

Count on it

Living in the certainty of God's Word



ACTIVITIES FOR JUNIOR CHURCH

These ideas provide a 'pick and mix' menu for activities with children aged 5–9 on Bible Sunday. Approximate timings have been given to help you plan your session. Select the activities that will be most suitable for your group, bearing in mind their ages and abilities. Some will require advance preparation.

All of these activities are built around Isaiah 55.1–11. This is the main Bible passage we are using this Sunday with all age groups. For help in understanding the message of this passage and the people and time when it is set, see the *Bible Foundations* section (Part of the Sermon/Talk Outline).

Use EITHER (1a) Drama Sketch 'God is Here' OR (1b) 'Story Time' (see extra sheets) or split into age groups if group is large enough

1a. DRAMA SKETCH: GOD IS HERE (15 mins – See Separate Drama Sketch)

This sketch sets the scene in Babylon, around 539 BC, which the words of Isaiah 55 speak to. Use this with junior school aged children, aged 7+.

Print off 3 copies of the script *Junior Church: Drama script: God is here*, one for yourself and one each for characters A and B.

A and B are street cleaners and can be played by boys or girls. If you can't rehearse with your main characters beforehand, arrange a read through in a circle then 'act it out'.

Have a bit of fun working out chewing gum mimes – take suggestions from the whole group. Prepare the rest of the group to say **God is here. God is now. You can count on it!** as a response to '**Where is God?**' Practise this before you start.

The rest of the group won't need scripts; it's just a 'When I say...you say...' instruction.

1b. STORY TIME (10 mins)

For younger children (aged approx. 5–6) use this mime and action retelling of the Isaiah passage as an alternative to the drama sketch (see separate script *Junior Church: Story time*).

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2. RESCUE STORIES (5–10 mins)

After the drama/story discuss what Bible stories show how God helps people. (If you used the drama you might ask what stories would help B to stop feeling miserable?) Showing there are lots of rescue stories helps make the point that God rescuing us from trouble is not a one-off thing. God does it all the time! Ask if the children know any stories where God helps us. Here are some examples:

- The story of the Great Escape from slavery told in Exodus. (God uses Moses to lead his people to freedom. God defeats the pharaoh. *God does not forget us.*)
- The story of Joseph and his brothers (God's plans are long term – Joseph sold as a slave into Egypt, but disaster turns into blessing. *God does not let us down.*)
- Prodigal Son. (Even when we've let God down, he'll stand by us if we turn to him. *God loves us and does not leave us.*)
- Abraham and Sarah. (Isaac is born in their old age. *God keeps his promise.*)
- Jesus calms the storm. (Jesus rescues the disciples. *God rescues us.*)
- Feeding of the 5,000. (Jesus fed the hungry people. *God takes care of us.*)
- The story of Ruth. (Ruth puts her own life on hold for Naomi and God takes care of Ruth by leading her to meet a new husband. *God leads us where we need to go. God loves us and gives us good things.*)

Lions in Babylon

Use the story of Daniel in lion's den to illustrate how God rescued Daniel when he was faithful to God. Daniel was captive in Babylon and remained completely faithful to God, even though this meant he would end up facing the lions! Tell the story in Daniel Ch 6.

3. CRAFT ACTIVITY

Rain/Snow decorations

God's Word is compared to rain or snow falling on the earth to help things grow.

Take copies of the Bible verses in the 'Growing' list (see Bible Grow Verses below) and let the children stick these on snowflake/raindrop shapes. Hang the snowflake/raindrop shapes on a thread or piece of string. Hang them in the windows or from the ceiling.

The Bible verses could be ready printed. Have plenty of verses to look at and choose from. Why not put the printed slips into a Bible at the pages they come from and make the connection between the book and the verse? Talk about the verses your group chooses.

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4. PALM PRAYERS (15 mins)

Demonstrate then assist your group to make newspaper palm trees to use in your prayers.

Take two sheets of newspaper. Lay one down flat then put the other on top so that the left hand page of the top sheet covers the right hand page of the bottom sheet (i.e. both sheets of newspaper together are now three pages wide).

Beginning at either single-page end, roll the paper into a tube. Secure the loose ends with sellotape/masking tape.

Starting at the top of the tube, make four cuts (through all the surfaces) to about half-way down the tube. Now set them aside until after the prayer.

Prayer

Explain: When you say *Loving God*, the children answer: **we can count on you.**

Loving God we can count on you.

We thank you because you are always there.

Loving God we can count on you.

We thank you because you love us.

We thank you because you care about us.

Loving God we can count on you.

We thank you for making things grow

For the seeds in the earth

And for the rain which waters them.

Loving God we can count on you.

Thank you for the flowers that grow in gardens

For the food which grows in farmers' fields.

Loving God we can count on you.

We thank you for the special stories

And special sayings in the Bible.

Loving God we can count on you

Help us to be your good people

Help us to grow strong in our hearts

Full of love for you and for your world.

Amen.

Now pick up your tree-tubes and beginning from the centre, gently pull up the paper. Watch the tree grow.

5. RAIN FOREST (5 mins) *A little extra...*

If you have time, use it to make extra trees and put these in a vase/bucket. Hang snowflakes/raindrops complete with verses above them. Put up a sign/ label on the bucket 'God's Word makes us grow!'

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BIBLE GROW VERSES

Photocopy or write out these Bible verses yourself or involve your group if they have good handwriting. Use these slips and the rain/snowdrop templates with the *Craft activities* in the Junior Church programme.

GROWING (into the people God wants us to be.)

But I am giving you a new command. You must love each other, just as I have loved you. John 13.34

We know what love is because Jesus gave his life for us. That's why we must give our lives for each other. 1 John 3.16

Put up with each other, and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you. Colossians 3.13

If we have all we need and see one of our own people in need, we must have pity on that person, or else we cannot say we love God. 1 John 3.17

Children, you show love for others by truly helping them, and not merely by talking about it. 1 John 3.18

Follow the example of people who do kind deeds. 3 John 11

We are part of the same body. Stop lying and start telling each other the truth. Ephesians 4.25

Always use the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to thank God the Father for everything. Ephesians 5.20

Be honest and work hard, so you will have something to give to people in need. Ephesians 4.28

Say the right thing at the right time and help others by what you say. Ephesians 4.29

Don't get so angry that you sin. Don't go to bed angry. Ephesians 4.26

Be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ. Ephesians 4.32

Act like people of the light and make your light shine. Be good and honest and truthful. Ephesians 5.8–9

Do as God does. After all, you are his dear children. Let love be your guide. Ephesians 5.1–2

Junior church

