus' life which included his death and resurrection.

▶ Easter Cross Craft

You will need: cross outlines and pictures printed from <https://craftingthewordofgod.com/2016/03/25/easter-picture-cross/> coloured pens or pencils, glue sticks, scissors

This is a craft that the children could make over Sessions 45-48 as they explore the Easter Story. Each week they can colour the corresponding picture(s) to add to their cross. By the end of the four weeks they will have an Easter decoration to take home which will remind them of the story. For this session, they should add picture F.

46. Sacrifice



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Matthew 26:17-30, 47-56,
John 10:17-18

Jesus and his disciples eat the Last Supper together and then Jesus is arrested



AIMS

To help the children understand the idea of sacrifice and that Jesus chose to give his life so that people could be forgiven.

To provide space for them to consider their response to that.

Jesus shared the Last Supper with his friends and spoke of his body being broken and his blood being poured out for them. Then he was arrested. None of this happened by accident – it was all part of God's rescue plan.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- Where do these Bible passages show us that Jesus chose to sacrifice himself for us?
- What is your response to his sacrifice?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Stuck In The Mud

For this game, you will need a large space for the children to run about. Depending on the size of your group, choose one or two children to be the chasers – they will try to catch the other children. If a child is caught, they have to stand with their arms out, and they are unable to move until one of the other children runs around them in a circle, going under both arms, to set them free.

This game was included in Session 34 of One Big Story,

but you could draw out the point of it further in this session by pointing out that sometimes, as the children attempted to free someone else, they were increasing the risk of being caught themselves. You could ask if any of them were intentionally taking that risk/ sacrificing themselves to help someone else, and why they made that choice.

▶ Elephant Ball

You will need: a soft ball

Get the children to stand in a circle with their legs apart and their feet touching the feet of the people beside them in the circle. Get them to roll the ball about inside the circle. The aim is to roll the ball through someone else's legs but to prevent it from going through their own legs. If the ball goes through someone's legs, that person has to do a forfeit, e.g.

(continued overleaf)

ten star jumps, run round the circle three times... They have to complete the forfeit to rejoin the game.

After you have played for a bit, a leader should begin offering to do the forfeit for them. Discuss how it felt when someone offered to do the forfeit and how they felt about accepting or rejecting the offer.

► Would you rather...?

Ask the children to make choices about what they would rather give up.

Would you rather give up chocolate or chips?

Would you rather give up books or computer games?

Would you rather give up your favourite toy or your favourite trainers?

Would you rather give up your bed or your bike?

Would you rather give up your favourite snack or your favourite sport?

Would you rather give up your pet or your pocket money?

Discuss why some things might be particularly hard to give up.

Ask if they can think of an example of a situation where they might choose to give up something that was really important to them, e.g. they may be willing to give up their favourite snack if it was something their brother or sister was allergic to, or to give up their pet if one of their family was allergic to it, or they may be willing to give money to help a person or a cause that they really cared about.

Giving up something that is important to us can be really difficult, but sometimes we are willing to do it if it is going to help someone we care about.

► Video Clip

You will need: equipment to play video

You could play a clip from a popular film to introduce the theme of sacrifice. Some examples available online are this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXuoOTjg35k>

which is a compilation of clips from Toy Story 3, Frozen and The Lego Movie, or this one:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXj61BxEy2M>

which comes from Inside Out.

Show the clip and talk with the children about who is making a sacrifice and why.



► Intro/ Recap

You will need: pictures on PowerPoint, or printed out (as detailed below)

Last week we talked about how Jesus arrived in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and the people worshipped him and welcomed him as king. It was a time of great joy and celebration.

But do you remember what Jesus told his disciples was going to happen to him in Jerusalem? He said he was going to be killed but that on the third day he would rise from the dead.

Today we are going to jump ahead a few days to the Thursday of that week, which was the first day of the Passover celebration.

If you have children who attended the group last year, you could ask if any of them remember what people celebrate at Passover.

As you provide the brief explanation below, you might want to use images from Free

Bible Images to illustrate it, such as slides 1, 4 and 8 from this presentation:

<http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/sb-passover/>

1. Back in the Old Testament, we read about a time when God's people were slaves in Egypt and God told Moses to lead them to freedom. Pharaoh wouldn't let the people go and there were several plagues that God sent on the Egyptians, ending with the last plague when the firstborn son in every Egyptian family was killed.

4. The Israelites were given instructions to take the blood from a lamb and paint it round the doorframe of their house. That would be a sign to God to pass over that house so that no-one would die there.

8. After this the Israelites were finally free to leave Egypt after being slaves there for many years, so it was something they celebrated every year to remember how God had helped them.

► The Last Supper

You will need: pictures on PowerPoint, or printed out (as detailed below)

You could use pictures from Free Bible Images, either printed out or displayed on PowerPoint, to illustrate the story. The suggested images are drawn from two sets on the website. The first four images (labelled 1,4,7 and 9 below) refer to the corresponding images at this link:

<http://freebibleimages.org/photos/last-supper/>

and the other images (labelled 1, 4, 12, 17 and 20) refer to the corresponding images at this link: <http://freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-gethsemane/>

On the Thursday of the week when Jesus entered Jerusalem, he and his friends got together to celebrate the Passover. The

disciples got a room for them to use and got everything ready. Then they all came in and sat round the table together and ate the meal.

Every year at Passover they would eat lamb to remember the lamb that had to be killed for the blood to be put round the doorframe at the first Passover.

1. Usually it was a happy time of celebration, but this time while they were sitting round the table, Jesus said something that disturbed his disciples. He said, "Tonight, one of you is going to betray me."

Jesus knew that he had enemies - people who hated him, and the things he was teaching, and wanted to get rid of him - and he was saying that one of his own disciples was going to hand him over to his enemies.

4. The disciples looked round at one another and wondered who it could be.

7. A little bit later as they were eating the meal, Jesus took some bread and he broke it up and passed it round for his disciples to eat. He said, "Take this bread and eat it. This is my body which is given for you." He was pointing ahead to what was about to happen. I don't think the disciples completely understood what Jesus was talking about, but they passed the plate round and each of them took the bread and ate it.

9. Then Jesus took some wine and he poured it out and said to them, "Take this wine and drink it. This is my blood which will be poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many people."

Again, he was talking about what was going to happen next. He knew that he was going to die very soon, but he knew it was part of God's plan.

He said that his death was going to be a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many people.

If you think back to the first Passover, the Israelites had to choose a lamb. It had to be a good lamb that had nothing wrong with it, and the lamb had to be killed so that its blood could be put on the doorframe of the house. That was what saved the Israelites from being killed.

Jesus was saying that he was like the lamb. Many times in the Bible it talks about Jesus as the Lamb of God. The Bible says that he was perfect, that he never sinned, and Christians believe that when Jesus died it was making a way for us to be saved from punishment for the things we have done wrong. It provided a way for us to be forgiven so that we can be right with God. Just like the people were saved at the first Passover by putting their faith in God and following his instructions, Christians believe that people can be saved today by putting their faith in Jesus.

That's why Jesus' death and the things we think about at Easter are so important to Christians.

As they finished up the meal, one of the disciples left. It was Judas Iscariot. He was the one who was going to betray Jesus. He had already arranged with Jesus' enemies that they would give him money if he led them to Jesus at a time when he wasn't surrounded by a crowd. Judas saw his chance and he snuck away to do that.

1. Jesus and the rest of the disciples went out to a garden once they had finished up.

4. Jesus told the disciples to pray while he went off himself and prayed to God.

12. After a while Judas arrived with some men armed with

swords and clubs and they arrested Jesus.

17. At first one of the disciples tried to fight back, but Jesus told them to put their swords away. He said, "This has to happen to fulfil the words of the prophets."

20. Jesus allowed the men to take him away, and the disciples ran away because they were scared.



REFLECT & RESPOND

► Discussion

The part of the story we're looking at today is a difficult one. It's not nice to think about Jesus saying he is going to die, or being betrayed by one of his closest friends, or being arrested, but what things from the story show us that it was not just an accident but that it was part of God's plan?

If you used the "Would you rather...?" intro activity you could refer back to that. **We talked about how hard it would be to give up certain things, but Jesus gave up something even greater – he gave up his life.**

The Bible is clear that it is something Jesus chose to do because it was part of God's plan. Read John 10:17-18:

"The Father loves me because I am willing to give up my life, in order that I may receive it back again. No one takes my life away from me. I give it up of my own free will. I have the right to give it up, and I have the right to take it back. This is what my Father has commanded me to do." (GNT)

Why do you think Jesus made that choice?

Allow the children to give some

answers, drawing out the points that it was out of obedience to God the Father, and because of his love for people, to make a way for people to be forgiven and to know God.

▶ **Reflection/ Prayer**

You will need: large sheet(s) of paper, pens, printout(s) of John 10:17-18 (from additional document: John 10), glue/ tape, equipment to play music

Lay out a large sheet of paper with the words from John 10:17-18 stuck in the middle of it. If you have a larger group, you may want to divide the children into groups and have a sheet for each group to use.

Play some music, e.g. Once Again by Matt Redman (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MwxC9AvwQc>) or You Chose The Cross by Martyn Layzell (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzMubghVEMO>) and as you do, encourage the children to write or draw their responses to Jesus' sacrifice on the paper around the Bible verses. It could be a prayer, a question, a drawing that illustrates something they've learned or anything else they like.

Give them a couple of minutes to do this and then lead them in prayer, thanking Jesus for his sacrifice.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ **Lumo Project Videos**

You will need: equipment to play video

These two videos could be used to tell or recap the story for this session:

The Last Supper - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tPMMHjtikU&list=PLcJVluh18isJJgv2R7PgPTFK5hpZSwckj&index=45>

This clip also includes Jesus predicting Peter's denial – stop the clip at 2.43 if you want to omit this section

Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane and his arrest - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPX7ujjXASo&list=PLcJVluh18isJJgv2R7PgPTFK5hpZSwckj&index=46>

▶ **God's Story Video**

You will need: equipment to play video

This video tells the story of the Last Supper, focusing on some details not mentioned elsewhere in this session such as Jesus washing the disciples' feet and some of what he taught his disciples at that point. It would not replace the teaching for this session, but could be used to complement it if you have time to go into more detail. You can find it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYAVu4MR7rc>

▶ **Easter Cross Craft**

You will need: cross outlines and pictures printed from <https://craftingthewordofgod.com/2016/03/25/easter-picture-cross/> coloured pens or pencils, glue sticks, scissors

This is a craft that the children could make over Sessions 45-48 as they explore the Easter Story. Each week they can colour the corresponding picture(s) to add to their cross. By the end of the four weeks they will have an Easter decoration to take home which will remind them of the story. For this session, they should add picture E.

47. Fulfilment



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Matthew 27:11-54

Jesus dies on the cross



AIMS

To help the children understand why Jesus' death on the cross is so important to Christians, and to help them consider what that means for them.

Jesus was crucified, and he died. This was what God had sent him to do. His death took the penalty for sin and provided the way for people to know God.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passage for this session and reflect:

- What are some of the reasons why Jesus' death is so significant?
 - How could you explain its importance to the children?
- Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

► Bridge The Gap

You will need: two ropes

Lay the ropes down in the middle of the hall, parallel to one another with a small gap between them. Get the children to line up along one of the ropes. Explain that when you give the signal, they have to cross the gap without stepping in between the ropes. Once they have done this, move the ropes slightly further apart and let them try again. Any child who steps in the gap has to sit out. Continue to increase the distance between the ropes after each crossing and keep going until you have a winner.

Point out that in the end all of them stepped in the gap because it got too wide. Sin creates a gap between us and God and it is so wide that none of us can cross it by ourselves, but God provided a solution by sending Jesus.

► Get Rid Of Your Sins Game

You will need: pieces of paper (A4 or A5 size), pens, timer

Give the children lots of pieces of paper and get them to write an example of a sin/ something that people do wrong on each one. You could ask for some suggestions to help those who are not sure to get started, also drawing out the fact that sin includes not only what we consider major things such as murder or stealing, but also things that seem smaller such as unkind words or disobedience. If the children have been part of the group for a while you could remind them of the definition of sin given in One Big Story

(continued overleaf)

Session 13, and that ultimately it is saying no to God. It doesn't matter if the same sin is written on multiple pieces of paper.

Once they have finished writing, get them to crumple the paper into balls. Divide the children into two groups and divide the balls of paper so that each group has an equal amount. Position each group on one side of the room with a line down the middle.

Whether these sins seem big or small, none of them are good, so the challenge is to try to get rid of them.

Set a timer for a minute or two minutes and tell the children that their task is to get rid of the sins on their side of the room by throwing them to the other side.

When the time is up, see which team has the least balls of paper on their side. If you have time you could even up the number of pieces of paper and let them try again.

At the end of the game you could point out that no-one really won the game because no side was completely clear of the sins. No matter how much effort you made to get rid of them it was impossible. It's the same in life. None of our efforts to be good or try to get rid of our sins are good enough. We can't fix it by ourselves, but God provided a solution to this in sending Jesus.



▶ Jesus' Crucifixion

You will need: nine plastic Easter eggs filled with the items listed below. You can print the question mark and the speech bubble from additional document: Items for eggs. Cut out the two speech bubbles and glue them together so that Jesus' enemies' words are on one side and the centurion's

words are on the other. If you are unable to find any of the other items, you could use pictures instead. The plastic eggs can normally be found in shops such as Poundland in the run-up to Easter.

1. Small piece of bread, and grape
2. Flower
3. Silver coins
4. Small piece of rope or chain
5. Question mark
6. Purple material and piece of thorny branch
7. Nails
8. Speech bubble
9. Stone

Before the children arrive, hide the eggs around the room. You may want to attach stickers to them with numbers 1-9 to ensure that they will be opened in the correct order to tell the story.

Explain to the children that you have hidden eggs around the room, each containing an item relating to the part of the Bible you will be looking at today. Get them to go and find the eggs but tell them not to open them yet.

Once they have found all the eggs, gather the children together and get them to open the eggs one at a time as you tell the story. If you have children who are familiar with the Easter Story, you could try to get them to work out the link between the objects and the story for themselves. The first four eggs contain items to recap on last week's lesson so more of the children should be familiar with this part of the story.

1. Last time we heard about Jesus having the special meal with his friends. He gave them bread and wine. Can you remember what he said about them? He said the bread represented his body being given, and the wine represented his blood being

poured out. He knew that he was going to die, and he was pointing ahead to what was about to happen.

2. After the meal, Jesus and his friends went out to the garden, and Jesus spent time praying to God.

3. Judas, one of Jesus' disciples, had already agreed to betray him to his enemies, and he was going to receive money if he led them to Jesus at a time when he was not surrounded by a crowd.

4. So, after Jesus had finished praying, Judas arrived with some men who arrested Jesus and took him away.

5. Jesus was taken and put on trial. First, he was taken to the High Priest, and eventually he was brought before Pilate who was the Roman Governor. He had the final decision to make about what would happen to Jesus. Pilate asked questions and people came and told lies about Jesus, but Jesus didn't say anything to defend himself. Pilate wasn't sure what to do. He didn't think Jesus had done anything wrong, so he decided to ask the crowd a question and let them make the choice. During the Passover celebrations there was a custom that one prisoner could be freed and the crowd could choose who it would be, so Pilate gave the crowd the choice to free Jesus or to free Barabbas who was known for being a violent criminal. He was sure the crowd would choose to free Jesus, but the religious leaders and Jesus' enemies persuaded the crowd to do what they wanted, and the crowd ended up shouting for Barabbas to be freed and for Jesus to be crucified. Eventually Pilate gave in and did what the crowd wanted.

6. He handed Jesus over to the soldiers and they whipped him

and beat him. Then they started to make fun of him. Because he had said he was a king, they put a purple robe on him, and they made a crown out of thorn branches and put it on his head. They bowed down to him and mocked him, calling out "Hail, King of the Jews." Some of them also hit him on the head with a stick and spat in his face. They treated him really horribly. When they had finally had enough of making fun of him, they took off the purple robe, put his own clothes back on him and led him off to be crucified.

7. They made Jesus carry his own cross, though someone had to help him because he was so weak by this point. Everyone walked outside the city to the place where the crucifixions were done. There were three people being crucified that day - Jesus and two thieves, one on either side. As Jesus was being nailed to the cross, he prayed and asked God to forgive the soldiers for what they were doing.

8. Lots of people came to watch the crucifixion. Many of Jesus' enemies came and made fun of him as he was hanging on the cross. They said, "If you really are the Son of God, why don't you come down from there and save yourself?" The priests and teachers of the law mocked him too. There were also many people who loved Jesus and who were heartbroken to see what was happening to him. About noon, the sky went dark although it was the middle of the day. Jesus cried out to God, saying, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" Later, he cried out, "It is finished!" - he had finished the work God had sent him to do. Then he gave up his spirit to God, and he died.

As the centurion, the Roman

soldier who was in charge of the crucifixion, saw what had happened, he said, "This man really was the Son of God." Once Jesus was dead, everyone started to go away, thinking about what had happened, but some of the women who were Jesus' friends waited to see what would happen to his body.

9. A man called Joseph asked Pilate for permission to bury Jesus' body and this was granted, so he took Jesus' body to a tomb he owned. It was like a cave carved out of rock. Jesus' body was put inside and a huge stone was rolled across the entrance to seal it. The women saw where Jesus' body was taken and then they went home because it was almost time for the Sabbath, the day of rest. They planned to come back once the Sabbath was over, with spices and perfumes to put on Jesus' body.

That's where we're going to stop in the story today, and it sounds like the end of Jesus' story, but it's not! The part of the story we have been thinking about today is difficult, but important. Next time we'll think about how the story continues, and it becomes much happier!



REFLECT & RESPOND

► Reflection

You will need: four large sheets of paper labelled: Jesus' enemies, Jesus' friends, Crowd, and Centurion, pens or pencils, post-it notes (optional)

Get the children to imagine what it would have been like for the different groups/ people to witness Jesus' crucifixion. What would they have been thinking and how would they have been

feeling?

You could give them some time to talk about this together, then let them draw or write their responses.

Have four sheets of paper around the room, labelled:

- Jesus' enemies
- Jesus' friends
- Crowd
- Centurion

If you have a small-medium group, you could allow the children to move round the room, going to each sheet in turn and writing or drawing their responses directly onto the sheets of paper. If you have a large group, you may want to give them post-it notes to write or draw on and then let them stick those onto the sheets once they are finished.

These events caused lots of different thoughts and emotions for people who were there, but they also have a big impact on people today.

Christians remember these events on the Friday before Easter, which we call Good Friday. It doesn't sound like what happened that day was very good, but Christians believe that Jesus' death was part of God's plan.

Refer back to Romans 3:23-25a (which were included in Session 41) to explain this (See Session 41 additional document: Romans 3)

"Everyone has sinned and fallen short of God's glorious standard, and all need to be made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift. They need to be made free from sin through Jesus Christ. God sent him to die in our place to take away our sins. We receive forgiveness through faith in the blood of Jesus' death."

Christians believe that Jesus' death was to make a way that

those who follow him can be right with God, that they can be forgiven, and that they can know God and be close to him.

If you have time, you could see if the children have any questions about what they have been hearing.

► Prayer

You will need: large sheet of paper labelled "People today", pens or pencils, post-it notes (optional)

Give the children a few moments to write or draw their own response (as in the reflection above). It could be a prayer, a question, something about how Jesus dying on the cross makes them feel, or something about what it means to Christians.

Once they have done this, lead the children in prayer, thanking Jesus for his sacrifice.

► Miracle Maker Video Clip

You will need: equipment to show video

You could use a clip from the film "The Miracle Maker" to recap the story, or as an alternative way of telling it. (This was also included in One Big Story Session 20.) The section covering Jesus' crucifixion runs from 1:10:07 - 1:13:26. (It is also available on YouTube here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88vJ5A_oLRM)



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

► Easter Cross Craft

You will need: cross outlines and pictures printed from <https://craftingthewordofgod.com/2016/03/25/easter-picture-cross/> coloured pens or pencils, glue sticks, scissors

This is a craft that the children could make over Sessions 45-48 as they explore the Easter Story. Each week they can colour the corresponding picture(s) to add to their cross. By the end of the four weeks they will have an Easter decoration to take home which will remind them of the story.

For this session, they should add pictures B and C.

48. Resurrection



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Matthew 28:1-10,
John 20:19-21,
1 Corinthians 15:12-14

Jesus rises from the dead and appears to his disciples



AIMS

To help the children understand the events of Easter Sunday and their significance.

To allow them to reflect on the hope Jesus' resurrection gives us.

Jesus' death was not the end. On the third day he rose to life, and he promises eternal life for those who trust in him.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- What do you think it would have been like to be one of Jesus' friends witnessing his resurrection?
- What difference does Jesus' resurrection make for you today? Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

► Unbelievable

Read out some statements to the children. They all sound unbelievable, but which ones do they think are actually true? You could get them to put up their hands to vote on whether they think they are true or false, or get them to move to one side of the room if they think it's true and the opposite side of the room if they think it's false.

Owls are the only birds that are able to see the colour blue.

A cockroach can live for a week with its head cut off.

Dolphins sleep with one eye open.

A man in America holds the world record for the most Big Macs eaten – he has eaten over 30,000!

More people are killed by vending machines each year than by sharks.

Someone once hiccupped non-stop for 68 years!

At the end of the game, tell the children that all the statements are true. If they are still doubtful about that, ask them what they could do to look into things if they wanted to find out for sure.

What would it take to make them believe that something that seems unbelievable is actually real?

Have you ever seen something that your friends or family found hard to believe?

▶ Eye Witnesses

You will need: tray, cloth to cover it, several small objects (e.g. pencil, key, match, earring... - you could also use some of the items from the eggs used in last week's story to link back to that), paper, pens or pencils

Show the children the tray and give them a minute or so to examine the different objects. Then cover the tray, give them paper and a pen or pencil and get them to write down as many of the different objects as they can remember. They could do this individually or in pairs. After a couple of minutes, get them to go through their lists and see who has managed to remember the most objects correctly.

If you have time, you could also let them take turns to remove one object from the tray without the others seeing, and see who is able to identify the missing object the quickest.

▶ Spot The Difference

You will need: spot the difference pictures (you can find examples online by doing a Google Image search for 'Spot the difference'), pens or pencils

Give out the images to the children and see if they are able to spot all the differences between the two similar pictures.

This activity could work well as the children gather, to occupy those who arrive early until the others join them.

▶ Easter Games

There are several Easter-themed games included in Session 20 of One Big Story.



**EXPLORING
THE BIBLE**

▶ Recap/ Intro

We heard last time about how Jesus was put on trial, then

taken away to be beaten and whipped by soldiers. After that he was crucified - nailed to a cross and left to hang there until he died.

We thought a bit about how Christians believe that Jesus' death was part of God's plan and that he died as a sacrifice for all the wrong things in the world, so that we could have the chance to be forgiven and to know God.

At the end we heard how, after Jesus died, his body was taken and put in a tomb. Some women who were Jesus' friends watched to see where his body was taken. They wanted to put oils and spices on his body, but it was time for the Sabbath, the Jewish day of rest, so they had to go home and wait until the Sabbath was over before they could do this.

Today we're going to think about the events that Christians remember on Easter Sunday.

▶ Easter Story Drama

You will need: shawls, perfume bottles, words for angel (from additional document: Angel Words), angel wings (optional), folded sheet to represent grave clothes

Choose people to be two women, an angel and Jesus. Give the two women shawls and perfume bottles; give the angel words to say, and wings if you have them.

Get them to act out the story as you tell it, encouraging them to do suitable facial expressions etc. to show how the characters would have been feeling.

Get the children playing the women and Jesus to stand at one side of the room and the angel to stand at the other side of the room beside the folded sheet.

Early on the Sunday morning, the women got ready to go to

Jesus' tomb to put oils and spices on his body. (Get them to begin moving across to the other side of the room.)

As they walked there, they were still very sad about what had happened to Jesus, but then they realised there was another problem. Jesus' tomb had been covered by a heavy stone, and they knew there was no way they would be strong enough to move it by themselves. They weren't sure what to do, but they kept on walking towards the tomb.

When they got there, they got a massive surprise. The stone was already rolled away from the entrance to the tomb, and when they looked inside, Jesus' body wasn't there! They wondered what could have happened.

Suddenly an angel appeared and spoke to them- "Don't be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He isn't here. He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come and see the place where his body lay."

The women looked and they saw the cloths that Jesus' body had been wrapped in, but there was no sign of Jesus himself. They were puzzled and they weren't sure what to make of the angel's message. Could it really be true? Could Jesus really be alive?

The angel spoke to them again - "Go quickly and find Jesus' disciples. Tell them that he is risen from the dead. He is going ahead of you to Galilee and you will see him there."

The women still weren't sure whether it was true, but they rushed to find Jesus' disciples to tell them the news.

As they went, they met someone on the road - it was Jesus! They were able to see for themselves that it was true. He was alive. They felt the marks in his hands and his

feet where the nails had been and they could see that it was really him. Jesus told them to go and tell his disciples and that he would see them later, so they rushed off, full of joy.

That night, most of Jesus' disciples were together. (You could get the children to imagine that they are all part of this scene.) **They were in an upstairs room with the door locked because they were frightened of the people who had arrested Jesus. Suddenly, Jesus was there with them and, although it seemed unbelievable, they knew it was true- he was alive!**

▶ Finger Puppet Story

You will need: washable pens, wipes

An alternative way of telling the story, using the script above, is to draw faces on your fingers to represent the different characters. You can then tell the story popping each character up or down as they appear and disappear from the story.

When you are finished you could let the children draw faces on their fingers and let them find a partner and practice telling the story to one another.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection/ Prayer

You will need: Bible, scratch art sheets with scratch tool (you can find these at Baker Ross or on Amazon by searching for 'scratch art' - there are various options available such as doodle sheets, bookmarks, or crosses). An alternative is to make your own scratch art sheets - you can find instructions here:

<https://www.creativeramblingsblog.com/scratch-art-paper/>

On Easter Sunday, Christians celebrate that although Jesus died, he came back to life again on the third day. Christians believe that this shows that God's power is stronger than the power of death and that Jesus defeated death. Just like he died and rose again, Christians believe that although we will all die one day, we can have the hope of eternal life with God by trusting in Jesus.

Jesus' resurrection is one of the most important beliefs for Christians. Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-14 to help explain why.

Give out scratch art sheets to the children. Explain that although it must have seemed very dark and hopeless for Jesus' friends when he died, it was not the end as he rose to new life. Let the children use the scratch tool to scratch away some of the darkness and reveal the colours underneath as they draw a picture or write something to remind them of what Easter is all about.

Lead them in prayer, thanking God for his power and for the hope of eternal life with him.

the corresponding picture(s) to add to their cross. By the end of the four weeks they will have an Easter decoration to take home which will remind them of the story. For this session, they should add pictures A and D.

▶ God's Story Video

You will need: equipment to play video

This short video could be used as a recap of the Easter Story. It summarises what the children have been exploring over the last few weeks, and also points ahead to the next session of One Big Story.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZ4gOniUV08>



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ Easter Cross Craft

You will need: cross outlines and pictures printed from <https://craftingthewordofgod.com/2016/03/25/easter-picture-cross/> coloured pens or pencils, glue sticks, scissors

This is a craft that the children could make over Sessions 45-48 as they explore the Easter Story. Each week they can colour

49. Commission



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

**Acts 1:3-11,
Matthew 28:18-20**

Jesus commissions his disciples to spread the word and make more disciples, before ascending to heaven



AIMS

To help the children reflect on Jesus' call to his followers to make disciples and to understand that even though they wouldn't see him physically any more he would still be with them as he was going to send the Holy Spirit.

Jesus commissioned his disciples to continue his work by making more disciples. Then he ascended to heaven but promised that he would still be with his followers by sending the Holy Spirit.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- How do you feel about Jesus' command to make disciples?
- How are you doing this?
- How does Jesus' promise to be with his followers help you in this?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one or more of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ **Mirror Game**

Get the children to divide into pairs and to stand facing their partner. One child should perform a series of actions, while their partner should copy them, pretending to be a mirror image. After a couple of minutes let them switch so the other person is leading.

If you have time, you could get them to come up with a short routine and then allow some of the pairs to do their routine while the other children copy it in their pairs.

▶ **Drawing Game**

You will need: paper, pens or pencils, picture (from additional document: Drawing Game)

Give each of the children a piece of paper, and provide pens or pencils. The leader should hold the picture and describe it while the children attempt to recreate the picture on their own sheet of paper. (You can decide whether you want to include the colours of the shapes as part of the description, or whether you want to simply focus on the shapes.)

As you describe the picture, try to keep questions from the children to a minimum. Just keep describing the picture and encourage them to try to keep up. Once you have finished, get the children to show their pictures, and see

who managed to get the closest to the original.

► Coordinates Puzzle

You will need printouts from additional document: Coordinates Puzzle, pencils

Give the children a copy of the puzzle sheet each. Their task is to find the coordinates listed, and then join the points they have found to create two shapes. Full instructions are included on the puzzle sheet.

This may be a good activity to occupy any children who arrive early while they are waiting for the others to come.



► Recap/ Intro

Last time we heard about Easter Sunday, and how on the third day after Jesus' death he came back to life again. Some of his friends went and saw his empty tomb and later they met him and saw for themselves that he really was alive. Today we're going to be thinking about what happened to Jesus and his disciples after that.

► Great Commission

You will need: Bible, pictures printed out or displayed on PowerPoint

Suggested images are images 3, 6, 12 and 13 from this link: <http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/lumo-ascension/>

The image numbers are included in the script below at the appropriate points.

For 40 days after his death Jesus spent time with his disciples, and many other people saw him too.

3. He taught his disciples about God's Kingdom. One time as he

was having a meal with them, he told them, "Don't leave Jerusalem until the Father gives you the gift he promised - the Holy Spirit."

Jesus was telling the disciples that God was going to send his Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to them.

He said, "When the Holy Spirit comes, he will give you power, and you will be my witnesses. You will tell people about me everywhere - right here in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth."

6. He gave his disciples some more instructions of what they were to do.

Look up Matthew 28:18-20 and read it in the Bible. Then discuss together:

What does Jesus tell his disciples to do?

- Go and make disciples of all nations (tell people everywhere about how they can follow Jesus)
- Baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (see if the children remember what baptism means - a sign of people putting their old, sinful life behind them and choosing to follow Jesus)
- Teach others to obey his commands

If you were one of Jesus' disciples how would you feel about being given that task? Does it sound easy or hard?

Maybe it sounds like a hard task, but Jesus reassures his disciples by giving them a promise. What is the promise he gives?

That he will always be with them.

12. After Jesus had spent 40 days with his disciples, teaching them these things, he

went out to a hill with them one day and as the disciples were watching, Jesus rose up into the sky. His disciples watched until a cloud covered him and he was out of their sight.

13. They continued to stand there, staring up into the sky, until two angels appeared. They said, "Why are you standing, staring up into heaven? Jesus has been taken into heaven but one day he will return in the same way you saw him go."

The disciples returned to Jerusalem to wait for the Holy Spirit to come.



REFLECT & RESPOND

► Reflection

It sounds like Jesus broke his promise to the disciples that he would always be with them, but really it was just that he was going to be with them in a different way. Up until then he had been with them as a person, but now he was sending the Holy Spirit to be with them.

Christians sometimes talk about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit – you might have noticed that phrase being mentioned when we read Matthew 28:19 earlier.

It's a confusing idea. Christians believe that there is one God but that he is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each of them is slightly different, but all of them are God.

In the Old Testament when we heard about God speaking and God doing things, we were talking about God the Father.

The Son is Jesus because he is sometimes referred to as the Son of God. Christians believe that he is God but he came to

earth to live as a man.

We can't see the Holy Spirit, but Christians believe that when we put our faith in God the Holy Spirit comes to live inside us to help us know God and follow him.

We'll talk more next time about the Holy Spirit as we'll find out what happened to the disciples when the Holy Spirit came.

Do you remember the promise that the angels made to the disciples?

That Jesus would come back from heaven one day in the same way they saw him go.

We are still waiting for that to happen, but Christians believe that one day Jesus will return as he promised. We have no idea when that will happen. The Bible doesn't tell us, but it does say that it will happen suddenly at a moment when people aren't expecting it, and that somehow when it happens everyone on earth will know about it.

▶ **Prayer Activity**

You will need: Prayer spirals for each child (from additional document: Prayer Spiral), pens, scissors, string/ wool, Sellotape (optional)

Even though we can't see Jesus today, Christians believe that he still listens to our prayers and helps us. Give the children each a copy of the prayer spiral (*from additional document: Prayer Spiral*). Get them to write a prayer inside the spiral. It can be anything they want, e.g. a prayer of thanks, a question, asking God for help...

Then get them to cut the spiral out and attach a piece of string to the centre so that the spiral hangs down.

Encourage them to take it home and to hang it up. If they

hang it over a bulb or a heater the spiral will spin because of the hot air. They can't see the hot air, but it is still there, and this can serve as a reminder that although we cannot see Jesus he is there and he hears our prayers.