



Children's Activities age 5-11

Introductory activity

Using a chocolate bar and what appears to be an empty crisp packet (but the packet actually contains a £1 coin hidden in the corner), offer the children a choice between the two - being careful to hide the coin by holding the packet by that corner.

Hopefully the children will choose the chocolate bar!

You can then reveal that the better choice would actually have been the crisp packet because of its hidden contents.

Link this activity to 1 Samuel 16:7 and the truth that God looks more at what we are like on the inside than at our outward appearance.

Discussion

Divide the children into age groups for a short discussion about how we feel when we first meet someone with a disability.

NB. Remember to emphasise that not all disabilities are obvious on the outside.

"Feelings" activity

This activity should be done while the children are still divided into age groups.

Give each child a large plain paper bag on which they can draw a face. On the outside the children can write words to describe the feelings we show on the outside. On pieces of paper the children can write words to describe the feelings we hide on the inside. These pieces of paper can be placed inside the paper bag.

NB. Younger children may find it easier to draw simple pictures to describe feelings.

During this activity ask the children to consider especially how those with disabilities might feel. Encourage them to think about positive feelings as well as more negative ones!

Through the Roof

Act out with the children the story of the disabled man lowered through the roof to Jesus (Luke 5: 17-26). All the children can be involved because those without key parts can form the crowd in the house.

Bring out the following points from the story:

- Sometimes it can be difficult for those with disabilities to come to church or to feel included
- We can all help one another like the four friends helped the disabled man
- Jesus forgave the man and helped him to feel better inside before He healed him on the outside



Disability Sunday Resource Pack

Disability awareness activities

Give out a wrapped sweet (e.g. Starburst) to each child. Ask the children to put their "good" hand (the one they write with) behind their back and unwrap the sweet with the other hand. Talk to the children about the difficulties experienced by those who do not have full use of their hands.

Play a game of "Chinese Whispers". Talk to the children afterwards about how it feels not to know what others are saying and use this to raise awareness of the difficulties of hearing impairment.

Put out two or three chairs in various parts of the room. Blindfold a child and ask another child to guide them to a chair. Make sure there are some narrow 'pinch points' (which can be made with spare chairs) and other obstructions. Discuss the difficulties experienced by those who are visually impaired.

Consider inviting someone from your congregation who has a disability to talk to the children about how God helps them.

Conclusion

Conclude with a prayer time, in groups, encouraging the children to pray about what they have learnt and for those they know who are disabled.



Youth Programme - Age 11+

Introductory comments

How extraordinary - the Lord of Glory makes himself at home in ordinary human beings. The Bible calls us temples of the living God. Even more remarkable: sometimes God chooses broken temples to show the surpassing riches of His grace.

Some people are born without a capacity most of us take for granted. Other people lose something they once enjoyed. But God loves us all and He also loves to live in broken people. So if you think learning about disability is just about wheelchair ramps and disabled parking, think again. Disabled people can teach us some important lessons about being human. They show us that what you see is not necessarily what you get. And they help us to see that, in a broken world, everyone is somehow broken.

Focus question

How do you think you'd feel if you had to live without one or more of your physical capabilities? What do you think you would miss the most?

Some of the people you're about to hear don't speak very clearly, so you'll have to listen carefully. It'll be worth it. They may be difficult to understand, but they are **thinking** very clearly.

Play Shattered Temples DVD (see Further resources from Through the Roof)

Discussion questions

1. Describe your first impression of these stories. What thoughts and feelings did you have? Any surprises?
2. Did anyone in this story remind you of someone you know? Can you tell us about that?
3. Did you identify with someone in this story? Can you tell us about that?
4. Read John 9:1-7 (or, preferably, the whole chapter)
 - a. What strikes you about the disciples' assumptions toward the blind man?
 - b. Have you ever come across that assumption - that people are broken because they or their parents sinned?
 - c. What do you make of Jesus' response?
 - d. Have you ever seen God glorified by healing someone? How did you feel about that?
5. Read Psalms 103 and 147
 - a. How is the healing power of God described? His compassion?
 - b. Why doesn't God heal everyone?
6. 'Have you ever seen God glorified by not healing someone? How did you feel about that?
7. What has spoken to you particularly as we have talked? Is there something you need to apply to your life? How can we pray for you?



Get Physical

If you want to do something to produce at least a little empathy for disabled people, try these simulations. Leave plenty of time to talk about thoughts and feelings afterwards. Take great care with these exercises - make sure they are closely supervised to avoid accidents. Please be aware that these activities are not designed to replicate the varied experiences of disabled people. The aim is to help people practically engage with the subject of disability and stimulate further discussion.

- Borrow a couple of wheelchairs and have youngsters wheel around church, and open heavy doors without putting their weight on their feet and see what it is like to see the world from a chair
- Put eye shades on youngsters and have them fill a cup from a jug
- Put eye shades on youngsters and let them try to get from point A to point B
- Construct a simple dyslexia experience by asking youngsters to follow a simple maze with a pencil while looking at the maze in a mirror
- Have youngsters negotiate a course on crutches. Make sure you include some steps (not a whole flight of stairs!).
- Have youngsters try to get a message by reading lips.



Disability Sunday Resource Pack

A Drama for Disability Sunday

“Hope Found” by Gayleen Gardner

Though simple in form, the message is powerful and one with which everyone can identify. The drama takes approximately 10 minutes and requires no props. Costumes for the Biblical characters are highly recommended.

(Scene: Woman enters, obviously agitated - talking to God. Upstage are four Biblical characters with backs to the audience. Modern day characters are seated in the audience. Each character either turns or rises to deliver their line. At the end of each line each character chooses a pose around the woman. 'All' refers to characters who have already spoken - excluding the woman.)

Woman: O God, no. Please. No. I can't do this. I can't face this. This is beyond me. I thought you loved me. OK. OK. I KNOW you love me but oh God this hurts too much. I feel so alone. I feel so far from you. What are you doing? What in this world are you doing?

Hannah: My name is Hannah. I know what it's like to feel alone. But I know how to worship and cling to the giver of life. He is my hope and salvation.

Job: My name is Job. I know what it's like to feel devastated.

All: But I know how to worship and cling to the Lord

Job: ...who gives and takes away. He is my hope and salvation.

David: My name is David. And I know what it's like to feel guilty.

All: But I know how to worship and cling to the Lord

David: ...who takes away my sin. He is my hope and salvation.

Joshua: My name is Joshua. And I know what it's like to feel inadequate.

All: But I know how to worship and cling to the Lord

Joshua: ...who is my strength and my shield. He is my hope and salvation.

Barbara: My name is Barbara. And I know what it's like to be terminally ill.

All: But I know how to worship and cling to the Lord

Barbara: ...who heals in this life and the next. He is my hope and salvation.

Kim: My name is Kim. And I know what it's like to lose a child.

All: But I know how to worship and cling to the Lord

Kim: ...who holds each child in His hand. He is my hope and salvation.



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Carol: My name is Carol. And I know what it's like to be divorced.

All: But I know how to worship and cling to the Lord

Carol: ...husband to the widow and defender of the defenceless. He is my hope and salvation.

Ken: My name is Ken. And I know what it's like to be addicted.

All: But I know how to worship and cling to the Lord

Ken: ...who died to set me free. He is my hope and salvation.

Disabled woman: My name is *[name]* and I know what it's like to be paralysed.

All: But I know how to worship and cling to the Lord

Disabled woman: ...who walks with me. He is my hope and salvation.

All: We know how to worship and cling to the Lord.

Woman: You - oh God - are my hope and salvation.

Director's Notes...

You hold in your hand a script that is simple and quite honestly unassuming on paper. But the simplicity and staging are very powerful and it is the intention that God will use this sketch to bring hope to each person in your congregation - no matter how obvious or hidden their heartbreak may be. The following are a few suggestions for casting and staging:

- Use your most dramatic actor or actress for the person in crisis. Their effectiveness is the key - their gender is not.
- When possible, you can use individuals from your congregation who really have struggled with illness or addiction or divorce. It is very effective for them to step out to the congregation.
- However, be prepared! Someone may think this is an open invitation to share!
- Having your Biblical characters in costume is recommended.
- Experiment with placement and posing. Hannah may kneel next to the woman, while David and Joshua stand, and Job is in a more humble, reclining position. Every character needs to speak to the woman, but they do not have to all be gathered too close around her. Your divorced character and addict are probably good ones to leave on the edges because that is often how they feel!
- We find the unison reading very powerful. If you don't have time to practise getting it to sound good then just have the individual characters say the entire line. Give it a try though - it works!

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