

Puppet Scripts to Introduce the Themes in the Lectionary Readings

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

Compatible with Roots



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

Ben – A 10 year old boy who loves to play

Melanie – Ben's mother

Dixie the dog - A unisex, lovable rogue who can get away with being naughty; only speaks when alone

Tips: Practise a funny, **woofy voice** for Dixie the Dog.

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

Use a puppet stand with a curtain or a table covered with a cloth. Check that it is safe.

Use safety pins to attach the script to the back of the curtain. The larger the text-size the better.

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

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

Copyright Notice

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

2nd November 2014 Matthew 23:1-12 The Pharisees' Burdens

Too Hard to Fetch!

Ben throws a ball for Dixie to fetch and wonders why his dog brings back all sorts of rubbish. The ball rolls into a lake and Ben has to retrieve it because Dixie can't. *Theme: Help others and don't set people up to fail.*

Humour: Dixie's funny barks
 The ball gets disgustingly slobbery
 Dixie's running makes Ben tired!
 Smelly items that Dixie gives to Ben

Props: Old ball
 Old shoe
 Plastic dog's bone or cardboard cut-out

Introduction

Who can swim?

Is there anyone here who doesn't like swimming? You're in good company because our friend, Dixie the dog doesn't much like swimming either!

The Puppet Sketch

After the Puppet Sketch

Why did Ben take off his shoes and roll up his trouser legs?

Did Ben mind getting wet to help Dixie to get the ball back?

Whose fault was it that the ball went in the lake? Was it an accident?

Today's Bible reading is about leaders who deliberately make life difficult for ordinary people. Listen and think whether leaders should be willing to be helpful or proud and selfish? (*Matthew 23:1-12*)

Too Hard to Fetch!

Ben	Fetch, Dixie, fetch! (<i>throws ball</i>)
Dixie	(<i>runs off</i>) Wwwwwoof, woof! (<i>returns really fast to Ben's left side</i>)
Ben	That was quick. (<i>looks at ball with disgust</i>) Ugh! Your ball's all wet. You've slobbered all over it! (<i>throws ball again</i>) There you go...
Dixie	Wwwwwoof, woof! (<i>returns to Ben's right side</i>)
Ben	Huh! You made me jump
Dixie	(<i>excitedly</i>) Wwwwwoof, woof!
Ben	(<i>throws again</i>) Over there!
Dixie	Wwwwwoof! (<i>returns to Ben's left side</i>)
Ben	You're making me dizzy! Fetch this one, Dizzy Dixie! (<i>throws further</i>)
Dixie	(<i>running</i>) I'm doing all the running while Ben just stands still!
Ben	I need to stop, Dixie. I'm so tired
Dixie	(<i>to audience, puzzled</i>) You're tired???? (<i>returns to Ben</i>) Wwwwwoof, woof, woof (<i>looks pathetically sad and lies down</i>)
Ben	Oh, all right Dixie, I'll throw your ball one last time. But this time I'm going to throw it really, really, really far away! Take your time...
Dixie	Wwoof, woof, woof! (<i>jumping up and down excitedly</i>)
Ben	(<i>longest throw yet</i>) Fetch that! (<i>laughs and sits down</i>)
Dixie	(<i>running off</i>) Wwwwwoof, woof! (<i>stops, looks round puzzled</i>) Wwwhere did that wwet ball go? (<i>spins round in circles</i>) It's in the lake and I can't swim! That wwwas that a mean trick, Ben! Mmm, maybe I can get my own back? Just wwwwait and see what different 'treats' I'm going to give you, Ben. Let me see? Wwwwhat's this? An old shoe? That wwwwill do vvvvery nicely! (<i>returns to Ben with old shoe and thrusts it in Ben's hand</i>)
Ben	Dixie, that's horrible! This old shoe is so smelly - poo poo poo! Get rid of it and find your lovely ball. (<i>Dixie goes</i>)
Dixie	My 'lovely ball'? It was 'slobbery' a minute ago! Now for one of my old bones! (<i>digs it up</i>) There you are, my lovely bone! Let's see how Ben likes chewed up bones... (<i>returns</i>) Wwoof woof!
Ben	Get that away from me. I don't want your old bone, Dixie. Where's your ball?
Dixie	(<i>quietly</i>) Woof woof woof. (<i>Dixie whimpers pathetically, shrugs shoulders to indicate the ball is lost</i>)
Ben	Oh it's lost is it? (<i>Dixie nods</i>) Mmmm (<i>looks around</i>) I can see it – there in the lake. Off you go Dixie (<i>Dixie shakes head</i>) I'm sorry I threw it in the lake where you couldn't get it, Dixie. Don't worry, I'll get it. Just let me take my shoes off and roll up my trousers. I'll get you your ball back, Dixie!
Dixie	(<i>happily</i>) Woof woof!

9th November 2014 Matthew 25:1-13 The Ten Bridesmaids

My Wonderful Wedding

After an exhausting shopping trip, Melanie tells Ben about her wedding day. This was postponed because her Father fell down the stairs wearing old slippers. The bride's Mother made her wear sensible shoes for dancing so that she wouldn't fall and hurt herself too.

Theme: Prepare wisely for the future.

Humour: Imagining new clothes worn incorrectly
 Platform shoes made the bride fall into her new husband's arms
 Bride's Mother insisting on sensible shoes

Props: Shopping bags
 Wedding photo

Introduction

Do you enjoy getting dressed up for a special occasion? When?
There's nothing more special than a wedding as an excuse for buying new clothes.

The Puppet Sketch

After the Puppet Sketch

Can you remember why Mum didn't buy a suit for Ben? (Something he could wear again, but not for football!)
Weddings aren't about spending lots of money on a fancy party. Why are they special?
Did Melanie make a wise decision when she chose to wear platform shoes?
What was her mother afraid would happen if she carried wearing the platform shoes?
What sort of shoes are better for dancing in? (Sensible decisions affect our future!)

Listen to the parable Jesus told about preparing for a wedding.
(*Matthew 25:1-13*)

My Wonderful Wedding

Ben	I hate shopping!
Mel	But you like the new clothes we bought for Jenny's wedding. I love my new dress with its really coool zip at the front.
Ben	It looked funny when you first tried it on - back-to-front!
Mel	Yes, we all had a laugh about that! I'm glad we didn't buy you a suit. 'Smart casual' they call your new outfit – so you can wear the clothes again for lots of different occasions.
Ben	Can I wear it playing football?
Mel	<i>(shocked)</i> Oh no!!! Too muddy! Mud stains don't wash out very well. But you would be the best dressed footballer in (your town) !
Ben	<i>(pointing)</i> That picture was taken on your wedding day wasn't it?
Mel	Yes. It was such a happy day! Especially as my Father was able to come. He'd been very ill just before it!
Ben	You had to cancel the wedding didn't you?
Mel	Not cancelled, just postponed.
Ben	Tell me the story again, Mum.
Mel	It was just one week before the wedding day when Dad fell down the stairs. He was in a rush, his slippers were old and slippery and he was carrying a heavy bag. I heard him scream out in pain and he was in agony waiting for the ambulance to arrive. I can remember my Mother holding him tight and stroking his hair to try and comfort him. There were complications and he was in hospital for nearly a week before they let him come home. We wanted to spend time looking after him, helping him to get better, not rushing round doing all those last-minute preparations for a wedding.
Ben	But you did get married, didn't you, Mum?
Mel	Oh yes. We only had to delay it for a couple of months. Fortunately it was only a small wedding. Nearly all the guests could come on the new date and Dad was there, still in his wheelchair, but he was so happy that he could be there for our special day!
Ben	Your shoes look really funny!
Mel	Those were called platform shoes. They make you taller. It was called... ..the height of fashion!
Ben	Height of fashion – very good, Mum. They don't look comfortable.
Mel	No, they weren't, especially when the dancing began. I kept nearly falling over. Somehow I always fell into your Dad's arms. <i>(Sighs, thinking about it)</i> He didn't seem to mind too much!
Ben	Grandma didn't like it, did she? In case you got hurt falling over.
Mel	She went home, fetched my sensible, flat shoes and said ' Put those on, Melanie. ' Just the way that Mothers do! <i>(both laugh)</i>

16th November 2014 Matthew 25:14-30 Parable of the Hidden Talents

Dirt-loving Dixie!

Ben has to tidy up before his Mother and an important visitor arrive. Dixie asks for a bone, but instead of enjoying playing with it, buries it in the garden and brings wet mud back into the house!

Theme: There are times for tidying up and storing things carefully and times for taking them out again and enjoying your belongings. The same is true for using your talents. Don't forget to use them!

Humour: The Minister's visit requires a tidy house!
 Dixie's funny barks
 The mess made by Dixie at just the wrong time
 Ben kicks Lego under a table instead of packing it away carefully
 The futility of hiding from Mum

Props: Lego
 Simple Lego model of a dog
 Plastic dog's bone or cardboard cut-out
 Flower
 Water pistol for fine spray of mist (if appropriate for venue/occasion)

Introduction

Do you hate having to tidy away?

Toys are to be played with. What use are they, when they are hidden away!!!

The Puppet Sketch

After the Puppet Sketch

Can Dixie play with the bone that's hidden in the ground?

What do you think Mum will say when she finds them both all dirty?

Was it a good idea to hide from Mum? ...Or is she just going to tell them off when she finds them)

Do you ever have special visitors you need to tidy up for? Who?

Listen to today's Bible story and find out why an important man got cross.

(Tell the parable of the hidden talents.)

Dirt-loving Dixie!

Dixie	Wwwwoof, woof!
Ben	Not now, Dixie. I'm busy
Dixie	<i>(louder)</i> Wwwwoof, woof!
Ben	I'm sorry, I can't take you for a walk. (Your Minister's name) is coming for tea and Mum said I've got to put away my Lego before she gets home from work. We need to look tidy for the minister!!!
Dixie	<i>(louder still)</i> Wwwwoof, woof!
Ben	Go in the garden you silly dog! <i>(opens the door)</i> There you go.
Dixie	<i>(excitedly)</i> Wwwwoof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof!
Ben	Ah! You want a bone. Here you are. Good dog. Off you go! <i>(exit Dixie; Ben turns to face the audience)</i> Oh no! This Lego is everywhere! <i>(Picks up Lego model)</i> Look, I've made a model of Dixie, but it's too big for the Lego box. <i>(Pauses to think)</i> Do I have to break it up? Yes, no, yes, no, yes, no. <i>(Drops it accidentally)</i> Uh Oh !!! Now I've dropped it on the floor. <i>(looks worried)</i> Is that the time? Mum will be home soon. I'm out of time! I'll just kick the rest of the Lego under the coffee table. <i>(kicks, exit)</i>
Dixie <i>(enters)</i>	Wwwwoof! Wwwhere will my wwonderful bone be safe? Wwwell, I'll bury it here under this flower. Wwwait a minute. Ben won't be happy if I dig a hole by the flowers. But what if he's too busy to notice? Here goes.... <i>(makes a mess, barking happily)</i> What a mess! Soil everywhere. I love soil! Let's roll in it! What fun! Here's a puddle to splash in. Wwwwet paws! Wwwwet paws. Wwwwwhat fun! Now I'm hungry. Where's my dinner? <i>(Taps on door)</i>
Ben <i>(enters)</i>	What have you been doing, Dixie? You're all dirty!
Dixie <i>(runs in)</i>	Wwwwoof, woof, woof!
Ben	How many times have I told you not to bury those bones. You were supposed to chew it and play with it. You know, enjoy it – not hide it away.
Dixie	<i>(walking round)</i> Wwwwwoof, woof, woof
Ben	Look at those muddy footprints! Mum will be furious!
Dixie	Wwwwoof, woof, woof
Ben	And you're all wet
Dixie	<i>(shakes)</i> Woof, woof! <i>(spray water, if appropriate)</i>
Ben	Dixie! Not all over me. Look at my clothes! Mum wants the house clean and tidy. Just look at us both! She won't be happy!!! <i>(doorbell rings)</i>
Door-bell	Ding dong
Ben	Quick, hide!!! <i>(They do so, humorously)</i>

23rd November 2014

Matthew 25:31-46

What Separates the Sheep and Goats

Christmas Cracker

Ben finds a left-over Christmas Cracker in the 'Christmas Box'. The crown reminds us that Jesus is King. The padlock gift reminds us to care about those less fortunate than ourselves.

Theme: We serve King Jesus by caring about others.

Humour: Ben likes to think he's strong and pulls the cracker out of Mel's hands, but falls over when it breaks. The pointlessness of Cracker gifts: a sharpener with no pencil and a tiny, useless padlock. Mum doesn't want Ben to grow up too fast: he promises to wake up at 3am on Christmas morning

Props: Big box
Two unused Christmas Crackers (one to be pulled off-stage by adults with free hands)
Paper crown from a third Cracker
Very small padlock (optional - it's too small to see)
Large padlock

Introduction

Even though Advent doesn't start until next week, people are already starting to make plans. Has anyone prepared a box for Operation Christmas Child or sent Christmas cards early to friends living abroad? Why so early? It is frustrating for children to have to wait to do things that only grown-ups can do. Like use permanent felt-tip pens or dangerous jobs. Can you think of any adult-only dangerous jobs? During the sketch listen out for an important job that adults sometimes do. Hint: They work with people who live with these. (*show large padlock*).

The Puppet Sketch

After the Puppet Sketch

What was the rewarding job done by Melanie's friend? (prison chaplain). Even if you can't do this work, you can still pray for prisoners to have a better future knowing Jesus as their King. What can all of us, including children, do to help others who are less fortunate than ourselves?

Jesus might not wear a paper crown, but he's still our king.
Listen to today's Bible reading and find out how we can please Jesus.
(*Matthew 25: 31-46*)

Christmas Cracker

Mel	<i>(Ben has just put the box down)</i> That was heavy!
Ben	Not for me it wasn't. I'm strong!
Mel	<i>(laughs)</i> Yes of course you are. Let's have look inside the box.
Ben	It's nearly Christmas! <i>(looks excitedly into the box)</i>
Mel	No! Advent doesn't start until next week, we're just planning ahead. Christmas cards are on sale at <i>(local shop)</i> How many have we got?
Ben	I can see a few here ...and a left over Christmas cracker on top.
Mel	Is it squashed?
Ben	Yes <i>(produces it, all squashed and laughs)</i>
Mel	We can't use that on Christmas Day. Let's pull it now.
Ben	O.K. I'm crackers about crackers!
Mel	Wait a minute. Let me hold the other end. <i>(takes hold, Ben pulls it out again)</i> I wasn't ready yet!
Ben	I told you I'm strong.
Mel	<i>(sarcastically)</i> ...or just impatient. I wasn't ready
Ben	<i>(pulling hard)</i> It's not breaking...
Mel	I remember these from last year. They do take a bit of brute force.
Ben	<i>(Both fall over comically as the cracker snaps)</i> Stupid cracker!
Mel	Oh no! Everything's on the floor. Please can you pick it up, Ben?
Ben	O.K. <i>(dives behind curtain and returns with crown)</i> This is for you, Mum. You can be Queen!
Mel	Thank you. I'll comb my hair & put it on in front of the mirror. <i>(exit)</i>
Ben	Don't be too long Mum. I wonder what the gift is? Last year I got a pencil sharpener, but no pencil. I couldn't see the point! No pencil, no point! I use felt-tips - but I'm only allowed the washable ones!
Mel	<i>(returning with a small padlock)</i> Quite right too. You can have this lovely gift. It's a padlock, but too small to be any good at all!
Ben	My bike padlock is much bigger than that... Oh no! I left it at youth club when we talked about Christians abroad imprisoned for their faith. It doesn't happen here, does it? Prisoners are all bad people.
Mum	Well, it's not as simple as that. We're all bad sometimes. Alcohol and drugs can make good people do bad things. Not everyone has a good start to life. I know a prison chaplain who tells the prisoners about Jesus. Some of them become Christians and their lives change completely. It's very rewarding seeing broken people have a fresh start, supported by people who care about them.
Ben	<i>(thinks seriously)</i> Mmmm! Could I be a prison chaplain?
Mum	Don't grow up too fast! Let's have fun enjoying Christmas first.
Ben	O.K. Mum, I'll wake up at 3 in the morning, as usual. <i>(Mum groans)</i>

30th November 2014 Mark 13:24-37 Fig Tree Illustrates Signs of Jesus' Return

Not as Dead as it Looks

Ben has just planted a bulb and wonders how long he'll have to wait before it grows. It will be worth waiting for – like the cakes he made earlier. He mustn't fall asleep and forget to take it out of the oven!

Theme: Waiting, but staying alert for something good to happen.

Humour: Boredom of waiting for things
 Dixie's funny barks
 Dixie's dirty face from eating cake

(NB Puppets don't usually wash well. Create a tissue-paper 'messy cake' with elastic bands to hang over Dixie's ears

Props: Dead branch (optional)
 Hyacinth bulb
 Plant pot
 Cake mess (see above)
 Noisy cooking timer or mobile phone to make similar noise

Introduction

Isn't it hard to wait?

It's a long wait until the spring? What do you like about spring?

Look at a branch and a hyacinth bulb. They're not as dead as they look!

The Puppet Sketch

After the Puppet Sketch

Who likes cake?

What does it look like before it's cooked? (all sticky and horrible.) How do they look when baked? (yummy)

Sometimes things look bad, but things turn out to be fine later. You just have to wait.

Jesus has promised to come back one day, but there could be some difficult times first.

We mustn't 'fall asleep' and not be ready.

What would the cake have looked like if Dixie hadn't woken Ben to take it out of the oven?

Listen to what the Bible has to say about waiting for signs of Jesus.

(Jesus' teaching from Mark 13:24-37)

Not as Dead as it Looks

Ben	I'm bored!
Mel	But you've had a busy morning! You've planted some hyacinth bulbs and you've made a cake.
Ben	I hate waiting. Why do cakes have to take so long in the oven. I want to eat it now. And why can't flowers grow straight away?
Mel	Well they can't. You'll just have to wait. I'm sorry, I have to go upstairs now. I've got things to do. Why don't you find out what Dixie's up to? Make sure you don't forget to take the cake out of the oven when the timer pings. <i>(exit)</i>
Ben	OK Mum <i>(sighs)</i> Where's Dixie?
Dixie	<i>(excitedly with bulb in mouth)</i> Woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof
Ben	What have you got there, Dixie?
Dixie	Wwwwwoof! <i>(Spits out the bulb)</i>
Ben	Bad dog! That's not a ball. You've dug up one of the hyacinth bulbs. It won't grow now. Just look at it, all chewed and falling to pieces. It might have looked dead, Dixie, but in the spring that pointy bit would have grown into a new green shoot and then we'd have had lovely flowers. It's not as dead as it looks.
Dixie	<i>(remorsefully)</i> Wooooof
Ben	Go to your bed and sleep, you naughty dog! <i>(exit Dixie)</i> I wouldn't mind a snooze myself. I'm tired after all that work. <i>(falls asleep and snores comically.)</i>
Timer	Ping, ping.... <i>(Ben stirs, but then goes back to sleep. Dixie wakes up and nudges Ben who keeps muttering and falling back asleep)</i>
Dixie	Wwwwwoof, woof, woof. Wwwwwake up you silly boy. The cake's ready. <i>(Ben wakes with a start)</i>
Ben	The cake, the cake! Why didn't you wake me up, Dixie? <i>(exit)</i>
Dixie	Wwoof????? Now that's not fair. I tried my best to wake him up. Now, did I hear the word cake? I love cake! <i>(exit)</i>
Ben	<i>(Dixie re-emerges with face covered in cake)</i> I <u>really</u> love cake!

7th December 2014 **Mark 1:1-8** **John the Messenger**

An Important Message

Ben won't be going on the traditional school pantomime trip unless Melanie remembers to fill in the permission slip. He really wants to go! He's also looking forward to the journey on the school bus with his friends.

Theme: It is important to respond to an urgent message.

Humour: Ben is impatient for Mum (who isn't listening) to complete the slip
 Oh yes we will, oh no you won't
 Look behind you!

Props: Paper
 Pen

Introduction

Are you a good listener?

Listen carefully to this puppet sketch and tell me

- (1) Which pantomime Ben is hoping to go and see?
- (2) What instructions were given to Jack if he wanted to find treasure?

The Puppet Sketch

After the Puppet Sketch

Which pantomime is Ben going to see?

Jack wouldn't have found the treasure without the old man's instructions.

Who was it in the Bible who told everyone to prepare to find Jesus, God's greatest treasure?

Why was Ben frustrated with his Mum at the start of the sketch? (She wasn't listening.)

Are good instructions any help if no one's listening?

Hear about the messenger, John, who gave some important instructions.

(Mark 1:1-8)

An Important Message

Ben	Mum! Mum!
Mel (<i>off-stage</i>)	Not now, Ben. I'm busy
Ben	But this is really important!
Mel	I can't hear you
Ben	(<i>shouting</i>) I've got an important message from school
Mel	Sausage of wool? Don't eat it! Wool sausages aren't very tasty.
Ben	(<i>frustrated</i>) No! An important message from school.
Mel	Can it wait a minute or will the world stop turning?
Ben	It will if I can't go to the school pantomime. I really want to go.
Mel (<i>enters</i>)	You <u>can</u> go to the pantomime. I said you could.
Ben	Not unless you fill in this parents' slip. Tomorrow is the last day!
Mel	(<i>looks at paper</i>) Oh, it's Jack and the Beanstalk. That's my favourite.
Ben	I already know the story. Jack sells a cow to a dirty, smelly, old man who's travelled from far, far away and gets some magic beans. The man tells him that to find treasure he should plant the magic beans. Next morning there's a tall beanstalk going straight up into the sky and the treasure. Jack has to climb up the beanstalk, which doesn't take him long because the beanstalk is very straight and it's easy to get into the sky where the treasure is. When he looks behind him there's a giant. You sign on the line, Mum. That's all you need to do.
Mel	Just a minute, I can't find my pen.
Ben	Look behind you, Mum. It's just there. Look behind you. (<i>both laugh, Mel signs form</i>) Mr Smith said 'Oh no you can't go' and we shouted back 'Oh yes we can' and he said 'Oh no you can't' and we went 'Oh yes we can' and it was really funny.
Mel	(<i>hands form to Ben</i>) Here you are. You can go now 'Oh yes you can'
Ben	Oh yes I can
Mel	Oh yes you can
Ben	I'm going to sit at the back of the coach and shout to the cars behind 'Oh yes we can'. Mr Smith says we can sing on the bus, if we're quiet and listen when the teachers are talking. It's going to be lots of fun!
Mel	I hope the road-works don't make you late for the show.
Ben	They'll be finished. It's a short journey straight up (London Road).
Mel	Just make sure you arrive at school in good time. Don't be late.
Ben	Mum, I'm ...never ...late... (<i>laughs</i>)
Mel	Are you sure you're seeing Jack and the beanstalk? Your nose is growing like Pinocchio's
Ben	Oh no it's not! (<i>touching nose</i>)
Mel	Oh yes it is!

14th December 2014 John 1:6-8,19-28 Who is John?

Who Am I?

Ben is completing a 'personal profile' from a 'Kids Alive!' magazine and wonders 'who he is'. He knows some good 'who am I' jokes, but that doesn't help. He is a son, a grandson and a nephew, but, best of all, he's a child of God.

Theme: Who am I? (A Child of God)

Humour: Ben would love to be wealthy – so he can give money to the church!
 Celebrities haven't answered his numerous letters
 Jokes

Props: Magazine
 Pen

Introduction

Have you ever wondered 'Who am I?' or 'Where do I come from?'

Ben is asking himself these questions. After the sketch, I'm going to ask you what your answers might be to these questions.

The Puppet Sketch

After the Puppet Sketch

Can we help Ben out with his questions? Who made Ben?

Ask for answers to the questions 'Who am I?' or 'Where do I come from?'

Listen to today's Bible story and find out more about Jesus' cousin, John.

(John 1: 6-8,19-28)

Who Am I?

Ben	This is Kids Alive! magazine page 15 and I'm going to send in my personal profile. I hope they print it! Name: Benjamin Age: ten Favourite sport: football Pets?: Dixie, my dog Favourite food: err... Hot dogs ! Favourite joke: What do you get if you cross a tree with a dog?
Adult	I don't know, what do you get if you cross a tree with a dog?
Ben	A lot of bark! That's right isn't it Dixie?
Dixie (enters)	Woof woof!
Ben	Favourite food: That's got to be chocolate! Favourite colour: Gold (<i>thinks</i>) Yeah!!! (<i>rubs hands together</i>) What do you want to be when you're older? A billionaire (<i>thinks</i>) ...so that I can give money to the church!!! Tell us something interesting about yourself: I have written one letter to the Queen, two letters to the American President, twenty letters to Lewis Hamilton and fifty letters to Wayne Rooney (<i>thinks</i>) ...but none of them have replied yet... (<i>puts pen down</i>) Check the letter box, Dixie!
Dixie	(<i>sympathetically</i>) Wwwwoof (<i>exit, speaks from off-stage</i>) No letters!
Ben	If they publish that everyone will know all about me. Or will they? Who am I really? (<i>Looks around, sees photo</i>) That's a photo of my family. I come from them. I'm Melanie's son. I'm Grandad's grandson and I'm Auntie Susan's nephew. Is that who I am? (<i>Thinks again</i>) I know some good 'What am I' jokes: I have one eye, but I cannot see. What am I?
Adult	I don't know, what am I if I have one eye, but I cannot see?
Ben	A needle! I travel around the world, but I stay in one spot. What am I?
Adult	I don't know, what am I if I travel around the world, but I stay in one spot?
Ben	A stamp! I'm as light as a feather, but even the world's strongest man can't hold me for more than a minute. What am I?
Adult	I don't know, what am I if I'm as light as a feather, but even the world's strongest man can't hold me for more than a minute?
Ben	His breath! If you have me, don't share me. If you share me, you don't have me. What am I?
Adult	I don't know, what am I if you have me, don't share me. If you share me, you don't have me?
Ben	A secret! (<i>sadly</i>) But that doesn't help me very much. Who am I? Where do I come from? What is my purpose?

21st December 2014 Luke 1:26-38 The Annunciation

Postman's Knock

Dixie gets excited when the Postman rings with a parcel. It's a photo of a new baby relative in Australia and a letter asking if the mother and her baby can come and visit next year?

Theme: It's great to hear exciting news – especially the news of a baby!

Humour: Dixie barking for the postman
 Deciding whether to open the parcel before Christmas
 Speculating what could be in the parcel
 Dixie's toy puppy has to be displayed next to the baby photo

Props: Parcel containing a baby photo in frame and letter
 Two more photographs in frames
 Small soft toy (a dog, if possible)

Introduction

Do you know what you're getting for Christmas or is it going to be a surprise?
Share stories about presents received in the past that were a lovely surprise.
Any special gifts from relatives living abroad? Those gifts must have been extra special!

The Puppet Sketch

After the Puppet Sketch

Was Mel expecting anything from the postman?
Why was Mel so excited?
Invite someone to tell you about the excitement felt in their family when a new baby arrives.
Do you think that Mel will say 'yes' to her cousin who wants to come and stay at her house?

Listen to today's Bible story when Mary gets an unexpected visitor with a very exciting piece of news.
Will she be as pleased as Melanie, I wonder?
(Luke 1:26-38)

Postman's Knock

Mel	Ah! Peace and quiet at last! I'm so glad Dixie's gone to sleep after being so excited all day. <i>(to audience)</i> Shhhh! Don't wake the dog
Door-bell <i>off-stage</i>	Ding dong
Mel	Oh no!
Dixie <i>(loudly)</i>	Wwwwoof, woof! Wwwwoof, woof! Wwwwoof, woof!
Mel	Not again, Dixie! It's only the postman.
Dixie <i>(louder)</i>	Wwwwoof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof
Mel	It's only the postman. A friend who brings lovely surprises.
Dixie <i>(growling)</i>	Grrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr!
Mel	Sit, dog, sit! <i>(Dixie sits quietly)</i> That's better
Dixie <i>quietly</i>	Woof! <i>(Mel tuts then opens door to postman)</i>
Mel	Hello <i>(pause)</i> Where would you like me to sign? <i>(pause)</i> Thank you very much. Have a good day!
Dixie	<i>(jumping up at parcel)</i> Wwwwwoof, woof, woof
Mel	Sit, dog, sit! <i>(Dixie sits quietly)</i> Good dog. It's a parcel from my cousin in Australia. That's unusual! She usually only writes to me at Christmas. I wonder what's in the parcel?
Dixie	Woof, woof
Mel	No, Dixie, it won't be chocolate for you! I never open presents before Christmas, but I'm so curious... <i>(thinks)</i> Shall I open it now?
Dixie	<i>(nodding)</i> Woof, woof, woof
Mel	No. I never open presents early. <i>(Dixie whimpers sadly)</i> Oh, all right then. <i>(Dixie jumps up to help)</i> No, Dixie, I can open it better by myself <i>(Mel reads letter, Dixie sits & pants expectantly)</i> Oh! Surprise! My cousin's had a baby & here's his photograph. Doesn't he look cute! <i>(Dixie whimpers, Mel pats Dixie)</i> You look cute too, Dixie! I couldn't forget you... you make far too much noise!
Dixie <i>(loudly)</i>	Woof, woof, woof!
Mel	Gosh, she wants to come to (your town) to visit us. Wow! It will be fantastic to see them both. I'm so excited! I haven't seen my cousin for twelve years – and she's coming from Australia with her baby!
Dixie	<i>(Jumps with Mel, holding paws/hands)</i> Woof, woof, woof, woof!
Mel	I'll put this lovely photograph with my other family pictures.
Dixie	<i>(disappears & returns with a stuffed toy and gives to Mel)</i> Woooooof!
Mel	You want me to put your baby up here too? <i>(Dixie nods)</i> O.K. Your baby is on display too. <i>(to audience)</i> It's all soggy and bedraggled! I'll take it down when Dixie's not looking. <i>(exit Dixie, Mel takes toy down, Dixie returns and barks, Mel sighs)</i> OK Dixie! I'll put your baby back!

25th December 2014 Luke 2:1-14 Jesus is Born/Visited by Shepherds

Early Morning Christmas Presents

Ben wakes up early on Christmas morning. Mum doesn't want to get up, but Dixie does! They open Dixie's Christmas presents and he scoffs the lot and is sick. There's one more gift that will last a little longer.

Theme: The gift of Jesus is very exciting!

Humour: Ben waking up really early, full of life
 Dixie's funny barks
 Several presents Ben opens are the same: dog chocolate
 Wrapping paper is so big that it covers up Dixie
 The squeaky toy gift will drive everyone crazy

Props: Small wrapped parcels (four)
 Wrapping paper
 Dog chocolates
 Squeaky dog-toy
 Christmas story book (board book, if possible)

Introduction

Did anyone feel so excited that they woke up really early today?

Are you allowed to open your presents straight away? (What did you get this morning?)

Ben wasn't allowed to open his presents until everyone else was up, but Dixie was awake early and happy to start Christmas.

The Puppet Sketch

After the Puppet Sketch

Will Mum be cross that Dixie has chewed the Christmas book?

What would you have bought Dixie for Christmas? How long would it have lasted?

What's the longest-lasting gift that you have ever been given? How long have you had it?

How long does the gift of Jesus last for?

Let's celebrate the birth of Jesus by treasuring the words of the Christmas Day Bible reading.
(Luke 2:1-20)

Early morning Christmas Presents

Ben	<i>(stirs from sleep)</i> Is it Christmas yet? Yes! It's 3 am and Santa's been. <i>(shouts out)</i> Mum! Can I open my presents?
Mel <i>(off-stage)</i>	No. It's 3 o'clock in the morning. Go back to sleep.
Ben	I'll try. <i>(tosses and turns comically)</i> I can't go back to sleep. It's Christmas Day!
Dixie <i>(enters)</i>	Wwwwwoof, woof!
Ben	Oh, Dixie. Can't you sleep either?
Dixie	<i>(shaking head)</i> Wwwwwoof, woof!
Ben	Well I'm very pleased to see you, <i>(stage whispers)</i> but we'll have to be quiet because everyone else is asleep.
Dixie	<i>(loudly)</i> Wwwwwoof!
Ben	Shhhhhh!
Dixie	<i>(quietly)</i> Woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof.
Ben	Good dog. I can't open my presents yet, but let's open yours. There's a whole pile here. We told everyone that you like chocolate!
Dixie <i>(nodding)</i>	Wwwwwoof, woof, woof
Ben	<i>(Opens parcel)</i> This one's from Auntie Susan. It's dog chocolate.
Dixie	Wwwwwoof! <i>(eats chocolate)</i>
Ben	<i>(Opens parcel)</i> This one's from Grandma. It's dog chocolate.
Dixie	Wwwwwoof! <i>(eats chocolate)</i>
Ben	<i>(Opens parcel)</i> This one's from Uncle David. It's dog chocolate.
Dixie	Wwwwwoof! <i>(eats chocolate)</i>
Ben	You might be sick after all that chocolate - get off my bed, Dixie! <i>(Moves Dixie who is promptly sick!)</i> Bad doggie, eating all that chocolate. <i>(Dixie hides under a large piece of wrapping paper)</i> At last! A present that isn't chocolate. How do I know? It's from Mum and me. <i>(opens gift)</i> look, Dixie - a squeaky toy.
Dixie	Woof, woof <i>(Squeaks toy loudly, then barks loudly at it)</i>
Ben	<i>(alarmed)</i> Quiet, Dixie! Christmas isn't just about presents, you know. We're supposed to be celebrating that Jesus is born. <i>(thinks)</i> I know, I'll read you a nice quiet Christmas book. Here's a board book I've had since I was a baby. I think it's dog-proof! <i>(reads)</i> This is Mary. She's going to have a baby. This is the donkey carrying Mary to Bethlehem. This is the stable where Jesus is born. Here are the angels, telling the shepherds the good news. Here are the shepherds visiting Jesus. Welcome King Jesus!
Dixie	<i>(snatches book & runs off chewing it, barking loudly)</i> Woof, woof...
Ben	Dixie! That's not how you treat books. And you'll wake Mum!

28th December 2014 Matthew 25:14-30 Simeon and Anna

Simeon and Anna

Ben finds a photograph of his deceased Great Grandpa holding a baby – a very special man! Great Grandpa had been very poorly, but he was so pleased to have met Ben before he died.

Theme: Young or old – we are all special.

Humour: Ben mistakes the oxygen tube for a pencil stuck up Great Grandpa's nose
 Imagining the facial expressions of a new-born baby

Props: Photograph

Introduction

Looking back over your life, who were the people who introduced you to Jesus? Were any of those particularly special to you? Encourage people to share their favourite memories. In today's puppet sketch, Melanie will be sharing such memories with her son, Ben.

The Puppet Sketch

? Questions to Ask After the Puppet Sketch ?

What is it about babies that makes them so special?

What was extra special about Jesus?

(Matthew 25:14-30)

Great Grandpa

Ben	Mum, Mum, look what I've found!
Mel (<i>off-stage</i>)	What is it, Ben?
Ben	It's a photograph I found in a cupboard. An old man with a baby. The baby looks a bit like me, but I don't recognise the man. He's old. Really old. Really, really, really, really, really, really old!
Mel	(<i>laughing</i>) Yes he was quite old. That's my Grandpa and your Great Grandpa. He was so frail when that photograph was taken with you.
Ben	I don't remember him.
Mel	No, you wouldn't. He died soon afterwards. But he was so pleased to meet you first. You were his first great grandchild.
Ben	What's that next to the bed?
Mel	It's a rail to stop him falling out of his hospital bed. And the red cord was to call the nurse if he needed help. You can see me at the edge of the photograph, my arm helping to support you. He was quite weak, but absolutely determined to hold his first grandchild.
Ben	Why's he got a pencil stuck up his nose?
Mel	That's not a pencil, it's the oxygen pipe he needed to help him breath. That was the reason he couldn't travel to come and see you. We took you to his hospital to see him as soon as we could.
Ben	Was I bored?
Mel	(<i>laughing</i>) No. You slept most of the time. You just woke up briefly and gave him one of your special frowns as if to say 'who are you'. Then you cried for food. That long special 'look' meant a lot to him!
Ben	His eyes are nearly closed. Was Great Grandpa falling asleep too.
Mel	Oh no, he's just looking down. He couldn't take his eyes off you. This photograph is just one of hundreds of very special memories I have of my wonderful Grandpa. He was always so cheerful all the time.
Ben	Why was he so special to you?
Mel	He loved to tell me all about Jesus and always made me feel happy. He told really good jokes and entertained me with magic tricks. He could throw a coin in the air and make it re-appear behind my ear - over and over again. Sometimes he would throw the coin through the ceiling and under my pillow. I'd run upstairs to find it. Strangely enough, he couldn't repeat that one until the following day.
Ben	He sounds very nice. I wish I could remember him.
Mel	He always said his main ambition in life was to make the world a better place because he had lived. Before he died he knew he was going to see Jesus – but he was very happy to have seen you first.
Ben	I'm glad I made him happy!
Mel	Me too!