

BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

40. The Wise And Foolish Builders

Bible Base: Matthew 7: 24-27

Key Christian Belief: Jesus taught us to live God's way.

Aim: To show that it is wise to listen to Jesus and do as He says.

You will need:

- the accompanying PowerPoint presentation
- two hard hats

Introduction

Display the first pair of pictures - two bumble bees - and challenge children to spot any differences they can find between these.

Display the second pair of pictures - two houses - and again challenge children to spot any differences they can find.

Give them some time to do so and then explain that there aren't any differences between the two houses in the picture. However, in a story that Jesus told there were two houses that probably looked exactly the same - and yet there was a very important difference between the two - but it was a difference that could not be seen. Ask the children to listen carefully to the story and see if they can spot what the important difference was.

Story

Ask for two volunteers who are good actors to come up to the front and help you. Provide each with a hard hat to show that they are builders and ask one to act the part of the first builder as you tell the story and the other to act the part of the second.

Explain that Jesus had spent a long day teaching His followers how to live God's way. He told them: 'If you want to live in a way that pleases God, you must learn to -

- love God and do what pleases Him even when no-one else is watching;
- tell the truth and keep your promises so that others can rely on every word you say;
- look out for others and do all you can to help them;
- forgive those who hurt you;
- trust God and talk to Him about everything.

Then Jesus said: 'If you have been listening to what I have told you today and you do it, this is what you are like...'

You are like a wise builder who decided it was time for him and his family to have a new house. He had been to building class so he knew that the first thing to do was to find a nice piece of flat rock. So he looked around and once he had found one he began to build his house on the rock, brick by brick, taller and taller, higher and higher. Soon he needed to go and get a ladder and climb up to finish off the walls and to put on the roof. Once he had finished, he climbed down the ladder, took a step back to look at the house he had built and was very pleased with what he saw.

Then he chose his favourite colours of paint and painted his house outside and in, until it looked just right. Finally, he brought in the tables, chairs and beds that he would need for every room and when the house was ready he and his family moved in.

For some months they lived happily in their new house. Then one night there was a terrible storm. The wind howled, the lightning flashed, the thunder boomed, the rain poured and the rivers overflowed. This man looked out of his window, saw the storm - but wasn't worried about it one little bit. He knew the house he had built would keep him safe. So he just made a cup of tea, sat by the fire and read a book until the storm had passed.

Then Jesus said: 'If you have been listening to what I have told you today and you don't do it, this is what you are like...'

You are like a foolish builder who decided it was time for him and his family to have a new house. He had been to building class so he knew that the first thing to do was to find a nice piece of flat rock. However, in the spot where he wanted to build he couldn't find one. So he just shrugged his shoulders, thought it wouldn't matter and began to build his house on the sand instead - brick by brick, taller and taller, higher and higher. Soon he needed to go and get a ladder and climb up to finish off the walls and to put on the roof. Once he had finished, he climbed down the ladder, took a step back to look at the house he had built and was very pleased with what he saw.

Then he chose his favourite colours of paint and painted his house outside and in, until it looked just right. Finally he brought in the tables, chairs and beds that he would need for every room and when the house was ready he and his family moved in.

For some months they lived happily in their new house. Then came the night of the terrible storm. The wind howled, the lightning flashed, the thunder boomed, the rain poured and the rivers overflowed. This man suddenly heard a terrible rumbling noise and when he looked up, there was a huge crack running down the wall of his house - then part of the roof blew off and this man and his family had to run for their lives as their house fell down round them.

Ask the children what the important difference was between the two houses. One was built on rock - and one was built on sand. When the wind blew, it blew lots of sand away and when the rain fell, it washed away whatever was left and because the house built on sand had nothing left to stand on, it fell flat. But no matter how hard the wind blew it couldn't blow the rock away and no matter how much rain fell it couldn't wash the rock away and so the house built on rock stood firm.

Ask the children if they can tell yet which of the two houses in the picture is which. Of course they can't - but ask them to watch and they will see. Then show the animation.

Exploring Christian Belief

What made the foolish builder so foolish? He knew what to do but he didn't do it. He had been to building class and knew that if you wanted to build a house that would keep you safe - you needed to build it on rock, but he thought it wouldn't matter and he built his house on sand instead. And because he knew what to do but didn't do it, Jesus calls him a foolish builder.

We would say the same of anyone who, for example, had been to cycling proficiency lessons and had learned all about looking after a bike and keeping safe on the road, and then went out without wearing a helmet. We would say that was very foolish indeed.

Jesus is telling us that when it comes to living our lives in a way that pleases God, He is the one to listen to and follow; He is the One who knows what He is talking about. It's wise to listen to what He says and to do it. And then we can be sure of His promise that He will be with us and take care of us whatever happens. Just as the wise builder knew that he could trust his house to keep him safe, Christians believe we can trust Jesus to be with us and to take care of us whatever happens. I hope we will all choose to be like the wise builder - putting our trust in Jesus and learning to listen to Him and do what He says always.

Song

You might use the song 'I'm Gonna Build My House On Solid Rock' (by Doug Horley) to finish the assembly.