

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

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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1st Jan 2017

Matthew 2,1-12

Discovery

The Telescope

Grandma is coming to visit soon, but Lily hasn't yet opened up the gift from her (a telescope) Mike shows Lily how to set it up and look at the stars. Once Lily looks in the right place, she is excited about what she can see. Dixie thinks it's a bone!

Theme: The excitement of learning to use the microscope, a gift received at Christmas

Roots themes explore: finding focal points; giving and receiving gifts; moments of revelation

Humour: Lily can't remember what Grandma bought her for Christmas

A gift you don't understand is 'boring'

Mike's panic that his mother will discover her gift unopened

Lily mistakenly looks in the wrong place and thinks net curtains are stars

Star joke

Dixie climbing over Lily

Props: Sign saying: 'In the lounge, by a window'

Small telescope on a stand

(toy or kitchen towel middle covered in foil & use a small camera tripod or a small box covered in foil)

Introduction

Ask whether there are any Christmas presents unopened at people's homes. (They might not want to admit publicly which presents haven't been appreciated yet.) Joke you are sure every box of chocolate has been opened!

Be impressed if any boxes of chocolates haven't been opened yet!

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'The Telescope'

After the Puppet Sketch

Perhaps there is a member of the congregation who needed help to learn how to use (or set up) a techy Christmas gift?

Until you know how to use such gifts they seem 'boring', but with the 'revelation' of what it can do, become really exciting.

Say that the Bible reading is about the Wise Men who initially looked in the wrong place for Jesus. As you listen, think what new understanding would they have known about the baby Jesus by the time they went home?

The Bible Story

Where? In the lounge near a window

Title of sketch: The telescope

Mike	Lily, Grandma's coming to visit later. Did you like her Christmas present?
Lily	Err.... I can't remember what she got me. Ooops!
Mike	You had better check your list! Is it in that pile of, err... boxes messing up the lounge. How many times do I have to tell you to put your things away???
Lily	Sorry, Dad. (looks at pile) I remember it was this thingy m'jig that's a... I don't know what it is!
Mike	Lily, it's a telescope. Grandma will be very sad you haven't even opened the box. Why haven't you opened it yet.
Lily	It's boring...
Mike	You don't know until you open it. Let me help you. (Dixie barks off-stage) Go away Dixie. I'm busy setting up some delicate apparatus. You'll break it!
Lily	Why does it have to take so long. I'm bored! Can I let Dixie in? (does so and he runs off with the instructions) Hey Dixie! Come back with the instructions!
Mike	Oh, no!!! Be patient. I'll tell you a joke while you're waiting. Why couldn't the astronaut book a room on the moon?
Lily	I don't know, why couldn't the astronaut book a room on the moon?
Mike	Because it was a full moon! Ah! I can see the moon! I can see the moon, with mountains and shadows...
Lily	Let me see! (jumping up and down)
Mike	Just a minute. If I turn the telescope just a little, I can see Jupiter and four tiny spots next to it. Did you know Jupiter has four moons? Wow!
Lily	I know! Can I see, Dad – pleeeeeease?
Mike	I thought it was 'boring'?
Lily	It is boring watching you have all the fun. Grandma gave the telescope to me, not you!
Mike	I'm glad you've understood what a special gift this was. Your turn. (Lily looks through telescope) What can you see?
Lily	A white mushy mess. I was right. It is boring.
Mike	You're looking at the net curtain in the window. Try to the left.
Lily	Oh, that's better! I can lots of shiny dots now. Are those the stars in the sky?
Mike	I think so. It's difficult to know without seeing myself. I'll fetch back the manual Dixie ran off with. We need it for the map of the sky. (exits)
Lily	Wow! This is so cool. I never realised the sky was... so big! (enter Dixie)
Dixie	(Begging) Woof, woof, woof!
Lily	Oh, would you like to look through the telescope too, Dixie? (climbs on Lily)
Dixie	Woof, wooooooof! (jumping up)
Lily	Careful! It's delicate. I'll lift you up so you can seebefore Dad sees us. (lifts Dixie who starts to bite the end) Oh, Dixie, it's not a bone! Careful, now! (Both fall down) Ahhhhh!

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? It's superman!

Ben is talking to Grandma while playing a new Superman video game. The reporter Clark Kent is secretly Superman from Krypton who has Superpowers to save the world. Even his girl-friend Lois Lane doesn't know he's Superman. Grandma has memories of Superman from her younger days but is confused by technology.

Theme: Identifying a superhero

Roots themes explore: Jesus identifying with us in baptism; John's uncertainty about who Jesus is; God's affirmation

Humour: Grandma doesn't really understand modern technology
The amazing things that Superman can do
Superman wears pants outside his trousers
Grandma remembers fancying Superman in her younger days
She would have recognised Superman as being Clark Kent

Props: Mobile phone
Picture of Superman on the front of the curtain
Sign saying: 'at home'

Introduction

Find out which are the favourite Super-heroes.

Some super-heroes appear to be 'ordinary people' when they aren't 'saving the world'.

e.g. Batman is Bruce Wayne and Superman is Clark Kent; neither of whom look like super-heroes.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it superman?'

After the Puppet Sketch

Does anyone agree with Grandma that Lois ought to have recognised her own boyfriend when he was being Superman?

Now think about Jesus during His childhood and early adult life as a carpenter. Ask how the people around him could have known that He was the Son of God?

Listen to the revelation of His true identity as His ministry was about to start.

The Bible Story

Where?

Title of sketch:

Ben	Is it a bird? Is it a plane? It's Superman!
Grandma	I'm sorry, Ben. What did you say?
Ben	Is it a bird? Is it a plane? It's Superman!
Grandma	I can't see any birds in here, or planes either. Are you feeling OK?
Ben	I would be feeling OK if I could get a higher score on this Superman game.
Grandma	Let me see, dear. Oh, it's one of those computer games you play on a mobile phone. I can't get the hang of those sort of games.
Ben	It's easy, Grandma. You click the arrows for up or down.
Grandma	Oh! That sounds too hard for me!
Ben	It makes Superman fly. It's as easy as that.
Grandma	Since when was it easy for people to fly?
Ben	Yeah, well Superman comes from the planet Krypton and has Super-powers. He can fly through the sky like a plane.
Grandma	Oh, the stories are coming back to me now. I used to quite fancy Superman when I was a youngster. It was those red pants on top of his trousers that used to get me going. (shakes) Oooooooh!
Ben	(Shocked) Really, Grandma. You know he has a girl-friend. Lois Lane is the love of his life.
Grandma	Ah! The silly girl who didn't recognise her own boy-friend flying around! If he'd have been my boyfriend I'd have recognised him in any disguise by his body movements & that special walk he had (mimics a comic walk).
Ben	Is that right, Grandma? The actor who played superman disguised that special walk so that not even you, with your special 'walk noticing' powers would have been fooled.
Grandma	Are you calling me a fool, young man?
Ben	No, no Grandma. I'm just saying superman is extra special.
Grandma	Bah! Extra special! No one could be as extra special to me as you are, Ben. My special, first grandson. My family is very special to me, you know. You do know, don't you, that Superman isn't real, don't you!
Ben	(Sighing) Yes, Grandma. Thank you. Can you let me play my game now?
Grandma	(Mildly offended) Of course! (quiet for a short while) Is that what you call virtual realarabbit-reality?
Ben	(Not really concentrating) It's just a game.
Grandma	Those pictures aren't really real, you know.
Ben	Of course, not, Grandma! Everyone knows that.
Grandma	(Pointing to the screen) That one's Clark Kent, the news reporter.
Ben	Thanks, Grandma
Grandma	That one's Superman. You can tell he's the superhero by the red cape.
Ben	Thanks, Grandma. I know! (Gives her a big, affirming hug)

Birthday fruit

Ben's friend John has chosen to go fruit-picking for his birthday treat. Lily thinks that's a strange birthday party, but wants to go too once she hears how much fun it was.

Theme: Enthusing others to want to join you

Roots themes explore: The invitation to come and see; stages of revelation; remaining with Jesus

Humour: Lily pretends that she is not jealous of Ben going to a birthday party
The farmyard smells
Fruit pun
Lily pretends she doesn't like strawberries, but later can't resist eating the strawberries Ben picked
Lily wants to go to the farm herself once she hears what a good time Ben had

Props: bowl
Signs saying: 'in a fruit-farm car park' and 'back home'

Introduction

Find out from the congregation to recommend their favourite places to go at the weekend.
Enjoy hearing about how much fun those places are.

Explain that Ben has been invited to go to a fruit-farm as his friend, John's birthday treat.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Birthday fruit'

After the Puppet Sketch

Ask why Lily was being so grumpy, saying that she didn't like the fruit-farm (smelly, full of boys and she was jealous)
Do you think that Ben was surprised when she ate lots of strawberries? (No, he knew she liked them really)
What made Lily change her mind and want to go to the fruit-farm, after all? (Ben talking about it enthusiastically)

Listen to the Bible story and find out what Andrew was so excited about that he wanted his brother to come and experience too. (meeting the Messiah)

The Bible Story

Where? At home

Title of sketch: Birthday fruit

Mel	Have a good time at the birthday party, Ben! (Lily is sulking)
Ben _(offstage)	Thanks, Mum! I've never been to a fruit farm before.
Lily	It's stupid picking fruit at a birthday party! They must be going bananas!
Mum	Bring back lots of lovely strawberries!
Ben _(offstage)	I will!
Lily	Well I'm not going to eat any of his dirty strawberries.
Mel	(surprised) I thought you loved strawberries!
Lily	Not if Ben and his friends picked them. They'll be covered in boy-germs!
Mel	Don't be like that, Lily. We'll wash them first. Are you jealous that Ben has been invited to a birthday and not you?
Lily	Jealous? Why would I want to go to a birthday party that's all boys. I'd never want <u>my</u> birthday party at a farm that's as smelly as this. Pooooey!
Mel	It's a healthy farm smell. You're just not used to it.
Lily	Get me out of this stinky, smelly place. I want to go home.
Mel	I want to go home too. You're not being very nice at the moment. Put your seat belt back on quickly. I was going to treat you to a milk-shake at the café here, but not when you're in such a bad mood.
Lily	Hugh!
Back home	
Ben	Here you are, Lily. I've brought you some of the strawberries I picked.
Lily	I'm not hungry.
Ben	OK, suit yourself. I'll eat them. (Lily watches jealously) Oh, come on, Lily. We all know that you like strawberries really. Why don't you have one?
Lily	I'm only going to have <u>one</u> . That's all, (takes one)
Ben	The fruit-farm was amazing. I filled 4 punnets and ate some too. Mum's going to use them to make a Pavlova for tea tonight. Have another one.
Lily	Oh, all right – just <u>one</u> more. But only one. (takes one) Was it <u>really</u> fun at the fruit-farm?
Ben	(Enthusiastically) Yes it was. First we had to hunt for the best bushes with the most fruit. The ones near the entrance were no good because all the best fruit had all been picked. But we found a patch full of big juicy strawberries. They tasted really sweet. Do you want another one?
Lily	Errr... well go on then (takes another)
Ben	I'm full now, so why don't you eat the rest? (Lily tucks in greedily) I've asked Mum if I can go back again tomorrow to pick some more. But you won't want to come, will you? Mum said you don't like strawberries!
Lily	(Talking as if mouth is full) Oh, errr! I've changed my mind. (shouts) Mum! Can we all go back to the fruit-farm tomorrow? (no answer) Huh, she can't hear. Where is she? (exits shouting) Can we pick fruit tomorrow?

22nd January 2017

Matthew 4.12-23

The Promise of the Kingdom

'Get Up and Go'

Mike is feeling depressed after recovering from a 'man-cold'. Mel spots a running group passing the house. They train together until they are fit enough to join the group.

Theme: Accepting the invitation to join a local running group

Roots themes explore: Turning towards the light; responding to Jesus' call; the nearness of the kingdom

Humour: Mike is feeling lethargic
Mel is impatient with his lack of energy
Just the thought of exercise makes one feel tired
Very colourful trainers
Moaning and groaning when starting to train
Mike feels up to joining the running club surprisingly quickly

Props: Trainers on Mel's feet
Sign saying: 'At home'

Introduction

Find out who feels tired at this dark time of year. What sort of activities would make them feel energised?
Does anyone take regular physical exercise? How far away do they have to travel to find their nearest gym/sports centre?
What are the benefits of exercise?

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Get Up and go'

After the Puppet Sketch

Exclaim that Mike and Mel didn't have to go very far to join in with the local running group passing their home!
Ask whether it was worth the effort for Mel and Mike to accept the runner's invitation to come and join them.
In what ways will their lives be improved if they join the running club and run regularly?

Listen out in today's Bible reading to see who will make the effort and accept the call of Jesus to follow him.
In what ways will their lives change?

The Bible Story

Mel	Get up, Mike – you lazy mammal! (Prods Mike, he groans) Come on!
Mike	Leave me alone. I've got a man-cold!
Mel	A man-cold! What sort of excuse is that? You've been using that for seven weeks! Colds only last for 3 days, you know!
Mike	I'm still feeling weak. My cough just won't go away. (coughs comically)
Mel	Anyone can cough as an excuse for getting out of the chores. (coughs then speaks mockingly) Oh, dear. I'd better not do any house-work. I'm too ill!
Mike	I'm sorry Mel. I don't mean to be lazy. I just don't seem to have my usual energy. You know me. Usually full of energy, but not at today. (groans)
Mel	What you need is some 'get up and go'.
Mike	Where can I buy that from? Is it on prescription?
Mel	Hugh! (looks at of window) Just get your lazy legs over here and look.
Mike	(Gets up with a lot of fuss) I'm looking – at our garden. So what?
Mel	No, beyond the garden. You really are having a bad day. See the runners?
Mike	It's making me feel tired just watching them. There's a fast one (follows with eyes comically) That one's slow. He's running sooo sloooowly he might fall asleep. That's what I want to do! (Sits down again and snores)
Runner	(Off-stage) Are you coming to join us?
Mel	Oh come on, Mike. Why don't you join the (Your Town) Running Club?
Mike	(Amazed) Me? Join a running club? Go running? Over your dead body?
Mel	(sarcastically) I do hope not! Mike, I'm serious. It would be good for you. It would get rid of some of that middle age spread.
Mike	What's wrong with my middle age spread? I'm rather attached to it. No, I'm sorry, Mel. I'm just not fit enough to run. Never! So that's that.
Mel	Oh, go on Mike. It's for your own good.
Mike	(Shouting) No!
Mel	Say yes, or I'll tickle you!
Mike	No! I said no and I mean it! (laughs as Mel tickles him) It's still no.
Mel	I'll bribe you with chocolate...
Mike	Oh, all right then. I'll do anything for chocolate.
Mel	How about if I come and train with you?
Mike	That I would like to see! A running Mel (laughs)
Mel	And what is so funny about me wearing a pair of running shoes.
Mike	(Laughs as Mel puts on shoes of a really bright colour) Nice trainers!
Mel	You need to get good running shoes too. They're good for your ankles.
Mike	First let's do the warm up (Both do so comically, starting with groaning)
Mel	Are you starting to feel energised yet?
Mike	Errr, well – yes I do, surprisingly. I'm off out to join the running club.
Mel	What, already? Wait for me! (Both exit)

Growing Older

Grandpa and Grandma look at photo albums of their children and relish 'the good old days' and compare stories about what it is like to grow older. They know that God is always with them however great their needs become.

Theme: God gives special blessings to the needy

Roots themes explore: Being blessed by God; communities listening to Jesus' words; the renewal of hope

Humour: Amusing photos of children
Anecdotes from the good old days
Sharing humorous consequences of old age

Props: Two books (look like old photo albums)
Sign saying: 'Visiting Mel and Mike's house'

Introduction

Ask the congregation to think about the advantages and disadvantages of growing older.

Say that Mike's mother and Mel's father are sharing their stories as they look at photographs from the past.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Growing Older'

After the Puppet Sketch

Say that Grandma isn't alone in finding some of Jesus' words difficult to understand (even if some of us don't like to admit it). Hopefully, Grandpa was able to help her out over a 'nice cup of tea'. Does that sound like a pleasant environment for such a discussion?

When Jesus taught about God, it wasn't over a 'nice cup of tea'!

Describe Jesus sitting down on a grassy hillside and the audience listening to him.

The Bible Story

Grandpa	Here is the photo album of Mel when she was little.
Grandma	And here are some photos of Mike as a child.
Grandpa	I've got one or two embarrassing ones!
Grandma	Oooo! Let me see! (thinks) Start at the beginning. I want to see them all.
Grandpa	Here's Mel. She was as good as gold... when she was a baby!
Grandma	Oh really. Mike was as good as gold... when he was asleep.
Grandpa	Mel turned out all right. But I worry about the children of today.
Both	(sigh) Things aren't how they used to be!
Grandma	Mike grew up to be a real hard worker. Not like today's children!
Both	(sigh) Things aren't how they used to be!
Grandpa	It's good to looking at old pictures and think about the good old days.
Grandma	They just seem like yesterday. I used to play a lot of tennis back then.
Grandpa	Really? I used to play for the local football team (Your Town) United.
Grandma	Were they any good?
Grandpa	No.
Grandma	I couldn't play tennis now. My tennis elbow isn't what it used to be.
Grandpa	My legs don't run quite as fast as they could then.
Both	(sigh) Things aren't how they used to be!
Grandma	I had all my teeth back then.
Grandpa	I had a whole head full of thick, black, curly hair.
Grandma	You must have been very handsome.
Grandpa	Well, yes, though I say it myself, I was really.
Grandma	And I was quite pretty, I don't mind you knowing.
Both	(sigh) Things aren't how they used to be!
Grandpa	My old legs are in constant pain.
Grandma	My arthritis is particularly bad in the morning when I first get up.
Grandpa	It's very tempting just to stay in bed all day!
Grandma	And why shouldn't we. Pensioners can do that.
Grandpa	But there are some advantages to being older.
Grandma	Do you know the poem: 'When I'm an old woman I shall wear purple with a red hat that doesn't go and doesn't suit me...'
Grandpa	(To audience) That would explain her dress sense! (to Grandma) I think that when one grows older, one can look back on all the times God has helped you through tough periods. Jesus has been with you all the time.
Grandma	I know what you mean. God helps me to cope with the pain in my joints.
Grandpa	Jesus said that God blesses those who suffer... and those who serve him.
Grandma	That never made sense to me, why it's good to suffer. Can you explain?
Grandpa	Errr? I'll do my best. How about a nice cup of tea first?
Grandma	Tea-rrific idea. I always start with a nice cup of tea! (both exit)

Dixie's Salty Dinner

Grandpa reminds Mel to put salt into the cake she's baking and accidentally lets Dixie into the kitchen. Mel drops the salt cellar and Dixie plays with it. The salt goes all over his food and he gobbles it all up. Afterwards Dixie is very sick.

Theme: Salt adds flavour to food

Roots themes explore: Adding flavour to life; sharing the light; spirit vs letter of the law

Humour: Everyone goes bananas for a banana cake
Grandpa wants more salt in the cake than Mel
Despite Grandpa's efforts, Dixie rushes into the kitchen
He won't let go of the salt cellar
Mel falls over wrestling the salt off Dixie and can't stop him eating the salty food
Dixie gets hiccoughs
Dixie drinks water fast, splashing it everywhere
Dixie is sick over Mel

Props: Salt Cellar
Empty dog bowl
Bowl of clean water
Sign saying: 'In the kitchen'

Introduction

Quote the proverb "Variety is the spice of life." Ask what 'variety' members of the congregation have in their own life to make their days more interesting? Encourage the conversation to turn to the topic of food, or raise the subject yourself. Say what sort of celebration meal you particularly enjoy.

Which are people's favourite ingredients that make their food taste extra special.

Explain that in today's sketch Grandpa likes his food to contain a bit of salt.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Dixie's Salty Dinner'

After the Puppet Sketch

Discuss how much salt we need to consume, especially if we eat a lot of convenience foods. Explain that in the old days, they didn't worry so much and that salt was considered to be a 'good' thing. Even today, our food would be very 'bland' without it.

As you listen to today's Bible reading, see if you can tell what Jesus means when he tells us to be like salt.

The Bible Story

Where? In the kitchen

Title of sketch: Dixie's salty dinner

Grandpa	What sort of cake are you baking today, Mel?
Mel	It's a banana cake for tea tonight. Ben and Lily's favourite.
Grandpa	I'll go bananas to have a slice too. It brings out the monkey in me!
Mel	And I thought Lily and Ben were the little monkeys around here.
Grandpa	Have you put any salt in yet?
Mel	No, not yet.
Grandpa	You were going to 'forget' again, weren't you.
Mel	Well, Dad, you know it's not good for your heart to have too much salt.
Grandpa	A cake isn't a cake without just a smidgingly little bit of salt.
Mel	Dad, I know. You've told me a smidgingly million times. I won't forget!!!
Grandpa	(Defensively) Ok, Ok, I'll leave you to it. You're the Master baker here.
Mel	Be careful you don't let Dixie in. He can smell cake a mile off. (holds salt)
Grandpa	I'll be carefu... (enter Dixie) woops! How did you get in, Dixie? (exits)
Mel	Oh, Dad!!! (Dixie jumps up, knocking salt out of her hand) Let go of my arm so that I can pick up the salt, Dixie. (Dixie picks it up first, spilling into food bowl)
Dixie	Woof, woof, woof! (shakes head with salt in mouth provocatively)
Mel	Dixie! Give me that salt. (Pulls it and falls over extracting from his mouth)
Dixie	Woooooooooffffff (Eats food fast)
Mel	(Gets up and tries to pull the food bowl away) Don't eat that salty food.
Dixie	Woof, Woof! (Wags tail as Mel holds up empty bowl)
Mel	Bad dog! You enjoyed that, didn't you? (Dixie nods) Too much salt is very bad for you. Dogs shouldn't eat that much salt! (Dixie hiccoughs) Now you have hiccoughs! You'd better have a drink of water.
Dixie	(Drinking) Woo-oo-oof! (splashes water all over Mel)
Mel	Stop it, Dixie! Look out, I'm wet all over. At least the water was clean.
Dixie	Woof, woof, woof. (Splashes more)
Mel	At least drinking all that water is healthy. I was worried Dixie might be sick. Now then. Time for Grandpa's special 'dash' of salt.
Dixie	(Stops drinking and starts coughing)
Mel	Uh oh! Did I speak too soon? (Dixie is sick over Mel) Urrgggh! Dixie, that's not funny. Now we'll both have to have a bath!
Dixie	(Backing off, whimpering) Grrrrrr!
Mel	Dixie! Go to your bed! (exit Dixie) I do hope everyone appreciates the trouble this cake has caused me!
Grandpa	(Offstage) How's the cake going, Mel?
Mel	Errrr? It's nearly mixed, Dad.
Grandpa	I hope you didn't forget the salt!
Mel	No, Dad. I definitely did not forget the salt!!!

Fair Play

Lily and Ben are playing Monopoly. Ben is winning Lily hits him and Ben hits back harder. Lily complains to Dad who scolds them both. Lily thinks Ben is cheating and complains to Grandma again. Ben gets told off for looking smug and is told to play again, giving his younger sister an advantage so that she can win

Theme: Behaving well is about words and thoughts, not just physical actions
Roots themes explore: Aligning our thoughts, feelings and actions; modelling reconciliation

Humour: Sibling rivalry
Lily goes crying to Grandma
Ben gets frustrated with his little sister and tries to cheat
Lily is ecstatic that she has won, despite the large advantage

Props: Dice
Monopoly money
Sign saying: 'In the lounge'

Introduction

Is there anyone in the congregation who played a board game with a brother or sister who was older or younger than them? Did they age difference make the game unequal and did they argue? Listen to the stories and the emotion behind them!

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Fair Play'

After the Puppet Sketch

Ben was told off by his Dad three times. Recall the reasons:

(Hitting Lily

Cheating

Laughing at Lily and looking smug)

Note that his attitude was as hurtful as the physical violence.

Ask why it was important for their future relationship to achieve reconciliation by letting Lily win?

Now listen to what Jesus has to say about the standards God expects from his people when dealing with the likes of Lily.

The Bible Story

Ben	Two. You threw two! Brilliant! I love playing monopoly!
Lily	It wasn't two it was a three.
Ben	Liar! It was two. I'll move your piece for you. One, two. You have landed on my property. I've got a hotel built there so that's £350 please.
Lily	Move my piece back. I'm not paying it. I haven't got £350.
Ben	You've got to pay it.
Lily	Shan't!
Ben	I'll take it then (does so) Thank you!
Lily	It's not fair. That's my money! (cries and hits Ben)
Ben	I can hit you harder than you can hit me. Take that. (punches her harder)
Lily	(Crying louder) I'm going to tell Dad what you did. (exits)
Ben	Cry-a-baby! While she's gone, I'll cheat and build a few more hotels.
Dad	(Entering) Lily says you hit her.
Ben	She hit me first. She's the one who should get into trouble.
Dad	If you hit her back, you're in trouble too. You mustn't hit your little sister.
Ben	Not even in self-defence?
Dad	No, never. Tell an adult. What are playing? Monopoly? Play nicely (exits)
Ben	(Mimicking) Play nicely? (shouting) Lily, it's your turn. Mind the hotels!
Lily	(Returning) Mind the hotels? Ben, you've cheated. You've put more hotels on.
Ben	Oh no I didn't
Lily	Oh yes you did. (to audience) Did he cheat while I was away?
All	Yes he did
Lily	Well, I'm telling Dad! (calling back to Ben) Cheat!
Ben	I'm never going to play Monopoly with Lily again. She runs off every time she's not winning. It's not my fault she's useless at board games!
Dad	(Entering) I hear you're cheating. Let me see. There's no way you could have built so many hotels already. Oh Ben, shame on you! Remove them at once!
Ben	(Sighing) Yes, Dad!
Dad	And wipe that smug look off your face. Be nice to your little sister! (exits)
Ben	(Mimicking) Be nice to your little sister! Lily, it's your turn again. (laughs)
Lily	(Entering) Don't laugh at me. (Ben stares at her) Stop it! I don't like it. I'm not playing. (knocks counters off board, exits) Dad, Ben's looking at me!
Ben	(Mimicking) Dad, Ben's looking at me! What a wimp she is. Silly Lily!
Dad	(Entering) I heard that. I told you before about being smug. Now start the game again and give Lily an advantage because she's younger than you.
Ben	That's not fair! Rules are rules. Why should I let her win?
Dad	If you don't, she'll never play Monopoly with you again.
Ben	Huh! OK. But next time I play you, you've got to give me a chance to win.
Dad	Mmmmm. (thinks) OK, Ben. It's a deal. (They do high five and both exit)

The Stolen Snack

Dixie wants to share Lily's bar of chocolate and it falls to the ground and can't be eaten. Mel provides Dixie with some dog chocolate and comforts Lily. A similar snack was eaten by a friend of Lily's. Can she forgive her?

Theme: Sharing with and forgiving those who are not our friends

Roots themes explore: The risk of love in action; growing into God's perfection; praying for those who persecute you

Humour: Greedy Dixie loves chocolate
The chocolate falls into Dixie's bowl of water
Lily cries hysterically
Dixie nearly bites Mel's hand off
Lily is unforgiving towards the classmate, Sam, who stole the chocolate bar
Mel tries to persuade Lily to share with Sam tomorrow
Lily agrees Mel to – after Mel threatens not to share the cakes she's just made

Props: 2 bars of chocolate
Sign saying: 'In the kitchen'

Introduction

Find out who received chocolates on Valentine's Day.

Were they extra 'tasty' because they were given by someone special?

Who shared their gift?

Lily was given a box of chocolate bars by her mother and seems reluctant to share them!

Introduce the Puppet Sketch "

After the Puppet Sketch

Comment that you can't blame Lily for not wanting to share the chocolate bars that were given to her.

Ask 'What changed her mind?' (Mel threatening not to share her cake.)

Notice that Lily was more likely to share in this way if her parents set a good example for her to follow.

Today's Bible reading challenges conventional worldly wisdom. It takes guts to try to be like Jesus!

The Bible Story

Lily	Go away, Dixie! These chocolates are not for sharing! They're mine!
Dixie	Woof, woof (jumps up and chases Lily to edge of stage)
Lily	Get off me Dixie, you're squashing me. Mum gave me these chocolates.
Dixie	(Growls and paws the bar chocolate which falls into Dixie's water bowl)
Lily	You made me drop it. I'm telling Mum! (Cries comically and exits)
Dixie	(Whimpers, lies down pathetically and knocks more water over)
Mel	Bad dog! You know you can't have human chocolate. You scared Lily!
Dixie	(Whimpers and begs emotionally)
Mel	Oh all right, I'll find you some doggy chocolate. Eat this and go away.
Dixie	(Grabs chocolate and runs off)
Mel	That dog will be the death of me. It's 'death by chocolate' for both of us! I hope there's more left for Lily. She really loves my Valentine's gift. Good, there are three bars left. (shouts) Lily! There's more chocolate here.
Lily	(Enters still crying but stops suddenly when sees chocolate; snatches from Mel's hand) They're mine! You gave them to me, remember!
Mel	And you remember your manners, young lady. Don't snatch!
Lily	Don't punish me. I'm not the thief. First Sam at school stole the bar I took in yesterday for my mid-morning snack and then Dixie. Tell them off, not me!
Mel	Sam stole your chocolate bar? Why would she do that?
Lily	I don't know. Ask her! She just said (in mocking voice) 'Finder's keepers'.
Mel	Is that the same Sam whose mother has just been made redundant?
Lily	Yeah, so what?
Mel	The family are going through a really hard time at the moment.
Lily	It's not my fault Sam skips breakfast. It's still stealing!
Mel	That's true, but how do you think God feels about Sam?
Lily	You want me to say he'd forgive her? I think she should be punished and never allowed chocolate again, not ever even when she's 100 years old.
Mel	That's a bit strict. I'm glad you're not God!
Lily	I will never be her friend again. Not ever!
Mel	Oh, Lily! You seem to be very angry, so this is what I want you to do. Let's pray together and ask God to help you to forgive Sam. Tomorrow you can take two bars of chocolate to school – one to give to Sam. Tomorrow after school I'll have a word with your teacher and see what we can do. Perhaps a healthier snack would be better for everyone at break time?
Lily	You want me to give Sam one of your chocolate bars! (mouth open)
Mel	Yes, Sam doesn't have many friends. Showing her a bit of kindness will help.
Lily	No. I refuse. I absolutely refuse to share your special chocolates with Sam.
Mel	Then I refuse to share my special banana cake with you at tea time.
Lily	What. No banana cake! That's my favourite! Oh, all right then!

Right to the Top

Mike takes his elderly mother to visit St Paul's cathedral in London. It's hard work for her to climb all the steps to the balcony and then up to the roof. She is impressed by the size of the cathedral, the whispering gallery and the view of the River Thames.

Theme: Feeling God's presence in a cathedral

Roots themes explore: Holy places and moments; awe; reassurance of God's continuing presence

Humour: The cathedral is huge and without pews
Puffing and panting to get up the stairs
The whispering gallery makes Grandma jump
The windy weather on the roof

Props: Sign saying: 'St Paul's Cathedral'

Introduction

Find out the highest building that members of the congregation have visited. (Either stairs or lift)

What could they see from the top? How did it feel?

Discuss how many churches have towers and spires pointing to Heaven.

List some of the local church towers near you and speculate what can be seen from the top.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Right to the Top'

After the Puppet Sketch

Discuss the atmosphere experienced inside a cathedral or a very old church. Hear about times that people have sensed the presence of God inside such buildings.

Listen how Jesus climbed up high to give his friends an awesome sense of his divinity in very special surroundings.

The Bible Story

Mike	You can open your eyes now, Mum.
Grandma	Are you sure? I don't want to get vertigo!
Mike	You've only climbed up a few steps. We're inside St Paul's Cathedral.
Grandma	Are you sure?
Mike	Of course I'm sure. Come on, open your eyes and look around you.
Grandma	Wow! It's huge! This is the biggest church I have ever seen!
Mike	Do you like Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece? It was built after a fire.
Grandma	It's beautiful! We should have more fires like that. Where are the pews?
Mike	This is a flexible space. They can put out as many chairs as they need.
Grandma	It's not a proper church without pews. Can I sit down now?
Mike	We'll sit down later. We don't want to miss climbing up to the roof.
Grandma	Climbing up onto the roof. Who do you think I am? A steeplejack?
Mike	Come on, Mum. You won't regret it.
Grandma	That's easy for you to say with your young legs. I'm older than you.
Mike	Oh, come on, Mum. I've seen you running about when you thought no one was looking. I want to show you the whispering gallery.
Grandma	The whisker-like galaxy. Is that a bar of chocolate? Oooo errr! It looks like an awful lot of steps!
Mike	I'll give you a push. (Gives the first push)
Grandma	(Panting) It's a very long way to the top! (pants again comically)
Mike	You can do it, Mum.
Grandma	Are we nearly there yet!
Mike	Nearly.
Grandma	(Panting) I'm going to sit down on the first seat I can see.
Mike	You've done well, Mum. Sit down while I explore the other side of the gallery. If I whisper from the far side of the dome you will hear me.
Grandma	No way! It's too far away. Excuse me while I have a little sleep. (snores)
Mike	(From far side) Hello, Mum! (She wakes up startled)
Grandma	Who said that?
Mike	Me, Mike your son. I'm over here! (waves)
Grandma	I don't believe it! (Waves back, shouts loudly) Can you hear me, Mike?
Mike	(Hands on ears) There's no need to shout, Mum. We're in a church.
Grandma	Come back here Mike. I want to go up to the roof. (Climbs, panting)
Mike	Wait for me, Mum. You might blow away off the top.
Grandma	Pardon? It's windy up here. I can't hear you over this wind!
Mike	Can you see the River Thames and the Millenium wheel?
Grandma	Wow! This view is amazing! It's a long way down! (Looks down)
Mike	Don't look down, Mum. You might get vertigo!
Grandma	Too late! (faints into Mike's arms, then get s up) Only joking!