

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 – Ben's mother

Grandpa – Mel's Dad

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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3rd July 2016

Luke 10.1-11,16-20

A supported community

Young Gardeners

Ben and Lily are undertaking some community service and are weeding the gardens of some elderly church members. One provides them with refreshments, the other doesn't.

Theme: *Going out of your way to help others without expecting a reward*

Roots themes explore: *Receiving and extending hospitality; the rewards of discipleship*

Humour: Repeating everything loudly

Holding bulb upside down; hypocritically criticising Lily for the same thing

It's OK to have dirty brown hands that match the brown chocolate on the cake

Squabbling over the best cup-cake without their hostess hearing

Props: Sign saying: 'name of street'

Small sand spade

Small brush

Two cup-cakes, one is chocolate

Bulb (dig one up from your garden)

Muddy shoes

Introduction

Bring in some muddy shoes and ask when shoes get mud on them. What is the best footwear for gardening? If the mud gets into the house, it will vacuum better when dry. Who in the congregation has to do (a) the gardening? (b) the vacuuming? How often is it the same person?! Do any of the children help with these tasks? Mel has sent Ben and Lily to go out and do some gardening to help some elderly church members they know.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Young Gardeners'

After the Puppet Sketch

Check whether the adult members of the congregation were reminded of Scrooge from Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'. Ask whether it was mean-ness that stopped Mrs Scrooge from providing refreshments? Do you think there may have been other things stopping her? It is difficult to tell what someone is like when we only see a very short part of their day. What feelings might the children have experienced by way of a 'reward'. (A warm feeling of knowing they've helped someone?) If we shouldn't expect a reward for being helpful, should the children have turned down Mrs Jones' cakes? (No, it would deprive Mrs Jones of the pleasure of treating them as a 'thank you'.)

It can require courage to go out on a mission to help others. Listen to the time Jesus asked his disciples to this.

Where? A local street

Title of sketch: Young Gardeners

Lily	<i>(Ben knocks on door)</i> You'll have to knock louder, Ben. Mrs Jones is a bit deaf.
Ben	Pardon? Oh, you mean Mrs Jones, yes she wears a hearing aid <i>(knocks again)</i> Mrs Jones!
Lily	Mrs Jones! We've come to dig your garden. <i>(door creaks open)</i>
Ben	No, not beg your pardon! Dig your garden. <i>(to Lily)</i> Louder, Lily and clearer!
Lily	We've come to dig your garden. <i>(Does actions)</i> Dig! Dig! Dig! <i>broom appears)</i>
Ben	No, Mrs Jone, dig, not brush. <i>(Returns broom)</i> It's OK we have our own spades. <i>(to Lily)</i> Oh gosh this is going to take all morning just to get started! <i>(to Mrs Jones)</i> <i>(bulb appears upside down)</i> Thank you, Mrs Jones. <i>(laughs and turns it round)</i> That's better!
Lily	We shall have to get rid of the weeds before we plant the bulbs she's given us.
Ben	<i>(Groans)</i> That sounds like hard work!
Lily	Just think of the nice cakes she'll give us when we've done everything.
Ben	Tell you what – You do the work and I'll put my feet up over here and then eat the cake!
Lily	That's not fair! Look over there, I can see the perfect place to plant the bulb. The ground's nice and soft for digging a hole. Let me have that bulb, Ben. <i>(Places it in hole upside down)</i>
Ben	Not that way, Lily! The other way up! <i>(aside)</i> Girls! They just haven't got a clue...
Lily	<i>(Turns it over)</i> Is that better <i>(Ben grunts)</i> You fill the hole back in, then, Smartypants!
Ben	<i>(Mimes shoving a bit of soil across sloppily)</i> Soon done.
Lily	There's a bit showing. You've not covered it up properly, the instructions say it has to be completely covered by the soil
Ben	<i>(Picks up a clearly heavy spade full of soil)</i> Heeeeeeeave! There, that will do!! <i>(shoves a bit more)</i> Happy? Let's go and claim our reward. Yummy cake! Mmmm!
Lily	BEN! It will NEVER grow through all that! Oh forget it, I suppose we have tried our hardest! We've finished now, Mrs Jones. <i>(louder)</i> I said... We've finished now, Mrs Jones!
Ben	<i>(Receiving cakes)</i> Thank you, Mrs Jones. <i>(louder)</i> Thank you Mrs Jones!
Lily	I'm off to wash my hands. <i>(Starts to go and half leaves the stage, but stops facing away from Ben)</i>
Ben	I'm having the chocolate one while she's gone. Mmmm!
Lily	<i>(Turning round)</i> That's not fair! You haven't washed your hands...I wanted the chocolate one!
Ben	Well the brown dirt will match the chocolate, so what's your problem? <i>(Remembers Mrs Jones is close by and coughs)</i> I mean... You can have the chocolate cake, Lily. See how I look after my darling little sister, Mrs Jones. I even let her have her favourite cake.
Lily	<i>(Sarcastically)</i> Why thank you, Ben! <i>(Sincerely but loudly)</i> and thank <u>you</u> for the cake, Mrs Jones.
Ben	We need to go now, Mrs Jones. See you again soon! <i>(loudly)</i> Bye! <i>(They move on)</i>
Lily	What a kind lady she is. Do you think we'll get cake from Mrs Scrooge?
Ben	I do hope so! <i>(Knocks on door)</i> It's Ben and Lily, we've come to weed your garden?
Lily	Sorry we're late. We were eating cake at Mrs Jones'... <i>(stops realising what she said)</i>
Ben	<i>(To Lily, whispering)</i> You shouldn't have told her that. You've blown it now!
Lily	<i>(Pause as listens to Mrs Scrooge)</i> Oh that's quite all right, Mrs Scrooge, we quite understand that you're too old to make cakes these days. Yes, I'm sure you made wonderful buns when you were younger. We're here to help you. We don't need feeding.
Ben	<i>(To Lily)</i> Lily! Speak for yourself!
Lily	Isn't that right, Ben. Our only desire is be helpful. Right, Ben? <i>(nudging with her arm)</i>
Ben	Yeah, that's right. Just show us your weeds and we'll get started on the slave labour... I mean <i>(coughs)</i> weeding. <i>(Sarcastically)</i> Oh no don't worry about it, completely our pleasure, Mrs Scrooge, our pleasure! <i>(exits, mumbling)</i>

Only a Dog

Ben snatches a ball from Dixie saying that humans' needs come before those of 'simple dogs'. The ball gets stuck in a tree and Ben falls trying to retrieve it. Dixie comes to look after him and barks for help. Mel wonders whether Ben deserved such loyalty from a 'simple dog'.

Theme: Dixie might only be a dog, but he was there to help Ben when he was in trouble

Roots themes explore: Subverting stereotypes; giving and receiving care; God's mercy in practice

Humour: Playing tug of war with a ball
Dixie whimpers when he loses the ball
Ben shows off about his football skills, then ball gets stuck in tree

Props: Small ball
Branch in vase
Wrapped chocolate
Sign saying: 'In the garden'

Assistant needed to wedge ball into the 'tree' will need to practice this!

Introduction

Does anyone get annoyed when someone at home borrows their things without asking? How does it feel? What is it about your things that make some of them "extra" precious to you? Is it worse when someone takes these, do you feel they would not be as careful with them? Can anyone think of a time when they gave permission for something to be borrowed and it still ended up broken?

That's how Ben felt when he found Dixie playing with his ball. Ask whether it was the Dixie being naughty, or Ben was careless for leaving it lying around? (Ben was careless) Regrettably, Ben didn't take this into consideration when he scolds Dixie for playing with the ball. Ben does seem to be in a bit of a grumpy mood today, so let's see what happens next...

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Only a Dog'

After the Puppet Sketch

Do we agree with Ben that pets' wishes should always come after the wishes of their owners, or was Ben being selfish? Do we agree with Mel, that Dixie was very kind to come back and look after Ben by calling for help, given the way he'd been treated? What about us, if someone has hurt us by either something they have said or done are we more reluctant to come to their help? It might not be something as serious as though they were injured but what if they simply asked for help at an event at church or school? I think there might be a challenge in there for us as well...

You see, Ben hadn't really broken his leg, he was just 'putting it on'. Who can remember what seems to heal Ben instantly? If he had actually broken his leg, the sooner he got help, the better. I am sure Mel would have been there straight away if she knew Ben was actually in any danger. Has anyone been in a situation where they needed help straight away? Who came to help? How did they feel when that person showed up? It's quite scary to think if we were helpless who would be with us. But who do we know they never leaves us and promised to always be by our side? How does that make you feel now?

In today's parable, urgent help will be needed and that help will come from a very special person.

The Bible Story

Where? In the garden

Title of sketch: Only a dog

Ben	Bad dog, Dixie, for taking my ball. That's my ball! I want to play football
Dixie	Grrr, gr, grrrrr! <i>(comical tug of war follows)</i>
Ben	Give.... Me.... My.... Ball! <i>(falls backwards as retrieving ball)</i>
Dixie	<i>(Facing Ben)</i> GRRR, GR, GRRRRR!
Ben	It's my ball. You're just a simple dog. Pets should do what their owners say!
Dixie	<i>(Turns round sulking, exits the stage looking very sad)</i> Woof, woof, woof. <i>(exits)</i>
Ben	<i>(To audience)</i> I'm the best footballer in the world. Watch this! <i>(invent an action that works in your setting)</i> Here's the highest kick in the world. <i>(ball goes up into 'tree' helped by assistant)</i> Oh! I've lost my ball. This is a really BAD DAY. <i>(thinks)</i> I could shake the tree <i>(doesn't work)</i> I can climb the tree - as I'm the best climber in the world. <i>(climbs and falls noisily)</i> Ahhhh! I think I've broken my leg. Ahhhhh!
Dixie	<i>(Returning, tilts head looking puzzled)</i> Woof, wooooooooooooooooooof?
Ben	Don't just stand there, get me some help. I'm in agony here, ahhhhhh!
Dixie	<i>(Louder)</i> Woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof!
Ben	That's more like it, Dixie. Mum's bound to hear you. Owwww! My leg!
Dixie	<i>(Louder, woofed in the same way Ben is saying "my leg" repeated each time)</i> Woof, woof!
Ben	My leg! My leg!
Dixie	<i>(Louder)</i> Woof, woof!
Ben	My leg! My leg!
Dixie	<i>(Louder)</i> Woof, woof!
Ben	My leg! My leg!
Mel	<i>(Offstage)</i> What's all that noise?
Dixie	<i>(Louder)</i> Woof, woof!
Ben	My leg! My leg!
Mel	<i>(offstage)</i> I'm coming! What's wrong?!
Ben	My leg really, really, really, really hurts!
Dixie	<i>(Nuzzling up to Ben comfortingly)</i> Woof, woooooof.
Ben	<i>(Stroking Dixie)</i> Cuddle me, Dixie. I'm dying here! <i>(grabs Dixie roughly)</i>
Dixie	<i>(Pulling back in pain)</i> Yelp! <i>(exits quickly)</i>
Ben	Hey! Come back here, Dixie, I need you, why have you left me now! Owwwwwww! <i>(looks back towards house)</i> Mum, help! I need you here quickly!
Mel	<i>(Enters shaking her head)</i> Let me look, Ben. What hurts?
Ben	My leg, I think it's broken! <i>(really loudly and over dramatically)</i> Ahhhhh!
Mel	<i>(To audience)</i> Mmmm, I think he might be acting it up. <i>(to Ben)</i> Hey Ben, I've got some chocolate here... Why don't you stand up if you want it? <i>(holds it high up above his head)</i>
Ben	<i>(Jumping up)</i> Chocolate? I love chocolate! <i>(grabbing it)</i> Thanks, Mum!
Mel	Hmmmm That miracle cure always works every time! Ben, you should thank Dixie for calling me to come and help – with that miracle cure, called "chocolate". Dixie was very kind to come and help you after you called him just a 'simple dog' and took the ball off him which you actually left lying around. What do you think a dog is going to do, I only think it is fair that you owe Dixie an apology, don't you think?
Ben	<i>(Mumbling loudly, but without sincerity and a mouth full of chocolate)</i> Sorry, Dixie!
Mel	One of these days he will learn, but if I'm honest I don't think it is going to happen anytime soon! Come on Dixie, let's see if we can find some treats for you as well!

17th July 2016

Luke 10.38-42

A serving community

The Workers

Mel receives a call from a Messy Church helper who can't come. Lily is reluctant to offer her help. Mel talks about the value of sharing out the work, so everyone has time for worship. She makes a drink while Lily gets the biscuits which they share while Mel reads Lily a Bible story.

Theme:	<i>Sharing the work so that we all have time for Jesus</i>		
Roots themes explore:	<i>How the Spirit shows us truth; how the Spirit can change us, unleashing greater works</i>		
Humour:	Lily's Messy Church craft has gone a bit floppy Mel mis-hears the caller and thinks she can help Lily isn't quite as co-operative as Mel was hoping		
Props:	Phone and ringing tone		
	Droopy 'tree'		
	Sign saying:		'At home'

Introduction

Discuss 'sharing the work':

Ask children what they do to help at home.

Praise the 'workers' in your church and use the opportunity to advertise which roles need more volunteers.

If your church doesn't do Messy Church, explain how it works. Explain that Mel is struggling to find enough volunteers for the next one.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'The Workers'

After the Puppet Sketch

At Mel's church they have to clear away the crafts before everyone eats, so the helpers tidying up have to miss worship. Discuss whether it would be possible to avoid that in your own church building. Why does it matter when we don't worship regularly?

Discuss how 'being busy' interferes with our ability to listen to God and the importance of 'sitting at the feet of Jesus' at regular times in our life.

Can anyone guess what the Bible reading is about today? (Mary and Martha)

The Bible Story

Mel	What have you got there, Lily?
Lily	<i>(Holding floppy 'tree')</i> Zacchaeus' tree from Messy Church. It's gone all floppy!
Mel	Oh dear! It was lovely when you first made it. There'll be more crafts next time.
Lily	Oh goody! What's the theme?
Mel	Hmmm well if memory serves me right, it will be Abraham. We'll sing an 'old favourite': 'Father Abraham had many sons'. You know that one, don't you?
Lily	Yep: 'Right arm, left arm right leg, left leg, stand up, turn around, sit down' <i>(pants)</i> Now I'm all dizzy! <i>(both laugh)</i>
Mel	Yep, that's the fun of it! But it's no fun find helpers this time!
Lily	Why? There's usually lots of helpers!
Mel	Everyone's on holiday. <i>(phone rings)</i> Hello, Jenny! Can you help at Messy Church? <i>(listens)</i> I'm glad you can come. The others are away. I was worried I'd have to do everything myself. <i>(listens)</i> Oh, gosh, this is awkward, I'm sorry, I mis-heard. You can't come! Oh, errr, no, no don't worry, it'll be fine. <i>(nervous laughing)</i> Errr, no, really I can manage. I'll have Ben and Lily with me. They love helping.
Lily	We do?
Mel	<i>(Slight panic sound in Mels voice)</i> Yes, of course they do. They just love to be useful, clearing up the craft, doing all the washing up - those kinds of things!
Lily	Wait a minute, that doesn't sound like Ben!
Mel	Yes, even the sticky paints...
Lily	That doesn't sound like me !
Mel	Don't worry we'll be fine. Bye! <i>(hangs up)</i> Oh bother! <i>(puts her hands to her face)</i> I pretended everything's fine. I really have absolutely no idea how I will manage!
Lily	Well it's not OK. You know I hate clearing up the paint. It goes on my clothes.
Mel	<i>(sighing)</i> Ben prefers football to tidying up!
Lily	So why did you tell Jenny we'd help you?
Mel	Well, I, I didn't want to upset her. You know how it is.
Lily	Huh!
Mel	But I'm asking you to help me, just this once. You won't miss out on the food.
Lily	But if we help clear up we'll miss the worship. I like 'Father Abraham'.
Mel	You were complaining it made you dizzy a moment ago?
Lily	Yeah but dizzy is fun. Sometimes I do it just for fun. <i>(demonstrates, falling over)</i>
Mel	Please, Lily... Do it for me – and for God? You really would be such a help...
Lily	<i>(thinking)</i> Mmmmm...
Mel	And you love helping when we have visitors here at home. You're great at putting the biscuits out onto the plate.
Lily	Yeah, I don't mind doing that.
Mel	When we share the work everyone has time to enjoy our visitors. I'll tell you what – let's share the work now. You get some biscuits and I'll do drinks. Then I'll have time to read you a story from your favourite Children's Bible.
Lily	O.K. It's a deal <i>(they do a high five)</i>

The New Phone

Ben would like a new phone. Initially Mel says no, Ben persists and offers to do extra jobs around the house to earn extra pocket money. Mel is sufficiently impressed that she agrees.

Theme: Persistence pays off, especially when you're prepared to put in some useful effort yourself
Roots themes explore: Asking God for everyday things; persisting in prayer; playing a part in being the answer to prayer

Humour: Mum is too busy to listen properly
 Ben's phone was run over by a skateboard
 Ben's is super-nice to Mum
 For the sake of a phone, Ben is even willing to clean out the lavatory

Props: Wrapped chocolate
 Signs saying: 'At home' & "Some time later"

Introduction

Ask who has a mobile phone with them? Look at the different types, from the small and easy to use models to the sophisticated ones. Find out when and why people need to replace their phone. (One common accident is for a phone in a back pocket to fall down the toilet!) Do people like to upgrade their phones or stick with one until it fails? Discuss how old a child should be when they are allowed their first mobile. What are the issues? In today's sketch, Ben has broken his first mobile phone. How do you think he feels?

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'The New Phone'

After the Puppet Sketch

What did Ben do to 'butter up' his Mum, so she'd say 'yes' to a new phone? (gave her flowers and chocolates)
 There was something else that he did that impressed her more. What action did she say was 'sensible'? (explaining **why** he wanted it) What offer impressed her? (to do extra jobs around the house)
 Actions speak louder than words and Ben's actions showed that he was willing to put in some effort and look after a new phone: rather than just saying what he wanted, he explained how he would help get it.

Today's Bible story tells us that God wants us to explain how we feel and tell him what we need. In Jesus' day, children didn't ask for mobile phones. Listen out for two healthy foods that they might have asked for. (fish and egg)

The Bible Story

Ben	Mum, can I have a...
Mel	Yes, dear, just help yourself from the biscuit tin
Ben	Err? (louder) No Mum, a new phone from a phone shop. I need a new phone.
Mel	Sorry, I just assumed you wanted a biscuit. Why do you need a new phone?
Ben	Oh, my old one broke. (embarrassed) It, err, got run over.
Mel	Run over?
Ben	Yes. It was run over – by a skateboard.
Mel	How did that happen?! Didn't you keep it in your pocket like I told you to?
Ben	Yes, but I was doing stunts and it jumped out of my back pocket.
Mel	Who ran over it?
Ben	It was err, me. I need a new phone.
Mel	Ben, they're expensive. You were careless with the last one. You didn't say 'please'.
Ben	Please, Mum. I promise I'll be really, really careful with this one. I'll never ever break another mobile phone again. This one will last me forever.
Mel	Let me think about it. I'm busy at the moment.
Ben	(Disappointed) Oh (both exit and re-enter) (Some time later sign comes up) Mum can I have a new phone, errr, please?
Mel	Not now, Ben (both exit and re-enter) (Some time later sign comes up)
Ben	Pleeeeeease can I have a new phone, Mum?
Mel	It would only get broken again. What's the point? (both exit and re-enter) (Some time later sign comes up)
Ben	Mum, I really need a new mobile phone. All my friends have got one!
Mel	Ben, have you any idea how much they cost? Let me get on with my work.
Ben	(To audience) Mmmm, how can I persuade Mum? She's so busy, she's not listening to me. (thinks) Ah! I have an idea (exits and returns carrying chocolate) Mum! I've tidied my room and found chocolate from my Easter eggs. Would you like some?
Mel	That's very kind of you, Ben. It'll help me concentrate on my work. Thanks!
Ben	You're welcome, Mum (exits)
Mel	I can't believe Ben has tidied his room without me even asking! Giving me chocolate too. What's he up to? I know! He's hoping I'll buy him that phone.
Ben	(Enters with flowers) Mum I've picked you some flowers from the garden and put them in a vase with water. Where would you like them?
Mel	Over there, please, Ben. Please don't spill water over my work or I won't be in a good mood to listen to your request. You want something, don't you.
Ben	All my friends have mobiles and their parents can track where they are and they can call for help in an emergency. Since mine broke, I've not been able to text and I feel the odd one out. I will be more careful with a new one. I don't mind doing extra jobs around the house to get extra pocket money. Please please, please Mum!
Mel	Well, Ben, you have been very sensible explaining why you want the phone. I like it when you bring me flowers and chocolates. I love it when you offer to help me. Let's start with £2 towards your phone if you clean the toilet, like I showed you last week.
Ben	Oh, Mum – not the toilet.... (thinks and sighs) OK, Mum I'll even do the toilet!

Runny Chocolate

Grandpa can smell something funny in Lily's bedroom. Her secret store of chocolate has attracted mice. When Grandpa investigates, the chocolate has melted too. It all has to be thrown away.

Theme: Better to share than to store a perishable item

Roots themes explore: Sources of security; greed and generosity; being rich towards God

Humour: Grandpa wondering what the smell can be
The chocolate has melted and gone goo-ey
Perhaps it would have been better to have shared some with Ben
Lily is scared of mice

Props: Box with chocolate inside
Signs saying: 'Lily's bedroom'

Introduction

Find out whether anyone is a 'chocolate hoarder' with secret stores of chocolate in their homes. Have they ever had to throw any away? Would anyone admit they have a secret stash only they know about? Maybe hiding it from the kids! Who's a 'chocolate scoffer' who eats it all straight away if it's in the house? These people must feel that it's a real waste to keep chocolates treats past their sell by dates! Let's find out whether Lily is a 'chocolate scoffer' or a 'chocolate hoarder'.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Runny Chocolate'

After the Puppet Sketch

How do people feel about Lily's chocolate being hidden on the windowsill, only to be ruined by the sun and eaten by mice? By show of hands, who is scared of mice?

How could Lily have avoided wasting her chocolate?

Is there ever a safe place to store chocolate indefinitely?

The people who gave Lily the chocolate (probably at Easter) would have wanted her to enjoy it. Are there any other gifts that can potentially be forgotten and wasted? (e.g. store vouchers/gift cards)

Listen to today's Bible reading remembering that God's gifts are to be enjoyed and shared.

The Bible Story

Grandpa	(Sniffs) What's that funny smell in your bedroom, Lily?
Lily	I don't know. I can't smell anything. (sniffs) No smell, Grandpa.
Grandpa	Yes there is a smell. Maybe you can't smell it because you're in here so much.
Lily	Is it me that smells, Grandpa? I had a bath last night.
Grandpa	Then you might smell of bubble bath, but it's not that. Mmmm.
Lily	Your nose must be very sensitive, Grandpa!
Grandpa	It always has been, Lily. They used to call me the 'Whiffing Womble' when I was in the army. The slightest whiff of a smell and I was onto it.
Lily	Was that useful, Grandpa? I mean being able to smell anything.
Grandpa	A mixed blessing, my dear. A very mixed blessing! Sometimes it's better not to be able to smell. I think the smell might be coming from the direction of your bedroom...
Lily	Yes of course – if it's not too smelly.
Grandpa	It's fine. Now where is that smell coming from? (moving around puppet theatre leading with his nose) Is it the bed – no. Is it your desk – no. Is it the wardrobe – no. Is it the drawers – no. Ah here it is on the windowsill. The smell is coming from that box.
Lily	Oh that? Well that's just my chocolate box. I hide my chocolate in there so Ben can't find it. I keep it nice and safe and all in one place!
Grandpa	Let me get this right. You keep your chocolate in a box on the windowsill in July, the hottest, sunniest month of the year.
Lily	Why not, Grandpa? What's the problem? The sun isn't going to steal my chocolate is it?? Now who is being silly?
Grandpa	The problem, my dear is the heat. It makes for runny chocolate.
Lily	Mmmm that does sound quite good actually, is that a bit like a chocolate fountain?
Grandpa	Exactly, only not so much fun. Especially when you have little visitors.
Lily	It's ages since I had a sleep-over. Not that we slept much, you see I had been saving up all this chocolate...
Grandpa	(Interrupting) No Lily, think smaller. Really little visitors. Look at these little brown specs all over your windowsill. Now what do you think they might be?
Lily	Errr? Tell me Grandpa.
Grandpa	Your little visitors are mice. They have a sweet tooth and love chocolate even more than cheese. You've hidden your Easter eggs from Ben, but these little guys have very sensitive noses. They leave their little poops everywhere.
Lily	Mice! Arggh! (screams dramatically) But I've never seen any mice here!
Grandpa	They're smart. They visit at night when you're asleep and can run at eight miles per hour. That's like 160mph for a human. Blink and you miss them.
Lily	Wow, that is fast! Could you run that fast, Grandpa when you were younger?
Grandpa	No, my dear, not ever. Now, shall we look inside the box? (opens it)
Lily	Poo-ey! I smell it now. What a disgusting sticky mess! And poops everywhere!
Grandpa	Shall we share this chocolate with Ben?
Lily	Yes he's welcome to it now. (shouts) Ben! I've got some chocolate for you!
Grandpa	(Sarcastically) Lily, how kind of you to share! It'll make him very sick.
Lily	Sick of chocolate? Ben will never be sick of chocolate. Not ever!
Grandpa	I'm afraid, Lily it will need throwing away! Keep your chocolate in a cooler place ...and somewhere the mice can't get to it – as well as Ben! (both exit)

7th August 2016

Luke 12.32-40

Your Father's good pleasure

Baby Overdue

Mel has packed her bag ready for going to look after her niece Stacey while her sister has her second baby. Dixie finds it, tips everything out and plays with the rattle. Grandpa disinfects it and assures Mel he's ready to look after Ben and Lily whenever he's needed.

Theme: Being packed up and ready for a very special event

Roots themes explore: Where our treasure is; responding to God's gift of the kingdom; being dressed for action

Humour:

- Mel has been impatient waiting for news for four weeks
- The phone keeps ringing with 'nuisance calls'
- Mel has too much 'insulation' (weight)
- Dixie empties out the bag and plays with Lego
- Dixie upset at being sent away
- Grandpa needing a sugar overdose to cope with watching Mel, which makes him dizzy
- Mel has mixed feelings when Grandpa says he can look after her children just as well as her
- Dixie might not be as easy to handle as Grandpa says

Props: Bag containing clothes, rattle and wrapped gift

Phone

Sign saying: 'At home'

Introduction

Most of us keep a diary with appointments booked in. For the most days we know what is going to happen and when. Unlike the olden days, there aren't many events that haven't been scheduled to take place at a particular time. One exception to this is the arrival of a new baby. Find out whether anyone in the congregation has experienced waiting for a new baby beyond the original 'due date'. Ask how it felt to wait for news. Share the sense of excitement and anticipation, followed by the relief and joy experienced when a baby has arrived safely. What makes waiting hard? Does anyone have any tips for making the time pass quickly?

Explain that Mel is waiting to help her sister Amy by looking after the older child, Stacey, while the baby is being born.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Baby Overdue'

After the Puppet Sketch

Re-inforce the idea that when we are waiting for important news, it's so distracting that it can be hard to concentrate on anything else. What are the hopes and expectations of the family waiting for news? (Be careful not to emphasise the risks if it might scare children present) Draw out the idea that the welfare of the mother and new baby are paramount. This is a time that puts the important things like health and family life into perspective.

Discuss the importance of being 'ready' for a major event and tell the congregation to listen to what Jesus has to say about being prepared.

The Bible Story

Mel	(To audience) I'm so excited! My sister, Amy, is about to have her second baby. I can't wait! I'm going to look after my niece Stacey while Amy's in hospital. When the phone rings, I'm ready to go. It could ring at any time! (pause, phone rings) Hello, is that Amy? (disappointed) Oh, who is it then? ...No thank you, I do not want any trees cutting down. I never have and I never will. Please get off the line as I'm waiting for an urgent call from my sister. Goodbye! (hangs up) I hope I didn't forget to pack the presents I've got Stacey – the big-sister-to be: a Lego hospital kit. (points to it) She'll love it! (phone rings) Hello, is that Amy? (disappointed) Oh, who is it then? ...No thank you, I have not been in an accident so I do not want your help to claim money against the person who did not bump into my car. Please get off the line as I'm waiting for an urgent call from my sister. Goodbye! (hangs up) I'm excited about seeing Stacey and new baby, but worried about leaving the kids and Dixie with my Dad. The kids should be OK, but the dog can be a lot of trouble! (enter Dixie)
Dixie	Woof, woof, woof!
Mel	Oh, Dixie, you heard your name, did you. (pats Dixie) Now, you be a good boy while I'm away. (phone rings) Hello, is that Amy? (disappointed) Oh, who is it then? ...No thank you, I do not want to take part in a survey about insulation. I'm very well insulated all over the house and more insulation around my waist than I want. If I wanted to improve my insulation levels I would join weightwatchers. Please get off the line as I'm waiting for an urgent call from my sister. Goodbye! (hangs up; Dixie knocks over bag, grabs and rattles Lego kit) Get away from Stacey's Lego, Dixie! Go on, off you go, shoo!
Dixie	<i>(Whimpers pathetically and exits)</i>
Mel	Oh dear, now I've upset Dixie! <i>(Paces up and down)</i> It's so hard to wait for that phone call. Why can't babies come at the right time? This one's nearly two weeks late. I've been waiting by the phone for four weeks... Perhaps I'd better make a nice cup of tea to help pass the time...
Grandpa	<i>(Offstage as if waking up to the word)</i> Tea? Did someone say tea? I'm sure I heard something about tea! Yes, please Mel! Mine's a milky one with six sugars... lovely.
Mel	Oh gosh, six spoon-fuls, Grandpa? You only usually take ...err four. <i>(Grandpa enters)</i>
Grandpa	Well you see, it's making me fret, just watching you, Mel. You're getting so anxious waiting for that phone call, the whole family are permanently on edge and it is exhausting, hence all the extra sugar I need to keep up! I am a bit older than you you see so should be slowing my pace down not increasing it like the last few weeks! All this pacing (looks left and right on each) up and down, up and down, up and down is making me dizzzzzzzz-y. <i>(acts dizzy and wobbles around)</i> sssso dizzzzzz-z-y.
Mel	And you think that a dose of sugar-poison will help you?
Grandpa	Don't worry, Mel. The kids will be fine. I can look after them just as well as you can. How hard can it be? <i>(Mel grunts)</i> Chill out and go and get a cup of tea... remember mines milk and six sugars! <i>(Mel exits shaking her head)</i>
Mel	<i>(Offstage)</i> O.K. - but you didn't mention looking after Dixie as well?
Grandpa	Naaaaa! Dixie's cool. No problem! What harm can a gorgeous little dog do... <i>(extensive barking, followed by Dixie rushing onto stage nocking Grandpa over)</i> Ahhhhh! <i>(falls off stage)</i>
Mel	<i>(re enters to help pick Grandpa up)</i> See! You can't say I didn't warn you! <i>(sarcastically)</i> Maybe increase that to eight spoons of sugar? <i>(both exit)</i>

Passion

Ben is desperate to get the main part in a school play about Nelson Mandela. Mel explains the implications of being a human rights activist.

Theme: The pain experienced by those who campaign for justice

Roots themes explore: Our images of Jesus; new life coming from destruction; recognising signs of our time

Humour: Would Ben like to spend 27 years in jail and have three wives?
Tips for beating off the competition at audition

Props: Script
Sign saying: 'At home'

Introduction

Ask the congregation to tell you the names of the people (other than Jesus) they respect the most because they made a significant contribution to changing the world, making it a better place to live in. Hear what they did that was good. What made you choose them, what made them stand out? Do you think it would be possible to put them into a list of the "best people"? Why not? (so many different things done, they can't be compared but can be celebrated)

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Long Walk to 'Passion'

After the Puppet Sketch

Grandpa will have remembered Nelson Mandela in the news and will enjoy sharing those stories with Ben. Ask the congregation to share their memories too. At what personal cost did, Mandela achieve true democracy in South Africa? Say that his family life was very difficult at times too.

Role models, such as Nelson Mandela can throw up issues that are hard to accept. Listen to some difficult words that we hear from Jesus...

The Bible Story

Where? At home

Title of sketch: Long Walk to Freedom

Ben	(Mumbling to himself) There is no passion. There is no passion. There is no passion.
Grandpa	What are you talking about, Ben. 'There is no passion'? What do you mean by that!
Ben	Passion is about... err, actually why don't you have a guess Grandpa?
Grandpa	Passion eh? A love play. Girl meets boy and they live happily ever after. <i>(blows kiss)</i>
Ben	Yuk, erm no thanks Grandpa. I'll never be in a play like that, that is just gross!
Grandpa	Not love, Hmmm, this is a tough one... Is it passion fruit. Yummy, but expensive?
Ben	Uh oh, nope, try again
Grandpa	It can't be the passion of Christ, suffering before Easter. I give up.
Ben	Oh Grandpa I thought you would know this! It's what Nelson Mandela said: 'There is no passion to be found in playing small – in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.' I want to be a Nelson Mandela.
Grandpa	Oh of course yes! Hang on... Oh really! So you want to be in prison for 27 years?
Ben	No! I didn't say that! What gave you that impression? I wouldn't like prison.
Grandpa	And get married three times.
Ben	Aaaaah! That would be worse! I'm never getting married in the first place...
Grandpa	Then you can't be Nelson Mandela.
Ben	In a school play, Grandpa, it's a school play. I want the main part.
Grandpa	You ou want a big part in the performance, but you don't like suffering. You're going to have to act well then. Changing the world makes a few enemies.
Ben	I thought he was popular? There are statues of him all over the world aren't there?
Grandpa	I think you might be missing something here and only seeing part of the story! Let me see your script... Oh, you've only got the happy ending here.
Ben	I've got to learn the words and beat my friend Chris. He wants the part too.
Grandpa	Sounds like war. Competition between two rival friends. That's a good start!
Ben	Help me Grandpa. 'A winner is a dreamer who never gives up.'
Grandpa	You sound like a wimp! You need passion. Sound like a man who's spent years fighting for good but called a traitor by powerful enemies. A man who's been in prison and missed out on seeing his children. More passion!
Ben	<i>(Starts loud, gets quieter)</i> 'A winner ... is a dreamer ... who never gives up.'
Grandpa	Better. You started loud, but got quieter. Persevere and push on right to the end!
Ben	<i>(Emphasising each word in bold)</i> 'A winner ... is a dreamer ... who never gives up.'
Grandpa	Perfect! Can you feel the difference? If it was up to me, I'd give you the part.
Ben	<i>(Excited)</i> Really! <i>(deflated)</i> But life isn't that easy is it? Tomsays he's better than me!
Grandpa	Don't give up so easily. You need to want this part with as much passion as Nelson Mandela wanted freedom and equal rights for his fellow countrymen.
Ben	Yeah. Like my life depends on it. I'll die if I don't get this part.
Grandpa	That's my boyl imagine that without this part, life just won't be worth living.
Ben	I'll do absolutely anything to get this part!
Grandpa	Errr? Give up your family life, Ben? Would you stand against me if I got in your way.
Ben	But Grandad, you wouldn't stand in my way. My sister might though. I'd kill her!
Grandpa	That's the fighting spirit. Talk tough, boy! Err, but not toooo tough. Maybe steady on just a little bit there with your sister, I don't want your mum telling me off for encouraging you two fight, I think she has a hard enough time with that anyway!

Afternoon Out

Mel has a day off work and takes Grandpa to a garden centre for a cup of tea. They enjoy the jokes printed on the napkins. When Grandpa falls an off-duty doctor comes to his help, but is only needed until the centres first aider arrives.

Theme: Thinking about how we spend our 'day off'

Roots themes explore: being set free from bondage; honouring the Sabbath; the pointing finger

Humour: Being in a conservatory is even better than being outside
Jokes

Props: napkins
Sign saying: 'Garden Centre Cafe'

Introduction

Find out what people like to do on their 'day off'. Encourage them contribute a variety of ideas from relaxing to energetic sports activities. Do some activities which are relaxing to some just sound like a chore to others? Which professions need rotas so that there is important cover 24 hours a day, 7 days a week? Today's sketch will show us something that Mel likes to do on her day off.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Afternoon Out'

After the Puppet Sketch

Ask what Mel did on her day off. (took her Dad to the garden centre) Ask where the kind doctor went on his day off. (went to the garden centre) What did Mel do to make sure that they didn't take up too much of the doctor's time on his day off (fetched the Garden Centre's first aider)

Ask the congregation, 'If you were a doctor, would you be willing to help someone on your day off?' Do you think it depends on the job or what the person is like, a tricky challenge! If you were a trained first aider would you run in and help or let the doctor sort the problem out?

Sometimes, there is a balance to be made between two principles e.g. having a day off and helping those around you in need. Do the adults think you ever find the right balance?!

Lets' hear what Jesus has to say about striking that balance.

The Bible Story

Mel	How's your cup of tea, Dad?
Grandpa	Very nice, thank you, Mel. How's your herbal pepper thingy tea? Sounds a bit weird "pepper" tea to me...
Mel	Oh Dad, it's not just pepper, it's pepper-MINT and yes, it is very refreshing actually, thanks Dad. And slimming too.
Grandpa	<i>(Makes a scoffing noise)</i> I can't be doing with all these different flavours. Once you just asked for tea or coffee. Now there are so many varieties and choices to make.
Mel	And how many sugars.
Grandpa	Hold on a second! I only had three today. I'm slimming too! <i>(pats tummy)</i>
Mel	Huh! Not that I noticed. Have you seen these napkins? They have jokes on them. What do you call an insect with musical talent?
Grandpa	I don't know, what do you call an insect with musical talent?
Mel	A humbug. What do you call a grumpy, short-tempered gardener?
Grandpa	I don't know, what do you call a grumpy, short-tempered gardener?
Mel	A snap dragon. What do you call a country where people drive only pink cars?
Grandpa	I don't know, what do you call a country where the people drive only pink cars?
Mel	A pink car nation.
Grandpa	Haha oh very good. Sorry to stop the <i>(sarcastically)</i> fantastic jokes but... my gammy leg is just starting to get stiff. I think we'd better get moving.
Mel	That's fine. But it has been very pleasant sitting here in this warm café.
Grandpa	Yes, the British summer always feels better from inside a conservatory with heating.
Mel	Exactly! Now come on put your coat on. There's a cold wind outside and no sun.
Grandpa	That sounds like a typical British summer's day.
Mel	I'll hold your coat while you get up.
Grandpa	Thanks, Mel. It's this right foot that's a bit slow. Excuse this little dance my toes are doing. I wish I had two left feet.
Mel	That's not what Mum said when you went dancing. I've seen your dancing medals.
Grandpa	Aaaah yes! Those were the days... <i>(Shows off some dance steps but then falls over)</i> Woa!
Mel	Careful, Dad. Are you all right?
Grandpa	I shall be, in a minute. Let me just check my other leg..... OWW!
Mel	Help! Is there a doctor in the house??!
Grandpa	Mel, keep your voice down I certainly don't need a doctor!
Mel	Yes you do. Just sit still – stay where you are.
Grandpa	<i>(exasperated)</i> Do I have any choice in the matter?
Mel	No. Do as you're told.
Grandpa	<i>(Reluctantly)</i> Yes, Mel!
Mel	<i>(Aside)</i> Thank you for rushing over. <i>(to Grandpa)</i> This man's a doctor. He'll look after you while I find the first aid rep.
Grandpa	I don't want to be any trouble to you on your day off. I'm fine, really.
Mel	Dad, will you just stop it! Let the doctor look after you. I'll be back soon with a staff member. <i>(mutter)</i> Poor old, Dad – always so independent! <i>(exits)</i>
Grandpa	<i>(Calling after)</i> It takes one to know one!

King of the Castle

Ben and Lily are playing 'I'm the King of the Castle' when Dixie rushes over and spoils the game. They complain that when visitors come, it's always the children who have to sit on the old wooden chairs. Ben asks Mel to explain why.

Theme: *Honest humility*

Roots themes explore: *Seeing yourself honestly; observing and being observed; giving without receiving*

Humour: *Enjoying playing dangerous games*
Irony that parents look after their children sacrificially, including humility training

Props: *Signs saying: 'In the garden' and 'In the dining room'*

Introduction

Why do children like to climb? (answers might include: enjoy the challenge, see better, being tall is associated with age and dominance so it's something they aspire to)

Discuss why a king and queen's throne has height and their subjects bow down to them.

Why is the 'top table' so called, even if all the tables are at the same level?

Ask if there is anyone in the congregation who would like to explain how you play 'I'm the king of the castle'?

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'King of the Castle'

After the Puppet Sketch

Ask what would happen in a family where children think that they are more important than their parents? Would this affect their ability to respect authority and be obedient when they ought to be?

Do we think that Mel is right? i.e. If children don't grow up to respect their parents, they won't respect everyone else in the way that Jesus commanded?

Now listen to the part of the Bible Mel was referring to when she quoted Jesus advising us to choose the lowest seat for ourselves.

The Bible Story

Where? In the garden

Title of sketch: King of the Castle

Ben	I'm the king of the castle!
Lily	Get down you dirty rascal! <i>(pushes Ben down)</i> Now I'm the king of the castle!
Ben	Get down you dirty rascal! <i>(pushes Lily down a bit too hard, she disappears off stage)</i>
Lily	<i>(Off stage)</i> Ow that hurt! You pushed me!
Ben	Well durrr... that's the game?
Lily	<i>(Enters)</i> Yes I know that, silly, but not that hard! <i>(pushes Ben back, he falls off stage)</i>
Ben	<i>(Offstage)</i> Ow! Why did you do that? That hurt!
Lily	<i>(Smugly)</i> Like you said. That's the game.
Ben	<i>(Sighs)</i> Actually we've stopped playing now. So I'm telling Mum you deliberately hurt me.
Lily	Hey! That's not nice. It's not fair.
Ben	Life isn't fair... And it's not fair that when Joe & Jenny visit, we have to share bedrooms...
Lily	It's fun sharing with Jenny. We talk all night and don't go to sleep.
Ben	Hmmm well it isn't as much fun for me. <u>And</u> we children have to sit on the old, wooden chairs.
Lily	They're really uncomfortable.
Ben	I think I'm going to complain...
Lily	Oh Ben I really don't think it won't make any difference?
Ben	Justice is on our side. Let's form a union, go on strike, refuse to sit down!
Lily	Mum won't give us any food and we'll go hungry.
Ben	I suppose she won't. Hmmm I do like food... OK forget that. But I'm going to complain anyway.

In the dining room

(both exit)

Ben	Mum, Why do the kids always have to sit on the hard wooden chairs? It's not fair.
Mel	You can't expect Grandpa to sit on the uncomfortable chairs! He fell over last week.
Ben	Well, OK maybe not Grandpa. But what about you? You haven't hurt yourself recently?
Mel	I think you' it's not just about looking after Grandpa, it's also a way of showing him respect.
Ben	What? Why can't the rest of us take turns?
Mel	The Bible says we should respect our parents. It's one of the ten commandments.
Ben	So?
Mel	I show Grandpa respect. He's my Dad. You and Lily need to show respect to your parents too. I need you to respect me so you will grow up to respect others. I would do anything to help you and Lily, quite sacrificially. But I need to teach you humility in a practical way.
Ben	I don't get it. You say you make sacrifices for your kids, but you want a comfortable chair when we are wriggling, wriggling, wriggling trying to find a way to sit which doesn't hurt?
Mel	I love you very much, Ben. But spoiling you and giving you everything that you wanted wouldn't be a loving thing to do.
Ben	I don't mind getting spoilt, in fact giving me everything I want sounds like a great new rule!
Mel	If I let you think that you can always have the best of everything, how will you cope when you grow up? Maybe as a poor student or just setting up home? How will you spend money wisely if you are used to getting everything you want? It's better to rough it a bit as a child and look forward to luxury when you're older and have your own money to spend, knowing the value of money. Besides all that, Jesus says we should choose the lowest place at the table - unless the host promotes you. That's the humble attitude I want to train you to do. Does that make sense?
Ben	Huh! So it's Jesus' fault I have to sit on a hard chair! I bet he never had to share his bedroom!
Mel	Oh Ben! I think if you really knew what Jesus has done for you, giving up your chair would seem nothing. One day you will grasp it! For now you can grab a cushion to make the chairs more comfortable? Does that sound like a fair deal to you?
Ben	Go on then, but I want to sit next to Grandpa, he never quite finishes all his food and that means I can clean up what is left... or maybe even steal a Yorkshire pudding when he isn't watching... <i>(both exit with Mel shaking her head)</i>