



Top Tip In this edition of puppet scripts, our top tip is the well-known proverb saying “Never underestimate the power of food!” Easter is the perfect time to put this rule into practice. If you want families to come to church this Easter, offer them an Easter Egg – or better still an egg hunt! If you choose a ‘Real Easter Egg’ from the Meaningful Chocolate Company, the Easter story will be re-enforced with quality! How many other events you run could be enhanced by food? Home-made cake and even chocolate biscuits can help to make your event more attractive!



Children’s Ministry Conference This year, the Grace stand featured a coconut shy with wooden faces hinged to the frame you can see in the picture. It was very popular with both children and adult delegates alike. After all, children’s workers like to have fun too! As it was nearly Valentine’s Day, we gave out free copies of our script for 14th February and these were well received. We can thoroughly recommend this annual conference in Eastbourne. The seminars are excellent and there are resources in abundance to choose from. It’s an excellent time to take a weekend away from your usual duties and meet fellow children’s workers and swap stories!

Prayer Requests Please thank God that Grace Worker Melody’s degree course at St. John’s is going so well and that she has had excellent grades after the first six months. Please pray for the new church chosen to pilot the new Grace scheme in September and for ‘Time for God’ as they select our volunteers. Thank you for praying for the next generation!

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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, recently moved back from Australia

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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6th March 2016

Luke 15.1-3,11b-32

The waiting father

'Mothers' Day' is the usual vocabulary used by modern families. Change it to 'Mothering Sunday' if you need to!

Yummy Chocolate Eggs

Grandpa organises Lily and Ben to give Mum a box of Easter eggs. One drops and cracks, so Ben eats it. He is scolded for lying about the missing egg. When he falls Mum gives him an egg to feel better. A jealous Lily wants one too.

Theme: *Fairness; sibling rivalry*

Roots themes explore: *Turning points; family dynamics/relationships in community; human fairness & God's generosity*

Humour: Chocolate is more exciting, but less healthy than real eggs

Ben might as well eat the broken egg

Lying about the missing egg

Ben really wants to eat the egg offered, but doesn't feel he deserves it

Ben takes an egg, but hypocritically doesn't think Lily should have one

Props: Empty 6 -egg box

2 Cadbury's chocolate eggs

Step ladder next to stage

Sign saying: 'Ben's bedroom'

Introduction

Find out what the mothers' have received/been treated to for Mothers' Day. When people are given a box of chocolates, do they open them straight away and share them with the person who gave them? If so, who were the chocolates really for????!!!! [To mothers] If you received chocolates/sweets would you share them or are they a treat for you to enjoy? You can be honest! What if you treated your son/daughter would they share their sweets with you do you think?

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Yummy chocolate eggs'

After the Puppet Sketch

Was it a good idea for Mel to give Ben one of her eggs when he fell and hurt himself? Did he deserve it after eating one of the eggs before the day? Should Mel give one to Lily too? Why do you think that?

Discuss the sibling rivalry demonstrated by Ben saying Lily shouldn't have one of the eggs.

The Bible Story

Where? Ben's bedroom**Title of sketch: Yummy chocolate eggs**

Grandpa	Ben, here's a special Mothers' Day treat for you to give to Mum.
Ben	Is it chocolate? I do love chocolate!!!
Grandpa	Yes, but Cadbury's cream eggs are designed for adults. You don't like them.
Ben	Oh yes I do!
Grandpa	Oh no you don't!
Ben	Oh yes I do!
Grandpa	I've put 6 into an egg box. Ben, you'll need self-discipline not to eat them.
Ben	Oh, Grandpa!!!
Grandpa	Can I trust you to hide – and not to eat them - until Mothers' Day?
Ben	Yes! I'll hide them here in my bedroom. <i>(Grandpa grunts & exits, Ben talks to himself)</i> The top shelf is out of sight - so Mum won't see them and I won't be tempted to eat them. <i>(Climbs up, drops eggs)</i> Botheration! An egg has broken. Hmmmm... It wouldn't be right to give mum a present that is broken and I wouldn't want to upset her... The best thing to do would be to... yes I might as well eat it! <i>(eats noisily)</i>
Later	<i>(Mum enters bedroom to wake up a sleeping Ben)</i>
Mel	Morning, Ben! Time to get up! You were looking forward to church today.
Ben	No I wasn't. Can I stay in bed? <i>(groans, then suddenly remembers it's Mothers' Day, sits up and speaks abruptly)</i> Oh! Happy Mother's Day!
Mel	Thank you, Ben.
Ben	<i>(Sleepily)</i> Errr, I've got a gift for you. I need to get it from the top shelf.
Mel	<i>(As Ben gets up)</i> Be careful, Ben! You're still very sleepy!
Ben	<i>(Ben climbs up on chair and wobbles)</i> Here it is, Mum, an ordinary egg box.
Mel	Oh <i>(said uncertainly)</i> I guess any gift from you is special Ben! <i>(receives box)</i> Thank you. Be careful on that chair now, Ben.
Ben	<i>(Wobbles, then regains balance)</i> You're welcome, Mum. Look inside!
Mel	My favourite! Six Cadbury's eggs! <i>(looks inside box and spots the gap in the egg carton)</i> Errrr, oh, only five!
Ben	There were six, but one broke. So I took it out.
Mel	How considerate of you. Was that to stop me getting covered in the sticky centre? But what did you do with it?
Ben	I, errrr, binned it. <i>(looking a bit nervous)</i>
Mel	Ben?
Ben	I, errr... recycled it!
Mel	Ben? Tell the truth now!
Ben	I... I... <i>(stammering)</i> oh alright, I ate it! Why let a good chocolate egg go to waste?
Mel	Ben, I've taught you not to tell lies. I'm very disappointed in you!
Ben	<i>(Wobbles, then falls off chair)</i> Ahhhhh! Owwww! I've bumped my arm. It hurts! AAAAAHHHHHHHHH!
Mel	<i>(Helping Ben sit down onto his bed and sits beside him)</i> I know something that will cheer you up. Why don't you have one of my chocolate eggs?
Ben	But Mum! They were for you! You told me off for eating one already!
Mel	And I'm now choosing to share one with you, so that you can feel better. <i>(Ben dithers – should he take one or not. He picks up an egg!)</i>
Lily	<i>(Offstage)</i> Ooooh I love crème eggs! Mum! Can I have one too?
Ben	<i>(Interrupts)</i> No, Lily! They're for Mum! I'm hurt and you're not!
Mel	Mmmm! Isn't it up to me to make that decision?
Ben	<i>(Embarrassed)</i> Oh, sorry Mum, I suppose they are yours aren't they?
Mel	Thank you Ben, and yes they are! I still have 4 left, shall we go and see if Grandad would like one too? He still has quite a sweet tooth!

13th March 2016

John 12.1-8

Wasting time with God

Dixie's perfume

Mel is getting ready for Jenny and David's house-warming party. She's pleased to see Dixie until he breaks her bottle of perfume. Mel is so cross she threatens to leave Dixie at home, until Lily pleads for him to be allowed to go, as planned.

Theme: Perfume; what's important now

Roots themes explore: The value of worship explored through the five senses; focusing on what's important now

Humour: Dixie gets in the way, but Mel doesn't mind
Mel gets very cross
Dixie stinks of perfume
Lily pleads hard for Dixie

Props: Empty plastic bottle (looks like it could be a perfume bottle)
Sign saying: 'Mel's bedroom'

Introduction

Discuss presents received recently.

Did anyone receive perfume for Mothers' Day (or at any other time)?

Do you use a gift like that straight away or keep it in the box for a long time because it's 'special' or 'too good to use'.

How often do we find that when we next come across these 'special' items they have expired or gone past their use by date?

Is an item given more special because of the person who gave it to you? (Ask for examples)

Let's hear what happened to one of Mel's Mothers' Day gifts...

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Dixie's perfume'

After the Puppet Sketch

Have fun thinking about how the scent from a whole bottle can be unpleasantly overpowering.

Who wouldn't want Dixie to come to one of their parties? Why might he not be welcome? (Maybe after a bath?)

Who would want the scented Dixie to come to one of their parties? Why?

What are our priorities when drawing up a guest list for a party?

Listen to the Bible story and think about the priorities Jesus had when he attended social events.

The Bible Story

Where? Mel's bedroom

Title of sketch: Dixie's perfume

Mel	I can't wait to see Jenny and David's wedding photos and hear about their honeymoon. I wonder who's invited to tonight's house-warming party? I'm wearing the perfume I was given on Mothers' Day. It looks expensive.
Dixie(offstage)	Woof, woof, woof!
Mel	<i>(Opening door to Dixie who enters)</i> You're invited, Dixie. I hope you'll be good!
Dixie	<i>(Nodding)</i> Woof, woof, woof! <i>(Mel pats him affectionately)</i>
Mel	Jenny loves you, Dixie, and you'll make the party much more exciting.
Dixie	Woof, woof! <i>(Wags tail and jumps up at Mel, knocking her over)</i>
Mel	Careful, Dixie, you've knocked me over. As I was saying, the party will be much more exciting if you're around!
Dixie	Woof, woof! Woof, woof! <i>(Jumps around uncontrollably)</i>
Mel	Be careful with my bottle of perfume, it was expensive.... <i>(Dixie knocks it over)</i> Oh Dixie look what you have done now!
Dixie	<i>(Smells the perfume and rolls over the area it spilt)</i> Woof, woof!
Mel	<i>(Crossly)</i> Naughty Dixie <i>(Dixie snuggles up to her)</i> You smell terrible Poooh-ey! I don't think smelling of perfume is how a dog is meant to smell! Oh [sadly] I was really looking forward to wearing that perfume.
Dixie	<i>(Looks at Mel and whimpers comically)</i>
Mel	It's no good looking at me like that. You're banned from the party and banned from my bedroom. Off you go, Dixie - right now! <i>(exit Dixie)</i> How am I going to tell Dad that I let Dixie break the perfume bottle he gave me? The one that I was saving for a special event as well! He'll say 'Well, Mel, I told you not to let that dog into the bedroom!'
Lily(offstage)	<i>(Dixie whimpers)</i> What's the matter, Dixie? <i>(Dixie whimpers)</i>
Mel	Oh no, that's all I need! Dixie complaining to Lily he's had done by!
Lily (enters)	Mum, Dixie stinks! Poooh-ey!
Mel	It's my perfume! My lovely perfume! <i>(cries comically)</i>
Lily	Oh no, not the perfume Grandpa gave you for Mothers' Day! <i>(starts crying)</i>
Mel	Oh yes, the very expensive bottle from Grandpa. <i>(cries even louder)</i>
Lily	Mum, how terrible! You were going to wear it to Jenny and David's! <i>(cries)</i>
Mel	I know! <i>(both wail inconsolably)</i> Silly Dixie!
Lily	<i>(Like an echo)</i> Silly Dixie!
Mel	Bad dog!
Lily	<i>(Like an echo)</i> Bad dog!
Mel	He's banned from my bedroom and definitely banned from the party.
Lily	<i>(Gasps and instantly stops making a fuss)</i> What?! Poor Dixie! You can't stop him from going. I won't let you!
Mel	But Lily, Dixie causes trouble wherever he goes.
Lily	But Mum, everyone loves him, especially Jenny!
Mel	He stinks, you said it yourself.
Lily	Well if Dixie isn't allowed to go, I'm not going either. So there!
Mel	Come on, Lily, Jenny will be disappointed not to see you.
Lily	She'll be disappointed not to see Dixie. I won't go if Dixie doesn't!
Mel	Let me think about it. <i>(pause)</i> Hmm... I suppose the scent will have mellowed a bit by the time we get there...
Lily	Thanks Mum! <i>(shouts)</i> Dixie, guess what... you're allowed to come! <i>(opens door, Dixie rushes in knocking her over)</i>
Mel & Lily	<i>(Together)</i> Oh Dixie, not again!

20th March 2016

Luke 19.28-40

The time has come

Waving the flag

Ben and Lily are waiting to cheer Princess Anne as she comes to their local town to open a new branch of 'Riding for the Disabled Association'. She doesn't arrive on a horse, but in a Lamborghini car and without wearing a crown.

Themes: Celebrating the arrival of royalty and the significance of their appearance
Roots themes explore: Celebration and significance of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem; recognising God's moment; how we welcome Jesus into our lives

Humour: The children are out of breath after running to the front for a good view
Lily is bored waiting
Ben puts his flag on a really long stick
Silly suggestions for Princess Anne's transport
Princess Anne needs to borrow a paper crown from 'Burger King'

Props: 2 patriotic flags, one on a ridiculously long stick
Sign saying: 'outside a new riding centre'
Sign flips over to read 'Riding Centre opened by The Princess Royal on 20th March 2016'

Introduction

Has anyone ever been in a crowd waiting to see a royalty (or a celebrity)?
Did they have to wait around for a long time? Was there tight security?
Hear about their experiences and the atmosphere they experienced.
Explain that there is great excitement in (your town) because a new 'Riding for the Disabled Association Centre' has been built. It's a great honour for (your town) that Princess Anne, The Princess Royal is coming to open it. Let's see what happens in today's sketch...

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Waving the flag'

After the Puppet Sketch

Ask what Lily's expectations were for the arrival of Princess Anne (on a horse wearing a crown).
Why was Lily disappointed? (no horse, no crown)
Point out that the two children were nevertheless still enthusiastic in their welcome for The Princess Royal.
The children waved flags in the sketch. What might a crowd have waved in Jesus' day? (Leaves and cloaks)

There really was once an attempt to kidnap Princess Anne in 1974 (Ian Ball was planning to demand £3 million from the Queen and fired 6 shots. Three hit Policeman Jim Beaton who was later awarded the George Cross)

As you hear from the Bible, notice the difference in the emotions between those who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem and his enemies.

The Bible Story

Ben	<i>(Both children are panting)</i> Beat you!
Lily	We both beat Mum. She's miles behind us.
Ben	She's tall enough to see from behind the crowd. We need to be at the front.
Lily	When Princess Anne comes I'm going to stand in front of this ribbon.
Ben	Don't be silly, that's a warning line! The police will arrest you and throw you in prison and...
Lily	What's wrong with going past the line?. I only want to say hello to the Princess.
Ben	<i>(Hits hand on head)</i> They'll think you're trying to kidnap her, you fool!
Lily	Don't be silly. How could I kidnap her? I haven't got a gun.
Ben	Just as well – you'd be dangerous!
Lily	<i>(pause for a few seconds)</i> I'm bored.
Ben	You've only been here two seconds. There's another hour to wait yet!
Lily	Oh <i>(thinks)</i> That's a long time to wave a flag, my arm is already aching!
Ben	Keep it in your bag until nearer the time. You'll only break it if you play with it.
Lily	Have you got your flag?
Ben	Yes. I've put it on a long stick so that Annie-girl can see it. Ooooooh... I might be on telly.
Lily	Annie-girl? She's called 'The Princess Royal'.
Ben	My friends and I call her 'Annie-girl'. Royalty are no different to the rest of us.
Lily	<i>(Shocked)</i> But she's a princess! She'll be wearing a crown full of jewels. <i>(Ben laughs)</i>
Ben	Yeah, sure! Like the one you got from Burger King made from paper.
Lily	<i>(Upset)</i> You're being mean to me. I've still got that crown from Burger King. Princesses always wear crowns. Have you really got a long stick for your flag?
Ben	I'll show you. <i>(holds it up)</i> See! Everyone will see it and I'll be on the TV news.
Lily	<i>(Impressed)</i> Wow, that's high. Do you think Princess Anne will be riding a horse?
Ben	I saw a picture of her riding a pig when she was little. That would be funny!
Lily	She's not going to arrive on a pig!
Ben	Alright it won't be a pig. Maybe she'll arrive on a motorbike.
Lily	<i>(Shocked)</i> A princess on a motorbike!!!
Ben	<i>(Sighs)</i> Only joking.
Lily	<i>(Pauses for a few seconds again)</i> I'm bored.
Ben	Then watch the big screen over there. Her car's approaching (your town) .
Lily	But she's a famous horse rider and rode in the 1972 Montreal Olympic Games. Why would she come to open a riding centre for the disabled in a car?
Ben	It's a Lamborghini. Cool!
Lily	A lamb for queenie?
Ben	Girls!!! <i>(hits hand on head)</i>
Lily	Here she comes! <i>(Both cheer and waves flags)</i> Oh! She wasn't wearing a crown!
Ben	Told you she wouldn't. The jewels are too heavy. <i>(Lily starts to cry and turns away)</i> Where are you going?
Lily	Where do you think I'm going? To Burger King to get Annie-girl a paper crown, like I said, she can't be a princess without a crown!
Ben	<i>(Frustrated)</i> Girls!!!!

27th March 2016

John 20.1-18

Easter encounter

Easter bunny

Grandpa has been asked to play the part of the Easter Bunny and 'lay some eggs' for Easter. Dixie smells the chocolate and jumps into the 'nest' and plays with the eggs. Grandpa gives him some doggy chocolate and the eggs are thrown out to the audience.

Please note that volunteers should be pre-chosen for tossing the eggs to the audience.

Theme: Recognising people we know

Roots themes explore: Being known by Jesus; encounter leading to witness; resurrection as a journey

Humour: Getting excited about chocolate
The Easter bunny tradition of laying eggs at Easter in a nest is crazy
Dixie goes mad for chocolate
We feel sorry for Dixie not being allowed chocolate
Dixie is willing to share what he can't have

Props: Bunny rabbit ears for Grandpa puppet
Lots of small Easter eggs in a basket
A home-made 'nest' into which to put the eggs
Sign saying: "in the garden"

Introduction

Explore together the symbolism of the egg representing new life (a chick) and the empty shell representing Christ's empty tomb. The Easter rabbit is a non-Christian tradition remembering a Saxon legend that the goddess 'Eostre' turned a bird into a rabbit and thereafter allowed her to make a nest and lay eggs just once a year in the spring. These eggs were to be a treat for good children. As with some of our Christmas traditions, some early Christians converted this pagan story and made eggs brought by the Easter bunny a part of the Christian celebration of Easter.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Easter bunny'

After the Puppet Sketch

Didn't Grandpa look funny in his rabbit ears!

The 'disguise' confused Dixie and made him bark.

We weren't confused by the costume rabbit ears, but maybe there have been times when you didn't recognise someone you know straight away. Perhaps you hadn't seen them for a long time or they had lost weight or changed their hairstyle?

Listen to people's experiences of mistaken identity. (It could also be thinking that they know a stranger!)

As we listen to the Easter story, we should allow our imaginations to think about what the risen Christ might have looked like that was different from the Jesus they knew before Good Friday.

The Bible Reading

N.B. Keep the Easter story insert from 'The Real Easter Egg' for next week.

Grandpa	Happy Easter everyone. <i>(waits for a response, rubs ear)</i> I'm sorry, I can't hear you. It is Easter isn't it? We are celebrating today, aren't we? I have brought a basket of chocolate eggs? So altogether now Happy Easter everyone!
All	Happy Easter everyone!
Grandpa	That's better. I have been asked to be the Easter bunny. It's all just nonsense, if you ask me. We never had the Easter bunny when I was a lad. Apparently the Easter bunny lays eggs once a year on Easter Day in a special bunny nest. Crazy! Have you ever heard of a bunny rabbit building a nest? Have you ever heard of a bunny laying eggs? Have you ever heard of an animal laying eggs of solid chocolate? Crazy! Well, never mind, it's time to put on my bunny rabbit ears. <i>(does so)</i> How do I look? I warn you: anyone who laughs at the Easter bunny won't get any chocolate. OK time to lay the eggs in this crazy Easter nest. <i>(does a little 'egg-laying dance' then tips eggs into nest)</i> Gently does it. Woops, that one fell out of the nest. Don't worry, it won't make a sticky, egg mess, it's only chocolate. No baby birds have been harmed in the production of this puppet sketch. [picks up egg and places back into nest] Job done. The Easter bunny has laid chocolate eggs into a rabbits nest. Crazy, crazy, crazy! <i>(exits shaking his head as he goes)</i>
Dixie	<i>(Enters sniffing)</i> Chocolate? Can I smell chocolate? Where is it, boys and girls? <i>(encourage audience to direct Dixie to nest of chocolates, pantomime style)</i> To the left? You mean the right? Turn around <i>(turns 360°)</i> Ah! Now I see the chocolate. Mmm a nest full of chocolate eggs. Dixie, get ready to pounce on it. How many can I catch in one go? <i>(Dixie crouches down ready to pounce)</i> One, two, three, go! <i>(Dixie jumps on eggs which fly everywhere and dances on the nest playing noisily with the eggs)</i>
Grandpa	<i>(Enters crossly, still wearing bunny ears)</i> Dixie! Get away from those eggs. <i>(Dixie turns round, barks at Grandpa as though he's a stranger)</i> Dixie, don't you recognise me with these ears on? I'm not really the Easter bunny. <i>(takes off the ears)</i> Look, it's just old Grandpa! <i>(Dixie stops barking, twists head looking confused)</i> Those eggs weren't for you. <i>(Dixie whimpers comically)</i> Sorry, Dixie. Chocolate isn't good for dogs. <i>(Dixie whimpers pathetically, encourages audience response)</i>
All	Awwww!
Grandpa	But, just for you, I have some doggy chocolate in my pocket. <i>(Gives some to Dixie; encourages audience to react)</i>
Dixie	Woof, woof, woof, woof, woof!
Grandpa	What was that, Dixie?
Dixie	Woof, woof, woof, woof, woof!
Grandpa	Dixie says that if he can't have the chocolate eggs all to himself, he thinks we should share them out with everyone here. Oh no we shouldn't. [leans towards audience, with hand to ear to encourage response]
All	Oh yes we should!
Grandpa	Oh no we shouldn't!
All	Oh yes we should!
Grandpa	Oh, all right then, I suppose we could carry this on all day but these bunny ears are hurting my head! Please can my volunteers throw the chocolate eggs to everyone, make sure they are shared out properly! <i>(eggs tossed to each person in the audience while Dixie and Grandpa bark and cheer)</i>

Easter jokes

Several Easter eggs have disappeared during the last week. It's no mystery – they got eaten! One of Ben's contained jokes. Ben already knows the Easter story so Grandpa challenges him with a difficult question. Lily's 'Real Easter Egg' contained the Easter story and she asks Mum to read it to her.

If at all possible, use one of the colourful leaflets from a 'Real Easter Egg' rather than the summarised wording in grey below.

Theme: Children have different needs

Roots themes explore: How Jesus meets needs differently; voicing doubts and unlocking fears; receiving the Holy Spirit

Humour: Ben is good at eating chocolate eggs (and Lily's, if she'd let him!)
Easter jokes told
Lily takes it for granted that the Easter story has a happy ending and just wants to go out to play

Props: A leaflet from inside a 'Real Easter Egg'
Sign saying: 'at home'

Introduction

Find out how many Easter eggs people got last week and how many are left. Have fun hearing about the favourite ones received and what might have been found in the middle of the egg. (Probably no live chickens, you hope!) Include the adults too! Did anyone get anything a little bit different to an Easter egg? What was it?

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Easter jokes'

After the Puppet Sketch

Ask which of the children knew that Grandpa had been the Easter bunny? (Ben, the older one)

Which of the children could read the Easter story for themselves and knew it very well? (Ben, the older one)

Which of the children needed time to think about the grown up's question? (Ben, the older one)

Say that Ben, being older, had different needs to Lily as he's old enough to think about the deeper questions.

Ben, like Thomas, needs know about the evidence for the resurrection so that his faith can be strong and long-lasting.

Do you think Lily understood the story? Do you think she really knew what it meant that Jesus rose after three days and why it is so important? Let's hope that Mel managed to talk to Lily again to think more about it.

Do you think we sometimes just assume we know the Easter story and it loses its significance? Let's listen to the Easter story again and see if we can discover something new!

The Bible Story

Where? At home

Title of sketch: Easter jokes

Grandpa	Have you got any Easter eggs left, Ben?
Ben	A few. Most have disappeared! It was a good idea finding chocolate eggs from you, the Easter bunny on Easter day.
Grandpa	And, don't tell me, it's a bad idea to find them on Christmas day.
Ben	Eggs-actly!
Grandpa	Did you read the Easter story booklet in 'The Real Easter Egg'?
Ben	Oh yes, but I knew it already. I liked the egg with jokes in it. What did the Easter egg say to it's friend?
Grandpa	I don't know. What did the Easter egg say to its friend?
Ben	Have you heard any good <u>yolks</u> today? Why shouldn't you tell a joke to an Easter egg?
Grandpa	Oh I don't know. Why shouldn't you tell a joke to an Easter egg?
Ben	Because it might... <u>crack up</u> ! How about another one... How can you tell where the Easter bunny has been?
Grandpa	I don't know. How can you tell where the Easter bunny has been?
Ben	Because <u>Eggs</u> mark the spot! Get it? Eggs like 'X'? Haha! How about another one... How does the Easter bunny stay fit?
Grandpa	That will be with <u>eggs-ercise</u> ! I got plenty of eggs-ercise when I was being the Easter bunny last week, I can tell you! I've got a question for you, Ben. How do you know Jesus came back from the dead?
Ben	I know he did. I just know. Easter bunny would call it a hoppy ending!
Grandpa	Yes but how do you know it Ben? What's the evidence from the Bible?
Ben	I'll have to think about it. Can we talk after football? I have to go soon.
Grandpa	O.K. we can catch up again later on. <i>(both exit)</i>

Mel	Have you got any Easter eggs left, Lily?
Lily	Most of them! It was fun finding chocolate eggs from the Easter bunny on Easter day.
Mel	And it's a bad idea to find them on Christmas day.
Lily	Yeah, I need to eat them before Ben decides to 'help' me [sarcastically] like he did last year. I still can't believe how much chocolate he ate!
Mel	Did you find the Easter story booklet in 'The Real Easter Egg'?
Lily	Oh yes. Can you read it to me?
Mel	O.K. "Long ago there lived a preacher named Jesus. 'Love one another,' he told everyone... 'Perhaps Jesus will be king,' peoples said. when they saw Jesus riding into... Jerusalem... Jesus knew there was trouble ahead. Powerful people had turned against him... They said 'He is dangerous. He must be put to death.' When Jesus was dead, his friends laid him in a tomb. Three days later, God raised Jesus to life His friends were pleased to see him." Do you think the story had a happy ending?
Lily	Yes, of course it was a happy ending. Can I go out to play now?
Mel	<i>(As Lily exits, Mel shouts to follow)</i> And what was that happy ending Lily? Lily? We haven't finished chatting yet! [exits]

Fish quietly

Grandpa sets up Ben's fishing gear then goes to the club house for a drink. Ben is bored, so he plays music and exercises. Both activities are too noisy. Ben borrows some earphones from the audience and doesn't notice he's caught a fish. Dixie jumps in to fetch the fish. The noise attracts attention so Ben and Dixie have to 'run for it'.

Theme: The risky consequences of Ben and Dixie's behaviour, while Grandpa receives hospitality in the safety of the club house

Roots themes explore: The priority of hospitality; the risk of following Jesus; the impact of the resurrection on everyday life

Humour: Grandpa likes a drink
Dixie's barking
Ben & Dixie's dancing
Ben's warm up exercises
Ben in earphones
Lily's vanity

Props: Fishing rod or stick and string
Loud music switched on then off
Back-up earphones (just in case no one in the audience has a set they're willing to lend)
Colourful fish cut out from paper
Sign saying: 'by the river'

Introduction

Think about places where no one is welcome who makes a noise. (e.g. libraries, museums, exam rooms, assemblies, maybe even some churches)

Explore the reasons for this and whether the rules are fair. Hands up if you have ever been told to be quiet in one of those places? I am sure it has happened to all of us!

Find out whether anyone like to fish and ask why they have to do so quietly.

Express regret that Ben and Dixie don't know how to fish quietly and got themselves into trouble...

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Fish quietly'

After the Puppet Sketch

Congratulate Grandpa on having the sense to keep out of the way with a drink.

When do we particularly appreciate such refreshments? (e.g. when hungry/thirsty; away from home; after a stressful time) We shall soon hear about the hospitality of Jesus after a night's fishing.

Dixie was taking a risk when he jumped into the water. They both took a risk with making a noise when the very large lady fisherwoman was around. Ben also took a well-motivated risk when he tried to help Dixie. Do you think he was right to do that? (Only if he wasn't risking his own life or health.) Sometimes to do the right thing means taking an appropriate risk...

In today's reading, Jesus asks Fisherman Peter to 'feed my sheep'. Listen out for signs that Peter was a risk-taker and the hints of risks to come when Peter was to follow those instructions.

The Bible Story

Grandpa	Right, I think you're all set up for a day's fishing now, Ben. Are you O.K. if I go and have a drink in the club house?
Ben	Sure, Grandpa. Dixie's around somewhere. If there's any trouble, he'll come running, barking his head off <i>(Dixie barks from offstage)</i> See what I mean!
Grandpa	O.K. I'll see you in a bit. Hope you catch some big fish, Ben! <i>(exits)</i>
Ben	<i>(Feels the tension on the fishing line)</i> That feels O.K. to me. <i>(Sits down)</i> Ah! This is the life. I could sit here all day. Ah! Ah! Ah! Oh, I'm bored. I'll put some music on. <i>(Ben puts on some loud music and jiggles in time to the music, singing along to the words badly; Dixie joins him, barking loudly; they dance together until Dixie spots Grandpa coming and runs off)</i>
Grandpa	<i>(Enters)</i> Ben! Turn it off! <i>(Ben stops music)</i> You can't play loud music at a fishing club. It scares away the fish. Everyone's complaining. A very large lady fisherwoman threatened to punch you if you don't stop immediately.
Ben	Do you think she would punch me?
Grandpa	No. But she was huge, so I wouldn't take the risk! <i>(exits)</i>
Ben	<i>(Checks the fishing line)</i> No fish yet. I'm so bored. Even Dixie had the sense to run off and find something interesting to do. What can I do now? <i>(Looks around)</i> There's nothing to do! <i>(sits and yawns comically)</i> I could do the warming-up exercises they taught us at jogging club. Here we go with the 'stretching exercises'. <i>(does some stretching exercise, finishing with running on the spot with heavy, clumsy feet)</i> I could run like this for miles!
Grandpa	<i>(Enters)</i> Ben! Stop running! <i>(Ben stops)</i> You can't be bouncing on the ground like that. It scares away the fish. And guess what, everyone's complaining again! Remember that very large lady fisherwoman from earlier? Well she has threatened to punch you again if you don't stop immediately!
Ben	Do you really think she would punch me?
Grandpa	No. But she was huge, so I wouldn't take the risk! <i>(exits)</i>
Ben	<i>(Checks the fishing line)</i> No fish yet. <i>(sits down)</i> I'm bored, I'm bored, I'm bored! No music, no exercising. Why do people like fishing so much? If only I had my earphones with me!
Adult	Does anyone have any earphones they can lend Ben? <i>(attach them to puppet with pins, thank the lender who returns to seat; Ben sits, jiggling comically to the music)</i>
Dixie	<i>(quietly)</i> Woof! <i>(no reaction from Ben)</i> Ben is so boring when he's got his headphones on. I want to play! <i>(looks at fishing line which starts to move)</i> A fish, a fish! We've caught a fish! I'd better tell Ben. <i>(barks loudly, paws at Ben who takes no notices for ages because he's enjoying the music)</i> It's no good, he won't take any notice of me. I'd better go and fetch that fish myself, we can't let it get away, what would granpa say! Here we go! One, two three, jump! <i>(splash)</i>
Ben	<i>(Sits up quickly)</i> Oh! Dixie has fallen in the water! <i>(Dixie barks loudly)</i> I'll save you, Dixie. I'm coming in after you! Better take these earphones out first. <i>(does so and holds out arm to Dixie and shouts)</i> Catch hold of my arm, Dixie <i>(he does)</i> Phew!
Dixie	Woof, woof, woof! <i>(gives Ben the fish)</i>
Ben	Uh oh! The very large lady fisherwoman is coming this way. Quick, run for it! <i>(exit fast)</i>

First hockey team practice

Lily has been selected to join a junior hockey team. The receptionist at the sports centre directs them to the netball team changing rooms by mistake. Mel admires the netball pictures they see, but doesn't enjoy having to run to the hockey team room.

Theme: Being committed to the team you belong to forever

Roots themes explore: What it means to believe and belong; the link between belief and action; the gift of eternal life

Humour: Lily & Mel prefer different sports
Mel is directed in the wrong direction and doesn't listen to Lily
She's embarrassed when she realises her mistake
Mel isn't quite so sporty now and gets out of breath from running
She's glad she brought the car and collapses into it after dropping Lily off

Props: (optional) hockey/netball items e.g. ball, stick, trophies, team photos
Signs saying: 'at the sports centre'

Introduction

Find out what teams people belong to.

How much do these groups mean to them? Why did they join the team in the first place?

Which sporting teams do they support? How do they show their support for those teams?

(Encourage a bit of friendly banter between rival teams!)

Discuss how loyalty to a club can be life-long and part of one's personal identity

Be enthusiastic about young people being encouraged into sport from an early age

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'First hockey team practice'

After the Puppet Sketch

Ask why Mel was enjoying walking along the corridor to the netball changing rooms?

Even though she doesn't play anymore, she still treasures the happy memories!

Can you think of your best moment when playing a sport (question for both kids and adults)

How did Mel react when Lily stated 'We are going to be in this team forever!'

What sentiments or meanings do you think lay behind this statement of Lily's?

What other things can we be committed/dedicated to? Other hobbies or passions?

Do you think being passionate about a sport or activity helps you get better at it? Why? Our beliefs have an impact on our actions, if we really want something we work extra hard at it!

In today's Bible reading, Jesus' 'team' of followers are described as his 'sheep'. Listen out for the sense of loyalty between Jesus, the Good Shepherd and his sheep.

The Bible Story

Where? Home

Title of sketch: First hockey team practice

Lily	Here's the sports centre where the hockey team meet. This building is huge!
Mel	You must be very excited, being selected to join the junior team. I know I was thrilled to be invited onto the netball team.
Lily	We're not quite the same, are we, Mum?
Mel	What do you mean?
Lily	Well, you liking netball and me liking hockey...
Mel	Any sport is good. <i>(looks around)</i> Mmmm, it's not clear where we have to go. Let me ask the receptionist.
Lily	<i>(Mel turns sideways, Lily looks round)</i> Wow! Look at all these trophies! I'm going to help win one. <i>(to Mum and pointing)</i> It's this way isn't it Mum?
Mel	No, the receptionist said it was down the corridor the other way.
Lily	But, Mum!
Mel	I'm sure she said this way. Come along now, Lily.
Lily	<i>(Sighing)</i> I'm sure I went that way last time.
Mel	I approve of these netball photographs. What a lot of teams they have and don't they look smart. It brings back happy memories of when I used to play.
Lily	Hmmmm, well I still like hockey better.
Mel	Wow! Look at this showcase with all the different netball equipment you can buy. Everything is so much more colourful than when I was a girl.
Lily	Mrs Owen said she would give us a kit list of things I need for the team.
Mel	Here we are <i>(reads door)</i> 'Team changing room'. Shall we go inside? You first Lily.
Lily	Thanks, Mum. But I can't see Emma and Courtney. Where are they? They are normally here by now...
Mel	Don't you worry I expect they'll be along soon. <i>(to the side as though speaking to person offstage out of view)</i> I've brought Lily for netball practice Mrs. Owen, she is very excited!
Lily	Errrrm... Mum, that's not Mrs Owen!
Mel	Oh! I see. <i>(laughs in an embarrassed way)</i> I do apologies Mrs. Owen... oooops! I mean not Mrs. Owen! Ah, oh dear I appear to be getting all tied up! Lily it looks as though you were right all along. This is the netball area! We should have gone down the other corridor. I'm sorry Lily.
Lily	Oh, Mum! I told you!
Mel	Fancy the receptionist telling me the wrong information! <i>[laughs nervously]</i>
Lily	Can we run? I don't want to be late!
Mel	I suppose so! <i>(both run, Lily darts ahead, Mel pants rather a lot)</i>
Lily	This looks more like it! This is where I came last time Mum. Mum?
Mel	Ca-an-'t ta-lk too pu-ffed.
Lily	Oh well I'm O.K.? <i>(Mum just responds by panting, mum waves her hands)</i> Look at all these hockey photos! Do you think I could be as good as the team in the photos? <i>(Mum just responds by panting)</i> Ooooh and look at all the equipment I need. I'm going to have to save up more of my pocket money for this... <i>(stops)</i> Ah over there! I can see Mrs. Owen. This is the definitely the right place, Mum.
Mel	Thank good ness! <i>(breathing heavily, leaning on the stage)</i>
Lily	Hi Emma! Hi Courtney! This is my sporty Mum. <i>(Mel tries to look sporty)</i> She played netball... although I think it was quite a long time ago looking at how much she is breathing right now. Hey, Mum, Emma, Courtney and I are going to be in this hockey team forever!
Mel	<i>(Mutters)</i> Sure you are! Bye Lily, have fun! <i>(to audience)</i> Oh to be young! Thank goodness I brought the car! <i>(pants as collapses into sitting position)</i> Maybe just a sit down for a few minutes might do me good...

Sibling loyalty?

Ben has made a model Spitfire and proudly shows it to Lily. Lily plays with it and breaks it and the siblings fight. Lily gets hurt and complains to Mum who scolds Ben. Both children are required to apologise to the other. There is enough empathy between them that they feel each other's pain when they get into trouble from Mum.

Theme: Love one another

Roots themes explore: Seeing glory in unexpected places; loving as Jesus loves – serving others and loving people we don't choose to love

Humour: Ben/Lily playing noisily with model Spitfire
Lily doesn't know if 600 km/hour is fast
The Spitfire that took so long to make breaks
Lily goes crying to Mum who pampers her
Mel's scolding
Ben's sense of injustice
Reluctance of both to say 'sorry'
The thought of younger sibling enjoyment when the older one gets into trouble
Lily mischievously tries to show her love for Ben by trying to kiss him

Props: Ben's model Spitfire
(make a paper aeroplane, colour it with grey stripes put a red spot on the wings surrounded by a blue circle)
Sign saying: 'in the lounge'

Introduction

Ask the audience if they can remember the quarrels they had with siblings when they were younger?

Did their parents always take the side of the younger one?

Sympathise with any tales of woe and move on to the present.

What about your brothers and sisters now kids? Do you fight at all or do you get on all the time? Perhaps parents have a different answer to this question!

Do siblings get on better when they are grown up or at times of trouble?

In what ways can child siblings show they care about each other? (e.g. sticking up for each other in the playground, helping each other out, sharing toys/sweets)

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Sibling loyalty?'

After the Puppet Sketch

Say that sibling rivalry and fights like the one we've just seen between Ben and Lily are normal and are all part of living as brothers and sisters together.

But, how could you describe their relationship at the end of the sketch? (empathic, teasing etc.)

Can it be difficult to turn a relationship around from jealousy and annoyance to one of kindness and concern?

Can you think of any time where it has and also hasn't turned around, how do you feel about the ones where it is still difficult? (no need to share out loud, just think about in your heads)

When Jesus talks about loving one another in today's Bible reading, was he only talking about people we like, or those we struggle with too (like siblings)?

Ben	Hey, Lily! I've made a Spitfire
Lily	A what?
Ben	A plane they used in the war. It could fly like this (<i>demonstrates noisily</i>)
Lily	Wow! That's cool. Do that again.
Ben	Here we go with a 'loop-the-loop'. (<i>Lily jumps up to try and take the Spitfire, but Ben keeps it just out of reach</i>) The Spitfire had a powerful Rolls Royce engine and an aerodynamic body allowing it to go at nearly 600 km per hour.
Lily	600 Km per hour? Is that fast?
Ben	Of course it's fast (<i>Lily finally manages to snatch the plane from Ben</i>) Be careful, with my model, Lily. It took me a long time and a lot of skill to build it.
Lily	Flying, flying high and zoooooom (<i>throws plane, watches it fall and crash into the ground</i>) Ah, oops, that didn't work as I wanted it too...
Ben	Lily! You broke my plane you clumsy idiot. You're dead! (<i>gets close to Lily</i>)
Lily	I didn't break it. Leave me alone! (<i>Hits Ben, Ben hits back harder</i>) That hurt! I'm telling Mum about you! (<i>cries comically</i>)
Ben	Cry-a-baby!
Lily	Bully! (<i>exits</i>) Mum! Ben hit me! (<i>Lily continues to cry hysterically</i>)
Mum (offstage)	My poor darling! What happened? Did your nasty big brother hit you? Where does it hurt? Let me kiss it better for you. (<i>sound of big kiss</i>)
Ben	It's not fair! Mum always takes Lily's side – just because she's younger!
Mum (enters)	Benjamin Owen! I'm very angry with you for making your sister cry. She says you hit her. Why did you do that, you know you shouldn't hurt anyone!
Ben	But Mum, she hit me first. She broke my model plane. She deserved it.
Mum	Well you're the older one. You should be setting a good example to her.
Ben	But she broke my plane?! This is so unfair!
Mum	Well it sounds to me like you both need to say sorry. I'll get Lily. (<i>exits</i>) Lily! Ben says you broke his plane. I want you to say sorry for breaking his plane and I want him to say sorry for hurting you.
Lily (offstage)	But Mum, I didn't break his plane on purpose!
Mum (offstage)	Lily!
Lily	O.K. Mum! (<i>enters and stutters</i>) Ben iiiii....'mmm sssssorry I broke your plane.
Ben	Humph! I suppose... I'm sorry I hit you. But don't break my things again!
Lily	It was accident. Mum was really cross then, wasn't she?
Ben	Yeah, she was cross with both of us.
Lily	I don't like it when she shouts.
Ben	My teacher can be worse!
Lily	Poor you! My teacher's really nice.
Ben	Some of my friends have sisters who think it's funny when we get into trouble. They laugh and point and say 'serves you right!'
Lily	'Cos they haven't heard that Jesus says 'Love one another' like we do every week at church. Why don't you... Give me a kiss! (<i>laughs and chases after Ben shouting and running away as well</i>)