

BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

49. DAVID IS CHOSEN

Bible Base: 1 Samuel 16: 1-13

Key Christian Belief: God chooses a king who follows His ways.

Aim: To help children understand that Jesus is able to help us follow God's ways.

You will need:

- a tin of fake dog food (see below) and 3 plastic forks

For your fake dog food, you will need the label from a tin of dog food, another tin of food the same size (ideally with a ring pull at the top), some orange jelly, some fun-size Mars bars, sellotape and glue.

Carefully take the bottom off your tin of food. Empty the tin and wash it out. Make the jelly, ideally slightly thicker than the instructions. Cut the Mars bars into pieces and put them into the upturned tin until almost full. Then pour in the jelly to fill up any spaces. Leave the tin in a fridge over night to set. When set, carefully sellotape the bottom of the tin back in place. Now carefully remove the label from the tin of dog food and glue it around the one with the jelly and Mars bar pieces in it. Try to do this as carefully as possible so people won't notice the join. You should now have what looks like a tin of dog food with a sealed lid and ring pull intact!

Introduction

Introduce yourself and thank the school for having you. Try to look a little embarrassed as you explain that you haven't had time for breakfast yet and you're starving. Would anyone mind if you just had a little bite to eat before you start? Look apologetically at the staff as you take your tin of 'dog food' out of your bag. Hold the tin at the bottom with the seam towards you. Make sure the label is clear for the pupils to see.

Talk as you slowly open the dog food. Comment on the fact that you've seen the adverts and noticed how the dogs always look so fit and strong. You've noticed how shiny their hair is and how strong and healthy their teeth look. You reckon that if this stuff is good for dogs, it must be good for humans too.

Now start to open the tin and take your time as you put the fork in and lift the food out, ready to eat. Have a little sniff of the food - and comment on how appetising it smells. Savour a mouthful. Comment on things like the contrast between the jelly that just slips down the throat and the meat, which is so satisfying and chewy.

By this stage you will be getting a lot of odd looks and sounds of disapproval. Pretend to notice their disgust for the first time. Ask them what's wrong. Assure them that it is delicious and ask if anyone else wants to try it... There are usually one or two. Check they don't have any food allergies or anything they are not allowed to eat, because you can't guarantee what's in the dog food! Using the spare forks, give them a mouthful and just ask them if they like it. Try not to give them a chance to say what it is.

Now explain to the pupils what is really in the tin and how you swapped it. There will be a lot of relieved faces - not least, amongst the staff!

Point out that things aren't always as they seem. Although the label said 'dog food' that wasn't what was in the tin at all. When we opened it we found something else entirely.

A book, DVD or computer game may look really exciting but when you try it, it turns out to be really boring. On the other hand a book, DVD or computer game that doesn't look very exciting may turn out to be the best ever. You can't always tell by the cover.

People are not always as they seem either. Your new teacher might seem scary at first but once you get to know them they may turn out to be much friendlier than you think. On the other hand someone who looks friendly might turn out to be really nasty instead. You don't know what people are like until you really get to know them.

In today's story Samuel has the job of finding a new king for the people of Israel. There were seven people lined up in front of him. How would he know which one to choose? They all looked like they would make good kings...

Bible Story

The people of Israel were living in the land that God had promised to give them. When their enemies attacked them they looked to judges like Gideon (whom we heard about last year) to look after them. But now they wanted a king to lead them. God told them at first that He was their king but they kept on asking and finally God told them that they could make Saul their king. Saul started well but after a while began to think he could do whatever he liked and started to do things his way and not God's, so God told Samuel that he had decided to choose a new king to take Saul's place.

God sent Samuel to Bethlehem and told him that the new king would be one of Jesse's sons. So Jesse had seven of his sons line up before Samuel.

'Any one of these would make a great king' Samuel thought as he looked at them. 'Look how strong and handsome they are!' So Jesse and Samuel walked along the line and Jesse introduced each of his sons to Samuel. Samuel listened carefully to see which one God would choose.

As he came to the first one a little voice inside him said 'No - not this one.' And it was the same for the second. 'Not this one either.' And for the third. 'Not him.'

So Samuel and Jesse continued on down the line. 'No - no - no' said God each time until there was only one left. 'Well, it must be him' thought Samuel to himself but again God said 'No - not him either.'

'This is odd' said Samuel to Jesse. 'Are these all the sons you have?'

'Well no' said Jesse 'There is one more - David, my youngest. He's out in the fields over there looking after our sheep.'

'Bring him' Samuel commanded.

As soon as David arrived the voice inside Samuel said. 'He's the one. Anoint him to be the next king of Israel.' So David knelt down and Samuel poured some oil over his head as a sort of ceremony to confirm that God had chosen him to be the next king of Israel.

David wasn't the one Samuel would have chosen. If it had been up to him, he would have chosen any one of Jesse's other sons. They looked just right! But God told Samuel 'I don't judge people by how they appear on the outside but by what is in their hearts.'

Exploring Christian Belief

We can see what people look like on the outside. We can see how they behave in public but we do not know what they get up to when no one is looking. We cannot see what is going on inside their heads. We do not know what they are thinking or how they are feeling. We do not know what they will turn out like in the future. But the Bible says that God knows all these things. He knows everything there is to know about us. He knows what we are really like. He knew everything there was to know about David.

And he knew that David would be exactly the kind of king the people needed - the kind of king God wanted him to be. He knew that deep down in his heart David really loved Him. He would follow God's ways and teach the people to do the same. And this was what mattered to God. This was the kind of king God chose for his people.

And this is the kind of king that God has chosen for us today too. He promised David that one of his descendents would be king forever. And Christians believe that Jesus is that king! The Bible says that he was born into David's family, and was born in Bethlehem just as David was - and that He is the one that God has chosen to be king over all His people forever.

Jesus loved God and perfectly obeyed Him - so much so that Christians believe He was willing to die for us so that we could be part of God's forever Kingdom. The Bible says that if we choose to trust and follow Him He will help us to live God's way, as He did. He promises to provide us with everything we need and to keep us safe from all that is evil so that we can enjoy God's love and friendship now and always. He is exactly the kind of king we need and Christians believe that everyone, everywhere is invited to belong to His kingdom. And that includes you!

Prayer

Remind the children that God knows everything there is to know about each of us and finish with this prayer of David's from Psalm 19: 14 (CEV).

'Let my words and my thoughts be pleasing to you, Lord, because you are my mighty rock and my protector.' Amen