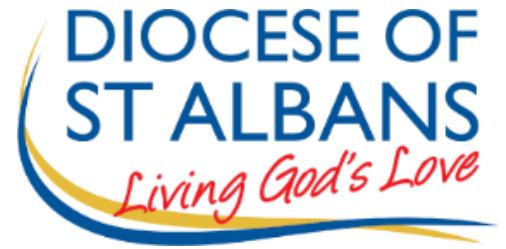


Stories of Justice

Virtual Holiday Club



About this holiday club:

This programme is designed to fit with the restrictions of Summer 2020. Here's some ways it may work:

- The group watches the video together and reflects on it on Zoom. Each family then does whichever activities they wish, on their own, and the group meets up again for the closing Zoom session.
- Families watch the video on their own, then meet up outdoors with one other household, socially distanced, to do some or all of the activities. The whole group meets online for the closing Zoom session.

There are a variety of response activities for each day. Each family can do as many or as few as they'd like.

For practical top tips on running a holiday club online, see this blog post: <https://stalbanscme.com/2020/06/30/running-a-holiday-club-online-top-tips-from-the-diocese-of-bath-and-wells/>

About this holiday club:

The topic of this Holiday Club is **STORIES OF JUSTICE** and is designed for primary-aged children, 4 to 11. We are asked to think about how God wants the world to be, and what we can do to help it become more like that. We look at five stories:

- Creation
- Queen Esther
- The Parable of the Good Samaritan
- The Parable of the Lost Sheep
- The Parable of the Sower

AUTHORS

Ruth Harley, ordinand at the Queen's Foundation Birmingham, former children's and families worker

The Revd Mina Munns, Priest in Charge and Pioneer Minister, Parish Churches of Cresswell and Lynemouth

Margaret Pritchard Houston, Children's Mission Enabler, Diocese of St Albans

For each story, there are response activities based around different learning and spiritual styles. We focus on: MAKE, TALK, DO, PRAY.

Then there is a plan for a closing online worship session via Zoom or a similar platform. The “activity” sections of the Zoom sessions assume that this holiday club is mostly being done with children who are familiar with your church and its culture – we assumed it was unlikely churches would be able to use online holiday clubs as a major outreach opportunity. So the activities focus around organising together to make a change in your church community. If you do have large numbers of new children in your groups, you can skip this part of the Zoom session, or come up with an alternative activity.

FAMILIES WITHOUT INTERNET: there is a text version of each of the stories available at the end. Families may dial in to the Zoom sessions by phone – however, this leaves them lacking the visual element. As meeting indoors with another household, with social distancing, is now permitted, you may wish to pair up families without internet with another family near them, to share the closing Zoom session together. Please encourage families to take precautions (eg masks, distancing, meeting in a garden if weather and internet strength permit).



DAY ONE: GOD'S BEAUTIFUL WORLD

Story: Creation

Option one: Short animated version (requires reading – parents/carers may need to read it out loud if watching with a non-reader): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLHB_hNk42g

Option two: Longer Godly Play version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBUF51c1T04>

Option three: For families who may not have internet access, text versions of the stories are available in the supplementary material file.



Wondering Questions

If you are watching the Godly Play version, wondering questions are included in the video. If you're watching a different version and would like to reflect on the story together, here are some questions you could use:

I wonder what your favourite part of the story was.

I wonder what the most important part of the story was.

I wonder which part of the story was for you.

I wonder why God decided to make the world.

I wonder what it feels like to make something.

I wonder if you could take out any part of the story and still have all the story you need.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES:

MAKE:

For today's story, we watched the story of Creation. If you watched the Godly Play version, there was one single picture for each day. Which picture did you like best? Which did you think showed something important, or something you care about? If you watched the other video, there were more pictures – which was your favourite? Which showed something important, that you care about?

Choose one of the images and create your own version. But – as we are thinking about how we can care for creation and look after our planet and the climate – only use materials which won't harm the environment. You could use natural materials like twigs or leaves, and/or the contents of your recycling bin.

As you create your image, think about the part of creation it represents.

- What do you like/appreciate about this part of creation?

- How has it been damaged by human activity?
- How do you feel when you think about it?

If you want to learn more about the climate, climate change and how it is effecting the planet, you can watch a short video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8unGCTWUWI>

When you have finished making your creation image, write a message across it about climate change. It could be a protest slogan, a lament, a prayer, a challenge to yourself and others to work for climate justice... whatever you want to write.

Or you could draw something on your picture to show how the climate is being damaged by pollution and other human activity.

Lot of children and young people around the world have been protesting about climate change. You can watch a short video of a protest here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cP62MeT5C4s>

At the moment, it is not safe to gather to protest like the people in the video. But you can still use the picture you have created to protest for climate justice. You could put it in your window so that people passing by can see it. Or you could post it to your MP or somebody else with power to make decisions about climate justice.

TALK:

Discussion questions:

(With older children, it may help to have a copy of the Bible creation story – Genesis 1:1 – 2:4 in front of you for some of these questions – you can find it here if you don't have a Bible at home: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1%3A1-2%3A4&version=NRSV>)

KS1, age 5-7:

How do you think God wants us to care for the world God made?

What are some of the ways people haven't done well at caring for God's world? (If you don't know, how could you find out?)

Are there any other Bible stories that this story reminds you of? What's the same about them? What's different?

KS2, age 7-11:

How can this story be true and evolution also be true? Are there different ways of things being true? How do we know if something is true?

Most societies and religions have creation stories. Why do you think these kinds of stories are so important?

What does this story tell us about how God wants humans to behave?

In Genesis chapter 1, verse 27, the story says that humans are “made in God’s image.” What do you think this means?

DO

Idea 1:

Go for a walk in your neighbourhood or in your garden. Count how many different kinds of all of these you can find:

- Flowers
- Trees
- Insects
- Birds
- Mammals
- Fish

When you get back, thank God for all the wonderful things God has made, and how different and diverse Creation is.

Idea 2:

Go for a walk in your neighbourhood. Bring gloves and bin bags and pick up any litter you see (make sure an adult is with you, as some litter isn’t safe to touch). Make a list of ways that you and your church/Scout group/school/other organisation could help get involved in taking care of God’s creation. Share these with church/Scout group/school/other organisation leaders.

Idea 3 (especially good for younger children):

Think of all the things we saw in today’s story. Take turns to be the leader and call them out – “fish!” “sun!” and so on. When the leader calls out something, everyone else has to make that thing with their body – a big shining sun, a wiggly swimming fish, and so on.

Idea 4 – similar, but for two households and with older children:

If two households are meeting together for this activity, you can turn it into a game called 10-second objects. Each household is a group, except for one person who’s the leader (you can take turns). When the leader calls out an object, each household group has 10 seconds to make that object using *all of their bodies together* – but the catch is that it has to be done in total silence, with NO TALKING. You can turn it into a competition by having the leader choose a winner for each one, but this isn’t required.

PRAY

You will need: Paper, pens, (and if you have them, collage materials, play dough, recycling materials, sellotape, scissors), candle and lighter

Think of ways we can care for the environment and help protect our world. This might include:

Using less plastic
Not wasting water
Walking or cycling instead of driving
Recycling
Giving our clothes to charity shops instead of throwing them away

Make a poster or model showing one of the things that you think is most important to do to help our world. When everyone has finished, bring all of the pictures or models together. Light a candle and pray the following prayer:

Pray: God, thank you for the amazing world that you have made and for everything in it. Bless our world. Help us to take care of what you have given and to make good decisions about the environment. Amen

CLOSING ZOOM SESSION:

Welcome: Welcome each child by name. Light a candle and place it somewhere the children can see it. Give everyone the opportunity to share a response to a simple 'starter' question such as "If you could create anything, what would it be?" "What is your favourite thing in creation (animal/plant/place)?"

Share: Encourage children who did the "make" activity to show the creation image they have made today, and read out the message written on it. If you have time, you could discuss how they chose their images, materials and message.

Activity: Scavenger hunt – get children to fetch items which relate to the theme in some way and bring them back to show. You could include:

- Something recycled.
- Something that can't be recycled.
- Something green.
- Something alive.

Prayer: Encourage the children to join in with actions as you pray:

- Thank you – use BSL/Makaton sign for 'thank you'. (Makaton sign at right)
- Pray for people who are ill/sad/having a problem – hug yourself.
- Pray for the world – arms making a circle in front of you.

End: Thank everyone for coming, remind them about the next session. Hold the candle up to the camera, and invite all the children to 'blow it out' together.



thank you

DAY TWO: DOING WHAT'S RIGHT

Story: Queen Esther

Option one: Short version (very pink and Princessy – this may be perfect for your group or it may be divisive):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYGqOMe-DqQ&t=44s>

Option two: Longer version:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cL6VVQLlagQ>

Option three: For families who may not have internet access, text versions of the stories are available in the supplementary material file.



Free photo 1510238 © Pavel Losevsky - Dreamstime.com

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES:

MAKE:

As we think about the story of Esther, we are going to make a sceptre.

Sceptres are special ceremonial sticks used by people with power and authority, like kings and queens. They are usually very beautifully and richly decorated:

Wondering Questions

If you would like to reflect on the story together, here are some questions you could use:

I wonder what your favourite part of the story was.

I wonder what the most important part of the story was.

I wonder which person in the story is most like you.

I wonder why the King agreed to what Haman wanted to do.

I wonder how Esther felt when Mordecai told her the Jews were going to be killed. I wonder how she felt when she went to see the King.



In today's story, Esther used her power and authority to stand up against injustice.

A sceptre is sometimes used in the Bible as a symbol of God's kingdom, where there is perfect justice.

To make a sceptre, you will need:

- Some sort of tube or stick. A kitchen roll tube would be ideal, or you could stick a couple of toilet roll tubes together. Alternatively, you could look for a stick in the garden or on a walk.
- Something to decorate it with. You can use whatever you have available! You can draw or paint, cover it with foil or coloured paper, use stickers, or whatever you want to use.....

While you are decorating your sceptre, you might like to listen to this song about the kingdom of God: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WL1_IhVTJmk

The words are: "The kingdom of God is justice and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, come Lord and open in us the gates of your kingdom." As you listen and make your sceptre, you might want to think about what a just, peaceful and joyful kingdom would be like...

When you have made your sceptre, hold it in your hands. Imagine you have lots of power like a king or queen. How would you use your power? What injustices would you stand up against, like Esther?

Now carry on holding your sceptre, but go back to being 'you'. What power do you have? How could you stand up against injustice? Can you think of any small things you could do to make a difference?

TALK:

Discussion questions – some appropriate for all ages, some a bit more aimed towards older children:

This story is in the Bible, but it doesn't mention God at all. Why do you think it's in the Bible, then?

If you were writing this story, would you change anything about it? Why or why not?

Esther and Mordecai were family members who showed bravery. Pair up your family (you may need a group of three). Take turns to tell each other, in your pairs, about a time when the other person has been brave and made you proud of them. Finish with a big family hug, if you can.

Can you think of any other times in history when there have been unfair rules or laws? How were they changed? Are there any unfair rules or laws now? Who is working to change them?

Are there people at your school or any groups you go to, who are treated badly because of who they are? What can you do if you see this happening? Who could help you? With adults helping you, make a plan for what to do if you ever see someone being bullied or treated unfairly. Remember to keep yourself safe in any plan you make. (You could act out your plan, to practice, if you wanted.)

Watch the story of Ruby Bridges – the first African-American child to attend what used to be an all-White school in Louisiana, in the USA. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6xSuhP6Dvs> . Talk as a family about how you feel watching that story. What are some ways this story is like Queen Esther? What are some ways it's different? Can you find some examples from this country? If you have family in a different country, can you find some examples from that country too?

DO

Obstacle courses. Standing up to injustice can be full of challenges that get in our way. Esther's story was full of challenges and situations she and Mordecai had to figure out the best way through.

Take turns building obstacle courses for each other. Think of all the different types of obstacles you can include – tunnels, things you have to climb, things that require agility ("the floor is lava" or making your way through something without knocking anything over), crawling under or over things, jumping from one thing to the next, ring/beanbag tosses, running while holding something on your head, and so on. If you have an outdoor space, you could include water in some parts of your obstacle course.

What does it feel like to go through an obstacle course? What mental skills did you use, as well as physical?

PRAY

You will need: plastic Easter eggs that can be opened up, blue tack, marbles or small stones, small slips of paper, pens

Weebles are a famous kind of toy that wobble if you push them, but it's impossible for them to fall over. Esther had to stand firm to make sure she got justice for her people. It was scary and she probably felt as if she might easily wobble and give in, but she managed to stay strong.

Think about situations in life where people are treated unfairly or where you have felt that you wanted to stick up for someone but were afraid to do so. Write that situation on a piece of paper and put it to one side for the moment.

Open up a plastic Easter egg and put a blob of blue tack on the inside, at the bottom. Wedge a marble or small stone on top of the blue tack so that it stays in place.

Put your slip of paper inside the Easter egg and then close it up.

Push the Egg and it will wobble, but it will always come back to an upright position because of its weighted bottom. It will never completely fall over.

Think about the situation you have written on the piece of paper and ask God to give you courage when you try to fight injustice and unfairness.

Pray: God, when it is hard to stand up for what we believe is right, help us to be brave. When we feel afraid, help us to stand firm and trust that you will help us. Amen

CLOSING ZOOM SESSION:

Welcome: Welcome each child by name. Light a candle and place it somewhere the children can see it. Go 'around the circle' (you will need to say whose turn it is) each saying their name and something they would like to be king/queen of, starting with the same letter eg. "I'm Ruth and I am the queen of rodents (raspberries, robots, red, etc...)

Share: Ask everyone to hold up their sceptres if they have made one. Give each child an opportunity to name one unjust thing in the world that they would like to change if they had the power to do so.

Activity: Play a game of 'Esther says' – like 'Simon says' – you only have to do something if 'Esther' tells you to. You could let children take turns to be 'Esther'. (Don't try to judge who has been quickest/slowest to do an action, because with the delay on Zoom you can't tell! But if you want to make it competitive, people can still be 'out' of doing the wrong action, or doing it when you didn't say "Esther says".)

Prayer: Using the things the children suggested during the 'share' section, pray for justice for unjust situations. For each situation, ask the children to suggest an action which everyone can join in with. If the children are confident to pray out loud they can do so, or otherwise an adult can pray while the children do the action.

End: Thank everyone for coming, remind them about the next session. Hold the candle up to the camera, and invite all the children to 'blow it out' together.

DAY THREE: THE SURPRISING HELPER

Story: *The Good Samaritan*

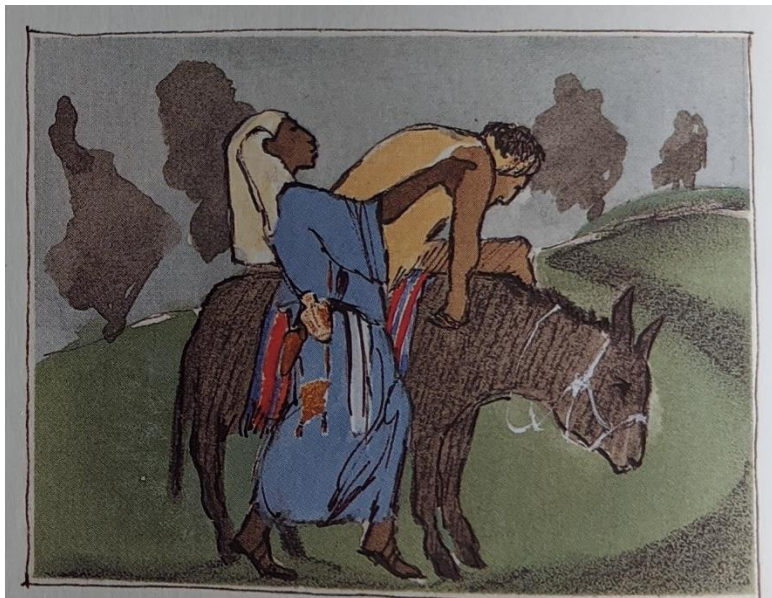
Option one: Lego version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3GJCK4Wy-0> (you may need to explain to children what “despised” means – the Jews and the Samaritans didn’t like each other.)

Option two: Longer Godly Play version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QuBNEQq8zOk&t=9s>

Option three: For families who may not have internet access, text versions of the stories are available in the supplementary material file.



Wondering Questions

If you are watching the Godly Play version, wondering questions are included in the video. If you’re watching a different version and would like to reflect on the story together, here are some questions you could use:

I wonder what your favourite part of the story was.

I wonder what the most important part of the story was.

I wonder why the first two people didn’t help. I wonder why the Samaritan did.

I wonder why Jesus wanted us to hear this story.

I wonder how the Jewish man felt when a Samaritan helped him.

I wonder which part of the story is for you.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES:

MAKE:

Retell the story as a video or cartoon strip.

Video ideas:

- Act out the story, using the people in your household, with one person holding the camera
- Act out the story using puppets or dolls or other objects. If you don’t have ones that would work, you can make them. Think about the background of the story too – how will you make the road? The sky? The inn?
- Stop motion animation, like the Lego version of today’s video. To learn how to do this with items at home (plus a free download), you can visit this website with an adult: <https://tinkerlab.com/easy-stop-motion-animation-kids/>

Cartoon strip ideas:

- What layout? Some cartoon strips have frames that are all the same size – some have the important moments in bigger frames. (If you have a printer at home, you can download some cartoon strip templates here: <https://www.teachingideas.co.uk/art/comic-strip-templates> - if not, you can copy one of these layouts on a piece of paper yourself. It doesn't matter if the lines are wonky!)
- Cartoon and manga use sound effects as well as dialogue. What sound effects (WHAM, BANG, OOF, THUNK, etc) can you use as you retell this story?

Gather all the videos and cartoon strips together on your church's website or Facebook page, to show them off! (**NOTE TO ADULTS:** be aware that if children appear in the videos, you will need parental permission to share them on social media. Children should NOT film themselves in their bedrooms, and should wear clothes and not pyjamas in all videos that you share.)

TALK:

Discussion questions:

Imagine Jesus is telling this story today. Who might he use instead of a Priest, Levite, and Samaritan? Does that change how you feel or think about this story?

What do you think the lawyer who asked the question felt and thought about this story? What do you think he did next?

Jesus taught using stories a lot. Is telling stories a good way to teach? Why or why not?

Is there anything you don't like about this story?

Have there been times when you could have helped someone and didn't? How does that feel? Is there a way you could make it right?

Is there a time that you have been able to help someone? What did it feel like to do that?

Think of someone who has helped you at some point in your life. Write them a letter to explain what that help meant to you. (If that person has died, you can still write them that letter. They'll know.)

DO

The good Samaritan is a stranger to the man who has been attacked. He is a foreigner from a hated group of people. He doesn't know the man who has been hurt and he doesn't have to stop and help, but the Samaritan has compassion and does what he can.

It's so easy to help people we know and like, but what about helping strangers? Open Doors is a charity that helps Christians who are suffering and being treated badly for their faith. You can

learn more about what it is like for Christian children in places such as the Middle East or Asia, by clicking on this link: <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/act/letter/>

You won't personally know any of these children whose families are being persecuted, but you can still show them that strangers from outside of their own country care about them. Draw a picture or write a short letter or postcard with some words of encouragement and send it to Open Doors so that they can pass it along for you.

PRAY

The Good Samaritan showed love and compassion for someone who didn't like him and came from a very different background. Who can we show love for in a similar way? Who is it sometimes hard for us to love but we would like to try?

You will need: cups with about 2-3cm of water at the bottom, strips of kitchen roll about 15 cm long and 3cm wide, felt tip pens (cheap and cheerful are good and definitely not permanent markers- you need the ink to run!)

Draw a large heart about 5 cm up the strip and colour it in with pen. Just above the heart, write the initials of someone (or draw a face of someone!) that you sometimes find it tricky to love- maybe because you don't get on very well.

Put the end of the strip in the water and pray that God will help you to show that person that you love them and that God loves them.

Watch as the water slowly climbs up the strip and the ink in the heart spreads out to cover and absorb the initials. This is a symbol of how you want your love and God's love to reach out to that person.

Pray: God, thank you that you love each one of us. Help us to show love for people who we don't know, who we don't like or who are different to us. Let your love spread from us to them. Amen

CLOSING ZOOM SESSION:

Welcome: Welcome each child by name. Light a candle and place it somewhere the children can see it. Go 'around the circle' (you will need to say whose turn it is) each saying their name and somebody they know who helps them, eg "I'm William and my older sister helps me practice my reading."

Share: Ask everyone what their favourite thing that we've done so far this week is. Why did you like it? Has anything surprised you this week so far? Have you discovered anything new about God?

Activity: Retell the story (you can use the text version at the end of these plans, or read directly from a Bible). Stop at these points and have children choose a character, and show with their bodies and faces what that character is thinking or feeling:

- The traveller is walking from Jerusalem to Jericho (character: the traveller)

- The robbers appear (characters: the traveller, the robbers)
- The priest appears (characters: the traveller, the priest)
- The priest walks by without helping (characters: the traveller, the priest)
- The Levite also walks by on the other side (characters: the traveller, the Levite)
- The hated Samaritan appears (characters: the traveller, the Samaritan)
- The Samaritan helps the traveller (characters: the traveller, the Samaritan)
- The Samaritan drops the traveller off at the inn (characters: the traveller, the Samaritan, the innkeeper)

Once they've chosen their character and found a pose, call "freeze!" and they have to hold their pose. Choose some children to say out loud what their character is thinking or feeling – if they don't want to, they can say "pass" and you'll choose someone else.

Prayer: 1) Hands on your hearts – pray for the people you find it easy to love. 2) Hands on your forehead – pray that our minds will be open to see God's love in unexpected people and places. 3) Hands out in front of us – pray for us to be like the Samaritan and show love to the whole world. 4) Hands up and out to the sides, so it looks like you're holding hands with the people in the Zoom box next to you – pray that we can all love each other as God loves us.

End: Thank everyone for coming, remind them about the next session. Hold the candle up to the camera, and invite all the children to 'blow it out' together.

DAY FOUR: WHO NEEDS HELP?

Story: *The Lost Sheep*

Option one: Animation without words, but with a possibly scary chase scene:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZGRubkzUHW&t=1s>

Option two: Longer Godly Play version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4I9GiHqIshU>

Option three: For families who may not have internet access, text versions of the stories are available in the supplementary material file.

NOTE: The text version used has other parables of the lost, in addition to the lost sheep. In gatherings, with some children who have seen the video and some who have read the text, you may need to mention this – the children who read the text will have seen other stories that the children who saw the video won't have.



Wondering Questions

If you are watching the Godly Play version, wondering questions are included in the video. If you're watching a different version and would like to reflect on the story together, here are some questions you could use:

I wonder what your favourite part of the story was.

I wonder what the most important part of the story was.

I wonder what part of the story is for you.

I wonder if you've ever been lost. I wonder what it felt like.

I wonder what it felt like when you were found.

I wonder if you have ever lost something. I wonder what it felt like.

I wonder why the shepherd left the 99 sheep to find the 1 that was missing. I wonder if you would do the same.

I wonder why Jesus wants us to hear this story.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES:

MAKE:

Option 1:

Think of someone you know and love who might be feeling lonely. Maybe it's an older relative who is alone during the pandemic. Maybe it's a friend you haven't seen for a long time. If you can't think of anyone, ask your vicar or children's worker and they might know someone from church who could use some love. Make them a card and post it, so they know they're loved. (You can also phone them or send a text or have a Zoom call with them if you want to and it's possible).

Option 2:




Make a story set so you can tell this story again and play with it. You can make a shepherd, some sheep, and the places in the story. Maybe you can include a sheepfold, and some grass, and water, and a dangerous place where the sheep can get lost. Maybe you can include a wolf. If you have a box in your house, you can decorate the box and use it as a place to keep your story.

TALK:

You don't need to use all these questions, and you don't need to use them in any particular order. Choose one or two to start with, and see where the conversation takes you. Or you could take it in turns to choose a question to ask each other and discuss.

- In the story, the Shepherd left the 99 sheep and went to search for the 1 lost one. How do you think the lost sheep felt about that? How do you think the 99 other sheep felt about it?
- The Shepherd didn't treat all the sheep the same – he left the 99 behind to go and look for the 1. Do you think that was fair? Why/why not?

Have a look at these pictures:

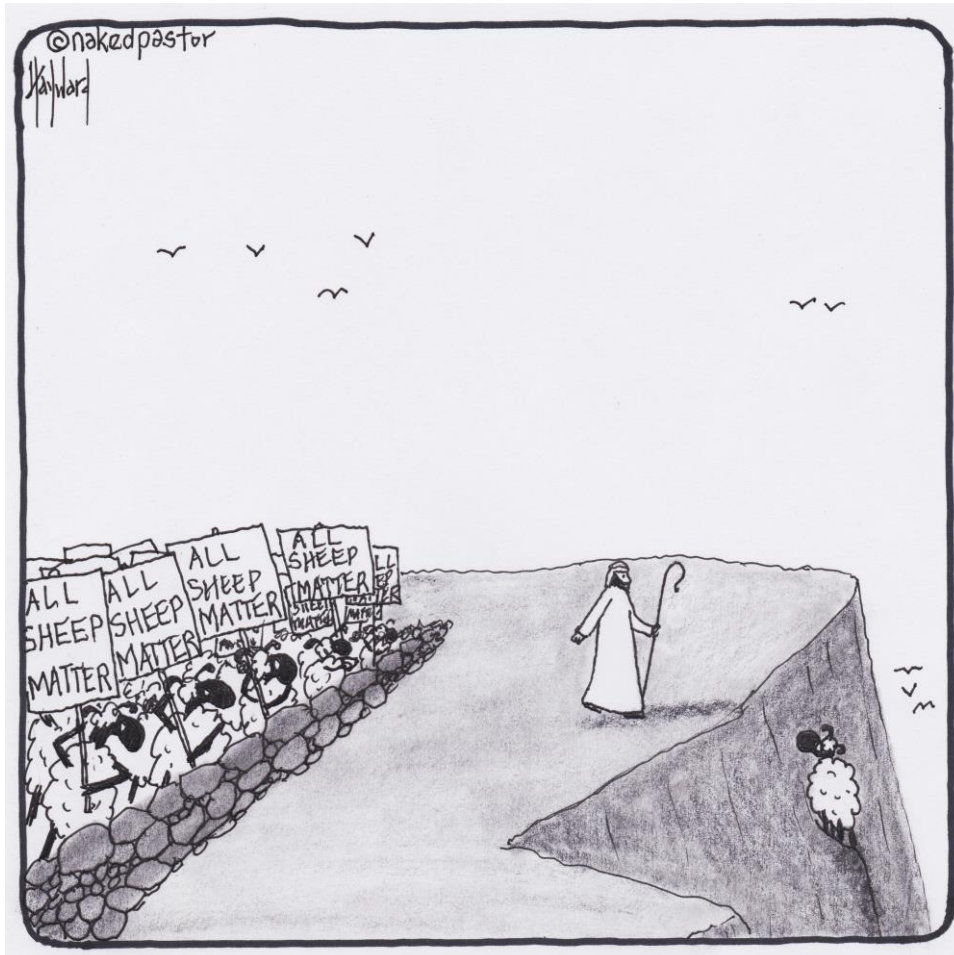
Equality	Equity	Justice
		
<p>The assumption is that everyone benefits from the same supports. This is equal treatment.</p>	<p>Everyone gets the supports they need (this is the concept of "affirmative action"), thus producing equity.</p>	<p>All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.</p>

- What do you notice about each picture?
- Which do you think is the most fair, and why?

- Can you think of an example of a situation where it would be most fair to treat everyone the same?
- Can you think of a situation where it would be more fair to treat people differently?

- The Shepherd is one of many images which helps us to think about what God is like. In what ways do you think God is like the Shepherd in this story?
- Can you think of any ways that God is different from the Shepherd in the story?

Have a look at this cartoon:



- What do you notice about the picture?
- How is it similar to the story of the Lost Sheep, and how is it different?

DO

In the story of the Lost Sheep, we see how much God cares about even one person who is lost and in trouble. In our country today there are lots of people who are struggling, especially with having enough money to feed themselves or their families. They might easily feel that no one cares but, just like the shepherd cares about every single sheep, God cares about every single one of us and there are many people and organisations out there who help to show that love. Food banks collect food and put it into parcels to give away to people who have no food and no way of paying for any. It's really easy for us to help food banks out and show a little bit of the same love that the shepherd has for the sheep in the story.

You will need: a big cardboard or plastic box, pens, paper, glue, sellotape

Work together to create a collection box for a local foodbank. Decorate the box with pictures of food or pictures from the story.

When the box is ready, go and look in the kitchen cupboard and see if there is anything you could put in the box- maybe a tin of beans or soup or a packet of biscuits. Anything tinned, dried, or in boxes is a good choice. Every time you go out to the shops, buy one extra thing to put in the box and, when the box is full, go and deliver it to your local food bank.

VARIATION: Some families may be under financial pressure, or relying on Foodbanks, themselves, and not able to participate in this activity. You can offer a variation on it, especially if your church has a relationship with a care home – to make cards for people in care homes, to show them that they are loved and cared for. The cards can be dropped off at the church or Vicarage and then sent to the care home all together.

PRAY

This prayer activity helps to reinforce the story's themes of searching and treasure and also helps children to think about those groups of people who are precious to God.

You will need: a large bowl or container (e.g. a mixing bowl), flour, sand or shredded paper, coins.

Put the flour, sand or shredded paper into the bowl and bury the coins in it. Take it in turns to use your hand to dig in the bowl and find a coin. When you pull the coin, ask God to bless someone who is poor, lost, homeless, a refugee, in danger, ill, or lonely.

Pray: God, you care for those who feel that they have no one to care for them. They are like treasure to you. Help us to open our eyes to see and love the lonely, the poor, the lost, the refugees, and those who suffer. Amen

CLOSING ZOOM SESSION:

Welcome: Welcome each child by name. Light a candle and place it somewhere the children can see it. Go 'around the circle' (you will need to say whose turn it is) each saying their name and seeing who can do the best/loudest sheep noise.

Share: If you did the "Talk" activity today, share what you talked about. Did you learn anything about fairness/unfairness? Does your church need to make any changes to make things more fair for some of God's people, so all people, like the sheep in the story, can be welcome and safe there? (Take notes – you will need to refer to this conversation tomorrow. If you want to give this question some structure, you can use an activity from <https://www.learn-to-listen.org.uk/activities>). If anyone has something they made that they'd like to show, they can do that too.

Activity: Open up the "Lost Sheep Pictures" page in the supplementary material file, and share your screen so children can see them. Ask what they can see in the different pictures. What's the same? What's different? Which is their favourite? Why? Why do they think the artists chose to show the scene in those ways? How do the colours make you feel?

Prayer: Fold your hands together in the “traditional” prayer style. Look down at how your fingers are all still separate, but really closely connected. All your fingers are different sizes. Some of your fingers are stronger than others. When they’re folded together like this, they face different ways. Who has painted nails? What colours? Who has jewellery on their fingers? What other ways are your fingers different from each other, and from other people’s fingers? Are some people missing fingers?

God’s people are like this. Different sizes and shapes and colours. Some have scars. Everyone decorates their body differently. But when we come together, we make strong praying hands and, like these fingers, we hold each other safely. Pray for your church community and all the wonderfully different people there.

Now open your hands just a little bit – keep your fingers together, but open your palms so you can see that little space like a cave inside your folded hands. Pray for people who are left out, or in danger, or unsafe, knowing that God the Good Shepherd will find them and hold them safely in God’s hands.

End: Thank everyone for coming, remind them about the next session. Hold the candle up to the camera, and invite all the children to ‘blow it out’ together.

DAY FIVE: GROWING JUSTICE

Story: The Parable of the Sower

Option one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVrkgF4IBSc>

Option two: Longer Godly Play version:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4I9GiHqIshU>

O Option three: For families who may not have internet access, text versions of the stories are available in the supplementary material file.

Wondering Questions

There are wondering questions included in both the videos today. You can pause the video and wonder about it together. Remember – there are no right or wrong answers to wondering questions, and anyone can answer. You don't have to stop with the first answer, either.



RESPONSE ACTIVITIES:

MAKE:

Option 1:

Using items you have at home, design and make a 3-d garden. It can be as complicated or as simple as you'd like. Some ideas:

- What parts of today's story would you like to include? Maybe some of the gardener's plants aren't doing well! You could add birds eating some of the seeds, thorns choking some plants, rocky soil, etc., as well as plants doing well.
- What will you make it out of?
- Will there be different sections in your garden? Maybe a shed or a secret house? Maybe a pond? Maybe a playground?
- Will there be animals and people in your garden? What will they be doing?
- Will there be moving parts?

- What materials will you use? Some ideas: items in your recycling bin, items from your garden or a nearby park (if an adult says it's okay to use them), Lego or Playmobil, Play-doh or Plasticine, paint or pastels or markers, blocks, coloured or patterned fabric, straws or chopsticks, etc.

Option 2:

Make a collage for each type of ground. Think about what texture you can make for each one (texture is how something feels – rough, smooth, soft, spiky, etc.). Use recycled or natural materials if you can.

Option 3:

Plant some seeds! If you don't have seeds at home, maybe you could save some from fruit or veg you eat this week and plant them later, or find some seeds in a park. You'll need dirt, and a waterproof container to put them in, and some sun. If you know what kind of seeds you have, try to find out online how often they need to be watered, how much sun they like, and if they need any extra nutrients to grow.

TALK:

You will need: paper, pens (and items such as playdough, collage materials, Lego etc if you have them).

Make sure you have listened to or watched the story at least once.

Give everyone a piece of paper and some pens (or any of the other items if you want to use them) and write, draw or create something:

- that you remember from the story
- or
- something you think is important about the story
- or
- a question you have about the story.

Spend 5-10 minutes doing this and then gather together as a family and take it in turns to share what you have written, drawn or created. Has anything surprised you about what someone else said? Has it made you think of something else? What does this story make you want to do?

DO

The Sower in the story made a difference by going out and sowing the seed he had. Some of the seed didn't grow and some of it only grew a little bit, but some of the seed grew amazingly well. The really important thing was that the sower went out and tried. If he hadn't tried at all then absolutely nothing would have grown. Just trying to do something to help others, even if it isn't perfect, can really make a difference.

Today's challenge is to make a plan to spread a little bit of kindness around the place where you live. Just a tiny act of kindness can make a big difference to someone.

You will need: paper, pens

Talk about what you could do as a tiny act of kindness for your neighbours or friends. You might want to bake a cake and drop it off to their house. You might make a card for someone to let them know you are thinking of them. You might even decide to do something unexpected like leaving some chocolate bars in a public place like a park, with a little note to say that they are a gift for whoever finds them. Make a plan of what you'd like to do and then use the pens and paper to write notes or cards to leave with your little act of kindness when you deliver it. Remember to keep to social distancing guidelines!

If you want to find out more about random acts of kindness, click on this link:

http://kindnessuk.com/acts_of_kindness.php

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/blog/random-acts-kindness>

PRAY

The Sower makes a difference by sowing seeds and each type of soil makes a difference to how the seeds grow. This prayer uses the image of something small making a difference and changing something it comes into contact with. There are two options, depending on what you have to use at home.

Option 1

You will need: Bicarbonate of Soda, a baking tray or plate, vinegar, teaspoons

Make a layer of bicarbonate of soda over the top of the plate or tray. Take it in turns to slowly drop some vinegar from a teaspoon onto the bicarb. Watch each small drop make a fizz and change the surface of the bicarb layer. As you drop the vinegar, pray that God will help you to do small things to make a difference in the world. You might want to pray especially for the acts of kindness you are planning from the 'Action' section.

Option 2

You will need: 200g Sugar, 100g Golden Syrup, 2 teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda, a large saucepan, a wooden spoon, an 8 x8 inch tin, greaseproof paper, a hob (and adult supervision!)

Lin the tin with greaseproof paper and put to the side. With adult supervision, put the pan on the hob on a medium heat and melt the sugar and the golden syrup together. Mix continuously. The mixture will eventually start to bubble. Keep stirring until the mixture starts to darken and turn amber. It will be bubbling a little faster now. Take the pan off the heat and quickly add the 2 teaspoons of bicarb. The mixture will start to grow and foam. Immediately pour it into the lined tin and leave to cool. When cool, cut the honeycomb and look at how the tiny amount of bicarb caused the mixture to grow huge. Think about what small things you can do to make a difference to the world and to others. Ask God to help you and, as you say 'Amen,' eat the honeycomb!

Pray: God, you have given us all skills and talents and, if we work together, we can help to change the world. Show us how we can do something small that will make a big difference in someone's life. Amen

CLOSING ZOOM SESSION:

Welcome: Welcome each child by name. Light a candle and place it somewhere the children can see it. Go 'around the circle' (you will need to say whose turn it is) each saying their name and what their favourite fruit or vegetable is.

Share: If you made a garden using today's MAKE activity, show what you made. What parts of the story did you include? Why did you choose to include/leave some parts out?

Activity: Take the results of yesterday's discussion – things your church needs to do to be fairer or better at including everyone. If you have lots of ideas, narrow these down using voting – eliminate the idea with the lowest votes, then have another round of voting, until you have a winner. Then figure out how this group of "sowers" can help this idea "bear fruit." What actions do we need to take ("planting seeds")? What problems might we encounter ("birds/thorns/etc")? How will we know if we've succeeded ("bearing fruit")?

Prayer: Encourage children to turn off lights and remove distractions as much as possible. Play a Taize chant via YouTube (in Zoom, click on "Share Screen" and then, in the popup box that appears, at the bottom left, there should be an option to "Share Computer Sound" – this makes the sound work better directly sharing it to others' computers, rather than playing it into your room and then counting on your computer's microphone to pick it up again.) This is a good one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVIdY8ECJyg>. Encourage children to focus on breathing slowly and deeply as they listen and watch. If they want to, they can mute their microphones and join in singing once they've picked up the words and tune.

End: Thank everyone for coming, remind them that they're welcome at Sunday worship (whatever that looks like, online, in person, or both). Hold the candle up to the camera, and invite all the children to 'blow it out' together.