



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON



Exploring the Gospels with Grandchildren

Written by Christine Evans
& Claire Hudson



INTRODUCTION

At the launch of the Catholic Grandparents' Association nationally at Westminster, Cardinal Vincent said, "Grandparents are often the real point at which creativity is introduced... You've got this opening with kiddies to really introduce them to things directly of the heart with the freedom that sometimes their parents don't have."

Have you heard the question, "How do children spell LOVE?" The answer is TIME. We grandparents are more likely than busy parents to have the time to sit, talk, share and do. We have the time to prepare a little for when we are going to spend time with our grandchildren. We have no agenda of hoping to sneak in a little counting exercise, or develop spelling skills. We may do these things but basically, we are more likely to be able to be the Mary in the situation rather than the Martha. We do not have 'to do' - we can just be - listening, and sharing - with love, patience and acceptance. We want to give our grandchildren a loving experience from the joy of our faith.

So, we want to open our grandchildren to the awareness, understanding and comfort of knowing that God is with them always, the He loves them and will always do so. We know that we do this in the example of our lives - our witness to our faith. This is not the case in the homes of all of our families. In some cases, for many and various reasons, talk of God, of Jesus is not valued. We grandparents have to be sensitive and respectful.

In this booklet, we are aiming to concentrate on three of the most common messages we hear in the gospel - those of love, faith and forgiveness. We know that the adage 'We hear and we forget, we see and we remember and we do and we understand' is a valid one and we hope to explore with you some ideas for sharing the gospel in creative ways with your grandchildren, chatting with them about situations in their lives with which they can relate to the gospels. We hope that these will be joyful, meaningful and memorable for you and the children loving, laughing and having fun together.



THE LOST SHEEP

(FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN)

LUKE 15: 4 - 7



As every sheep was important to the shepherd in Jesus' time, each sheep being known by him, every single person is important to God who knows each one of us by name and if we become a bit separated from God he will always be there, looking out for us to rescue us and bring him back to be close to him in our lives. Make some sheep shapes out of card. Child(ren) to make paper curls and stick on the sheep. Talk about situations and how the child knows he/she should behave e.g. sharing, helping, not saying unkind words. Talk about when they may not have done this. How did they feel afterwards? Did they say 'Sorry?' Did that make them feel better?

ACTIVITIES

Let's pretend you are the shepherd with your sheep. (Grandparent takes a sheep and hides it) 'Is it under the table?' etc. Eventually, it is found. Hurrah! Or you could cut out green bushes, stick them along the bottom edge and take turns to hide a sheep. The shepherd says, 'Hurrah!' - he is so relieved and happy. This is how God is when we have gone off and been unkind - perhaps shout because we say something mean to a brother or sister, and then we say we are sorry. Jesus knows each one of us and is really sad when we aren't loving to each other. And when we come back to behaving as he knows, will make us happy, he is like the shepherd - so happy.

THE TWO SONS

LUKE 15: 11 - 31

We hear the story of the two sons, one of whom was really silly but as soon as he came back to his father saying he was sorry, his father was so happy and celebrated as God does with us. Tell the story of the two sons acting it out with the models in the activity below.



ACTIVITY

Make two figures using Pringle cans and paper. Tell the story. Give details appropriate to age (e.g. older children can be reminded that to touch pigs / pork was unheard of for the Jews). Talk about brother / sister being naughty e.g. refuses to help clear the table and goes off to watch TV. Other child helps. Non-helper keeps away then gets hungry - comes back and says 'Sorry!'. How Mum and Dad are so happy when this happens. Younger child a bit miffed but happy that all is now good again in the house. Our loving Father is always there waiting.

JESUS & ZACCHEUS

LUKE 19: 1 - 10

Tell the story of Zaccheus. Develop Zaccheus' shortcomings appropriately - perhaps compare with shopkeepers who overcharge? Jesus asks to go to his house. People muttering e.g. the popular and kind captain of the football team chooses the boy who is a bit of a bully to be his kick around mate at break time? Perhaps, with older children make the point that Luke seems to take special delight in featuring social outcasts such as this tax collector, unclean Samaritans, or a crucified terrorist. He loves to show the doors of the Kingdom being thrown wide for them. Zaccheus is sorry - makes amends. The boy feels special and has a friend - stops bullying.



ACTIVITY

Make a story cube with each side illustrated:

1. Jesus enters Jericho
2. Zaccheus in tree
3. Jesus calls to Zaccheus, 'Come down.'
4. Zaccheus and Jesus at Zaccheus's house
5. Zaccheus gives money back
6. Jesus saying: 'I have come to save those who are lost.'

THE GREAT CATCH OF FISH

LUKE 5: 1 - 7

Talk about the events. The fishermen must have felt so fed up, tired and disappointed - no fish. Just like we feel when we have put lots of effort into something and it doesn't succeed - the picture that doesn't turn out as we want, the burnt meal, the football match defeat. Jesus says - trust me. I am looking after you. He gave Simon and his friends the catch of fish. He will listen to our prayers and answer them. Sometimes, he says, 'Yes.' Sometimes, 'Not yet.' Sometimes, 'I have a better plan for you.'



ACTIVITY

Make a picture of a boat with a fruit net hanging from the side filled with fish.

MULTIPLICATION OF LOAVES & FISHES

JOHN 6: 2 - 15

Talk about the events on the hillside in Galilee. Those who have made their First Holy Communion can be reminded of the connection: 'take, thank, break and give.' Jesus felt sorry for the people, he knew they were hungry. He often shared meals: with Zaccheus, Mary, Martha, he cooked breakfast for his friends after the resurrection. But later on in the Bible (Luke 12: 22 - 32), Jesus tells his listeners and us, not to make too big a deal of food - what we like, what we don't or clothes - not to get hung up on fashion - they're not worth making a fuss about. And, don't worry - don't be afraid. Our Father in Heaven knows what we need - he will look after us. Perhaps you could look at something you could do for CAFOD or Mary's Meals to do some of God's work and provide food for the hungry?

ACTIVITY

Make a concertina of paper cut into a fish shape - cut and open - multiplication of fish!



THE HOUSE ON THE ROCK

MATTHEW 7: 24-27

LUKE 6: 47-49

Jesus was really anxious that we should understand how important it is to really listen and understand his words and not forget them. He tells us about the man who built his house on sand, and of course, it fell down but the man who built it on rock was fine. What can we / children think of in our lives like that? Is there someone at school who is cool but is a bit of a let-down when it comes to being a real friend? Is there somebody else - un-sporty, a bit geeky, who you can really rely on to help you out? Sand? Rock?



ACTIVITY

Children can do some building with Lego, one on sand and one on rock. Then add water...

PARABLE OF THE SOWER

LUKE 8: 4 - 15

We all know of the times when we have heard something but haven't really listened and so the words haven't taken root. Chat... When Grandpa explained how I should download photos; sometimes we hear about something, we are really keen and then we don't bother... keeping up a diary? Another time, we hear of a good idea and decide to really work at something... do some exercise every day? Somebody comes along and says, 'That's a waste of time... Come and play a new computer game'... So it is with getting and keeping God as a good and close friend. How can we live our lives to do this so that our lives are happy knowing God's love which grows like the seed in the good soil?



ACTIVITY

Assemble the field! Sandy path, stones, weeds, compost on a tray. Shake some grass seed on each. What do we think will happen after a week when the seeds have been watered? Talk about what Jesus is saying to us.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

There are items on the market in which you may be interested. One is **The Jesse Box** - essentially a diorama or theatre back drop with figures that can be changed and used by children to dramatise bible stories. The box comes with the Easter and Christmas figures and texts and more can be downloaded.

Also, there is **The Brick Bible** presenting the Old and New Testaments in comic strip format using Lego figures. Have a look at these and have a go at 'wooling' sheep, multiplying fish, making boats with nets, and generally enjoying yourselves!

We hope you have found these suggestions stimulating and enjoyable and that hopefully you will have some new ideas for sharing the faith with our grandchildren.

RESOURCES

We have used readings, thoughts and ideas from:

The New Jerusalem Bible Stories Jesus Told by Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen

The Life of Jesus Essential Bible reference - by Rob J Bewley

Jesus and Me Every Day - by Eira Reeves

26 Creative Celebrations for All Generations - by Sr M Schneider, SND

If You'd Been There in Bible Times - by Stephanie Jeffs

The Brick Bible - by Brendan Powell Smith

The Jesse Box www.thejessebox.com

'Spreading the gospel' - Pinterest <http://www.pinterest.com/agkerrick/spreading-the-gospel/>

www.bibleclasscreations.blogspot.com