



**New Grace Churches** It is very exciting to announce that five new churches are joining the Grace Project in September and the recruitment process is already in operation to find new children's workers to fill those positions. In addition, we are looking for a pioneering church to help us to pilot our next project...

**Flagship Church Sought** Could your church accommodate more children and their families? Grace is looking for a church wishing to recruit more youngsters into their children's work programme. It will be a year-long 'mission' suitable for churches with volunteers available to continue the ministry afterwards. Grace will provide training for those volunteers and advice on strategic development of a sustainable programme. Please contact Rachel on 01332 416152 for more information.

**Top Tip** Children love birthdays! Unchurched families haven't heard of Pentecost, but advertise your celebrations as the birthday of the Church and it suddenly becomes more exciting!

**Summer is Coming!** Take advantage of the better weather to plan some outdoor events. At the end of the summer term, don't be afraid to cancel weekly indoor clubs if you find that children tend to drift away to play outside in the sunshine. How about organising a Family BBQ, keeping the children busy with parachute games? In this picture, you can see some key stage two children acting out the story of Jonah by a local lake.



**Prayer Requests** Please pray for Tanita who usually emails out this newsletter. Through no fault of her own, she has been in a car accident, resulting in considerable pain. We pray that her fractures will heal quickly. We thank God that Grace will grow this summer and pray for those who will be recruited on the 15<sup>th</sup> May.

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## **Puppet Scripts to Introduce Themes: Lectionary Readings May/June 2015**

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

*Bible readings and themes compatible with Roots*

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

**Ben** – playful 10 year old boy

**Melanie** – Ben's mother

**Dixie the dog** - unisex, 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](http://www.graceproject.org.uk)

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**3<sup>rd</sup> May 2015**

**John 15:1-8**

**The Vine**

### **Let's Go Camping**

Ben takes Dixie the dog camping in the garden. At first all is fine and they water the plants. Dixie doesn't like the chocolate diet Ben has chosen and returns home. Ben is sick from too much chocolate. Mel insists that tomorrow is a chocolate-free day when Ben will have a balanced diet.

*Theme:* Ben needs Mum's dietary advice to get the right nourishment to stay healthy and grow stronger.

*Humour:* Ben's home-made tent doesn't suit British weather

Dixie lifts his leg to water the plant

Choosing only chocolate to eat and eating so much that Ben is sick

It's a tight squeeze inside the tent

Dixie knows better than Ben when it's time to go home

Dogs water plants with wee

*Props:* Small plant, toy watering can, small sleeping bag (pillow case), tent (sheet), water bottle, chocolate

### Introduction

Differentiate between favourite snacks and healthy food by asking favourite foods, then deciding which are healthy.

Review the balance between the foods needed for a healthy diet. (incl. fruit/veg 'five-a-day'/other food groups)

Ask how a dog's diet differs from ours.

Discuss how plants need different nutrients to us, but still in the right balance.

*Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Let's Go Camping'*

### After the Puppet Sketch

Review that whether you are a plant, a dog or a human being, good nourishment is important.

Ask whether Ben understands the importance of a healthy diet.

What would happen to Ben if he ignores his mother and only ever ate chocolate?

Was she right to stop him from eating more chocolate after he'd been sick?

Say that it's just as well Ben wasn't too far away from home so that his Mum could rescue him.

In today's Bible reading, God is the good gardener providing the right nourishment for all of us. Jesus helps us to avoid the things that are bad for us but guides us to the good things too! We become detached from Jesus at our peril! Jesus only wants the best things for us. He knows how to look after us in the same way that a good gardener knows how to look after their plants and all the different needs they have. Jesus does the same for us!

*The Bible Story*

Ben	I love camping, don't you, Dixie?
Dixie	<i>(enthusiastically)</i> Woof, woof, woof!
Ben	What do you think of the tent? I made it myself from old sheets!
Dixie	<i>(not so enthusiastically)</i> Woooooof
Ben	Don't worry. It won't rain. It never rains in May! Look what I've packed for our overnight stay. <i>(Points to bag)</i> There's chocolate, pyjamas, chocolate, a torch, more chocolate, dog chocolate for you, a water bottle and ...more chocolate for me.
Dixie	<i>(coughs at the thought of too much chocolate)</i>
Ben	Before we have supper, let's water the plants. Will you help me? There's the watering can, Dixie. <i>(points at the watering can)</i>
Dixie	<i>(kicks can over)</i> Woof, woof <i>(lifts leg to water plant, sound effect)</i>
Ben	Hmmm that's OK for you to do, Dixie, but I can't do that. <i>(picks up the watering can)</i> This plant looks like it needs water. <i>(tips watering can)</i> There we go. That's better!
Dixie	Woof! Woof! Woof!
Ben	What's that? You're hungry? Yes, I guess it's time to eat supper. Hmmm, what could we have? I know! Chocolate! Come inside the tent, Dixie. <i>(squash up together uncomfortably)</i>
Dixie	Woo-oo-oof!
Ben	Stop squashing me! Your tail's on my face. I can't see the chocolate!
Dixie	<i>(grabs dog chocolate and munches it noisily)</i>
Ben	Who needs healthy food when there's chocolate? What harm can it do? Would you like some more of your special chocs?
Dixie	Uh uh! <i>(walks out on Ben)</i> That's enough chocolate for me. I'm off!
Ben	Come back, Dixie. Don't you want to camp with me tonight? Oh well, at least I've got plenty of chocolate to keep me happy. Yum, yum, yum. <i>(keeps eating chocolate)</i>
Mel (offstage)	Are you OK, Ben?
Ben	<i>(mumbles back with mouth full of chocolate)</i> Yes thank you, Mum. I've got plenty of chocolate.
Mel (offstage)	I think it's starting to rain. Do you need to come indoors?
Ben	No way! I'm not going to miss out on the fun for a bit of rain! <i>(water droplets thrown over Ben)</i> Oh bother!
Mel (offstage)	Don't eat too much chocolate!
Ben	I can never eat too much chocolate, Mum. <i>(Makes comical chewing noises, then shouts to Mum)</i> Ooooh, erm... Mum, I'm not feeling so good. I need you, I feel sick! <i>(groans)</i>
Mel (enters)	That's a lot of wrappers. How much chocolate have you eaten?
Ben	<i>(groans)</i> Loads <i>(Ben is sick)</i> Mummmm, my stomach hurts!
Mel	That's your own fault for eating too much chocolate. You'd better come inside straight away!
Ben	Oh Mum!
Mel	No more chocolate for 24 hours. You need a healthy, balanced diet tomorrow, with plenty of fresh fruit and veg! It's for your own good! We'll do bed-time prayers as usual. You need a good night's sleep too.
Ben	Oh Mum! <i>(whispers)</i> I suppose she's right. <i>(both exit toward house)</i>

## Not Going Out

Mel won't let Ben go out with his friends because he needs to revise for a test. He's a reluctant student and doesn't appreciate his mother's help. Mel turns down an opportunity to go out with her friends and Ben realises that this is a sacrificial act. One day he'll be a good parent too, letting his child have the last chocolate chip cookie.

*Theme: Parents love their children sacrificially, even when they've grown up and left home. They hope their children will learn to do the same.*

Humour: Ben arrogantly feels his friends can't manage without him  
Learning your tables is hard and Ben reacts by trying to distract his Mum  
Mel describes her 'night out', optionally, she may sing badly  
Ben listens at the door  
Mel put on the spot when asked if she'd do anything at all for Ben  
Exaggerated life scenario with a cowboy  
Reluctance to give up the last chocolate chip cookie

Props: telephone with ring tone  
Plate (or saucer)

### Introduction

Ask the congregation where they love to go for a treat?  
In this case they 'love' the experience because it is pleasurable.  
In the puppet sketch, we're going to find out what Mel loves doing.

### *Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Not Going Out'*

### After the Puppet Sketch

Did Mel enjoy helping Ben to learn his tables? (No) Why did she help him, instead of visiting her friend?  
Ask which is the Christian sort of love that Jesus demonstrates?

Having a good time doing something you love knowing you'll enjoy yourself too, or  
Sacrificially putting yourself out for someone you love who needs your help?

How did Jesus demonstrate this type of love? (The cross)

Ask the parents what they have done for their children's benefit rather than for their own enjoyment.

In what ways have their grown up children needed their love and support after leaving home?

Ask whether their children left behind their parents' love when they left home?

Are there any grandparents who observe their children being good parents?

Parents will do almost anything for their children, at considerable cost to themselves.

Mel talked about Jesus' sacrificial act of love on the cross. Now listen to what Jesus told his friends about loving others.

### *The Bible Story*

Mel	No, you can't go out to play. Your test tomorrow is more important.
Ben	But my friends won't have any fun if I'm not there!
Mel	They will manage. Now tell me the 7 times tables again.
Ben	1x7=7; 2x7=14; 3x7=21; 4x7=28; 5x7=35...
Mel	Excellent
Ben	6x7 is... oh bother err...ten thousand two hundred and eighty one...
Mel	Now you know that's not right. 6 7's are 42. Try again.
Ben	1x7=7; 2x7=14; 3x7=21; 4x7 is twenty... Ermmm oh I forgot!
Mel	You knew that one before. It's 28. Let's say them together from the start again.
Ben	I'm fed up with this. You're horrid making me say it again and again.
Mel	Ben! Don't talk to me like that. It's the only way to learn.
Ben	<i>(deviously)</i> Did you have a good time last night, Mum, with your friends?
Mel	Yes, it was a wonderful evening. Are you ready to say your tables?
Ben	<i>(cutting in distracting her)</i> What did you do?
Mel (ad lib here)	We had dinner at <i>(local restaurant)</i> , chatted and sang songs from the 80s – rather badly! <i>(Thinks)</i> Hang on! Let's not get distracted from work.
Ben	I hate learning tables. I don't want your help. <i>(exits dramatically)</i>
Mel (Ben listens, unseen by Mel.)	<i>(phone rings, Mel answers)</i> Hi Jess... Yes, it was a lovely evening and great to catch up with Amanda... That's sudden! Why is she going back tomorrow?... I'm sorry, I can't pop round to say goodbye. I'm helping Ben with an important test tomorrow. You're right, <i>(laughs)</i> it isn't much fun for either of us, but it is important! Sorry! Another time, hopefully?
Ben <i>(enters)</i>	You should have gone, Mum. You would have had fun again.
Mel	No, Ben. You're more important to me. I love you too much.
Ben	<i>(thinks)</i> Would you do anything for me? Anything at all?
Mel	Mmm probably... yes, Ben, I think so! You're my child and I love you.
Ben	Supposing I was grown up. Would you still do it for me?
Mel	Yes, you will always be my child, even when you've left home.
Ben	Supposing a pirate came to kidnap me with a gun pointing at my heart. Would you jump in front of me to stop him shooting me?
Mel	Hmmm, that doesn't sound likely. Well I suppose Jesus was willing to die for me, so yes, I hope I would do that for you too. Will you risk your life for your children?
Ben	Of course I'm brave enough to fight pirates. I do it all the time – on my computer. I've got this really good game...
Mel	<i>(interrupting)</i> Let's have a biscuit before we start working again. There's one chocolate chip cookie left.
Ben	And because you love me so much, you'll let me have the last one, please?
Mel	Maybe not ... or maybe yes. As a treat to help you to concentrate. Deal?
Ben	Thanks, Mum!

17<sup>th</sup> May 2015

John 17:6-19

Prayer for Protection

## Skateboard Safety

Grandad has given Ben a skateboard and Mel is worried for his safety. She provides protective clothing and supervises Ben skateboarding. Mel prays for Ben because she knows that sooner or later she's going to have to let him go out on his own.

In this sketch, a leader will need to prompt the congregation to shout out 'Oh yes he will' to support Ben. Instead of the usual introduction, the first discussion takes place after scene 1 to give Ben time to put on his 'protective gear'.

*Theme: Providing protection for children; later letting go and trusting God when they become independent*

Humour: Ben appeals to audience, with a pantomime style 'Oh yes I can'  
Protective clothes have been made from egg-boxes  
Fuss at a little scratch  
Mel over-reacts the first time Ben goes out alone  
Ben's only 'accident' is to get muddy  
Mel doesn't want to hug a muddy Ben

Props: Skateboard (or model/picture of one)  
Protective gear made from egg-boxes and string  
Small binoculars or telescope (A kitchen roll middle)

### *Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Skateboard Safety'*

#### **After scene 1**

Find out what 'wheels' are used by the youngest members of the congregation. (e.g. bike, scooter, skateboards, cars)  
Hear about fun you can have with them.

Ask the participants about the safety precautions they take to avoid accidents (e.g. checking equipment, choosing safe places to go and protective gear: helmet, elbow/knee pads, wrist guards and good shoes)

Affirm the safety precautions that have been discussed, so that kids can have fun safely.

### *Scene 2*

#### **After the Puppet Sketch**

Ask for a show of hands of those who thought Mel was being over-protective.

Ask for a show of hands who thinks Mel was right to be cautious. (Say it's OK to vote twice)

Ask whether Mel can be with Ben at all times as he grows into a teenager and towards adulthood?

What should parents of younger children be doing to prepare them for the day when they have independence?

If you can do so non-judgementally, include in this discussion spiritual preparation for a life of faith.

Today we shall hear about Jesus praying for protection for His disciples after His crucifixion. Listen out for the preparation that He has already done in advance. What kind of a future for the disciples is Jesus praying for?

### *The Bible Story*

Mel	I'm cross with Grandad for buying you that skateboard!
Ben	He thought it would be fun for me.
Mel	He should have asked me first.
Ben	But Mum, they're fun! What would you have said if he'd asked you?
Mel	No. Not over my dead body, you're far too young.
Ben	That's why he didn't ask you! All the other boys at church have one!
Mel	I will never, ever let you ride it. Not in a million years! <i>(Ben sighs)</i>
Ben	Please, please, Mum. Let me ride it! I won't break like an egg, you know. I won't fall off, not ever! I'll be really careful. Oh yes I will!
Mel	Oh no you won't!
Ben/Everyone	<b>Oh yes I/he will!</b> <i>(gaining audience sympathy)</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Repeat several times</i></span>
Mel	<i>(grunts)</i> I suppose I could come with you. Don't go out of my sight though!

## Scene 2: At the park – Ben wearing protective pads made from egg-boxes

Mel	Is your helmet on tightly?
Ben	Yes Mum! Thank you for this <i>egg</i> citing gear to wear. <i>(points)</i>
Mel	You're fortunate we had all those egg boxes left over from the craft last week. Are your shoes comfy? Your elbow pads? knee pads?, wrist guard? Eggcellent!
Ben	Don't <i>eggs</i> asperate me, Mum. They're fine. Can I go and skate now?
Mel	I <i>eggs</i> pect so. Promise me you won't do any dangerous stunts!
Ben	I won't Mum, and I'll come and find you if I fall over.
Mel	I'll be waiting here with my telescope watching you. See you soon!
Ben	I hope not! This is so <i>egg</i> citing! <i>(exits)</i>
Mel	Where is he, I can't see him? There he is. <i>(sways head)</i> left, right, left, right –I'm dizzy! Up, down, up Oh no, he's fallen off! Ben! Come here!
Ben (returns)	Mum, it was nothing. Look, not even a scratch! Can I go again?
Mel	Only if you PROMISE me you'll be more careful. Don't fall over again.
Ben	I'll try Mum. <i>(sighs and exits)</i>
Mel	<i>(rotating head)</i> Ooooh, not so fast Ben. I'm getting dizzy again! Now where have you gone, Ben? <i>(calls)</i> Ben! Ben! Ben!
Ben (returns)	I've scratched my finger and got a splinter. It doesn't hurt, though.
Mel	Let me see! Oh Ben, my poor darling. Let me kiss it better and give you a big hug.
Ben	<i>(embarrassed)</i> No Mum, not in front of everyone!!!
Mel	Maybe I've been over-reacting. If you practice skateboarding really carefully, I'll let you come here with your older friends from church.
Ben	Cool Mum. I promise to be really careful. <i>(exits)</i>
Mel	I suppose I can't wrap Ben up in cotton wool forever. He has practised hard and looks competent. I'll just have to pray to God to keep him safe.
Ben (returns)	Mum, I may have fallen off again. Don't look so worried. I got covered in mud. Would you like a hug now? <i>(Holds arms up)</i>
Mel	Absolutely not, don't come near me in that state! <i>(runs off screeching)</i>

## Singing in French

Ben would like to go to France to practise the French he's learning in school. Like his Mum, he enjoys speaking in French. He tells Mel about a French ballad remembering the First World War, and then they sing Frere Jacques together.

*Theme: Learning languages and communicating with people from other countries breaks down barriers. Celebrating international events promotes peace.*

Humour: Mel says she's 14 instead of 40  
Computer translation of lyrics can be funny  
Reporting votes at the Eurovision song contest can be boring – Ben would rather play football!

Props: Tourist information leaflet

### Introduction

Find out who knows a little French. What can they say in French?

Hear some of the French words/phrases they know.

Ask whether it helps to know the language when you go abroad for business or pleasure?

Emphasise the fun in learning a new language (and it's exercise for the brain too\*!)

*Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Singing in French'*

### After the Puppet Sketch

Mel mentioned both the Eurovision Song Contest and celebrating the Olympics. Which is a fairer competition?

Draw out the issues of language and public bias that affect the Eurovision Song Contest voting and the excitement of an international gathering.

Discuss peace-making, emphasising the role of international co-operation.

(e.g. League of Nations after the First World War and, more recently, the United Nations)

Imagine the international atmosphere in Jerusalem at Pentecost due to the foreign visitors.

How could the disciples, seen as ignorant Galileans, have the opportunity to tell them all about Jesus?

Who helps them?

## *The Bible Story*

\*Develops mental capacity in the young and helps prevent dementia for older people

Ben	Can we go to France for our holiday this year?
Mel	Well, it's a nice place to go. But why do you want to go to France?
Ben	My French teacher talks about exciting places like the Eiffel Tower and Euro Disney. I'd like to meet the Hunchback of Notre Dame Cathedral who rings the bells. If I went to Paris I could practice my French.
Mel	I enjoyed learning French at school, but I've forgotten most of it now.
Ben	There's some written on this leaflet she gave us. Can you read it?
Mel (reading)	Yes! 'Bonjour, je m'appelle ( <i>pause</i> ) err Mel. Comment t'appelles-tu?
Ben (reading)	Ben. D'ou viens-tu?
Mel	( <i>your town</i> ) Et toi?
Ben	( <i>your town</i> ) Quel age as-tu?
Mel	( <i>hesitates</i> ) Erm... Quatorze?
Ben	Fourteen? Are you really fourteen?
Mel	Ooops! No, I meant forty, quarante. Sorry, my French is a bit rusty! What did you learn today?
Ben	We listened to the Eurovision song, 'N'oubliez pas'. It's a French song about the First World War and the destruction caused by wars.
Mel	Ooh, I remember that one. It was very sad, but strong and beautiful too.
Ben	Yes, it says that I'm still here, full of hope to rebuild my village. My French teacher said the computer translation was a bit funny, though.
Mel	Hmmm, a literal, word-for-word translation doesn't always work.
Ben	It said 'Our hearts hoping and vacuum my steps'. How can a heart use a vacuum cleaner to clean a staircase? ( <i>Mimes noisily/comically</i> )
Mel	If it didn't mean vacuuming the staircase, what did it mean?
Ben	It means 'the emptiness under my footsteps'. That sounds really sad.
Mel	It's how you feel when someone you love has died. Jesus' friends felt like that for the Pentecost festival. The city was full of visitors from other countries all celebrating and speaking in different languages.
Ben	Like the stadium where they held the Eurovison Song Contest?
Mel	A <u>bit</u> like that - or London for the Olympic games. It was a religious festival, so more like going home for Christmas and hearing the church bells ring.
Ben	I can sing Frere Jacque, who over-sleeps instead of ringing the bells.
Mel	I learnt that when I was a little girl. I can remember it! ( <i>sings</i> ) Frere...
<b>Both</b>	<b>...Jacques, Frere Jacques, Dormez-vous? Dormez-vous? Sonnez les matines, sonnez les matines. Ding dang dong, ding dang dong.</b>
Mel	( <i>laughs</i> ) It's a better song than some of the Eurovision entries.
Ben	Can I stay up and watch to the end next year?
Mel	Listening to the votes coming in is soooo boring. Like watching paint dry! I've recorded it if you want to watch it now.
Ben	No thanks. I just like staying up late. I'd rather play football. Bye! ( <i>exits</i> )

## The Newly Hatched Chick

Ben visits a National Trust farm-house on a windy day. He's fascinated by the chickens and the incubator containing chicks hatching from their eggs. The live hatchlings are too big to return to their shells and too small to face the dangers of the exciting, windy courtyard.

*Theme: Christians can be 'born again' when they have the spiritual maturity to receive the Holy Spirit.*

Humour: Umbrella blows about uncontrollably  
Dixie 'loves' chickens – or at least chasing them!  
A chicken's life-span depends on the farmer  
Tricky questions that Mel can't answer

Props: Broken egg-shell  
Umbrella blown inside out

### Introduction

Has anyone ever see a chick hatching? Ask them to describe what happens.  
Describe how the new-born chick is different to a fully grown chicken.  
Why is the courtyard a dangerous place for a young chick? What could happen to it?  
Invite everyone to make hen-clucking noises as a sound effect to start the puppet sketch.

*Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'The Newly Hatched Chick'*

### After the Puppet Sketch

Say that it's good to ask questions. What are the questions that bother us?  
Young humans need protecting, just as much as baby chicks. What spiritual dangers are facing young Christians?  
If we're going to live in the excitement of the courtyard, we need the power of the Holy Spirit which is every bit as exciting as the strong wind blowing at the farm.

Listen carefully to the Bible story and think what Jesus means to be 'born again'. Does he mean a chick climbing back into the egg-shell or something different?

### *The Bible Story*

Provide an opportunity for children to ask faith questions and make sure that they are discussed appropriately.

Dixie	Woof, woof, woof, woof. ( <i>jumping round and round comically</i> )
Mel	Why are you excited, Dixie? Is it the wind? Aaaaah! ( <i>umbrella blows</i> )
Dixie	( <i>shaking head</i> ) Woof, woof. ( <i>jumps up and down again</i> )
Mel	Do you want to chase the chickens?
Dixie	( <i>nods head</i> ) Woof, woof, woof!
Mel	The poor things will be terrified. I'd better take you back to the car.
Dixie	( <i>Dixie whimpers sadly, Mel leads him away, struggling with broolly</i> )
Ben (offstage)	Mum, I have something to show you!
Mel (offstage)	Back soon! Just taking Dixie to sit in the car, instead of chasing chickens.
Ben (enters)	OK Mum, I'm here by the gate.
Mel (returns)	( <i>Without umbrella, looks at Ben's hand</i> ) What have you got there?
Ben	It's a discarded egg-shell. The farmer said I could have it.
Mel	You were a long time watching the incubator. Tell me about it.
Ben	There were lots of eggs inside. Three of them had small holes and the little chicks inside were pecking their way out. There was a sticky one, just hatched and having a rest under the warm lamp.
Mel	It's hard work hatching out of an egg.
Ben	Some of them won't make it. The chicks have died inside the egg.
Mel	That's sad. They wouldn't last long in this courtyard either.
Ben	No, it's far too cold and windy for a little chick!
Mel	That's right. Chickens don't always live as long as they should.
Ben	How long does a chicken live?
Mel	Err, well.... That depends on the farmer! About 5-8 years, I suppose.
Ben	Then do they get eaten by us?
Mel	Or by foxes. They are prone to diseases too. A baby chick is safer indoors.
Ben	But not as much fun! Here they have the wind and chickens for company.
Mel	That's true. But you need to be big and strong to face the wind.
Ben	The chick was nice and safe inside this egg-shell. But there's no going back inside. Once you're born, you're born!
Mel	Yes, you have to grow strong enough to face the world and all its problems. There are difficult questions we need to ask ourselves.
Ben	I was asking myself why some the chicks had to die. Why do we die?
Mel	That's a tough one. How long have you got?
Ben	Sam keeps asking me 'which came first, the chicken or the egg?'
Mel	That's a tricky one to answer too. What do you think?
Ben	I think God made them both. But where does God come from?
Mel	It's good to keep asking difficult questions. Sometimes you need a strong faith in God to accept these mysteries and just trust in Jesus. Here's one to make you think... Where does Jesus come from?
Ben	That's easy. Jesus came from God. God sent him. ( <i>pauses</i> ) But why?

## Table Manners!

Ben has good table manners, but then allows Dixie to eat at the table with him. The dog's manners are dreadful. Mum reminds him that dogs have to eat from a bowl on the floor. Both have been trained by Mel and, despite their differences, are very much part of the same family.

*Theme:* Mel has different rules for Ben and Dixie's mealtimes, but the pet is still loved as part of the family.

Humour: Dixie jumps on the dinner table, treads on cutlery and slobbers on bread  
Dixie is wearing a bib  
Tug of war resulting in them both falling over  
Very short grace learnt from the Simpsons  
Ben's tummy rumbles  
Sound effects of a slobbery doggy kiss from behind the scenes

Props: Serving spoon, desert spoon, knife, fork, glass, side plate and napkin  
Baby's bib

### Introduction

Find out who enjoys eating a sit-down meal with their family and why.  
Explore the importance of regular, good nourishment.  
It's a parent's responsibility to make sure their children eat properly.  
This is normally easier if the whole family eat together regularly – but with one exception!

*Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Big Bad Dog'*

### After the Puppet Sketch

Why can't pets eat at the same table as the human members of the family?  
Are pets still part of the family? (Yes)  
Even though the rules for dogs and boys, the same person is responsible for both. Who should they both obey?

As you hear today's Bible story, listen and remember who should be considered to be part of our extended family.

*The Bible Story*

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Ben	Now that's the right way to set the table. My glass is on the right, and the side plate and paper napkin go on the left. The bread rolls are in the middle of the table and there's a mat ready for hot food.
Dixie	<i>(jumps on the table wearing a bib)</i> Woof!
Ben	Dixie, get down! You know you're not allowed on the table!
Dixie	Woof, woof, woof! <i>(jumping over Ben's cutlery)</i>
Ben	Stop it! I've just arranged that cutlery and you're messing it up.
Dixie	Woof, woof! <i>(grabs hold of spoon and Ben tries to grab it)</i>
Ben	Let go, Dixie. This is no time for 'tug of war' Dinner's nearly ready. <i>(Tug of war ends with both falling over. Dixie falls onto bread rolls.)</i>
Dixie	Wooooof! <i>(moves a bread roll onto side plate, slobbers on it noisily)</i>
Ben	Bad dog! That's disgusting! <i>(calls out)</i> Mum! Can you call Dixie off the table?
Mel (offstage)	Dixie, dinner time! <i>(Dixie pricks up ears, jumps down, exits)</i>
Ben	Thanks, Mum! <i>(laughs)</i> That was funny! <i>(looks at bread)</i> But ugh, this bread is disgusting! <i>(pushes it off the stage)</i> I need to change the plate and cutlery for a clean set. <i>(re-sets the table)</i> That's better!
Mel (offstage)	Ben, the soup is ready. Please can you wash your hands?
Ben	<i>(exits)</i> OK, Mum <i>(While Ben is away, Dixie's eating noises are heard.)</i>
Ben (returning)	<i>(to audience)</i> Dixie was enjoying the dog food in the kitchen. What an appetite! I've never seen anyone eat so much or so fast!
Mel (enters)	Thank you for setting the table, Ben. Twice!
Ben	That's OK, Mum. Can we eat now? My tummy's rumbling <i>(rumble)</i>
Mel	Can you say grace, first?
Ben	O.K. 'Rubbadubdub, thanks for the grub' Can I eat now? I'm starving!
Mel	That was a good, short grace for a hungry boy.
Ben	Yeah, I learnt it from 'The Simpsons'.
Mel	<i>(laughing)</i> They're not a family known for their good manners!
Ben	Dixie has terrible manners! <u>I'm</u> not allowed to jump on the table or play with the cutlery. This is how Dixie eats... <i>(demonstrates)</i>
Mel	Stop it Ben! You're not a dog. Dixie has to eat from a bowl on the kitchen floor. I've trained you to have good human manners and Dixie to have good dog manners. Both of you can behave well.
Ben	I wish Dixie could join us at the table. It would be funny. I wish Dixie could be part of the family meal.
Mel	We both know that Dixie really is part of our family. There's a time to spend apart and a time to play together. After this meal, you can go and play with Dixie. But first we'll both clear the table.
Ben	OK, Mum <i>(both exit)</i>
Ben (offstage)	Come here, Dixie, my lovely dog. Give me a kiss! <i>(slobbery sound effects)</i>

## Little by Little

Mel and Ben have been asked to perform 'The Hare and The Tortoise'

*Theme: Stories illustrate important truths. The Tortoise works hard to win the race while the Hare sleeps.*

Humour:            Funny hare ears worn by Ben (which later fall off)  
                      Ben is the hare because he likes winning  
                      Ben is very bouncy  
                      Mel has to crawl along the ground and the church might not be clean  
                      Ben is slow to wake up  
                      The hare throws a tantrum

Props:            Hare ears  
                      Carrot

### Introduction

Does anyone know the proverb 'If at first you don't succeed ...?' (try, try, try again)  
Rather than give a lecture about persevering, keeping going when things are hard, we can enjoy a story.  
Mel and Ben are going to tell a famous Aesop's fable that you may have heard before?

### *Introduce the Puppet Sketch: Little by Little*

### After the Puppet Sketch

Is the story right? Do we become winners when we keep on going and persevere?  
Aesop's fables very cleverly teach us principles about how to be successful. Some of the stories are very cynical about the selfishness of human nature.  
Jesus has a habit of changing conventional truth upside down too and making us think slightly differently!  
In the story we just heard, the hare rested and lost, while the tortoise worked hard, without resting, to win.

Listen carefully to today's Bible reading about some parables Jesus told. As you listen, think how are the parable messages different to the moral of Aesop's fable? (Sometimes we need to wait and allow things to happen in God's own time.)

### *The Bible Reading*

Mel	We have been asked by (your minister) to act out a story for you.
Ben (enters)	<i>(wearing the ears)</i> It is called 'The Hare and The Tortoise'
Mel	You may have heard the story before.
Ben	But not quite like this.
Mel	Although I've got the longer legs, Ben will be the hare because he can jump higher <i>(Ben jumps)</i> , run faster... <i>(Ben runs on the spot)</i>
Ben	...and I like winning!
Mel	I have to crawl on the floor. <i>(to audience)</i> Who was on cleaning duty this week?
Ben	Let's have a race, tortoise.
Mel	<i>(on hands and knees)</i> All right hare.
<b>Both</b>	<b>I will win!</b>
Mel	One two three, go <i>(both start 'running' on the spot)</i>
Ben	I'm running very fast. <i>(moves ahead of Mel)</i>
Mel	I'm plodding along slowly. There's all sorts of rubbish on this floor!
Ben	I'm so far ahead there's even time to sleep. <i>(lies down)</i> Snore, snore
Mel	Look, the hare's asleep. I can overtake and win. <i>(does so)</i>
Ben	Snore, snore
Mel	Hurray! I have won and the hare is still asleep!
Ben	Snore, snore
Mel	<i>(nudges Ben)</i> I have won, Hare.
Ben	Snore, snore <i>(ears fall off)</i>
Mel	Ben, this is your cue. You're supposed to wake up now!
Ben	Sorry, I was just dreaming of ...errrr
Mel	Carrots?
Ben	Yes, carrots! How are you knees, Mum
Mel	Sore. How are your ears?
Ben	I think they fell off!
Mel	Never mind, just finish the last bit of the race anyway.
Ben	OK <i>(Catches up with Mel)</i>
Mel	I won the race, I got here first!
Ben	But I wanted to win! That's why I chose to be the hare. You cheated!
Mel	I didn't cheat. You lost the race by falling asleep. You were too big-headed, or should I say, big-eared?
Ben	Can I throw my tantrum now?
Mel	Go on... I suppose it is part of the script...
Ben	Boo hoo hoo. It's so unfair. I hate you. <i>(Etc. etc.)</i>
Mel	<i>(sarcastically)</i> Nice tantrum. Have you been practising?
Ben	<i>(moodily)</i> I'm not going to answer that, Mum.
Mel	Since you lost the race, I'll let you say the moral of the fable.
Ben	Plodding along wins the race. <i>(both bow and exit)</i>

## Ferry to France

Ben and Dixie enjoy a calm crossing to France that allows them to enjoy the food and scenery. After exploring the boat, there's even time for a sleep. Coming back is rough. They are both sick and amazed at the height of the waves.

Theme: The sea can suddenly become violently rough and dangerous to boats.

Humour: Dixie scavenging food, Ben chooses chips  
Exploring the boat, finding life jackets which need to stay in place  
Jokes (which Dixie doesn't get)  
Noisy snoring  
Dixie jumps on Ben  
Both are sick  
Staggering on the boat  
Dog passport gets wet

Props: Dog lead  
Waste paper bin  
Water  
Wet dog passport  
Blue sheet on the floor to represent water

### Introduction

Find out whether anyone has been to France. How did they get there?  
Has anyone been on a ferry when the sea was really rough? What was it like?  
Any other boating experiences the congregation would like to share?

### *Introduce the Puppet Sketch: Ferry to France*

### After the Puppet Sketch

Would anyone like to share their experiences of being at sea when it's rough?  
Were they scared?

Today's Bible reading tells of a time when the disciples were on a boat and really scared for their lives.  
Notice what Jesus was doing while they quaked with fear!

### *The Bible Story*

Ben	Whoa! Cool! This ship is huge! I'd better tie you to... err this bin.
Dixie	<i>(whimpers)</i>
Ben	Sorry, Dixie, you need to stay safe. We don't want 'dog overboard'
Dixie	Woof, woof, woof
Ben (to Dixie)	I say, I say, I say. What lies at the bottom of the sea and twitches? A nervous wreck. <i>(laughs)</i>
Dixie	<i>(mystified)</i> Woof?
Ben	Try this one: Did you hear about the red ship that collided with the blue ship? All the sailors were marooned. <i>(laughs)</i>
Dixie	<i>(mystified)</i> Woof?
Ben	Never mind. It's dinner time. Let's find the food. Maybe sea food?
Dixie	<i>(nodding)</i> Woof, woof! <i>(Ben looks away at the food available)</i>
Ben	There's a healthy chicken salad or chips. Hmmm! That's a tricky decision. I think I'll have chips!
Dixie	<i>(looks in bin)</i> Who threw this food away? It'll do for me. <i>(eats noisily)</i>
Ben	Oh Dixie! It looks like you don't need feeding then! <i>(pauses and looks around)</i> I love the view!
Dixie	Woof, Woof, woof
Ben	Mmm, those white cliffs of Dover look like marshmallows from here.
Dixie	<i>(finds life jackets and pulls them off shelf)</i> Woof woof?
Ben	You found the life jackets. Put them back before anyone sees!
Dixie	<i>(scampers round in circles)</i> Woof!
Ben	You're making me dizzy! Let's both have a sleep. Leaving home at 4am doesn't suit me at all! <i>(both sleep, loud snores)</i>

## The Return Trip

Ben	I've got your doggie passport safe in my pocket. So we can come again.
Dixie	Woof. Woof!
Ben	Hmmm! The sea is a bit rougher today. <i>(water splashes over them)</i> Your passport just got wet, Dixie.
Dixie	Woof <i>(shakes over Ben)</i>
Ben	And even wetter!
Dixie	Woof
Ben	I feel sick
Dixie	Woof
Ben	You too? That's not good. We'd better find the nearest toilet! <i>(both dash off stage)</i>
Dixie	<i>(both reappear on stage)</i> Woof <i>(swaying)</i>
Ben	<i>(both swaying, each sway bigger than the last)</i> Sorry if I sway into you. It's a bit rough! <i>(Dixie keeps barking as the two sway more and more.)</i> Just look at the size of those waves! Aaah! We'd better get inside now! <i>(Bens screams and Dixie barks)</i>

28<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Mark 5:21-43

Rule Breaker

## A & E

Ben has an eye injury from playing football. He makes a noisy fuss about the long queue at A & E. Life and death emergencies are seen straight away. There's an old lady there who's been waiting quietly for 4 hours and not had any tea.

N.B. The tannoy is an additional voice from off-stage.

*Theme: Prioritising the order in which people receive treatment, according to their needs*

Humour: Ben makes a big fuss  
He feels his way around because he can't see  
It's impossible to do maths when his eye hurts  
There's a really long waiting time at A & E

Props: Sun glasses  
Crisps

### Introduction

Collect stories of visits to Accident and Emergency. How long was the wait?

Was the medical care good?

What criteria do Doctors use when they prioritise their patients?

### *Introduce the Puppet Sketch: A & E*

### After the Puppet Sketch

Did you notice why the old lady wasn't seen quickly? (She didn't want to make a fuss.)

What will life be like for her when she returns home alone?

Do you think that noisy patients should be treated first? Why not?

Listen to the contrast between the circumstances of the two people healed by Jesus in today's Bible reading.

### *The Bible Reading*

Mel	This way, Ben. Follow me
Ben	<i>(wearing sunglasses)</i> I can't see anything! That football blinded me!
Mel	Not far now. Sit down here on this chair. Can you feel where it is?
Ben	Just about. My eye hurts! <i>(Makes loud groaning noises)</i>
Mel	Try not to groan so loudly. It's not helping the other patients.
Ben	<i>(Groans just as painfully, although not as loudly)</i>
Mel	That's enough, now Ben.
Ben	Who's bothered? Is there anyone else here?
Mel	Yes, there's a long wait I'm afraid. We've got ticket number 257.
Ben	That's a lot of people to see the doctor before me.
Mel	They're on number 223 now. So that's 257 minus 223 makes
Ben	Mum! I can't do maths when my eye hurts. It's impossible!
Mel	Let's see: 34 people taking 5 minutes means a wait of 2 hours 50 minutes.
Ben	That's forever!
Mel	Or longer if an emergency comes in, I'm afraid.
Ben	But <b>I'm</b> an emergency <i>(groans again)</i>
Mel	I'll go and ask if they can move you up the list. I can't promise they will. <i>(exit)</i>
Ben	I'll wait here. Mum, Mum, where did you go, Mum?
Mel	It's OK, I'm back now. They said they would try to see you soon. The old lady in the far corner thinks she's broken her wrist. She's been waiting for 4 hours and had nothing to eat in all that time, but doesn't want to complain!
Ben	Have you brought any food?
Mel	I just grabbed some crisps quickly. I didn't have time to make a picnic as you said it was an emergency, Ben! The nurse says you're allowed some food.
Ben	Can you give a packet to the old lady too?
Mel	Aww, that's very kind of you, Ben. She can't because she might need an anaesthetic. You have to have an empty stomach for that.
Ben	<i>(siren sound effect)</i> That sounds like an emergency ambulance coming in. That patient won't have to wait four hours, will she, Mum?
Mel	No, they always prioritise emergencies. The girl who just came in doesn't look good. She's got an oxygen mask over her face, drips and three staff pushing the trolley as fast as they can. Poor kid!
Ben	I'm glad she didn't have to wait four hours. She'd really be in trouble!
Mel	No, they treat the worst patients straight away. She's in the best place to recover from her injuries.
Ben	Will I have to sleep here tonight?
Mel	I certainly hope not, but let's wait and see what the doctor says.
Ben	I hate waiting, but I don't mind her being seen first when she's so poorly.
Tannoy	<i>(off-stage)</i> Mr Ben to see the doctor in room 2.
Mel	Well, fancy that! Follow me, Ben <i>(takes Ben's hand and guides him off)</i>