

spill the beans

worship and learning resources for all ages

issue 22

lent, easter and pentecost

5 march 2017 to 4 june 2017

sample

A resource with a Scottish flavour for
Worship Leaders, Sunday Schools,
Junior Churches and Youth Leaders,
based on the Narrative Lectionary.

spillbeans.org.uk
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introduction

AT THE BEGINNING OF 2009 a conversation began amongst a couple, then a few, then a group about collaboratively creating resources that enabled us to tell the story of faith in a worship context and within age groups for younger people and teens. Spill the Beans was born as the result of that conversation and has grown and developed over the intervening years.

The ethos has remained the same, however. It's all about story. For we believe story is the lifeblood of faith. In story we can tell the truth and speak with honesty about things for which there are not yet words. Story contains mystery and is the poetry that forms faith. Stories grow as we grow and can reveal new truths at different times in our lives.

So we believe giving stories to people is one of the most important things we can do in sharing our faith. Children and adults hold stories in their being and keep coming back to them throughout life. Our culture is stored in story. The same is true for our faith.

Narrative Lectionary

Over the course of 2011-2014 the Spill the Beans Resource Team completed a full cycle through the Revised Common Lectionary. As we neared the end of that cycle we began discussion about what to do once we had completed that cycle. We considered the pros and cons of remaining with the RCL for another cycle or trying a different tack. We have decided, in a spirit of continual experimentation, to journey with the Narrative

Lectionary which began a new four year cycle in September 2014. In this issue we complete the third year of the Narrative Lectionary cycle.

Note that a set of previous issues (1-12) which covered a cycle of the Revised Common Lectionary is available to purchase.

The Narrative Lectionary is a relatively new four year lectionary that focuses on story and retelling the broad sweep of the biblical narrative in each year. We felt that this focus has a natural resonance with the ethos of Spill the Beans. It is a little experimental and has the feel of a new adventure.

Why have we decided to do this? To fully understand this you need to know that Spill the Beans is a work of love. None of the contributors are paid for their contributions, these contributions are written and prepared with our own congregations in mind. Instead of working in isolation, we bring this work together, give it some spit and polish, and share it with others. This is how we can keep the cost so low.

Many of the team were attracted to the freshness of the different approach taken by the NL and see it as a means of sparking new ideas and experiences for our congregations.

We pray you will also be enthused and enlivened by a new approach within worship and in your age groups, engaging with the great biblical narrative so that all people will let these stories shape their own story of faith.

spilling the beans

IN THIS 22ND ISSUE of Spill the Beans you will find an extensive collection of things to use each week. Each piece is written with specific congregations in mind rather than some average congregation. Thus there may be the need to be a little creative yourselves in adapting and evolving some of the ideas to suit your own place and culture and congregation. That is a good thing.

Of course, if you are creative and you'd like to share what you have done, then we have a place for that on our blog (<http://spillbeans.org.uk>) and Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/spillbeansresources>. There you will find PowerPoint backgrounds for most weeks, a live discussion of the passages for that week and how we might be able to adapt and recreate what has been suggested.

These are a few ideas that possibly expand upon the story offering words, phrases, poetry and ideas that could be used in some way in worship. We encourage you not to use these exactly as they are but rather edit, expand and enmesh these ideas within the culture of your own faith community.

Each week we provide a selection of words, ideas and creative moments to take the theme and the passage a little further. We do not provide a ready made service or perfect prayers but ideas and pointers that hopefully scratch at your own creativity and provoke heaven's imagination within you.

Here are some helpful tips to guide you in your use of the material in age groups:

1. It presumes some introduction to the story will have taken place in worship together or will play a part in the service when children join it later.

2. Depending on the make-up of your own groups of children you will need to remain flexible in how you use the material.
3. Each idea has been given a guide age range to help your planning, but this is only a guide so use your own judgement about what will work with your group.
4. Before the sit-down activities if you have a group of young children or lots of boys, you may want to add a run-around type game to expend some energy.
5. Use the gathering time exercise with the whole group to get into the story together across the ages.
6. We encourage you to retell the story together.
7. Follow that by choosing as many or as few activities your space and time allow. You could offer a number of activities each at different stations all at the same time for all ages to self-select with a teacher staffing each one, or have traditional classes.
8. During activities, ask children to retell the story to you and ask about their week, what was happy and what was sad and if this week's story reminds them of other biblical and personal stories.
9. The intention is not to complete "the tasks" brilliantly, but rather to provide opportunities to begin conversations, build relationships, retell the story of the day, and talk about what it means for us today.
10. There are many websites that provide handout-type sheets that will have images, crosswords and wordsearches for the story of that week. They can be helpful in an emergency, but try to be more creative as leaders, the rewards are worth it.

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Please remember you can use the bookmark system within Adobe Reader to quickly move around this document.

spill the beans resource team

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND EXTRA MATERIALS, join us on the Spill the Beans blog: <http://spillbeans.org.uk> or join the community at <http://www.facebook.com/spillbeansresources>.

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Key to Abbreviations

In the worship ideas section the following abbreviations may be used to indicate different sources of worship music:

| | |
|------|---|
| ATAS | All the Assembly Songs You'll Ever Need |
| CG | Common Ground |
| CH4 | Church Hymnary, 4th Edition |
| CH3 | Church Hymnary, 3rd Edition |
| JP | Junior Praise |
| MP | Complete Mission Praise |
| SGP | Songs of God's People |
| WGRG | Wild Goose Resource Group |



through the season

Introduction

In this section you will find some ideas for scene-setting activities and a weekly focus as you move through the season.

These ideas are provided for you to use and adapt depending on your own setting.

These ideas provide possible ways of linking all the weeks together which can be a helpful reminder to people of the thread of the story and the key aspects being focused on during worship.

This season, which takes us through Lent into Eastertide and then on to Pentecost. We suggest using the image of the cross, symbolising how the cross features, to a greater or lesser degree, in every season of the Christian year.

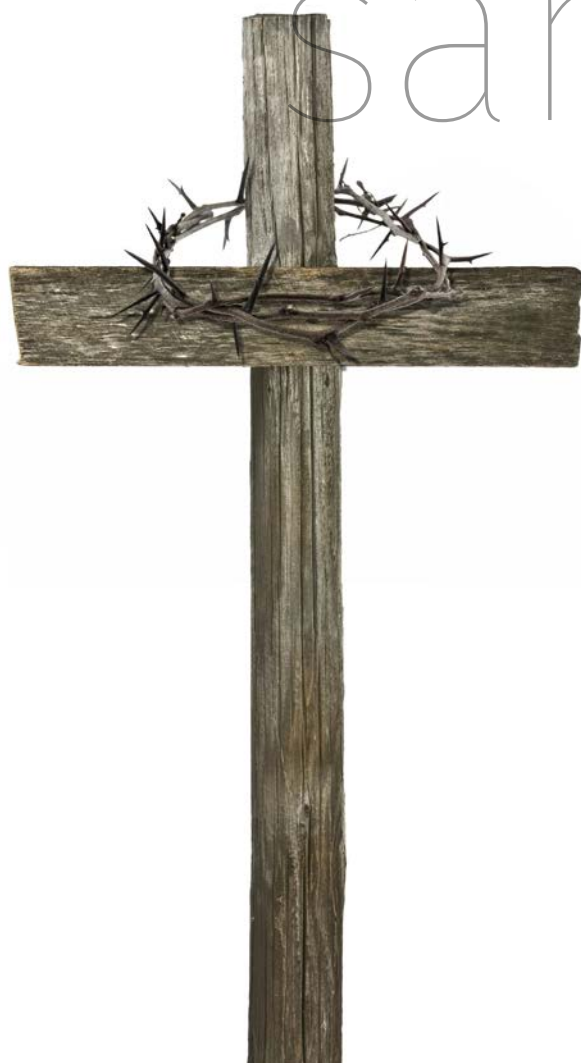
You may be able to make (or have) a giant cross that can be moved through your worship space.

Or you may wish to project an image of the cross on a screen - as the background to your worship themed projection.

Each week, a word could be fixed to or draped around the cross as a symbol of the theme(s) of the day's texts.

Week By Week

- 5 Mar Lent 1**
Story: Luke 10:25-42
Title Word: Hospitality
Action: The cross might be left in the vestibule this week—it is still a way off yet.
Draped on the cross, or around it, you may wish to place symbols of hospitality—both our gospel stories speak of caring for others.
- 12 Mar Lent 2**
Story: Luke 13:1-9, 31-35
Title Word: Repentance
Action: The cross looms larger in this week's readings, Herod is out for Jesus' blood. Place the cross in a position where folk have to walk around it.
- 19 Mar Lent 3**
Story: Luke 15:1-32
Title Word: Rulebreaker
Action: You could move the cross off to one side of the worship space this week while Jesus is busy telling stories.
- 26 Mar Lent 4**
Story: Luke 16:19-31
Title Word: Division
Action: The cross is still on the margin this week. It would be good if it could be placed at a place of crossing, or if two pieces of material symbolising roads could be placed on either side: the cross bridging the gap.
- 2 Apr Lent 5**
Story: Luke 18:31-19:10
Title Word: Blindness
Action: The cross moves into the centre, a place of prominence. It is looming large in our journey now. If possible, illuminate the cross to highlight it further.
- 9 Apr Palm Sunday**
Story: Luke 19:29-44
Title Word: Hosanna
Action: The cross is in the shadows today, eclipsed by the triumphant entry and the cries of Hosanna but still central as we move into Holy Week.



**13 Apr Maundy Thursday**

Story: Luke 22:1-27

Title Word: Broken

Action: Let the cross take centre stage, draped in purple.

14 Apr Good Friday

Story: Luke 23:32-47

Title Word: Darkness

Action: Switch the purple cloth for a black cloth.

16 Apr Easter Sunday

Story: Luke 24:1-12

Title Word: Resurrection

Action: Drape the cross with a white cloth with a large stone/boulder (or representation of a stone) placed against the cross.

23 Apr Easter 2

Story: Luke 24:13-35

Title Word: Communion

Action: Keep the cross centrally placed as the focus of the disciple's thoughts as they walk to Emmaus. Perhaps place a large loaf (or representation of a loaf) alongside the cross.

30 Apr Easter 3

Story: Acts 6:1 – 7:2a, 44-60

Title Word: Disciple

Action: Once again, the cross is moved to the entrance of the worship space, where folk have to walk around it.

7 May Easter 4

Story: Acts 8:26-39

Title Word: Baptism

Action: Move the cross to the side of the worship space.

14 May Easter 5

Story: Acts 15:1-18

Title Word: Grace

Action: The cross remains on the side.

21 May Easter 6

Story: Galatians 1:13-17; 2:11-21

Title Word: Love

Action: Return the cross to the centre of the worship space.

28 May Easter 7

Story: Galatians 3:1-9; 23-29

Title Word: Inclusive

Action: Keep the cross in the centre of the sanctuary.

4 June Spirit

Story: Acts 2:1-4 & Galatians 4:1-7

Title Word: Spirit

Action: The cross moves back to the vestibule, draped in red. Surround it with all the words through the weeks competing for space.

sample



lent 1
sunday 5 march 2017

hospitality

bible notes

Luke 10:25-42
(Psalm 15)

Choices, Big Choices

IT IS ALL ABOUT CHOICES. BUT THEN IT ALWAYS IS.
Lent has begun and we are in a season of choices. This week both stories we tell are about choices but not always about the ones we expect to make or have been traditionally offered.

We begin with the Good Samaritan where we are immediately on safe ground: go and be a Good Samaritan. Well yes, but...

Who are you in this story? Which character do you gravitate towards? Normally, most people find themselves in the shoes of the Samaritan, yet that would not be true for Jesus' first listeners. No self-respecting Jew, poor, rich or otherwise would even consider imagining themselves to be the person who represents their enemy. The Samaritan was everything they despised and so they would have probably focused themselves on the beaten up man who, like themselves, would have been poor, lived a life that was always threatened and who probably knew people to whom this had happened.

Now the story changes. If you are the beaten-up man, then the story of the Good Samaritan refocuses everything: do you have the grace to allow your enemy to tend you? That is a much bigger question about being a neighbour. Yet still there is more: you need that person you call your enemy because that person you call your enemy may one day be the one who saves you. That is a huge moral point to make especially today in the relationships we build locally and globally. The one who you thought was your enemy could one day be your salvation.

Just pause and think about that a moment. This is about choices: big choices!

Of course the Narrative Lectionary does not leave us with that one devastating point. It moves us to a different scene now and

the house of Mary and Martha. Here there seems to be no right or wrong: you can work or you can wait, you can be busy, or you can pause.



Perhaps Martha was distracted by what she thought important, playing the typical cultural role. It would be the men who would normally sit and listen. Mary broke those rules and Jesus noticed. So did Martha and she was not pleased, this is not how her sister, or any woman should behave but Jesus seems to acknowledge this choice of Mary. It is subtle but there.

In both stories, part of the challenge is allowing ourselves to be in different places and thus to experience new truths. Both stories place us far out of our traditional comfort zones and by doing so enable us and invite us to think differently and respond differently.

Perhaps this is the make-up of the kingdom of God? Seeing things from the place you have never been before, positioning yourself in a place you always imagined others were in. That is the beauty and magic of Jesus' stories: they invite us into different places presenting us with a choice about how to respond and how the world might be if we respond differently.

In Lent we are given these moments to reorient ourselves by shifting ourselves to unfamiliar ground and pausing long enough to see things differently and then going back to reality as it is now in order to live towards that new vision, that insight into the kingdom.

Both these stories invite us to get our heads dirty by doing something counter-cultural. In this season of Lent, where might you invite yourself to walk on unfamiliar ground and where might you lead your faith community to do so too? It's all about choices: it always is.

the story

The Innkeeper's Story

This little inn has been in our family for generations. It once served travelling men and women on a thriving trade route. Rarely would there be a spare room to be had! We housed, in my great, great grandfather's day, senior politicians, churchmen and even royalty! Business was booming in those days, however times change, and only our warm welcome and hospitality remains at the core of our business.

In times past we could be choosy in who stayed in our few small rooms, but nowadays we take whoever we can get. The thriving trade routes are long gone, the politicians and the churchmen would not want to be seen in this little backwater of a village, and we house more rogues and brigands than royalty these days.

Just the other day, a man arrived outside the inn calling for help. I rushed to the door, eagerly willing to serve, and I saw a man trying to comfort and soothe another who was lying atop his donkey. The man looked as if he had taken a pretty terrible beating, and looked to me to be more dead than alive. The man who owned the donkey stopped off regularly, and he asked if I could care for the man until he came back from his journey.

"Is he a friend of yours?" I asked him.

"No" He replied, "I have never met this man before. I found him a few hundred yards down the road, gasping for breath and pleading for help."

"Why are you helping a stranger?" I asked him. "He is not even one of your own kind!"

"No" said the businessman, "but if no one cares for those in need, what does that say about the kind of world we live in?"

So, I helped to carry the stranger inside. I found him a room, washed him, bandaged his wounds, and gave him something to eat and drink. It was a good few days before the man could even speak to us, and he told me how robbers had attacked him, and how other people had walked on past him, refusing to even check whether he was dead or alive, including a priest and a lawyer, he said. He asked me for the name of the man who helped him but because of client confidentiality I could not tell him. Truth be told I was not sure how this Jewish man would take being told a Samaritan had helped him. I assured him that all his bills were being met, and it was his task to get himself strong and healthy and to return to his family.

But he kept on at me, kept asking who it had been. Sometimes he muttered to himself about the cloak he remembered seeing through his bloodshot, bruised eyes. I knew he was going to put two and two together eventually, so I came clean. And you know what? I thought he would be angry with me for letting a Samaritan businessman give him that care. But when I told him, he just smiled to himself and said, "I knew it. A brother I never knew I had..."

Okay, I made some profit from caring for and looking after the man. However what kind of person would leave another human being for dead? Are we becoming a society which ignores the weakest and most vulnerable? Are we so suspicious of each other that we won't accept help from others when it is offered? Where has all our compassion gone if we choose to ignore the needs around us?

Excuse me, I am talking to you!

Are you listening?

Are you willing to care?

Are you Christ-like enough to care for your enemy?

Wouldn't you want someone to look out for you in the same situation?

If the answer to these questions is yes, what are you waiting for? Go live out the gospel where you are. Be kind and compassionate to everyone you meet, bring some hope and dignity and love into this world, and if you ever need help yourself then accept it humbly and gratefully.

Retelling For Young People

Help Me, Help Me

Help me, help me, help me please!
Though I am bleeding and on my knees.
Help me, help me, help me please!
Can't you see me beneath the trees?

Help me, help me, help me please!
Don't ignore my urgent pleas.
Help me, help me, help me please!
Care for me, don't let me freeze.

Help me, help me, help me please!
Please don't feel so ill at ease.
Help me, help me, help me please!
I am not some horrible disease.

Help me, help me, help me please!
Even if I'm Dutch or Cantonese,
Help me, help me, help me please!
God's love it guarantees.

Help me, help me, help me please!
Make your choices the 'Bees Knees!'
Help me, help me, help me please!
Be my neighbour—that's God's reprise.

worship ideas

Through the Season

Please visit [pages 4 and 5](#) where you will find ideas that can be used to help create a linking theme through the season. This focuses around a large cross for this season.

The cross might be left in the vestibule this week—it is still a way off yet. Draped on the cross, or around it, you may wish to place symbols of hospitality—both our gospel stories speak of caring for others.

Gathering Activity

The season of lent is upon us. During this period of 40 days, six Sundays, we enter a period of reflection and preparation. Each Sunday you will be given a small task for reflection during that week.

If you like to have an installation that can be added to or adjusted during the season, prepare your table with purple or dark blue cloths. You might wish to blend some of these colours, purple, blue, dark red. Satin lining material is quite cheap but gives a good finish, or use organza rolls in these colours.

In the centre of your table place a box, this could be a small wooden chest type, or a woven one, or an old shoe box covered with appropriate wrapping paper. It needs to be lidded, and to look like something you would use to keep things safe.

Each week prepare a blank card (credit-card size) for everyone to take away, write on, pray over, and if desired, return to the box the following week.

Explanation

You were given a card today as you came in to church, with space on each side for writing. Take your card away this week, and as time goes by reflect on the things you do which help you feel closer to God, and those which do not, write them on your card.

You may choose to keep your cards all through lent. Or you may choose to return them to the box next week.

The Good Samaritan and the Two Sisters. This week we are asking questions, what do we need to do, what do we need to leave? What contrast do you make between being busy and simply being? The lawyer wanted to know what he should do. Martha wanted her sister to get on and help. Each was distracted and missing the really important things of life.

How often are we like this too? What distracts you? What do you need to stop, or reduce, where do you need to slow down?

Call to Worship

Holy One,
we gather this day,
we come as we are
seeking to be your people,
seeking to serve others in your name.
Accept all we bring before you today.
Accept our worship we pray.

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Loving God,
beside us on every journey.
We come this day to praise you
as a people who love you with all their heart,
with all their mind,
with all their soul.

Merciful Christ,
we come this day to say sorry
for those times when we have chosen
not to love our neighbour
as we love ourselves.

Pause

We come to say sorry
for the times when we have walked by on the other side.

Pause

We come to ask your forgiveness
for the times when we have chosen
to assume rather than assist;
to condemn rather than care.

Pause

Gracious Spirit,
as we gather for worship this day
may we be challenged
to be better neighbours,
to show our faith in action
and to show our love to all.

So be it.
Amen.

All-Age Prayer

God of love,
when we move to a new home
we always hope for nice neighbours:
neighbours who will be nice to us;
neighbours who will look out for us;
neighbours who will care about us.

We are sorry
when we have not been good neighbours
to those around us in the places where we live
as well as those people in need
that we avoid on the street
without a care.

As we hear the well known story
of the Good Samaritan again today,
may we listen and reflect
on how we can love others
the way we love ourselves.

May we think of ways
in which we can show how to be a good neighbour
like the Samaritan who helped the robbed and injured man.

In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

Reflection

The injured,
 Priest,
 Levite,
 Samaritan,
 Mary,
 Martha.
 So many characters.
 Recognise yourself?

So which are you?
 Feeling battered?
 Or perhaps have turned a blind eye?
 Maybe you didn't want to get your hands dirty?
 Or perhaps you let your heart do the talking
 and did the right thing?
 Or were you too busy keeping busy
 to listen to what God has to say to you?

We all want to be a Samaritan,
 and we would all like the time to be like Mary.
 What is stopping us?
 What is holding us back?
 Well?

Prayer of Dedication

As we offer these gifts
 of ourselves and of our money,
 may all that we give
 be used to further the work of your Church,
 in showing care and compassion
 to our sisters and brothers in need
 now and always.
 Amen.

Prayers for Others and Ourselves

Familiar stories for many...
 stories that many have heard time and time again
 and prayed to be better neighbours
 and Good Samaritans
 on more occasions that we can perhaps remember.
 May today be the day on which we act.

Pause

God of grace and guidance,
 may you be with all
 who have the power to bring about change.
 Inspire them to pave the road of peace,
 rather than cross over to the other side.
 May we play our part
 in binding wounds
 afflicted by words or violence.

God of care and compassion,
 may you be with those
 in our midst or in our community
 who need your help at this time.
 May we be your agent of love this day.

May we love you and each other
 with all our heart, soul and mind.
 May we love those beside us,
 the stranger,
 the immigrant.

May we recognise those times when we are helpless,
 when we do not have the capability
 to meet our own needs,
 whether physically, mentally or spiritually,
 and accept the help and support that others can provide us.

May we not feel threatened by revealing our weakness,
 but rather may this be a chance
 to build bonds of grace and generosity.

May we bring to you now
 our own prayers in this time of silence.

Silence

Lord hear us. Lord graciously hear us.
 Amen.

sample

worship ideas

Take Home Ideas

If you filled a Jar of Blessings during Advent through Epiphany then this week and throughout Lent you get to remove a blessing each day! If not there will be an idea to take home in this section.

Think of a time when you were a 'Good Samaritan'. Chat with someone else about how that felt.

Are you a Mary or a Martha? Chat about the good points of both women.

As the week goes on spot the Mary's and Martha's, the Good Samaritans who you meet.

Sending

As we go out this day,
may we seek to be better neighbours
to those we know well
and those who we do not know at all.

May we cross the road to help
rather than to avoid.

With softened hearts,
may we love others,
particularly those who need it most.
And as we do, may it be with your blessing,
now and forever.

Praise/Hymns

| | |
|--|--|
| All my hope on God is founded | CH4 192 / MP 16 |
| Amazing Grace | CH4 555 / MP 31 |
| Bind us together, Lord | MP 54 |
| Blest are they, the poor in spirit | CH4 341 |
| Brother, sister, let me serve you | CH4 694 |
| Change my heart, O God | MP 69 |
| Children of God, reach out to one another! | CH4 521 |
| Christ's is the world in which we move | CH4 724 |
| Dear Lord and Father of mankind | CH4 485 |
| God forgave my sin | MP 181 |
| How we need you | Fischy Music, <i>Bring It All To Me</i> |
| Inspired by love and anger | CH4 253 |
| Jesus' hands were kind hands | CH4 351 |
| Martha laboured in the kitchen | online at http://www.carolynshymns.com/martha_labored_in_the_kitchen.html |
| O God, in Christ you call | online at http://www.carolynshymns.com/o_god_in_christ_you_call_us.html |
| O God, we bear the imprint of your face | CH4 254 |
| When I needed a neighbour | CH4 544 |

sample



age group ideas

gathering

Holiday Places

all age

Make up a simple, short quiz about holidays which can be played in teams. Think about places to stay on holiday, such as hotel, caravan, bed and breakfast, tent, chalet, train, car, plane and ways of getting to your holiday destination. Use this as a means of introducing the story of the Good Samaritan who travelled to the inn on a donkey

crafts

Story People

age 3-5

You will need: people-shaped card (you can make these or buy these from craft suppliers or pound shops), collage materials (scraps of coloured paper, card, felt, feathers, stickers), PVA glue, glue spreaders, crayons, and heart-shaped stickers.

Give each child a card person and get them to decorate it with collage materials as one of the characters from the stories they have heard. Ask the children to tell each other which character they have made. Ask the children to stick heart-shaped stickers on to their people.

Talk about the stories with the children and about how we can make good choices and show love to one another.

Heart And Homes

age 6-12

You will need: square bathroom tiles, funky foam in a variety of colours cut into 2 cm squares, PVA glue, glue spreaders, funky foam heart shapes and pencils.

Give each child a bathroom tile and a selection of funky foam squares. Ask the children to write their name in pencil on the back of the tile. Ask the children to make a house shape by sticking the foam squares to the tile (not just an outline but a filled in shape). Then ask the children to stick a foam heart on the tile either on top of the house or outside the house. Leave tiles flat and allow the glue to dry. Tell the children they can collect them next week.

Discuss the stories with the children and see if they can identify the moment in the stories when they can see love being shown.



Hands And Feet

all age

You will need: long pieces of lining paper (one per group), chunky crayons and marker pens.

Divide the children into groups of three or four with a variety of ages in each group. Provide a long piece of lining paper and a selection of chunky crayons and marker pens for each group.

The children should draw round their hands or feet and colour in the shapes with chunky crayons. Ask the children to write words around the hands giving ideas of how they can help others. Get the children to write words around the feet giving ideas of places in the community where help is given to others.

Have the children do their hands at one end of the strip of lining paper, and their feet at the other. You may want to have a couple of children work at each end and then switch over.

Talk about the story of the Good Samaritan with the children and how the least expected person was the one who helped and who showed themselves to be a good neighbour. Discuss with the children how we can be good neighbours. Ask the children to show their frieze to the other group(s).

Note that if you wish to focus on the Mary and Martha story, you could do this same craft but drawing hands at one end of the story and ears at the other (perhaps getting a partner to draw the shape of the other child's ear). This could reflect the themes of helping and listening in this story.

age group ideas

activities

Beasts Of Burden

age 3-5

You will need: images of different animals that can carry people (be imaginative), first aid kit.

The Good Samaritan puts the man on his animal.

- Can the children think of any animals that people sit on?

Horse, donkey, camel are the obvious ones but you may want to have images of other animals that carry people, for example, an elephant, reindeer, dolphin and so on. You may wish to tell a short story of 'War Horse' and how this animal, like the one in the bible story, carried injured men during the war.

- What would we do to help someone who was bleeding or could not walk?

A First Aid kit would be good to show or if you have a children's doctors or nurses set they can play with that. Many animals help people in need, especially dogs for seeing, hearing and forgetfulness.

Choices

age 6-12

You will need: three boxes, various items (see text below), envelopes, instruction cards (again, see text below for examples), paper slips with "I choose Jesus" written on them.

Our stories today are both linked to making choices. For this activity you will need the children sitting in a circle with two boxes in the middle of the floor. For Box 1 children make choices blindly and for Box 2 although they make the choice blindly they are given direction. Explain the difference to the children.

In Box 1 you will need some items like a dish towel, a children's book, a chocolate bar/Easter egg, packet of pencils, a one pound coin. The children put their hand into the box without peeking inside and pull out an item.

Each child has a number of options to choose from:

- keep it
- share it
- give it away
- use it

Ask the children why they made their choice.

In Box 2 you will need envelopes with instructions on them, for example, walk around the circle twice, touch your knees with your nose, draw a picture of the minister, sing or say a nursery rhyme and such like. Produce a surprise third box with slips of paper for everyone with the words written on them: "I choose Jesus". Remind the children this is the start of Lent and they are to make the choice of take up/give up/or both.

Who Are You?

age 6-12

Ask the children to pick the character they want to be in both stories; victim, one of the two people who walk by, the Good Samaritan, the innkeeper and even the one not mentioned: one of the bandits. Ask each child to re-tell the story from their view point. Then do the same with Jesus, Martha and Mary.

Choices Again

age 6-12

You will need: flip chart/large sheet of papers, marker pens.

To start the activity off talk about good choices and bad choices. You will then need a chart for the wall or the floor which needs to be split into columns with the children's and leader's name down the left hand side. At the top of each column add phrases to which the children can relate, such as: say thank you every day, tidy bedroom, help with dishes, not eating chocolate, not eating crisps, trying some vegetables, a new food, help in the garden, take up more exercise.

Each week through Lent ask the children to select a couple of items from the list and to try out. If they have managed to accomplish anything on the lists put a tick against each child's name when it is done and if not place a cross. Replace the sheet each week and at the end of Lent maybe the children will be surprised by what they have accomplished or find it interesting the good choices made and the bad. Martha and Mary both made different choices. The Good Samaritan made a good choice as did the innkeeper taking the person in.

games

Heart, Soul, Strength, Mind

age 3-5

Teach the children verse 27 using actions: You – point to a person, love – cross arms over front of body with fingers at front shoulder, Lord, God – raise arm and point finger skywards, heart – point to heart or place both hands over the area in a pumping motion, soul – open hand in front of face sweep around and pinch fingers together and up away from your face (a bit like you are removing a mask), strength – strong man arm motion, mind – point to your brain and neighbour – link arms with someone either side or with the whole group.

Set The Table

age 6-12

You will need: cups, saucers, plates, knives, forks, spoons for four place settings, table, copy of this week's story.

Split the children into two teams with one team being Martha and the other Mary. Both teams start at the same time with one person reading the story to their group while the other team sets the table for 4 people. Which team finishes first? You will need to take a note of how long it took for the winning team and also what stage the other team was at when one team finished. Do not tell the children you are keeping a record of how far they got because they are about to switch roles and do it again. Once again note the point to which the team got. Afterwards tell the children the results. Were they distracted by each other's activity? Did this have an impact on the results? Did they manage to zone out what else was going on? Do the children think Jesus or Mary would have been distracted by Martha's busyness? If you feel you have made the right choice then any distractions would not bother you.

discussion starters for teens

choices

Preparation

Today involves some conversations about feelings so be aware of where the young people are at during the conversations so as not to make anyone uncomfortable.

Opening Activity

Expectations And Roles

- What is expected of you?
- What roles do you play?
- Are you an older brother or younger sister? A daughter or son? Stepchild? School pupil?
- Are you expected to behave differently in different places or at different times?
- How do you know what is expected?
- What happens when you get that wrong?

The Word

Read Luke 10:25-42 together.

Activity/Discussion

These are two very famous stories that we hardly ever read at the same time, even though they appear together.

- In the story of the Good Samaritan, who do you think you are in the story?

Most of us pick the good Samaritan and hardly anyone picks the guy that gets beaten up. Try to imagine the story from the victim's point of view.

- How does it feel to see the two men who could help walk past?
- How do you feel when the Samaritan, the man you hate, comes to help you?
- Would that change you?

The second story about Martha and Mary seems like a very different situation. This is not a parable, it is a real life example of what Jesus has just been talking about.

- What might link these two stories?
- Perhaps they are about rules, roles and expectations?

These women have already welcomed Jesus into their home, breaking some of the social boundaries of their time as neither of them seems to be married.

- Why is Martha annoyed?
- Have you ever felt like that?



Sometimes we fit in or do what we think we are supposed to, rather than doing what we feel is right. This is the beginning of Lent, where we spend time in the lead up to Easter thinking about how we can live in the way Jesus wants us to.

- What do you think these stories tell us about how we are supposed to live?

Living It Out

We have lots of choices, even when we think we have none. We always have choices about how we treat others and what we think is important. Think about these two things and the stories we have read today each night as you go to bed.

- What choices did you make today?

Give thanks to God for the people who chose to help you.



sample

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