



The photograph above shows the Grace Worker team of 2016 to 2017 celebrating the end of another year of ministry at the Hollywood Super-bowl in Leicester.

Sadly, Tanita and Melody are leaving us this summer. Tanita will be working directly for the churches in Kineton, Warwickshire. Melody has achieved outstanding grades in her children's ministry course and returning to her native Birmingham. We wish them both every blessing!

Mandy will be continuing the good work in Queniborough, Leicestershire and three young volunteers are about to join us from 'Time for God'. They are Sara from Germany, Caroline from the USA and Lena from the Ukraine. Please pray for their safe arrival in Daventry and transition to British life.

You will notice in the scripts below that two new characters, Dad and Grandma, make their debut in October. This completes the set of seven characters in total. Enjoy!

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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 – Their mother

Dave – Their father

Grandpa – Mel's Dad, recently moved back from Australia

Nanna – Dave's mother

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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4th Sept 2016

Luke 14,25-33

Stark Choices

Taller Tower

Ben and Lily compete to build the tallest tower of lego, but run out of bricks. Lily finds a secret store of pink bricks she claims as her own and has pocket money to buy more. Ben runs to Mel as a neutral judge, but Dixie knocks over the tower before she arrives.

Theme: *Budgeting for a building competition re-play*

Roots themes explore: *Choosing a path; thinking it through; reshaping identity*

SU All-Age Lectionary Services aim: *To consider what it means to follow Jesus*

Humour: Squabbling over lego pieces

Lily wants to buy more pink pieces and claim ownership

Towers wobble, then Dixie knocks them over anyway

Props: Sign saying: 'at home'

Lego

Adult needed to encourage audience participation

Introduction

Find out who has ever enjoyed building with Lego? What did they like to build?

What was the biggest thing they ever built? Did they run out of pieces?

Has anyone added pieces from a specialist kit into a bigger box, only to lose some pieces and fail to build it again? Ask everyone to imagine the frustration!

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Taller Tower'

After the Puppet Sketch

Think about the 'limiting factors' that restrict the height of a Lego tower built (number of bricks, strength of base, safe environment) Are Lily and Ben likely to get on better when they've done some careful planning?

If they were to compete again, each with an equal number of bricks, who would likely win? (Ben better planner)

If Ben is more likely to win, is Lily better to accept his offer to build together or insist on another competition?

Listen out for the wisdom of planning and budgeting realistically in today's reading.

The Bible Story

Lily	I wonder how tall a tower I can build out of my Lego?
Ben	It's not your Lego, Lily, it's shared. We've had it a long time!
Lily	I'm going to try to build a tower that's taller than me.
Ben	We are going to have a competition. After the count of three: 1,2,3...
Lily	Hey! I'm not ready! <i>(both starts building furiously)</i>
Ben	I wanted that piece!
Lily	There's plenty more...
Ben	I'm winning! Mine's taller.
Lily	Mine's stronger.
Ben	Who cares?
Lily	I'm not listening, I'm concentrating.
Ben	We've run of pieces. <i>(places his tower on table)</i>
Lily	I've got some girly, pink pieces given to me for my birthday present. <i>(Shows taller tower only taller because of pink top.)</i> I won!
Ben	That's not fair! I'm telling Mum! <i>(storms off)</i>
Lily	<i>(Calling after him)</i> You're a poor loser! <i>(to self)</i> I can use his pieces if he's quit! Shall I make mine taller or stronger? What do you think everyone? Taller or stronger? <i>(adult encourages audience to shout taller or stronger)</i> I'll make it taller.
Dixie	<i>(Rushes across and knocks Lily's tower over.)</i> Woof, woof, woof <i>(Runs off)</i>
Lily	Bad dog! You knocked over our lovely towers! <i>(Cries comically)</i>
Ben	<i>(Returns)</i> Mum says you have to share the leg... Agh! Where's yours? Has Dixie knocked yours over? That makes me the winner. I won! I won!
Lily	No it doesn't mine was taller.
Ben	You needed a stronger base. <i>(to Dixie)</i> Hey Dixie! We make a good team!
Lily	Next time, my tower will be twice as tall as yours. I've got plenty of pocket money and I'll buy more pink bricks that are mine .
Ben	Hmmph! I've got a better idea. Why don't we pool both our pocket moneys and buy even more bricks and build a tower together? We could beat the world record and get our names in the 'Guinness World Records'.
Lily	<i>(Cheering up)</i> That's a good idea – but we'll have to keep Dixie away.
Ben	<i>(Head in hands)</i> Of course we'll have to keep Dixie out of the way! That's a no-brainer. We need to plan a strong construction that won't fall over.
Lily	<i>(Giggles)</i> Can I draw it? Or no, can I show you a great picture? <i>(exit)</i>
Ben	<i>(Groans)</i> I hate to think what Lily's plan will be like. We want a world record!
Lily	Won't be long.
Ben	I can wait! <i>(taps feet and hums to self)</i>
Lily	Here's a tower that never fell over. <i>(shows picture)</i> The Leaning Tower of Pisa.
Ben	Let's demonstrate what happens to something that leans over like that. <i>(pulls Lily, both lean, wobble noisily and topple from stage with a comical squawk)</i>

Missing Passport

Grandpa has lost his passport and stubbornly won't allow Mel to help him look for it. He realises the consequences and Mel locates it in a secret pocket in his bag. He celebrates by buying the whole family cream cakes.

Theme: Finding something precious is worth celebrating!

Roots themes explore: Recognising what's missing; taking responsibility and not giving up; rejoicing

SU All-Age Lectionary Services aim: To rejoice that God looks for us when we are lost

Humour: Grandpa too stubborn to let Mel help him search
The thought of no more holidays
Grandpa teases himself
He forgot about the secret pocket in his hand-luggage
Cream cake gets dropped on the floor

Props: Photocopy of passport
Cream cake
Sign saying: 'At home'

Introduction

Ask whether anyone has ever mislaid their passport or something important just before a trip? How did it feel? What would have been the consequences? This is what happens to Grandpa in the puppet sketch.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Missing Passport'

After the Puppet Sketch

Ask whether Mel wanted to be treated to a cream cake as a thank you for finding the passport? Why not *(old/on a diet)* Seriously though, people do like to celebrate and treat their friends as a thank you after a crisis has been avoided. Find out about any good parties held recently and what they were celebrating.

Now let's hear what makes God want to party.

The Bible Story

Grandpa	Where's my passport? Oh, Dixie, I'm so worried. I can't find my passport!
Dixie	<i>(Whimpers)</i>
Grandpa	That's right, Dixie. It's a very serious matter. No more camping in France.
Dixie	<i>(Jumps up and wags tail excitedly)</i> Woof! Woof!
Grandpa	Sorry, Dixie, I said no more camping. Have you seen my passport?
Dixie	<i>(Shakes head pathetically, growling)</i>
Grandpa	Of course not. <i>(sarcastically)</i> You've never buried anything in the garden! Please check your latest hole – and fetch Mel too! <i>(exit Dixie)</i> Let me think now! Is it hidden in my smelly socks drawer? Phewey – no burglar would ever risk looking in there! Perhaps I dropped it while singing to my lovely cabbages in the allotment? No – more likely to have dropped down the drain as I was getting out of the taxi. Uph! I'll never get it back from there. <i>(think up comical places in your own venue/leadership homes where the passport might have got lost)</i> Poor me. I'll never see my friends abroad again. <i>(sobs comically)</i>
Mel	<i>(Enters)</i> What's up Grandpa? You see very upset!
Grandpa	Didn't Dixie tell you?
Mel	No, he's just a dog! He was running to the garden scared stiff.
Grandpa	Silly me! I accused him of burying my passport. Why would Dixie do that?
Mel	Well, Dixie's hidden stranger things before now – like a pint of milk.
Grandpa	To drink next time there's a famine – it didn't half smell after just a week!
Mel	Have you checked the hand-luggage you were carrying on your last trip?
Grandpa	It's completely empty. Of course I checked my bag. <i>(loudly)</i> Am I a fool?
Mel	No, of course not. It's just that a different pair of eyes can help.
Grandpa	I don't need that kind of patronising help, thank you!
Mel	O.K., O.K. I've got plenty to do if you don't need my help. Bye! <i>(exits)</i>
Grandpa	Oh dear, now I've upset Mel – and I still haven't found my passport. Could it be under this table? <i>(falls off table and climbs back up)</i> Poor old me. Now I've hurt my hand <i>(shakes it)</i> no my hands fine; I've hurt me leg <i>(shakes it)</i> no, my legs fine. I've got it – I've hurt my pride <i>(cries out loudly)</i> Owwww! I'm hurt! I'm hurt! Somebody come and take pity on me! <i>(Mel returns)</i>
Mel	What hurts, Dad?
Grandpa	My pride.
Mel	Is that all? I've come rushing back to a stubborn old man's cry for help and all that you've hurt is your pride?
Grandpa	My pride is very important to me at my age. Please look for my passport.
Mel	Come here <i>(sighs)</i> What about this secret pocket inside your hand-luggage.
Grandpa	You found it, hooray! You can have this cream cake I saved from tea-time.
Mel	Thanks – but how long have you had it. What about my diet?
Grandpa	Nonsense! I insist I treat you. Here you are! <i>(Wobbles, drops on floor to Mel's relief)</i>

18th Sept 2016

Luke 16.1-16

It's complicated

Tip or not to Tip

Mel and Ben are having lunch at a café. The waitress seems a bit depressed. They are curious to know whether she will take all of the tip for herself or whether she will share it. She shares it.

Theme: Sharing financial good fortune with friends

Roots themes explore: Honesty and being trustworthy; making wise decisions; living in a compromised world

SU All-Age Lectionary Services aim: To see how God wants his people to act justly

Humour: Ben orders a strange mixture of food
A joke
Siblings find it hard to share

Props: Coins
Sign saying: 'At a café'

Introduction

Ask for the most disgusting recipes people can think of using foods that just don't go together.

Fortunately Mel doesn't let her son mix ridiculous foods together at a café. However she does respond to a kind suggestion he makes. Listen out and hear what Ben asks her to do.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Tip or no tip'

After the Puppet Sketch

What did Ben ask his mother to do? (Tip generously to cheer the waitress up)

Would this benefit only her? (No, the tips were shared between staff) Ask whether your audience think that this is a fair system and whether the generous tip would still cheer her up. (Make her feel good about herself and the service she'd offered?)

Today's Bible reading addresses the issues of fairness, integrity and honesty.

The Bible Story

Where? At a café

Title of sketch: To Tip or not to Tip?

Mel	This is a lovely café, Ben. What would you like to eat?
Ben	Snails, with a peanut butter and jam sandwich covered in ice cream.
Mel	<i>(Coldly)</i> No, Ben They don't serve all that here and certainly not all on the same plate.
Ben	Can I see the menu?
Mel	Ah yes, of course. There are two. One for kids and the big one.
Ben	Did you hear the joke about the peanut butter?
Mel	No, Ben. What is the joke about the peanut butter?
Ben	I'm not telling you. You might spread it!
Mel	Very good, Ben!
Ben	Which school teaches you to make ice cream?
Mel	I don't know. Which school teaches you to make ice cream?
Ben	Sunday <i>(Sundae)</i> School. <i>(both groan)</i> Why do the French like to eat snails?
Mel	I don't know. Why do the French like to eat snails?
Ben	Because they don't like fast food!
Mel	Talking about fast food. What would you like to eat? Tell me quickly!
Ben	Can I have a burger and chips, err, please?
Mel	Yes, and we'll put some healthy salad with it. <i>(Ben groans)</i> I'm going to have the chilli with corn on the cob.
Ben	Not for me, thanks. The <u>chilli</u> is bound to be <u>hot</u> .
Mel	Yes, Ben. Nice pun. Now excuse me while I go and place the order.
Ben	O.K. Mum. <i>(exit Mel)</i> Why can't I have snails, peanut butter, jam and ice cream all mixed together? When I grow up I'm going to be a celebrity chef and open a restaurant where you can mix together whatever you want. I'll invent all sorts of new recipes and kids will love them. I'll be famous. <i>(Mel returns)</i>
Mel	Are you day-dreaming again, Ben? I think you need some cookery lessons before you can invent a recipe that anyone will want to eat.
Ben	Hugh! Here comes the food.
Mel	That was quick. <i>(to invisible waitress)</i> Thank you very much.
Ben	Thank you. <i>(to Mel)</i> She didn't look very happy, did she?
Mel	No, she was polite and gave good service, but something's troubling her.
Ben	Let's cheer her up with a big tip.
Mel	The service was good. All the staff might have to share their tips. There was a big money box by the till.
Ben	Please Mum!
Mel	I love it when you're kind and generous. <i>(puts tip on table)</i> Time to go.
Ben	<i>(Both walk away from table)</i> Let's watch from here. <i>(They do)</i>
Mel	Good for her. All the money went into the box. Time to go. <i>(both exit)</i>

Sharing Sweets?

Grandpa gives Lily a bag of sweets as a 'Thank You' for helping him sort out his shoes. He tells her to share them. She eats them all herself and is very sick.

Theme: Not sharing sweets
Roots themes explore: Consequences of choices; identifying and bridging chasms
SU All-Age Lectionary Services aim: To understand the importance of putting God first, before our wealth

Humour: Smelly old shoes
 Shoe puns
 Lily is very sick
 Dixie licks up the sick

Props: Shoes
 Bag of sweets
 Sign saying: 'At home'

Introduction

Look at the different types of shoe worn by the congregation. Are any of them smelly?
 Who hoards old shoes? Why is it tempting to hold on to old shoes and clothes we'll never wear again?
 Where are the local charity collection points for shoes?
 Maybe it's time to have a clear-out, like Grandpa in this sketch?

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Sharing Sweets'?

After the Puppet Sketch

Notice how Lily thought she shouldn't have to share her sweets when they were given to her and she'd done all the work.
 Are rich people justified in keeping their wealth to themselves when it came to them through employment?
 What would you like to say to someone on a very high salary, but who didn't give to charity?

Listen to what Jesus has to say about sharing (or rather, not sharing) with the poor people around you.

The Bible Story

Grandpa	Thank you for helping me to sort through my old shoes, Lily.
Lily	They smell a bit – poeey! Some of them are really old!
Grandpa	Like me then! I don't bend well and have to pick them up with a stick.
Lily	Would that be a <u>shoeting</u> stick, Grandpa? <i>(both laugh)</i>
Grandpa	Actually it's a <u>shoe</u> -horn. It stops me from getting a <u>shoeting</u> pain.
Lily	Most of your shoes are really old. Why don't you buy some new ones?
Grandpa	Because I'm living on a <u>shoe</u> -string. Seriously though, I find it difficult to get to the shops these days. Would you like me to play you some music, Lily? Maybe some <u>Schubert</u> ?
Lily	<i>(Puzzled)</i> Schubert?
Grandpa	Yes Lily, Schubert. He's a classical composer.
Lily	<i>(Quickly)</i> No thanks Grandpa. Your vinyl records are a bit scratchy. Have we finished sorting out the shoes now? The smell is making me feel sick.
Grandpa	Yes, thank you Lily. You've been a big help. Here's a bag of sweets as a 'thank you' gift. But make sure you share them or you will be sick! <i>(exits)</i>
Lily	<i>(To audience)</i> Why does Grandpa want me to share my 'thank you' present when I'm the one who did all the work? <i>(tastes one)</i> Mmmm! Delicious. I'll eat half now and save the rest until later.
Grandpa	<i>(Offstage)</i> Make sure you share those sweets, Lily!
Lily	If Grandpa thinks I'm going to share with Ben, he's wrong. Do you think he'd share with me, his little sister if he'd done all the work? No, of course not. Mum can share her sweets with Ben. She's got a whole load in the cupboard she won't eat because she says on a diet. Ben can have those. I'm eating every one of these myself! <i>(does so noisily)</i> Now I feel sick, just like Grandpa said I would. Maybe I shouldn't have eaten them all in one go? I'm going to be sick... going to be sick... any moment now... <i>(Lily is comically sick)</i>
Dixie	<i>(Enters)</i> Woof, woof, woof
Lily	Oh, Dixie, I feel terrible! It's Grandpa's fault. He gave me too many sweets.
Dixie	<i>(Looks up at Lily in a questioning sort of way, whining)</i>
Lily	Oh, all right, Dixie, he told me to share them and I didn't. He wanted me to give some to Ben. They're not doggy sweets.
Dixie	<i>(Pants loudly)</i>
Lily	Oh, I know you'll eat anything, but these aren't good for dogs. <i>(Dixie starts to lap up Lily's sick)</i> What are you doing, Dixie? I know you'll eat almost anything, but you really don't have to lick up my sick. Ohhh! That's disgusting!
Dixie	<i>(Wagging tail excitedly)</i> Woof, woof, woof
Lily	I'll leave you to your feast, Dixie. I'm just so glad I'm not a dog! <i>(exits)</i>

Helping Dad

Mike is cooking a special meal and would like Ben to help him. Despite making a mess in the kitchen Ben will only do each task if he's paid. Mike points out that Ben can't expect to receive both pocket money and payment for giving help. However, he finds his old bowling set he's been keeping to give to Ben and the pair play bowls together.

Theme: Giving help for free

Roots themes explore: The sheer scale of God; watching, waiting and trusting in God; the power of small things

SU All-Age Lectionary Services aim: To learn from the example of others what it means to be faithful to Jesus

Humour: Ben's greed
Making a mess of the kitchen
Disappointment at not receiving the expected payment
Enthusiasm for learning how to play bowls

Props: Kitchen equipment:
Carrots
Water gun
Balls
Sign saying: 'In the kitchen'

Introduction

Discover who does what task around the house. Point out that there is no salary for housework, but it still needs to be done. Ben hasn't realised this yet and demands payment for helping his Dad to prepare a meal.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Helping Dad'

After the Puppet Sketch

Ben felt that he was being treated as a slave when asked to help and demanded payment for his services. It turned out that Ben is more precious than a slave or a servant. How does Mick demonstrate to his son their special relationship? (teaches him how to bowl and gives him his own bowling set – something precious to him)

Listen to Jesus' teaching about the expectations that God places upon us. (That we serve Him willingly, not expecting thanks.)

The Bible Story

Dave	Ben, can you give me a hand in the kitchen?
Ben	<i>(Offstage)</i> Why? Do I have to?
Dave	Yes. I'm preparing a special meal for our visitors and there's a lot to do.
Ben	<i>(Begrudgingly)</i> I suppose so. <i>(enters)</i> What do you want me to do?
Dave	Please can you start by washing the carrots.
Ben	This is slave labour! I'll do it if you pay me.
Dave	All right then. I'll give you £1 for washing the carrots.
Ben	<i>(Surprised and cheering up)</i> Oh! All right then. <i>(Audience squirted with water)</i>
Dave	Try not to make such a mess everywhere. Put this apron on. <i>(Ben does)</i>
Ben	It's a bit big.
Dave	So was the mess you made. <i>(Ben grunts)</i> Please can you chop the carrots.
Ben	Like this? <i>(pieces of carrots fly everywhere)</i>
Dave	Mmm. That's not many left for the saucepan. You'd better do more.
Ben	O.K., but that's another £2 you owe me
Dave	All right. You can have another £1 if you stir the onion in this frying pan. Try to do it carefully this time and keep the onion in the pan!
Ben	I'll try. <i>(Stirs the onion very slowly, gradually faster.)</i> What else will you pay me to do?
Dave	Just one more task. Please can you set the table. £2 if you don't forget anything. Not even the jug of tap water.
Ben	Great! I'm going to get lots of money. Can you pay me now Dad.
Dave	All right. <i>(starts writing)</i>
Ben	I don't need a salary slip, just the money, thanks Dad.
Dave	Here is your account. I owe you £6 for your help today, but you've had £20 pocket from me since the start of the year. So you owe me £14.
Ben	That's not fair!
Dave	Serves you right for being greedy, Ben. Come on, pay up.
Ben	But I've already spent my pocket money.
Dave	You can re-pay me over the next few weeks... or we can agree that family members help each other. It's only reasonable, considering all that your mother and I do to support you and Lily every day.
Ben	<i>(Unhappily)</i> I suppose so. But why did you say you'd pay me? I feel tricked.
Dave	I will pay you – if you pay me back your pocket money. Fair do's?
Ben	Huh!
Dave	I give you lots of things because you're my son and I'm going to give you something now. I've been saving my old bowling set to give you when you were old enough to play. I'll get it now and we can have a game. I used to be a local champion, you know?
Ben	Bowls!!! I'd love to play bowls. Hurry up, Dad!
Dave	You sound quite 'bowled over'! Let's go and play. <i>(both exit)</i>

Hide and Fleak

Dixie plays 'hide and seek' but breaks a leg after jumping out of a thorny patch and picking up fleas. The vet operates and treats the fleas. Dixie's homecoming is a joyous occasion.

Theme: Returning to the family after being treated by a vet
Roots themes explore: Liminal or 'in between' places; the ingredients of active faith (humility, obedience, trust, thanksgiving); restoration to community
SU All-Age Lectionary Services aim: To thank Jesus for the healing and salvation he brings

Humour: Hiding in a silly place/jumping out
 Avoiding getting fleas
 Relief that pet insurance covers the fee
 Wobbly walking wearing leg plaster/Can still jump up and lick face

Props: Branch
 Signs saying: 'Local park' and 'At home'

Introduction

Find out whether anyone has had flea problems with any of their pets. How was this resolved? Comment on the high cost of pet insurance, if appropriate.

Find out which places need to be avoided because of fleas.

Dixie is having fun playing hide and seek in the sketch today and is going to have problems with fleas ...and more besides...

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Hide and Fleak'

After the Puppet Sketch

Lily was really pleased to see Dixie again, even though it was only an overnight absence.

Share stories about the pleasure of a pet returning home after an operation.

How does it feel to be coming home after an extended hospital stay? Discuss whether being separated from loved ones amplifies the pain of illness.

Just imagine the joy experienced by a group of sick people previously separated from the community as they return home in today's Bible reading.

The Bible Story

Lily	15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. Coming, ready or not! <i>(searches for Dixie)</i> Where are you, Dixie? Over here? No! Over here? No! I give up.
Dixie	<i>(Jumping out onto Lily knocking her over)</i> Woof, woof, woof <i>(licks Lily)</i>
Lily	Urgh! Get your wet tongue off my face, Dixie. If you're going to do that, I'm not playing. <i>(thinks)</i> But it is a fun game. This is my last warning. If you lick my face again I shan't play with you anymore. Are you ready?
Dixie	Woof, woof <i>(runs off)</i>
Lily	<i>(Slowly)</i> 1,2,3 <i>(quickly)</i> 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16 <i>(slowly)</i> 17,18,19,20 Coming, ready or not! <i>(searches for Dixie)</i> Where are you, Dixie? Over here? No! Over here? Yes! I found you! <i>(Dixie tries to jump up)</i> No, Dixie. I've told you before about jumping up at me, but you can give me a hug. <i>(hugs Dixie)</i> I love you so, so much. <i>(scratches, looks at hand)</i> What's this? A flea? Urgh!!!! <i>(pushes Dixie away)</i> Get away from me, Dixie!
Dixie	<i>(Plaintively)</i> Woooooof, wooooof! <i>(droops head sadly)</i>
Lily	I'm sorry, Dixie. I do love you really. It's your fleas I don't love, not you. You must have picked them up while you were hiding. <i>(Dixie whimpers)</i> All right. Let's play one more time. <i>(Dixie whimpers again)</i> I won't cheat this time. 1,2,3,4,5 <i>(Dixie hesitates to go, listening for fast counting)</i> 6,7,8,9,10 <i>(exit Dixie, Lily starts to count really fast again)</i> 11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20 Coming, ready or not! <i>(searches for Dixie)</i> Where are you, Dixie? Over here? No! Over here? No! I give up.
Dixie	<i>(Dixie jumps out, falls over and barks in pain)</i> Woof, woof, woof, woof!
Lily	You poor dog. <i>(Goes to stroke, but pulls back, Dixie writhes in agony and continues to whimper comically)</i> Sorry, I'm not touching your fleas. Err... I'll call Dad. He'll know what to do. Dad! Dad! Dad! Daaaaad! Emergeeeency! <i>(both exit)</i>
Dave	<i>(Off stage)</i> Oh dear, dear me. It looks like he's broken his leg.
Lily	Don't worry, Dixie. The vet can fix it. Even if it costs thousands of pounds.
Dave	Yep, it could be £2000. I'm not sure if we can afford that. <i>(Lily shakes, upset, Dad laughs)</i> It's OK we have pet insurance. Now, how can we move Dixie without catching fleas? MMMMMMmmmmm? <i>(all exit)</i>

At home the next day

Dave	Are you ready for Dixie to come back home?
Lily	Yes, I can't wait – but will there still be any fleas?
Dave	No, the vet's de-flead Dixie. Dixie's fleas are no more. Flea's forever forgotten. <i>(laughs, exits)</i> Dixie, are you ready to go and see Lily?
Lily	I can't wait to see Dixie again. He's been away for so long! It has felt like forever. The vet kept him overnight. <i>(Dixie hobbles in comically)</i> Take it easy, Dixie. You poor dog. I can see you can't move around like you used to. Poor Dixie! <i>(Dixie jumps up unexpectedly, licks Lily's face)</i> Naughty, Dixie! Down boy!

Practise Makes perfect

Lily persists in trying to Lumba under a low stick, despite Nanna's discouraging remarks. Her efforts are rewarded with success.

Theme: Persistence in spite of discouraging remarks
Roots themes explore: Persisting in prayer; blessing from struggle; being the blessing
SU All-Age Lectionary Services aim: To explore what it means to persist in being faithful to God

Humour: Lily's Lumbas aren't quite straight
 Nanna's attempts at encouragement misfire
 Dixie's bark distracts Nanna from watching Lily

Props: Sketch performed on a table covered with a green cloth
 Pole balanced between books (nearest audience) and back of the chair puppeteer is sitting on.
 Sign saying: 'In the garden'

Introduction

Invite members of the congregation to have a go at 'Lumba' and have a competition.
 Find out whether the winner is good because of being small, young, supple or had lots of practise. (Or a combination!)
 Make the point that learning a new skill takes practise. Let's find out how Lily gets on practising the lumba...

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Practise Makes Perfect'

After the Puppet Sketch

Ask whether Nanna was any help? (no) Why not? (too discouraging and distracted by the barking)
 Nanna's discouragement could have made Lily give up, but she was determined to keep practising and finally succeeded.
 Has anyone in the congregation succeeded at something difficult, thanks to a lot of practise? (e.g. learning a musical instrument – which doesn't always sound nice in the early stages – were family members honest about this?)

Let's hear about a widow who achieved success through persevering in the face of discouragement.

The Bible Story

Where? In the garden

Title of sketch: Practise Makes Perfect

Lily	One, two three <i>(takes deep breath)</i> down and <i>(falls under the stick)</i> Try again, Lily. One, two three <i>(takes deep breath)</i> down and <i>(falls under the stick)</i> Try again, Lily. One, two three <i>(takes deep breath)</i> down and <i>(falls under the stick)</i> Oh, bother!
Nan	You're not very good are you, Lily. You keep falling over!
Lily	Oh, Nanna! Could you do any better.
Nan	When I was your age, I could have lumba'd under that stick – no problem.
Lily	<i>(Disbelieving)</i> Is that right Nanna?
Nan	Oh, yes. I was quite a gymnast. In fact I'm still pretty fit for my age.
Lily	How old are you now, Nanna?
Nan	Twenty one. Ladies stop at twenty one. But... I have been twenty one for quite a long time...
Lily	Twenty one times over, I reckon Nanna.
Nan	Not quite that old, Lily. But let's just say I'm looking forward to getting my birthday card from the Queen.
Lily	Let me see you do the lumba, Nanna!
Nan	Well....
Lily	Go on...
Nan	Maybe tomorrow. I'm wearing the wrong sort of shoes.
Lily	You could take them off.
Nan	I'm wearing the wrong sort of socks.
Lily	You could take those off too.
Nan	I'm errr.... Wearing the wrong sort of feet.
Lily	Oh, Nanna! Watch me then. One, two three <i>(takes deep breath)</i> down and <i>(knocks the stick down)</i>
Nan	Useless! Just useless!
Lily	But, Nanna – you're supposed to be encouraging me.
Nan	I am encouraging you.
Lily	You could have fooled me. With friends like you, who needs enemies.
Nan	Pardon?
Lily	Nothing, Nanna. I'm going to try again one more time. I just need to put the pole back into place. <i>(Lily replaces the stick; Dixie barks offstage and Nanna turns towards the barking)</i> Are you watching Nanna?
Nan	<i>(Looking back at Lily quickly)</i> Yes, of course I'm watching.
Lily	You weren't!
Nan	I was! <i>(Lily throws Nanna a sideways look and grunts)</i>
Lily	One, two three <i>(takes deep breath)</i> down and <i>(Dixie barks again and Nanna is distracted just as Lily successfully completes the lumba)</i> Hooray! Did you see that, Nanna?
Nan	See what?
Lily	I did it, Nanna! I did it! <i>(Grabs Nanna for a dance. Nanna doesn't know why they are celebrating)</i>

Anything you can do

Ben and Lily perform extracts from the famous duet from 'Annie Get Your Gun' by Irving Berlin.

Theme: Arrogance
Roots themes explore: Being honest with God; recognising God in our midst; role models for holiness
SU All-Age Lectionary Services aim: To learn to rely on God and not on what we have done or who we are

Humour: Watch the duet on Youtube to see how the song can be made humorous.

Props: Sign saying: 'At home'

Introduction

Find out which entries in the Guinness Book of Records the congregation can remember.
 Have a vote for the favourite one that inspires others to greatness.
 Say that many human beings are naturally competitive and this can be particularly true of siblings.
 Let's watch this behaviour between Lily and Ben in today's sketch.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Anything you can do'

After the Puppet Sketch

The song by Irving Berlin made everyone laugh when it was first performed in 'Annie Get your Gun'.
 It laughs at real human behaviour.
 Seriously though, does anyone like to be with a 'show-off'? Why not?
 Why don't we like show offs? (They try to look better than the people around them. No one likes to be 'put down'. It's very annoying etc.)

Let's find out what God thinks about people who show off.

The Bible Story

Lily	I'm going to sing a famous song better than Ben could.
Ben	It's a duet, Lily. We're going to sing it together...
Lily	<i>(To audience)</i> Just ignore Lily. She's not as good as me! <i>(sings to Ben)</i> Anything you can do, I can do better. I can do anything better than you.
Ben	No, you can't.
Lily	Yes, I can.
Ben	No, you can't.
Lily	Yes, I can.
Ben	No, you can't.
Lily	Yes, I can.
Ben	Anything you can buy, I can buy cheaper. I can buy anything cheaper than you.
Lily	Fifty pence?
Ben	Forty pence!
Lily	Thirty pence?
Ben	Twenty pence!
Lily	No, you can't.
Ben	Yes, I can. Yes, I can!
Lily	Any note you can hold, I can hold longer. I can hold any note longer than you.
Ben	No, you can't.
Lily	Yes, I can.
Ben	No, you can't.
Lily	Yes, I can.
Ben	No, you can't.
Lily	Yes, I can. Yes, I CA_A_A_A_A_N!
Ben	Yes, you ca-a-a-an! Anything you can say, I can say faster. I can say anything faster than you.
Lily	<i>(Fast)</i> No, you can't.
Ben	<i>(Faster)</i> Yes, I can.
Lily	<i>(Faster)</i> No, you can't.
Ben	<i>(Faster)</i> Yes, I can.
Lily	<i>(Faster)</i> No, you can't.
Ben	<i>(Fastest)</i> Yes, I can.
Lily	Anything you can sing, I can sing sweeter. I can sing anything sweeter than you.
Ben	No, you can't.
Lily	Yes, I can.
Ben	No, you can't.
Lily	Yes, I can.
Ben	No, you can't.
Lily	Yes, I can.
Ben	No, you can't, can't, can't.
Lily	Yes, I can, can, can. Yes, I can!
Ben	No, you can't!

Wicked Slave-trader

Grandma hears Ben singing 'Amazing Grace' to himself. He is amazed to hear that the minister who wrote the hymn had once been a wicked slave-trader.

Theme: God's grace can transform the lives of wicked people
Roots themes explore: Reciprocal hospitality; God's priorities; dramatic change
SU All-Age Lectionary Services aim: To explore how we can live as 'saints' who trust in Jesus
 To celebrate the surprising glory of Jesus' return

Humour: Ben struggles to believe that the hymn is even older than Grandma
 John Newton had some exciting opportunities that went wrong
 Ben alternates between being envious and realising the adventures weren't much fun
 Ten thousand years of singing won't be boring

Props: Ben could be singing along to a version of Amazing Grace from Youtube
 Sign saying: 'At home'

Introduction

Find out whether anyone in the congregation has a favourite hymn. Do they sing it to themselves to help them through times of trouble? Discuss the power of songs and the passion of those who write them.
 A lot of passion went into the writing of 'Amazing Grace'. Let's hear about the man who wrote it.

Introduce the Puppet Sketch 'Wicked Slave-trader'

After the Puppet Sketch

Review contrast between the dreadful life John Newton lived, full of sin and often friendless and the new Christian life he came to lead after the near-shipwreck. Members of the congregation may be able to add more details to the story.

The transformation to John Newton's life took place over many years. Let's hear about someone whose life changed completely in just one day.

The Bible Story

Where? At home

Title of sketch: Wicked Slave-trader

Ben	<i>(Sings)</i> Amazing grace – how sweet the sound - that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.
Gma	I know that hymn. It's very old!
Ben	Was it written when you were a little girl, Grandma.
Gma	It's over 200 years old. I'm not that old!
Ben	Oh, sorry, Grandma.
Gma	If I were more than 200 years old, you'd be very impressed over just how young and fresh I look.
Ben	Grandma, how young and fresh you look. <i>(throw 'looks' at each other)</i>
Gma	That was very flattering, thank you, Ben! The words of the song are remarkably fresh and undated for such an old hymn. It's much loved.
Ben	It must have been written by a very good person.
Gma	Huh! Well, errr John Newton wasn't always a good person! Hmphh!
Ben	Tell me what he did that was so bad, Grandma. Did he have adventures?
Gma	He went to sea with his Dad at the age of eleven.
Ben	Wow! That sounds exciting. I'd like to do that!
Gma	Only because his mother had died.
Ben	Oh, I wouldn't like that. I'd miss my Mum if I went to sea. What then?
Gma	He joined the British Navy.
Ben	That sounds fun. I'd like to that and get paid for going on a cruise.
Gma	He tried to run away from the awful conditions, got caught and was publicly whipped 96 times.
Ben	That's not fun. Any other adventures, Grandma?
Gma	He left the navy on a ship trading between Africa and the Caribbean.
Ben	Another cruise-ship. I'm jealous.
Gma	They traded in slaves. John Newton argued with the crew who dumped him in Africa as a slave to the Princess Peye. He was a slave to the slaves.
Ben	Oh! How terrible. He must have wanted to go home!
Gma	Yes he wrote to his father who sent a friend to go and find him and bring him home.
Ben	Ah good! A happy ending!
Gma	The ship sank off the coast of Ireland.
Ben	Not a happy ending then!
Gma	Yes, it was. John Newton started to pray and the cargo miraculously moved in the ship to fill the hole in the hull. The ship drifted to safety.
Ben	Wow! God answered his prayer big time!
Gma	Yes. Over the following years, John Newton changed from being a reckless young man who swore, gambled and drank heavily to Christian minister who campaigned against slavery and wrote hymns: <i>(sings)</i> When we've been here ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we've first begun.
Ben	Singing for ten thousand days, Grandma. How boring!
Gma	<i>(Shocked)</i> Not in the least, my dear. It will be beautiful. <i>(sings again out of tune)</i>
Ben	Count me out, Grandma. I'm off to go and play. <i>(exits to Grandma's sighs)</i>