

GOD ON ***MISSION***



**A four part programme
for 3-11 year olds exploring
an overview of mission in the Bible**

Mustard  Seeds
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faithful • creative • effective

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Since 1993 TnT Ministries has been resourcing and equipping people to teach the Bible to children and teenagers more faithfully, more creatively and more effectively.

Our comprehensive range of printed material covers the entire 18 month to 18 year age range. It is used right around the world in over 27 countries and has been translated in part or in whole into twelve different languages.

We have conducted live children's ministry training in churches and theological colleges in South Africa, Singapore, Dubai, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Germany, Norway, Hong Kong, Australia and throughout the United Kingdom.

Mustard Seeds is our new range of electronic material and will ultimately be a comprehensive four year syllabus for 3 to 11 year olds.

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We firmly believe that the Bible is God's word to mankind and that it contains everything we need to know in order to be reconciled with God through faith in Jesus Christ and live in a way that is pleasing to him. Therefore, we believe it is vital to teach the Bible accurately to children, being careful to teach each passage's true meaning in an age-appropriate manner, rather than selecting a 'children's message' from a Biblical passage.

SIM

This series has been produced in partnership with Serving In Mission UK.

Serving In Mission UK

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God on Mission

Week 1	A Promise for All Nations	<i>pg. 6</i>
	<i>Genesis 12:1-7; Galatians 3:6-14</i>	
	Aim : To teach that God kept his promises to Abraham by sending Jesus to die on the cross so that all who trust in Jesus can be blessed.	
Week 2	A Blessing for All Nations	<i>pg. 17</i>
	<i>Psalm 67</i>	
	Aim : To teach that God blesses his people so that all people will know and praise him.	
Week 3	A Message for All Nations	<i>pg. 27</i>
	<i>Acts 13:13-52</i>	
	Aim : To teach that the good news about Jesus must be told to everyone; some will accept it and rejoice, but others will reject the truth and harm those who speak it.	
Week 4	A King for All Nations	<i>pg. 40</i>
	<i>Revelation 7:9-17</i>	
	Aim : To teach that Jesus' death and resurrection makes it possible for people from anywhere in the world to be forgiven and safe in heaven with him.	

Series Aims

- To understand that God has always planned to rescue people from all nations.
- To understand that God's promises are offered to all people in Jesus.
- To understand the need to tell all people the good news about Jesus.
- To understand that because of Jesus' sacrifice heaven will be filled with all kinds of people.

Series Context

This series is the first of four, seeking to expand children's understanding of what gospel work is; why it is so important; and who the gospel is for. These series are, by nature, thematic and therefore draw on passages throughout the Bible to give a more comprehensive picture of 'mission'.

Series Overview

This series (God on Mission) provides an overview of God's salvation plan from Genesis to Revelation. It focuses primarily on two fundamental aspects of the gospel message:

- 1. Inclusivity** – God's desire (and therefore mission) has always been that everyone might come to know him (weeks 1, 2 and 3). God uses all means – both blessing and hardship, to bring people from every people, tribe, tongue and nation to know him (weeks 2, 3 and 4).
- 2. Exclusivity** – God's offer of salvation comes to the world through Jesus alone (weeks 1 and 3). Only those who have trusted in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour can share in his promise of eternal life in heaven with him (weeks 1, 3 and 4).

This is the nature of the gospel message. Different backgrounds, cultures, nationalities and languages cannot disqualify anyone from sharing in God's promises; the only qualification is that people come to him through his Son, Jesus, as he is revealed in the Bible.

Part 2 (Jesus on Mission) will explore further the way Jesus made God's salvation plan known during his mission on earth.

Part 3 (The Apostles on Mission) will explore the birth of the Church and the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem.

Part 4 (The Church on Mission) will explore the continuing work of the Church in reaching every generation throughout the world with the good news about Jesus.

Memory Verse

Psalm 67 will be learned in its entirety – two to three verses each week. The ideas for learning the Psalm are based on the NIV text, but these can be adapted for whichever translation you use.

Using This Resource

This programme is designed to be adaptable. It can be used for a mixed 3-11s group or more age-specific groups.

Text in blue is generally applicable to younger children (3-7 years); green text is aimed at older children (7-11 years); and black text is applicable to all-age groups, at the leader's discretion.

Leaders are encouraged to engage with the study material in a devotional manner, seeking to apply God's word to their own lives before attempting to teach others.

We trust that you will be blessed as you do that. We also hope that once you have done that, your application of God's word to the children you teach will be more deliberate and relevant.


Note: All page numbers in this document are hyperlinked – simply click on the number to jump to that page.

Craft Symbols



We make use of the following symbols for the craft activities:

 Apply glue here

 Cut along this solid line

 Cut out this shaded area

 –  – Fold outwards along this dashed line

 –  – Fold inwards along this dashed line

All Age Service

One of the motivations behind this series is to stimulate the entire church family to think and pray for missions, both locally and internationally.

By providing four lessons we envisage that a local church might use this resource as the basis for a 'Missions Month'. One of these sessions could be adapted for an all-age service. In this series we propose using the first session for this purpose and using it to launch a month long 'missions focus'.

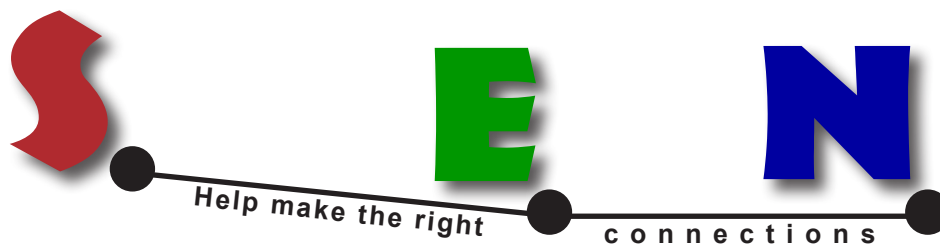
An all age service seeks to engage the entire age range with the truth of God's word by taking into account the various stages of development of the children present. In our local church we aim for these sessions to provide adult teaching in 'bite-sized chunks' and would normally divide a 50 minute session up in the following way:

Welcome and song	7 mins
Introduction	5 mins
Song	4 mins
Teaching	10 mins
Activity	5 Mins
Application	6 mins
Prayer	5 mins
Memory Verse	4 mins
Song	4 mins

As you can see from the above, the teaching content is divided into three sections and interspersed with an activity and songs.

To adapt this material for a session like this:

- Choose one of the *Intro Ideas* we provide to be used as the Introduction.
- Teach the text of the lesson using some of the ideas provided in our *Teaching Plan*. Be sure to use visuals wherever possible to keep younger children engaged.
- Choose (or possibly adapt) one of the *Game Ideas* we provide for the activity. You could either involve the entire congregation or have a sampling of various age groups to engage in the activity for the rest to watch.
- Apply the passage that has been taught by using the ideas provided in the *Discuss and Apply* section. Refer back to the introduction and activity as they should illustrate the application or reinforce the teaching in some way.
- Use (or adapt) the *Prayer Idea* provided to get the people praying about what they've learned. This works well in family groups, but must not exclude those without family.
- Teach the *Memory Verse* using the idea provided.
- Add related songs at appropriate points in the service.



A child with special educational needs (SEN) may provide some challenges to your group. It is therefore essential that you are well prepared for your lessons and that you have carefully thought about how to include all the children. You may need to make some changes to your existing programme to make it accessible for everyone.

A key principle to consider is that, as with all children in your church, each child is an individual and will have different needs, strengths and weaknesses. It is important that you get to know the children you teach as well as possible and that you make an effort to build a relationship with them.

In terms of the lesson itself, you may need to consider the following:

- A child with SEN may need to have an additional adult to support them.
- Consider the environment in which you teach and try to eliminate potential distractions. Where you are seated and where the children are seated, the temperature of the room and noise levels all affect the sense of calm and orderliness of the class.
- Think about the class size and ratio of adults to children.
- It may be appropriate, at times, for a troubled or disruptive child to be accompanied by an adult and to be moved away from the group to a quiet area. Here they can engage in something related to the lesson which is calming and quiet.
- Use clear and child appropriate language.
- When giving instructions; tell them to the whole group, demonstrate, then check that the child with SEN understands what needs to happen.
- Balance the amount of open ended and closed questions you ask.
- Be careful of rhetorical questions; the child with SEN will want to answer them.
- If a child wants to ask too many questions, which may distract from the lesson, tell them that for now we are going to listen and that later you will come back to their questions. **Make sure that you do spend some individual time with the child going through their questions.** You may find that by the time you go back to them, their questions have either been answered or forgotten

or they are not that important anymore.

- Break up your lesson into different sections; short, sharp sections work best as this keeps children engaged and therefore able to manage their behaviour.
- Children with SEN like structure and routines; you may like to start the session with the same song or greeting time or keep the structure the same each week. For example; start with a song, a recap from last week, a short introduction to the new lesson, a song, the Bible story, a craft, the application and then a game for consolidation and further application.
- Use repetition (chants or songs with simple tunes to teach main Bible truths).
- Use lots of different kinds of aids to teach your lesson (movement, pictures, multimedia, props, music, textures, drama, etc.). Consider different learning styles.
- Use simple pictures (too much detail can be distracting).
- Think about how much reading and writing you are expecting the children to do; too much may cause the child with SEN to become anxious and distressed about failing.
- On worksheets, consider making them accessible by asking children to draw some of the answers, rather than write them. If there is a lot of writing or reading required, pair up the SEN child with an adult or with a more able peer. You can also write the answers on a board for them to copy down.
- Children with SEN may find it more difficult to think about application as this requires them to put themselves into a situation which is, at times, hard to do.
- For a child who is non-verbal, find out what their communication is from parents and try to use these as much as possible in your lessons and interaction (Makaton or BSL signing, eye gazes, communication switch boxes, symbols, photos, pictures, objects of reference, etc).

–Toni Edmonds-Smith
Special Needs Teacher

A Promise for All Nations

Genesis 12:1-7; Galatians 3:6-14

Big Idea : God's promise to build a nation of blessed people through Abraham is fulfilled when people trust in Jesus, the Seed of Abraham.

Aim : To teach that God kept his promises to Abraham by sending Jesus to die on the cross so that all who trust in Jesus can be blessed.



Leader's Study Notes

Read Genesis 12:1-7 and Galatians 3:6-14 noting whom God intended to receive the promise.

Use the following notes to help you think about the passages in more detail.

Genesis 12:1-7

Abraham (at this stage still known as Abram) was originally from Ur, but moved with his father, Terah, to Haran (11:31).

12:1 The call may have taken place in Ur ('had said' v.1), making this a reminder of the original call and prompting Abraham to resume his journey. This call comes against the backdrop of God's judgement at Babel (11:1-9). Abraham's call is God's gracious response to that event.

12:2-3 God made a threefold promise to Abraham which included descendants, blessing and land. Notice the emphasis on the fact that it is God who will achieve this – four times God says, "I will..."

Fulfilling these promises would certainly require an act of God since there were still many obstacles to be overcome:

- Abraham had no descendants and his wife was barren (11:30);
- Abraham was living in a fallen world still under the curse of Babel (11:9).
- The land was inhabited by the Canaanites (12:6);

The Babel builders had tried to make a name for themselves, but God is the one who would make a great name for Abraham. Abraham would also be the one through whom all people on earth are blessed.

12:4-5 Abraham responded in obedience to God's call. In our individualistic modern world it's hard to understand just how difficult this must have been. For a man to leave

his country, his people and his father's household (12:1) was very significant in a traditional society. Hebrews 11:8-10 tells us that his obedience to God was the response of faith.

12:7 God reaffirmed his promise of land and descendants and Abraham responded in worship.

Galatians 3:6-14

3:6-9 Paul makes the case from Old Testament Scripture that God's plan has always been the same. Even Abraham was saved by faith, just as the gospel of Jesus proclaims. It is therefore not just Abraham's biological descendants who inherit God's promise of blessing, but all those who trust in Jesus. Paul goes so far as to specifically include Gentiles amongst those justified by faith so that his words cannot be misunderstood. This was God's intention from the very beginning.

3:10-14 Paul reaffirms this great truth by stating it in the negative. Righteousness and blessing are not obtained through the Law. Paul quotes from the Old Testament three times to prove that faith in Jesus, rather than obedience to the Law, is the means by which all people may receive God's promise of life and blessing (Deuteronomy 27:26; Habakkuk 2:4; Leviticus 18:5).

It is wonderful to note from these two passages how inclusive and exclusive God's rescue plan is; it includes people from all nations, but only those who will trust in Jesus. Anyone from any background, culture or nation can be rescued through faith in him.

Reflect

- How is it a comfort to know that God's rescue plan goes all the way back to when God announced the gospel to Abraham?
- Think about how inclusive the gospel is (for all people). Does your church reflect this?
- Think about how exclusive the gospel is (through faith in Jesus alone). How does this encourage you to share Jesus with people of other religions?
- Give thanks to God that his wonderful promises to Abraham are fulfilled in Jesus and that anyone who trusts in Jesus can share in that blessing.

Series Intro Idea

Briefly summarise the first eleven chapters of Genesis by gathering a number of different objects to put in order. Include a '100%' sign (Genesis 1 – everything was perfect); a piece of fruit (Genesis 3 – Adam and Eve's sin); a toy sword (Genesis 3 – God's judgement on sin); a boat (Genesis 6 – a new start with Noah); and some building blocks (Genesis 11 – it all goes wrong again at Babel).

Show the children the different items and ask them to guess what each one is for.

Get them to help you put the items in order and explain each one as you go.



Life Story

The true story on page 10 has been provided by Serving in Mission. Use it at any point in your lesson to illustrate an application of the lesson in real life.

Session Outline



You could use the Series Intro Idea on the left of this page. This will help to give the context for this lesson and the series as a whole.



Introductory Idea

Introduces this week's lesson.

Pose the questions at the end of the Introductory Idea. This gives children something to look out for in the lesson and helps their concentration. These get answered later in the session.



Teaching Plan

The core of the session.

The action of the Bible text is explained in an age appropriate and engaging way.



Game Idea

Not essential.

Reinforces the lesson aim in a fun way and provides a way of displacing energy!

Review the questions posed in the Introductory Idea.



Discuss and Apply

Not to be missed!

This is where the children can be quizzed on the content and meaning of the Bible story. Questions and discussion are needed to apply this Bible story to the children's everyday lives. They should do most of the talking.



Prayer Idea

Use the prayer idea or just encourage each child to pray about an aspect of the lesson.



Activity

An opportunity to reinforce the lesson. **For younger children, Activity A or B will be suitable. For older children, Activity C or D can be used to facilitate the Teaching or the Discuss and Apply section – some children prefer a lively discussion to completing written answers.**



Memory Verse

A fun way of remembering the key verse for the series.



Introductory Idea

Option 1: Broken Bridges. Before the lesson join a number of pieces of A4 paper together end to end using glue or tape. This will become your 'bridge'. Cut the bridge into seven or eight sections with obvious joins so that they form a sort of puzzle.

Lay a sheet of blue material (the river) down on the floor. The 'river' must be too wide for the children in your group to jump across. Place the two ends of the bridge on either side of the sheet and explain that the bridge has broken and the children need to fix it in order to cross the river, but they must start from one side only.

If you have a small group, the children can work together to arrange the pieces in the correct order. If your group is too large to do this, you could make two identical bridges and choose two children to race against each other.

Talk about how the broken bridge needed to be rebuilt in order to cross over and how that could only be done one step at a time. In today's true story from the Bible God began to fix our broken world by making the first step known and he has now finished the last one. [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link to the lesson.]

Option 2: The Big Picture. Choose two children from the group to race to build a small model from a picture or set of instructions. This could be a jigsaw puzzle; a small LEGO structure; a tower of coloured blocks to a specific design; or something similar. Give each child the necessary items, but only one of them the picture/instruction booklet/planned design.

The child with the instructions should win easily. Talk about how the jumble of puzzle pieces/LEGO/blocks just looked like a mess without the instructions, but with the instructions it's easy to see what to do with them to make them into something great. In today's true story from the Bible the world was in a mess, but God had a plan to sort it out. He could see the big picture and knew what needed to be done from the very beginning. [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]

Bridge Questions

The children must listen carefully to today's true story from the Bible to discover the answers to the following questions:

- What was God's plan? [*To bless all nations* (Genesis 12:2-3; Galatians 3:8)]
- Where did it start? [*God calling Abraham* (Genesis 12:1; Galatians 3:8)]
- Where does it end? [*Jesus redeeming all who trust in him* (Galatians 3:14)]



Teaching Plan

You could teach this lesson using models. To do this divide the teaching space (or table) into four areas and get the children to move with you as you do. The first area represents Abraham's life with his family; the second, his call and the promises given; the third, Jesus; and the fourth, heaven.

In the first area place a number of action/LEGO figures to be Terah's family including Abraham and Sarah. Talk about Abraham's move from Ur to Haran with his father.

Remove Abraham and Sarah from the first area and place them in the second as you talk about God calling Abraham to leave his father's household. Use the pictures on page 12 to represent the three aspects of the promise: descendants, blessing and land. Colour versions of these are available in the graphics pack for this series and can be downloaded from our website.

Briefly talk about the fact that Sarah was unable to have children. Introduce another figure as you tell of the miraculous birth of Isaac to Sarah in her old age. Explain the difficulty that once Abraham died he was not yet in the land and he only had one son – not exactly a great nation!

Move to the third region where you can place a cross. Explain that Jesus was a descendant of Abraham. By dying on the cross he made it possible for people to be forgiven and to fix the problem of sin.

Move to the fourth area. Take the pictures from the second area one by one and explain that the land God has promised to give his people is heaven; the descendants (family) are not just those related to Abraham, but anyone who trusts in Jesus' death. Whoever trusts in Jesus can be forgiven and experience God's blessing in heaven with him forever.

For older children – you could tell the story as for younger children above and then engage them in a simple Bible study using Galatians 3:6-14. The following questions will help to draw out the main teaching points:

- Why was Abraham declared to be righteous even though he was a sinner? (3:6)
- How does someone become a part of Abraham's family? (3:7)
- How is Jesus the final part of God's rescue plan which started with Abraham? Who does this plan include? How do they receive the blessing? (3:8-9, 13-14)

You might also like to explore Hebrews 11:8-12 as a summary of Abraham's place in God's rescue plan for the whole world.



Game Idea

Option 1: Chain Tag. Choose one child to be 'it' and begin the game. The other children must avoid getting caught by this child. If the child who is 'it' tags another child they join hands and both become 'it', but they cannot let go of each other's hand. The game continues until all the children have been caught and joined the chain.

Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible God started with just one man, Abraham, and made him into a great nation. Today everyone who trusts in Jesus' death can become part of that family.

Option 2: You're in, You're out. Before the lesson, gather a range of small items in various colours. On a piece of paper write down a number of different criteria by which the items can be distinguished e.g. colours, patterns, where they belong, what they may be used for. Make sure that these distinctions are objective!

Get the children to sit in a circle and place the different items in a group in the middle. Explain that as you count down from five, the children will each need to choose a single item and sit back down. You will then read out the first criteria on your list. Any child holding an object that fits your description receives a point for that round. The first child to five points is the winner.

Play the game a few times, pointing out after each round who is 'in' and who is 'out' based on the pre-chosen criteria. Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible Abraham was made right with God by faith alone. Anyone who trusts in Jesus' death by faith can also become part of God's family, but not trusting in him will keep you out.

Option 3: For older children. Play a game where the children have to work out what the unknown 'rule' is e.g. the stick game:

Get the children and leaders to form a circle together. Explain that the point of the game is to work out the rule. If you know the rule you are 'in', but you must not tell anyone else in the circle. It will help if at least two leaders know the rule before the lesson!

The leader starts by holding a stick/chopstick/pencil and says the line, "I can play the stick game, stick game, stick game. I can play the stick game; can you?" As they say this the leader needs to move the stick in a way that makes the children think it is important. They then pass the stick onto the next person in the circle who tries to copy what the leader did. If they do so correctly, they are 'in'.

However, the rule is not to copy what the leader does, but what they say. Before they repeat the line they need to say the word 'okay'. You can make the game easier for the children if they are struggling to pick up the rule or if you are running short of time by making the word 'okay' more obvious, but don't start off too easy!

Variations of this rule could include saying 'thank you' when the stick is passed to you; which hand you use

to take the stick; whether you are sitting with your legs crossed, etc.

Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible Abraham was made right with God by faith alone. Anyone who trusts in Jesus' death by faith can also become part of God's family, but not trusting in him will keep you out.



Discuss and Apply

Talk about some of the difficulties we experience in life by referring to some of the things mentioned in the Series Intro. Can the children see that all these problems can be traced back to the big problem of sin? In today's true story from the Bible, how did God plan to deal with the problem of sin? Where did the plan start? What promises did he make?

Talk about how God kept these promises to Abraham by sending Jesus into the world to die on the cross. Explain how his death deals with the problem and power of sin.

Talk about what heaven will be like. Which of the problems they mentioned will be in heaven? Why will that be so?

Explain that Jesus is the only way that we can be forgiven of our sin and become part of God's family. Everyone needs to join and anyone can, but they must trust in Jesus to do so. **Younger children can't easily imagine that there are people who are not part of God's family already. You will need to explain that there are many who have never trusted Jesus and who are not part of God's family.**

Talk about some of the different people in your group/church. How many different nationalities and languages are there? Explain that all people can be part of God's family. Do they know other people from different nationalities in their neighbourhood or school who are not yet part of God's family? How can the children help to make them a part too?

For older children – discuss as above for younger children. You could also explore other ways in which many people believe the problems in the world will be resolved using the following questions:

- Why will none of these really work? Why is the gospel the only real solution?
- Why does everyone need to hear the gospel to become part of the people of God?
- What about other religions? Do they also need to hear the truth about Jesus?
- How can the children be a part of this happening?



Life Story

David White is a young man who longs to see God's promise of rescue go out to all the nations of the world.

After going to University, he felt God calling him to take the good news of Jesus to people who did not know it. Today there are more than three billion people in the world who do not know about Jesus.

David felt especially drawn to working with people from South Sudan, a very new country in the middle of Africa. Serving In Mission, a Christian charity which sends workers into the mission world, is helping him do that.

For many years, there has been war in Sudan and there is still a lot of fighting in that region. Many people have been forced to flee to refugee camps and have often been forced to walk miles and miles through dangerous territory to reach safety. They usually arrive with just what they are carrying, hungry, thirsty and with no home. Many of them are children.

Their greatest need is to know the love of Jesus and that is why David is now learning the languages they speak. He is at a special college in Egypt, learning Arabic and some of the local languages so that he can tell these people how much Jesus loves them.

There are already some Serving In Mission people doing this work and they are seeing many people come to know Jesus. In one tribe more than 100 people put their trust in Jesus in just the first three months that people started to talk to them about him.

David's plan is to head into South Sudan as soon as he can speak the language well enough. He will have nothing with him but a Bible and the desire to make the gospel of Jesus known. By reaching out to the young Christians he hopes to show them what it really means to live for Christ and how that can truly set them free.

Just as Abraham believed God's promise that he would be a blessing to all nations, so David believes he can help make God's promise to all nations come true.

If you want to find out more about David's faith and work and other Serving In Mission gospel workers, go to www.sim.co.uk



Prayer Idea

Use a world map and provide the children with a number of small flags of countries where there is little or no gospel witness. There are a number of organisations which provide this kind of information and a brief internet search will help you with a list. Give each child one of the flags. Show the children which country they are in. Do they know which country their flag represents? Invite the group to match each flag to the respective country, but do not place the flags yet.

As the group prays ask each child to place their flag and pray, "Lord please help people in ... to know and love Jesus."



Activity

For 3-7s – choose either Activity A (page 13), or Activity B (page 14).

Activity A – Print page 13 onto card (one copy for every three children).

Before the lesson cut out the figures and use a craft blade to cut the circles out of each figure as marked. The children colour in Abraham and place their fingers through the holes to enable Abraham to walk. Remind them that Abraham left his home because God had promised to give him land, many children and to bless the world through him.

Can the children remember how God kept his promises to Abraham?

Activity B – Print page 14 onto paper (one copy for each child). The children colour in the picture. You could provide glitter for the crown.

Remind the children that God kept his promises to Abraham by sending Jesus into the world to die (the cross). He did this so that many more people could be blessed by God and live with him in heaven with Jesus as king.

For 7-11s – print either Activity Sheet C (page 15) or Activity Sheet D (page 16) onto paper for each child. Choose whichever is appropriate for your children and use it to reinforce the lesson or as a discussion starter.



Memory Verse

By the end of this series the children will have learned the whole of Psalm 67. This week they will learn verses 1-2.

Before the lesson divide verses 1 and 2 up into phrases. Write each phrase on a separate piece of paper, using a different colour for each verse). For the NIV text you might divide the verse as follows:

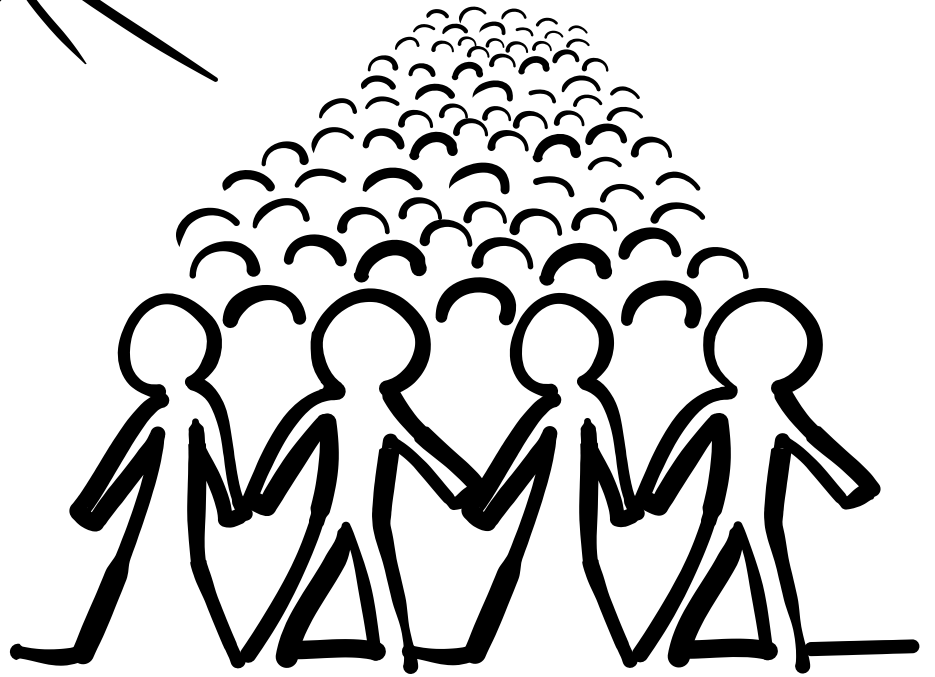
*May God / be gracious / to us / and bless us / and make / his face / shine on us.

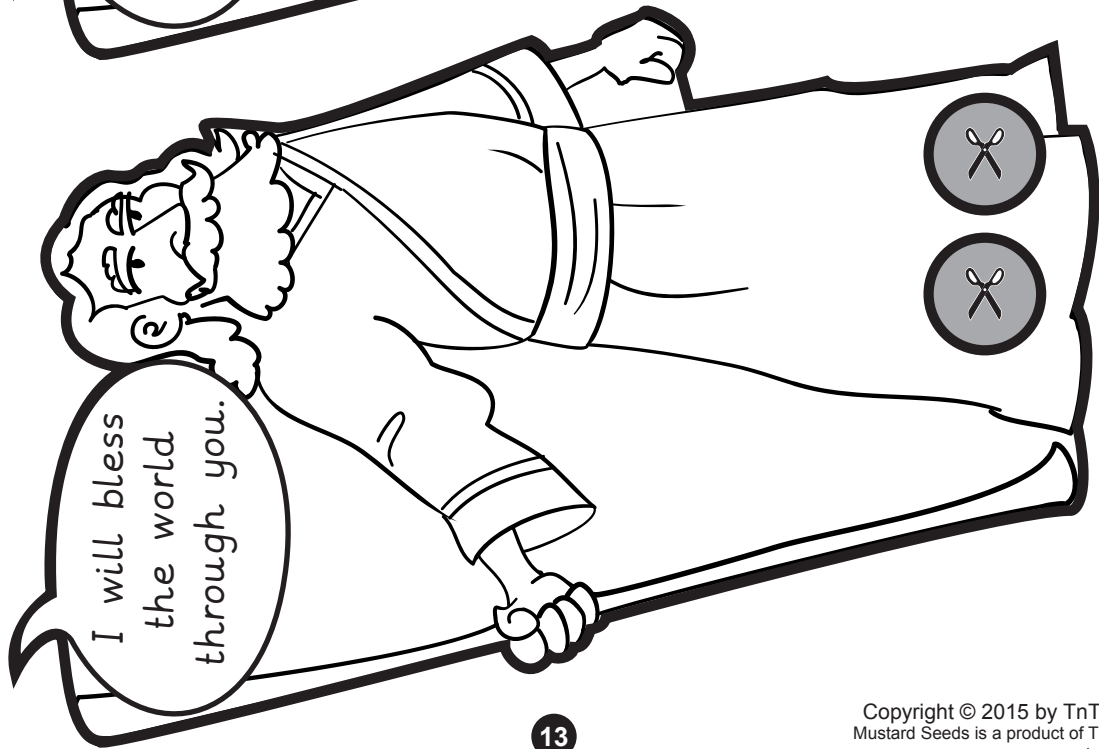
* so that / your ways / may be known / on earth, / your salvation / among all / nations.

Divide the group into two teams. Give each team one verse and have them arrange the pages in the right order. [Placing a star on the first page for each verse will make it easier for the children to know where to start, especially for the group with verse 2.]

The teams then learn their verse and recite it to the other team. Remove one piece of paper from each team every time the verse is read until they know their entire verse.

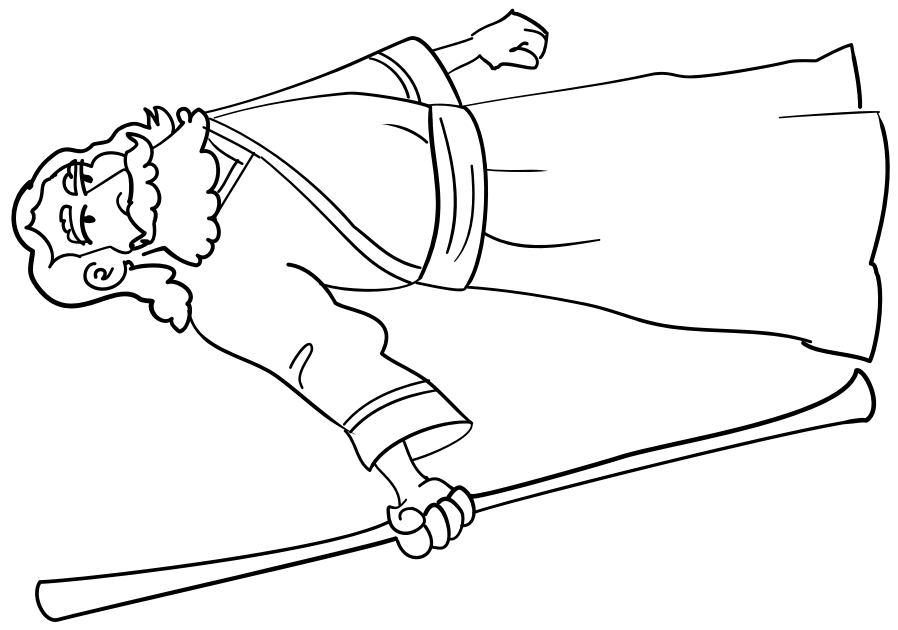
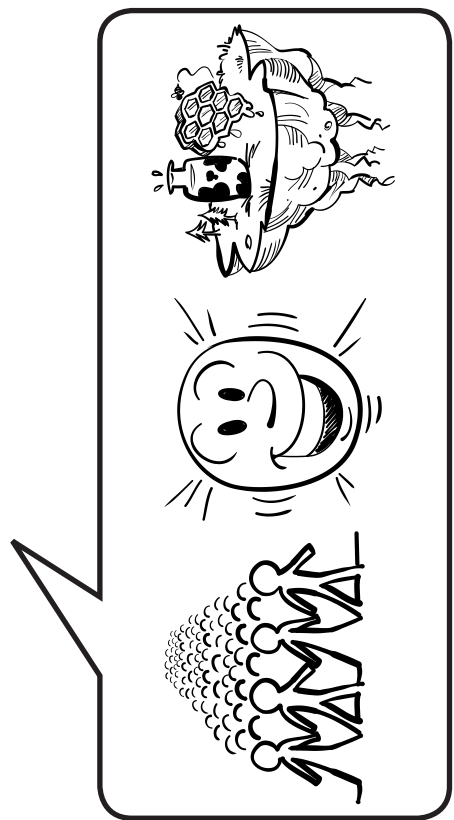
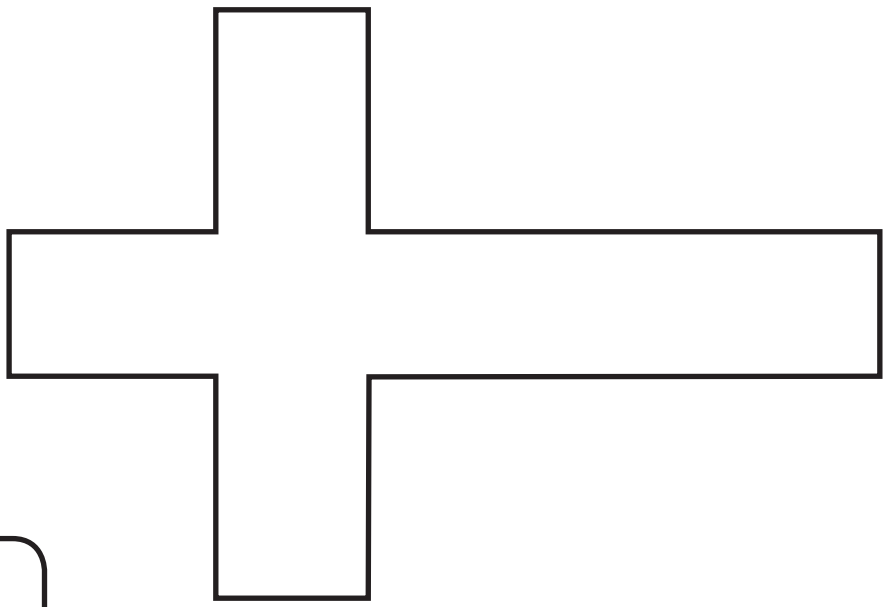
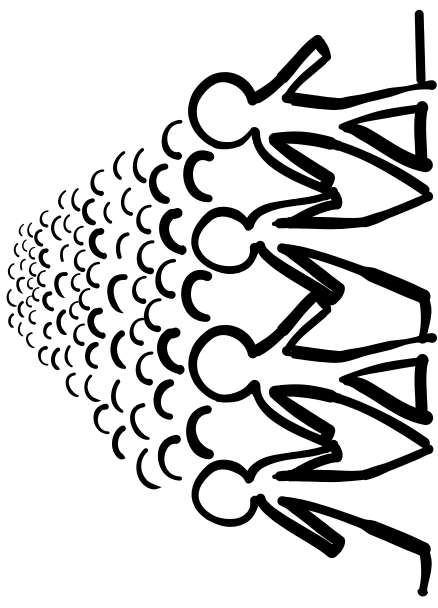
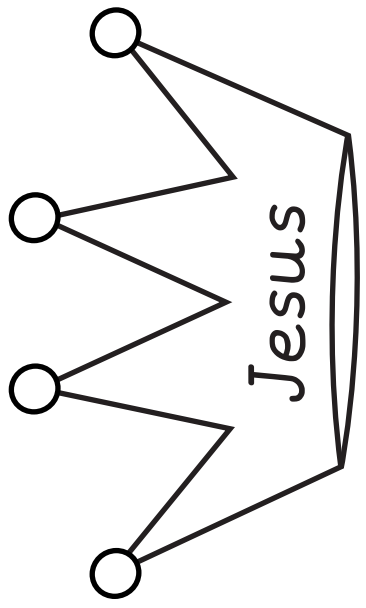
Can they recite the other team's verse as well?





God kept his promises to
Abraham when he sent
Jesus into the world.

Galatians 3:16



A Promise for All Nations

The true story can be found in Genesis 12:1-7
and Galatians 3:6-14



Discover

What did God tell Abraham to leave behind? (Genesis 12:1)
Circle all the correct answers below.

- Home Country
- Father Nephew
- Possessions Wife

What did Abraham do when God said this? (Genesis 12:4) Tick the correct answer

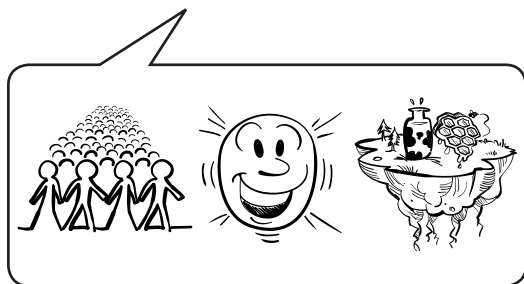
- He ran away. He left for Canaan. He tried to change God's mind.

What did God promise to do for Abraham? (Genesis 12:2-3, 7)

1. Make him into a g _ _ _ _ p _ _ _ _ _ .
2. B _ _ _ _ him.
3. Give him this l _ _ _ _ .

Think Spot

Do you think this was an easy thing for Abraham to do?
Why do you think he obeyed?



DISCUSS

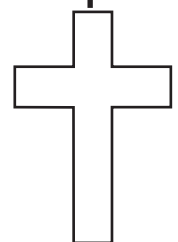
Look up Galatians 3:6-9, 14.

How was Abraham made right with God?

Who else can be made right with God? How can this happen?

How did God keep his promise to Abraham?

What does God promise to those who trust in Jesus?



A Promise for All Nations

The true story can be found in Genesis 12:1-7 and Galatians 3:6-14

Discover

What did God tell Abraham to do? (Genesis 12:1) _____

How did Abraham respond to God's command? (Genesis 12:4) _____

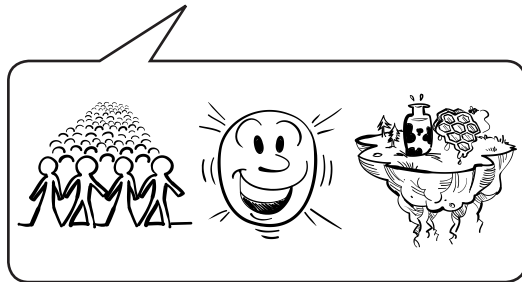
What three things did God promise to do for Abraham?

1. _____ (Genesis 12:2)
2. _____ (Genesis 12:3)
3. _____ (Genesis 12:7)



Think Spot

Do you think this was an easy thing for Abraham to do?
Why do you think he obeyed?



DISCUSS

Look up Galatians 3:6-9, 14.

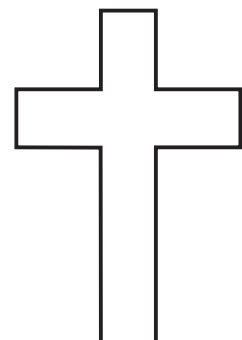
How was Abraham justified?

Who else can be justified? How can this happen?

How did God keep his promise to Abraham?

What does God promise those who trust in Jesus?

Why is it important to tell others this good news?



A Blessing for All Nations

Psalm 67

Big Idea : The psalmist asks God to bless his people so that all people on earth will know God's gracious rule and also come to praise him.

Aim : To teach that God blesses his people so that all people will know and praise him.

The Story So Far

Week 1:

- God kept his promise to build a nation of blessed people through Abraham by sending Jesus to die on the cross.
- All who trust in Jesus become part of the people of God and experience his blessing.



Leader's Study Notes

Read Psalm 67 noting the result of God blessing his people and the reasons they have to praise him.

Use the following notes to help you think about the passages in more detail.

This psalm celebrates God's goodness to his people, particularly as it is seen at harvest time when his blessing is obvious to all. The psalm is structured so that verses 1-2 mirror verses 6-7; verse 3 mirrors verse 5; and verse 4 is highlighted as the focus of the psalm.

67:1-2 The psalmist pronounces the Aaronic blessing from Numbers 6:24-26. This is a prayer that God would be gracious to his people (treat them better than they deserve to be treated) and that he would bless them. To be blessed in the Bible is to enjoy life in all its fullness. This is only possible when we are in a right relationship with the Creator of life and understand all of life in relation to him.

The psalmist's reason for asking for this blessing is given in verse 2 – that God's ways and his salvation will be made known throughout the world.

67:3, 5 The psalmist's desire is that people from every nation would come to know and worship the true God.

67:4 God is worthy of worship because he is a just ruler. It's a joy to serve and submit to the gracious King who blesses his people.

67:6-7 God's blessing in this psalm is seen in the harvest, an annual reminder of God's goodness, the purpose of which is to invite people from all nations to fear (revere or stand in awe of) the Lord.

The ultimate goal of the psalmist's plea for God to bless his people is that people from all nations will come to know and fear the Lord. The blessing of God's people is not an end in itself, but the means by which others become part of the people of God. God's people are blessed by him so that they might become the conduit of blessing for those who do not yet know him.

Reflect

- What is the reason for praising God in this psalm – his blessing or his rule? What is the purpose of his blessing?
- Think about the various ways in which God has blessed you materially, emotionally and spiritually. How have you used these blessings to make God known to others?
- Give thanks for the many blessings you have received. Pray that God would help you to think creatively about how these can be used to bring others to know God's rescue plan in Jesus.

Session Outline



Review

Review the previous lesson using the questions provided as well as any of the visual aids that were used for the previous lesson. This is helpful for children who may have missed that session.



Introductory Idea

Introduces this week's lesson.

Pose the questions at the end of the Introductory Idea. This gives children something to look out for in the lesson and helps their concentration. These get answered later in the session.



Teaching Plan

The core of the session.

The action of the Bible text is told as a story for younger children and explained. Or the Bible text is taught as a simple Bible study for older children.



Game Idea

Not essential.

Reinforces the lesson aim in a fun way and provides a way of displacing energy!

Review the questions posed in the Introductory Idea.



Discuss and Apply

Not to be missed!

This is where the children can be quizzed on the content and meaning of the Bible story. Questions and discussion are needed to apply this Bible story to the children's everyday lives. They should do most of the talking.



Prayer Idea

Use the prayer idea or just encourage each child to pray about an aspect of the lesson.



Activity

An opportunity to reinforce the lesson. For younger children, Activity A or B will be suitable. For older children, Activity C or D can be used to facilitate the Teaching or the Discuss and Apply section – some children prefer a lively discussion to completing written answers.



Memory Verse

A fun way of remembering the key verse for the series.



Life Story

The true story on page 20 has been provided by Serving in Mission. Use it at any point in your lesson to illustrate an application of the lesson in real life.



Review

Review the previous lesson using the following questions:

- What was God's plan? [*To bless all nations* (Genesis 12:2-3; Galatians 3:8)]
- Where did it start? [*God calling Abraham* (Genesis 12:1; Galatians 3:8)]
- Where does it end? [*Jesus redeeming all who trust in him* (Galatians 3:14)]



Introductory Idea

Option 1: Pass it on. Have a packet of sweets or cookies (individually wrapped ones are best). **Beware of any food allergies.** Tell the children clearly that you want each of them to have one sweet. Start by giving one child a sweet. After a short pause give the same child another sweet. Keep giving subsequent sweets to the same child. Don't tell them to pass them on and don't allow the other children to grab them. Take note of how they respond.

- How long does it take for the first child to start passing the sweets on to others?
- Do other children also pass the sweets on or is the first recipient the only one to do so?

Talk about these observations and other responses you notice. How is it possible for a child sitting at the back of the class to also receive a sweet?

Today's Bible lesson is a song about why God shows his kindness to people by treating them better than they deserve to be treated.

Option 2: For younger children – Copy the Beat. Sit the children in a circle on the floor or on chairs. Explain that you are going to show them a rhythm which they will need to work out and copy as quickly as they can.

Start by tapping or clapping out a simple beat until the children have all joined in. Show them several different rhythms, gradually making them harder to follow.

In today's true story from the Bible a man sang a song that asked God to show his kindness to people so that they would do something and others would join in too.

Bridge Questions

The children must listen carefully to today's true story from the Bible to discover the answers to the following questions:

- To whom does God show kindness? [*His people – us (67:1, 6-7)*]
- How does God show kindness? [*Blesses his people and rules justly (67:4, 6-7)*]
- Why does God show kindness? [*So that all people will know and praise him (67:2-5, 7)*]



Teaching Plan

Since this lesson has no story it will need to be taught visually. You could do this by creating a circular visual aid on a board in three stages.

Can any of the children remember the three things that God promised to give Abraham? [Descendants (big family), blessing and land.] Today's lesson is from a book in the Bible that's full of songs or prayers to God. The man singing this song (Psalm 67) is asking God to bless his people, just as God promised he would do for Abraham.

Explain what blessing means by talking about some of the ways that God blessed his people in the Old Testament e.g. giving them food to eat; keeping them safe from enemies; giving them land to live in; making them into a great nation; giving them good laws; God living with his people, etc. As you talk about these things put up pictures to represent each of them.

In this song God's blessing is seen in the good harvest he gives to his people. God made the crops grow really well so that his people had enough to eat. When God does this for his people they praise him and thank him.

When they understand that God is always fair and that his rules help them to live the best life they can then they want to obey God as king. Place a picture of happy people under a crown in the second space.

When God's people live in this way, other people see this and also want to praise God and live with him as their king. Place a picture of lots more happy people in the third space to complete the circle.

Talk about how more people coming to know and love God is exactly what God had promised Abraham he would do for him. This is one of the ways that God blesses his people.

Point back to the first picture in the circle, then go round the different stages again to show that the cycle carries on and to help the children remember. This is what the man singing this song is asking God for!

For older children – use the teaching plan above as for younger children. Then read through Psalm 67 together and get the children to work out which verses are part of each stage in the circle (some will

be relevant in more than one of the stages). You could write these verses down next to each stage to build up the picture. Remind the children that the whole psalm is a song of praise to God.



Game Idea

Option 1: For younger children – Pass the Parcel. Before the lesson make up a package by wrapping multiple layers of newspaper with a sweet under each layer. You could use a printout of Psalm 67 pasted onto a block of wood as the first item to be wrapped. Play a children's praise song while the parcel is passed around the group. Each time the music stops the child holding the parcel unwraps one layer and removes the sweet, but instead of keeping it for themselves they give it to the person to their left.

Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible a man was singing a song to God. In his song he asked God to give his people good things so that everyone around them would see how good God is.

Option 2: Straw Pipeline. Divide the group into two teams. Give each team an equal number of plastic drinking straws; a bucket of water; a large measuring jug; some sticky tape; and a cup/jug. Place a towel under each of the full buckets to mop up any spills.

Explain that the children need to work together in order to transfer the water from the bucket into the large measuring jug. They do this by connecting the straws together using sticky tape – water cannot be poured directly from a bucket or cup/jug. The children will also need to support the straws with their hands at each of the joins.

The winning team is the one to transfer the most water over the longest distance. You can calculate this by multiplying the amount of water by the number of straws used.

Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible the man singing this psalm (song) wanted God's people to pass on what God was like to others so that even people far away would come to know him.

Option 3: For older children –Team Charades. Before the lesson write down a list of words for the children to act out. Write a second identical list, but in the reverse order. These could relate to a particular theme or category in order to make it easier for the children to guess.

Divide the group into two teams and choose one child from each to start the game. These children stand opposite their teammates and are each given a list of words. They must work down their list to act out each word without speaking or making noises to help. The first child on their team to correctly guess a word can run to join the child acting out the words and they both then mime the next word on the list. As more children join the 'acting side' it should become

easier for the rest of their team to guess the word they are miming.

The game continues in this way until all of one team's members have swapped sides and no-one is left to guess.

Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible the man singing this psalm (song) wanted God's people to pass on what God was like to others so that everyone would come to know him and join in.



Discuss and Apply

Remind the children what the word 'blessing' means. Can they think of ways in which God has blessed them? You might need to help them by suggesting some of the good things he has given or done for them.

Talk about the reasons why God does these things: in one sense he does it because he loves to bless his children, but he also does it for the reason the psalmist sings about. He wants more people to see how good he is and to come to know him.

Talk about the ways in which our lives show God's blessing. How should we respond to God's blessing? How does this teach others about what God is like?

For older children – discuss as above for younger children, then use some of the questions below to help the children think about the passage more carefully:

- In what ways do God's blessing and our obedience go together? Which one comes first? How does each of these show God's goodness to others?
- How can people see God's goodness in our prosperity? How can they also see it in adversity? How is this attractive to others?
- How does this help us to be thankful and praise God? How can this help us when we don't have things that we would like or when we suffer?



Life Story

Lal Guite was born in India. He worked for many years in Bangladesh and is now living in London.

He is a Serving In Mission gospel worker, committed to sharing the good news of Jesus wherever he is.

Lal was brought up in a Christian family in northern India and always had a heart for mission. After going to Bible school he moved to Bangladesh with his wife and two children among the local people.

Through his daily life in the Serving In Mission office in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, he told people about Jesus, taught them from the Bible and showed them how Jesus was the best news they could hope for.

A lot of these people were very poor and came from many different places in Bangladesh and from further away. Most of them were Muslims who had never heard that Jesus could save them.

Lal wanted to get better at Bible teaching so when the chance came for him and his family to spend two years in London learning more about how to teach the Bible he was very interested. From there they can reach out to the Bangladeshi people who live in London.

Many of those Bangladeshi families came to the UK as refugees and chose to live near Brick Lane – one of the most famous streets for curry in England! Very few of the Bangladeshi people in London have heard about Jesus and Lal longs to help them know more.

He works in a Christian bookshop nearby and tells anyone who comes in all about Jesus. He also helps some of the families learn English and helps the children learn to read and write and do their homework.

Lal and his family are truly a blessing to all nations through the great work they are doing with Serving In Mission.

If you want to find out more about Lal and other Serving In Mission gospel workers, go to www.sim.co.uk



Activity

For 3-7s – choose either Activity A (page 22) or Activity B (page 23).

Activity A – Print page 22 onto paper or card (one copy for every two children).

Before the lesson cut the pages in half lengthways as shown. Each child receives one strip.

The children colour the pictures and fold as shown to produce a card with the crown and two children which opens to reveal the children around the world.

Remind the children that God blesses us and rules us and wants others to come to do the same.

Activity B – Make a musical instrument. Print page 23 onto paper (one copy for every ten children). Cut the page in half and then cut the verse slips out two at a time.

Each child will need a yoghurt pot or cardboard tube (with one end sealed before the lesson); rice/pasta pieces/dried peas; a piece of colourful wrapping paper; a piece of cellophane; and a rubber band.

Help each child to paste a strip of wrapping paper around the container (you could also do this for them before the lessons to save time). Place a teaspoon of rice/pasta pieces/dried peas into each container and cover the opening with cellophane and a rubber band. Then paste the verse slip on top or around the container.

Use these musical instruments to sing a praise song.

Remind the children that God's name will be praised all over the world.

For 7-11s – print either Activity Sheet C (page 24) or Activity Sheet D (page 25) onto paper for each child. Choose whichever is appropriate for your children and use it to reinforce the lesson or as a discussion starter.



Prayer Idea

Encourage the children to think of someone they know, perhaps from school, who does not yet know/praise God. Could they invite this person to church or other event where they can hear about Jesus? What could the children pray as they think about doing this?



Memory Verse

By the end of this series the children will have learned the whole of Psalm 67. In the previous lesson they learned verses 1-2. Can the children recite this?

This week they will learn verses 3-5.

To help them do this print the pictures on page 26 and place them on a board writing the missing words in between. You may need to enlarge the pictures and you will need more than one copy of some of them.

Go through the verses a few times with the children, then remove all the words. Finally, remove all the pictures as well.

The verse from the NIV would read as follows:

May the  praise you, God;

may all the  praise you.

May the  be  and  for joy,

for you  the  with 

and  the  of the .

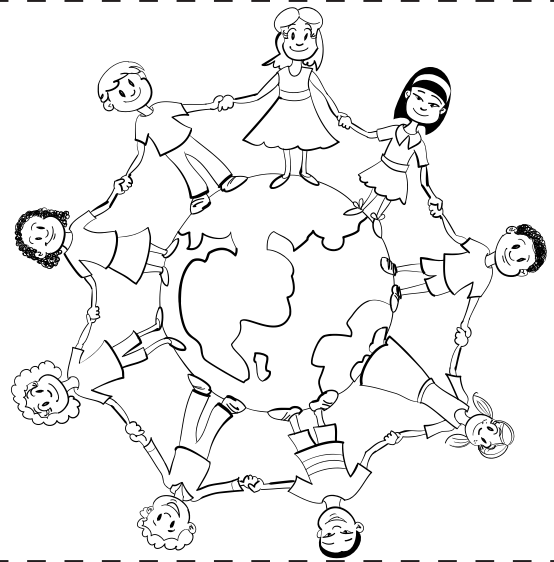
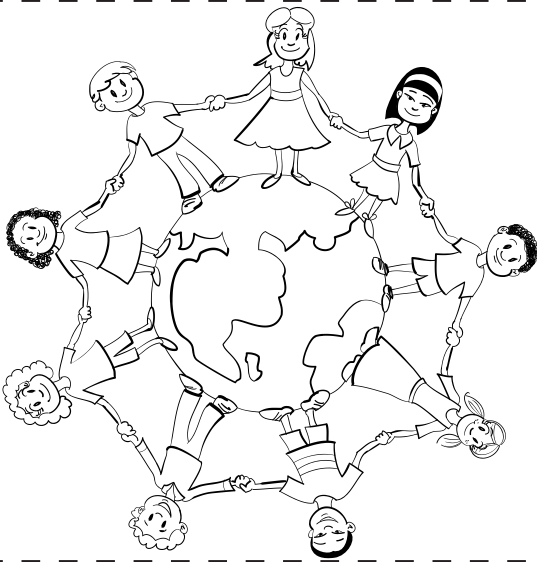
May the  praise you, God;

may all the  praise you.



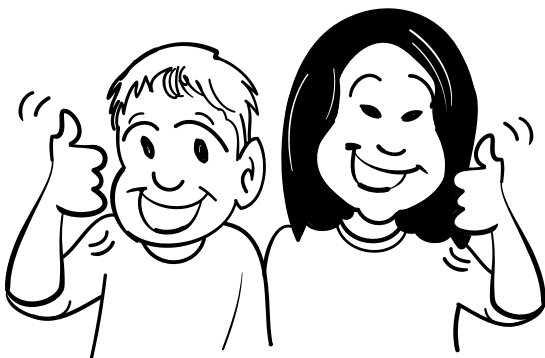
God's ways will be
known on earth.

God's ways will be
known on earth.

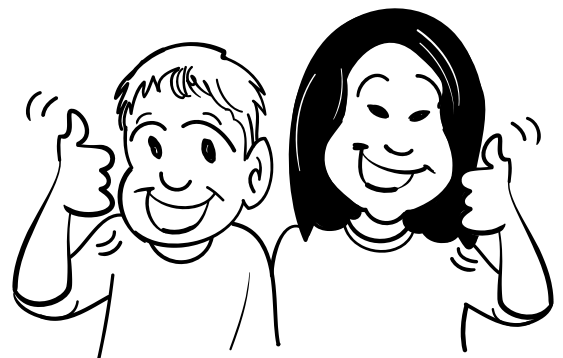


His saving power
among all nations.

His saving power
among all nations.



You rule people
fairly.



You rule people
fairly.

May the peoples praise
you, God; may all the
peoples praise you.

Psalm 67:3

May the peoples praise
you, God; may all the
peoples praise you.

Psalm 67:3

May the peoples praise
you, God; may all the
peoples praise you.

Psalm 67:3

May the peoples praise
you, God; may all the
peoples praise you.

Psalm 67:3

May the peoples praise
you, God; may all the
peoples praise you.

Psalm 67:3

May the peoples praise
you, God; may all the
peoples praise you.

Psalm 67:3

May the peoples praise
you, God; may all the
peoples praise you.

Psalm 67:3

May the peoples praise
you, God; may all the
peoples praise you.

Psalm 67:3

May the peoples praise
you, God; may all the
peoples praise you.

Psalm 67:3

May the peoples praise
you, God; may all the
peoples praise you.

Psalm 67:3

A Blessing for All Nations

The true story can be found in Psalm 67:1-7

Discover

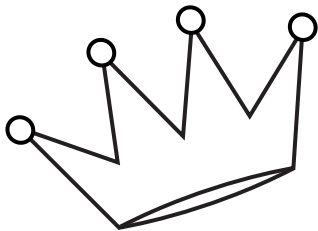
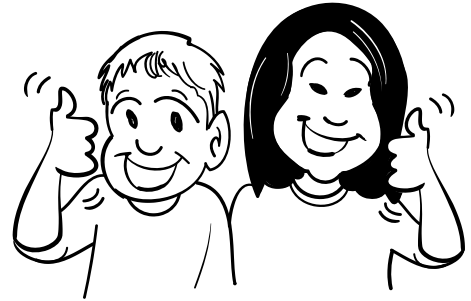
What does the songwriter ask God for? (67:1)

His b _ _ _ _ _ .

Why does the songwriter ask for this? (67:2, 7)

Tick the correct answers below.

- So God's people can be happy.
- So other people will know and love God.
- So that God's name will be feared.



Think Spot

What does the word 'blessing' mean?

Look up Genesis 12:2-3. What is special about the songwriter's request?

Who does the songwriter want to praise God? (67:3, 5)

A _ _ p _ _ _ _ .

What reasons do they have to praise him?

Circle all the reasons that are given in the psalm below.

God saves
people

God guides
all people

God rules over
everything

God blesses
his people

God's justice

God gives people
everything they want

God defeats
his enemies

God would be
angry otherwise



Discuss

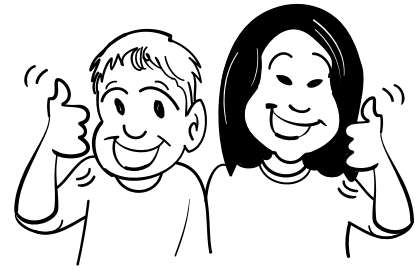
In what ways has God blessed you and your family?
How should you respond to God's blessing?

Do you think of God's laws and rule as a blessing?
Why/why not?

How can God's kindness to you help others to know him?
What could you do, say and pray to show them?

A Blessing for All Nations

The true story can be found in Psalm 67:1-7



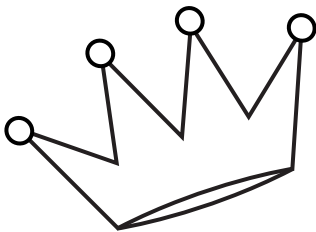
Discover

What does the psalmist ask God for? (67:1)

His b_____.

Why does the psalmist ask for this?

1. _____ (67:2)
2. _____ (67:7)



Think Spot

What does the word 'blessing' mean?

Look up Genesis 12:2-3. What is special about the psalmist's request?

Who does the psalmist want to praise God? (67:3, 5)

A__ p_____.

What reasons do they have to praise him?

List the reasons that the psalmist gives in the space below. There are at least five!



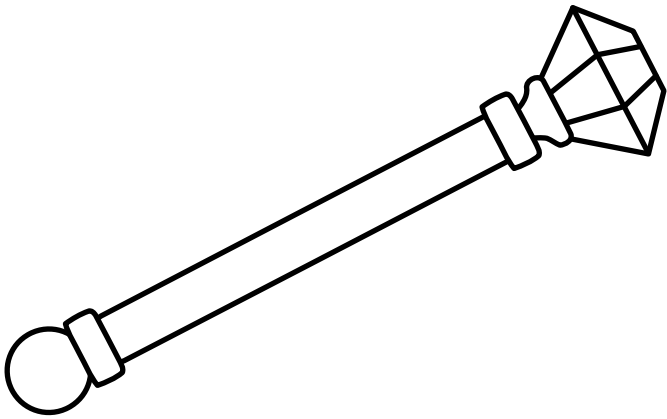
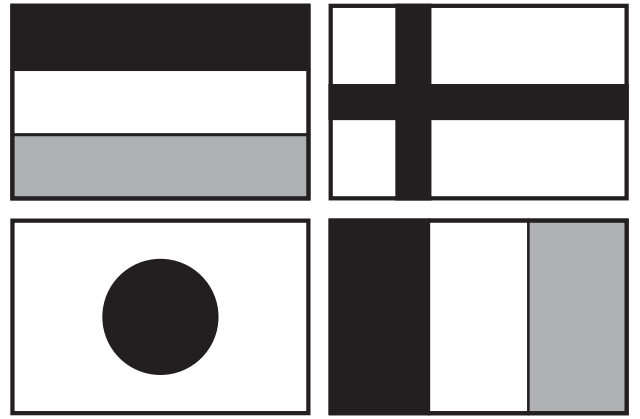
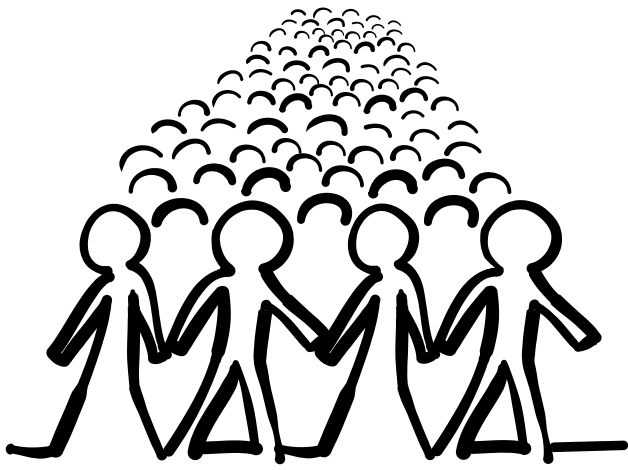
Discuss

In what ways has God blessed you and your family?
How should you respond to God's blessing?

Do you consider God's laws and rule to be a blessing?
Why/why not?

How can God's kindness to you help others to know him?
What could you do, say and pray to show them?

What does it mean when God doesn't give us something good or when life is hard?



A Message for All Nations

Acts 13:13-52

Big Idea : Paul traced the history of Israel to show both Jews and Gentiles that Jesus is the fulfilment of all the promises God had made since Abraham.

Aim : To teach that the good news about Jesus must be told to everyone; some will accept it and rejoice, but others will reject the truth and harm those who speak it.

The Story So Far

Week 1:

- God kept his promise to build a nation of blessed people through Abraham by sending Jesus to die on the cross.
- All who trust in Jesus become part of the people of God and experience his blessing.

Week 2:

- God blesses his people so that all people on earth will know God's gracious rule and also come to praise him.



Leader's Study Notes

Read Acts 13:13-52 noting whom Paul addressed in his sermon and how they responded to his message.

Use the following notes to help you think about the passages in more detail.

This is the first of Paul's missionary journeys. It was his custom to start in the synagogue of every new city he entered (Acts 17:2). There he would not only have encountered Jewish listeners with a rich heritage of understanding about the Creator and his dealings with his people, but also God-fearing Gentiles. These Gentiles had not converted to Judaism, but were closely associated with their local synagogue.

13:16-22 This is Paul's first big sermon, having merely been the companion of Barnabas until this time. He addressed both Jews and Gentiles in the crowd as he summarised God's faithfulness throughout Israel's history. He began not simply with their rescue from Egypt, but their time in Egypt where they prospered even though they were enslaved. This is a fulfilment of God's promise to make Abraham into a great nation with many descendants.

He then traced their rebellious wilderness wanderings and God's gracious dealings with them which resulted in them

displacing the pagan nations in Canaan and fulfilling God's promise to Abraham to give this land to Abraham's descendants.

Finally, he described the circumstances around the formation of kingship in Israel and hints at the promises God made to David. All of this sets the stage for what Paul was going to tell them about Jesus.

13:23-37 Jesus is the promised descendant of Abraham and of David. Despite the fact that he was rejected by the religious leaders of Israel, his resurrection proves that he is the one who fulfils all of the Old Testament promises. Paul highlights again in verse 26 that this message of salvation is for both Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews).

13:38-41 Paul is very deliberate here. Forgiveness of sins is proclaimed through Jesus and it's only through faith in him, not by the law, that we are freed from our sins. The message of salvation is for everyone, but it comes with a stern warning – those who reject it will perish.

13:42-50 There was a mixed response to the truth about Jesus; some rejected it and others accepted it. Those who rejected the truth began to persecute Paul and Barnabas and forced them to leave the area. Paul once more emphasised the inclusive nature of the gospel in verse 47; he quoted Isaiah 49 to prove that God's message of salvation is, and always has been, intended for all people everywhere.

13:51-52 Persecution did not distract Paul and Barnabas from the task they had been given by God, nor did it dampen their spirits. They simply moved on to the next city to preach the gospel there.

The message of the apostles centred around the person and work of Jesus. It showed that Jesus was

the promised king, the fulfilment of God's dealings with his people from the beginning. The resurrection of Jesus was the final sign that he is who he claims to be. A mixed response to this message is to be expected, but the Holy Spirit enables those who are persecuted to keep preaching the gospel with joy despite opposition.

Reflect

- What is it about Paul's speech here that excites you most about God's plan of salvation? How does/could your life reflect this?
- Think about the different responses you've had when speaking about Jesus. How is the example of Paul and Barnabas an encouragement to you?
- Give thanks that the resurrection of Jesus proves that he is the promised king. Pray that the Holy Spirit would make you bold and joyful in sharing the gospel with all people, despite opposition.



Life Story

The true story on page 31 has been provided by Serving in Mission. Use it at any point in your lesson to illustrate an application of the lesson in real life.

Session Outline



Review

Review the previous lesson using the questions provided as well as any of the visual aids that were used for the previous lesson. This is helpful for children who may have missed that session.



Introductory Idea

Introduces this week's lesson.

Pose the questions at the end of the Introductory Idea. This gives children something to look out for in the lesson and helps their concentration. These get answered later in the session.



Teaching Plan

The core of the session.

The action of the Bible text is told as a story for younger children and explained. Or the Bible text is taught as a simple Bible study for older children.



Game Idea

Not essential.

Reinforces the lesson aim in a fun way and provides a way of displacing energy!



Review the questions posed in the Introductory Idea.

Discuss and Apply

Not to be missed!

This is where the children can be quizzed on the content and meaning of the Bible story. Questions and discussion are needed to apply this Bible story to the children's everyday lives. They should do most of the talking.



Prayer Idea

Use the prayer idea or just encourage each child to pray about an aspect of the lesson.



Activity

An opportunity to reinforce the lesson. **For younger children, Activity A or B will be suitable. For older children, Activity C or D can be used to facilitate the Teaching or the Discuss and Apply section – some children prefer a lively discussion to completing written answers.**



Memory Verse

A fun way of remembering the key verse for the series.



Review

Review the previous lesson using the following questions:

- To whom does God show kindness? [*His people – us (67:1, 6-7)*]
- How does God show kindness? [*Blesses his people and rules justly (67:4, 6-7)*]
- Why does God show kindness? [*So that all people will know and praise him (67:2-5, 7)*]



Introductory Idea

Option 1: Timeline. Print two or three copies of page 33 onto paper or card and cut out the pictures along the bold lines. Keep the sets of pictures separate with paperclips, but place them in random order.

Divide the room into groups and give one set of pictures to each. Explain that they are all pictures of events or great people from Israel's history. The teams need to race against each other and try to put them in the correct order. You could give them a printed copy of Acts 13:16-25 or get them to open their Bibles to help them figure out the order the pictures should be in.

Check the pictures when they are finished and talk through some of the events/people that are pictured. In today's true story from the Bible Paul reminded a large crowd of people all about Israel's past and showed them how these things pointed to something even better that God had done.

Option 2: Shadows. Before the lesson gather a number of items that the children will be familiar with e.g. a mug; hairbrush; frying pan; tennis racket; football; lightbulb. Include a few trickier items as well. Make a small shadow screen using a lamp and a thin white sheet draped over a small table/clothes horse/frame. You might need to construct this on top of a bench or table so that all the children can see.

Divide the group into two teams down the middle of the room. Explain that you have some items that the children need to identify; the first team to correctly do so will earn a point. Dim the lights and hold one of the items close to the light without showing it to the children so that the shadow falls on the screen. Repeat this with the other items and then declare the winning team.

Alternatively, if you are unable to make or use a shadow screen, simply use 2D silhouettes. Print out a number of pictures of the items you want to use then trace an outline of each and colour them in black. Paste the silhouettes back to back with their corresponding pictures and then hold the silhouettes up one at a time for the children to see. Turn them around to show the pictures and confirm whether the children have guessed correctly.

Ask the children whether they found it easy or difficult to tell what the shapes really were. Talk about how obvious it became once they could see the actual items. In today's true story from the Bible, Paul told a great crowd about the clues (or shadows) that God had given them in the past and that now God has made the real thing known to all people. [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]

Bridge Questions

The children must listen carefully to today's true story from the Bible to discover the answers to the following questions:

- Who was Paul's message for? [*Jews and Gentiles – everyone (13:16, 26, 44-46)*]
- Who was his message about? [*Jesus (13:23, 32-33, 38)*]
- What did people think of this message? [*Some accepted it and rejoiced; others rejected it and tried to harm Paul (13:43-45, 48, 50)*]



Teaching Plan

There are two main teaching points to cover in this lesson. Firstly, the content of Paul's message – that God's promise to send a rescuing king (Messiah) is fulfilled in Jesus. And secondly, the two reactions to this message. With younger children you will need to work to simplify Paul's sermon and concentrate on the different ways in which those listening responded to it.

Start by explaining where Paul and Barnabas were, what they were doing and who was gathered there to listen (a great crowd of both Jews and Gentiles).

Using the pictures from page 33 (Intro Idea Option 1), briefly summarise the history Paul gives of God's faithfulness to his people. You could choose two or three pictures to highlight and explain how God had kept his promises to Israel e.g. God had promised to make them into a great nation (v.17, he made them prosper in Egypt); God promised to give them land (v.19, he drove out the Canaanites).

After each of these promises ask the children whether they think this is a good thing or a bad thing. Would it make the people listening happy or sad/angry? **For very young children you could provide each child with a circle of paper which has a happy face on one side and a sad/angry face on the other. Ask them to hold up the correct face whenever you ask the question.**

Finish by talking about the promise God had made to King David – that he would have a son after him who would rule God's people as king forever and save them from their sins. Explain that Paul told the people that Jesus was this promised king. The Jewish leaders had rejected him, but God raised him from the dead so that anyone who trusts in him may be forgiven.

Again, ask the children how they think the people listening would have felt when they heard this. Remind them that many different people had come to hear Paul, then talk about their various reactions – some Jews followed Paul (v.43); many Gentiles rejoiced and trusted in Jesus (v.48); others were jealous and tried to hurt Paul and Barnabas and forced them to leave (v.45, 50). But Paul and Barnabas went away happy because of what God had done.

For older children – use the above teaching plan for younger children as a basis for your lesson, but instead of holding up pictures for Paul's sermon get the children to look up the events described. These could include:

- Life in and exodus from Egypt (Exodus 1:6-12, 6:5-9, 12:50-51)
- Joshua's conquest of Canaan (Joshua 1:1-5, 23:1, 24:11-13)
- King David's reign (2 Samuel 7:8-16)

If you are short of time, print out the passages onto paper before the lesson for the children to read through rather than having to look them up.

You could go through each event one at a time or divide the class into several smaller groups with one each to look up and then feedback together. Get the children to consider the following questions:

- What is going on in the passage? What events are being described?
- How is God showing kindness to his people?
- Which of the promises God first made to Abraham is it like (people, blessing or land)?

Focus finally on the work of John the Baptist and why Paul mentions him in particular. Link his announcement to the idea that Jesus is the fulfilment of all of God's promises to his people – he is the promised king who will gather God's people to himself to live in his perfect kingdom (land) forever.



Game Idea

Option 1: Before the lesson cover the sides of a large die in paper; draw a smiley face on four sides and a sad face on two.

Divide the group into two teams and get the children to gather around in a circle. Explain that each of them will be given a chance to gain points for their team by rolling the die. A smiley face earns one point; a sad face means that they lose all of their points for that round. They can choose to stop rolling the die at any time and 'bank' their points, then a child from the other team may take a turn.

Start by giving the die to one child and count out the points as they add up. Encourage their team members to cheer and make a bit of noise. Ask occasionally if they would like to stop and save all of their points. If they say yes, write up the score and

pass the die to a child on the other team. If a sad face is rolled before they have a chance to 'bank' they will lose all of their points for that round.

Continue in this way until every child has had a turn to throw for their team.

For older children, you could simply use a plain die and choose two numbers to be 'losing throws'.

Talk about the children's reactions at the end. How did they react when their team was winning? What about when the other team was doing well? Talk about how when their team was doing well it was good news for them, but bad news for the other team.

Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible some people knew that Jesus' victory was a good thing from God and they responded happily; others thought that this was bad because they didn't want God's blessing to be for anyone but themselves.

Option 2: Love It, Hate It. Draft a list of different things that usually evoke a strong reaction. These could include types of food (e.g. peanut butter, Marmite, sardines, Brussels sprouts); subjects (e.g. mathematics, science, drama; art); sports (e.g. football, gymnastics, running; rugby), etc. **For younger children, hold up pictures of each of the items on your list.**

Explain that the children will have to decide very quickly whether they love or hate the different things you call out from your list. Designate one side of the room 'Hate' and the opposite side 'Love' then get the children to all stand in the middle. Read the first item on the list or hold up the picture then count down from three. In that time, the children must run to the side of the room that they think best describes how they feel about the item.

Continue through the list then talk about some of their reactions. Why do they love/hate some of those things? How can some people love one thing that others hate? Why is it different for different people? You might want to hold the name 'Jesus' up for the last round and see what the children do.

Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible Paul spoke to a huge crowd people. He told them some very good news about Jesus, but not everyone was happy to hear it – they reacted in very different ways.

Option 3: For older children. Divide the group into two teams and have them sit in lines on opposite sides of the room facing each other. Print enough copies of page 34 so that you will have at least one square of paper with 'yes' or 'no' written on it for each child. Scrunch these up into balls and place them all together in a large plastic bowl in the middle of the room.

Number the children off in each team and make sure they remember their number. For each round the leader declares that 'Jesus is king' and then calls out a number; the children in each team with that number

run to the middle and unscrunch a ball from the bowl to reveal what it says. If the child has a piece of paper with 'Yes' on it, they must cheer. If the piece of paper reads 'No' they must 'boo'. The first child to respond correctly earns a point for their team.

However, if only one child has a piece of paper reading 'Yes' and the other has one that reads 'No', the child with the 'No' must also chase the child with the 'Yes' back to their seat. If they manage to catch their opponent they gain a point for their team, but if the child escapes they will lose one.

Continue the game in this way, ensuring each pair of children has at least one turn. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Explore how the children felt when they opened their piece of paper. Were they nervous about getting a 'No' or a 'Yes'? Were they worried that they might get a 'Yes' when the other person got a 'No'? Why/why not?

How did they feel when they both had the same (either 'Yes' or 'No')?

Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible people responded in very different ways to the truth about Jesus. Some accepted the truth and wanted to hear more, others rejected the truth and chased the apostles out of their city, but Paul and Barnabas went away rejoicing.



Discuss and Apply

It's important for children to understand that not everyone accepts that Jesus is king. Some people are indifferent about this, but many are hostile towards Jesus and his followers. Understanding this helps children to be prepared for opposition they may face when talking to others about Jesus, but it also helps them to identify with the suffering and persecution that Christians in various parts of the world face on a daily basis. This should encourage them to pray for those who encounter opposition because of their faith.

There is no need to scare children with gruesome details, but it is helpful for all children to know that:

- opposition (and sometimes hostility) is to be expected when we share the truth about Jesus with others.
- Jesus is in control because he sits on his throne in heaven – even now.
- God gives courage and faithful endurance to those who trust Jesus.

If the children you teach are facing opposition in any form, how can you encourage them to continue living for Jesus and sharing him with others? How is Paul and Barnabas' faithful example in this lesson helpful?

How can the children you teach be encouraged to pray for Christians around the world facing brutal and life-threatening opposition?

The following questions might be helpful to help the children identify with Paul's experience and express how they feel in their own situation. This discussion is probably only helpful for children of school-going age.

- How might the apostles have felt when people said "Yes" to Jesus? What about when they said "No"? Why were there such different reactions?
- Why did Paul speak to both Jews and Gentiles? What was so important about his message?
- Who do we need to tell about Jesus? What can we learn about how people might respond?
- Are there some people you don't want to speak to because of how you think they will treat you? How should you act towards these people?
- What reason would you have to rejoice even when people reject the truth and treat you badly?



Life Story

Lizzie longs to tell people in Peru about how to get clean water – and how to get living water, Jesus.

She is a water engineer and was sent to Peru through Serving In Mission. She works in rural villages with other members of her church to help people understand how important it is to have clean water. Often these villages only have a single pipe bringing water in and if that gets damaged or contaminated then everyone becomes ill.

She teaches them how to keep their water supply clean; how to prevent infection; and how to keep the drains clear. But Lizzie's greatest joy is being able to share the good news of Jesus with the villagers, especially those who have never heard about him.

She said, "I work with a group of Christian churches interested in planting churches in these rural communities. I often travel out with those evangelists and work alongside them. The absolute necessity of clean water provides a fabulous opportunity to talk about the living water of Jesus."

Lizzie often thinks about the parts of the Bible where Jesus talks about himself as the living water – a message to all nations that he alone can provide people with everything they need.

In John 7:37-39 Jesus told the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and drink!"

Lizzie aims to spend at least ten years in Peru, working alongside local people and sharing the good news of Jesus as widely as she can.

If you want to find out more about Lizzie's faith and work and other Serving In Mission gospel workers, go to www.sim.co.uk



Prayer Idea

Encourage the children to pray for Christians around the world who are hurt or treated badly for being followers of Jesus or speaking about Jesus.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (www.csw.org.uk) has some helpful resources which you could share with your group. They also have some guidelines for writing to Christians in prison. Perhaps your class could write a letter of encouragement or [draw a picture](#) for someone in this situation.

You will need to ensure that the situation you choose to describe and level of detail is appropriate for the age group you teach. But we do want children to understand from the youngest possible age that following Jesus will invite opposition and persecution.



Activity

For 3-7s – choose either [Activity A](#) (page 35) or [Activity B](#) (page 36).

Activity A – Print page 35 onto paper or card for each child.

Before the lesson cut the top strip off each page and cut away the shaded areas using a craft blade.

The children colour in the pictures. The cross on the left needs to be coloured in red. You could also simply cut the entire window out (including the cross) on the left side and provide the children with two strips of red paper with which to make their own cross over the left window.

Help the children to fold and glue the card as shown to create a sleeve. Then slide the remaining slip of paper/card into the sleeve. The slip should stick out slightly either side as the sleeve has been cut shorter.

When slip is pulled to the right it reveals the reaction of those who liked what Paul had to say. When it is pulled left, the reaction of those who rejected Paul's message is revealed.

Activity B – Print page 36 (one copy for every child) and page 37 (one copy for every two children) onto paper or card. You will also require one split pin paper fastener for every child.

Before the lesson cut out the circles and make holes on the x's

The children colour the pictures. Help the children to fasten the circle with the quarter cut out on top of the circle with the pictures.

Show them how the story progresses starting with Paul entering the synagogue. This cycle repeats itself a number of times in the book of Acts.

For 7-11s – print either [Activity Sheet C](#) (page 38) or [Activity Sheet D](#) (page 39) onto paper for each child. Choose whichever is appropriate for your

children and use it to reinforce the lesson or as a discussion starter.



Memory Verse

By the end of this series the children will have learned the whole of Psalm 67.

In the previous two lessons they will have learned verses 1-5. Can the children recite these?

This week they will learn verses 6-7. Before the lesson divide the two verses up into four phrases each and write these on strips of paper. Place each of the phrases from the same verse in a separate balloon. Use two different colours of balloon, one for each verse/team. Inflate and knot the balloons.

Place all eight balloons at one end of the room. Divide the group into two teams and designate a colour to each team.

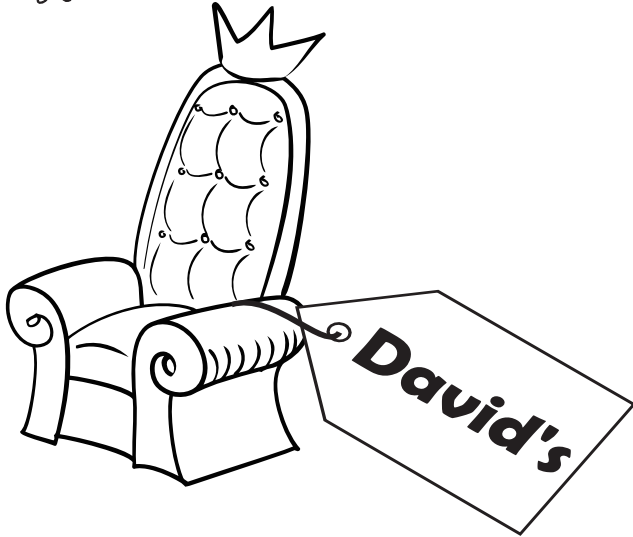
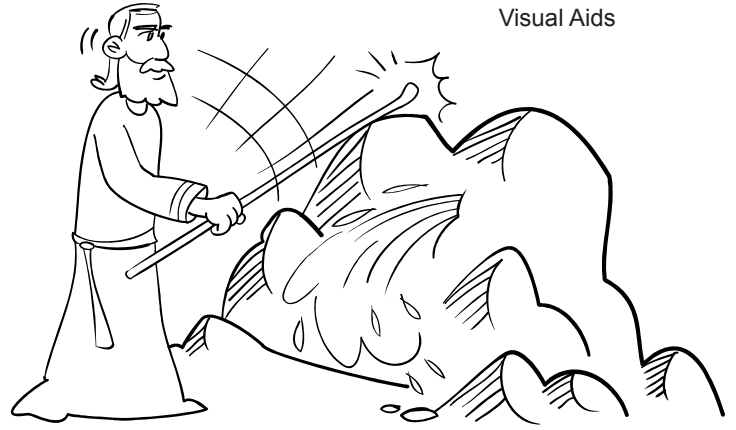
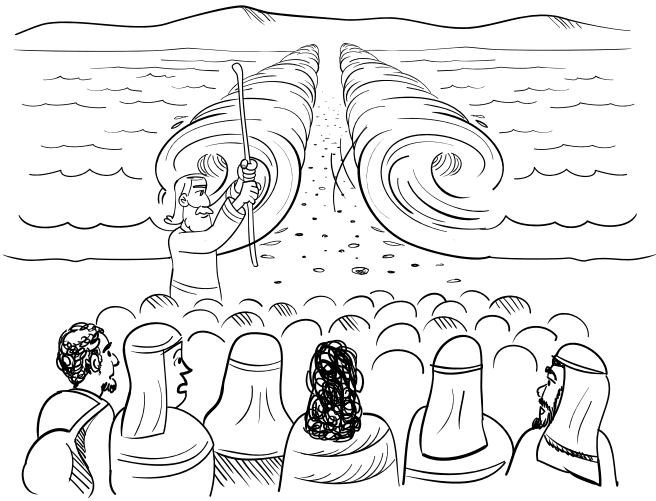
The teams send one person at a time to fetch one balloon from the pile. They then pop the balloon to discover the phrase.

Once all the phrases have been collected, they can arrange them in order. The first team to correctly learn and recite their verse wins. Swap verses and get them to learn the other team's verse before reciting them both together.

The NIV text for these verse could be broken up as follows:

Group 1: The land yields / its harvest; / God, our God, / blesses us.

Group 2: May God bless / us still, so that / all the ends of the earth / will fear him.



Yes

No



Yes

No



Yes

No

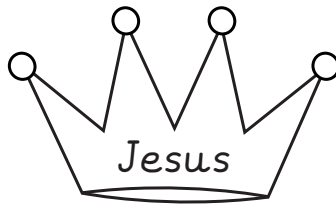


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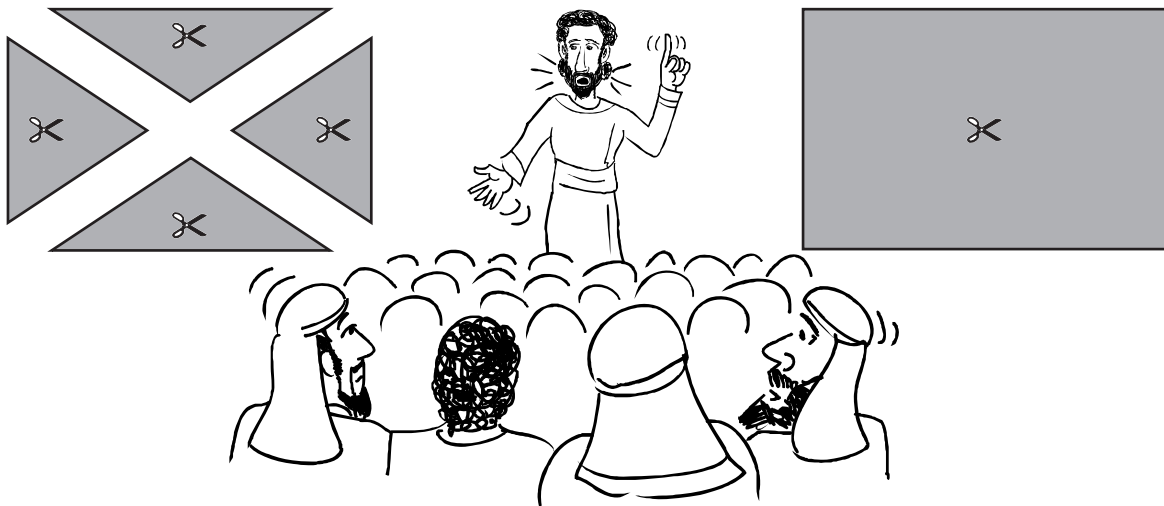
No



...some were
angry and
chased Paul
away.

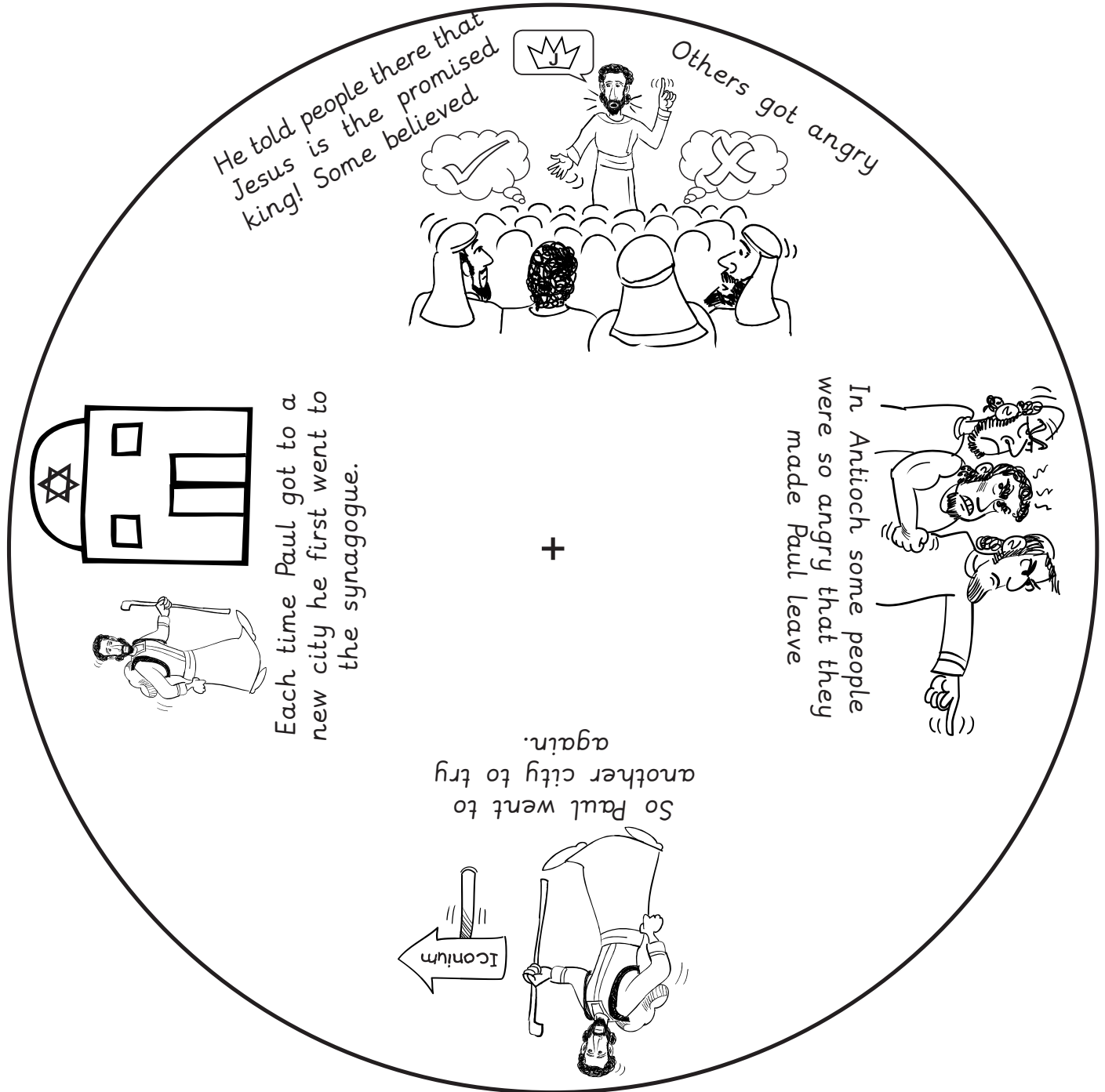


...some were
happy and
wanted to
know more.



When Paul told people in Antioch that Jesus is the promised king...





Acts 13:13-52

Turn the dial to see what happened in one of the
cities called Pisidian Antioch.
Paul and Barnabas went to
different cities, telling people the
good news about Jesus.

+

+

Paul and Barnabas went to
different cities, telling people the
good news about Jesus.
Turn the dial to see what happened in one of the
cities called Pisidian Antioch.
Acts 13:13-52

A Message for All Nations

The true story can be found in Acts 13:13-52

Discover

Who did Paul address in his sermon? (13:16, 26) Circle all the correct answers.

Only the Jews

Gentiles

Men of Israel (Jews)

His father

People from Jerusalem

Paul spoke about Israel's past and how God had always kept his promises.

Number the events below from 1 to 5 to put them in the correct order (13:17-22, 24)

- ___ The work of John the Baptist
- ___ 40 years in the desert
- ___ King David's reign
- ___ The escape from Egypt
- ___ Joshua's conquest of Canaan



Who fulfilled all of God's promises about a saviour? (13:27-29, 32-33) _____

How did the people respond to Paul's message?

1. Some f _____ Paul and Barnabas (13:43)
2. Others were j _____ and spoke against Paul (13:45)
3. Some were glad and b _____ (13:48)
4. Others p _____ Paul and Barnabas and made them l _____ (13:50)



Think Spot

Which part of Paul's sermon do you think made people most angry? Why?

What did Paul and Barnabas do when some Jews tried to harm them? (13:51-52)

Tick all the correct answers.

- They were sad and angry
- They rejoiced in the Holy Spirit
- They left the city
- They called them names in return

Discuss

Why did Paul speak to both Jews and Gentiles?

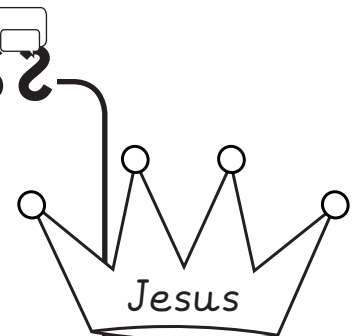
What was so important about his message?

Who do we need to tell about Jesus?

How might people respond?

Are there some people you don't want to speak to because of how you think they will treat you?

How should you act towards these people?



A Message for All Nations

The true story can be found in Acts 13:13-52

Discover

Who did Paul address in his sermon? (13:16, 26)

_____ and _____

Paul spoke about Israel's past and how God had always kept his promises. List some of the events and people Paul mentioned in the space below (13:17-22, 24)



Who fulfilled all of God's promises about a saviour? (13:27-29, 32-33) _____

How did the people respond to Paul's message?

1. Some _____ Paul and Barnabas (13:43)
2. Others were _____ and spoke against Paul (13:45)
3. Some were glad and _____ (13:48)
4. Others _____ Paul and Barnabas and made them _____ (13:50)



Think Spot

Which part of Paul's sermon do you think made people most angry? Why?

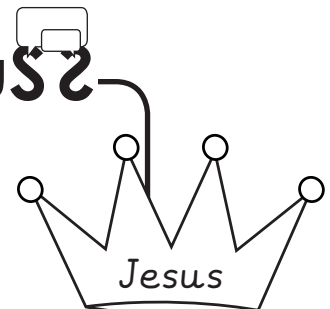
What did Paul and Barnabas do when some Jews tried to harm them? (13:51-52)

Discuss

Why did Paul speak to both Jews and Gentiles?
What was so important about his message?

Who do we need to tell about Jesus?
How might people respond?

Are there some people you don't want to speak to because of how you think they will treat you? How should you act towards these people? What reason would you have to rejoice?



A King for All Nations

Revelation 7:9-17

Big Idea : John shared a vision of heaven where people from every nation who trust in Jesus will be gathered around his throne, worshipping him.

Aim : To teach that Jesus' death and resurrection makes it possible for people from anywhere in the world to be forgiven and safe in heaven with him.

The Story So Far

Week 1:

- God kept his promise to build a nation of blessed people through Abraham by sending Jesus to die on the cross.
- All who trust in Jesus become part of the people of God and experience his blessing.

Week 2:

- God blesses his people so that all people on earth will know God's gracious rule and also come to praise him.

Week 3:

- While preaching in Pisidian Antioch Paul traced the history of Israel from their time in Egypt showing that Jesus is the fulfilment of all the promises God had made since Abraham.

7:11-12 The angels, elders and four living creatures, (previously introduced in 4:4-11 and 5:6-14) represent all living creatures: heavenly beings, humanity and every species of animal. Every living being is represented before the throne, subject to King Jesus, and they worship him.

7:13-17 The elder's question provides the opportunity for the elder himself to explain what John sees. The great tribulation refers to the final persecution at the end of the age rather than the persecution that is present daily in the lives of all Christians. What they all have in common is that each one has been purified because they have trusted in Jesus' death for their sins to be forgiven. Since they have been purified they can:

- remain safely in God's presence (7:15);
- be fully satisfied (7:16);
- have no fear of persecution (7:16);
- be cared for by Jesus who will nourish and comfort them (7:17).

This is a magnificently victorious picture of the final fulfilment of God's promise to bless all nations through Jesus – the Seed of Abraham. Jesus' death and resurrection provide a sure hope for all people everywhere, regardless of their ethnicity, language, location or cultural heritage. King Jesus is finally seen to be who he really is – the glorious promised king of all nations who alone is worthy of worship, honour and praise.



Leader's Study Notes

Read Revelation 7:9-17 noting the identity of those wearing white robes and how they are described.

Use the following notes to help you think about the passages in more detail.

Revelation was written by John (1:4) while he was exiled on the island of Patmos. The style of writing is called apocalyptic and it is highly symbolic. Much of the imagery is drawn from the Old Testament books of Ezekiel and Daniel.

7:9-10 Here is the final fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham – a great multitude that no-one can count (cf. Genesis 12:1-3, 15:5, 22:17). People from every nation, tribe, people and language are gathered together here and experience God's blessing – salvation through Jesus. Their white robes are a sign of purity and the palm branches a symbol of victory in battle. The Lamb is Jesus, the one who was sacrificed to purify his people from their sins (cf. 7:14).

Reflect

- Think about your church and community. How do they compare with the gathering in this vision? What makes it possible for people to be a part of the heavenly gathering?
- What comfort can you draw from this passage as you face struggles in this life? Are you able to offer this comfort to others? How would you do that?
- Give thanks for the certain hope that is found in Jesus – real forgiveness, restoration and a secure future with him.



Life Story

The true story on page 44 has been provided by Serving in Mission. Use it at any point in your lesson to illustrate an application of the lesson in real life.

Session Outline



Review

Review the previous lesson using the questions provided as well as any of the visual aids that were used for the previous lesson. This is helpful for children who may have missed that session.



Introductory Idea

Introduces this week's lesson.

Pose the questions at the end of the Introductory Idea. This gives children something to look out for in the lesson and helps their concentration. These get answered later in the session.



Teaching Plan

The core of the session.

The action of the Bible text is told as a story for younger children and explained. Or the Bible text is taught as a simple Bible study for older children.



Game Idea

Not essential.

Reinforces the lesson aim in a fun way and provides a way of displacing energy!



Review the questions posed in the Introductory Idea.

Discuss and Apply

Not to be missed!

This is where the children can be quizzed on the content and meaning of the Bible story. Questions and discussion are needed to apply this Bible story to the children's everyday lives. They should do most of the talking.



Prayer Idea

Use the prayer idea or just encourage each child to pray about an aspect of the lesson.



Activity

An opportunity to reinforce the lesson. For younger children, Activity A or B will be suitable. For older children, Activity C or D can be used to facilitate the Teaching or the Discuss and Apply section – some children prefer a lively discussion to completing written answers.



Memory Verse

A fun way of remembering the key verse for the series.



Review

Review the previous lesson using the following questions:

- Who was Paul's message for? [*Jews and Gentiles – everyone* (13:16, 26, 44-46)]
- Who was his message about? [*Jesus* (13:23, 32-33, 38)]
- What did people think of this message? [*Some accepted it and rejoiced; others rejected it and tried to harm Paul* (13:43-45, 48, 50)]



Introductory Idea

Option 1: Perfect world. Divide the children into groups and provide each group with magazines or other pictures from which to choose what they might include in their 'perfect world'.

With very young children, you could do this exercise by simply holding up a range of pictures (good and bad) and asking them each to say whether that picture shows something that we want in our world or not. 'Bad pictures' might include people fighting, sad faces, a gravestone, a person with a broken arm, etc. 'Good pictures' could include anything that the children of the age you teach might find attractive. These will often be material things rather than spiritual or relational and for the purpose of this exercise that's fine.

Briefly discuss why each of those items make a perfect world. Today's true story from the Bible is about a vision (or dream) that John had where God showed him what heaven is like. It's a picture of the perfect world. [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]

Option 2: Before the lesson, make a list of a number of different countries and gather some facts about them. These could include how far away they are from you; how many people live there; what the language looks/sounds like; the kind of foods eaten there, etc. Try to choose countries that are very different from each other. Write the facts and country names on separate pieces of paper.

On one side of a board or wall place the list of countries. Read out the facts about each of them one at a time or, to make it slightly easier, stick all of the facts on the opposite side of the board. Can the children guess which country is being described?

With younger children, you will need to simplify this exercise. Choose just one fact about each country and use pictures instead of words where possible. Place the facts and the countries in two columns on the board and get them to match the fact to the correct country.

Talk about how different each of the countries and the people are from each other. Can the children imagine

what it would be like if they all lived together? Do they think it would work?

Today's true story from the Bible is about a vision (or dream) that John had where God showed him a place in which all kinds of people could live together happily. It's a picture of heaven, the perfect world. [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]

Bridge Questions

The children must listen carefully to today's true story from the Bible to discover the answers to the following questions:

- Who will be in God's perfect world? [*A great multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language* (7:9)]
- How will they get there? [*They are made clean by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus* (7:14)]
- What will they do when they get there? [*Worship God in loud voices because he has saved them* (7:10)]



Teaching Plan

This passage breaks into two sections, centering on the question that John is asked in verse 13 – who are these people and where did they come from? You could therefore teach the lesson in two parts by first describing what John saw (7:9-12) and then explaining what it means in answer to John's question (7:14-17).

It will be fun to try to recreate this scene using the models of the four living creatures on page 46; multiple angels from page 47; and also the children in your group. To do this get the children to sit in a circle. If you have a small class use a model of a throne and sixteen pawns from a chess set to be the elders. [Revelation 4:4 tells us there were twenty-four elders, but the actual number is not mentioned here so you could use sixteen as representative.] Arrange the elders, four living creatures and the angels around the throne in concentric circles. The children can be the great multitude that surrounds the entire scene. If you have a large class you will either need to upsize the models and use an actual chair as the throne or use children to represent some of the creatures/elders/angels. You could also provide palm branches (or green paper cut to look like palm branches) for each child.

Talk about what they were doing – praising God, wearing white and waving palm branches. Explain what each of these elements means:

- The elders and four living creatures are a picture of all earthly creatures.
- The angels represent all heavenly creatures.
- The great multitude are those who have been saved by the death of Jesus, from every nation,

tribe, people and language on earth. Their white robes show their purity - forgiveness of sins because of Jesus' death. The palm branches are a symbol of peace.

- The throne of the Lamb shows Jesus as king over all creation. Everything in all creation is gathered around the throne worshipping him.

Focus your explanation on the last two points – the great multitude and the throne of the Lamb. Talk about why the people are gathered around Jesus and how he will look after his people in heaven (verses 15-17). If you used Intro Idea Option 1 you could refer back to some of the things the children wanted to exclude from their perfect world. Which of these are mentioned here? How does Jesus change them? Which of the good things they mentioned are promised here?

For older children – Use the above teaching plan for younger children, but get the older children to create the scene themselves. Divide the group into teams and provide them with all the models from pages 46 and 47. Get them to look up the passage and arrange the scene described in verses 9-12 before discussing what it means.



Game Idea

Option 1: Play a variation on the popular 'Fruit Salad' game. The children sit on chairs in a circle with one less chair than there are children. Go around the circle and assign one of three or four different nationalities to each child e.g. Australian, Chinese, Nigerian, Italian. The child in the middle also needs to be given a nationality.

To play the game the child in the middle calls one of the nationalities and all the children who have been assigned that nationality need to get up and swap seats. While they are moving between seats, the child in the middle tries to occupy one of the empty seats. The child left without a seat must then call another nationality. Every so often, when the leader shouts "Heaven" all the children must swap seats. **For very young children choose simple nationalities and do all the calling for them.**

Remind the children that in heaven every nation, tribe, people and language will be there. Anyone, from anywhere in the world, who has trusted in Jesus' death will be there with him.

Option 2: For younger children. Before the lesson print out a number of copies of the shapes on page 48, enough for each child in your group to have one shape. Alternatively, use sticky labels and draw one of five different shapes onto each, enough for one shape per child.

Give each child one of the shapes/stickers and get them to move around the room. Explain that you will call out a number between two and five; the children must get into groups of that number, but every child

in that group must have a different shape. Anyone who is not in a group is out for one round. After each round the children start moving around the room again until you call another number.

Remind the children that today's true story from the Bible was about what heaven will be like for everyone who has trusted in Jesus' death. People were there from every nation, tribe, people group and language – all kinds of people gathered to worship King Jesus.

Option 3: For older children. Print four of copies of page 48 onto two different coloured sheets of paper, two per colour. Rough cut the pages into six squares and scrunch each of these up to conceal the five shapes and one blank piece of paper (this will decrease the chance of any one team getting a full set in the first round). This will give you twelve balls of each colour.

Place all the paper balls in a pile in the middle of the room. Divide the group into two teams and get them to sit at an equal distance from the pile of paper balls. If you have a large group you could run this game with three teams, but you will need another set of shapes in a third colour and will also need three copies of each colour.

The game is played in three rounds. In the first round, the children should collect five balls of the same colour; in the second, they should collect five shapes of the same colour; and in the third, they should end up with a 'full set' – five shapes in each colour.

Round 1: The children need to run in a relay to collect a 'set of five' for their team by collecting one scrunched up ball at a time from the pile. Do not reveal to them that they need a full set of shapes and not simply five balls. The children should collect five of the same colour. This is more likely to be the case if you also name the teams the same colour as the paper you have used.

Once the teams have collected five balls ask them to open the balls up to reveal the shapes. Do any of them have five different shapes? If not, they do not have a full set. (At this stage in the game the chance of any team having a full set of shapes is very low, but if they do you will need to move directly to round three!)

Round 2: Tell the children that there are five different shapes. They need to collect a 'full set' (don't explain what a full set is at this point either). The children then continue fetching balls until they have a set of five shapes. They may only open up the paper balls when they are back with their team. Which is the first team to get a set of five shapes? Duplicate shapes and blanks must be scrunched up again and returned to the pile.

Round 3: Explain that none of them yet have a truly full set of shapes. Can the children work out what they need to have a 'full set'? Remind them again that there are only five different shapes in each colour. Help them realise that they need to collect five shapes

in each of the colours to make up a full set (ten balls if there are two teams; fifteen if there are three). The first team to get a full set wins.

Remind the children that today's true story from the Bible was about what heaven will be like for everyone who has trusted in Jesus' death. People were there not just from every country in the world, but also every tribe, people group and language – all kinds of people gathered to worship King Jesus.



Discuss and Apply

Invite the children to identify differences between themselves. This may include age, height, hair and eye colour, ethnicity, nationality, language etc. In some groups there will be more differences and they may be more obvious than in others.

Can the children think of anything that they have in common (or is the same about all of them)? You might point out that they have all come to this group to learn about Jesus. In that way your group is a little bit like the vision that John had of heaven – many different people all worshipping one person, Jesus.

Do the children know other children from their neighbourhood or school who are also different to them? Maybe they come from another country or speak a different language? Is it possible for them to also worship Jesus? How might that happen?

Remind the children that God showed John what heaven is like – many people (more than you can count) from every country, every tribe, every people group and every language all doing the same thing: worshipping Jesus.

For older children – you might also explore the idea that John's vision shows us what is necessary if people are going to be in heaven: they will need to be worshippers of Jesus.

In our politically correct world we may feel that we cannot invite someone from another country/culture/ethnicity to leave their religion and trust in Jesus.

- Is this right or wrong? How does this passage support your answer?
- What is the makeup of your church? In what way is your church a picture of heaven? In what way is it different? What could you do to make it more like what John saw?



Life Story

About 1.4 billion people live in China – more than in any other country in the world – but only around 65 million of them know Jesus.

While that may look like a small proportion, there are as many Christians in China as the whole population

of the United Kingdom and the number of Chinese Christians is growing very quickly indeed.

In 1949, just after the Second World War, there were only around one million Christians in the whole country. Some people think that by 2030 there will be more Chinese Christians than there are in America. That huge growth shows that the gospel really is for all nations and that Jesus is the king of all people.

His gospel is being spread by many dedicated people who are working in China through agencies like Serving In Mission and Overseas Mission Foundation. Many of them are in China as English teachers, but they seek to share the gospel through the way they live and by personal contact with Chinese people.

A young couple called Phil and Sue live in a big tower block in one of China's big cities and go to a church which meets on the 27th floor of another tower block.

Sue loves to go to the weekly Bible study groups with other young mums, while Phil works to help his Chinese friends understand the gospel better through Bible study and by praying with them.

They love the Chinese people and want to stay in China as long as they can, building up people in their knowledge of Jesus and also helping small churches to thrive. They have to renew their visa to stay in the country every year but know that God will lead them to wherever he wants them to be.

But even though they are working very hard, there are still huge areas of China and other parts of Asia where Jesus is not known so it is very important that people who love Jesus keep going there.

If you want to find out more about the spread of the gospel in China or about Serving In Mission gospel workers, go to www.sim.co.uk



Prayer Idea

Play Prayer Bingo. Before the lesson draft a list of sixteen of the least reached countries in the world and discover one important fact about each which will make for a suitable prayer item. Resources like Operation World (www.operationworld.org) or the Joshua Project (www.joshuaproject.net) provide helpful information and prayer guides.

Use these facts to create a bingo card like the one on page 49.

Ask the children to gather in groups of four and give each group one bingo sheet and four sets of four different colour tokens so that each child in a group will receive four tokens of the same colour. These can simply be squares of coloured paper no bigger than the blocks on the bingo sheet.

The children take turns to place a token each on the sheet and pray for the country they cover. They keep

going until the entire page is full. They then look to see which child has three tokens in a row horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

For younger children – simply give each child a token to place on the sheet (the colour doesn't matter as this will be done as a group exercise). As they place their token explain the prayer point to them and suggest what a good, simple prayer might be. The child might wish to pray this prayer or you could pray so that all the children can hear the prayer about that point.



Activity

For 3-7s – choose either Activity A (page 50) or Activity B (page 51) or Activity C.

Activity A – Print page 50 onto paper for each child.

The children colour the picture. Remind the children what each part of the picture represents.

Activity B – Print page 51 onto card for each child. Each child will also require one paper plate on which to assemble the throne room.

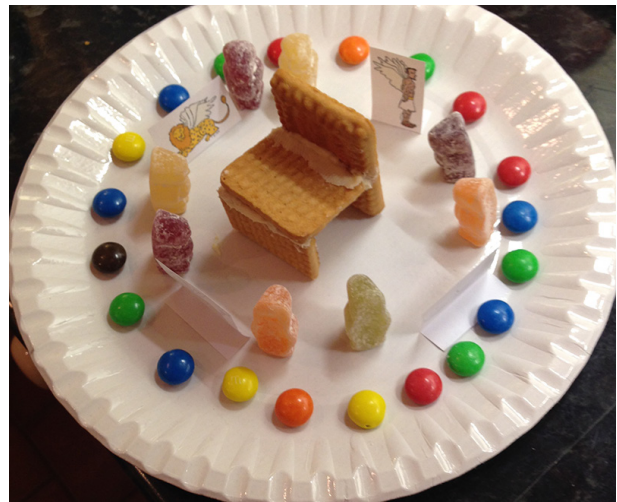
Before the lesson cut all the pictures from page 51 and paperclip them together in sets onto the plates.

The children colour in the pictures. Help them to assemble the throne room by folding and gluing the individual pictures in place with the throne in the centre and the four living creatures around the throne. The strips of children must be glued end to end to form a large circle. Place this on the plate encircling the throne and the living creatures. Write 'Revelation 7:9-17' on the edge of the plate. If you don't have paper plates you could also use another sheet of card or paper.

Activity C – Make an edible throne room. **Beware of food allergies.** You will require one paper plate per child; two wafer/malt biscuits per child; small sweets like Smarties or Jelly Tots; Jelly Babies; and icing.

Before the lesson cut half of the wafer biscuits in half to produce two squares which will be used for the seat and front legs of the throne.

Help the children to assemble the throne using the icing and the biscuits. Use a small amount of icing to stick a range of sweets around the throne to be the people. Jelly Babies can represent the elders and other sweets the four living creatures. You could also simply print the pictures from page 51. The finished product might look something like the picture below.



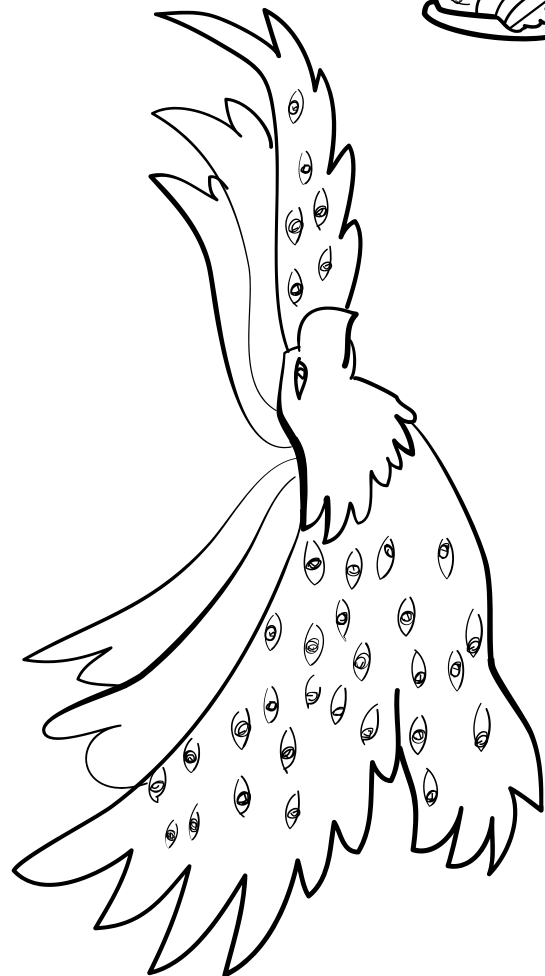
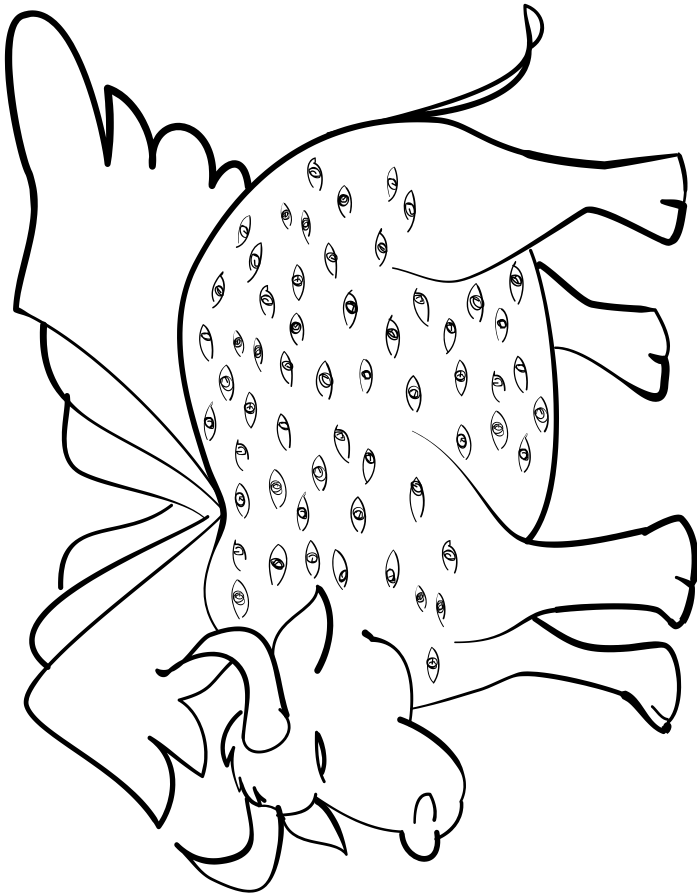
For 7-11s – print either Activity Sheet C (page 52) or Activity Sheet D (page 53) onto paper for each child. Choose whichever is appropriate for your children and use it to reinforce the lesson or as a discussion starter.

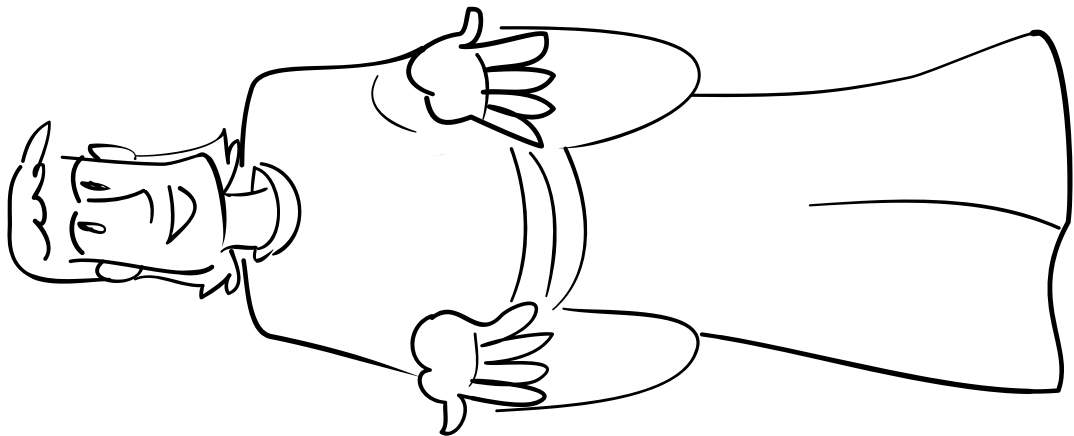
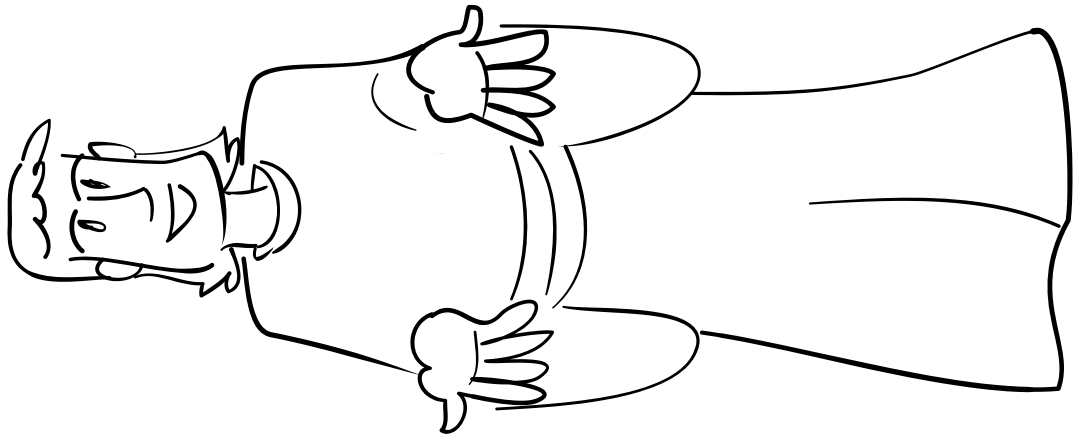
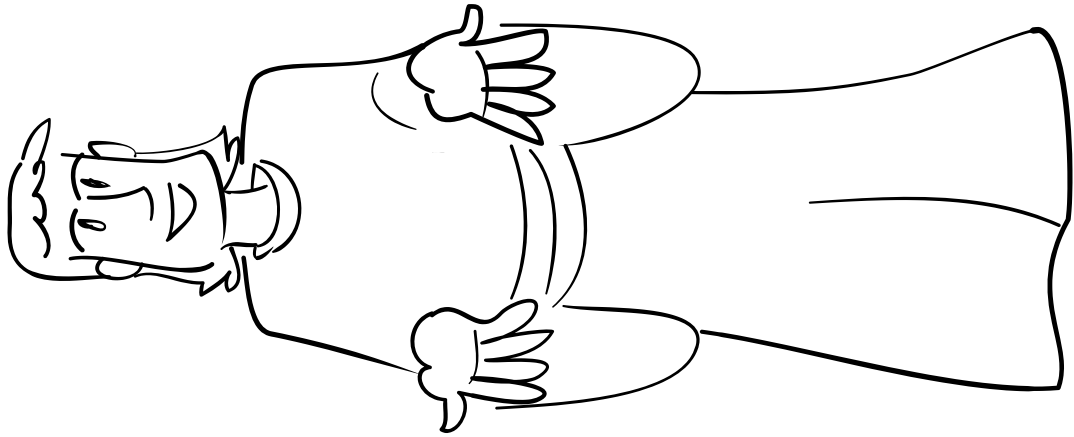
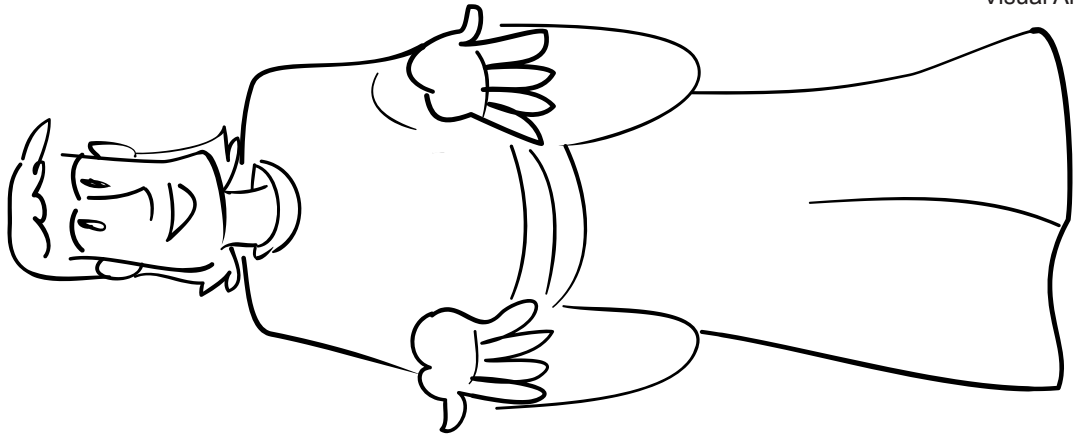


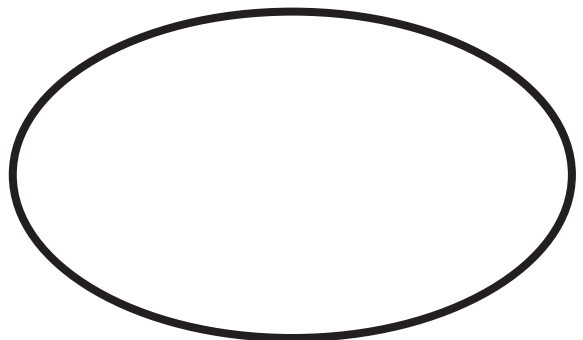
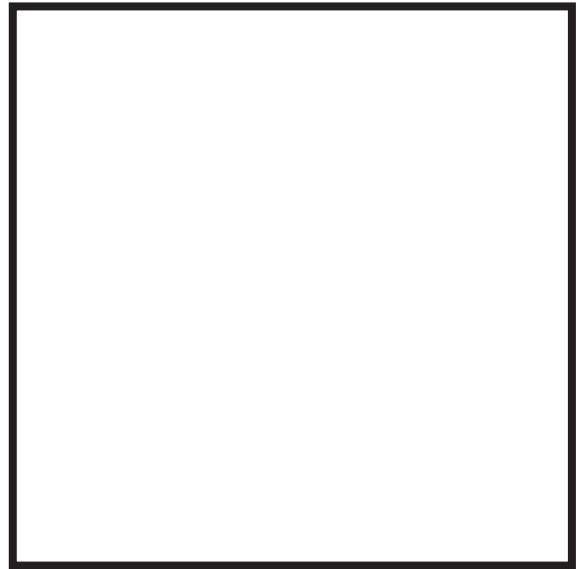
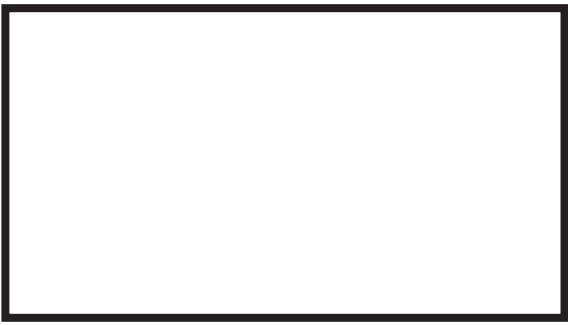
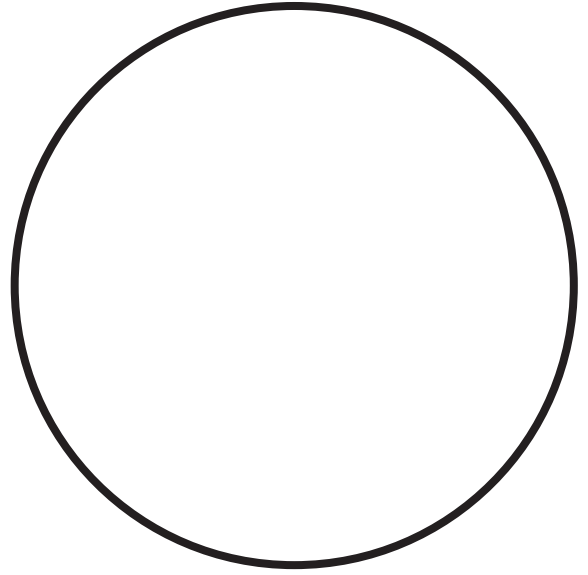
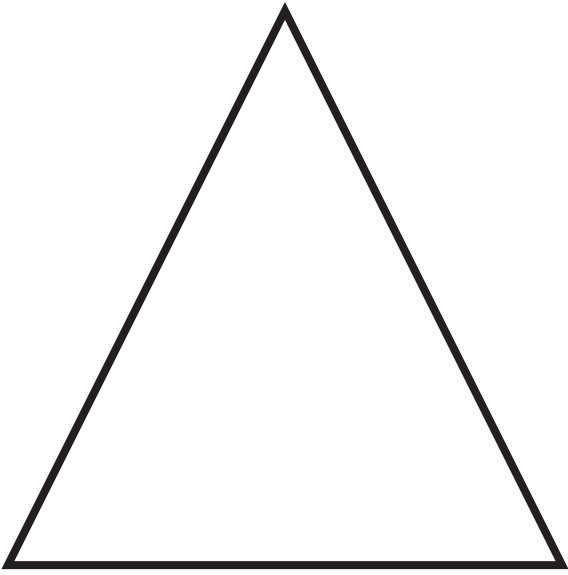
Memory Verse

The children should now be able to recite the whole of Psalm 67. You might need to first review it in the three stages using the pictures/method used to teach each section.

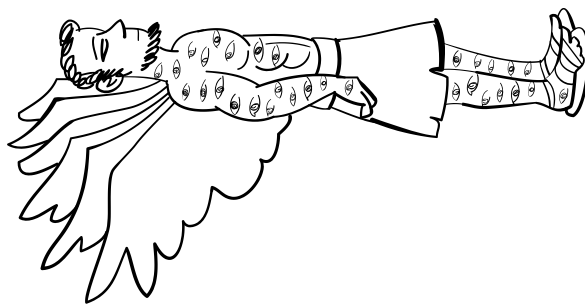
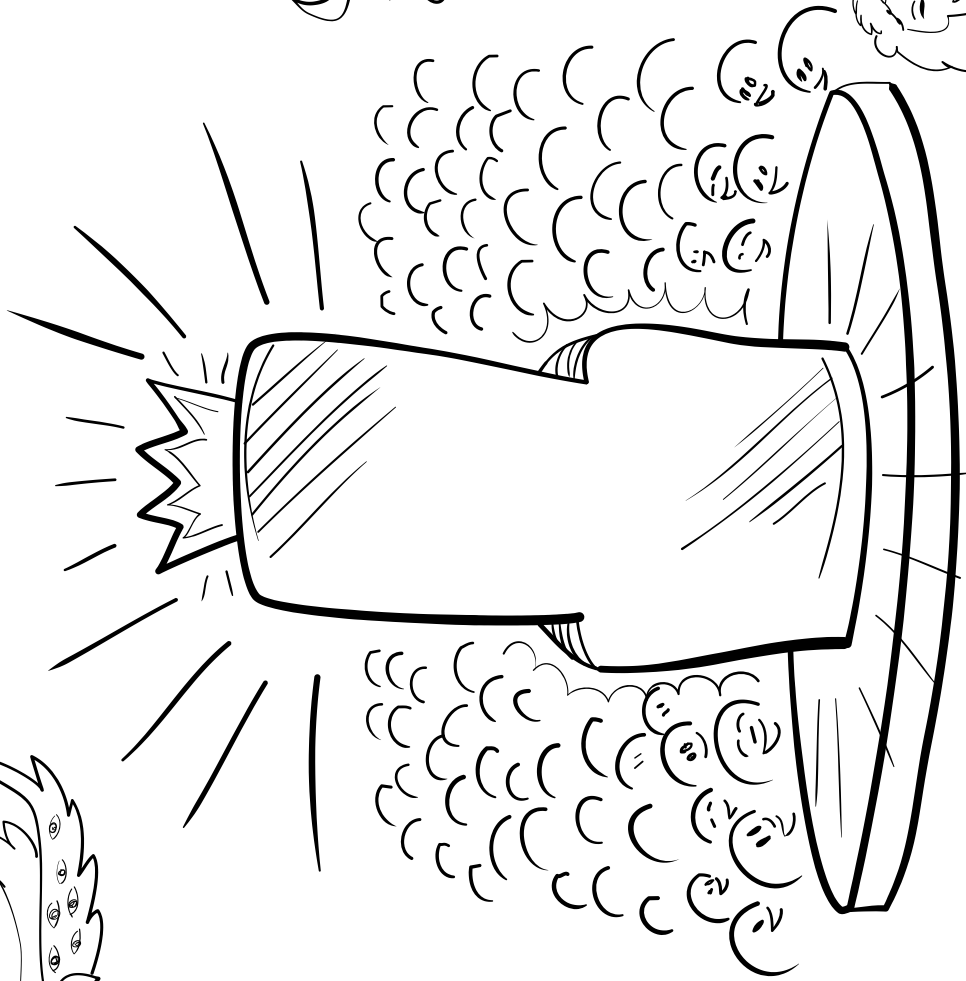
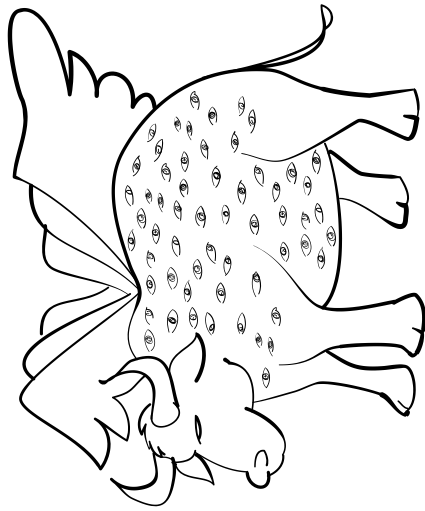
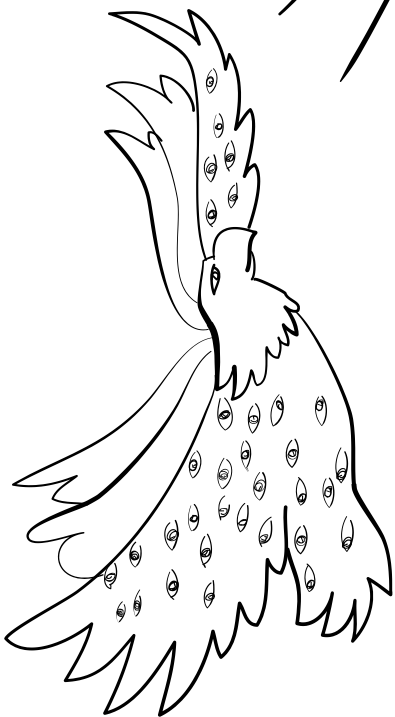
Remind the children what the Psalm means.





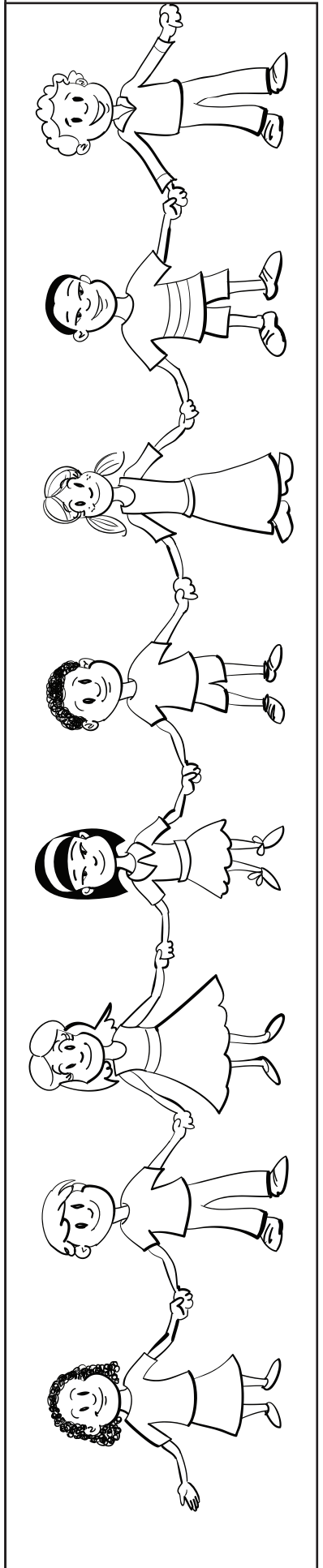
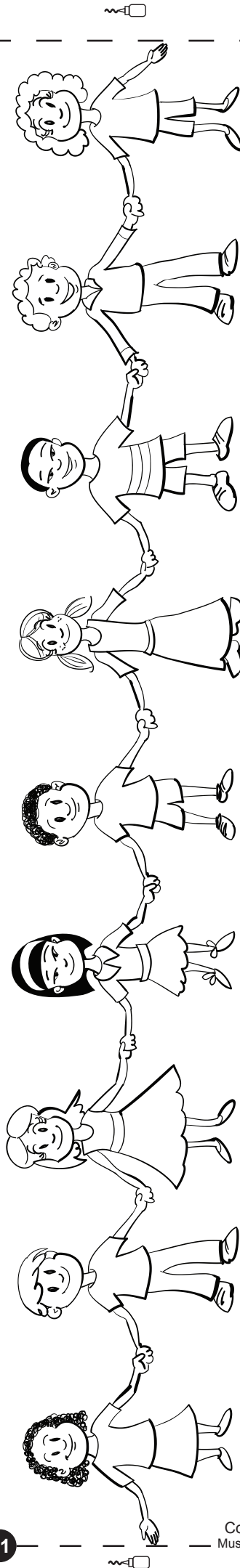
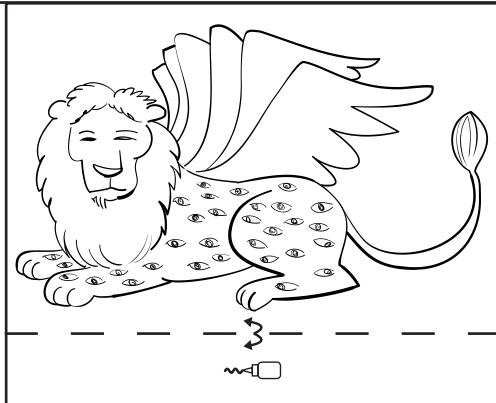
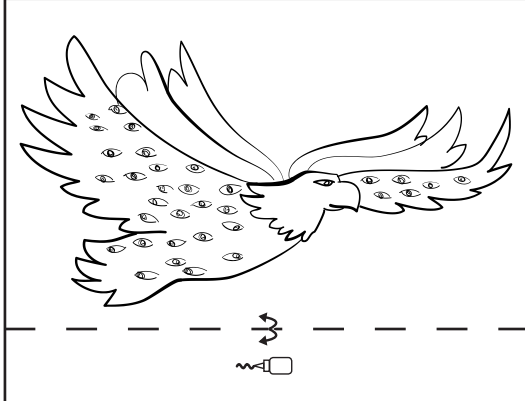
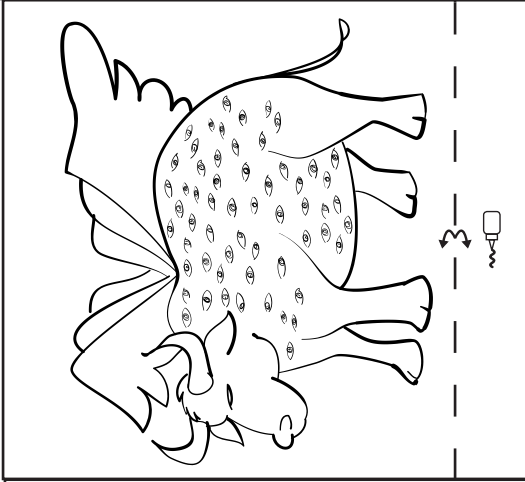
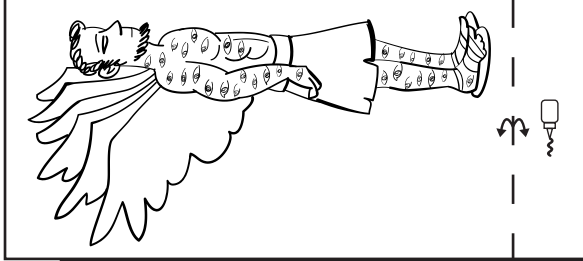
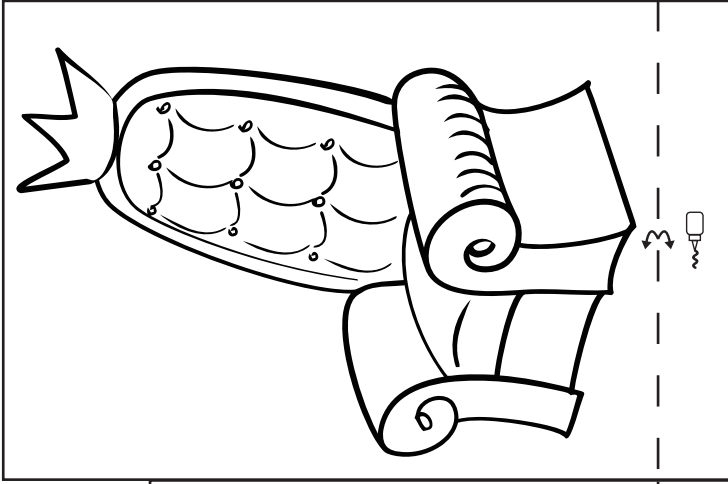


<p>Oman</p> <p>Thank God that it has become easier for Christians to witness to Muslims here and pray that this would continue.</p>	<p>Italy</p> <p>Pray for the many Italians who see Christianity as just another religion and those who don't trust the true Church.</p>	<p>Israel</p> <p>Thank God for the many Jews who have recently recognised Jesus as God's promised king. Pray that more would come to know him through the Bible.</p>	<p>North Korea</p> <p>Pray that God would protect his people as they face severe persecution. Ask for opportunities for those smuggling Bibles into the country.</p>
<p>Albania</p> <p>Pray that missionaries would be able to work together to spread the good news of Jesus in a country that is almost entirely unaware of who he is.</p>	<p>Angola</p> <p>Ask that God would help Christians to live differently to those following tribal religions. Pray that he would unite them around the gospel.</p>	<p>Australia</p> <p>Pray for students in Australia who have the chance to explain the good news to people from all sorts of countries.</p>	<p>Burundi</p> <p>Pray for missionaries to return to this country with the good news of Jesus after so much war and violence.</p>
<p>Vietnam</p> <p>Ask God to strengthen Christians here as they face the threat of persecution. Pray that they would be able to continue meeting in secret as churches are forced to close.</p>	<p>China</p> <p>Pray that God would protect believers who risk kidnapping and death just for being Christians. Thank God for the growth of his Church here despite severe persecution.</p>	<p>Somalia</p> <p>Pray that God would make a way for his word to reach people in a country where even owning a Bible risks death.</p>	<p>Syria</p> <p>Pray for Christians here in the middle of great conflict, that they would be able to keep trusting in Jesus.</p>
<p>Eritrea</p> <p>Pray for Christians who are imprisoned or are being forced to flee the country. Ask that God would comfort them and that they would find safety.</p>	<p>Malaysia</p> <p>Pray that God would strengthen new believers who convert from Islam and risk losing their families because of their faith.</p>	<p>Belarus</p> <p>Pray that Christians would be able to continue meeting together despite opposition from the government. Ask God to help people to understand the difference between true Christianity and false religion.</p>	<p>Kenya</p> <p>Ask that God would help his people to meet together and to witness to Muslims around them despite the danger.</p>



John saw that in heaven people from every nation, tribe, people and language and all creatures of the earth will worship Jesus as king.

Revelation 7: 9-17



A King for All Nations

The true story can be found in Revelation 7:9-17



Discover

In John's vision of heaven, who was standing before the throne? (7:9)

A great multitude from every n _ _ _ _ _ , t _ _ _ _ _ ,
p _ _ _ _ _ and l _ _ _ _ _ .

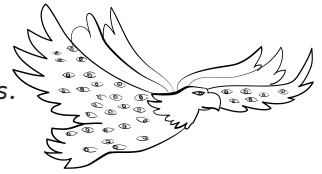
What were they doing? (7:9-10) Circle all the correct answers.

Holding palm branches

Playing harp music

Sitting on thrones

Shouting praise to God

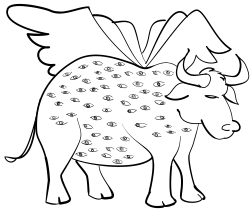


Why were they wearing white robes? (7:13-14)

Cross out the words in bold that are wrong.

They had **washed/painted** them in the **soap/blood** of the **Lion/Lamb**.

Think Spot



Who is the Lamb on the throne? Look up John 1:29.
Who are the people wearing white?
What is the focus of this gathering?

What is promised to the people in white? (7:15-17)

They will never go h _ _ _ _ _ .

They will never go t _ _ _ _ _ .

The s _ _ _ _ _ will not beat down on them.

The L _ _ _ _ _ will l _ _ _ _ _ them and God will wipe away every t _ _ _ _ _ .



Who will do this for them? (7:15, 17) _ _ _ _ _

DISCUSS

How will heaven be like the church today? Think about who will be there and why. What will they do?

How will heaven be different to the world today?

What is the only way that people can get to heaven?

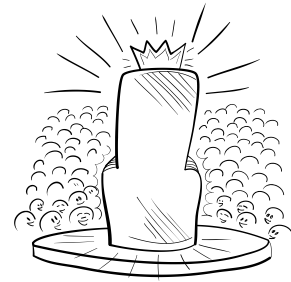
How can you help them to get there?

Who do you speak to about Jesus? Are they all like you or are they different? Who else could you tell?



A King for All Nations

The true story can be found in Revelation 7:9-17



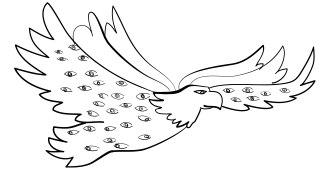
Discover

In John's vision of heaven, who was standing before the throne? (7:9)

A great multitude from every n _____ , t _____ ,
p _____ and l _____ .

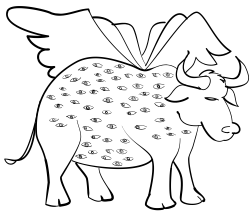
What were they doing?

1. _____ (7:9)
2. _____ (7:10)



Why were they wearing white robes? (7:13-14) _____

Think Spot



Who is the Lamb on the throne? Look up John 1:29.
Who are the people wearing white?
What is the focus of this gathering?

What is promised to the people in white? (7:15-17)
Write down some of these things in the space below.



Who will do this for them? (7:15, 17) _____

DISCUSS

In what ways will heaven be like the church today?
Who will be there and why? What will they do?
In what ways will heaven be different to the world today?
What is the only way that people can get to heaven?
How can you help them to get there?
Who do you speak to about Jesus? Are they all like you or
are they different? Who else could you tell?

