

Scripture Union Northern Ireland



Booklet one



# Bible Timeline Assemblies Introduction

In this booklet there are assembly scripts and resources for year one's Bible Timeline Assemblies.

## General Information

The assemblies below are designed:

- to help children grasp the overall story and message of the Bible
- to be used with the Bible Timeline PowerPoints
- to be suitable for the whole school
- to be adaptable for use with pupils from KS1 or KS2

## Each assembly:

- is based on a Bible story or passage
- focuses on a key Christian belief and its application for today
- includes an opportunity for personal response or reflection (for training on appropriate use of these applications, please contact Scripture Union for a understanding of the schools' context, [info@sunl.co.uk](mailto:info@sunl.co.uk))
- lasts between 8 and 10 minutes

This overview gives details of the 72 assemblies included in the three year outline. The details may be subject to slight alteration as the material is developed.

## Three-Year Programme

Together the assemblies are designed to form the basis for a primary school assembly programme over the course of three years (24 assemblies per year) and it is envisaged that they will be led by teachers, ministers or other invited guests on a rota basis. However, individual assemblies can be adapted for use on a stand-alone basis.

The material will be produced on a termly basis over three years as follows:

- nine assemblies usually based on stories from the Old Testament and one Christmas assembly for use between September and December;
- nine assemblies based on stories from the gospels and two Easter assemblies for use between January and April;
- three assemblies based on stories from Acts or the letters of Paul for use during May and June.

## Introduction PowerPoint - Overview of the Bible Timeline

The Bible Timeline provided includes 16 full colour pictures, which together tell the story of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. A poem summarising the story of the Bible is also provided. Each line of the poem accompanies one of the pictures from the Timeline and there are actions to go with it.

Each booklet contains one year of school assemblies divided into three school terms. Below you will see how each of the 16 images connects to a series of assemblies. It is recommended that at the start of each term you use the introduction powerpoint to remind children how far along the timeline you have travelled.

Each set of assemblies is linked to one of the 16 Bible Timeline images, as indicated in the overview, and begins with a brief summary of 'the story so far' to help children put the stories in their context within the overall story of the Bible. Each powerpoint highlights the image being explored, points to the relevant line of the poem and then shows the teaching point or key Christian belief for that particular assembly.

### Feedback

If you using any of these assemblies and have any comments or suggestions to make for improvement please contact [info@sunni.co.uk](mailto:info@sunni.co.uk). Any feedback you can give us will be welcome and hopefully will enable us to produce an effective, user-friendly resource that will be widely used in Primary schools throughout Northern Ireland.

## Bible Timeline Assemblies

### Year One, Term 1

No	Story / Theme	Bible passage(s)	Key Christian Belief
THE BIBLE		Picture - The Word	
1	The Word Of God	2 Timothy 3: 16	The Bible comes from God.
2	Light To Live By	Psalm 119: 105	The Bible helps us find our way.
3	One Big Story	2 Timothy 3: 15	The Bible tells one big story.
IN THE BEGINNING			
In God's perfect world when wrong things began...		Picture - Garden of Eden	
4	Creation	Genesis 1: 1 - 2: 4	In the beginning God made the world.
5	Fall	Genesis 3	In the beginning God gave Adam and Eve a choice.
6	Noah	Genesis 6 - 9	In the beginning God provided a rescue plan.
ABRAHAM'S FAMILY			
...God gave Abraham's family a part in His plan.		Picture - Abraham	
7	The Birth Of Isaac (What A Laugh)	Genesis 17: 1-22; 18: 1-15; 21: 1-7.	God has a plan for people everywhere.
8	Jacob & Esau	Genesis 27: 1-45	God has a plan for our families.
9	Joseph	Genesis 37 - 47	God has a plan for our lives.
CHRISTMAS 1			
Angels announced the Good News of His birth...		Picture - Stable	
10	Getting Ready For Christmas	Luke 1: 26-38; Matthew 1: 18-23; Luke 2: 1-7	Jesus came to show God's love for us.



## Year One, Term 2

No	Story / Theme	Bible passage(s)	Key Christian Belief
<b>WHO JESUS IS: ONE OF US</b> <b>...As Jesus, God's Son, came to live on the earth. Picture - Storm</b>			
11	The Boy Jesus	Luke 2: 41-52	As one of us Jesus is able to understand us.
12	Jesus Is Baptised	Luke 3: 1-22; John 1: 29-34	As one of us Jesus is able to take our place.
13	Jesus Is Tempted	Luke 4: 1-14	As one of us Jesus is able to help us when we are tempted.
<b>WHO JESUS IS: SON OF GOD</b> <b>...As Jesus, God's Son, came to live on the earth. Picture - Storm</b>			
14	Jesus Heals A Paralysed Man	Mark 2: 1-12	As Son of God Jesus is able to forgive us.
15	Jesus Calms A Storm	Mark 4: 35-41	As Son of God Jesus is able to take care of us.
16	Jesus Feeds Five Thousand	Mark 6: 30-44	As Son of God Jesus is able to use us.
<b>OUR FATHER GOD</b> <b>...As Jesus, God's Son, came to live on the earth. Picture - Storm</b>			
17	Our Father God	Matthew 6: 9-13	Our Father God listens to our prayers.
18	Giving In Secret	Matthew 6: 1-4	Our Father God sees what we do in secret.
19	Don't Worry	Matthew 6: 25-34	Our Father God knows what we need.
<b>EASTER 1</b> <b>He died on the cross so our sins can be forgiven;</b> <b>Then He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. Pictures - The Cross, the tomb</b>			
20	The Meaning Of The Cross	1 Corinthians 15: 3	Jesus died for our sins.

## Year One, Term 3

No	Story / Theme	Bible passage(s)	Key Christian Belief
<b>THE HOLY SPIRIT</b> <b>He has given us His Spirit to help us since then</b> <b>To spread the Good News until He comes again! Pictures - Spirit / Good news</b>			
21	Pentecost	Acts 2: 1-41	The Holy Spirit helps us to change.
22	A Lame Man Is Healed	Acts 3: 1-26	The Holy Spirit helps us to care for others.
23	Peter And John Are Arrested	Acts 4: 1-31; 5: 12-42	The Holy Spirit helps us to live God's way.
24	Philip And The Ethiopian Official	Acts 8: 26-40	The Holy Spirit helps us to understand God's Word.

## INTRODUCTION POWERPOINT BIBLE TIMELINE POEM & ACTIONS

The poem and the actions below are intended for use with slides 4-19 from the Bible Time Line PowerPoint available.

Slide	Poem	Action
4.	In God's perfect world when wrong things began,	Thumbs up, smile. Thumbs down, frown.
5	God gave Abraham and his family a part in His plan.	Open and close fingers like stars twinkling.
6	From Egypt he rescued them by His mighty hand	Turn left; mime pulling on rope as if helping someone to safety.
7	and took them to live in their own promised land.	Turn right; mime picking grapes from a vine.
8	Their leaders were judges who helped them to fight;	Raise fists in front of face.
9	they were followed by kings - some did wrong, some did right.	Mime putting on a crown. Thumbs down, shake head. Thumbs up, nod head.
10	Their enemies came, took God's people away,	Hands in front of face, palms outward, as if in defence. Wrists together, as if tied.
11	but God kept His word to restore them some day.	Look up. Move wrists apart, as if being set free.
12	Angels announced the Good news of His birth	Mime cradling a baby in your arms.
13	as Jesus God's Son came to live on the earth.	Point up to heaven with one finger of each hand. Point down to earth with one finger of each hand.
14	He brought us Good News from the Father above;	Hands outward as if offering something to someone.
15	He taught us His ways and He showed us His love.	Point a finger of one hand to the side of your head as if thinking. Hug yourself.
16	He died on a cross so our sins can be forgiven;	Mime pointing to nail prints in each hand alternately.
17	then He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven.	Move arms upward, palms up. Point upwards to heaven with one finger of each hand.
18	He has given us His Spirit to help us since then	Move hands downwards in front of body as if being covered from head to toe.
19	to spread the Good News until He comes again.	Hands outward as if offering something to someone. Punch the air with fist.

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 1. THE WORD OF GOD

Bible Verse: 2 Timothy 3:16

Key Christian Belief: The Bible is the Word Of God

Aim: To help children understand what makes the Bible special for Christians.

You will need:

- The accompanying PowerPoint presentation.
- A selection of different kinds of books from the school library.
- A Bible.
- A copy of 'the maker's instructions' for some gadget you own.
- (Optional)The audio track for 'Obey The Maker's Instructions' which can be downloaded from <http://sammyhorner.bandcamp.com/track/obey-the-makers-instructions>.

#### Introduction

Ask if any of the children have ever been to a library – or visited the school library. What different kinds of books would you find there?

Show a selection of different kinds of books – perhaps from the school library – and talk about what makes each of them interesting – e.g. storybook, science book, history book, dictionary, book of poems.

Now tell the children you are thinking about a particular book and ask if they can guess what book you are thinking of from the following clues. This book...

- was the first ever to be printed by machine.
- was given to the Queen at her coronation.
- has been published in more languages than any other.
- is the world's number one bestseller.
- is left in every hotel room and hospital ward.
- is used by witnesses as they swear to tell the truth in a court of law.

The answer of course is the Bible! (Show your copy of the Bible and / or the picture from the PowerPoint.) In our assembly today we will be thinking about what makes this book so special.

#### Main Teaching

The word 'Bible' comes from a Greek word that just means 'book'. When you look inside the Bible, however, you discover that it is not just one book. In fact, it is really a collection of 66 different books, like a library. If the books were separated out and put into a library, it might look like this. (Display the Bible library slide from the PowerPoint presentation.) There are two sections in this library: the Old Testament which has 39

books about God and His people before the time of Jesus and the New Testament which has 27 books about God and His people from the time of Jesus on.

And as in a library there are different kinds of books, so it is with the Bible. There are books of rules, books of stories from long ago, books of poems and wise sayings, books about the life of Jesus, books with letters in them and books of messages from God. Give some examples, pointing out some of the books the children might have heard of.

But Christians believe that all of these books have one thing in common – something that makes them all very special. (Display the words of 2 Timothy 3:16)

Christians believe that the Bible comes from God. There were around 40 different people who wrote the various books of the Bible – people like Moses, David, Isaiah, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul. They wrote down what had happened and what they believed God wanted them to say to His people, but according to this verse it was God who helped them to know what to write, so that the Bible really is God's message to us.

The exciting thing about this is that, if it is true, it means that the God who made everything we see round us wants to speak to us. He has not left it to us to guess what He is like or how He wants us to live. Instead, He has told us everything He wants us to know and this has been written down for us in the Bible.

And Christians believe that God has given us the Bible because He wants us to get to know Him and learn to live as His friends. This is what makes the Bible such an exciting book and it is why in most of our assemblies we try to think about something the Bible says and what we can learn from it.

### Conclusion

Display a copy of the manual for some gadget you own (show slide). Explain how helpful this is and talk about the importance of following the maker's instructions.

Point out that Christians believe God made us and as our Maker He knows what is best for us. The Bible is like the Maker's instructions for our lives. It tells us what we need to know about God and how to live as His friends because this is what we were made for and this is how God intends us to live - and it is always wise to listen to the Maker and follow His instructions!

### Song (optional)

Obey The Maker's Instructions

If using the audio version teach the children the chorus first. Then play the whole song and encourage them to sing along with this and perhaps just listen to the verses.



NB: The sheet music for this song can be found in Kidsource – a book of worship songs for children. This is no longer in print – but your church or school might have a copy!

### Reflection / Prayer

Ask the children to think silently for a few moments about what they might want to say to their Maker. Then conclude with a prayer asking that through the Bible in assembly each week we would get to know Him better and learn to live as His friends.



## BIBLE TIME LINE ASSEMBLIES

### 2. LIGHT TO LIVE BY

Bible Verse: Psalm 119:105

Key Christian Belief: The Bible helps us find our way.

Aim: To encourage the children to listen to what God says and do it.

You will need:

- Items that help us in the dark – e.g. a torch, a candle, lantern.
- The words of Psalm 119:105 printed on card or accompanying powerpoint.

#### **Introduction**

Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine they are at home and it is pitch black dark. It is late at night. The lights are not working. There is no light anywhere. How do they feel? Why? What will be difficult for them to do?

Ask what sorts of things we use to help us in the dark. Show the items you have brought and talk about how and when they are used (show slide).

Display the words of Psalm 119:105 (slide) and point out that the person who wrote this is saying that the Bible is meant to help us in the same way that a lamp would have helped him long ago or that a torch would help us today. In our assembly today we are going to think about what this means.

#### **Story**

Tell a true personal story about a time when you used a torch to help you find your way or ask the children to imagine the following scenario, which was real for the writer of this assembly!

Imagine you are in Africa in the middle of the countryside late at night and you have to get from one house up a long lane to another house in the darkness. It is pitch-black dark outside. There are no streetlights. The moon and the stars are hidden behind the clouds. It is so dark you cannot see your hand in front of your face. You are aware that there are snakes around because you have seen one or two in the grass during the daytime. Your friends have also warned you to watch out for scorpions – tiny little creatures that can give you a very sore sting.

As you prepare to leave the first house, you are very scared. Your knees are knocking together and you are shaking all over. How will you find the right path? How will you know if there are any snakes along it? How will you know if there are any scorpions? You won't be able to see!

Seeing how scared you are, your friends give you a torch to help you find your way and you are very relieved! You switch it on, check to find the right path, make sure it is safe

and begin to follow carefully in the light of your torch (demonstrate this) because you know that if you do so you will be able to find your way safely home. At one point you think you see a snake in the path in front of you – but as you get closer you realise it is only an old tree branch. So you continue on your way and finally make it safely home, with the help of the torch your friends gave you to help you find your way.

### **Conclusion**

Just as in this scenario, your friends cared about you – and gave you a torch to help you find your way home, so Christians believe God cares about us and has given us His Word, the Bible, to help us find our way safely through our lives. The Bible tells us everything we need to know about God and about how to live as His friends, and God says that if we follow carefully what it says, just as you would follow very carefully in the light of your torch in the scenario we were thinking about earlier, we can be sure that He will always be with us and will bring safely to be with Him in heaven one day.

However, just suppose, in the scenario we were thinking about, that your friends had given you a torch and you had set off into the darkness without even bothering to switch it on. Would that be a sensible thing to do? Of course not! When you have a torch, you need to use it – to find the right path, the path that is safe, the path that will take you where you want to be. In the same way we need to use the Bible to find out what God says is the right way for us to live our lives.

Then, suppose your friends had given you a torch, you had switched it on, found the right path and then decided to set off some other way instead. How sensible would that be? When you know the right way to go – you need to go that way! Once we know what God says we should do – we need to do it.

Christians believe that God has given us His Word, the Bible, to help us find our way safely through our lives. We can use it like a torch to guide us when we listen to what it says and do it!

### **Reflection / Prayer**

Ask the children to think of all the different kinds of light that help people find their way in the dark – headlights, a lighthouse, star light, runway lights and to think about how useful these are – and how good it is to have them!

Conclude with a prayer thanking God for the Bible, which is like 'a lamp to guide us' and asking Him to help us listen to what it says and do it.

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 3. ONE BIG STORY

Bible Base: The whole Bible

Key Christian Belief: The Bible tells one big story.

Aim: To help children grasp the big story of the Bible.

You will need:

- The Bible Time Line PowerPoint
- 4 sheets of A3 card and a marker

#### **Introduction**

Tell the children what your favourite stories were when you were growing up and ask them what some of their favourite stories are.

Point out that the Bible has lots of stories in it – adventure stories, love stories, spy stories, everyday stories about ordinary people like you and me. Tell them what your favourite Bible story is and ask if they have any favourites.

Ask the children to name four different characters whose stories appear in the Bible. Write each suggestion on a separate sheet of A3 card, bring the person who suggested it up to the front and give them the piece of card to hold up.

Now ask if anyone can put these stories in the right order – the order in which they appear in the Bible. Allow up to three volunteers to try and perhaps reward the first one to get it right.

Explain that the stories in the Bible all join together to tell one big story. Ask the children what they think this might be about. It is the story of God and His people – but it is more than that; it is the story of God's rescue plan for the world. In our assembly today we are going to think about this one big story and discover what it is all about.

#### **Telling The Story**

Go through the Bible TimeLine PowerPoint, teaching children the actions for the first eight slides – the Old Testament – and then see if they can say and do these actions with you as you go through the slides again. Repeat this for the second eight slides – the New Testament - and then put both halves together.

The Bible tells us that when God made the world it was perfect but sadly the first human beings chose to disobey God and God's world was spoiled. Right from the beginning, however, God had a plan to put everything right again. First, He chose Abraham and his family to be part of His plan. They became His people and He became their God. He gave them the job of helping the nations around them to see that He is the one true God and to get to know what He is like.

Then, many years later, when the time was right, God sent His own Son Jesus into the world. The Bible tells us because of Him, now people everywhere can be friends of this one true God. He took the blame for the wrong things we have done so that we can be forgiven. He has sent us His Spirit to help us live God's way and tell everyone the Good News. And one day He will return to take all those who trust and follow Him to live with Him in a perfect world forever.

This is the one big story of the Bible. We don't always love God and obey Him as we should. As a result the world we live in is not the perfect place God meant it be. But God sent His own son Jesus to put things right again – and the Bible tells us what He has done for us and how we can be part of God's rescue plan. This is the most important and most exciting story in the world – and Christians believe it is true!

### **Reflection / Prayer**

Ask the children to think of or imagine a time when they were in danger and needed to be rescued. Conclude with a prayer thanking God for His rescue plan and asking Him to help us know that we can trust Jesus to forgive us, to help us live God's way and to live with Him in heaven one day.

## BIBLE TIME LINE ASSEMBLIES

### 4. CREATION

Bible Base: Genesis 1: 1-24

Key Christian belief: In the beginning, God made the world.

Aim: To help children appreciate that the world around us shows what God is like.

You will need:

- The Story Of Creation PowerPoint
- (Optional) Every Blade Of Grass lyrics (included) and audio track
- (Optional) Or Creator God song- Nicky & Becky Drake

#### Introduction

Have you ever stopped to think about how amazing our world is?

Think of the variety of plants, fish, birds and animals there are. How many different kinds of birds can you name? Do you know how many different kinds there are? There are 10,000 different kinds – so we haven't even come close this morning!

Think of all the stars there are in the night sky. So many, you couldn't count them. The nearest star to our sun is called Proxima Centauri. How long do you think it would take to get there in the fastest rocket that has ever been built? The answer is 78,000 years! And that's only the nearest star to our sun...

Think of the way you are made. For example, did you know that your eyes can tell the difference between six million different colours? How amazing is that?

Have you ever wondered where our world came from and how it came to be so amazing? This morning we are going to hear what the Bible says about how our world began.

#### Telling The Story

Use the script below with the PowerPoint slides attached to tell the story of Creation.

1. Imagine you are surrounded by nothing.

No one is anywhere near you.

Close your eyes and imagine what this would be like.

It's dark and gloomy.

But in the middle of this nothing is God. He just is.

And as God moved around, he began to create.

Out of nothing he made something.

Out of the darkness he created light.

In the beginning, there was nothing. Nothing except God.

2. God saw the light was good.

3. Then God made the sea and the sky.



4. From the sea, he made the dry land. He made islands and beaches.
5. He made deserts and valleys
6. He made mountains and hills And God said: That's good.
7. God made the sun – bright and glowing
8. He made the moon, pale and silvery
9. He made the stars, far away and mysterious  
And God saw what he'd made and was pleased. 'This is very good', he said.
10. God made plants; trees and flowers to grow on the land.
11. He made forests and woods
12. He made grain, wheat, barley, and maize
13. He made flowers: daffodils, tulips, sunflowers and daisies,  
loads and loads of different flowers  
hundreds and thousands and millions of them!
14. He made plants that can be eaten – fruit and vegetables, growing on trees and  
bushes, growing under the ground and over it. And God saw it was very good.
15. God created all sorts of animals in the sea – massive ones
16. Small ones
17. Jumping ones
18. Nibbling ones
19. Warm water ones
20. And he made the birds
21. Night time birds
22. Day time birds
23. Birds with different beaks

24. And different feathers
  25. Even baby birds
  26. And he made animals on the land – cows
  27. Camels
  28. And kittens
  29. Lions
  30. Lemurs and
  31. Lizards
  32. Pythons
  33. And polar bears.
  34. Scary animals
  35. Cute animals
  36. Wild animals
  37. Tame animals
  38. Large animals
  39. Amphibians (ask younger pupils to name the ones they see in the powerpoint)
  40. Insects (ask younger pupils to name the ones they see in the powerpoint)
  41. And mammals. (ask younger pupils to name the ones they see in the powerpoint)
  42. And God looked at everything he had made and he said, "It's good!"
  43. Finally, God made human beings. They were different from the animals because they were able to be friends with God. And God gave them a special job to do.
- He asked them to give names to all the animals. He also told them they had to look after everything in the world. They had to make sure that the plants grew properly, and that the birds, animals, and fish were well cared for. This was a big job, but God knew that with His help they would be able to do it.

44. And God looked at everything he had made and he said, "It's good!"

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

People have different ideas about how our world began. Christians believe that the story we have heard from the Bible this morning is not really there to tell us exactly how or when it happened. But it is there to tell us one important thing. And that is that however it happened, and however long ago it was, it was God who thought of it and God who brought it into being. We are not here by accident. We are part of a world that God planned and made.

And when God made the world it was good. He filled it with all the good things that human beings would need and with lots of things for them to enjoy – just as parents prepare for the arrival of a new baby by making sure they have bought everything their new baby will need and get a room ready, full of things for their baby to enjoy.

God made the world – and then made us to enjoy and take care of it with Him.

To begin with, God's world was perfect, but unfortunately it did not stay that way and we will learn more about what went wrong next time.

But for now, as we look around us at the amazing world God has made and think of all the good things He has provided for us, we can see clearly how good and how great God is. The world around us helps us to see what God is like.

For Christians, that means that if you are ever tempted to think that God doesn't care about you, that He is not able to help you or perhaps that He is not even there – all you need to do is to look around you at what He has made and perhaps that will help you to love Him, trust Him and praise Him as you should.

### **For Reflection / Application**

Encourage pupils to think of ways in which they might help to take care of the world in which we live and preserve it for others.

### **Song (optional)**

Every Blade Of Grass or Creator God (Worship for Everyone)

The soundtrack for Every blade of grass is included on the album Little Kids Praise 2005 produced by Spring Harvest and is available to download from iTunes.

Play through the first verse and chorus of the song, displaying the words from the attached PowerPoint and demonstrating the actions below.

Then go back to the beginning and invite the children to join in. Point out that for most of the verses, they simply need to repeat the line after the lead singer sings it.

### Actions

Every blade of grass  
Every sunset sky  
Every starry night  
Every mountain high

Every single thing  
That your hands have made  
Bring you glory  
Bring you praise

And I want to praise you too  
For no one is as wonderful  
As you  
And I  
Want the world to see  
That the God of all creation  
Is a friend to me

Every bird that sings  
Every shiny sea  
Every blooming flower  
Every towering tree

Hands up, palms towards face, wriggle fingers  
Move right hand over head to rest flat on left hand  
Hands up, palms out, open and close fingers  
Use two hands to make mountain shape above head

Count on fingers of one hand  
Put right hand out, palm up  
Put left hand out, palm up  
Wave both hands from side to side above head

Wave both hands from side to side above head  
Wag finger in front of face  
Point upwards  
Point to self  
Hand above eyes, look right, look left  
Trace out globe shape with both hands  
Shake your own hand

Make beak shape with fingers, open and close

## BIBLE TIME LINE ASSEMBLIES

### 5. FALL

Bible Base: Genesis 3

Key Christian belief: In the beginning, God gave us a choice.

Aim: To help children appreciate that choices have consequences.

You Will Need:

- Fall PowerPoint

Note: You will need to come with a fake 'bruise' on your forehead, a cereal bar in your pocket and wearing clothes that are inappropriate for the weather (see below).

#### **Introduction**

Usually, I like being able to choose. I love it when someone asks me what I would like for my tea, or for my birthday. The trouble with choices, though, is that often they have consequences. Consequences are the things that happen as a result of the choices you have made.

For example, this morning when the alarm clock went off, I chose to stay in bed for ten extra minutes rather than have breakfast. And because of that I'm starting to feel very hungry... You don't mind if I have a quick nibble now do you...? (Produce cereal bar and look hungrily at it.) Oh well, perhaps you're right...that would be a bit rude, wouldn't it? I'll just have to keep it for later.

When I got up it was dark but I thought I knew where everything was so I chose not to switch the light on. Unfortunately I forgot about the box I had left sitting on the stairs. In the dark I tripped over it and bruised my forehead. Ouch! (Reveal bruise)

Also this morning I forgot to check what the weather was like and I chose to wear shorts and a tee shirt. And now I'm freezing! (Or didn't bring an umbrella and now I'm soaked!)

When God made the world, He made us like Him - able to think and make choices for ourselves. We are not like robots or machines that do what they are programmed to do automatically. But sometimes you need to think carefully about the choices you make - because choices have consequences.

God gave the first human beings a very important choice. Let's hear what happened...

#### **Telling The Story**

Use the attached PowerPoint as you tell the story below.

Slide 1





In the very good beginning everything and everyone knew how good God was. Everything was perfect in God's world and everyone was happy.

God gave Adam and Eve a beautiful garden to live in and they enjoyed taking care of it and making things grow. But God also gave them one rule to obey. He told them that they were not to eat the fruit of a certain tree. And he told them that if they ever ate the fruit of that tree they would surely die.

And because they knew how good God was, and because there was plenty of other fruit to eat, they never even thought of going near that tree. And still everything was perfect and everyone was happy.

#### Slide 2

But there was one person who was not happy.

Satan crept into God's beautiful garden looking like a snake. Satan hated God.

Satan wanted to stop people from loving and obeying God. Satan wanted to spoil God's world.

So Satan tempted God's people to eat from the tree.

#### Slide 3

He made them doubt whether God was really as good as they thought He was.

He told them not to listen to God.

He told them they could do whatever they liked.

And he told them, "You will not surely die."

Now Adam and Eve had a choice to make.

#### Slide 4

They could listen to God or they could listen to Satan.

They could do what God said - or do what they wanted instead.

What do you think that you would have done?

Do you know what Adam and Eve did?

#### Slide 5

Adam and Eve chose to listen to Satan.

They chose to disobey God.

They chose to do what they wanted instead.

They chose to eat some fruit from the tree. What a very sad day!

Can you imagine what God thought about all this?

#### Slide 6

God was not happy. God was very angry.

#### Slide 7

God cursed the snake.

#### Slide 8

God punished Eve.

#### Slide 9

God punished Adam too.

#### Slide 10

And God put both of them out of the garden in which they had lived with God.

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

The Bible teaches us that the first human beings chose to disobey God and says that sadly, human beings ever since have done the same. And Christians believe that it is because of the wrong choices we have made that our world is no longer the perfect world that God meant it to be. God never intended that there would be any sickness. He never intended that there would be any fighting. He never intended that there would be any pollution in the air or in the rivers. These things are part of our world because of the wrong choices that we have made.

But by far the worst result of Adam and Eve's disobedience was that they were no longer able to live in God's presence. The Bible teaches us that the wrong things we do separate us from God.

However, even on this sad day God made a promise. Instead of destroying the world there and then, He promised that one day He would send someone to put everything right again. One day all the wrong things we have ever done will be forgiven, all the things that spoil our world will be gone and human beings will once again be able to live with God in a perfect world forever.

#### Slide 11

In the meantime, God asks us to trust Him and to believe His promise. And He offers His love and friendship still to those who choose to trust Him and follow His way.

And Christians believe that is the most important choice that anyone ever has to make.

### **For Reflection / Application**

Encourage pupils to think about the consequences for themselves and for others of the choices they make.

### **Prayer**

## BIBLE TIME LINE ASSEMBLIES

### 6. NOAH

Bible Base: Genesis 6-9

Key Christian belief: In the beginning, God had a rescue plan.

Aim: To help children understand that God has a rescue plan for those who trust in Him.

You Will Need:

- EITHER the Noah PowerPoint OR the images from it printed on card and laminated
- Items suitable for different weather conditions (see below).

#### **Introduction**

Talk about the weather forecast and how helpful (or otherwise!) it can be when you are making plans for a picnic, choosing what to wear and so on.

#### **Slides 1-3**

Show the children three different weather symbols in turn and choose a volunteer in each case to come up to the front, put on the right clothes and choose the items they would need in the type of weather indicated by the symbol. E.g.

Sun – hat, sun-glasses, sun-cream

Snow – coat, wooly hat, gloves, scarf

Rain – umbrella, raincoat, wellington boots

#### **Slide 4**

Show the weather-warning symbol and talk about various weather warnings that are sometimes issued – heat wave, strong winds, flooding. Ask what the children might do to keep themselves safe if they knew this type of weather was coming.

There were some people in the Bible who were given a severe weather warning but sadly they did nothing about it...

#### **Telling The Story**

Do you remember why Adam and Eve had to leave the garden they had been living in?

God drove them out of the garden because they had disobeyed Him.

Adam and Eve were now separated from God.

They began finding it harder to get on with each other.

Making things grow was harder than it used to be. Raising children was hard.

And now their bodies began to grow older too and they knew that one day they would die.

From then on things grew worse and worse.

More and more people chose to disobey God and do what they wanted instead.

They chose to argue and fight, tell lies and steal. It seemed like no one cared about anyone else and no one cared about God or about what He said any more.

There was one man and his family, however, who were different. Noah trusted God and tried to follow His way.

One day God came to Noah and said 'I am sorry that I made all these people. I will not let them go on hurting each other and spoiling my world forever. I am going to send a huge flood to wipe them off the face of the earth and then I will start again with you and your family.'

God told Noah to build a big boat so that he and his family would be safe when the flood came.

#### Slide 5

So Noah started to build the boat on a beautiful sunny day when there were no clouds in the sky and no sign of rain anywhere.

'What are you building a boat out here for – in the middle of the desert?' the people asked.

#### Slide 6

Noah told them that there was going to be a flood and that they would need the boat to keep them safe when the flood came. But the people just laughed!

#### Slide 7

For 120 years, Noah went on building the boat - even though most days were sunny and warm and there was no sign of rain anywhere.

#### Slide 8

For 120 years he warned the people that a flood was coming – but they would not listen.

Then one day when the boat was ready, God told Noah to bring his family and two of every kind of animal on to the boat.



Again the people around just laughed at Noah. He pleaded with them to get on to the boat where they would be safe. But again they would not listen. Finally when Noah and his family and all the animals were on board God shut the door. And then the weather began to change.

#### Slide 9

First the sun began to disappear behind the clouds.

#### Slide 10

Then it began to rain.

#### Slide 11

Then the sun disappeared, the clouds grew darker and the rain grew heavier.

For a whole day it kept raining, the water in the rivers overflowed the banks and the ground for miles around was flooded.

Still it kept raining – and the flood grew deeper. Soon the water reached the top of the houses – then it covered the trees. For forty days it kept on raining and eventually the waters covered the mountains. The only living creatures left in the world were Noah, his family and all the animals on board the ark.

#### Slide 12

Then at last the sun began to peep out from behind the clouds. The rain was lighter now.

#### Slide 13

Finally it stopped altogether.

#### Slide 14

Then the clouds disappeared. The sun shone brightly and the water began to go down. In time Noah could see the tops of the mountains again, then the tops of the trees and at last the ark came to rest on dry ground. Noah and his family stepped out and looked up into the sky.

#### Slide 15

And there in the sky, between the clouds, was a beautiful rainbow. 'I will never again flood the earth like this.' God said. 'And I have put the rainbow in the sky to remind you of this. Every time you see it, remember what I have promised you today. For as long as Earth remains I will take care of it and make sure that human beings have everything they need to live on it.'

It's a promise that God has been keeping for thousands of years.

## **Exploring Christian Belief**

Christians believe that this story shows that God hates wrong things - and will not allow people to keep on doing wrong things forever. But it also shows that He has a rescue plan for those who trust Him and follow His way as Noah did. Those who trust Him and follow His way need never be afraid of God's anger. He has promised to keep them safe with Him forever.

And the rainbow is there to remind us that God's promises are true!

## **For Reflection / Application**

Ask pupils to consider whether it is ever right to be angry – as God was with the people in Noah's day. Have they ever felt that they were right to be angry with someone because of the way he or she has behaved towards them?

Bearing in mind that God waited 120 years before sending the flood in order to give the people with whom He was angry a chance to change their ways – how do they think they might learn to be more patient and loving towards those who have hurt them?

## **Songs (optional)**

You could finish this assembly with either Mr Noah (KS1), Arky Arky (whole school or KS2) or Rainbow, Hillsong Kids.

## **Prayer**

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 7. THE BIRTH OF ISAAC

Bible Base: Genesis 17: 1-22; 18: 1-15; 21: 1-7

Key Christian Belief: God has a plan for people everywhere.

Aim: To show that God is able to do more than we can ever ask or imagine.

You will need:

- The accompanying PowerPoint presentation.
- The sheet music for the song 'Ho Ho Ho Hosanna'.

#### Introduction

Ask the children what makes them laugh. Invite one or two to share a funny story or a joke that made them laugh.

Talk about what makes you laugh, including (perhaps you could show a short clip of one):

- funny stories / jokes
- funny people - e.g. Mr Tumble, Mr Bean...
- funny things that happen - e.g. Home Alone...

Talk about (or demonstrate) different kinds of laugh, including:

- a belly laugh (out loud for everyone to hear)
- a nervous giggle (to yourself)
- a burst of laughter (as when trying but failing to keep it in)
- an evil laugh (as when planning a trick on someone)

Today we are going to hear a Bible story that was full of laughs.

#### Telling The Story

Abraham was 99 years old. His hair was white, his eyes and ears weren't working as well as they once did and his body was full of aches and pains. One night God appeared to Abraham and told him to go outside, look up into the night sky and count the stars.

So Abraham began to count. 'One, two, three...sixty-four, sixty-five...seven hundred and eighty-two, seven hundred and eighty three...'

'How are you getting on?' asked God

'Fine.' said Abraham. "Now where was I? Er...oh well...one, two, three...'

'It's impossible, isn't it?' said God

'I guess it is.' said Abraham.

Then God told him that he was going to have a family and hundreds of years from now there would be so many of them that, like the stars, they would be impossible to count.

Abraham remembered that God had told him something like this before a long time ago.

He had promised Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation. He had promised that He would bless Abraham's family. He would give them a land of their own, and if they obeyed Him, He would be with them and take care of them always. He had also promised to use them to bless the nations of the world; that because of them people everywhere would get to know God and share in His love.

But Abraham and Sarah still had no children - not even one.

'Don't worry' said God. 'You and Sarah will soon have a baby son.'

'But I'm nearly a hundred years old.' thought Abraham. 'People of my age don't have babies!' He looked down at his shaking hands and tried to imagine using them to change a nappy and burst out laughing. He thought it was the funniest thing he'd ever heard!

Some time later, Abraham was sitting in the shade under a tree when he looked up and saw three strangers coming towards him. They seemed to appear from nowhere and Abraham guessed that they were no ordinary visitors. He thought perhaps that one might be God Himself and the others some of His angels in disguise.

First he ran to find Sarah. 'Quick!' he said. 'We have three visitors - bring them something to eat!' Then he went out to meet the visitors and bowed low before them. He invited them into his tent and they began to talk together.

'Where is your wife Sarah?' asked one of the visitors.

'She is in the other tent getting something ready for us to eat.' replied Abraham.

'By this time next year' the visitor went on 'Sarah will have a baby son.'

At this they all heard a noise outside the tent. It was Sarah laughing to herself. 'All these years I haven't had a single child...and now that I'm nearly ninety I'm going to have a baby son? That's impossible - don't be so daft!'

The visitors called to Sarah to come in.

'Why did you laugh?' they asked.

Sarah was embarrassed. 'I didn't laugh.' she said - but her face went so red that everyone knew she was telling a lie. She really had laughed.

'Is anything too hard for God?' the visitor asked.

And, sure enough, one year later Sarah had a baby son, just as the visitors had said and just as God had promised.

Abraham picked him up in his arms and looked down at him. The baby gave a great big smile and made a gurgling noise.

'Listen!' said Abraham 'He's laughing!'

'I know what we should call him.' said Sarah. Let's call him Isaac! Do you get it?'

'What do you mean?' asked Abraham

'Let's call him Isaac...Isaac means 'he laughed'!'

'Perfect!' said Abraham and they both laughed out loud.

'I can't wait to tell everyone!' said Sarah. 'God has given us such a laugh - and everyone who hears about it will laugh with us too. Who would ever have guessed that we would have a baby son at our age? I guess it's true - nothing is too hard for God!'

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

At first Abraham and Sarah laughed because they didn't think what God told them could possibly be true - they were far too old to have children!

But in the end they laughed in a different way - they laughed because something they thought was impossible had actually happened. God had done something for them that was far beyond anything they had ever imagined or thought possible. Perhaps you know what it is to have that kind of laugh - e.g. when the team you support are three-nil down at half time and then the impossible happens; they come back and win!

Abraham and Sarah discovered that when God makes a promise, He keeps it no matter how impossible it may seem - because nothing is too hard for Him.

The birth of Isaac was just the beginning of God keeping his promise. Eventually Abraham's family grew so big that no one could count them - just as God had said. One day Jesus was born into this family - and because of Him people everywhere, including us, can know God and share in His love, just as God promised.

As we think of what Jesus came to do for us we can see how amazing God's love is. He kept the promise He gave to Abraham so long ago and now, because of Jesus, we too



can be part of God's big family and enjoy His love in our lives just as Abraham did.

And as a Christian, I believe that if we learn to trust God as Abraham did, we too will often want to burst out laughing as we discover that God loves us and keeps His promises to us in ways that are far beyond anything we could ever have expected or imagined!

### **Song (optional)**

Teach the children the following actions:

Ho! Ho! Ho! (hands on tummy)

Ha! Ha! Ha! (shoulders back, throw arms open wide)

He! He! He! (move shoulders up and down)

Now invite them to use these actions as they sing the song 'Ho Ho Ho Hosanna!' three times – slowly at first, then faster.

Ho Ho Ho Hosanna!

Ha Ha Haleluia!

He He He loves me!

I've got the joy of the Lord!

### **Prayer**

Conclude with a prayer thanking God for His incredible love and asking Him to help us remember when things are tough that nothing is too hard for Him.

**Ho-ho-ho-hosanna** Traditional

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## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 8. JACOB AND ESAU

Bible Base: Genesis 27: 1-45

Key Christian belief: God has a plan for our families.

Aim: To show that God cares about our families Suitable for KS1 and KS2

You will need:

- the accompanying Powerpoint presentation
- the backing track for 'It's Excellent To Be Obedient'

#### **Introduction**

'It's not fair!' Have you ever said this to anyone in your family? E.g.: 'It's not fair - you have more sweets than I have.' Or: 'It's not fair - why should I put it away; I didn't get it out!'

Has anyone in your family ever said this to you? E.g.; 'It's not fair - you never give me a turn.' Or: 'It's not fair - I have to do all the work and you never help!'

Sometimes in our families things may not seem very fair. Today we will hear about a family in which lots of things were unfair.

#### **Telling The Story**

Prepare and use the attached powerpoint as you tell the story. (Display the characters individually, in pairs or all together as relevant to each part of the story.)

Introduce the family; mum - Rebekah, dad - Isaac and their two boys - Jacob and Esau. Explain that Jacob and Esau were twins.

Establish that although twins are two children born in the same family on the same day usually one is slightly older than the other. (This might be done by interviewing a pair of twins chosen from the school.) In this case, Esau was the older.

Establish that sometimes twins look alike and are hard to tell apart - and give an example of twins known to you. In this case there was at least one difference between the two: Jacob had smooth skin while Esau had hairy skin.

Tell the story as follows:

In this family things started going wrong because mum and dad each had a favourite. Isaac loved Esau more than he loved Jacob. Rebekah loved Jacob more than she loved Esau. Thus Esau would sometimes say to his mum, 'It's not fair - you love Jacob more than you love me.' Jacob would sometimes say to his dad, 'It's not fair - you love Esau more than you love me.'

Isaac was getting old. One day he sent for Esau and said, 'I'm getting far too old to be the leader in this family any more. Very soon now you will be in charge and everything I have will belong to you. I want you to go out and hunt for a wild animal, kill it and turn it into a dinner of roast meat for me. Once I have eaten it I will say a special prayer for you and from then I will make you the leader in this family and everything I have will belong to you.' So Esau went off to do as his father had said.

Rebekah had been listening at the door of the tent, however. She sent for Jacob and told him what she had heard. 'We don't want Esau to be the leader - do we?' she said. 'We want you to be the leader! I will tell you what we will do. We will play a trick on your dad. I will make him some stew - with lots of his favourite meat in it. You take it to him, pretend you are Esau and he will make you the leader instead of Esau and everything he owns will belong to you.'

'But mum,' protested Jacob. 'As soon as he sees me he will know it's me, Jacob, and not Esau.'

'No he won't,' said Rebekah. 'He is old - and his eyes aren't working properly. He will never be able to tell the difference.'

'But mum,' went on Jacob. 'As soon as I open my mouth he will know it's me.'

'Then you will just have to practise disguising your voice to make it sound like Esau's,' said his mum.

'But mum,' said Jacob again, 'What if he touches me? As soon as he feels my smooth skin he will know it's me!'

Rebekah thought about this and said, 'I will tell you what we will do. I will stick some goat's hair on your arm and if he wants you to come close, make sure it is the arm with the goat's hair on it that he touches - and then he will think for sure that you are Esau.'

Jacob thought for a moment and said, 'Well - I do want to be the leader, so I will do it!'

So later that day Jacob went into the tent where his dad was.

'Hello,' he said. 'It's me, Esau. I have brought you the dinner you asked for.'

'You don't sound like Esau,' said Isaac. 'You sound much more like Jacob to me. Come closer and let me touch you.'

So Jacob went up to his dad and put out his arm with the goat's hair on it and let him touch it.

'Well,' said Isaac, 'you sound like Jacob but I know now that you are Esau because I can feel your hairy skin. So where is that dinner you brought me?'

Jacob brought him the dinner that his mum had prepared and after eating it, thinking he was Esau, Isaac called him over and told him to kneel in front of him while he said a special prayer for him. Then he said, 'From now on you are the leader in this family and everything that was mine is now yours. This is my promise.'

Jacob ran excitedly from the tent to tell his mum that their trick had worked. Meanwhile Esau came home from hunting. He made a dinner of roast meat for his dad and took it to him.

'Hello,' he said. 'It's me, Esau. I have brought you the dinner you asked for.'

'What?' said Isaac? 'Haven't you just been here? Haven't I just eaten the dinner you made for me? Haven't I just made you the leader in this family?'

'No, dad,' said Esau. 'I have been hunting all day just as you asked.'

Slowly Isaac realised that he had been tricked and when Esau realised what Jacob had done he ran from the tent shouting, 'Jacob! Where are you? If I get my hands on you I'll kill you for what you did to me today!'

Rebekah heard him and quickly sent for Jacob.

'It is not safe for you to stay here any more,' she said. 'Quick - get your things and go before Esau finds you!'

So Jacob ran away and in fact had to stay away from home for many years.

### **Comment**

*Comment as follows.*

At this point in the story I don't think anyone in this family is especially happy.

Isaac is saying 'It's not fair - I have been tricked!'

Esau is saying, 'It's not fair - I should be the leader in this family!'

Jacob is saying, 'It's not fair - why should I have to run away?'

Rebekah is saying, 'It's not fair - I may never see my favourite son again.'

I don't think that God is happy with this family either.

It is God's idea that we should live in families but His idea is that we should learn to love and care for each other and be happy together in our families. Mums and dads



should love each other and keep their promises to each other. Brothers and sisters should learn to live in peace with each other and not fight. Parents should love and care for their children and treat them fairly. Children should obey their parents and treat them with respect.

However I don't believe I have ever met any family where this always happens as it should. My family is certainly not perfect - and I suspect yours isn't either.

The good news is that as you read on through this story you find that God still cares about this family even though they were far from perfect and did not treat each other in the way that they should have done. One of the things that happened later on was that God met with Jacob and helped him to change and become a better person so that in time he was able to go back to his family, say sorry to Esau and begin to put things right.

So if things are not always as they should be in your family, don't give up! God still cares about your family and is ready to help. In particular, God wants to help us, as he helped Jacob, to play our part and to treat others in our families in the way that we should.

In the Bible the fifth commandment tells us the part that God wants you, as children, to play in your families most of all. He wants you to treat your parents with respect. This means listening to them and obeying them. It means showing appreciation for the things they do for you. It means helping them without having to be asked. It means, if you think something is unfair, explaining why you think it is unfair politely and without being grumpy or rude.

We may not be able to do much about the way others in our families behave - but we can think about the way we behave in our families - and ask God to help us play our part. That may not solve every problem - but it will always make a difference.

### **Prayer**

Conclude with a prayer asking for God's blessing in the families of the children present.

### **Song (optional)**

You could teach the 'It's Excellent to be Obedient' (This is an Elvis-style song based on the fifth commandment. You might invite children to curl their lips, like Elvis, each time they sing 'uh-huh-huh!' and to shake their heads each time they sing 'oh no no'. If you are feeling particularly brave you might also wear an

Elvis wig and jacket as you perform / teach the song!)

Well it's excellent to be obedient uh-huh-huh,

It's excellent to be obedient uh-huh-huh;

You don't say no to your ma and pa

You say uh-huh.

Well it ain't real good to be real rude oh no no  
It ain't real good to be real rude oh no no  
You gotta treat your parents like you know you should Uh-huh-huh  
Well it's excellent...

(Optional second verse)

It don't show aptitude to have an attitude oh no no  
It don't show aptitude to have an attitude oh no no You gotta treat your parents like  
you know you should Uh-huh-huh  
Well it's excellent...

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 9. JOSEPH

Bible Base: Genesis 37-45

Key Christian Belief: God has a plan for our lives.

Aim: To help children understand that God is with us in the ups and downs of life.

You will need:

- The accompanying PowerPoint presentation.
- Costumes (as below).

#### **Introduction**

Open the PowerPoint presentation and display the Snakes And Ladders board. Ask if anyone has ever played a game of Snakes And Ladders and briefly remind the how it works. Then ask:

- In a game of Snakes And Ladders what do you want to happen? (Land on a ladder.)
- How does it feel when you do?
- What do you not want to happen? (Land on a snake.)
- How does it feel when you do?

Point out life can sometimes feel a bit like a game of Snakes And Ladders. Sometimes good things happen, we get what we want, everything is working out as we had hoped, and we are happy - as if we had landed on a ladder. Sometimes bad things happen, we don't get what we want, things don't work out as we had hoped, and we are disappointed – as if we had landed on a snake.

Display the picture of Joseph from the PowerPoint. Ask the children if they have ever heard of Joseph - a character from the Bible who had a bright coat of many colours? As Joseph thought about his life, it must have seemed like a game of Snakes And Ladders at times – full of ups and downs.

But as we shall see, God had a plan for Joseph's life. In all the ups and downs, God was with Him, working everything out for good.

#### **Telling The Story**

Invite four volunteers to help you. Line them up in height order – shortest to tallest. Tell them that, in this order, they will each represent Joseph at a different stage in his life.

#### **Joseph the brother**

*Dress your first volunteer in a multi-coloured robe.*

Joseph's dad, Jacob, loved him more than any of his brothers and showed it by giving him a beautiful coat of many colours. This made his brothers jealous. He also dreamed



that one day his family would all bow down to him and this made them very angry.

When his brothers saw Joseph coming towards them one day, they were going to kill him but in the end they decided to make some money out of him instead. So they sold him to some slave-traders who were heading for Egypt. They took his coat, dipped it in blood and told their dad that Joseph was dead.

### Joseph the slave

*Dress your second volunteer in an apron.*

In Egypt Joseph was sold as a slave to a rich man called Potiphar. His master soon saw that he was bright, hardworking and reliable so Joseph was promoted and was soon running the whole household!

Unfortunately, Potiphar's wife fancied Joseph - and wanted him to be her lover. But Joseph stayed loyal to his master and told her 'no'. She was so angry that when Potiphar came home, she told him that Joseph had tried to attack her. Potiphar believed his wife and Joseph was put in prison.

### Joseph the prisoner

*Dress your third volunteer in a striped tee shirt.*

In time, the prison officer too, noticed that Joseph was bright, hardworking and reliable and soon put him in charge of all the other prisoners.

Eventually, Joseph met two of the most important servants in the household of King Pharaoh. They had each done something wrong and ended up in prison along with Joseph. They each had a dream and Joseph was able to tell them what their dreams meant. When one of them was released he promised to tell King Pharaoh about Joseph - in the hope that the king would release him too.

Joseph waited for the day to come when he would be set free. But it did not come because the servant forgot about his promise. And Joseph had to stay in prison.

However, one night King Pharaoh himself was having a difficult time sleeping and had some strange dreams. The servant remembered Joseph. Soon, Joseph was with the Pharaoh, telling him what his dreams meant. He told him that after seven years of plenty, there would be seven years of famine and that he needed to save some crops during the years of plenty so there would be enough to eat during the years of famine. Pharaoh was so impressed with Joseph that he put him in charge of 'Project Famine'.

### Joseph the Prime Minister

*Dress your fourth volunteer in a royal robe.*

The famine was so severe that Joseph's brothers had to travel all the way to Egypt in search of food. They went to find the person in charge not knowing that it was their brother. What would Joseph do?

He decided to forgive them. He could see that when they sold him as a slave, when Potiphar's wife told lies about him, when he met the king's two servants in prison – it was all part of God's plan. Now here he was in Egypt and was able to make sure that his family, as well as thousands of others, had plenty to eat while food was scarce. God had been with Joseph all along and although what Joseph's brothers did was bad – God had made it turn out for good!

When Pharaoh heard that Joseph's brothers had to come to Egypt he invited them, their dad and their families to come and live in Egypt. He gave them somewhere to live in the best part of the land and made sure that they had everything they needed.

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

Joseph's life was full of ups and downs, like a game of Snakes And Ladders, but it was not pure chance, or a roll of the dice, that decided what happened to Joseph. It was no accident that he ended up becoming Prime Minister of Egypt. It was God who had made things turn out this way.

Christians believe that God is in control of everything that happens to us. That doesn't mean that bad things don't happen. He doesn't always take the bad things away or stop them from happening and that can be hard to understand. However, when bad things happen there are two important lessons that we can learn from the story of Joseph.

The first is that in everything that happens, God is with us. In the Bible, every time something bad happens to Joseph the narrator says, 'But God was with Joseph.' God was with Joseph in the tough times as well as in the good times. The bad times did not mean that God had forgotten about him or didn't care about him any more. Instead, God had been there with him, helping him to be brave and strong and to get through.

The second is that in everything that happens God is at work for good. In the story of Joseph, He even took the bad things that people did and made them turn out for good in the end. This reminds us of a wonderful promise that God has given to all those who love Him. Display and read together the words of Romans 8: 28.

God had a plan for Joseph's life. He was with Joseph all along, working everything out for good, according to His plan. Joseph didn't know what God's plan was, but knowing that God was with him and was working everything out for good helped him to trust God and do what was right even when everything seemed to be going wrong.

God has a plan for us too. Sometimes when we are going through tough times, it can be hard to understand what God's plan is. Sometimes it is only afterwards, when we

see the big picture, that it all makes sense. But Christians believe that if we love God and trust Him as Joseph did we can be sure that He will always be with us and will help us to discover His amazing plan for our lives too.

### **Reflection / Prayer**

Ask the children to think of a 'down' time in their lives - e.g. when they were treated unfairly, or when things didn't work out the way they had hoped. How did they react? Conclude with a prayer asking God to help us keep on trusting Him and doing what is right – even when things seem unfair or don't work out the way we hoped.

## BIBLE TIME LINE ASSEMBLIES

### 10. GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS

Bible Base: Luke 1: 26-38; Matthew 1: 18-23; Luke 2: 1-7

Key Christian belief: God showed His love for us by sending His Son to be our Saviour.

Aim: To help children understand that they can celebrate God's love for them by looking out for little things they can do to show their love for others.

You Will Need:

- A stocking, a pillowcase and a duvet cover.
- The attached PowerPoint presentation.

#### Introduction

My family and I are looking forward to a BIG Christmas with a BIG tree in our front room a BIG turkey to eat on Christmas day and a BIG party in our house on Boxing Day. We are also hoping to get some BIG presents this year so instead of hanging up our stockings on Christmas Eve we thought we would hang up our pillowcases. In the end, however, we thought they weren't big enough either so we decided to hang up duvet covers instead!

When we think of Christmas we should not think big, however. We should think small. Christmas started with the birth of a TINY LITTLE baby born in a TINY LITTLE shed in a TINY LITTLE town called Bethlehem. This baby was Jesus, God's Son.

#### Telling The Story

Briefly retell the story of the angel's visits to Mary and Joseph and of how Jesus came to be born in Bethlehem from Luke 1: 26-38, Matthew 1: 18-23 and Luke 2:1-7. Point out that when Jesus came from heaven to earth He started life here as a tiny little baby. He was born not in a great big palace with a gold crib but in a tiny shed with a wooden manger – and not in a great big city, but in a tiny little town called Bethlehem. There were no crowds lining the streets to welcome him or reporters gathered round to get the story. Only a few people really knew what an amazing thing had happened that night.

And yet it is the birth of this baby that Christians celebrate at Christmas - because of who He is and what He had come to do for us. Mary was told that her baby would be the 'Son of the Most High God' and Joseph that He would 'save His people from their sins'. In other words, the Bible teaches us that God sent Jesus into the world to take the blame for the wrong things in our lives so that we can be His friends and one day live with Him in heaven. The good news is that God loves us and wants us to be His friends and this is what we celebrate at Christmas.

And God's love was wrapped up not in a great big present but in a tiny little baby! The first Christmas wasn't about a great big present; it was about a tiny little baby that God sent to show His love for us. When it comes to showing love to others, often it is little

things that mean the most - such as squeezing someone's hand when they are upset, visiting someone who is ill, lending a helping hand, giving to someone in need.

### **Conclusion**

God showed His love for us by sending His Son, Jesus, into the world as a tiny little baby. It is not the size of the present God gave us that Christians celebrate at Christmas but the love that came with it. And so it is not the size of the presents we get, or of the presents we give, that matters most at Christmas but the love that comes with them.

So let's remember to be thankful for the little things our family and friends do each day to show their love for us and not just for the presents they buy as at Christmas!

As a Christian I celebrate God's love for me by looking out for some little things that I can do to show my love for others because this is what Christmas is really all about! Maybe you might like to do that this year too.

### **Reflection / Prayer**

Ask children to think silently about one little thing they could do that might make a big difference to someone else. Finish with a prayer thanking God for Jesus and what He came to do for us, and asking God to help everyone make a big difference to others round them by the little things they do.

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 11. THE BOY JESUS

Bible Base: Luke 2: 41-52

Key Christian Belief: As one of us, Jesus is able to understand us.

Aim: To encourage children to grow in friendship with God as Jesus did.

You will need:

- The accompanying PowerPoint presentation.

#### **Introduction**

Show pictures of some celebrities, as they were when they were children and ask the children to guess who they are. (Some samples are included in the PowerPoint but these may need to be updated from time to time.)

Like the celebrities in the photographs, we are growing all the time. We don't look like we did when we were babies any more. People who have not seen us for some time notice that we have grown since the last time they saw us. Shoes and clothes that once fitted us no longer do.

However, there is more to growing up than just growing taller. When people tell us to 'grow up' they are not telling us to grow taller; they are telling us to stop behaving like babies and to start behaving the way we should at our age! As we grow we are meant to learn to do more for ourselves. We are meant to learn to behave more sensibly.

It is interesting to know that Jesus grew as we do. He was once the age that you are now and He understands what that is like. We know about Jesus being born as a baby; we know about Him as a man – but we don't know much about Him as a boy. However, there is one verse in the Bible that tells us about how Jesus grew and because Jesus grew in a way that pleased God – this verse tells us how God wants us to grow too.

#### **Luke 2: 52**

Jesus grew in size. He needed the right food, exercise and rest in order to grow taller and stronger just as we do. He grew in wisdom. He had to listen to His teachers and work hard in order to learn new things just as we do. He grew in friendship with others. He had to learn to obey His parents and be a good friend to others just as we do.

But Jesus also grew in friendship with God. For Jesus, this was another important part of growing up. The story we are going to hear will help us to think about what this means and how we can grow in friendship with God, as Jesus did.

## **Telling The Story**

As you tell the following story, each time you come to a word that is underlined, hold up or show the picture associated with it (available in powerpoint and can be printed out). Before you begin, show each picture to the children and invite them to join in with a suitable action each time you hold it up during the story.

Mary and Joseph lived with Jesus in a little village called Nazareth. Once a year they traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. Just as we look forward to our birthdays and to Christmas, once a year they looked forward to Passover and when the time came to go to Jerusalem they were very excited.

Jerusalem was seventy miles away. They had to walk for three whole days in order to get there. At the end of the long journey they were tired.

They had a great time in Jerusalem. They spent a whole week there – visiting friends, shopping in the market and playing in the park. They visited the temple to worship God. They had a special meal together to remember how God had set the Jewish people free long ago when they were slaves in Egypt. But now the week was over and it was time to go home. Mary and Joseph were sad to leave their friends.

They joined a group of travellers on their way to Nazareth and began the long journey home. At the end of the first day they went to look for Jesus among his friends and relations but he was nowhere to be found. Mary and Joseph were worried.

As soon as it was light the next day they began walking back to Jerusalem. When they got there they looked for Jesus in the park, at the market, at the houses of the people they had visited – but he was not there. Then they remembered that when they had last seen him he had been in the temple. They hurried to the temple and when they went in they were amazed by what they saw.

There was Jesus – listening to the teachers, asking them questions and answering theirs. And everyone who heard was amazed at the answers he gave.

‘Why have you treated us like this?’ Mary asked. ‘Your father and I have been searching everywhere for you.’

‘Why were you searching for me?’ Jesus asked. ‘Didn’t you know that I had to be in my Father’s house?’

Mary was puzzled by his answer – but Jesus was talking about his heavenly Father – God. He wanted to be where he could learn more about Him.

Even though his parents didn’t always understand him, he went home with them and obeyed them because He knew that this was what God wanted him to do.



## **Exploring Christian Belief**

I wonder where your favourite place to be is – where you would turn up if you were lost. Perhaps it would be the sweet shop, the amusements or the playground. Jesus' favourite place to be was in 'His Father's house' where He could get to know God better and learn to live in friendship with Him. This was the most important part of growing up for Jesus.

Christians believe that because of what Jesus has done for us, we can belong to God's family and get to know Him as our heavenly Father too. Like Jesus, there are places we can go to learn more about God. We can listen carefully to those who teach us from the Bible and perhaps even read it for ourselves. We can ask questions when we don't understand. We can talk to God each day and when we know what God wants us to do we can be careful to do it! (If there is an SU group in the school you could highlight it).

As a Christian I believe God wants us to grow up in every way as Jesus did. But most of all he wants us to grow in friendship with Him. And this is the most exciting part of growing up – because the more you get to know Him the more you discover how amazing His love is and how great it is to be part of His family!

## **Prayer**

Ask children to reflect on how much they have changed since this time last year. Then ask them to think about ways in which they would like to change in the year ahead.

Ask God help each of us to grow in every way as Jesus did during the year ahead.

## BIBLE TIME LINE ASSEMBLIES

### 12. JESUS IS BAPTISED

Bible Base: Luke 3: 1-22; John 1: 29-34

Key Christian Belief: As one of us, Jesus is able to take our place.

Aim: To help children understand that Jesus came to take the blame for the wrong things we have done.

You will need:

- the PowerPoint presentation

#### Introduction

Ask the children to imagine that you are a chat show host and you are about to introduce your special guests. See if the children can guess who you are talking about from your introduction each time. For example...

'Ladies and gentleman, tonight we have with us one of the greatest football players of all time. He's the leading goal scorer from the Premier League this season. It's...'

'Tonight I am thrilled also to have on the show one of my favourite female singers. Her new single is at the top of the download charts at the moment. Please welcome...'

'And finally our special guest star this evening is one of the nation's favourite actors. Star of several smash hit films including... Let's give a great big round of applause for...

If you are confident you could ask if anyone else would like to come up to the front to introduce someone famous and see if we can guess who it is. Allow one or two children to have a go and suggest that they each have a career ahead of them as chat show hosts (It is a good idea to have a couple pupils pre-prepared to do this).

Ask the children now to listen as you tell them what someone else once said to introduce a famous person to a large crowd of people and see if they can guess who the famous person was. Bonus points if they know who the one introducing Him was too!

'Look! Here he is! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'

It was John the Baptist who said this to introduce Jesus to a large crowd of people. Today we are going to think about what he meant by this and what we can learn about Jesus from it.

## **Telling The Story**

John's job was to prepare the way for Jesus and to get people ready for His arrival as their King. John told people that the King was on His way and that in order to be ready for Him, God wanted them to stop doing what was wrong and start doing what was right. He told them all to stop being greedy and to start sharing what they had with others. He told tax collectors to stop charging people too much and to start charging only the proper amount. He told soldiers to stop bullying people and to start treating them fairly.

And if any of them were willing to change their ways, John would baptise them in the river Jordan. John would plunge them beneath the water for a few seconds and then bring them back up out of the water again. This was a way for the people being baptised to show everyone that they were ready to start a new life and leave the old one behind.

One day Jesus came to John to be baptised. Knowing that Jesus hadn't done anything wrong, John wondered why He should be baptised. He didn't need to make a new start! But Jesus wanted to show that He had become one of us and was now on our side.

Suppose one day that a famous footballer comes to watch your team play. When one of your team is injured, this famous footballer puts on your team's football kit and comes on to the pitch to play on your team. In the second half, he scores the winning goal that sees your team through to the next round. Wouldn't that be great?

Christians believe in a way that's what Jesus was doing when He was baptised. He was showing that He had chosen to become one of us and to be on our side. It was as if He was coming on to the pitch, wearing our colours. He wanted John and everyone watching to know that as one of us He was even willing to share in the blame for all the wrong things we have done. When He was baptised it was not to show that He was sorry for the wrong things He had done and ready to make a new start, but to show that He had come to take the blame for the wrong things we have done and to help us make a new start.

So John baptised Jesus in the river Jordan and as He was coming up out of the water a voice from heaven said: 'This is my Son whom I love. Listen to Him.'

A few days later when a large crowd had gathered to watch what John was doing, John saw Jesus coming towards him through the crowd and said: 'Look – here He is! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'

## **Exploring Christian Belief**

It may not be so obvious to us, but the people listening to John knew exactly what he meant. Every year, the Jewish people had to confess their sins to the High Priest in the Temple and ask God's forgiveness. And as they did so, they had to bring a lamb with

them. The lamb would be killed and its blood sprinkled on the altar as an offering to God. Only then would God be ready to forgive them.

John was saying that, like those lambs, Jesus had come to give His life for us, so that we can be forgiven for all the wrong things we have done.

The lambs that the people brought each year to the Temple had to be perfect. Nothing less would be good enough for God.

The Bible tells us Jesus the Lamb of God was perfect in every way. He never said, did or thought anything wrong. And because He was perfect, He was able to take the blame for the wrong things we have done and give His life for us on the cross, so that we can be forgiven.

Jesus came to be one of us and to take our place – like a substitute coming on to the pitch to take the place of another player. He was able to do what no one else could have done. And because of this we can be friends of God not just for a year but forever.

No wonder then that when John saw Jesus coming towards Him He pointed Him out and said: 'Look – here He is! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'

### **Reflection / Prayer**

Conclude with a prayer thanking God that Jesus came to be one of us and to give His life for us in order that we might be forgiven.

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 13: JESUS IS TEMPTED

Bible Base: Matthew 4: 1-11 and Hebrews 4: 15

Key Christian Belief: As one of us, Jesus is able to help us when we are tempted.

Aim: To show that we can rely on Jesus to give us the strength we need not to give in when we are tempted.

You will need:

- Cadbury's Crème Egg (if possible straight from the fridge)
- Normal Egg
- Bowl
- Baby Wipes / Cloth
- Accompanying PowerPoint Presentation

#### Introduction

Show the crème egg and describe how wonderful crème eggs are. Get a volunteer to come up to the front. After peeling off the top of the wrapper, give it to the child to hold, smell, etc. but they are not allowed to eat it. Leave the child standing.

Explain that today's assembly is about strength. Begin to talk about strength using the pictures on PowerPoint.

Have a volunteer come up to the front and squeeze an egg at each end with their finger and thumb. The egg should not break, demonstrating that even a fragile egg has strength due to its shape. (Break it afterwards to show that it isn't a trick egg!)

Return to the child with the crème egg. Are they demonstrating strength? Discuss physical strength vs. inner strength. When do we need inner strength? When we are tempted to do something that is wrong e.g. lying, fighting, stealing, cheating, gossiping etc. at school or at home. This is when we need inner strength. Our story today will help us to know that Jesus can give us that strength.

#### Telling The Story

Imagine you have a watch that the makers claim is unbreakable. How would you test that claim? Last time we saw that God has just told everyone that Jesus is His Son, and that He is 'well pleased' with Him. He was claiming that Jesus is perfect in every way. Now He allows Jesus to be tested so that we can see that this claim is true.

Jesus was tempted in 3 different ways. (Use PowerPoint pictures for this.)

#### Turning stones into bread

Jesus was being tempted to prove that if He had bread He would be satisfied. This is like us. We can think that if we have food to eat and all the things our bodies need we

will be satisfied. This is not true. Christians believe the only thing that will totally satisfy us is knowing God as our loving Heavenly Father.

### Throwing Himself down from the top of the temple

Jesus was being tempted to perform a stunt to prove that He was God's Son so that people would accept Him. In the same way each of us may think that if we do something really daring, people will like us and become our friends. This is not the case. If people only accept us because we do what they want, they are not true friends. The Bible says that God loves and accepts each of us the way we are. Each of us is special to Him. We do not have to do anything to make Him love us or accept us – He already does!

### Bowing down to the devil

Jesus was being tempted to do what He knew was wrong in order to gain great power and wealth. In the same way we might be tempted to do something wrong in order to get what we want – e.g. sweets, a turn on the computer etc. Christians believe in situations like this we should realise that obeying God is more important than anything else because His love is worth more than anything else we could ever want.

### Exploring Christian Belief

When we are tempted we can look to Jesus. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 4:15 "... [Jesus] has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin." Therefore when we call on Jesus to help us we are not asking something of Him that He hasn't already faced. He knows what we are going through. The only difference is that Jesus did not give into temptation.

Refer back to the volunteer holding the crème egg. This was an example to show how difficult it is to say no to temptation. It is not an easy thing to say no to temptation: it requires inner strength. As we have seen when we are faced with a difficult situation we can call on Jesus to help us say no to temptation. Just as Jesus did not give into temptation He can give us the inner strength to say no too.

### **Prayer**

## BIBLE TIME LINE ASSEMBLIES

### 14. JESUS HEALS A PARALYSED MAN

Bible Base: Mark 2: 1-11

Key Christian belief: As God's Son, Jesus is able to forgive us for our sins.

Aim: To show that above all else, Jesus came to bring us God's forgiveness.

You will need:

- the PowerPoint attached
- a straw mat or palliasse
- a glass of water, jelly in a bowl, a spoon, a baby wipe and a towel (check out any allergies before the assembly)
- the audio track or the music score for the song 'Busy Little House' by Ian White\*

#### **Introduction**

*NB: Since this part of the assembly involves a volunteer lying on a mat, it may be hard for some of the children to see. Perhaps the action could take place on the platform or stage, if there is one. Or perhaps the children could be seated along the sides and back of the hall, with your volunteer in the middle. Or perhaps the children in the middle rows could kneel and the children in the back rows could stand. However you do it, try to make sure that, as far as possible, everyone can see.*

Hold up your straw mat or palliasse and explain that today's story is about a paralysed man whose friends carried him on a mat like this to see Jesus. We don't know how paralysed the man was – it may be that it was just his legs that would not work. However we are going to imagine that it was even worse than this - that he was paralysed from the neck down so that the only parts of his body that he could move were his head, eyes, mouth and face muscles. If that was the case, then the man would have had no choice but to lie flat on his back all day, every day on a mat like this.

Place the mat on the floor in front of the children and ask for a volunteer to come and lie on it and to imagine that he cannot move anything below the neck. He cannot move his arms or legs. He cannot sit up.

Explain that in order to do anything, the man in our story needed others to help him. Fortunately, he had four good friends whom he knew he could trust. Ask your volunteer to choose four friends that he is sure he can trust to come up to the front.

Explain to the four friends that you would like them to demonstrate some of the things the man in the story needed his friends to do for him. For each of the following scenarios, the volunteer on the mat should choose one or more of his friends to help him. He can talk to them each time as they carry out their tasks.

When he was thirsty he needed his friends to bring him some water...



(One of his friends brings the volunteer some water and helps him to drink it.)

When he was hungry, he needed his friends to feed him... (One of his friends feeds him a spoonful of jelly.)

When his face was dirty, he needed his friends to wash it for him... (One of his friends uses a wipe to wash his face.)

When it was wet, he needed his friends to dry it for him... (One of his friends dries his face for him.)

When he needed to go anywhere, he needed his friends to carry him...  
(The four friends should carry him on the mat (e.g.) to the window and then turn him round and bring him back again.)

Ask the volunteer on the mat how it felt having to depend on his friends. Did they do a good job – or did they let him down? Would he trust them again?

Thank the volunteer and his friends and allow them to take their places again.

### **Telling The Story**

Use the attached PowerPoint to tell the story as follows.

The man in our story had not been able to walk for a very long time but he had four very good friends that he knew he could rely on to help him. They all lived in a little town called Capernaum. One day the man's four friends noticed that a large crowd had begun to gather in a house near where they lived. When they asked what was going on they were told that Jesus had come to that house and that everyone had come to see Him.

They rushed round to their friend's house and found him lying on his mat as usual. 'We're going to take you to see Jesus!' they said. 'He's been able to help all sorts of people. He's made blind people see and deaf people hear. Maybe he'll be able to help you walk again!'

But by the time they got to the house where Jesus was, it was already overcrowded and they couldn't get in. So what were they to do?

Suddenly one of them spotted the stairs going up the outside of the house to the flat mud roof. 'I know what to do!' he said. The four friends carefully carried the man up the stairs on to the roof and started to dig.

Meanwhile, inside the house, everyone was busy listening to Jesus when some pieces of mud started to fall on top of them from the ceiling above. They looked up and were amazed to see a hole beginning to appear...and four men looking down through it.

They were even more surprised when they lowered their friend on the mat through the hole in the roof and down to the floor where Jesus was.

Jesus smiled at the man and said, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.' The man's friends were surprised and maybe a little disappointed. This was not what they had been expecting!

And when the religious leaders who had been watching heard Jesus tell the man that his sins were forgiven, they too were very surprised and began to think to themselves: 'Who does this man think he is? Only God can forgive sins!'

Knowing what they were thinking, Jesus turned to them and said, 'You are right - but I want you to see that it is God who has given me the right to tell everyone who believes in me that their sins are forgiven. Watch...' At this Jesus turned to the man on the mat and told him to get up and walk. At once the man got up off his mat and began to walk excitedly around the room. 'Look!' he said 'I can walk!'

Everyone was amazed. 'We've seen great things today!' they said as they watched the man leaping and dancing and walking out to meet his friends with his mat rolled up under his arm!

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

When the man's four friends brought him to Jesus that day they were hoping that Jesus would be able to help him walk again. So when they lowered their friend down through the roof in front of Jesus they weren't expecting Him to tell him that his sins were forgiven. Perhaps they were a little disappointed. That was not the reason they had brought their friend to Jesus!

But Jesus wanted the man to realise that, more than anything else, he needed to be forgiven for the wrong things he had said, thought and done. If our legs don't work we can't jump, skip, dance, play sport or go anywhere on our own - and that is bad. But if there are wrong things in our lives the Bible says we can't be God's friends or live with Him in heaven - and that is even worse! And so Jesus wanted the man in our story to know that he needed to be forgiven even more than he needed to be able to walk again.

Christians believe that, like the man in the story, we all need to be forgiven. We have all said, done and thought things that are wrong and need God's forgiveness. Otherwise we can never be His friends or live with Him in heaven.

Jesus also wanted everyone there that day to know that more than anything else, the reason He had come was so that we could be forgiven and enjoy God's love and friendship forever. The religious leaders didn't believe that Jesus was able to forgive the man but by helping him to walk, Jesus was able to show everyone that it was God who had sent Him and that what He said was true. The man's sins really had been forgiven!

And Christians believe that, because Jesus is God's Son, He is able to forgive us too. If we trust in Him, as the man in the story did, we can be sure that all the wrong things we have ever said, thought and done have truly been forgiven! Isn't that good news?

### **Reflection / Prayer**

Ask the children to think silently about anything they need to ask God's forgiveness for. Then pray, thanking Him that He sent Jesus into the world so that we can know for sure that He has forgiven us.

### **Song\* (optional)**

Either play the song 'Busy Little House' by Ian White, and encourage the children to join in with the words 'busy little house' at the end of each verse, or teach the whole song and encourage the children to sing it with you.

## **BUSY LITTLE HOUSE**

Ian White



1. Once there was a house, a busy little house. And

this is all about, the busy little house.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2. Jesus Christ had come, teaching everyone.<br>So everyone had run to the busy little house.                      | 5. Whatever shall we do, whatever shall we do.<br>We'll never get him through into the busy little house.            |
| 3. Everyone was there, you couldn't find a chair,<br>In fact you had to fight for air, in the busy little house.   | 6. We'll open up the roof, we'll open up the roof,<br>And then we'll put him through into the busy little house.     |
| 4. A man who couldn't walk, was carried to the spot,<br>But the place was chock-a-block, in the busy little house. | 7. Then Jesus turned His eyes, and saw to His surprise,<br>The man coming from the skies into the busy little house. |
| 8. Then Jesus turned and said, get up and take your bed,<br>And run along instead from the busy little house.      |  |

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 15. JESUS CALMS A STORM

Bible Base: Mark 4: 35-41

Key Christian Belief: As Son of God, Jesus is able to take care of us

Aim: To show that we can trust Jesus to take care of us.

You will need:

- The words 'His Presence', 'His Power' and 'His Peace' printed on three separate cards big enough for everyone to see clearly or use accompanying PowerPoint)

#### Introduction

Ask children if they have ever been afraid. What were they afraid of? Share examples of things that frighten you, or tell a story of a scary thing that happened to you.

Today we are going to hear a story of some big grown up men who were afraid. The story has some things to teach us about Jesus that can help us whenever we are afraid.

Explain that you need the children's help to make some sound effects during the story. Divide them into three groups and ask the first to make the sound of the wind. What would a gentle breeze sound like? Now there is a fierce hurricane? Ask the second to make the sound of the rain (drumming their fingers on the floor or patting their hands on their knees). Imagine there is just a gentle pitter-patter of rain? Now it is pouring down? Ask the third group to make the sound of waves splashing (with their mouths and / or with their hands). Imagine the waves are gently lapping on the seashore? Now there are huge waves crashing down?

Explain that you want each group to listen carefully to the story and make the right kind of noise to go with what is happening. Ask them also to keep their eyes on you as you tell the story and to watch out for a signal you will give them with your hands. (Demonstrate a 'stop' sign with your hands.) When they see this signal they must stop whatever noise they are making at once. (Practice this with each group in turn.)

#### Telling The Story

When the story starts it is a calm, peaceful, quiet summer's evening down by the shore of Lake Galilee. Jesus and his friends had had a busy day; Jesus had been teaching crowds of people about God and helping those who were sick – but at the end of the day they were all feeling rather tired.

'I know what we'll do' said Jesus. 'Let's get away from all these people and have some peace and quiet all to ourselves on the other side of the lake.' So some of Jesus' friends – who used to be fishermen – went and got their boat and when it was ready,

Jesus and His friends stepped inside. Jesus knew that He could leave His friends to sail the boat so He went to the back, lay down and began to catch up on some sleep.

As the boat sailed out, it was a perfect evening for sailing; lots of others were out sailing their boats that night too. But it wasn't long before things began to change.

(From this point on, encourage each group to make the appropriate sound effects, gradually building to a storm. Eventually you will have to shout over the noise of the storm. Don't worry if you can't be heard...use hand gestures and actions to convey the fear of the disciples, to show them waking Jesus up and to show Him standing up and shouting 'Peace'. On the word 'Peace' give the signal to stop and there should then be absolute silence...creating the effect of Jesus calming the storm instantly.)

First, a gentle breeze began to blow. Then a dark cloud seemed to appear from nowhere and a few spots of rain began to fall. The sea that had been totally calm to begin to be a little choppy; the waves began to splash against the side of the boat. The wind grew stronger, the rain grew heavier and the waves grew bigger until before they knew it they were in the middle of a storm. The wind howled around them, the rain came pouring down and the waves came crashing into the boat.

Jesus' friends were terrified. They ran to the back of the boat to where Jesus was sleeping and shouted, 'Jesus! Wake up! We're going to drown! Don't you care? Help!' Jesus stood up in the back of the boat and just said 'Peace!'

And it was just like that. One minute there was a raging storm; next minute it had gone! Jesus' friends looked all round them. 'Wow' they said. 'What kind of person is this? Even the wind and the waves do what He tells them!'

'Why were you so afraid?' Jesus asked them. 'Couldn't you trust me?'

If we are friends of Jesus, I have a feeling that when we are afraid - fussing, fretting and worrying like His friends in this story – this is what Jesus would want to ask us. 'Why are you so afraid? Can't you trust me? I think this story shows us that we can trust Jesus to be with us and to take care of us no matter what happens.

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

There are three lovely things about Jesus from this story that are good to remember when we are afraid.

#### **His Presence**

Jesus was with His friends in the middle of the storm. Whenever they needed Him they were able to turn to Him and ask Him for his help. The Bible tells us if we are His friends, it is just the same for us. He has promised: 'I will never leave you'. 'I will be with you always.' What a great promise!

### His Power

Think of what Jesus was able to do. He was able to say to the wind: 'Be quiet!' and it was! The Bible doesn't say that it rained, but assuming it did, He was able to say to the rain: 'Stop!' and it did! He was able to say to the waves: 'Calm down!' and they did! The wind and the waves don't listen to us – but they do listen to Jesus. How come?

For Christians, this is one of the stories that help us to know that Jesus really is God's Son – the One that God has put in charge of everything and everyone. Nothing is too hard for Him. He does not promise always to take the scary things away from our lives – but He does promise to take care of us and to bring us safely through. And this story shows us that He is well able to do that! No matter what happens we can trust Him to take good care of us. Nothing will ever take His love away from us.

### His Peace

You could almost feel the peace after the storm in this story, couldn't you? Jesus took away the thing that His friends were worried about and it was gone!

But that wasn't the only kind of peace there was in this story. What was Jesus doing in the middle of the storm? He was sleeping! He wasn't worried about it one little bit because He knew He could trust His Heavenly Father to take care of Him. And this is the kind of peace that Jesus wants us to have in our hearts. It is the peace that comes from knowing we can trust Him to be with us and to take care of us no matter what happens. Christians believe that the more we get to know Jesus and the more we learn to trust Him, the more we will have His peace in our hearts and that can make all the difference when scary things are happening around us!

So next time you are frightened think of Jesus and remember what the Bible teaches us:

- His Presence: He has promised to be with you
- His Power: He is able to take care of you
- His Peace: he wants you to trust Him

### Prayer

Invite the children to think of something that is worrying or frightening them right now and conclude with a prayer thanking Jesus for His promise to be with us and asking for Him for His help and for His peace in the midst of our fears.

### Song (optional)

With Jesus As Our Captain

(words adapted from 'With Jesus In The Boat' – see 'Junior Praise' number 291.)

With Jesus as our captain we can smile at the storm,  
Smile at the storm, smile at the storm.

With Jesus as our captain we can smile at the storm,  
Smile at the storm, smile at the storm.

Sailing, sailing home;  
Sailing, sailing home,  
With Jesus as our captain we can smile at the storm,  
As we go sailing home.

Use the following actions:

With Jesus	(point upwards with one finger of each hand)
as our captain	(salute)
we can smile	(smile)
at the storm	(pull arms across chest as if keeping warm)
as we go sailing	(make sailing motion with one hand)
home	(point upwards with one finger)

The second time they sing it, ask the children not to sing the word 'smile' – just do the action. Next time ask them to omit the word 'Jesus' in the same way; then 'captain' and 'storm'. Sing the whole chorus through the last time without omitting any words.

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 16. THE HUNGRY CROWD

Bible Base: John 6: 1-13

Key Christian Belief: As Son of God, Jesus is able to use us.

Aim: To show that Jesus wants to use us to bring God's love to others.

You will need:

- a packed lunch
- the accompanying PowerPoint presentation

#### Introduction

Apologise for this – but tell the children that you have some sums for them to do.

The first is for anyone from P2 or P3. Display the first sum:

$$2+2$$

and choose a child to answer. Point out that the + sign in this sum means 'add'. If you have two sweets and you add two more, you will have four sweets altogether.

The next is for anyone from P4. Display the second sum:

$$3 \times 4$$

and choose a child to answer. Point out that the x sign in this sum means 'multiply'. If three people each have four sweets, there are twelve sweets altogether.

The third is for anyone in P5. Display the third sum:

$$2x = 8$$

and ask what the value of x is in this sum – or what it stands for. Two fours are eight so the value of x is four.

The fourth is for anyone in P6. Display the fourth sum:

$$\frac{5 + 4}{3}$$

and choose a child to answer. Explain that in this case the line means 'divide'. If you have nine sweets to divide them among three people, they will have three sweets each.



The final one is for anyone in P7. Display the fifth sum:

$$3^2$$

and choose a child to answer. Ask if anyone knows how to say this – i.e. three squared. The little <sup>2</sup> means 'squared' and this means that you need to multiply the bigger number by itself. Three threes are nine.

### **Telling The Story**

Congratulate the children on their brilliant answers so far and tell them that you have one more sum for them to look at. This time it is Bible story written out as a sum. Invite the children to look carefully and see if they can work out what Bible story it is.

$$\frac{5l + 2f}{5000p} = 1m^2 \text{ r } 12b$$

Tell the children that you are going to look at the various parts of the sum, one at a time, to see if the children can work out what each of the different letters stand for.

#### 5000 people

Ask the children what they think the 'p' stands for? It stands for people of course. In this story there was a large crowd of 5000 (and more) people. They had spent the whole day with Jesus. They were so interested in what He had to say that no one had noticed that it was well past teatime (just like no one in your class notices when the lunch bell goes because you are so engrossed in what you are doing...) and now they were all hungry.

'Send the people away so that they can get something to eat' said Jesus' helpers.

'No' replied Jesus. 'You feed them.'

'But where will we get enough food to feed all these people?' His helpers asked.

'Go and see what you can find!' Jesus told them.

#### 5 loaves and two fish

Eventually Andrew, one of Jesus' helpers, found a boy who had brought a packed lunch with him and hadn't eaten it yet. Ask what sorts of things the children have in their packed lunches and show them what is in yours. Now ask them to look at the sum and see if they can tell what the boy had in his packed lunch. Five loaves and two fishes!

'What use will this one packed lunch be?' muttered Andrew. 'This will never be enough to feed all these people!'

Imagine your lunch was all there was to feed the whole school. It would never be enough, would it?

### Jesus

Even so Jesus asked for the five loaves and two fishes to be brought to Him and the boy gladly gave them to Jesus. So of course the J in our sum stands for Jesus. But what does our sum tell us that Jesus did with them? He multiplied them!

He made the people sit down in groups and then in front of them all He gave thanks to God for the loaves and fishes and broke them into pieces. Then He gave them to His helpers and asked them to pass them round. (Mime going round the hall offering bread and fish to everyone.) And somehow or other it just went on...and on...and on...until everyone had had enough to eat and no one could eat another thing!

### One square meal

Can anyone really clever work out what the m stands for in our sum? Jesus divided up the loaves and fishes so that everyone had...one...square...meal! The m stands for meal!

The Bible tells us that everyone ate and was satisfied. No one was hungry any more.

### 12 baskets full of crumbs

Afterwards, Jesus' helpers went around gathering up the crumbs. Can anyone see from our sum how many crumbs were left over? There were twelve baskets full of crumbs! Everyone was amazed. The boy's lunch had fitted into one basket and now, after everyone had eaten, there were enough crumbs left over to fill twelve baskets!

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

In this story there was a large crowd of hungry people and the same is still true in our world today. Jesus cares about them – just as He cared for the people in this story. And Christians believe He wants us, if we are His friends, to care about them too.

At first His friends thought the hungry people were nothing to do with them. They wanted to send them away so that they could look after themselves. But Jesus said 'No – you feed them.'

Christians believe Jesus wants us to do what we can to see that people around the world who are hungry have enough to eat. This means that, like the little boy in the story, we have to be willing to share what we have with others. If the little boy had kept his lunch to himself, the hungry people would never have been fed.

On his own, however, the little boy would not have got very far. Instead of sharing his lunch with others by himself, he first gave it to Jesus and discovered that Jesus was able to do far more with it than he would have ever thought possible.

In the same way, we may not think that we can do very much to help others, or that what we have won't make much difference, but Christians believe that if we give our lives to Jesus asking Him to use us to bring God's love to others, we will often discover that He is able to use us far more than we would ever have thought possible.

Jesus could have turned stones into bread to feed hungry people – but instead He chose to use his followers to feed them. Jesus cares about hungry, sad, tired and lonely people and wants to use us to bring God's love to them. He was able to use this one boy's lunch to feed a whole crowd of people. If you are willing to give what you have to Jesus, who knows what He will be able to do with you!

### **Prayer**

Invite the children silently to think about what they could give to Jesus – their time, their treasures, their talents. Invite them silently, if they wish, to offer these things to Jesus. Then pray, asking Jesus to take what we have offered to Him, and anything we may give to Him in the future and use it to make a difference to others.

### **Song (optional)**

If you have access to it, you could use the song '5000+ Hungry Folk' which is included on Ishamael's CD 'I Know Jesus Loves Me Too'. The individual track can be purchased for download from the online shop at [www.ishmael.org.uk](http://www.ishmael.org.uk).

Or Jesus Feeds the 5,000 by Kids on the Move.

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 17. OUR FATHER GOD

Bible Base: Matthew 6: 9-13

Key Christian Belief: Our Father God listens to our prayers.

Main Point: To show that God is like the best dad we can imagine.

You will need:

- the accompanying PowerPoint presentation

#### Introduction

Point out (if true) that, although you have visited the school many times before, you don't actually know any/all of the children who are present. You don't know their names or much/anything about them.

Tell the children: 'Imagine that your best friend is coming up to introduce you to me. What might he or she say about you? Would they use any word pictures to help me get to know what you are like? For example...'

(For each of the examples below, show the relevant picture each time as you say the name of the animal.)

'If you hardly ever say anything and when you do, you speak very softly, your friend might say that you are as quiet as...? (A mouse)

If you can't sit still and are always moving around from one thing to the next, your friend might say that you are as busy as a...? (A bee)

If nothing ever scares you, your friend might say that you are as brave as...? (A lion)

If you are always cheerful - even first thing in the morning, your friend might say that you are as happy as...? (A lark)

Or maybe you are as wise as...? (An owl)

Perhaps your teacher would say that your whole class comes in to the room sometimes like a herd of...? (Elephants)

Word pictures like these can help us get to know what someone is like.

Suppose I asked the question "What Is God like?" what might you say?' (Take some answers and then ask 'Are there any word pictures that might help us?')

## **Input**

People often have different ideas about what God is like. Here are some pictures that people might have in their heads when they try to imagine what God is like.

### **Santa Clause**

Why might people think that God is a bit like Santa?

In some ways God is like Santa because He gives us lots of good things. But I think God might be disappointed if we only ever think about Him once a year or when we want something. There is more to God than that...

### **Doctor**

Why might people think that God is a bit like a doctor?

In some ways God is like a doctor because He is able to help us when we are ill. But I think God might be disappointed if we only ever think about Him when we are ill. There is more to God than that.

### **Policeman**

Why might people think that God is a bit like a policeman?

In some ways God is like a policeman because it is His job to see that people keep His rules. But I think God might be disappointed if we think He is only interested in catching us and punishing us when we do wrong. There is more to God than that...

### **Grandfather**

Why might people think God is a bit like a grandfather?

In some ways God is like a grandfather - because He can tell you lots of stories about what He did and things that happened before you were born. But I think God might be disappointed if we think He can't help us today like He helped others long ago...

The good news is that we don't have to wonder or try to guess what God is like. The Bible tells us what He is like! The Bible's favourite word to describe God is...Father. He is like the best dad you can imagine.

## **Exploring Christian Belief**

I don't know your dad. I know some boys and girls who don't have a dad, or whose dad doesn't live with them any more. I know some who have two people they call dad. I know some who don't know who their real dad is either.

But all of us can imagine what the best dad or father in the world would be like and the Bible tells us that's what God is like. Someone who understands us and cares about us. Someone who is always ready to listen to us and help us. Someone who always gives

us good things. Someone who teaches us the best way to live. Someone who is always ready to forgive us when we say sorry.

Best of all, Christians believe that God wants to be your father! The Bible tells us that by choosing to trust and follow Jesus we can become part of His family. As we read or listen to what the Bible says we can get to know what He is like. And most of all as we learn to talk to Him and to trust Him we can find out for ourselves how wonderful it is to have a Father in heaven who loves us.

### **Prayer**

Jesus taught His followers, when they were talking to God to call Him their Father. Then He gave them a prayer as an example of what they might say to God when they were talking to Him. We are going to finish with a simple version of the prayer that Jesus gave His followers.

Ask the children to keep their eyes open. Explain that you will say one line of the prayer at a time and show the children some actions to go with the words. Invite those who wish, to say each line after you and copy the actions you do.

Our Father in heaven	Hands reaching out, as if in welcome
We want to honour you and do what pleases you.	Hands together as if in prayer, head bowed
Please give us what we need each day.	Hands cupped together as if ready to receive
Forgive us for the wrong things we do...	Wrists joined together (as if tied) then moving apart (as if untied)
...and help us forgive others too.	Repeat as above
Help us not to give in when we are tempted...	Two hands held up in front of the face, as if in resistance
But keep us safe from all that is evil.	Hug yourself
For we know that you are great...	Show muscles in both arms
...and you are good.	Thumbs up

Nothing is impossible for you.

Wag finger in front of face while shaking head

Amen

Thumbs up



## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 18. GIVING IN SECRET

Bible Base: Matthew 6: 1-4

Key Christian Belief: Our Father God sees what we do in secret.

Aim: To show that God wants us to share because we care.

You will need:

- A charity collection bucket, tin and / or box.
- (You can use an ordinary bucket, tin or box with a label 'Please Give' stuck on.)
- Some silver coins

#### Introduction

Ask: 'Can you keep a secret?' as if about to reveal one. Then say 'So can I!'

Point out that it can be hard to keep a secret. Tell a personal story of a surprise you were planning for someone and the lengths you had to go to in order to keep it a secret. Keeping secrets (like this) can be great fun - especially if the surprise works. Others are not so good and if you have said or done something you are ashamed of it's probably better to own up and get it over with than try to keep it a secret.

#### Telling the Story

Jesus talked about some things that we should do in secret. One of these was giving what we have to help others. He said that when we give something of ours to help someone else we should do it in secret. Have you ever thought of giving in secret?

We can share what we have with others in lots of ways - but one way is by giving some of our money to a charity that helps poor or sick people either in this country or in another part of the world. Give an example that the children will be familiar with.

Show a charity collection bucket, tin and / or box and talk about where you might see any of these - in a supermarket, in the street, on a shop counter next to the till. By putting money into these, we can do something to help others that are poor or sick.

In Jesus day, when people went to the temple to worship God, there were two ways in which they could give to help others. Outside the temple, there would often be poor people with begging bowls, into which you could put some money to help them buy something to eat. Inside the temple there was a little wooden collection box and the leaders of the temple used any money that was put into this box to see that the poor people who lived in Jerusalem had enough to eat.

However, in Jesus day there were folk who loved to show off about how much money they were giving to help the poor. So, for example, if they were going to put money into a begging bowl, they would wait until there were lots of people about. Then they



would draw attention to themselves perhaps by clearing their throats loudly. Finally when everyone was watching they would take out a valuable silver coin, wave it around so everyone could see how much they were giving, and put it into the bowl. (Act this out using some coins as you talk to the pupils).

The problem was that these people didn't really care about the poor. If no one had been watching, they would have walked straight past without putting anything into the bowl. All they cared about was what other people thought of them. They loved it when other people noticed and praised them for what they did and when they gave money to help the poor or sick it wasn't because they cared about them and wanted to help; it was the praise of others that they were really after.

And Jesus told his followers not to be like that. Christians believe God wants us to share because we care. God is concerned not just with what we do on the outside - but also with what we are like on the inside. He wants us to learn to genuinely care about others. And Jesus is able to help us change so that we have hearts that truly love and care for others as He does.

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

If we truly care about others - we will help them whether anyone else sees or not. It won't matter whether anyone else notices. All that will matter is that you have truly helped the person concerned. So, for example, if you buy a present for someone who is sick, to cheer them up, and they open it in front of others, resist the temptation to say 'I bought him that!' Then your friend will know that you did it just because you care about him. Keep it between you and him. No one else needs to know.

And every now and then, why not think of doing something for another person and keeping it a secret so that even they don't know who did it? Like tidying up or washing the dishes at home - or putting a sweet on everyone's desk in your classroom - without letting on who did it. Only you and God will know; and if you've done it just because you truly care about the people you have helped, Jesus said God will reward you.

The important thing to God is that we have hearts that truly love Him and truly love others. So when you do something to help someone else - keep it a secret. Don't go around boasting and showing off. Then Jesus says your Father in Heaven will reward you; and knowing His love and friendship in our lives is the greatest reward of all.

### **Prayer**

Conclude with a prayer asking God to help us do what is right and to help us care for others whether anyone else sees or not.

## BIBLE TIME LINE ASSEMBLIES

### 19. DON'T WORRY

Bible Base: Matthew 6: 25-34

Key Christian Belief: Our Father God knows what we need.

Aim: To show that we can trust God for the things we need.

You will need:

- the accompanying PowerPoint presentation
- a cardboard box decorated with wrapping paper and labelled 'worry box'

#### **Introduction**

Point out that it is important, often, to get things in the right order and to know what comes first. For example, when you wake up in the morning not feeling very well and tell your mum (as you would) that you don't want to miss school she may well tell you that you will have to take the day off because 'your health comes first.'

Or after tea, when you are about to play your favourite game on the computer, your mum might ask if you have done your homework. If you haven't she might then tell you not to play on the computer until you have because 'your homework comes first.'

Or when you have some visitors in your house for tea and you are handing round the buns, your mum might tell you to wait until others have had one before you have yours because 'visitors come first.'

Sometimes knowing what comes first can save your life. Ask the children to imagine that the plane they are travelling on has crash-landed in the middle of the forest miles from anywhere. No one has broken any bones but some of the passengers have suffered cuts and bruises. It is getting dark and when the sun sets it will be cold. They are going to have to spend the night in the forest. From the PowerPoint, display the list of five things they will need to do in order to survive. Ask the children if they know which of these they will need to do first? And then in which order should they do the rest?

Invite some of the children to say what they think and then reveal the answers, with the following explanation.

You should take care of injuries first because without oxygen (carried by the blood) to the brain a person can survive for no more than three minutes. Next you should build a shelter and then build a fire in order to keep warm because if it is too cold, a person might not survive for more than three hours. The fourth thing to do is to find water because without water a person can survive for three days. Finally, you should look for food. This is least important because without food a person can survive for three weeks.

Today we are going to think about something Jesus said to help us think about what comes first in our lives.

### **Telling the Story**

Explain that Jesus was continuing to teach His friends about knowing God as their Father in heaven. He pointed out that the people around them always seemed to be worrying about things. Mind you, they did have lots to worry about. The people around Jesus were mostly farmers or fishermen who sold the fruit, vegetables, wheat and barley they grew or the fish they caught to make a living. The problem was that if the crops didn't grow, or they didn't catch any fish, or they weren't well enough to do the work then they would have nothing to sell and would have no money to buy food or clothes.

So they used to worry about food – where the next meal was coming from. And they used to worry about clothes – how they were going to afford to buy new ones when the old ones were done. And they used to worry about their health – what would happen to them if they were sick.

All these things are important – but Jesus says that there is something even more important than all of these.

Today where we live, we may not have to worry about where our next meal will come from or how we are going to afford to buy new clothes. And if we are sick we can go to the doctor who won't charge us anything for the medicine we need, unlike the people in Jesus' day. So we have lots to be thankful for!

And yet we still worry, don't we? Ask the children what happens when they worry – e.g. can't sleep, can't concentrate, feel sick.

Then show the children your 'worry box' and ask them to imagine that they have each written down on a piece of paper one thing they are worried about and put it into the box. If we were to lift the pieces of paper out one at a time, to see what is written on them, what sorts of worries do you think we might find?

Display the list of worries from the PowerPoint slide and talk sensitively about each of these. Again, all these things are important – but Jesus says that there is something even more important than all of these. Let's find out what it is.

Read and display Matthew 6:33. Jesus said that the most important thing we can ever do is to find out what God wants us to do and do it! We should always put Him first.

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

When we are worried about anything, the Bible teaches us to remember that we have a Heavenly Father who knows what we need and has promised to take care of us. And

instead of worrying, we should learn to talk to Him and to trust Him with everything. We should leave all our worries with Him and just get on with doing what we know He wants us to do. For if we do that – He has promised to take care of us!

So the answer to all the what-ifs that go round in our heads when we worry will always be the same.

Q. What if I get sick?

A. God will take care of you.

Q. What if my dad can't get a job? A. God will take care of you.

Q. What if I fail my exams?

A. God will take care of you.

Q. What if I don't have any friends? A. God will take care of you.

So why worry? We have a Father in heaven who knows what we need and has promised to take care of us. If we put Him first and just get on with doing what we know He wants us to do we can trust Him to take care of everything else!

### **Reflection / Prayer**

Hold up your worry box and again ask the children to imagine that all their worries have been written down and put into this box. Invite them to think silently for a few moments about what these worries might be. Then conclude with a prayer, thanking God that He knows and loves each of us and asking Him to help us put Him first and leave our worries with Him, knowing that He will take care of us whatever happens.

## BIBLE TIME LINE ASSEMBLIES

### 20. THE MEANING OF THE CROSS

Bible Base: 1 Corinthians 15: 3

Key Christian Belief: Jesus died for our sins.

Aim: To help children understand the significance of Jesus' death for Christians.

You will need:

- the accompanying PowerPoint presentation

#### **Introduction**

Explain to the children that you are going to show them some symbols. A symbol is a picture with a meaning. Each time you hold up a picture ask any children who know what it means to raise their hands. Then hold up the pictures, commenting as follows:

You might see these inside a building:

No smoking

Telephone booth

Boys' toilets

Girls' toilets

You might see these on a road sign:

Airport

Picnic area

You might see these on a map:

Hospital

Church

You might see this on a weather map:

Snow

You might see this on a bottle:

Poison

Congratulate the children on their knowledge of symbols. Explain that you have one more symbol to show them and hold up the cross. Tell the children that they might see this on a piece of jewellery, on a hot cross bun or in a church somewhere. It is a very important symbol for Christians because it reminds us of the cross on which Jesus died. Today we will be thinking about what this symbol means.

## Telling the Story

Point out that being nailed to a cross was a horrible way to die. It was the way the Romans put to death anyone found guilty of a serious crime. Jesus had done nothing wrong but the Jewish leaders didn't like what He said and wanted rid of Him. So they told lies about Him and had Him arrested. Eventually He was sentenced to die and nailed to a cross. Jesus' friends couldn't understand it. They thought everything had gone wrong - because they had not yet realised that the cross was all part of God's plan!

Explain that you are going to show the children five different crosses that will help them to understand why the cross of Jesus is good news for Christians. These five crosses each have something to teach us about the cross of Jesus.

## There Is Something Wrong

Display the first picture and ask if anyone knows what the cross in this picture means. It means there is something wrong.

The cross of Jesus also reminds us that there is something wrong. Many of the people who watched Jesus die knew that He hadn't done anything wrong. It was not because of any wrong things that He had done that He was nailed to a cross. Instead the Bible says that it was because of the wrong things we have said, thought and done.

## I Have Come To Rescue You

Display the second picture and ask if anyone knows what organisation the ambulance with the red cross on it belongs to. Explain that it belongs to the Red Cross - an organisation that helps to rescue people in an emergency - bringing food to those who are hungry and in danger of starving, or first aid to those who have been injured and are in danger of dying. The cross on this ambulance means: 'I have come to rescue you.'

The cross of Jesus also tells us that He has come to rescue us. The Bible says that we are in trouble with God. Because of the wrong things we have said, thought and done, we cannot be His friends or live with Him in heaven. But God has sent Jesus to rescue us. He came to take the blame for the wrong things in our lives so that we can be forgiven.

## I Love You

Display the third picture and ask if anyone knows what the crosses in this picture mean. (There are usually some noughts to go with them.) They mean: 'I love you!'

The cross of Jesus also tells us how much He loves us. He didn't have to die on the cross. He could easily have stepped down from it if He had wanted to. But He didn't. He stayed there because He loves us and because He knew that there was no other way for us to be forgiven. Jesus gave His life for us. There is no greater love than this!

### There Is Treasure To Find

Display the fourth picture and ask if anyone knows what you would find at the spot marked with a cross on the map. This cross means 'There is treasure to find!'

The cross of Jesus also reminds of the wonderful treasure that can be ours because of what He has done for us. Christians believe this treasure is even more precious than silver, gold, diamonds or pearls. It is the treasure of God's love. Because Jesus has taken the blame, we can be forgiven for the things in our lives that are wrong. That means that we can know God's love and friendship in our lives every day and be sure that one day we will go to live with Him in heaven forever.

### You Have A Choice To Make

Display the fifth picture and ask if anyone knows when a piece of paper like this might be used? Explain that a voting slip like this would be used in an election – when adults are deciding who they want to be in charge of the country – or when you are deciding who you want to be on your School Council. Perhaps John says that if you vote for him he will see that homework is banned from now on while Mary says that if you vote for her she will see that there are ten extra weeks holiday every year. You have to decide which one you will vote for and put a cross in the box beside his or her name.

The cross of Jesus also reminds us that we have a choice to make. The treasure of God's love is for those who choose to follow Jesus and to put Him in charge of their lives. And Christians believe that this is the most important choice we will ever have to make.

### Exploring Christian Belief

Display 1 Corinthians 15: 3 and explain that the good news of Easter is that Jesus died to take the blame for the wrong things in our lives so that all those who trust and follow Him can have a new life as God's friends now and for ever.

Point out that the Easter story doesn't end with the death of Jesus. The Bible tells us on the third day God raised Jesus to life again and this is how we know that God is pleased with what He has done for us and ready to accept as His friends all those who put their trust in Him!

### Reflection / Prayer

Conclude with a prayer thanking God that he has shown His love for us so clearly by sending His own Son Jesus to die for us on the cross. Ask Him to help us remember this whenever we may be tempted to doubt His love for us.

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 21. PENTECOST

Bible Base: Acts 2: 1-42

Key Christian Belief: The Holy Spirit helps us to change.

Aim: To discover that Christians believe the Holy Spirit helps us to live for Jesus.

You will need:

- the PowerPoint presentation attached
- a packet of Maltesers

*NB: The paragraphs in italics could be omitted for younger children.*

#### **Introduction**

Ask the children what they can 'see' in each of the pictures on the first four slides. When someone says 'the wind' ask them what colour it is and what it looks like! Point out that we can't actually see the wind – but we know it is there because we can see what it does – bending the trees, blowing (and drying) the washing on the line, making the kite soar through the air, stirring up the waves.

These pictures show how powerful the wind can be. It has the power to make things move. To demonstrate this, invite several volunteers up to the front. Ask them to lie down. (In a large hall, use the stage so everyone can see – or else have the volunteers seated and ask them to lean their heads back and look up to the ceiling.) Place a Malteser on their lips and see how long they can keep blowing it in the air above their mouths without it touching them. Give them some time to practice – then ask them all to begin at the same time and see whose Malteser stays in the air the longest.

Display the next slide and ask the children what it is. It is a wind farm – a group of wind turbines that use the power of the wind to make electricity. These days we use wind as a source of energy or power.

*Long ago we used horses to give us the power we needed to pull heavy ploughs and carriages. Then we discovered how to use flowing water from a river to give us the power we needed to make the machinery in our factories work.*

*After that we discovered how to burn fuels taken from the ground – coal, oil, gas – to make electricity. However, we also discovered that digging all these things up destroys the environment and the smoke from burning them pollutes the air we breathe.*

*These days we have found better ways of making electricity. We are learning how to use the sun and the wind to give us the power we need.*

So wind is something you can't see but gives us the power we need to make things work.



Before Jesus went back to heaven, He gave His followers a promise. He promised that He would send them a helper known as the Holy Spirit to be with them and to live inside them. Like the wind, they would not be able to see Him but they would know He was there by what they would see Him do. He would give them the power they would need to follow Jesus and tell others about Him.

### **Telling The Story**

One day, soon after Jesus had gone back to heaven, His followers, who were now known as the apostles (or messengers of Jesus) were all gathered together in an upstairs room.

Suddenly the sound of a rushing wind came from heaven and filled the whole house. As it whooshed around them, they also saw what seemed to be flames that came down and settled on their heads. Then they rushed outside and found themselves praising God in languages they had never spoken before.

Jews from many different countries, who had come to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost, heard the commotion and were amazed to hear them all praising God in so many different languages. Each of them heard their own language being spoken.

'What does this mean?' they asked. 'How can they speak all these different languages when they have never heard them before?'

Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'

'These people are not drunk!' said Peter, standing up. 'It's only nine in the morning! You are seeing what the prophet Joel spoke about long ago. "In the last days" he said, "God will pour out His Spirit on all people." Today God has sent the Holy Spirit to us just as He promised He would. You can't see Him but you can see from what is happening around you that He is here! He has come to help us spread the Good News about Jesus.'

'As many of you know' Peter continued, 'Jesus of Nazareth did many amazing things among us as a sign that He was sent from God. But our leaders would not believe this and persuaded us to hand Him over to be put to death. But God raised Him from the dead. We are all witnesses that Jesus is alive and has now gone to be with His Father in heaven. Be sure of this: God has made this Jesus, whom we crucified, King for ever.'

When the people heard this, they were very upset and asked Peter and the others what they should do.

Peter replied, 'Stop doing what is wrong and start following Jesus. Then God will forgive you, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit just as we have. This promise is for you and for your children and for all who have yet to hear.'

About three thousand people heard Peter's message that day and began to follow Jesus. They began meeting up each day to learn from the apostles, eat together and pray. They shared what they had and gave to those in need. They continued meeting together in the temple courts and each day more people became Christians and joined them.

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

Christians believe that this is the story of how Jesus kept the promise He had given to His followers to send the Holy Spirit to be with them and to help them. It is the story of how the first Christians began to meet together in what we would now call the church. So the day of Pentecost is like the birthday of the church!

Several weeks before this, Peter and the others had all run away when they saw Jesus arrested and taken away to be crucified. They didn't want the same thing happening to them so they went and hid in an upstairs room with the doors locked. Peter had been so frightened that three times he had denied that he even knew Jesus. But now they were standing up in front of everyone telling them about Jesus! What had made the difference? Well – one thing of course was that they had seen Jesus alive. They had some amazing good news to share. But as well as that, they now had the Holy Spirit to help them and they weren't afraid any more.

And Christians believe that the Holy Spirit is still at work today. We can't see Him but we know He is here by the amazing things He does. On the day of Pentecost there was a rushing wind and tongues of fire to show everyone that the Holy Spirit had come. That doesn't usually happen anymore - but we can still know He is here by the way He helps people change. Just as he helped the disciples to be brave and strong instead of being frightened and weak, he gives people today the courage to do what is right even when they are scared. He helps people give up their selfish ways and learn to care for others. He helps people break their bad habits and discover new better ones instead. So if you know of someone who has changed in a remarkable way after starting to follow Jesus – that is a sign that the Holy Spirit has been at work in their lives.

As Peter said, the promise of the Holy Spirit is for everyone who believes in Jesus. He promised His disciples that He would not leave them on their own. He would send them a powerful, but invisible, helper to help them live God's way and bring God's love to others. This story shows us that the helper has come and that is good news for all of us!

### **Reflection & Prayer**

Ask the children to imagine what it would be like to have an invisible helper with them every day – helping them to know and to do what was right; helping them to be brave and strong when they needed to be.

Then finish with a prayer for those who wish, thanking God for sending the Holy Spirit and asking Him to be with them, helping them to know and do what is right and to be brave and strong when they need to be in the week ahead.

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 22. A LAME MAN IS HEALED

Bible Base: Acts 3: 1-31

Key Christian Belief: The Holy Spirit helps us to care for others.

Aim: To discover that Christians believe that God helps us to care for others.

You will need

- the accompanying PowerPoint presentation

#### **Introduction**

Choose volunteers to take part in some challenges to help you find out who has the strongest legs. E.g.

1. Who can jump the farthest from a standing start?
2. Who can stand on one leg for the longest time?
3. Who can stand with their legs farthest apart?
4. Sitting back to back with arms linked together, which pair can stand up fastest?

All of these exercises involved the volunteers using their legs. But suppose for a moment that you could not use your legs. How would you manage to get about? What help would you need? What would you miss being able to do?

#### **Telling The Story**

Our story today is about a man who could not walk. Since the day he had been born, he had never been able to use his legs. He needed others to carry him wherever he wanted to go. He needed others to bring him anything that he needed. Growing up, he had not been able to take part in many of the sports and games that others around him enjoyed. But worst of all, now that he was grown up, he could not get a job as others did to earn the money he needed to look after himself. And so here he was, sitting outside the big temple in Jerusalem begging.

It was a good place to sit – there were lots of people coming and going throughout the day and on a good day his begging bowl would have lots of coins in it – mostly copper or silver. Once or twice he had found a gold coin in there amongst the rest but that was very unusual. He used to try to guess which of the people coming towards him would be the most generous – but he could never tell. Some rich-looking people would walk straight past him as if he wasn't there; others who didn't look as if they had very much themselves would reach into their pockets and take out a silver coin to put in his bowl.

He dreamed of what he would do if he had lots of silver and gold – some fancy new clothes, a tasty meal at a five-star inn, some new rugs or carpets for the house, perhaps. But mostly he had just enough for some bread and fish to eat each day and some oil for the lamps at home. He hadn't been able to buy any new clothes in ages.

One afternoon, Peter and John, two of Jesus followers, were going up to the temple to pray. They saw the man sitting there as usual and went over to speak to him.

'Hello' the man thought to himself, 'I wonder how much they are going to give me?'

'We haven't any silver or gold' Peter said and immediately the man's heart sank. 'But we will give you what we do have.'

'I wonder what that can be' the man thought to himself.

'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth' said Peter, 'stand up and walk!'

All of a sudden a strange feeling came into the man's legs – something he had never felt before.

'That's odd' he thought 'I can wiggle my toes...I can bend my knees...I can lift my feet off the ground...I can stand...I can walk...I can jump!'

And there he was now in front of everyone walking and jumping and shouting praises to God at the top of his voice.

Soon a crowd had gathered round to see what had happened.

'How come this man is able to walk now?' they asked Peter and John in amazement.

'It is by the power that comes from Jesus that this man has been healed' said Peter. 'Jesus was put to death on a cross – but God raised Him to life again. He is now in heaven and it is from there that he has sent us the Holy Spirit, just as He promised, so that we can bring God's love to others just as He used to do when He was on earth.'

'We cannot see Him but He is here all the same. The fact that this man has been healed shows that Jesus is alive and that all the promises He gave us are true. He is the One we must listen to and follow. If we put our trust in Him, God will forgive us for all the wrong things we have ever done and help us live as His friends now and forever!'

'It's true' shouted the man. 'Jesus really is alive! He gave His followers the power to make me well! Praise God!'

And off he went, skipping, jumping and dancing all the way home.

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

Before Jesus went back to heaven He gave His followers an important job to do. They were to care for others and share the Good News of God's love with them just as He had

done. He told them that He would send them an invisible helper, called the Holy Spirit, whom we heard about last week. With His help they would be able to do all that Jesus had done and more! They would be able to care for others in amazing ways.

One of the ways they would know the Holy Spirit was with them would be when He helped them do things for others that they would not have thought possible.

This does not mean that followers of Jesus are always able to make sick people better – although it does still happen – but Christians believe that as we pray for others and ask God to show us what we can do to help them, He will often answer our prayers and use us to make a difference in ways that will surprise us – and help us to know that the Holy Spirit is with us just as Jesus promised He would be.

It may be that He helps us to know exactly the right thing to say to someone. It may be that He puts it in our hearts to speak to someone, or to call them at just the right time. It may be that as we pray for someone, things begin to change.

Christians believe that the Holy Spirit helps us as we learn to pray for others and care for them as Jesus would. Who will you reach out to and pray for this week?

### **Prayer**

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 23. PETER AND JOHN ARE ARRESTED

Bible Base: Acts 4: 1-31; 5: 12-42

Key Christian Belief: The Holy Spirit helps us to live God's way.

Aim: To discover that Christians believe that the Holy Spirit helps us to live God's way even when it is tough.

You will need

- the accompanying PowerPoint presentation

#### **Introduction**

Ask the children if they have ever been in trouble at home or at school? What did they get into trouble for? What was the result? If possible, share a time when you got into trouble at home or at school when you were growing up.

#### **Telling The Story**

Peter and John were in trouble with the Jewish leaders. Last time we heard how a lame man had been healed and they had told everyone that it was the power that comes from Jesus that had healed him. Unfortunately, the Jewish leaders did not like this. They were the ones who had had Jesus sentenced to die on a cross just a few weeks earlier, thinking that would be the end of Him. Now Peter and John were telling everyone that He had come back to life again and that made them furious. There was no other way to explain what had happened to the lame man but still they would not believe it.

So they sent soldiers to arrest Peter and John and lock them up in prison. Next morning, they sent for them and asked them again to explain how the man had been healed.

'It is by the power that comes from Jesus that this man has been healed' said Peter. 'It shows that God has truly raised Him from the dead and that He is the One we must listen to and follow.'

'Nonsense' said the High Priest. 'You are never to speak of this man Jesus again.'

'But we must' said Peter. 'We have to do what God says. We cannot keep the good news about Jesus to ourselves.'

The Jewish leaders were furious but they let Peter and John go. When they got back to the others and told them what the leaders had said, they all gathered together and prayed that God would help them all to be brave and strong. In fact they prayed so hard that the whole building shook!

After that, even though they had been told not to, Peter and John went on telling people about Jesus and many more people started believing in Him. They brought sick people from the nearby villages to them and all of them were healed. Large crowds gathered in the street wherever they went and when they saw this, the Jewish leaders grew angrier and angrier.

'We have to put a stop to this' they said to each other and once again had Peter and John locked up in prison for the night.

Next morning, the leaders gathered together to decide what to do with Peter and John, but before they could send for them a messenger arrived, looking rather embarrassed.

'Those two men we locked up last night – did anyone let them out?'

'Of course not' said the High Priest.

'Well how come they are in the Temple courts telling people about Jesus right now?' asked the messenger.

'What?!' yelled the High Priest. 'Who let them out?'

'No-one' said the messenger. 'The gates are still locked and the guards are still outside. They got out without anyone seeing them. We don't know how they did it!'

What they didn't know was that an angel had appeared to Peter and John in the middle of the night. He had opened the doors for them and told them to go to the Temple courts and keep right on telling the people gathered there the good news about Jesus.

Once again the Jewish leaders sent for Peter and John.

'Didn't we tell you that you were not to speak of this man Jesus again?' they said.

'Didn't we tell you that we would have to obey God rather than you?' replied Peter.

'What on earth are we going to do with them?' the leaders asked each other. Some wanted to lock them up for a long time. Some even wanted to put them to death.

'But if we do that, the people won't like it' said the High Priest. 'There are too many people on their side. There could be a riot.'

'I don't think we should do anything' said one of the leaders whose name was Gamaliel. 'Let's just wait and see what happens. If there is any truth to the story they are telling about Jesus, then we will not be able to do anything to stop it – but if there

isn't, the fuss will all die down sooner or later. This time next week it will all have been forgotten about and everyone will be talking about something else.'

So the High Priest sent for Peter and John and ordered them to be beaten, because they had disobeyed their orders, but then he let them go.

When the followers of Jesus gathered together to pray this time they gave thanks to God because He had given them such wonderful good news to tell and had helped them to keep going even though others had tried to stop them.

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

Peter and John had a difficult choice to make. They had to choose whether they would do what God had told them to do or what their leaders were asking them to do. Doing what God said would get them into trouble with their leaders.

Can you imagine what that would be like? If you knew that doing what you believed was right would get you into trouble with your leaders?

It does not often happen in this country – but there are some countries around the world where being a follower of Jesus can get you into trouble. In some countries, it is illegal to read from the Bible, to meet with others to worship God or to tell others about Jesus. But there are many followers of Jesus who do so anyhow, often in secret. If they are caught they may be beaten, sent to prison or even killed but like Peter and John they choose to keep on following Jesus anyway – doing what they believe is right, no matter what their leaders say.

They do this because they truly believe that Jesus is God's Son and that because of Him all the wrong things in our lives can be forgiven and we can be friends of God now and forever. They would rather go to prison than stop following Jesus. And if they were here today they would say that the Holy Spirit, along with the prayers of others around the world, helps them to keep going when it is tough.

You are not likely to be arrested for believing in Jesus or for choosing to do what God says in this country. But there might be some who will make fun of you or stop being friends with you if you do. They may even try to persuade you to say or do something that you know is not right and make it hard for you to say no. But Christians believe that, if we ask Him to, the Holy Spirit will help us to keep on doing what God says even when others make it hard for us. And since we know it is what Jesus wants us to do, this is one way in which we can help others to see how special He is to us!

### **Prayer**

Ask God to give us courage always to say and do what they know is right. Ask Him also to be with Christians who live in countries where it is dangerous for them to practice their faith or tell others about Jesus.



## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 24. PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN OFFICIAL

Bible Base: Acts 8: 25-40

Key Christian Belief: The Holy Spirit helps us to understand God's word.

Aim: To discover that Christians believe the Holy Spirit helps us to understand what God says.

You will need

- the accompanying PowerPoint presentation

*NB: Instead of using the PowerPoint, you could get two volunteers to act out the story as you tell it. Have two chairs seated in the middle of the stage and have the official sitting on one of them. He could be reading and puzzling over a scroll. Have Philip run up to him and then climb on to the other chair. Have him point to the words on the scroll as if explaining them to the official. The official could then point to an imaginary pool and Philip could pretend to baptise him – dipping him under the water and then bringing him back up again. Have Philip wave goodbye and go off in the direction from which he came. Have the official climb on to the 'chariot' again and then (at the end of his journey) climb down and hurry off excitedly in the opposite direction.*

#### **Introduction**

Ask if anyone has been on a long journey – by plane, by boat or by car. Talk about how you fill in the time on a long journey. Play a game of 'I Spy' or similar game for long journeys.

Today's story is about someone going on a long journey by chariot. He had brought a copy of the book of Isaiah with him. (Isaiah is one of the books in the Old Testament part of our Bibles.) On his journey, he had four opportunities to do something with this. Listen out for what these were.

But listen out also for how the Holy Spirit helps the man in today's story. We have seen how the Holy Spirit helps us to live for Jesus and strengthens us when things are tough. Today we are going to hear about another way in which the Holy Spirit is able to help us.

#### **Telling The Story**

##### **1. An Opportunity To Read It**

His Excellency the Treasurer of Ethiopia was a very busy man. He had been to the Passover Festival in Jerusalem and was now on his way back home to Ethiopia. He had been very busy in Jerusalem and when he got back to Ethiopia he would be very busy there too. But for three whole days he would be travelling through the desert with nothing much to see or do. So he had decided that he would bring a copy of the book of Isaiah with him. He had been wanting to read it for some time but he had been so busy! But here, at last was the perfect opportunity.

Christians believe that the words written in the Bible are God's words. It is important to read (or listen to) them for ourselves. Do you have a Bible – at home, are there any in your classroom? If you have, have you ever read anything or had it read to you?

## 2. An Opportunity To Understand It

The Ethiopian official opened the scroll and began to read – but unfortunately he could not understand what he was reading. He tried to figure it out but it didn't seem to make any sense. He had no idea what it meant.

Meanwhile, Philip, one of Jesus' followers, was busy telling lots of people about Jesus in a place called Samaria. Hundreds of people came flocking to hear what he had to say. But one morning Philip sensed the Holy Spirit telling him to go into the desert.

'That's odd' thought Philip. 'There aren't usually too many people in the desert!'

Even so, Philip set off into the desert where the sun was blazing hot. After a while, out in the distance, he saw something moving. As he got closer he saw that it was a chariot with a very important-looking man sitting on it. He seemed to be reading something and Philip heard him mumble the words to himself out loud.

'Led like a lamb to the slaughter...God has laid on him the punishment we deserve...'

'He's reading about Jesus!' Philip thought. 'I wonder if he knows that.'

'Excuse me Your Excellency' Philip called out, running up to the chariot and walking beside it. 'Do you understand what you are reading?'

'No' said His Excellency sadly. 'How can I if no one explains it to me?'

'Well I think I can help you there' said Philip, grinning from ear to ear. Now he knew why God had wanted him to be in the desert.

'Jump on board' said His Excellency. 'Come up here, sit beside me and tell me what this means.'

So Philip climbed on to the chariot, sat down beside His Excellency and began to explain what he had been reading about to him.

'It's all about Jesus' said Philip. 'Hundreds of years ago Isaiah wrote that a rescuer would be born one day and that when he grew up he would be punished for the wrong things all of us have done, so that we can be forgiven.'

'And that's exactly what Jesus has done!' said Philip. 'It happened just as Isaiah said it would. And now God has raised Him back to life again to show everyone that He is the one we must listen to and follow.'

Now at last the man understood what he had been reading. God sent Philip to help him understand it. Give examples of people who could help them understand the Bible and what they are reading e.g. SU leaders, youth worker, minister, friends or family who are Christians.

### 3. An Opportunity To Obey It

'Is this true?' asked His Excellency. 'Did Jesus really die and come back to life again?'

'Yes, He did' answered Philip. 'Lots of people saw Him after He came back from the dead and can tell you all about it. And thousands have now started to follow Jesus.'

'Then I want to follow Him too' said His Excellency. 'Is there any reason why I couldn't be a follower of Jesus?'

'None at all' said Philip and when the chariot came to a little pool of water, he baptised him as a sign that he had now started to live a new life. As soon as the official knew what God wanted him to do, he was ready to do it. There and then, in the middle of the desert, he started to follow Jesus.

Christians believe that it is important not to just hear about Jesus but to follow him and look for opportunities to show His love to others as He has asked us to do? Once you know what God wants you to do it is important to do it!

### 4. An Opportunity To Share It

It is likely that this Ethiopian official was the first person from his country to hear the Good News about Jesus and follow Him. So when he got home he had a wonderful opportunity to tell others about Jesus too. And it seems that he did – because not long after that we read about a church that had been started in Ethiopia.

If you are a Christian, in what ways could you share the Good News about Jesus with others? Could you explain it to them yourself? Or could you invite them to come with you wherever you go (church, SU group, GB/BB) to learn about Jesus so that they can learn about Him too?

### **Exploring Christian Belief**

Remind the children of the four opportunities this man had and encourage them to look out for and make use of any similar opportunities they may have – to read, understand, obey and share what the Bible says.

Then ask if they noticed what part the Holy Spirit played in the story and point out that it was the Holy Spirit who sent Philip to help this man understand God's message to Him. God wants us to read or listen to what the Bible says. But sometimes it can be a hard book to understand! The good news is that God has not left us on our own to try to figure out what it means. He has given us the Holy Spirit to help us.



Christians believe that it was the Holy Spirit who helped those who wrote down the words that are in the Bible to know what to write – so that the words we find there are really God’s words to us. It is important that we take time to read or listen to them.

Christians also believe that God provides us with teachers – like Philip - who are gifted in helping us to understand what the Bible says. It is important that we talk and listen to them too if we want to really understand what the Bible says.

And Christians believe that as we read or listen to what the Bible says, the Holy Spirit is with us and that He will help us in one way or another to understand what it means, and what God wants to say to us through it, if we ask Him to. And then we can look out for opportunities to obey it and perhaps even share it with others as this man did!

Jesus promised His disciples before He went back to heaven that He would send them a helper who would remind them of everything He had told them and teach them God’s ways just as He had done. If we want to understand more about God and how to live as His friends, Christians believe we can ask the Holy Spirit to help us – and He will!

### **Song (optional)**

All About Jesus by John Althoff

### **Prayer**



Scripture Union Northern Ireland

