

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE – WORSHIP IDEAS

1 Birth of John the Baptist Foretold (Luke 1: 5-26)

What if you couldn't speak?

Birth of Jesus Foretold (Luke 1: 26-36)

Nothing is impossible for God

Resources:

Scissors

Postcard sized cards

- Zechariah was struck dumb by his experience and because he doubted that God was able to fulfil his promises. Can you communicate without speaking?

- Play games similar to charades in groups.

- Learn a song or The Lord's prayer in British Sign Language or Makaton:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5INr-nOEmyE>

- Mary was invited to be part of God's great plan for the world, it would change her life forever.

- It seemed impossible for her to have a child but the angel explained "Nothing is impossible with God". What's the most difficult thing you have ever had to do? Did it seem impossible?

- Think of things that are impossible.

- Find out things that seem impossible for some but which members of the congregation may be able to do with ease.

- Try some challenges together that are or seem impossible such as, licking your elbow, sticking out your tongue and touching your nose (the trick here is that you use your finger to touch your nose not your tongue!), climb through a postcard:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vN196_s92ZQ

- Collect ideas for prayer – things which may seem impossible to us e.g. ending war, feeding the hungry etc. and invite God to work through us (like Mary) to help address these problems.

Mary's Song (Luke 1: 46-56)

Turning the World Upside Down

Resources:

World globe or map

- Sing: O Lord, all the world belongs to you (Turning the world upside down).

- Using a globe of the world (or a map if not) turn it upside down. Discuss and imagine what would happen if the world was literally turned upside down e.g. the seasons would change, the ceiling would become the floor...

- Play a game of opposites beginning with easy ones e.g. up/down, in/out, on/off then progress to war/peace, sickness/health, poor/rich, etc.

- Read Mary's Song together and spot the ways in which God turns the world upside down – changing the way things are to make them better e.g. humble are blessed, shown mercy, scattered the proud, filled the hungry etc.

2 The Birth of Jesus Luke 2: 1-7

Expect the unexpected.

Resources:

Two gifts wrapped as described.

Lattice topped mince pies.

- The King of kings was born in a stable, laid in a manger where the animals would feed.

- Have two presents, one beautifully wrapped but containing nothing, the other tatty wrapped in newspaper. The first is empty, the second contains something special e.g. some gold chocolate coins. The idea is that the greatest treasure, Jesus, arrived in the simplest most unimpressive way... God's plan may be very different to what we expect.

- Share some mince pies, if possible, with lattice tops. Mince pies were originally oval to represent the manger, the rich filling represented Jesus the greatest gift from God and the lattice top represented the straw.

Shepherds & Angels

Luke 2: 8-20

God reveals the truth to ordinary people.

- Recreate a sound scape for the Shepherds and the angels. Half the congregation take the role of sheep bleating when indicated, the other half are the host of angels, singing “Hallelujah” (as in the Hallelujah Chorus) when asked. After a bit of practice, conduct the two halves (or invite a child, pre-briefed, to do so). Begin with quite bleating (encourage people not to all bleat at once) – then bring in the angels quietly at first and getting louder. The sheep get louder too as they are scared.
- Discuss and imagine what the shepherds must have felt – what does the Bible tell us about how they felt including after the visit to see Jesus.
- Shepherds were ordinary, unimportant, even outcast people who lived a very difficult life – God chose to reveal the birth of Jesus to the least important ordinary people.

Mary’s Treasured Memories

Luke 2: 19

Recounting the story

Resources:

A large white feather

A large pebble

Some sheep’s wool

Three Clay pots

- A great way to recount the birth story is using simple objects “Mary’s Treasures”
 - A feather – the visit of the angel.
 - A stone – the rough road to Bethlehem
 - Some fleece wool – the visit of the shepherds
 - Three pots – the gifts of the wise men

This idea is taken from a story in this beautiful book:

WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

by Margaret McAllister

Lion Children’s Books

ISBN-10 : 0745976050

ISBN-13 : 978-0745976051

Presentation in the Temple

Luke 2: 21-39

Waiting on God

- Stand at the front as if waiting for something to happen, check your watch every so often and seem annoyed and frustrated. Eventually begin singing “Why are we waiting!” (Tune “O come all ye faithful”) encourage everyone to join in. Ask someone in the congregation to interrupt, stop everyone and ask, “Why are we waiting? What are we waiting for?” Explain that actually you have no idea, you just thought something might happen!
- Think and imagine what it must feel like to wait – groups may come up with examples, some could even mime or freeze frame situations where they had to wait e.g. at a bus stop, in a doctor’s waiting room, waiting for the post to arrive.
- We spend a lot of time waiting but we usually know what we are waiting for... explain that Simeon was waiting, God had promised that he would see the Messiah, before he died – he was very old and had waited a long time but he never gave up. Jesus was who he had been waiting for and he was so thrilled he sung a song.
- Say (or sing) the words of Simeon’s Song (Luke 2: 29-32).
- We sometimes have to be patient and wait for God to do what God is going to do. God’s timing is different to ours, not always an instant, fast-food experience! Pray for patience and to rely on God’s promises (maybe display some examples or give some out for groups to read and reflect upon).

The Boy Jesus at the Temple

Luke 2: 41-51

Priorities

Resources:

(Option) Where's Wally books

- Play a game of "Would you rather?" You could do this in groups. Offer different choices e.g. Drink Tea or Coffee? And then the groups can discuss and decide. Gradually make the choices more tricky:
 - Have a pet cat or dog?
 - Fly by plane or travel on a train.
 - Climb a mountain or go potholing.
 - Meet a snake or a spider. etc.
 - Last: Go for a long walk with your family or study the Bible?
- (You could also get some "Where's Wally" books and have fun trying to find Wally and the other characters.)
- Jesus' family had been up to Jerusalem, they travelled with many friends and family members. On the way back they did a bit of a head count and realised someone was missing! Where was Jesus?
- Tell how they searched and found Jesus in the temple – he was busy thinking and talking about scripture.
- For us studying and learning about the Bible is important, it might not be easy but something we should all make time for.

3 John the Baptist Prepares the Way

Luke 3: 1-20

Welcoming Jesus.

- This would provide a fabulous opportunity for the church family to join together in spring cleaning the church, preparing and sharing food together and joining in fellowship. John came to prepare people to meet Jesus – we, the Church, are also called to welcome people and point them to Jesus. You could together get the building ready for a special visitor, Jesus and at the same time reflect on the need to prepare our hearts and lives, clearing the clutter, cleaning away the dust and dirt, refreshing and renewing.

The Baptism of Jesus

Luke 3: 21-22

Starting Something New

- The Baptism of Jesus comes, of course, immediately before his time in the wilderness and the start of the period of Lent.
- For us baptism is a sign of an ending and a new beginning – dying to an old way of life (of sin and death) and rising to a new way (of life and love). We are baptised as a sign of turning away from evil and starting a new life with God.
- Jesus, of course, didn't need to turn away from sin as the Bible tells us that Jesus was "without (outside) sin" – but he went first through the waters of baptism in a new way – the Holy Spirit, the Voice of Father God and of course Jesus (the Son) himself were all involved in his baptism – the sign of a new beginning, a new stage in God's plan – the start of God's new kingdom.
- Starting something new is often a good thing – starting a new book at school – a fresh start.
- Ask some people to share a skill or talent they may have with a group that others could then have a go and maybe try something new.
- As part of a project leading into Lent then why not explore the "Love life, Live Lent" resources – doing something new and good each day during Lent for others. There are adult, youth and children's versions.

- 4 Temptation of Jesus**
Luke 4: 1-13
- Temptation
& Choosing God's
Way
- Resources:
Bread roll
Rock
Map
Crown
Step Ladder
"Hello" Magazine
- Begin by saying, singing or even signing the Lord's Prayer together. Highlight the line – Lead us not into temptation – discuss in groups what this means. What is temptation? Why would God lead us into temptation so that we would ask God not to? Alternative translations to explore:
 - And keep us from being tempted. (CEV)
 - And do not bring us to hard testing. (GNB)
 - And do not cause us to be tested. (ICB)
 - Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil. (TM)
 - Do not let us fall into temptation. (New Catholic version).
 - The Greek word, translated as temptation is more a time of testing or a trial.
 - We are all tempted from time to time, tempted to do the wrong thing... it can seem like a test to find out just how good we are at resisting temptation. What sort of things might tempt us?
 - The temptations that Jesus experienced in the wilderness tested him – would he stick to God's way, the right way or would he give in to selfishness.
 - Around the church place a rock and a bread roll, a map of the world (rolled up) and a crown, a step ladder and a copy of something like "Hello" magazine. Ask folk to gather the objects and put them into pairs. Jesus was tempted with:
 - Stuff for himself (Rock and bread) – we can all find things we want tempting, but God's way is to find satisfaction in the Word of God.
 - Power (Map and the crown) – we might like the idea of having power, of being in charge. But Jesus pointed us to God, we should give God the crown in our lives and serve him not ourselves.
 - Fame (Ladder and Magazine) – when tempted to throw himself off the high place of the temple Jesus was tempted with fame – everyone would have heard about it! Instead Jesus says we should test God, we should obey and trust God not seek the approval of others.
- 5 The Calling of the First Disciples**
(Luke 5: 1-11)
- Fishing for people!
- Resources:
Paper Fish
Large Net
- Have you ever been trying really hard to do something but no matter how hard you try, how patient you are, how many times you done it before, how hard you've practised, it just won't work... Share some examples in groups. Think about how you might feel, what you might say or do.
 - That's probably how Simon, James and John the fishermen must have felt, they'd been out fishing all night and not even a nibble! Along came Jesus, teaches the crowd from Simon's boat and then asks him to take him fishing. And the catch breaks all records – fish after fish, till the nets are bursting. It's a miracle and the three fishermen are amazed.
 - Jesus calls Simon, James and John to follow him, to share in the work of fishing for people, of calling them into God's kingdom.
 - A fun prayer opportunity would be to ask each person to write their name on a paper fish, gather them in a net and then invite each person to take a fish and pray for that person that they would have the faith and courage to share the good news during the week ahead. Folk could take the fish away and continue to pray for that person during the week.

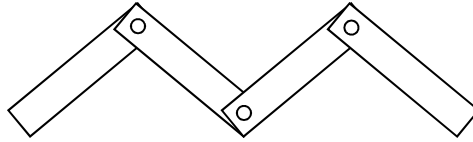
Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man

Luke 5: 17-26

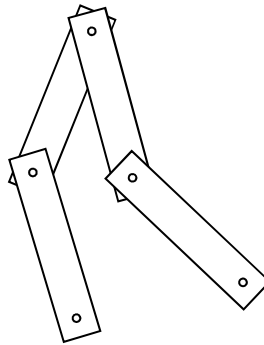
Bringing people to Jesus

Resources:
Card strips
Paper Fasteners

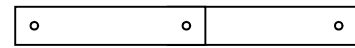
- Provide individuals (or groups) with four strips of card joined with split pin paper fasteners as follows (Or provide resources to make them):



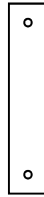
- Explore, in groups, the different shapes and patterns that can be made by manipulating the pieces.
- Have a large set of strips to lead with, invite everyone to use their strips to join in retelling the story of “The man with the wobbly legs” (The healing of the paralyzed man) using the strips to illustrate:



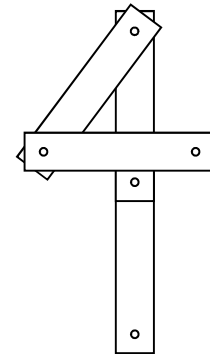
Man with the wobbly legs.



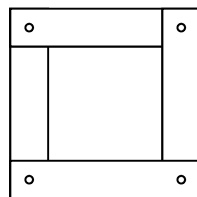
The man's flat bed.



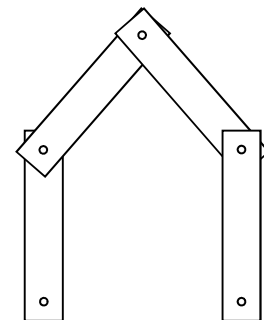
Not one friend...



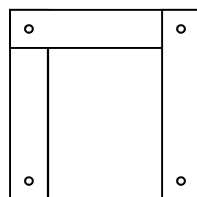
but four friends!



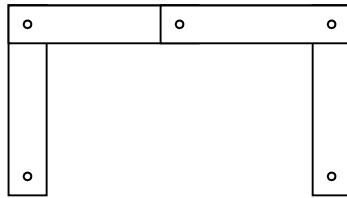
Now way through the windows...



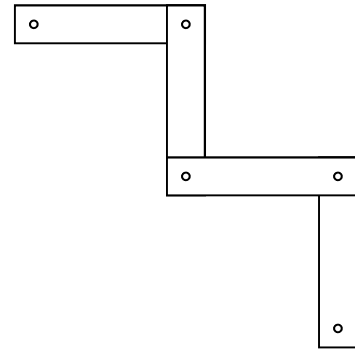
A House...



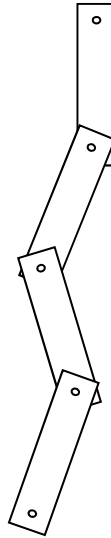
no way through the door.



...with a flat roof.



Steps up to the roof.



Lowered on ropes.

- The friends knew the only answer for the man was to take him to Jesus. We can bring others to Jesus in prayer.

6 The Twelve Apostles

Luke 6: 12-16

Called by God

Resources:

Cards for writing and displaying names

- Most people will be familiar with or recall the calling of the register at the start of a school day. There maybe someone who can actually remember the names of the register.
- Some of the names we may have forgotten, some we may remember for good or perhaps not so good reasons.
- The names of the Apostles are listed in the Bible and their meanings are as follows:
 - Simon / Peter - God has heard / Rock
 - Andrew (Same as Adam) – Man (Human)
 - James – To follow
 - John – God is gracious
 - Philip – Friend of horses
 - Bartholomew – Son of a farmer
 - Matthew – Gift of God
 - Thomas – Twin
 - James – To follow
 - Simon (The Zealot) – God has heard
 - Judas – Praised one.
 - Judas (Iscaiot) – Praised one.

- Folk could explore, find out, discuss what their names mean, why they have them. What would you like people to think when they hear your name?
- Despite their positive sounding names, the Apostles were far from perfect, they all made mistakes, got into arguments and fights and let Jesus down. They were ordinary people, just like us but they followed Jesus and he changed their lives for ever.
- This is an interesting take on assessing the Apostles and their suitability (from a worldly perspective) for the job:
<https://bible.org/illustration/resumes-apostles>
- Display and celebrate the names of all those present (and others unable to join) – all called to serve God and one another. Give thanks to God for one-another.

Love Your Enemies

Luke 6: 27-37

The challenge of love

Resources:

Eyes cut from photographs for prayer idea.

- Who and what do you love? Discussion and feedback.
- What do we mean by love?
- In English we use the word love to mean different things, to refer to or describe different things:
 - I love my Mum or my Grandad.
 - I love my sister or brother.
 - I love my friends.
 - I love chocolate.
 - I love everyone.
- Love can be used to mean anything from being in love with someone who we might choose to marry to really liking something a lot - we might really like a bar of chocolate but we wouldn't want to marry a bar of chocolate!
- In the New Testament, which was originally written down in Greek, we find several different words for love.
 - EROS – Romantic love.
 - STORGE – Family love.
 - PHILIA – Brotherly or Friendship love.
 - AGAPE – God's unconditional love.
- Maybe discuss which things or people we love fall into which category.
- Jesus taught us to love our enemies – can you work out which sort of love he was talking about? When Jesus says, "Love your enemies" he uses the word "Agapao" he wants us to love everyone, care for them, be kind to them, respect them without any conditions.
- God loves everyone. So should we.
- If possible, for a prayer idea, have some pictures of pairs of eyes cut from magazines or online – lots of different ones. Give each person some eyes to look into. Who might the person be? What might they be concerned about? What might make them joyful?
- Remind folk that we will never look into the eyes of anyone whom God does not love. Even the people we like the least, even folk we call our enemies, God still loves them – he loved them enough to die for them, just as he gave his life on the cross for us.

A Tree and Its Fruit

Luke 6: 43-45

What's inside matters.

Resources:
Selection of fruit prepared for tasting

- Show a selection of fruit (preferably ones that grow on trees) – these could be prepared and shared around – people could try different fruits and talk about preferences etc.
- Many fruits grow on trees – apples, pears, cherries, peaches, plums, quinces, oranges, lemons, limes, figs, medlars, damsons, olives – can folk think of more.
- Fruit trees may look different but many look very similar so how can you tell what of tree you are looking at? Look at the fruit. Apples grow on apple trees, figs on fig trees... it's much easier when you can see the fruit.
- If somebody does good things then they are like a good tree that bears good fruit. If they choose to do bad things they are like a tree which bears bad fruit. What we are like on the inside matters and God sees what is on the inside.
- God wants us all to be good trees and to bear good fruit.
- You could sing, together, "I want to be a blooming tree" by Doug Horley.

The Wise and Foolish Builders

Luke 6: 46-49

Do it God's way

Resources:
Building resources
Table, label and boxes/cubes (nets)

- Building activities are a good way to get into this – could be Lego or, for a challenge, sugar lumps to see who can build the tallest tower. As folk build, encourage them to think about what makes a strong tower.
 - Alternatively talk and think about what it means to be wise. Wisdom is knowing right from wrong and choosing the right.
 - Retell the story of the Wise and Foolish Builders. The difference is that one chose to build on a solid foundation – the work was harder but the result was stronger.
 - We would be wise to build our lives on a firm foundation – Jesus Christ – following, learning and trusting Jesus is the best foundation on which to build.
 - If possible, have everyone right their name on a block or cube – these can be made from cardboard (using a 3D net readily available online) folk could make them together. For a prayer of commitment place a sturdy table at the front, cover with a thin cloth and label it "Christ the solid rock". Use the blocks to build on the table and pray that each would learn to trust Jesus more and more.
- Here is a rhymed retelling that might be of use:

Two builders built their houses.
You've heard this tale before
but the message is important,
not one we should ignore.

One builder was a wise man,
on the rock he built his home.
The work was hard and heavy
but the wise man didn't moan.

The other man was foolish,
he built his house on sand.
The build was quick and easy
but not on solid land.

The weather then turned nasty.
The wind came rushing past,
The lightning flashed, the thunder roared
the rain fell hard and fast.

The rivers rose and flooded.
The sand was washed away.
The house with no foundation
fell flat I'm sad to say.

The wise man's house upon the rock
stayed firm, it stood the test.
The solid rock on which he built
turned out to be the best.

So build your life on Jesus,
be wise, give him the crown.
When troubles come, he'll hold you.
He'll never let you down.

**7 Jesus Anointed by
a Sinful Woman**

Luke 7: 36-50

All for Jesus

Resources:
Scented candles
Alabaster jar
Spikenard oil

- If possible, light some strongly scented candles at the front of the church and ask people to put up their hand as soon as they could smell them. See how long the scent takes to fill the whole room.
- If you had to get out of the house in a hurry what one thing would you want to rescue first? Is there something especially precious you might want to take? A photo album, a special object...
- The woman in our reading today brought something very precious to Jesus, an alabaster jar filled with a very expensive perfume called Nard. (If you are able get some spikenard essential oil for people to smell.)
- Why do you think she gave her most precious possession to Jesus in the way she did?
- What would we give to Jesus? Jesus wants all of us. He wants to give our lives to him.
- This also provides a good opportunity to explore our need for forgiveness – a practical prayer for forgiveness would be ideal. Spikenard oil may also be mixed with a base oil like sweet almond oil for use in simple anointing of the head or hands. (Undiluted essential oils should not be used.)

**8 The Parable of
The Sower**

Luke 8: 1-15

Sowing the seed

Resources:
Seeds for sowing
Pot with soil

- This would be a good theme to explore outside if the church has a suitable garden area. Sowing seeds for wild meadow flowers, or even vegetables, is always a good church family activity. You could use pots or plant direct. Sowing the seed is a strong analogy for the Gospel.
- Although the parable considers how different people may respond to the message of the Gospel but the strangest part is the way in which the sower behaves – illustrate it like this, prepare a pot with soil etc. then throw some seeds in the general direction of the pot – some may go in, some may not.
- The farmer was not careful about where the seed landed which was odd as seed was very valuable and the farmer would not want any to go to waste. Throwing seed where it may not thrive seems reckless.

- But our job is to sow the seed, to “throw” the Gospel in all directions, not worrying about how people might respond, God will make it grow in accordance with God’s will.
- Just as the farmer cannot make the seed grow, so we cannot make the Gospel take root in someone’s heart, that’s the work of God in the Holy Spirit, we just have to make the Good News known.
- It might be a good outreach opportunity to give out small packets of sunflower seeds with a suitable text attached and invite people to plant them and send pictures of the resulting sunflowers or ask people to bring them in pots for display outside the church building.

A Lamp On A Stand

Luke 8: 16 – 18

Let it shine

Resources:

Electric night lights

Feathers

Soil

Small candles

- The song “This little light of mine” is a good one to share for this theme.
- Providing folk with an electric nightlight or mini-votive candle would make a good take away object. They could be marked around the outside with “Let It Shine!”
- Tell the following story illustrate with some soil, some feathers and some small candles as necessary:

A great king had a beautiful daughter but she felt alone and longed to find a prince to marry. There were three eligible brothers in the neighbouring kingdom and they came to the King to seek his daughter’s hand in marriage. Unable to decide between them the King set them a challenge. Giving each a single gold coin he challenged them to use the money to purchase something that would fill the throne room completely. The first brother thought for a while then used the money to buy soil, carts of soil which is very inexpensive. He returned to the King’s palace and unloaded all the soil into the throne room but it hardly filled even a quarter of the space. The second brother thought that he needed something that would both be cheap and take up a lot of space so he went to the local market and purchased as many goose feathers as his money could buy. He too returned to the palace and used the piles of feathers to fill the throne room but, like his brother, he failed, there just weren’t enough feathers. When the third brother arrived at the palace in was night time. He seemed to be empty handed, as the King watched he took from his pocket a bundle of candles and one after another he lit them and placed them around the throne room until the whole space was filled with light. Each of the little candles burned and gave out a little glimmer of light, together their light filled all the room.

- We light candles and light lamps to give light. There’s a ridiculous idea in the reading of lighting a lamp and then hiding it under the bed or inside a clay jar where it’s light cannot be seen or be useful.
- We have the light of the love and truth of Christ, we are called to share that light in the way we live and share God’s love with others.
- Think of some ways that we could share God’s love in the coming week and then pray for opportunities to shine our lights in the world.

The Woman in the Crowd

Luke 8: 42b-48

Faith in Jesus

Resources:

Faith display materials

- Faith is a fundamental of the Christian way, but not blind faith, faith in something specific and reliable – faith in Jesus.
- Display the word “faith” and ask folk what they think it means, give examples of faith in action etc. Ideas can be written up and displayed.
- The woman in the crowd was not well and so she had put her faith in the doctors and healers. They had not been able to help so she had suffered for 12 years.
- We can be thankful that there are many illnesses and diseases that doctors can cure today that in the time of the woman in our reading were not. When we go and see the doctor, we have hope that they can help make us well or refer us on to someone with special skills and knowledge who can. Of course, even today, doctors can’t cure everything.
- The woman was very unhappy because the sickness she had meant that she was not allowed to go the temple or the synagogue to join in worshipping God. She had to keep away from others and may even have been shut out of her home and family.
- She came secretly, hidden in the crowd and touched the hem of Jesus’ clothes. He knew immediately that he had been touched!
- What made her well? What healed her? Jesus tells her and us: *‘Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.’* It was her faith in Jesus.
- What questions might we ask from hearing this story? Gather the questions and together undertake to explore some answers for them.

9 Jesus Sends Out The Twelve

Luke 9: 1-6

Travelling Light
God will provide

Resources:

(Option) Kim’s game materials

- Start with a game of “I went on holiday and in my bag I put...” Here’s a possible sequence with players numbered:
 - I went on holiday and in my bag I put a camera.
 - I went on holiday and in my bag I put a camera and sunglasses.
 - I went on holiday and in my bag I put a camera, sunglasses and a towel. etc.
- An alternative would be to play “Kim’s Game” with the contents of a holiday bag with typical items included.
- When we go on holiday, we pack quite a lot of stuff to take with us. Even for a day trip or a short journey we take stuff along, money, food and drink, an umbrella etc.
- Jesus sent out his twelve apostles to proclaim the kingdom of God and heal the sick. He asked them not to take anything. Only the clothes they were wearing and a staff to help on the rough roads that they would have to walk. Why do you think this was?
- Some possible answers:
 - Faith and relationships go hand in hand – the disciples were to accept whatever hospitality was offered and stay with that household until they left – building relationships and a faith hub for the future. We are called together to be God’s people, a family, relationships matter.
 - The disciples were to rely entirely on God to provide their needs, just as they relied on God for the words to say and the power to heal. We too need to learn to rely on God and not on other things.

Jesus Feeds The Five Thousand +

Luke 9: 10-17

Satisfied?

Resources:
Bread Rolls

- Begin with a single bread roll, soft for easy breaking. This may be done in groups. The intention is not to eat the roll but to break it up and consider how many people it might feed. Break the bread in half, two people may eat a little, in quarters, 4 a smaller amount, 8 the pieces getting smaller, 16 etc. (A roll may provide between 64 and 128 pieces, depending on the size of the roll, if being cut up or broken for communion).
- Would it be possible to provide some for every member of the congregation from one roll? Would it be enough to satisfy them i.e. fill them until they had had enough?
- In the parable the disciples are overwhelmed by the idea of having to feed 5000(+) hungry people – they only have five loaves and two fish which isn't even enough for them to be satisfied let alone the crowd.
- They focus on what they don't have, the enormity of the problem and loose sight of who they are working with.
- Jesus takes the little they have and does miraculous things – 5000+ hungry folk fed and twelve baskets of leftovers (which would keep the disciples going for some days!)
- In John's Gospel, when asked about this same miracle, Jesus replies, "I am the bread of life." Only Jesus can truly satisfy our needs – only when we place all we have and all we are in his hands will we be truly satisfied.
- Jesus can take us and the little we have to offer and transform it with amazing results – drawing others to his kingdom through us and helping them to find true satisfaction too.
- This may lead into Holy Communion or could be followed by a bring and share church picnic or lunch.

Peter declares that Jesus is the Messiah

Luke 9: 18-20

The identity of Jesus 1

Resources:
(Options) Guess who game

- In groups play the game "Guess Who" if sets are available or you can play the game with the whole congregation – people can stand or raise their hands and then sit or lower hands if they are eliminated until one person remains.
- You could play 20 questions with famous people to guess instead.
- As well as how we look, our names etc. we may also have jobs or titles so we might say they are the minister, the organist, the Junior Church leader etc.
- Jesus asked his friends whom people said he was, some thought he was John the Baptist, Elijah the Prophet or even another Prophet from the past.
- When Jesus asked who Peter and the disciples said he was, Peter didn't say – You're Jesus, Our Leader, Our Teacher etc. he said – You are the Messiah (or the Christ) – Which means Anointed One – Jesus was not just an ordinary person, he was God's chosen one, God's Son. What difference could or should that make to how we think about Jesus?

- The Transfiguration**
Luke 9: 28-36
- The identity of Jesus 2
- Resources:
Pictures and disguise materials
- Provide groups with different pictures of famous people and other materials to cut out and create disguises e.g. hats, beards, masks, glasses. Then show the disguised people and see if the rest can work out who they really – (have copies of the famous faces to show when guessed).
 - The followers of Jesus recognised that he was extraordinary, what he said and did was amazing, Peter had even recognised that Jesus was the Messiah.
 - On this occasion Jesus took three of his friends to the top of a mountain where he revealed to them the complete truth – Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
- 10 The Good Samaritan**
Luke 10: 25-37
- A different point of view
- Sing or listen to the song “When I needed a neighbour”. Talk about what a neighbour is and discuss in groups who would make the perfect neighbour, what characteristics might they have?
 - Share a retelling of the story of the parable. Think about the “view from the ditch” – What mattered to the man who lay dying – he needed help – did it matter who helped him? Was he even aware of the other people that passed by?
 - We often focus on the people who passed by but what really matters is the one who met the needs of the man in the ditch. Where are we in this story? Who do we associate with?
 - All of us were once like the person in the ditch – in need of salvation.
 - Jesus came and lifted us and took us to his family (the church) to care for and nurture us – joining in the journey of our healing and transformation.
 - We can be like Jesus, reaching out to others and welcoming people into God’s family where they can share in the love of Jesus.
 - Think of some ways in which the church family can share God’s love with those around.
- Mary & Martha**
Luke 10: 38-42
- That’s not fair!
- Resources:
Big paper etc.
- It’s Not fair: In Groups people can discuss and record examples (on a big sheet of paper) to answer the question. When might we say this? When did you last say it?
 - Think about the three main characters in the story, what reason might each give for saying this phrase? Mary? Martha? Jesus?
 - Martha certainly thought it was unfair for Mary to sit with Jesus and “do nothing” while she did all the work. Jesus explained that the things Martha was concerned about could wait, having time with him was more important. What do you think Martha did next?
 - We all need time to sit at the feet of Jesus, waiting, listening, learning. I wonder what question you might like to ask Jesus.
 - What does Jesus teach us about fairness – justice? Maybe explore some ideas of justice and consider ways that people could help address the unfairness in injustice in our world.
- 11 The Lord’s Prayer**
Luke 11: 1-4
- How to pray.
- Resources:
- The Lord’s prayer is very familiar to us and is in use around the world – maybe look at some examples of the Lord’s Prayer in different languages (you may be fortunate to have folk in the congregation who can share examples). Good to remember that we are part of the Church in all places, through all time.

Lord's prayer in
different languages
Prayer space labels

- Set up some prayer and discussion spaces which focus on different words from the prayer:
 - Our Father in heaven (The nature of the perfect parent)
 - Hallowed be your name (What does it mean to be holy – set apart)
 - Your kingdom come (What is and will God's kingdom be like)
 - Your will be done on earth as in heaven (How do we know God's will?)
 - Give us today our daily bread (God provides our needs)
 - Forgive us our sins as we forgive them that sin against us (Why must we forgive to be forgiven?)
 - Lead us not into temptation (Avoiding temptation)
 - Deliver us from evil (What are the evils of today?)
- Worship could then involve moving (if practical) collectively or in groups to different spaces to reflect on questions with songs, prayers, discussion and simple activity.
- Another fun way to explore the Lord's prayer is through this simple drama, where the Lord's Prayer becomes a dialogue between the person saying the prayer and God:

THE LORD'S PRAYER AGAIN!

Chris Our Father which art in heaven...

God Halloo-ooo!

Chris (Clears throat as if annoyed by interruption) Our Father which art in heaven...

God Yes?

Chris Look, do you mind, I'm trying to say the Lord's Prayer...

God I don't mind at all, go ahead... be my guest.

Chris (Sarcastically) Thank you! (Quickly repeats first line) Our Father which art in heaven, (Monotonous)
Hallowed be thy name...

God Why, thank you!

Chris Pardon?

God How kind of you to say so.

Chris Say what?

God How kind of you to say that my name is hallowed, you are right of course, it is, but it was good of you to say so all the same. Anyway, please go on, don't let me stop you...

Chris Your Kingdom come.

God Amen!

Chris Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

God Have you told anyone about the Gospel yet?

Chris Eh?

God Well, you said, my will be done, I was just wondering if you had done what I asked yet?

Chris And what exactly did you ask?

God Well, my exact words were, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel." Have you done that yet?

Chris Well not exactly, no.

God But you do want my will to be done?

Chris Well yes, but...

God So you'd be willing to do it then?

Chris I suppose so. (Thinking) Look, are you sure there isn't someone else you could ask instead? I'd be happy to pray for them.

God I'm afraid not... they all seem to be so busy. I tried asking a couple of your fellow Christians earlier but they said they had to go to church or something, anyway I don't think they heard me. I can't understand it really, all those people praying, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," but very few actually want to do it. I mean, if I want something done in heaven, I just have to say the word and a dozen or more angels are on hand to get it done before you can say, "Omnipotent!" but try to get something done on earth, well, it's like talking to a brick wall...

Chris (A little impatient) May I continue now?

God Why, of course, sorry to keep you.

Chris (Recaps quietly) ...on earth as it is in heaven. (Continues) Give us this day our daily bread.

God Certainly... my pleasure.

Chris And forgive us our trespasses.

God Absolutely, don't give those trespasses another thought.

Chris As we for... (Stops suddenly in realisation).

God Please, do go on.

Chris No, I don't want to.

God Why?

Chris Well, if I do, I know exactly what you are going to say.

God You do?

Chris Yes!

God (Encouraging) Oh, go on, try me!

Chris Oh, alright... (Rushing) As we forgive those who trespass against us.

God What about Celia McPherson?

Chris (Ruffled) I knew it! I knew you'd bring up Celia McPherson.

God Well, have you forgiven her yet?

Chris No, but I was going to... (thinking quickly)... later today in fact, as soon as I have finished praying.

God Oh, good. While you're there perhaps you would do a bit of my will and remind her that I love her.

Chris (Fed up) Yes, yes, I suppose so. Now may I finish please?

God If you want to.

Chris Well, I'm not sure I do now. I guess it won't hurt. Okay... Lead us not into temptation.

God I won't... but don't you go walking enthusiastically into any either.

Chris (Speeding up) But deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. (Triumphantly) Amen! (Christian begins to leave.)

God Yes, thank you, do call again. I'm always here.

Chris Perhaps... if I'm not too busy!

12 The Rich Fool
Luke 12: 13-21

All we have
belongs to God

Resources:
Coins for challenge

- The Rich Fool meets an untimely end to teach us an important lesson, there's no use amassing wealth for ourselves – if we have more than we need we can do God with it not let it waste away.
- Share and discuss some statistics which highlight the injustice of poverty e.g. how many people own half of the World's wealth, how many people do not have access to clean water etc. This shows the injustice of wealth.
- We may not be uber rich but many of us fall into the top few percent in terms of richness. Here is an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for the resources we have and consider how we might use even the small surplus that some may have for good for others.
- What can we do to help?
- If possible, provide everyone (or every family) with a pound coin and ask them to make a difference with it during the week – they can use it in any way they wish and share the ideas on a display the following week(s). What ideas do people have.
- Alternatively explore the Love Life, Live Lent resources mentioned earlier or have a reverse Advent calendar where each day during Advent we place an item which we have but don't need in a box and then donate to a charity.

Don't Worry
Luke 12: 22-31

Faith in Jesus.

Resources:
Mr Worry Book or
DVD

- "I have spent most of my life worrying about things that never happened." Mark Twain (US Author). Provide large sheets for groups and invite them to draw or write things that worry them.
- What is worry? How does worry affect us physically, mentally, spiritually? Have you ever been so worried that you couldn't do anything else?
- The Little Miss & Mr Men Stories are helpful and the story of "Mr Worry" would be a good one to share and question. (Can be obtained as video on DVD). In this Mr Worry encounters a wizard who helps him stop worrying by asking him to write a list of all his worries and then he promises to ensure those things will not happen. Mr Worry is "cured" for a while and then begins to worry about not having anything to worry about.
- Watch the film and discuss how God is like or not like the wizard. Does God promise that things will never go wrong? No, but he does promise to be with us always.
- Jesus points us to examples in nature of creatures (things created) not concerning themselves with appearance, clothing, food etc. yet God does not let them down.

13 Jesus Heals the Crippled Woman
Luke 13: 10-17

Jesus will
transform us
for good

- Provide everyone with a large metal paper clip. Also provide some paper (if you have a notice sheet that you distribute that is sufficient).
- Examine the paper clips and ask what they are for (demonstrate they can try them out especially if anyone present has not used them before!)
- The design of paper clips hasn't change much since they were first produced – it's a simple but effective design.
- Invite people to play with the clips, opening them out, making different shapes, could they be bent to make them useful for some other purpose. (Some folk may find this tricky so may require some support).
- The majority of paper clips don't get used as paper clips, people bend them and twiddle them and many get used as tooth picks etc.

- Now you've bent it out of shape can you use it as a paper clip? How easy is it to bend it back into its original simple design so it can be a paper clip again? It's not easy.
- The woman in the Bible reading was bent out of shape, she couldn't stand up straight. Life must have been very difficult. Some things would have been impossible.
- Jesus has compassion on her, even though some would not and did not approve, he heals her – he straightens her out – instead of staring at the floor she can stand tall and look into the eyes of Jesus. What a moment!
- People can get bent out of shape in all sorts of different ways – not just physically but also emotionally and spiritually. Life can be tough and we can be pulled and twisted in all sorts of ways that leave us in need of healing, to be renewed to be the people we were created to be.
- We all need to come to Jesus for healing and wholeness. We all need forgiveness and salvation.

14 The Places of Honour
Luke 14: 7-11

Pride and humility

- Where's the best place to sit in church? Do you have a favourite place? What if someone else arrives before you and sits where you like to sit, does it really matter?
- Jesus noticed that some people were arriving for a feast to which he had been invited, chose to set in the "best" seats but then, maybe someone more important arrived and the people who came before were asked to move. Others may have been invited to move to a better seat. This is all about pride and humility.
- Discuss what pride and humility are.
- C.S. Lewis said, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's about thinking of yourself less." Putting others first.
- A fun way to consider the teaching of the passage is to arrange for some folk to play musical chairs but rather than rushing to get the seats (as they are removed) they insist on others having them first.
- The following drama sketch could be used as a fun way to introduce the theme and then to reflect further on how Jesus demonstrates humility although he is our king:

The Rickety Chair

A table is set for a feast. There are four chairs arranged from left to right – on the left a very grand chair, each other chair is slightly less impressive, the one on the right is shabby and wobbly – the rickety chair.

Page My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, from the greatest to the least,
My Master's pleased to welcome you to this tremendous feast.

The table's laden with good things, treats beyond compare!
Pray gather now to scoff the grub, just grab yourself a chair.

My Lords, ladies and gentlemen, first to grace the hall,
The Mayor of Littlebridge-Without, pray greet him, one and all.

The Mayor enters.

Mayor I am most glad to be here. My, what a super meal!
I wonder now, where shall I sit? This chair suits me I feel.

He takes his place in the best chair.

Page Pray silence gracious guests, greet Lady Fortherington-Sleet,
Mistress of the manor house. Please madam, take a seat.

Lady Fortherington-Sleet enters and moves to the mayor.

Lady Now, I'm not one to be fussy but it's plain for all to see
That I'm much more important than you, so vacate that seat for me!

Mayor So where am I to sit? I still need an appropriate place.
A place that is suited to my rank. So where is a suitable space?

Lady I'm really not that bothered, just move so I can sit there.
There's a place at the end of the table, the one with the rickety chair.

Mayor Well, really, that's quite shocking! I refuse to go and sit there.
I'm not for one moment going to sit on that terrible rickety chair!

The mayor moves down one seat and Lady Fortherington-Sleet takes the best seat.

Page Please be upstanding, and great with much grace,
Prince Rupert De-Swarve, as he honours this place.

The prince enters and moves to the best chair, speaking to Lady Fortherington-Sleet.

Prince Why madam, I think that your duty is clear,
I'm much more important and I should sit here.

Lady Well really, how shocking, I arrived before you,
But since you're a prince I know what I must do.

But tell me, your highness, where am I to sit,
A place for my status, a seat where I fit?

Prince Good lady, I note, at the end of the table
There's a chair which is empty, sit there if you're able.

Lady You cannot be serious, everybody will stare.
I'm not going to sit on the rickety chair.

Lady Fotherington-Sleet gives up the best seat to Prince Rupert, she turns to the mayor.

Lady Oi mush, that's my place I think you will find
Now shift and sit elsewhere, just where, I don't mind.

Mayor But where shall I sit? I'm the mayor don't you see,

I'm still quite important! Where's a place fit for me?

Lady Where you sit, my good man, I really don't care,
At the end of the table you'll find a free chair.

Mayor Good gracious dear lady, that space may be spare
But I'm much too important for the rickety chair.

Mayor moves down another seat and Lady Fotherington-Sleet occupies the second seat.

Page My Lords, Ladies and gentlemen! Here's a marvellous thing,
His Majesty King Theobald. Make way for the king!

The King enters. The others bow as he enters.

Lady Excuse me Prince Rupert, the king should sit there,
You'll just have to move to a different chair.

Prince But there's only one place at the end, right down there,
And I'm not going to sit on the rickety chair.

Mayor It looks, my dear lady as if you'll have to go
And sit at the end of the table...

Lady Oh no! I'll not lower myself to sit over there.
I'll have nothing to do with that rickety chair.

Mayor I'll not budge from my seat, there's only one spare
And I'm not going to sit on the rickety chair!

The king sits on the rickety chair.

Page Your majesty, are you content to sit there?
You are much too grand for the rickety chair!

King My dear, don't you worry, I'm just fine sitting here.
I have all I need, so there's nothing to fear.

I may look quite grand with my cloak and my crown,
But I don't need a throne just somewhere to sit down.

The Great Banquet

Luke 14: 15-24

Accepting God's Invitation

Resources:

Card with RSVP

- Hold up the letters R.S.V.P. on a large card or on screen. Where are you most likely to see these letters and what do they mean. They are often found on an invitation. They represent a French phrase “répondez s'il vous plait” – in English they are asking the person who has received the invitation to confirm whether or not they will accept the invitation and attend the event.
- If you get an invitation from the Queen, then you won't find these letters on the bottom. It is assumed that you will attend.
- In our reading today Jesus tells a parable about a rich man who organises a feast. He sends out lots of invitations but when the day of the feast arrives the guests refuse to come. What excuses did they give? I wonder what the worst or the best excuses you have ever had not to turn up for something. These could be discussed.
- As none of the people invited came the master of the feast set his servants to gather other people, and even then there was not enough. The people you would expect to have come to the rich man's feast didn't come, but the ordinary, poor and lowly people came.
- We are all invited to the feast that Jesus has prepared in heaven – we all have to respond to the invitation.

15 The Lost Sheep

Luke 15: 1-7

Resource:

10 sheep, 1 hidden

Text on Sheet

Shaped Paper.

- A maths teacher asked the child of a sheep farmer a question, “If I have 20 sheep in a field, and three of them find a gap in the fence and escape. How many sheep will there be left in the field?” The child replied, “That's easy, there would be no sheep left in the field.” The teacher frowned, “Oh, I thought you really knew your arithmetic!” The child replied, “Oh, I do, it's just that you don't know your sheep!”
- Sheep have a habit of wandering off and can find themselves in difficulty. A good shepherd will check on the sheep and, if any are missing, go and find them.
- You could have a collection of 10 sheep with one of them hidden in the worship space for folk to search for.
- Share the Bible verse: “All of us were like sheep that were lost, each of us going his own way.” This could be written on large sheep shaped paper - groups could think about ways in which we go astray.
- Jesus came to find us and to bring us home.
- Prayer response could be of confession or thanksgiving.

The Lost Son

Luke 15: 11-32

Forgiveness

- This parable can seem over familiar to a point where we don't really hear the wonder of the grace and forgiveness that it demonstrates.
- There are numerous artistic interpretations of the parable (links). Print and display a number of these for people to look at, discuss, reflect on etc. What is the key emphasis of image? What makes them distinct from others? Who else is in the image? What part of the story is shown?
 - https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/93/Rembrandt_Harmensz_van_Rijn_-_Return_of_the_Prodigal_Son_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg
 - <https://www.nationalgallery.ie/art-and-artists/exhibitions/murillo-prodigal-son-restored/five-things-know-about-murillo-prodigal>
 - <http://www.edkoebler.com/product/prodigal/>
 - <https://calvin.edu/news/archive/a-prodigal-gift-of-art>
 - <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/The-Prodigal-Son/DF3395EBF7BA01A>
 - <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/bible-belters-in-praise-of-murillos-prodigal-paintings/>

- In the reformed tradition, rather than an absolution following the confession, we often use an “Assurance of Pardon” – words which remind us of the scriptural basis and completeness of our forgiveness in Christ. Accepting that we are forgiven can, at times be more of a problem for us than for God. Adrian Plass has an alternative take on the story of the Prodigal Son which can be found in “The Sacred Diary of Adrian Plass - Christian Speaker Aged 45 ¾” See the entry for Tuesday 15th March.

16 The Rich Man & Lazarus

Luke 16: 19-32

Wake up and do something

Resources:
£10 note

- What wakes you up in the morning? Does someone call you? Do you use an alarm clock? Have you even not woken up in time and then been late? Or perhaps your alarm has a snooze button. You can press the button and have a few more minutes in bed before the alarm sounds again. Of course you could keep pressing the snooze button, ignore the alarm and stay in bed all day.
- In the story the Rich Man knows that there is a poor man at his gate who needed help but he ignored him, and kept on ignoring him even though he could have helped and he knew he could help, he had more than enough! In the end though he left it too late! The situation is flipped for the rich man finds himself in need and suffering and the poor man is blessed.
- Show a £10 note. Ask who would like it. In groups talk about what they might do with it. In light of the story what could we do with it? How could it be used for good.
- Being poor is not shameful. There is nothing wrong with being rich as long as we make good use of the resources and opportunities we have not just for ourselves but for others too. Being rich doesn't guarantee that we will be happy.
- The story reminds us to follow the example of Jesus and do good for others. Let's not ignore this but do whatever we can to help.
- Decide on a way to use the £10 for good and do just that.

17 Healing of Ten Lepers

Luke 17: 11-19

Gratitude and Thanksgiving
Count your blessings.

- Have you ever asked for something and the person has paused and said, “What's the magic word?” – they may have been waiting for you to say please!
- Maybe also when someone gave you something perhaps they held on to it for a moment until you said thankyou or maybe you have had to write a thankyou letter for a gift.
- In our story today Jesus healed ten people who were suffering from a rather nasty illness which meant that they had to leave apart from everyone else and people would avoid them. Once they had been healed they all went away to show the priest who would be able to say that they were healed and could return to live with their family and community. Just one came back to Jesus to say thank you.
- We may not have been miraculously healed but we all have thousands of reasons to be grateful to Jesus.
- A challenge for the week would be to count our blessings, keep a jar and drop in a note or a coin or something each time we think of something, however simple, to be thankful for. If notes, open them up at the end and say a thank you prayer, if coins, donate them as a thank offering towards a local charity.

18 The Persistent Widow

Luke 18: 1-8

God cares and hears our prayers.

- Share some Knock, Knock jokes (such as those below) and maybe ask if anyone knows others to share.
 - Knock, knock. Who's there?
 Tank! Tank who? You're welcome!
 - Knock, knock. Who's there?
 Luke! Luke who? Luke through the letterbox.
 - Knock, knock. Who's there?
 Little old lady! Little old lady who? I didn't know you could yodel!
 - Knock, knock. Who's there?
 Nana! Nana who? Nana your business!
- Now try this joke to introduce the parable (Two leaders needed)
 - Widow Knock, knock.
 - Judge Who's there?
 - Widow Widow!
 - Judge Widow who?
 - Widow Widow who wants justice.
 - Judge I'm busy.
 - Widow Knock, knock.
 - Judge Who's there?
 - Widow Widow!
 - Judge Widow who?
 - Widow Widow who wants justice.
 - Judge Just go away!
 - Widow Knock, knock.
 - Judge Who's there?
 - Widow Widow!
 - Judge Widow who?
 - Widow Widow who wants justice.
 - Judge Oh, not you again.
 - Widow Knock, knock.
 - Judge Who's there?
 - Widow Widow!
 - Judge Widow who?
 - Widow Widow who wants justice.
 - Judge Leave me alone!
 - Widow Knock, knock.
 - Judge Who's there?
 - Widow Widow!
 - Judge Widow who?
 - Widow Widow who wants justice.
 - Judge Why won't you leave me alone.
 - Widow Knock, knock.
 - Judge Who's there?
 - Widow Widow!
 - Judge Widow who?
 - Widow Widow who wants justice.
 - Judge Oh, I give up... What do you want?
 - Widow Justice.
 - Judge Okay, but promise you'll leave me alone now.
 - Widow Of course!

- Discuss: How is God different from the judge in the parable? If we keep on asking will God eventually give us what we want? What is the message of the parable?
- God knows what is best for us and works through all things for our good. God will give us what is right and good although that may not be what we expect. We should continue to pray and pray until we recognise God's answer but also accept the answer we receive.

**The Pharisee
& The Tax
Collector**

Luke 18: 9-14

Pride and Humility

Resources:
Building blocks
or Sugar lumps

- In the Old Testament book of Proverbs (16:18) we find the well-known saying: "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."
- Build a tower and as it gets higher become more and more proud of how brilliant you are at building towers – keep going till it falls. Talk about how sometimes if we get so caught in in how "brilliant" we are and our heads swell with pride we run the risk of being embarrassed when things go wrong.
- There's nothing wrong with taking pride in what we do and wanting to do out best but when we start to boast and think that we are better than others then we are building our tower too high.
- Review the words of the prayers of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector – compare and contrast them. What's the difference?

**The Camel
Through
Eye of the Needle**

Luke 18: 18-30

That's impossible!
Or is it?

Resources:
Animal pictures
Needle & Thread

- Provide groups with a series of pictures of animals, must include a camel. They don't need to be to scale in relation to each other but they need to be of different sizes in reality so they can be sorted in order of height. (See suggestions below) and then share the actual heights.
 - Camel 1.9m
 - Horse 1.6m
 - Cow 1.7m
 - Alsatian Dog 0.6m
 - Tiger 1.0m
 - Domestic Cat 0.24m
- If you wish have a speed needle threading challenge – it's not the easiest thing getting a thread through the eye of the needle which is tiny.
- In the reading Jesus compares the challenge of a rich person to enter the kingdom of God to trying to pass a camel through the eye of a needle. It would seem to be an impossible task. Why might a very wealthy person find following God's way difficult? (Think about the young man in the reading).
- Is getting a camel through the eye of a needle impossible? It certainly would be for us but Jesus reminds us that, for God, nothing is impossible. God can transform the heart and mind of anyone whom he calls.
- A different perspective of this reading may be found in the beautifully illustrated book (details below) which also includes illustrated versions of a number of other parables:

Stories Jesus Told – Favourite Stories from the Bible
Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen – Candle Books
ISBN-10: 1859855881
ISBN-13: 978-1859855881

**19 Zacchaeus the
Tax Collector**

Luke 19: 1-10

- Sing the song “Zacchaeus was a very little man” by Christopher Idle – the last verse points to the truth that just as Jesus calls Zach, forgives him and the encounter transforms his life so Jesus will do the same for us.
- This is another opportunity to consider how Jesus forgives and transforms us. Share and discuss this phrase attributed to Leighton Ford, “God loves us the way we are, but too much to leave us that way.”
- Use the following two part drama script as a retelling of the story:

Part One – Zacc’s Tax

Zacc enters and takes up his place at a large “desk” to one side of the theatre. There are some substantial money bags on the desk. He has a large calculator. A group of town’s folk are gathered, they are all mumbling.

Zacc Settle down, settle down, it’s time to pay your taxes. Please form an orderly queue and have your money ready, that way we can save time!

Man Huh! That’s about all we’ll be saving.

Zacc Okay, let’s get started. First of all Mr Levi. Mr Levi?

Levi Yes?

Zacc Your payment if you please?

Levi How much is it this time?

Zacc Oh, the usual.

Levi The usual?

Zacc That’s right.

Levi And exactly how much is that?

Zacc Well, that depends.

Levi On what?

Zacc Pardon?

Levi On what does it depend?

Zacc Well, how much you have earned, the number of children you have, the size of your house and the number of sheep in your flock.

Levi Well, I have earned precisely ten pieces of silver, I have four children, my house is exactly the same size as it was last month and I have fifty sheep.

Zacc Okay, (*Tapping the calculator*), ten divided by the usual percentage, plus dependents, window tax, wool tariff, interest and accrual – that's twelve pieces of silver please.

Levi Twelve? Twelve? That's more than I've earned.

Zacc I can't help that.

Levi Are you sure it's twelve, I mean, is that really all tax?

Zacc What are you suggesting?

Levi Well, you haven't added a bit? Made a mistake?

Zacc Would you like me check my calculations?

Levi Yes please!

Zacc Okay, ten divided by the usual percentage, plus dependents, window tax, wool tariff, interest and accrual – oh, oh dear, I am sorry, I seem to have made a mistake.

Levi Really, not twelve? How much should it be then?

Zacc Fourteen.

Levi Fourteen!?! (*He slams the money down*) Here, here's the money. (*He storms out*).

Zacc Thankyou! Next please, Mrs Benn. Mrs Benn?

An old woman comes forward.

Benn Yes dear?

Man Dear is definitely the word!

Zacc Do you mind, I'm just doing my job.

Man That's what they all say!

Zacc Now, Mrs Benn.

Benn Yes dear?

Zacc I've got some good news and some bad news.

Benn Oh, I see. What's the good news?

Zacc Well, you'll be pleased to hear that, now you have reached the grand old age of sixty-five, you have moved into a lower tax bracket.

Benn Oh, wonderful. So what's the bad news?

Zacc Well, the bad news is, they've just increased the tax level for each bracket which means that you will now be paying the equivalent to what was previously the bracket above your former bracket even though you are now in a lower bracket which is good.

Benn Oh. I'm not sure that I really understand...

Zacc Don't you worry. I'll deal with all the technical stuff.

Benn That's very kind dear.

Zacc All you have to do is pay.

Benn How much?

Zacc Ten.

Benn Ten?! Ten?!! Where am I supposed to get ten from?

Zacc Well, if you have any difficulty paying I can always arrange a monthly direct debit, so you can pay in instalments. That way you would only have to pay two pieces of silver each month.

Benn I see.

Zacc But then, there's the question of interest.

Benn Interest? How much?

Zacc Well, two pieces of silver a month, for five months, plus interest charged at two pieces of silver per month, that would be four pieces of silver per month, making a total of twenty pieces of silver owed.

Benn So, I end up paying double.

Zacc Yes, so you see, paying it all in one go is a much better idea.

Benn You drive a hard bargain young man. *(She slaps the money on the table and leaves).*

Zacc starts counting the coins, out loud. The next "customer" moves forward.

Cust Excuse me?

Zacc *(Annoyed)* I'm counting!

Cust It's just that I'm in a bit of a hurry...

Zacc *(Very deliberate)* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5...

Cust Couldn't you do that in a moment?

Zacc *(Starting again)* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5...

Cust But I want to pay my taxes.

Zacc *(Ignoring the customer)* 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

Cust Please will you let me pay my tax!

(Putting up closed sign)

Zacc Sorry, we're closed! Please call again tomorrow.

Zacc leaves. The "customers" gather to talk.

Levi That Zacc is such a cheat. I'm sure he's pocketing half the money for himself.

Man Yeah, how do you think he can afford that house?

Benn Yes, I agree, did you hear how much he charged me?

Levi How much?

Benn Ten!

Man Ten? That's criminal. That Zacc, I can't stand the man.

Levi He may be small, but he's a big problem!

Zacc enters and passes by.

Zacc Hi folks! How are you?

Nobody says anything, they just stare at him.

Zacc Hello? Everyone okay?

The others turn away from him.

Zacc Is there a problem?

The others mutter to each other.

Zacc Oh, well, see you later.

As he leaves...

Man Not if we see you first!

They all exit grumbling.

Part Two – Zacc’s Snacks

A large crowd of people is gathered in the back of the theatre, they are talking excitedly.

Levi I’m so excited, I hear he’s amazing.

Benn I can’t believe he’s coming here, to our little town.

Man Yes, Jesus is so popular at the moment, I’m amazed he’s chosen to visit us, it’s just so exciting.

Zacc enters, he is behind the crowd and has to keep jumping up to be seen and heard.

Zacc What’s going on?

Nobody takes any notice of him.

Zacc Why the big crowd?

Man *(Purposefully ignoring Zacc)* Can you hear something?

Benn No, I don’t think so, perhaps it’s the wind making a whining sound?

Zacc Hello? Am I invisible?

Levi I wish you were.

Man What time is Jesus due?

Benn Any moment now as far as I know.

Zacc Jesus? Jesus? Is Jesus coming here? Wow!

Levi Hey look everyone, here he comes now.

The crowd begin to cheer and wave. Zacc makes several attempts to push through and see around the crowd but no-one will let him through. In the end he moves away and climbs up the tree. As he finishes climbing Jesus enters. He walks across as the crowd wave and cheer. Then Jesus stops and stares at Zacc in the tree.

Jesus Zacchaeus? Is that you?

Zacc Me? Zacchaeus? Do you mean me?

Jesus I don’t see anyone else round here called Zacchaeus. What are you doing up that tree little fellow?

Zacc Well, I wanted to see you as you passed by.

Jesus Well come down, immediately, I’m feeling peckish and I need a snack, Zacc. I’d like to stay at your house today.

Zacc What? My house?

Crowd His house?

Jesus I'd like some snacks at Zacc's.

Zacchaeus climbs down quickly.

Levi But he's a sinner Jesus. Don't you know? He cheats and steals and rips people off.

Jesus I know all about him.

Zacc arrives on the scene.

Jesus So Zacc?

Zacc Lord, I know I've done wrong. Look I'll give half of everything I have to the poor and if I've cheated anyone I'll give them back four times what I owe.

Zacc starts handing out the cash and the crowd are suddenly very pleased to be with him.

Jesus Zacchaeus, today salvation has come to your house.

Zacc and Jesus exit. The crowd also exit, chatting happily.

Triumphal Entry

Luke 19: 28-49

What were you expecting?

- Look at some artistic images of the triumphal entry and consider how they reflect the reading and the way that different people are responding. Look at the key features such as the clothes and branches on the ground.
- Make palm leaves from card or create your own palm crosses (these can be made with strips of card). Here is a link to a Youtube video for demonstration. It takes some practise but it's satisfying: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=znDyR8_POCU
- Hold a celebratory procession around the worship space or outside the building, waving palms and shouting "Hosanna" or singing a suitable song.
- Place a collection of rocks on view – remind people that rocks are ancient and would have been present through history. If rocks could speak what might they say? In the reading Jesus talks of rocks crying out if his followers were silent.

20 The Wicked Tenants

Luke 20: 9-19

Unhappy ending?

Resources:
Childhood story

- Share a favourite childhood story with a "and they all lived happily ever after" ending. Not all stories have a happy ending. In this parable there doesn't seem to be a happy ending for anyone. The Son is killed and the tenants are killed.
- The vineyard is often a symbol of Israel so the story is very bad news for God's people. Why do the people say, in verse 16, "God forbid".
- Explore the idea of a Cornerstone – what does Jesus mean when he speaks of the cornerstone.
- At one point in the Holy Week and Easter story it seems that the story of Jesus does not have a happy ending.

21 The Widow's Offering

Luke 21: 1-4

It all belongs to God

- Show a series of “sums” and mark them to confirm which are correct and which are wrong. e.g. $2+16 = 18$, $14+11 = 24$, $24+10 = 34$ etc. When “marked” praise those present for their “arithmetic” skills.
- Now share the story and explain that it doesn't seem to add up. The rich folk put in huge handfuls of cash, the widow only two small coins – how can lots of money be less than just two small coins.
- It's all a question of percentage and cost. The rich folk put in only a tiny amount of what they had, the widow gave everything she had, 100%.
- When people brought their gifts to the temple, they placed them in a big, trumpet shaped collecting box. They had to announce how much they were putting in as they did so, it was a very public thing.
- So why didn't the widow just put in one coin and keep the other one for herself. The minimum offering was equivalent to the two small coins – she could either put in both coins or nothing – she chose to honour God with all she had.
- All we have and all we are belongs to God. Consider this phrase, attributed to C.S. Lewis – “God doesn't want something from us. He simply wants us.” What difference should this make to our lives.

22 The Last Supper

Luke 22: 14-23

- The last supper was, of course, a part of ancient tradition of celebration (as commanded in the Old Testament) to commemorate the Passover and Exodus – when Moses led the people of God out of Egypt.
- This is a good opportunity to explore the symbolism of Passover and how Jesus gives new meaning to the festival and, in this moment, to the breaking of bread and drinking wine.
- It is always a great thing to make and break the bread together for a communion celebration. Hold a meal together, several courses interspersed with worship songs, readings and discussion and in the middle share a simple communion.

Who's The Greatest

Luke 22: 24-27

Leading by serving.

- Hold a simple competition between “teams” that enable them to earn points to determine 1st, 2nd and 3rd places (as in the Olympics). This could be practical or could be some sort of simple quiz or problem solving.
- Have a bronze, silver and gold medal (could be homemade) to award. In the Olympics these medals indicate who is the best at doing what they do. But do they mean that the person who wins gold is a better person than the people who win silver or bronze.
- We all like to win or succeed but Jesus explained that it is not a question of who is best, who is greatest, who's number one in the kingdom of God – he shows that to be great we must serve. Jesus is the servant king. We need to learn from his example and serve one another.

Gethsemane

Luke 22: 39-46

Accepting God's way.

- What's the worst thing or most difficult thing you've had to do? We all have to do things, from time to time, that we would rather not e.g. going to the dentist, doing our homework when we would rather be other with friends, giving bad news... (Think of some examples, share some stories).
- In the Garden of Gethsemane, as Jesus prayed he had to come to accept that he was going to go through a terrible time to fulfil God's will. He accepted that there was no other way to save the world than for him to suffer and die.

- Show a goblet and explain the analogy used by Jesus in his prayer – accepting and drinking the bitter cup. Have you ever had to take nasty medicine? Jesus had to take on the cure for all our sins and it was terrible. But Jesus followed God’s will, God’s way.
- Sometimes God may call us to do difficult or challenging things, which we might not like or feel confident about but has also promised to be with us through it all.

Betrayal & Arrest

Luke 22: 47-53

What’s it worth?

Resources:

Sets of 5p coins

- Give groups sets of thirty 5p coins. How much are they worth - £1.50 What could you buy for £1.50? What would you be prepared to do to earn this amount of money? Empty the bins every week? Hoover the house? Take the dog for a walk every day for a week?
- These coins aren’t worth all that much – at national minimum wage (at the highest rate) they would pay for about 10 minutes of someone’s working time.
- Judas Iscariot was paid 30 pieces of silver by the rulers of the temple. At today’s rate these were worth, at the most, about £320. That may sound like quite a lot, it’s the equivalent of about 36 hours work at highest rate national minimum wage but was it worth it? In return for the money he agreed to do something terrible – he agreed to betray Jesus, to lead his enemies to him and hand him over to be put to death. Is there any amount of money that is worth that?
- Here is a place for repentance – you could use the coins to bring and place at the foot of a cross (this could also link a Maundy Thursday service through into a Good Friday one) as a symbol of our repentance recognition of our part in the betrayal of Jesus – he died for our sins too.

23 Good Friday

Luke 22:54 – 23:56

The Darkest Day

Resources:

See specific sketches

- Good Friday is a day for simple solemnity – a tried and tested approach is to focus on our need for forgiveness and assurance of that forgiveness through Christ. Worship could include traditional and modern songs, short readings and an opportunity for a practical engagement in confession and receiving forgiveness.
- Rather than a sermon or address visual drama may be used to powerful effect. Here are some examples:

1 LIGHT IN DARKNESS

The action, largely mimed, with some illustrative dialogue, takes place at the front of the nave, between the front pew and chancel step. All the lights in the church are turned down and the opening scene is in near darkness (only natural light from the windows). Each character enters, in turn and “performs” their little cameo.

Dealer *(Talk anxiously on a mobile phone)* Yeah, okay... I know I said I’d have the stuff today but there have been problems okay... it’s not my fault... we had to lie low for a while okay... I’ll have it for you by Wednesday I promise...

(Ends call and redials for another – waits for a response) It’s Pedro, how’s the delivery coming along, my clients are hungry

mate, you got the stuff? Look, that's no good, I need now... I can't wait that long okay... *(He continues to mime a conversation during which he looks anxious and makes hand gestures etc.)*

Gossip *(Woman enters, picks up "home phone", dials and waits...)* Hello Sandra, how are you? How's the problem? Any news? Any progress? Oh right, oh dear, that's not good, painful. Did he say that? That's outrageous – he needs to get his act together, I can't believe the way he treats you sometimes. No love, of course not, your secrets safe with me...

(She ends the call and redials) Hi, Marg, yeah, it's Molly, yeah, how's you? You'll never guess what I've just heard, Sandra, yeah – well she still hasn't sorted it... in fact it's worse... I don't know why she puts up with him... she must be mad, in fact, I think she might be quite literally... I know, she is isn't she... *(She continues to mime a conversation...)*

Rogue *(Enters with laptop, places it on tall table and begins to type and mutter to himself)* I can't believe what a clever devil you are... just transfer this money into there... that's it, now to cover up the trail and make it look like it came from him... that's it... all we have to do now is wait and I'll be raking it in... lovely money, come to Daddy... Oh, you have been a bad boy haven't you.... *(He continues to type and react in a sneaky way...)*

Dealer I'm gonna need more this time... just to keep them off my back... how much can you get for me? Is that all?

Gossip She doesn't deserve it... but she's a fool unto herself... she really should get her life together and stop moaning... I think she does it on purpose... it's all me, me, me with her...

Rogue Hang on... that's not so good... I'll just have to... there that should sort it...

Jesus figure enters, he is carrying a bright light. He stands in the centre, on the chancel steps and hold the light out as if it were a gift. The front of the nave is lit. The characters realise they are exposed by the light...

Dealer *(Turning towards Jesus and shielding his eyes)* Do you mind? It's so bright... I don't need people like you telling me how to live my life... put that light out!

Gossip *(Turning towards Jesus and shielding her eyes)* Who are you to judge me with your bright light... everyone else does it... it's not just me... stop looking at me like that... put that light out!

Rogue What do you mean? It's not really wrong... just a bit of bending the rules... it won't hurt anyone... not really... anyway... who made you God! Put that light out!

Suddenly the three characters rush towards Jesus. Dealer grabs the light and extinguishes it. Gossip and Rogue fling his arms to the sides so he is left standing with arms outstretched and head bowed... The three characters "fall away" and the light is left on the floor, extinguished.

Voice This is the verdict: light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

Jesus lowers his arms and raises his head. He picks up the light and switches it on again. The lights in the church are raised again as he holds the light aloft. The three characters kneel before him in worship...

Voice Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus leads the characters away.

2 RIBBONS – A mime with narration for Good Friday

Scene 1 – Traders in the Temple

Three pairs of actors stand facing each other. Each has a length of red ribbon. They hold these between and move their hands back and forth as if exchanging goods. The actor playing Jesus takes another length of ribbon to drive them out.

¹³When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

¹⁴In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and other sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market.

Scene 2 – The Sentence & Mocking of Jesus

During the first part of the reading one actor bunches together the ribbons and use them to "whip" the actor playing Jesus. In the second part, as the soldiers mock Jesus a length of ribbon is tied around the head of actor playing Jesus and two lengths are draped over his shoulders to represent the robes. He is then pushed and "mocked".

²⁴When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!”

²⁵All the people answered, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!”

²⁶Then he released Barabbas to them. Be he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Pause after this while Jesus is flogged.

²⁷Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers round him.

²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head.

Pause while the “crown” is placed on Jesus’ head and the “cloak” around his neck.

³⁰They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. They spat on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him.

Pause while the robe is removed.

Then they led him away to crucify him.

Scene 3 – The Crucifixion

The Actor playing Jesus stands with arms outstretched in a cruciform manner. One ribbon is tied around each wrist and one placed loosely around his feet. The other actors then stand and stare in silence. In the second part of the reading, the remaining lengths of ribbon are simply laid over the actors arms as he bows his head as if dead.

²²They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). ²³Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.

²⁴And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

²⁵It was the third hour when they crucified him.

Pause after this while Jesus is crucified, ribbons being placed on his wrists, feet and waist.

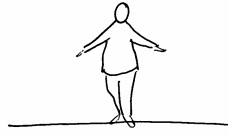
⁴Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

The ribbons are quietly gathered and the actors depart in silence.

3 SUPPORTERS

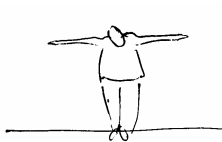
Overview



The actor playing Jesus takes up a position in the middle of the platform.



Other characters then enter as directed below and are called to him. Each responds positively and takes up a place on either side of him (two each side, facing the congregation). Jesus rests his arms behind the characters. The characters should enter from different places and not come straight to Jesus until called.



When challenge by Jesus' words each makes their excuse or "betrayal" and departs. Jesus is left standing with his arms outstretch, in a cruciform manner. He then bows his head to conclude.

Running Order and Words

Person 1 enters and walks across towards the middle and then heads down the aisle. Jesus calls them and they stop and return to him.

Jesus: Come, follow me!

Person 1: Yes Lord!

Person 2 enters and walks towards the platform.

Jesus: Come, follow me!

Person 2: Yes Master!

Person 3 enters.

Jesus: Come, follow me!

Person 3: Yes Teacher!

Person 4 enters.

Jesus: Come, follow me!

Person 4: Yes Healer!

Jesus extends his arms to surround the followers and drawn them more towards him. The characters look towards him with smiles and contentment.

Jesus: If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

The expressions of the characters change. They look shocked and crest fallen.

Person 3: I swear, I don't know the man!

Person 3 departs.

Person 2: I don't know him, I have never known him!

Person 2 departs.

Person 4: He means nothing to me, I do not know him!

Person 4 departs.

Person 1: You must be mistaken. I don't know him at all!

Person 1 departs.

Jesus is left with his hands outstretched, deserted completely. He looks at the congregation, looks to the sky and then speaks his final words.

Jesus It is finished!

Jesus bows his head as if dead. After a few moments of silence he quietly departs.

4 DO NOT TOUCH

- A chair is place (on a small stage block) at front and centre.
- The chair has a sign on it which clearly says "Do not touch".
- Initially the chair is covered over with a cloth.
- First person enters and sees the covered chair.
- He walks across with curiosity and whips the cover off to the reveal the chair and sign.
- He walks around the chair a looks at it, reading the sign carefully.
- Looking around to make sure no-one is about he removes the sign and throws it aside.
- Then, again checking there is no-one around he ventures to touch the chair. He shrugs, waves his other hand and goes to leave.
- He realises he is stuck to the chair.

- He tries variously to get unstuck but ends up with both hands stuck.
- Another person enters, they see the man.
- Realising he needs help they attempt to drag him away.
- After a bit of a struggle they place a hand and foot on the chair to provide leverage and realise they too are stuck.
- A third person enters, seeing the problem, they also venture to help (flexing muscles a little first).
- Various attempts to pull the others away until, eventually the third person touches the chair and sticks.
- They continue to pull away and attempt to get free for a little longer and then “give up” in despair.
- Jesus enters. He walks quietly across and those stuck look at him and follow with their eyes.
- He quietly picks up the sign and holds it up for all to see.
- Turning the sign around he reveals the word, “SIN”.
- Clutching the sign to himself (with the sin word showing) he sits in the chair.
- As he does so he bows his head.
- At this point the others realise that they are no longer stuck, they step back in amazement and move to kneel in worship.
- Reader says: *Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.* ⁵ *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.* ⁶ *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*
- Silently the Jesus figure stands, and tears the sin sign in two.
- They all leave quietly.

24 Easter Day
Luke 24

Oh Day of
Celebration

- Celebration is the word de jour! Celebration, of course, of the best news ever – Jesus is Alive!
- A beautiful story to share is “Easter Angels” by Bob Hartman – may be available second hand if not currently in print.
 - ISBN-10: 0745944205
 - ISBN-13: 978-0745944203