

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

Copyright Notice

These scripts are copyright to Grace for the Next Generation. You may adapt them for use by your own church only. Please share our website details so that others can download them. Future scripts can be sent out with Grace e-newsletters on request by sending email details to office@graceproject.org.uk You may send out electronic copies on condition that you include the Grace logo (available on our website) and these copyright details. Grace for the next Generation is a British charity that promotes quality family ministry and places children's workers into churches.

7th May 2017

John 10,1-10

Giving not taking

The wrong name

Lily asks her busy Mum for help with a school project on shepherds. Mel accidentally calls her 'Ben'. Lily is upset, initially refuses to help Mel but Grandpa persuades her to change her mind.

Theme: *The significance of names in the community of family life*

Roots themes explore: *Gatekeeping; being known by name; a community of care*

Humour: Mel is busy and gets Lily's name wrong

Lily over-reacts

Props: Sign saying: 'at'

Introduction

Find out who knows why they were called their particular name/nickname. Does anyone know what their names mean? Ask how hard it is to learn a lot of names quickly. Sympathise with anyone who struggles to learn names. Occasionally a parent will accidentally mix up the names of their children, especially if they are stressed or busy, as Mel is in today's sketch.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'The wrong name'

After the Puppet Sketch

Find out whether anyone feels sorry for Mel and her situation? Who thinks that Lily over-reacted?

Ask why she might have got upset? Why are names important? (important part of our identity etc.) School teachers sometimes have an impossible number of names to learn. How does it feel if a teacher doesn't know your name?

Point out that we are more likely to co-operate with someone who cares about us enough to have learnt our name.

Now listen to Jesus describing himself as a good shepherd who knows each one of us by name.

The Bible Story

Where? At home

Title of sketch: The wrong name

Lily	Mum! (no answer) Mum! (louder; no answer) Mum! (louder still)
Mel	Sorry I can't hear you over the noise of the washing machine.
Lily	(Even louder) Mum!
Mel	I'm really busy! You'll have to come here if you want to talk to me.
Lily	Mum! Can you come and help me with my school project?
Mel	What?
Lily	Come and help me with my school project.
Mel	I'm sorry I can't hear you.
Lily	Can you help me with my school project?
Mel	(Entering, sighing) I still couldn't hear you. It's noisy in the kitchen
Lily	(In a demanding tone) Help me with my school project!
Mel	I've got too much to do just now. I'm sorry, I can't at the moment, Ben.
Lily	Ben?!?! Ben?!?! Mum, you just called me Ben! How could you?
Mel	I'm sorry, Lily, I'm busy and stressed.
Lily	Don't you know the difference between me and Ben! (laughs unkindly)
Mel	If you had come to me instead of expecting me to drop everything to come and hear what you were saying. I wouldn't have made the mistake
Lily	I can't believe my own mother thinks I'm Ben!
Mel	I'm sorry, Lily. I would really appreciate some help in the kitchen.
Lily	No way. Why would I come and help if I don't know my name? (exits)
Mel	Oh, dear, I've upset Lily. I feel bad, but it wasn't deliberate. I really am in a hurry and I could do with her help instead of a temper tantrum. Exits)
Upstairs	
Lily	I can't believe my own mother doesn't know my name! (sobs comically)
Grandpa	(Enters) What's the matter, Lily?
Lily	Mum doesn't know my name!
Grandpa	What? I am quite sure that Mel does know your name. What makes you think she doesn't?
Lily	She called me Ben! (Grandpa laughs) It's not funny, Grandpa!
Grandpa	Lots of mothers do that when they're busy. Don't worry about it.
Lily	(Agitated) I'm obviously not a boy. I feel really insulted!
Grandpa	Get over it. Lily. Mel is a good Mum. How did it happen?
Lily	I was just asking for help with my school project. It was important.
Grandpa	It's important you help your Mum when she's busy. Have you offered?
Lily	Not likely, not when she called me by the wrong name.
Grandpa	Mmmmm. That's a pity. She's not likely to have time to help you if you don't help her. Instead of sulking, go and offer to do something useful?
Lily	(Thinks) Welllll... (reluctantly) I suppose I could, if you insist.
Grandpa	Good choice, Lily. You are Lily, not Ben aren't you? (Lily grunts, both exit)

Planning a trip

Mike and Ben are checking places to stay in the Lake District over the Bank Holiday weekend. The first one they choose is full, the second has bad reports on trip adviser. After successfully booking, they use the AA website to plan their journey.

Theme: Making plans for a Bank Holiday weekend away

Roots themes explore: The house of God; the way to the Father; a testing journey

Humour: Ben can type faster than Mike
Frustration that the first B&B is full
Amusing trip adviser review
Dixie's antics recalled
Ben wants his Dad's credit card details
Important to take a break mid-journey at favourite service station

Props: Model laptop
Sign saying: 'At home'

Introduction

Ask the congregation if they have any plans for the Bank holiday weekend / half term holiday. Listen to their travel plans and find out how they booked their accommodation. Does anyone check Trip Adviser before they book? Do good reviews reduce the stress of travelling to a new place?

Let's meet Mike and Ben as they book a weekend away in the Lake District.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Planning a Trip'

After the Puppet Sketch

Say that, thanks to the internet, Mike and Ben were able to book a short break confidently knowing what lay in store for them. Has anyone been on a trip to the unknown where they really weren't sure what awaited them?

Let's hear now, how Jesus helps us to prepare for Heaven and the journey to get there.

The Bible Story

Where? At home

Title of sketch: Planning a trip

Mike	It has good reviews on trip adviser. Shall we book the bed and Breakfast now? It's a busy time of year in the Lake District.
Ben	Yes, but can I type. You're so slow, Dad!
Mike	Cheeky! (sighs) I suppose so. (mutters aside) Arrogant whizzkid. You're booking for five people. (Dixie barks as they swop places)
Ben	And a dog
Mike	Unfortunately, yes! And there I was, hoping for a peaceful holiday!
Ben	It wouldn't be fun without Dixie. Do you remember the time he tried to chase a rabbit down a hole and got his nose stuck. He looked so funny waving his tail and back legs in the air. (mimicks the posture Dixie had)
Mike	And the noisy sheep-dog that came running over to guard its territory. Huh! As I was saying. No chance of a peaceful holiday.
Ben	(Laughing) What a commotion! Don't worry it couldn't happen again.
Mike	Let's hope nothing else happens instead. Have you booked, whizz-kid?
Ben	No, it's full already. Let's check out 'The Hermit Hotel' on trip adviser.
Mike	Sounds like a place that should be nice and quiet for our break.
Ben	Mm, reviews are awful. (reads) 'Grumpy landlord ought to <u>be</u> a hermit.
Mike	It goes on 'threatened to cook noisy pet dogs for breakfast'.
Ben	Poor Dixie. He can't stay quiet, even when bribed with doggy chocolate.
Mike	Exactly! What about this one? (reads) 'Quiet location, dogs welcome'
Ben	It gets a lot of stars... It even has its own football pitch.
Mike	Is that for team games? Dogs vs humans?
Ben	Shhh, I need to book it quick while there are still vacancies.
Mike	Don't hold your breath. This is peak booking time. Come on, com
Both	Come on, come on, come on... Yes!!!
Mike	Ok it's going through just the payment.
Ben	Can I have your credit card details, Dad?
Mike	Oh no!!! I'll have the laptop back, and complete the details myself!
Ben	But Dad, I only need a few numbers.
Mike	Then you'd be able to access my bank account. Oh no, I don't think so!
Ben	Oh Dad, don't you trust me? (reluctantly gives up the laptop)
Mike	(Typing in numbers) X,x,x,x; x,x,x,x,x,x,x All done. Let's check the AA website for travel times. (typing) A,a; a,a; a,a. Fourteen hours! Woops I've typed the wrong postcode.
Ben	Why didn't you let me type again? We must to stop at our favourite service station. It wouldn't be a holiday without a service station stop.
Mike	That's better, 4 hours, allowing 20 minutes at 'Costa del Service Station'.
Ben	And only 4 day to pack. Better rush! Come on Dixie, we're going to the Lake District in 4 days. (Loud barking offstage as Ben & Mike exit)

Always Watched

Ben and Grandma visit a church and look at a display on the theme: 'If you love me, keep my commandments.' They sense the presence of God who watches all the time – as do the CCTV cameras!

Theme: Behaviour watched all the time at a church that's open every day

Roots themes explore: Speaking for God (the Advocate); loving relationships; building bridges

Humour: Will the church be open for visitors?
Smiling for the camera
Funny photos
Grandma says God is exactly like a CCTV camera
Dixie can't come in, but is happy with a bone outside
Ben doesn't like babies and thinks it's unfair they can come into church, but not Dixie

Props: Big bone
Signs saying: 'No dogs' and 'At a church in the Lake District'

Introduction

Think about some special churches that have been visited by members of the congregation. What makes them special? Find out whether they are open daily to allow people to come and experience God's presence and whether they have evidence of the local congregation showing God's love in the local community.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Always watched'

After the Puppet Sketch

Can anyone remember why Grandma said that the CCTV camera was like God? (God's Spirit is always watching over us.) At the church Ben and Grandma visited in the Lake District, there were photos of the congregation showing God's love by giving Christmas presents to children and Street Pastors helping people who needed to get home into a taxi. How members of your own church show love to the local community?
Listen to what Jesus told his disciples before he left them.

The Bible Story

Ben	Dixie, race you to the church (they race and Dixie wins)
Dixie	Woof, woof, woof (shows off, including licking Ben's face)
Ben	Urgh! Get off my face, Dixie and stop showing off. (reads sign) I'm sorry, Dixie, but you can't come into this church (Dixie whimpers pathetically) But I have brought you a big bone to enjoy while we go inside.
Dixie	Woof, woooooof! (Ben throws the bone to Dixie and ties the leash to railings; Dixie responds noisily diving at the bone leaving the stage)
Ben	Dixie will do anything for a bone!
Grandma	(Offstage) Wait for me!
Ben	Come on Grandma!
Grandma	(Entering) I'm not as young as I used to be, you know! I'm getting frail.
Ben	Do you really think this church will be open? There are no services today.
Grandma	There's only one way to find out. Try the door, Ben. (he does so)
Ben	I really don't think the door is open. See... the door is definitely locked.
Grandma	Let me help. (does so; church door opens throwing both to the floor)
Ben	I thought you said you were getting frail!
Grandma	There's still just a little bit of super-human strength left in me, yet.
Ben	Wow! This church is beautiful!
Grandma	Can you sense that Christians have been praying here for 1000 years?
Ben	I thought Jesus lived 2000 years ago?
Grandma	Yes, but England was a bit slow catching on. They didn't have the internet to spread news round faster. Can you get a signal on your phone, Ben?
Ben	(Takes out phone) Only just, but they obviously have electricity. Look at the size of the sound desk!
Grandma	Yes, they've got a data projector and a screen and all the modern stuff.
Ben	And look, smile Grandma, we're being video'd by the cctv camera.
Both	Cheese!
Grandma	That camera is exactly like God.
Ben	God looks like a camera?
Grandma	No, of course not. What I mean is God watches us all the time.
Ben	Oh, yes. He's here and everywhere.
Grandma	He reigns wherever Christians serve him. Look at this display over here.
Ben	(Reading) 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments'.
Grandma	Look at these photos of people being like Jesus, showing love for others. Ahhh! That's cute little baby receiving a Christmas present from Santa.
Ben	Huh! Here's a picture of Street Pastors helping someone into a taxi.
Grandma	It's just so peaceful here! (Baby crying heard off-stage) Or it was!
Ben	It's not fair they let babies in, but not dogs. I'm fetching Dixie! (exits)
Grandma	Stop, Ben. He'll cause chaos! (covers ears at barking/chaos offstage)

28th May 2017

John 17.1-11

A living prayer

School Tests Over

Ben talks to Grandpa about how he felt taking the Year 6 school tests and the last few weeks of term. The whole year group is performing a musical about 'Robin Hood'. It will be very sad to say goodbye to friends who will be attending a different secondary school.

Theme: Year 6 activities before leaving primary school

Roots themes explore: The meaning of 'the hour has come; unfinished business; being one

Humour: Remembering the stress of the school tests
Ben's not sure whether he wants to change school or not
Playing the part of one of Robin Hood's Merrie Men

Props: Robin Hood hat
Sign saying: 'At home'

Introduction

Find out what people like to do now that summer has come? E.g. holidays and special treats at school? Find out if any of the children are moving to a new school and how they feel about it.

In today's sketch Ben has very mixed feelings about moving up to secondary school.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch "

After the Puppet Sketch

Ask how Ben felt about finishing his school tests (relief after feeling stressed).

The whole year group are now united in a project – the school musical, but then they'll have to split up. Pray for the local Year 6 children who are moving on this summer.

Today's Bible Reading hears about Jesus' praying for his friends at a time when they are facing a period of transition.

The Bible Story

Ben	Would you like to watch the football with me later, Grandpa?
Grandpa	That would be lovely. Who's playing?
Ben	It's (local team) against (rival team). It should be a good match.
Grandpa	A game we have to win, then. I'm glad you've got time to relax and enjoy the football again, Ben. You were so stressed before the school tests!
Ben	It was horrible. My teacher gave me so much homework and said it was important. I'm so glad the tests are all finished.
Grandpa	It is important to work hard and do your best.
Ben	The only 'best' bit was having an excuse not to do the chores. I've not had to tidy my bedroom for weeks!
Grandpa	Remind me not to go up to your room. It sounds very untidy!
Ben	It's tidy now. Mum gets worked up about my room being tidy, not me!
Grandpa	What do you do at school, now that the tests are over?
Ben	All sorts of fun stuff. The main thing is getting ready for the school musical. Everyone in Year 5 is in it. We're doing 'Robin Hood'.
Grandpa	That sounds fun. Which part have you got?
Ben	I'm Little John
Grandpa	Are you little?
Ben	(Laughing) No, I have to walk on stilts so that I'm really tall. It's a joke!
Grandpa	Ah, so there are jokes in the play?
Ben	Yes, I ask 'What do you call a woman with a boat tied to her head?'
Grandpa	I don't know. What do you call a woman with a boat tied to her head?
Ben	Maud (both laugh)
Grandpa	It's good seeing you so much more relaxed. Back to your usual old self. I'm glad you're having fun with your friends practising the play.
Ben	Yes, it is fun, but it's sad too.
Grandpa	What do you mean?
Ben	It's not long before we have to say goodbye to some of our friends. There's quite a few kids not going to (your local secondary school). I might never see them again.
Grandpa	And that makes you sad?
Ben	Yes, we've been together so long. It will be sad to say goodbye.
Grandpa	I guess so. You must be dreading going up to secondary school.
Ben	What? I didn't say that. I can't wait. I'm really excited about moving up.
Grandpa	(Taken aback) Oh? That's good. What are you looking forward to?
Ben	Making new friends, the science labs have loads of equipment and the art rooms are amazing. They do so much more than just painting.
Grandpa	I'm glad you're looking forward to it.
Ben	I'm not really. I'll miss my old friends. Let's just watch the football now.