

Puppet Scripts to Introduce Themes: Lectionary Readings

For All Age Services, Children's Groups and Time Together before Junior Church

Bible readings and themes compatible with Roots

Scripts written by Rachel Coupe

CHARACTERS *(Only two puppets on stage at any time)*

Ben – Playful 10 year old boy

Lily – His 8 year old sister

Melanie – Their mother

Mike – Their father

Grandpa – Mel's Dad, recently moved back from Australia

Grandma – Mike's mother

Dixie the dog - Lovable rogue who can get away with being naughty; speaks English when alone

Tips: Practise a funny, **woofy voice** for Dixie the Dog. Use a puppet stand with a curtain or a table covered with a cloth. Check that it is safe. Props can be placed on a table or a tall flower stand next to the curtain.

Props and visual aids are helpful for children. If not available, be creative and help them to use their imagination.

Use safety pins to attach scripts to the back of the curtain and highlight each part. Use a large font-size.

For amplification, headset microphones stay in the right place and leave the hands free.

The puppets need to perform high enough for everyone to see - encourage people to move if necessary.

For suggestions re. buying puppets and puppet stands, please visit our website www.graceproject.org.uk

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6th November 2016

Luke 20,27-38

God of the living

Another Mum

Ben's friend is reluctant to call his new stepmother 'Mum'. Mel assures Ben that it's OK to have two Mums and they explore the meaning of marriage.

Theme: *Human relationships are complex and the mystery of transformed relationships in Heaven*

Roots themes explore: *Searching for truth; resting in the mystery; grounds for hope*

Humour: Ben wants to call his Mum 'Mel'
Parents are wiser than a 10 year old's friends? (Ben isn't sure)
Sam wants to go on honeymoon with his Dad and step-mother
It rains a lot in England
Ben claims to remember his parents' wedding before he was born
Wedding joke

Props: Sign saying: 'at home'

Introduction

Extol the virtues of the extended family and how the different roles are important in the raising of a child. Quote the proverb 'It takes a whole village to raise a child'. Noting that research shows that having several adult Christian role-models helps children to grow and remain in the Christian faith, discuss how church members can help families with faith development, especially if the grandparents live far away. Establish the value of diversity in family relationships. Explain that Ben's friend is struggling to come to terms with a change in his family circumstances. Things don't stay the same forever and everyone has to face changed circumstances from time to time. Here is a situation faced by many children today.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Another Mum'

After the Puppet Sketch

Does the congregation agree with Mel, that it's good to have lots of relatives who love you?

How would they help Sam as he adjusts to the idea of having a step-mother as well as a mother?

Listen carefully to today's Bible story and think about what Jesus might have said to Sam.

The Bible Reading

Ben	Mum, can I call you Mel?
Mel	Errr? I beg your pardon? I'm your mother, not your friend!
Ben	<i>(Shocked)</i> You're not my friend! Are you my enemy?
Mel	No, Ben. A parent is better than a friend. Mum's do what's best for you, even if you can't see why. Friends can be silly and if so, don't copy them. I'm responsible for you – and wiser than your friends – I hope!
Ben	Hugh! I'm 10. I don't need looking after. Mother, dear, can I call you Mel?
Mel	Mmmm, why would you want to do that?
Ben	Well, my friend Sam calls his new step-mother Anna.
Mel	That's different. Has he talked about it with Anna and his Dad?
Ben	Yeah, but Emily wants him to call her 'Mum' once they're married.
Mel	How does Sam feel about that?
Ben	He doesn't want to. He's already got a Mum and she might get upset. I mean, you can only have one mother, can't you. Having two mothers would be like, err ...be like having two heads.
Mel	I promise you. He won't grow a second head, if he has two 'Mums'. Lots of children have a step-mother.
Ben	I don't want any mother, except you, Mum. <i>(Gives Mel a hug)</i>
Mel	That's lovely, Ben, but you don't only have your Dad and me to look after you, do you? There's Auntie Amy, Grandpa and Grandma. Don't you enjoy having lots of relatives who love you.
Ben	I like getting lots of Christmas presents! <i>(Mel thinks Ben is being greedy!)</i>
Mel	Hugh!!! ...But you agree it's nice having lots of relatives? Is Sam's Dad is getting married soon? How exciting! When's the wedding?
Ben	Next Saturday. He's going on honeymoon to Devon. Sam wants to go too, but they won't let him!
Mel	I'm not surprised! It's a very special time for the newlyweds. Your Dad and I went to Bournemouth. It was long before you were born.
Ben	I remember!
Mel	Pardon?
Ben	I mean, I remember the photographs in the album. Dad said it rained all week and he got bored while you stayed indoors just knitting.
Mel	We chose Bournemouth as it's the sunniest town in England. It wasn't!
Ben	Dad said his best man joked that you'd married 16 men: 4 better, 4 worse, 4 richer and 4 poorer. Was it nice marrying 16 people, Mum?
Mel	You think I have 16 husbands? Two mothers is nothing compared to that!
Ben	<i>(Laughs)</i> I'll tell Sam I've got 16 Dads. That will make him laugh.
Mel	You do that, Ben. I think a bit of laughter will help. You tell him that joke!
Ben	OK Mum!

Built to last

Dixie waits outside faithfully while Lily and Grandma visit a large, old church. Lily is impressed by the solid stone walls, the precious contents and the history.

You may wish to adapt this script so that it includes items of interest from your own church.

Theme: Old churches are built to last

Roots themes explore: Active hope; faithful endurance; doing what is right

Humour: Lily and Grandma both have trouble keeping up with Dixie
Dixie desperate to go inside, but quite happy when bribed with a bone
Grandma is not older than a Norman church!
Cracked font won't hold water
Grandma more concerned for the brass lectern than for Lily being hurt
Lily isn't allowed to anything (i.e. sit on chest or walk on the brass monument on the floor)
You don't 'piss' in a piscine
Lily mimes carrying a water jar on her head comically

Props: Dog bone (or cardboard cut-out)
Pictures of items referred to
Picture of the Herod's Temple in Jerusalem
Anything old from your own church
Sign saying: 'at an old church'

Introduction

Find out which old churches people have visited. What was special about them?

Let's find out what Lily likes about a church she visits with her Grandma.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Built to last'

After the Puppet Sketch

Help the congregation appreciate old churches and how they've stood the test of time, especially as their builders didn't have the machines or materials that we have today. Discuss the grandeur of cathedrals and how impressive they are!

Show a picture of the Jerusalem Temple at the time of Jesus and describe how magnificent it was.

The thought of it being knocked down would have been shocking to those listening to the words of Jesus in today's Bible story.

The Bible Reading

Dixie	<i>(Rushing onto the stage)</i> Woof, woooooof, woof!
Lily	<i>(Following, panting loudly)</i> Wait for me, Dixie! <i>(Dixie barks at door)</i> You want to go inside the church? <i>(Dixie nods)</i> Wait for Grandma first.
Gma	<i>(offstage)</i> Wait for old Grandma. I can't keep up with your young legs!
Lily	<i>(shouting to Grandma)</i> Dixie wants to go inside the church.
Gma	<i>(offstage)</i> No!!! You can't take dogs into church!!! <i>(Dixie whimpers)</i>
Lily	Dixie's <u>really</u> upset! Here's a bone to keep you busy <i>(Dixie exits happily)</i>
Gma	<i>(offstage)</i> That dog will do anything for a bone! <i>(Grandma enters stage panting)</i> This is an old church! I think it's Norman.
Lily	Is it as old as you, Grandma?
Gma	Don't be cheeky! It's 900 years old. I'm only seventy- seven.
Lily	Oh! Sorry Grandma. Can we go in now? <i>(opens door, both pass through)</i> What's that bird bath doing here? It's all cracked and no good!
Gma	That, my dear, is even older than the church. It's a thousand years old. It's the font used to hold the water for baptisms.
Lily	Won't the water leak out through the crack?
Gma	No, they put a bowl inside. What else can you see?
Lily	That Eagle is very shiny. I'm going to climb the steps behind it. <i>(does so)</i>
Gma	Don't fall o..... ff. <i>(Lily nearly falls, grabs lectern, bangs head and cries out in pain)</i> Mind the lectern! Don't touch! Somebody has to clean that brass.
Lily	Oww! What about me, Grandma? That Eagle is hard!
Gma	It would serve you right if it carried you away in its claws. Be careful with things in an old church. Bibles have rested on that lectern for years!
Lily	<i>(Climbing down)</i> I think I need to sit down. Can I sit on this old chest...
Gma	<i>(Sharply)</i> No!
Lily	<i>(Sighing)</i> What can I touch?
Gma	<i>(Sharply)</i> Nothing! <i>(Lily sighs again)</i> Come over here <i>(beckons, Lily follows her)</i> Don't walk on those brass monuments!
Lily	So, why are they on the floor? This church is booby-trapped!
Gma	Look at this piscina.
Lily	Pissina? Is that to piss in? <i>(sings)</i> pissina, pissina, pissina!
Gma	Shh, Lily! The minister will hear you! It's a wash basin for washing hands.
Lily	But there are no taps! How can you wash your hands without water?
Gma	Have you never heard of jugs? In the old days, you had to fetch water.
Lily	I've seen pictures of girls carrying water on their heads, like this <i>(mimes)</i>
Gma	Behave, Lily! See how water drains through the thick stone church walls.
Lily	Wow! The walls are really thick. Is that how the church lasted 900 years!
Gma	Yes, Lily. Are you impressed?
Lily	<i>(Genuinely awed)</i> Very impressed, Grandma. Very impressed! <i>(both exit)</i>

The special one?

Mike plays a game with Ben based on 'The Lego Movie' He pretends to want to stick his 'special' tower together with superglue. Ben is horrified and splits the tower into three houses for Lucy, Batman and Emmet. He explains that Emmet, didn't look very special but turned out to be a greater hero than Batman. Dixie comes in and knocks the three houses off the table and they smash.

Theme: Public sign mocking Jesus as a King turned out to be true

Roots themes explore: Compassion for the lowly; unlikely heroes; the cross as throne

Humour: Mike thinks his tower is 'special' when it isn't
He pretends to want to super-glue his model together
Ben hides the superglue and it sticks a dog bone to the TV remote control
Dixie causes havoc and the Lego smashes

Props: Tall Lego tower

Sign saying: 'in the lounge'

Sign saying 'The special one' on one side and 'King of the Jews' on the other

Introduction

Discuss how hard it is to break up a Lego model that you're proud of!

Explain that 'The Lego Movie' is set in model built by a father who can't bear for his model to be changed. This inspires his son to create the baddy 'Lord Business' who won't allow any creativity to be expressed.

In today's sketch, Mike is pretending to be like that father.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'The Special One?'

After the Puppet Sketch

Sum up the conclusion that in 'The Lego Movie' Emmet didn't look like 'The Special One', but turned out to be a hero after all. Ask if it's true that heroes can look like ordinary people? Find out who the local heroes are and what they have done to help others. Include any family members who care for relatives.

Say that today's Bible reading describes the point in time when Jesus' friends must have doubted that he was 'The special one'. Turn over the sign to say 'King of the Jews'. Explain that this was a joke placed on the cross above Jesus' head to make fun of him. Listen and find out who took Jesus seriously. *(the second criminal mentioned)*

The Bible Reading

Where? In the lounge

Title of sketch: The special one?

Mike	<i>(Shows tower)</i> I've built a special, tall tower. I don't think anyone has ever built a tower as special as this before. I love the way you can build things from Lego that no one has ever done before. Don't you think it's especially creative and imaginative? <i>(Audience shouts 'Oh no it isn't')</i> Oh yes it is! <i>(Oh no it isn't)</i> Oh yes it is! <i>(Oh no it isn't)</i> Oh yes it is! <i>(Oh no it isn't)</i> All right, it isn't that original, I was just playing a game. I'm going to pretend to Ben that I think this tower is so wonderful I'm going to super-glue it together. Here he comes now. Don't tell him it's just a joke!
Ben	<i>(Enters)</i> Dad, what have you got there?
Mike	This, my son Ben, is the tallest Lego tower in the world.
Ben	No, Dad, it's not. I've seen much taller towers than that.
Mike	Don't argue with your father, Ben. I will super-glue it and keep it forever.
Ben	Dad, that's not what Lego is for. You break it up and make new things.
Mike	Mmmm, now where did I put the super-glue? Have you seen it, Ben?
Ben	<i>(To audience)</i> If I do see it, I shall hide it from Dad. He's gone nuts!
Mike	Where is that super-glue? It's around her somewhere!
Ben	I can't see it, Dad. <i>(to audience)</i> Here it is. I'll hide it under Dixie's bone.
Mike	Are you sure you haven't seen it, Ben?
Ben	No, Dad!
Mike	What's Dixie's bone doing by the TV? <i>(Picks it up but the TV remote is stuck to it)</i> Aaaaah! The super-glue has stuck the TV remote control to Dixie's bone. That's disgusting! <i>(Ben sniggers)</i> Did you do this, Ben?
Ben	Ummm, no – well yes. Dad you can't super-glue Lego together, so I hid it.
Mike	Huh! You want to turn my awesome tower into something else?
Ben	Yes Dad. <i>(Splits it into three)</i> Three houses. One for Lucy, one for Batman and one for Emmet. Superheroes deserve nice houses.
Mike	Great! Let's superglue them to survive a blast from the Kragle gun.
Ben	<i>(Firmly)</i> No Dad.
Mike	OK, Ben. You win. Just tell me which superheroes is the greatest.
Ben	Well Batman looked like a superhero and he did save Emmet from certain death, but in the end it was Emmet who saved the world.
Mike	Emmet, the unskilled labourer who didn't look very special at all?
Ben	Yes, he made everyone work as a team and risked his life for them.
Mike	So it was a surprise that he was the hero? I like your houses, Leave them on the table to show Lily what it means to be a true super-hero. I'd better go and mend this remote! <i>(exits)</i>
Ben	Dad's tower wouldn't stand up. These houses are much more interesting. <i>(Dixie rushes in, knocks Lego onto floor, it breaks)</i> Oh Dixie! <i>(to audience)</i> Perhaps I should have super-glued them together after all!

The broken leg

Ben goes to visit Grandma in hospital because she has a broken ankle. It was very painful and she can't wait to have the plaster off. Ben tries to cheer her up by reading the jokes on the get well cards.

Theme: Living with pain and waiting patiently for things to get better

Roots themes explore: Living with uncertainty; honestly facing fears; practising waiting

Humour: Ben's flowers died on the way
Grandma had broken her leg standing on a step ladder to clean a cobweb away
Ben resists a kiss from Grandma and pretends to faint
Ben has a 'man-cold' but she has a low resistance to pain
Grandma accidentally banks her foot with her stick and yells in pain
Jokes on the cards

Props: 'Plaster' on Grandma's leg
Cards
Walking stick
Sign saying: 'at the hospital'

Introduction

Ask whether anyone has been impatient waiting to get better from an injury or an operation?

Which was worse, dealing with the pain or having to stay put in one place?

Grandma is in hospital, having broken her leg. Let's find out if she's a 'patient patient'?

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'The broken leg'

After the Puppet Sketch

Find out who thought Grandma was a patient patient?

Can you remember the special reason why she was looking forward to Christmas?

Will the ankle be completely better straight away or will she still have to be careful?

In what ways does the coming of Jesus at Christmas promise that things will get better in our dark world?

As we start the season of Advent waiting for Jesus to come, it's fitting that we look forward to his coming again on today's Bible reading.

The Bible Reading

Where? At the hospital

Title of sketch: The broken leg

Ben	Grandma! Look what I've brought for you. Lovely flowers!
Gma	They're lovely... <i>(sees they're wilted)</i> Errr... what a lovely thought!
Ben	They're a bit droopy. I picked them myself from the garden.
Gma	Then they are extra special. Give your old Grandma a kiss. <i>(Ben steps back as she does so)</i> Some water will help. This hospital is very hot!
Ben	It's too hot. I think I might faint. <i>(pretends to)</i> Only joking!
Gma	I don't mind the heat. It's the pain I can't stand. There's nothing to do here, except sit and think about how my ankle hurts. It's taking so long to get better!
Ben	How did you break your ankle?
Gma	Well I couldn't sleep so I got out of bed to go to the bathroom and on the ceiling was a spider's web. A spider's web, would you believe! A catastrophe like that can't wait until morning, so I fetched a stool and a feather duster and climbed up to brush the cobweb away, when...
Ben	Oh Grandma, you shouldn't stand on stools at your age.
Gma	Huh! The worst thing is, the cobweb is still there. It's terrible!
Ben	How long do you need to wear the plaster on your foot. It's huge!
Gma	If I'm good and do as the doctor says, I should have it off for Christmas. The plaster, that is, not the leg! I can't wait to have it off!
Ben	You'll have to wait, Grandma! Can I look at your cards?
Gma	<i>(Points with stick accidentally hitting her foot, screams loudly)</i> Ahhhhh!
Ben	I can get them Grandma. Are there any funny ones?
Gma	Have a look. I put the rude ones away before you came.
Ben	<i>(Reading)</i> What do you give a lemon that has been hurt?
Gma	Lemon-Aid. I know every word on those cards.
Ben	Why did the cookie go to the hospital?
Gma	He was feeling crumbie!
Ben	Why did the doctor lose her temper?
Gma	Because she didn't have any patients.
Ben	Don't get well soon, get well now!
Gma	If only I could! Time goes so slowly here.
Ben	Does it help having visitors?
Gma	Yes, it's nice to know your family care <i>(Ben sneezes)</i> and want to share their germs!
Ben	Sorry, Grandma. Perhaps I shouldn't have come.
Gma	Yes you should. Don't let a cold stop you. Unless it's a man-cold!
Ben	And Grandma, don't let a swollen ankle stop you from enjoying your hobbies. How's your knitting coming along.
Gma	Mmmm you're right – but are you calling me a nit?

Snakes and Ladders

Ben and Lily play snakes and ladders until Dixie knocks the board over. They decide to make up their own large version of the game to take to church.

You will need someone to encourage the audience to join in with 'Oh Yes He Will'

Theme: A radical new perspective on what pleases God
Roots themes explore: Radical character; radical message; radical consequences

Humour: Lily is a poor loser and the siblings start name calling
Dixie knocks the game over
Initial idea for a ladder messages
Humorous picture of God looking happy

Props: Pen
Paper
pictures to unroll for the congregation to see saying:
Ladder - Marry a prince and live in a palace
Ladder - Say sorry and mean it
Snake - Boasting and showing off
Picture of a happy God with a large beard
Signs saying: 'At home' and 'Oh Yes He Will'

Introduction

Ask who likes to play snakes and ladders? How does it feel to slide down a long snake just before you reach the winning square? Hopefully the members of the congregation are mature enough to pick themselves up and carry on. Is anyone willing to admit to giving up and refusing to play when they were younger and losing?
Lily is at a disadvantage when she plays games with her older brother, Ben, and gets frustrated. Let's see how she gets on.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Snakes and Ladders'

After the Puppet Sketch

If the game of snakes and ladders represents our Spiritual walk with God, what else might be written on
(a) the snakes and (b) the ladders?
Snakes symbolise bad situations in the game. What are the negative associations with snakes?

Listen and find out why the religious leaders are called 'snakes' in today's Bible reading.

The Bible Reading

Ben	I'm beating you, I'm beating you
Lily	I hate this game of snakes and ladders. If I can't win, I don't want to play!
Ben	Don't be silly, Lily. Grow up! Let's take a break while I go and get us both a drink. (Exits)
Lily	(Calling after Ben) Can I have a chocolate biscuit too?
Ben	(Offstage) No! They're bad for you.
Lily	If you get me a chocolate biscuit I'll carry on playing.
Ben	(Offstage) Oh! All right then.
Lily	If I could throw a double six I could still beat Ben. (Enter Dixie) What do you think, Dixie? You want me to win, don't you!
Dixie	Woof, woof, woof (Nodding head)
Lily	I thought you did. Come here and give me a big cuddle. (Dixie jumps up at Lily knocking her over. Pieces of the game fly everywhere.) Oh Dixie! Say sorry!
Dixie	(Exits whimpering pathetically)
Lily	I'll put all the pieces back so that I'm winning. Ben won't notice the difference!
Audience	Oh yes he will
Lily	Oh no he won't
Audience	Oh yes he will
Lily	Oh no he won't
Ben	(Returning) Oh yes I will! What do you take me for? A nutcase?
Lily	No just a slippery snake who's always winning every game. It's not fair!
Ben	That's because I'm cleverer, smarter and got a bigger brain than you.
Lily	My brain's still growing it will be ten times the size of yours when I'm grown up
Ben	Then I'll call you a 'big head'. (Both turn away from each other sulking. Ben has a thought.) We could make up our own giant-size snakes and ladders game. We could take it to Junior Church to play with our friends.
Lily	(Cheering up) That's a good idea. Instead of counters, we could jump across the snakes and ladders from one side of the hall to the other.
Ben	All we need is some good ideas to write on the snakes and ladders.
Lily	I've got a really good one!
Ben	What?
Lily	I've forgotten. (Thinks again) I know (writes and drops ladder) Marry a prince and live in a palace.
Ben	They won't like that one at church. Being important doesn't matter to God. How we treat other people is what counts with him.
Lily	Oh! (thinks, writes and rolls out words) 'Say sorry and mean it'. Is that better?
Ben	Much better. When you say sorry and really mean it, that could be a really long ladder that helps you win the game. (Lily starts drawing)
Lily	Your turn, Ben. Can you make something up to write on a snake?
Ben	Mmmmm. (writes and rolls out) 'Boasting and showing off'. What's that you've written, Lily?
Lily	(Finishing off) Oh, just a picture for the top. It's a happy looking God sitting on a cloud in the sky. (Rolls it out)
Ben	Errrr, yes, Lily. I errr like the beard! (both exit laughing)

'I Want'

Lily asks for a horse for Christmas. She makes unrealistic promises about looking after it. Mum talks her into asking for a 'My Little Pony' play set. Watching an advert for the playset makes Lily realise that this would be a good present to receive.

Theme: Wrong expectations

Roots themes explore: Crushed expectations; time for change; living the kingdom

Humour: Lily wants a pony for Christmas
Unrealistic promises
Mel's attempts to sell the 'play set' idea
Lily changes her mind after watching the advert

Props: Picture of TV screen
Sign saying: 'At home'

Introduction

Find out what people are hoping to receive for Christmas. Does anyone have any trouble answering the question 'What would you like for Christmas?'

Where do they look to get ideas of what to ask for?

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'I Want'

After the Puppet Sketch

How would Mel have felt about Lily's disappointment about not getting a horse for Christmas? (e.g. guilt, frustration, annoyance at her greed etc)

Notice how easily Lily was persuaded first by her friends to want a horse and then by an advert that she really wanted a 'My Little Pony' play set instead. What advice should her mother be giving her?

Are their better sources of advice to listen to?

Listen to the Bible story today and find out the name of the prophet Jesus quotes as being worth listening to. What expectations did this prophet give the Jews?

The Bible Reading

Mel	What would you like for Christmas, Lily?
Lily	I want a horse.
Mel	A horse?
Lily	Yes a horse! (Mel looks at her strangely) You know, an animal with four legs, a mane and a beautiful swishy tail.
Mel	That's a very strange present to ask for! Why do you want a horse?
Lily	My friend Zoe said she was asking for a horse and everyone said they did too
Mel	So you don't really want a horse, you just said it to keep your friends happy?
Lily	(Shouting) Mum, I really, really, really want a horse!
Mel	O.K. I heard you! Errrr. You didn't even say please!
Lily	Pleeeeeeeeeeease!
Mel	Who's going to look after this horse?
Lily	Me!
Mel	Are you going to feed it every day at 6 o'clock before school, even in winter?
Lily	Yes!
Mel	Are you going to muck out the stable every day after school?
Lily	Yes!
Mel	And where do you think we are going to keep this new horse of yours?
Lily	That's easy. You just buy a field.
Mel	Lily, do you know how much it costs to keep a horse? We can't afford it.
Lily	I'll earn the money by doing chores for pocket money. Let me wash up now.
Mel	(Firmly) Lily, I will get you a horse. Not a real one, that's just impossible, but I've seen a lovely 'My Little Pony' play set that I think you'd love.
Lily	(Sarcastically) My Little Pony? My Little Pony? That's not a real horse.
Mel	It's the best I can do, Lily. Sorry! (Lily cries comically) Get over it, Lily. You must know you can't have a real horse. I know you're disappointed! (Lily keeps crying) I give up. I'll put the TV on for you I have things to do. (Exits)
Lily	It's not fair! <u>All</u> my friends are getting a horse for Christmas. They told me so. What's on the TV today. Ugh! Just adverts, (changes channel) adverts (changes channel) and more adverts. I was hoping to watch a horse show so that I can learn how to ride like a famous jockey. (Recites nursery rhyme, doing actions.) 'This is the way the ladies ride, clip clop, clip clop, clip clop. This is the way the gentlemen ride, gallop-a-trot, gallop-a-trot, gallop-a-trot. This is the way the farmers ride. hobbledy hoy, hobbled hoy and down into a ditch.' (Laughs) That's a silly old fashioned rhyme! (TV advert catches her eye) Oh!
TV	You can have so much fun with 'My Little Pony' this Christmas. It's every little girl's dream to own a prize-winning pony! Buy the 'My Little Pony Christmas set today'.
Lily	That looks fun. That's what I really, really, really want for Christmas! (Exits)

A Letter to Santa

Lily is writing a letter to Santa Clause asking him to wake her up when he comes. She wants to talk to him about going to help in his factory in Lapland. Dad takes the letter and brings back a reply from Santa. Lily should choose clothes the right size for her new baby cousin Jack.

Theme: Dad helps Lily to be generous like Father Christmas in an appropriate way
Roots themes explore: The role of fathers; angelic messages; righteousness redefined

Humour: Lily would like to work in Santa's factory
Dad warns her of the consequences
Lily sleep-talks as Santa leaves her gifts outside her bedroom door

NB The sketch is acted out as though Santa is real in order not to spoil Christmas for younger children.

Props: Pen
Paper
Sign saying: 'Lily's bedroom'

Introduction

Explain the importance of Father Christmas to children in a diplomatic way. Do they know what time he comes on Christmas Eve? Agree that children have to be asleep before he can come.

Explain that Lily thinks it would be fun to go to Lapland and work in the toy factory there.

Let's find out whether Santa agrees that this is the right thing for a young girl to do?

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'A Letter to Santa'

After the Puppet Sketch

In the sketch, Santa Clause thought of a better way for Lily to help him. What was it? (Find an outfit for baby Jack)

How did Santa communicate this request to Lily? (by a letter)

Why couldn't Father Christmas come into the room? (Lily might wake up and see him)

Speculate whether Lily would have remembered the conversation next morning.

We'll now here how Joseph got a message in the middle of the night telling him to do the right thing. The advice wasn't quite what he expected it to be!

The Bible Reading

Where? In Lily's bedroom

Title of sketch: A Letter to Santa

Mike	You look very busy, Lily!
Lily	Yes I'm writing a letter.
Mike	Let me see (Lily covers it up quickly) Who are you writing to?
Lily	It's a secret!
Mike	Are you writing to the Queen?
Lily	No, of course not.
Mike	Are you writing to Ollie Murs?
Lily	No and I'm not telling you.
Mike	Is it to Santa Clause?
Lily	Oh, Dad you guessed.
Mike	Why are you writing to Father Christmas.
Lily	Errr... I want him to wake me up when he comes and interview me for a job in his toy factory in Lapland.
Mike	Lily, you do know how far away that is don't you. And it's really cold!
Lily	But Dad, I want to be helpful and make children happy!
Mike	Mmm... If you give me the letter I'll take it to him at (place to visit Santa)
Lily	Can't I give it to him myself?
Mike	No, Lily it's your bedtime, but it's late night shopping. I'll take it now.
Lily	Oh, I suppose so. Goodnight, Dad!
Mike	Goodnight Lily (Exits)
The next morning	
Mike	Good morning, Lily. I've got a letter for you!
Lily	Is it from Santa?
Mike	Yes. Open it now. I can't wait to see what it says. (Lily takes out letter)
Lily	Read it for me, Dad.
Mike	OK. Dear Lily, Thank you for your lovely letter. You are very kind wanting to help me make toys for all the children. I'd love to have you in Lapland, but you should stay in (your town) so you can go to school and be with your family and friends. However, I do need your help. I don't know what size outfit to get for your baby cousin Jack, he's growing so fast! Please can you buy one the right size and let me have it before Christmas Eve?
Lily	Dad, we have to go shopping today! Father Christmas needs my help!
Mike	Yes, Lily, we'll go today and I'll take the clothes you choose to Santa.
Lily	Come on, Dad. Hurry up! (Both exit)
Christmas Eve	
Lily	(Snores; noises off-stage; Lily sleep-talks) Is that you Santa? I want to talk to you. (More noises off-stage)
Santa	(offstage) Don't wake up, Lily? I'll leave your presents outside your door, just in case. No one is allowed to see Santa Clause! Thanks for Jack's clothes. He's going to love them! Goodnight, Lily!
Lily	Goodnight, Santa (snores again)

Just like a real baby

Lily has an unexpected Christmas present from Baby Jack. It's a baby doll and she treats it like a real baby.

Theme: The reality of Jesus coming as a baby

Roots themes explore: Telling the Christmas story

Humour: Lily is surprised to get an extra gift
How can Baby Jack buy and wrap a Christmas present?
Lily treats the doll as a real baby and can't put it down
The doll gets covered in food and burps

Props: Baby doll wrapped loosely so that the wrapping paper is easily removed
Sign saying: 'At home'

Introduction

Find out whether the congregation have asked for specific Christmas presents. What did they ask for?

Does anyone prefer to be surprised? Ask for stories about surprise gifts not expected.

Lily is going to receive an extra gift she didn't expect.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Just like a real baby'

After the Puppet Sketch

Does anyone know a child who treated a doll like a real person, as Lily did?

Adults can feel surprised that they do this, even though they may have done so themselves in years gone by.

Jesus coming as a baby was a huge surprise, even though the Jews were expecting a Messiah

The Bible Reading

Where? At home

Title of sketch: Just like a real baby

Grandpa	(Shouting to Lily, offstage) Lily, I've got something for you!
Lily(offstage)	I'll come in a minute!
Grandpa	Why don't you come now?
Lily	I'm busy!
Grandpa	Busy? Busy doing what?
Lily	Playing with 'My little ponies'. I can't come until they've been fed.
Grandpa	I've got another Christmas present for you. I can put it away for tomorrow if you're too 'busy'. (Lily appears very suddenly) I thought you were feeding your ponies?
Lily	They can wait! (Snatches parcel and opens it fast) It's a baby doll!
Grandpa	It's from Baby Jack. Do you like it?
Lily	I love it. But how did little Baby Jack manage to buy and wrap a present?
Grandpa	Maybe he had a little help? Grown ups do that sort of thing sometimes.
Lily	Huh! Well I wish they'd be honest about it. If grown-ups can pretend, then so can I. I'm going to pretend this is a real baby!
Grandpa	What will you and your baby do together first.
Lily	(Thinks) It'll need a new nappy. I'll change him in the bathroom. (exits)
Grandpa	Last time I looked in the bathroom, there were no nappies there.
Lily(offstage)	Found some! Oh Baby! Your nappy is such a mess! Pooey!
Grandpa	I can just imagine the smell! Lily has a powerful imagination.
Lily	(Returning) Baby had a terrible pongy nappy, but he's all clean now.
Grandpa	(Smelling) Ah, no smells now. Lily. I think it's tea-time now. Put your doll down, wash your hands and come and eat.
Lily	No way! I'm not putting my baby down. He's hungry too!
Grandpa	(Sighing) Oh, all right then. Baby can eat too. Just baby food, of course.
Lily	My baby likes bananas, sultanas and chocolate. Especially chocolate.
Grandpa	Let's try the healthy food first. I'll get a banana. (Exits to get banana)
Lily	You love bananas, don't you, Baby! (in baby voice) Yes I love bananas!
Grandpa (returning)	Here you are, Baby. A lovely banana. (Lily makes Baby chuck it on floor) Naughty Baby! Let me get you some sultanas. (Exits to get sultanas)
Lily	You love sultanas, don't you, Baby! (in baby voice) Yes I love sultanas!
Grandpa (returning)	Here you are, Baby. Lovely sultanas. (Lily makes Baby chuck throw in the air) Naughty Baby! Let me get you some chocolate. (Exits fetch)
Lily	You love chocolate, don't you, Baby! (in baby voice) Yes I love chocolate!
Grandpa (returning)	Here you are, Baby. Lovely chocolate. Your favourite! (Lily makes Baby make a mess with the chocolate all over face and clothes) Naughty Baby. Look what a mess you've made.
Lily	That's what babies do, Grandpa! Mess their faces, mess their bibs, mess their nappies and burp really loudly. (Baby 'burps' and says 'pardon!')

