



spill the beans

worship and learning resources for all ages

issue 44

pentecost 13 to reign of christ
4 september to 20 november 2022

A resource with a Scottish flavour for
Worship Leaders, Sunday Schools, Junior
Churches and Youth Leaders based on
the Revised Common Lectionary.

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introduction

Welcome to the final issue of this three year collection of Spill the Beans. We returned to the Revised Common Lectionary for 2019-2022 with new material as we decided to take another tour through that lectionary.

Please see [page 6](#) for more information about what we are doing for upcoming Issues 45 to 48.

Who Are We?

At the beginning of 2009 a conversation began amongst a couple, then a few, then a group about collaboratively creating resources that enabled us to tell the story of faith in a worship context and within age groups for younger people and teens. Spill the Beans was born as the result of that conversation and has grown and developed over the intervening years.

The ethos has remained the same, however. It is all about story. For we believe story is the lifeblood of faith. In story we can tell the truth and speak with honesty about things for which there are not yet words. Story contains mystery and is the poetry that forms faith. Stories grow as we grow and can reveal new truths at different times in our lives.

So we believe giving stories to people is one of the most important things we can do in sharing our faith. Children and adults hold stories in their being and keep coming back to them throughout life. Our culture is stored in story. The same is true for our faith.

Spill the Beans is a work of love. None of the contributors are paid for their contributions, these contributions are written and prepared with our own congregations in mind. Instead of working in isolation, we bring this work together, give it some spit and polish, and share it with others. This is how we can keep the cost so low.

In addition, we regularly pay it forward by using surplus monies to support other new ministries and projects.

Collaboration

The team is delighted that we are in creative collaborations with Fischy Music (www.fischy.com) and the Scottish Bible Society (<https://scottishbiblesociety.org>).

Archive Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary Resources

We have two Overspill packages that provide complete sets of past issues that give a huge library of resources for both the Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary.

The Revised Common Lectionary Overspill Pack

Issues 1-12

1,536 pages

£50

Purchase through this link: <https://pul.ly/b/108820>

The Narrative Lectionary Overspill Pack

Issues 13-27 (plus summer extra) in higher quality render

2,082 pages

£60

Purchase through this link: <https://pul.ly/b/207215>

The Road Less Travelled Overspill Pack

A lectionary created by the team and users, exploring parts of the

Scriptures less frequently travelled in either RCL or NL

Issues 28-32 in higher quality render

806 pages

£25

Purchase through this link: <https://pul.ly/b/262757>

You are downloading a compressed archive of files which need to be unpacked so we recommend downloading these to a desktop or laptop computer rather than phone or tablet. Note that depending on future years there may not be resources for some Sundays depending on the timing of Easter and changes to the readings as a result.

Using Issue 44

In this issue of Spill the Beans you will find an extensive collection of things to use each week. Because each piece is written with specific congregations in mind there may be the need to be a little creative yourselves in adapting and evolving some of the ideas to suit your own place and culture and congregation. That is entirely purposeful.

Of course, if you are creative and would like to share what you have done, then have a look at our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/spillbeansresources> and the associated Facebook group that provides space for discussion and support. On our blog at <https://www.spillthebeans.org.uk/> you will find PowerPoint backgrounds for most weeks.

Each week we provide a selection of words, ideas and creative moments to take the theme and the passage a little further. We do not provide a ready made service or perfect prayers but ideas and pointers that hopefully scratch at your own creativity and provoke heaven's imagination within you.

Here are some tips to guide your use of the material in age groups:

1. It presumes some introduction to the story will have taken place in worship together or will play a part in the service when children join it later.
2. Depending on the make-up of your own groups of children you will need to remain flexible in how you use the material.
3. Each idea has been given a guide age range to help your planning, but this is only a guide so use your own judgement about what will work with your group.
4. Before the sit-down activities if you have a group of young children or lots of boys, you may want to add a run-around type game to expend some energy.
5. Use the gathering time exercise with the whole group to get into the story together across the ages.
6. We encourage you to retell the story together.
7. Follow that by choosing as many or as few activities your space and time allow. You could offer a number of activities each at different stations all at the same time for all ages to self-select with a teacher staffing each one, or have traditional classes.
8. During activities, ask children to retell the story to you and ask about their week, what was happy and what was sad and if this week's story reminds them of other biblical and personal stories.
9. The intention is not to complete "the tasks" brilliantly, but rather to provide opportunities to begin conversations, build relationships, retell the story of the day, and talk about what it means for us today.
10. There are many websites that provide handout-type sheets that will have images, crosswords and word searches for the story of that week. They can be helpful in an emergency, but try to be more creative as leaders, the rewards are worth it.

Information

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Sleepless Nights Publications

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spill the beans resource team

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Key to Abbreviations

In the worship ideas section the following abbreviations may be used to indicate different sources of worship music:

ATAS	All the Assembly Songs You'll Ever Need
CG	Common Ground
CH4	Church Hymnary, 4th Edition
CH3	Church Hymnary, 3rd Edition
JP	Junior Praise
MP	Complete Mission Praise
SGP	Songs of God's People
WGP	Wild Goose Publications



a harvest celebration

ideas for inter-generational worship



Introduction

This event could be used to gather all ages together for a Harvest Celebration or simply to thank God for our wonderful world. Lay out the activities, with instruction sheets, for everyone to enjoy and then get together for a time of celebration. This layout would fit very well into a Messy Church gathering.

It is based around parts of Psalm 65, a song of thanksgiving for the earth.

Psalm 65

For reference, here is the text of the psalm.

¹ Praise is due to you,

O God, in Zion;

and to you shall vows be performed,

² O you who answer prayer!

To you all flesh shall come.

³ When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us,

you forgive our transgressions.

⁴ Happy are those whom you choose and bring near
to live in your courts.

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house,
your holy temple.

⁵ By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance,

O God of our salvation;

you are the hope of all the ends of the earth
and of the farthest seas.

⁶ By your strength you established the mountains;
you are girded with might.

⁷ You silence the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of their waves,
the tumult of the peoples.

⁸ Those who live at earth's farthest bounds
are awed by your signs;
you make the gateways of the morning
and the evening shout for joy.

⁹ You visit the earth and water it,
you greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water;
you provide the people with grain,
for so you have prepared it.

¹⁰ You water its furrows abundantly,
settling its ridges,
softening it with showers,
and blessing its growth.

¹¹ You crown the year with your bounty;
your wagon tracks overflow with richness.

¹² The pastures of the wilderness overflow,
the hills gird themselves with joy,

¹³ the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,
the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy.

1. Balance

"You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples." (verse 7)

You will need: balance board.

Can you balance on the balance board. How long can you stay balanced? Stand on one foot. Get someone to time you. Who will be our one foot standing champion!

Talk about the balance that exists in our world. What keeps our world steady and stable? Pray for people in countries where there are earthquakes, floods, and war.

2. Wonderful Animal Hunt

"Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs" (verse 8)

You will need: animal pictures (try and use unusual animals if you can) hidden around the room, animal check sheet for ticking off the found animals.

Find the animals hidden around the room. Tick them off on your sheet when you find them.

Talk about the animals that you found. Thank God for all the amazing things he has made. Pray that we would look after them well.

3. Big Messy Pictures Of Day And Night

"...you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy." (verse 8)

You will need: large blue and black paper, lots of things for collaging, pens, glue, scissors, paint, brushes.

Join in creating two big pictures: one of the day and one of the night.

Talk about your favourite part of the day. Add it to the picture. Talk about nighttime. What do we see in the sky? What animals are about? Thank God for our wonderful world.

4. Praise Wall

"Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion" (verse 1)

You will need: big white paper, pens, paint.

Praise is when we say good things about God. What could you write or draw to add to our praise wall. Try finishing this sentence, "Lord you are amazing because..."

Talk about how this Psalm helps us praise God.

5. Bulb Planting

"You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it" (verse 9)

You will need: pots, stickers, bulbs, compost, wipes.

Decorate a pot. Fill it with compost and plant your bulb. Take it home and look after it. In the spring you will see it begin to grow.

Talk about how we look after plants. What else can we do to look after God's wonderful world?

6. Origami Boats

"...the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it." (verse 9)

You will need: pens, paper, instructions for making boats, paddling pool, water.

Decorate your paper and then make a paper boat and sail it in the water.

Talk about the oceans, seas, rivers and streams in our world. Which ones have you been to? If you could sail anywhere in the world where would you sail? Thank God for the water in our wonderful world. Pray for people who don't have enough water to drink or water their crops. What else could we do to help?

Celebration

You will need: some inflatable globes, facility to play some music.

Gather all together. Talk about the different activities you have done and enjoy what you have created together.

Have three or four large inflatable globes and throw them around your group while some music plays. When music stops the people who are holding the globes shout out something about the world for which they want to thank God. Do this numerous times. Encourage all ages to shout out.

Split the room into three groups and give each group a word to listen for and then do an action/noise as you read Psalm 65 out loud.

- Anything to do with the earth (earth, mountain, grain, animals, meadows, hills, valleys etc): **wave your arms in the air.**
- Anything to do with the water (seas, rivers, etc): **clap.**
- When God/You is said: **cheer loudly.**

Pray

Play the music again this time when the music stops hold onto the globes tightly and encourage everyone to quietly (for 10 seconds) ask God to help with something in the world just now.

Scottish Bible Society

This intergenerational event has been prepared by Jen Robertson. Jen is the Children's Resource Manager for the Scottish Bible Society. You can find out more about the work of the society at: <https://scottishbiblesociety.org>.

next season

Future Planning: The Women's Lectionary

This issue of Spill the Beans, Issue 44, is the final issue in the current series using the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL). This will mark the completion of a second cycle of the RCL that we have undertaken.

We wanted to do something a bit different having completed that second cycle of the RCL. This helps keep us, as a team, fresh and keeps the creative juices flowing. We also hope and pray that it will give others an excuse to move outside the confines of the well-established lectionaries to try something a bit different.

We did this ourselves with a lectionary plan we titled "The Road Less Travelled" which explored bible stories and other parts of the texts, including parts of the Apocrypha, that do not regularly appear in the RCL or Narrative Lectionary.

There have recently been excellent new lectionaries published by Wilda C Gafney and Ashley M Wilcox. Both of these are excellent resources for exploring the Scripture through the eyes of women in the Bible or through the use of female imagery.

After considering these options, we have decided to use Ashley M Wilcox's "The Women's Lectionary: Preaching The Women Of The Bible Throughout The Year" (2021, Westminster John Knox Publishing) as the basis for the year from Advent 2022 to Reign of Christ 2023. Ashley and we are excited by this partnership and where these resources will take us over the course of the next year.

Please do join us on the journey!

Stories Of The Well: Recovering Her Story

An accompanying resource for this year ahead, or indeed for providing fresh insight to many stories comes from one of our own contributors, Liz Crumlish:

Biblical texts can and should speak to us in and through the grittiness of everyday life.

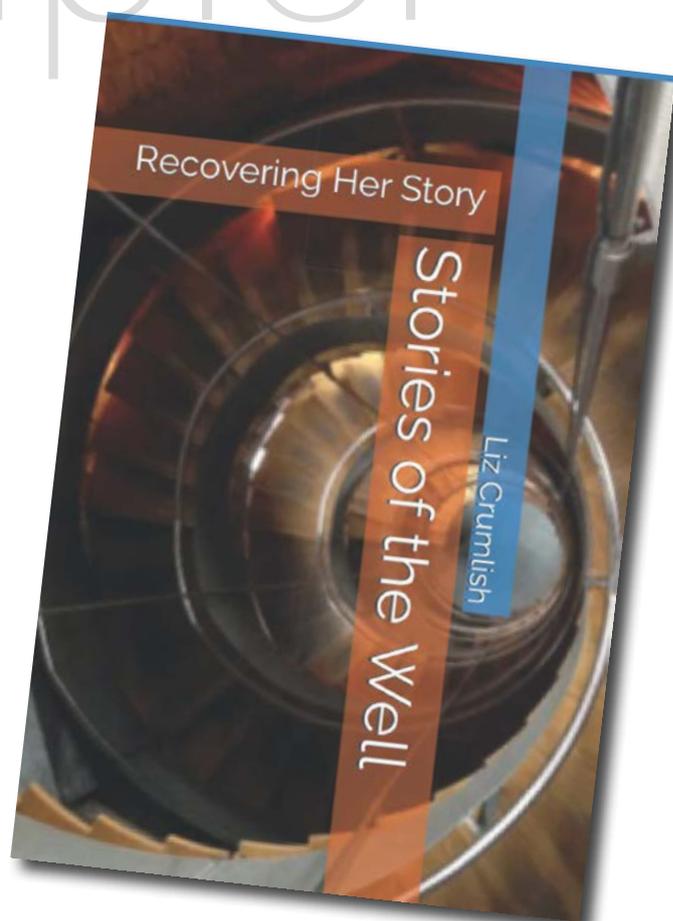
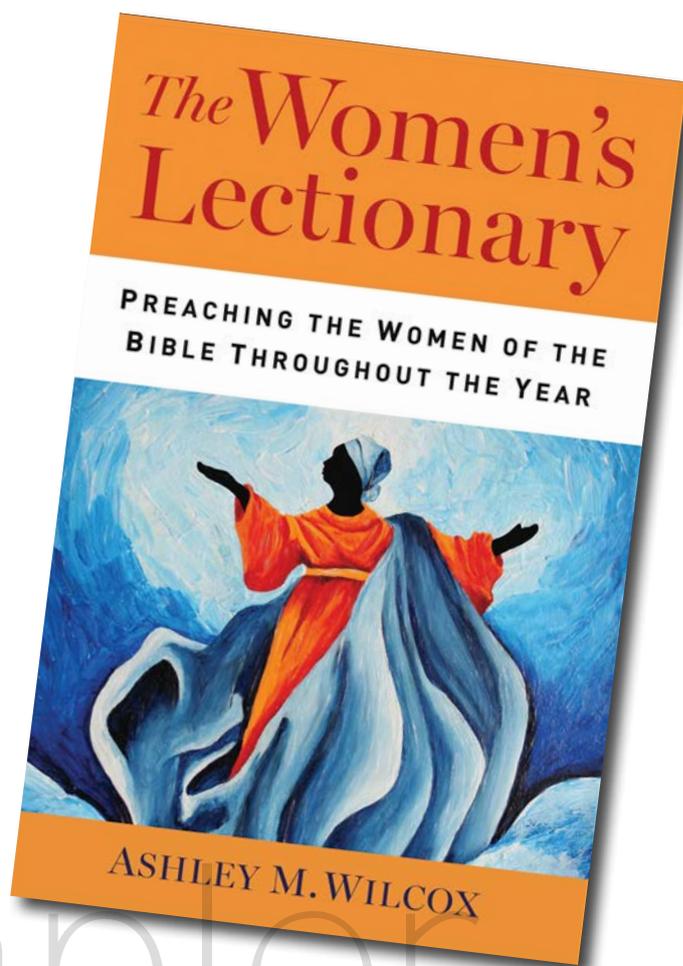
However, many women feel alienated from the text or feel short-changed by the way women are portrayed – or, more accurately, by the way women's stories are interpreted by those who have controlled the canon of scripture and by those who have dictated which stories are shared in lectionary cycles.

This publication is an attempt to recover at least some of herstory from history and to encourage all of us who identify as women to find ourselves in the story.

May we find resonance in stories of sisters and mothers, of queens and sex workers, of judges and widows, of virgins and daughters... And may we claim our place in the lineage of saints and feisty women who are our heritage.

Stories at the Well: Recovering Her Story
Liz Crumlish, KDP 2022

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Stories-Well-Recovering-Her-Story/dp/B09SPC6CG9/ref=nodl_?dplinkId=49b5069c-b586-428a-832d-bd9f20ccf70e



through the season

Introduction

In this second part of the season of Pentecost, we continue to travel with Luke's account of Jesus' life and the numerous sayings, encounters and parables that Luke recounts. During this season we recognise that Jesus is travelling around, meeting with different people, taking his message of love and his enacting of that love into communities across the region.

To play on the idea that we are following Jesus on his journey during our worship, a feature could be made of a pathway along which we are travelling during the autumn.

This could be a projected image or physical installation. A wall hanging, for instance, onto which a new word or symbol could be added along the pathway for each Sunday's story.

Or perhaps a pathway already in your church space could be used for this with sign posts added each week with an image representing the story.

Ideas for images are given below in the outline for this issue.

Week By Week

4 Sep Pentecost 13

Scripture: Luke 14:25-33

Title: Eyes Wide Open

Image: Pile of coins, an invoice made out for the cost of discipleship

11 Sep Pentecost 14

Scripture: Luke 15:1-10

Title: Lost And Found

Image: A single sheep and a single coin

18 Sept Pentecost 15

Scripture: Luke 16:1-13

Title: Children Of Light

Image: Debt notice

25 Sep Pentecost 16

Scripture: Luke 16:19-31

Title: Lazarus And Dives

Image: A drop of water

2 Oct Pentecost 17

Scripture: Luke 17:5-10

Title: Increase Our Faith!

Image: A pile of mustard seeds

9 Oct Pentecost 18

Scripture: Luke 17:11-19

Title: Responding To Jesus

Image: A thank you card

16 Oct Pentecost 19

Scripture: Luke 18:1-8

Title: Do Not Lose Heart

Image: A judge's wig

23 Oct Pentecost 20

Scripture: Luke 18:9-14

Title: What Is Humility?

Image: An image of someone in prayer

30 Oct Pentecost 21

Scripture: Luke 19:1-10

Title: Zach's Zeal

Image: A sycamore tree

6 Nov Pentecost 22

Scripture: Luke 20:27-38

Title: Heavenly Hypotheticals

Image: Many wedding rings

13 Nov Pentecost 23

Scripture: Luke 21:5-19

Title: Stones And Signs

Image: A plethora of warning signs

20 Nov Reign Of Christ

Scripture: Luke 23:33-43

Title: The Ultimate Cost

Image: Three crosses





pentecost 13
sunday 4 september 2022

eyes wide open

bible notes

Jeremiah 18:1-11
Psalm 139:1-6,13-18
Philemon 1:1-21
Luke 14:25-33

Costly Loyalty

In a way both to entice new members or to give them a warm assurance that they have done the right thing, many organisations or publications will send out a 'free' gift after you have joined. In the last year your writer's household received a tote bag from The New Yorker and a teddy bear following the first service of their car! Each prompted a wee smile: both knowing it was all a well-crafted sales and after-sales technique to create a feeling of brand loyalty, and knowing that it worked, it did indeed feel good.

Now contrast that confected sense of belonging to a particular group with this week's collection of sayings about loyalty to Jesus and the Way of Jesus. Luke combines four different sayings to emphasise the point that discipleship in Jesus' group is costly. There is no free gift pack included, no cuddly teddy bear or tote bag, no welcome pack with Gift Aid form, rather there is the realisation that to follow Jesus is a whole-of-life endeavour. This is not about a momentary sense of belonging and acceptance, but about building a new community based on the principles of the Kingdom of God. To do that takes courage, commitment, and the willingness to confront, at considerable cost, those powers that would seek to prevent such principles from becoming commonplace.

The choice of sayings that Luke has gathered have elements of potential hyperbole to them. After all, how do we equate the compassion of Jesus on the cross to those who were his family and friends with the harsh reference to hating your family without suspecting some hyperbole at play? It is the same with the last reference (verse 33) to "give up all your possessions". This hyperbolic language forces the reader to think about their own situation and, indeed, to ask what in their life does become a kind of idolatry that distracts from following Jesus' Way? Possessions certainly can act that way, and, for some, the idealised picture-perfect family can become one's entire

focus in life. Jesus demands a wider perspective.

The two examples that Luke provides of the necessity of foresight and pre-planning are common-sense arguments. You wonder if these were not based on actual cases that were well known at the time. How many times do you hear today of cost over-runs on major capital projects? The Edinburgh tram system may immediately spring to mind for those in Scotland. And who would dream to wage war without first knowing that they would win? Putin's attempt at a three-day victory in Ukraine has descended into a horrifyingly costly and wantonly destructive invasion replete with war crimes as a testimony to the evil wickedness of his hubris.

The point of these sayings of Jesus is that making a decision to follow him should be one made knowing what it might mean. It should be made with one's eyes wide open to the potential good that it will bring, but also to the cost. Being caught up in the fervour of a moment, with emotive music playing, a powerful orator calling you forward with talk of blessings and riches to follow, may not be the best way to properly evaluate Jesus' call to follow, however much it enables 'healthy' church statistics (another form of idolatry?).

Rather, is Jesus not deliberately provoking those who seek to follow in order to provide some kind of selection process, giving those who are not fully committed the opportunity to step back. While at the same time, for those who are prepared to commit their lives to follow Jesus – wherever that may lead them – then they are doing so in the knowledge that it has been their decision to do so.

In a time of massive change and challenge (both in wider society and in the church), the question of the balance between realism and hopeful optimism is alive and kicking. What lead can the church offer in this time?

the story

Are You Sure?

There were crowds of us. It was obvious that people wanted to hear what he had to say. And those of us who had been following him for a while now had seen healings too. There had been arguments with the scribes and the Pharisees. And there had been stories: stories that stuck in your mind, challenging stories, stories that none of us were likely to forget.

But today he reminded us again what it would cost us to be his disciples. It would cost us our lives!

I can still hear him saying it: "If you choose to follow me you need to think about what it will cost you... it'll cost you everything you have and are... your family... your possessions... everything. You need to know that if you choose to follow me it may cost you your life."

He'd said things like this before... hard things... about letting the dead bury their own dead... and not looking back... about how his teaching would divide families... about how he would be betrayed and killed.

This time he went on to tell us a couple of stories to hammer his point home.

"Can you imagine," said Jesus, "a man who wanted to build a tower and he started on the job before he had costed out the materials and the labour and worked out whether he had enough resources to finish the job. He prepared the ground and got the foundations laid and then discovered that he didn't have enough money to start on the walls and complete the job. The foundations were there for everyone to see and they laughed and said of the man: he started something he wasn't able to finish, a tower without walls!"

"Or how about," said Jesus, "a king who has ten thousand troops deciding whether or not to go to war against another king who has twenty thousand. When he works out that he cannot win he is not as foolish as the would-be tower builder. He wisely sends a message to the other king who is still far away and asks for peace-talks to begin."

There were crowds of us following Jesus around, watching what he did, listening to his stories. That was the easy bit. If we wanted to take it further, to become one of his disciples he wanted us to know what it would cost us.

Other teachers had told us that if we followed them, our problems would be solved, we would know peace, we would be happy and wealthy. Jesus wasn't like that. He wanted us to work out for ourselves what it would cost us to follow him. He was clearly asking us: "Are you sure?"



Retelling For Young People

Tower Building Challenge

You will need: Lego building bricks either to illustrate the talk or to let people build their own towers.

Each table in Mr Murdoch's class had been set a task. Using Lego, they had to construct a tower. It had to be 30cm high and the base had to be 15cm square. They could use whatever colour bricks they liked but they had to collect them from the Lego tub in the corner of the classroom before they began to build. They could not go back for more. They had 25 minutes to complete the task. The towers would be judged by measuring their height and width (up to 50 marks) and seeing if they were stable (up to 25 marks). Extra marks would be added if the tower looked good and its bricks were arranged in a pattern (up to 25 marks). One mark would be deducted for every 4 bricks they had left over after building.

Table one decided that as they only had 25 minutes they would go and grab the bricks they thought they needed and get building straight away.

Table two spent a long time talking about what colour bricks they wanted to use. They had a go at guessing how many bricks they'd need and how many of each colour. By the time they went to collect their bricks they only had 7 minutes to build it.

Table three looked at the measurements of the tower and of a standard Lego brick and a long (double length of a standard brick) Lego brick. They used some squared paper to work out how many bricks they'd need. That took 10 minutes. Then they decided to get 20 long bricks in one colour and the short bricks in another colour. That took 3 minutes and they then had 12 minutes to build their tower.

Table four decided that they would collect more bricks than they thought they needed and build straight away. They would lose marks if they had too many bricks left over but they would have plenty of time to design and build.

- What do you think the four towers looked like after 25 minutes?
- Which table, do you think, scored the most marks?
- Which table do you think scored the least marks?
- Do you think it's a good idea to work things out before you do them?
- Why is the proverb—"Look before you leap"—a good one?

Jesus once told a crowd of people that if they wanted to follow him, they needed to think hard about it first and he told them a story about building a tower (Luke 14:28-30).

You might want to try building a tower out of Lego bricks yourselves.

worship ideas

Weekly Imagery And Gathering Activity

The focal image for this week that you could add to your pathway display, as per the Through the Season idea found on [page 7](#), is of a pile of coins and a mock-up invoice for the 'cost of discipleship'.

As you wait for worship to begin, ask yourself:

- What was your last big purchase?
- What planning was involved in that purchase?

Share with your neighbour if you feel comfortable doing so.

Call To Worship

Leader: O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

All: You know when I sit down and when I rise.

Leader: O Lord, may we open ourselves in worship,

All: being honest with ourselves and with you.

Leader: O Lord, may we appreciate the cost of calling

**All: and willingly give of ourselves
in worship and service.**

Leader: O Lord, receive our praise

All: as we gather to worship you.

All-Age Prayer

Generous God,
thank you for giving us families,
people who love us and keep us safe,
who care for us and teach us your ways,
never counting the cost.

Thank you for giving us friends,
who share time with us and play with us,
who stand by us when life gets hard,
never counting the cost.

Thank you for giving us people in church
who encourage and guide us
in becoming more like Jesus,
who give of their gifts,
never counting the cost.

Thank you for giving us Jesus,
for his willingness to die on the cross
revealing the depth of your love for us,
never counting the cost.

May we learn not to count the cost
but give freely of ourselves,
when the time comes.

So be it.

Amen.

Prayer Of Adoration And Confession

Creative parent,
you designed the universe
and poured out
your unconditional love
to make it.
We are in awe of you.

Jesus Christ,
you gave yourself freely to the world,
taking on human form,
offering us love and inviting us
to build your kingdom with you.
We are in awe of you.

Loving Spirit,
you are within us and all around us,
gently nudging and guiding us along,
when we allow you in.
We are in awe of you.

Loving Parent,
you know us completely,
every fibre of our being is made by you,
you even count the hairs on our head.
We are truly in awe of you.

God, you have freely given us
life, love and a call to love you in return.
God, you continue to love us and call us to you,
allowing us to choose freely to follow or turn away.

Forgive us, loving God,
for those times when we choose to turn away,
for those times when the cost
seems too great for us to bear
and instead, we choose our own
selfish desires over you.

Lord, remind us that you long to forgive us,
that your love for us is eternal
and that no matter how often
we fail you or turn away,
you are always there for us,
waiting to welcome us home
when we choose to come to you.

Help us to realise that you are all we need,
when we turn to you and choose to follow you
with our heart, mind and soul,
everything else falls into place
and with you we have everything we need
to go forward day by day,
continuing the work of building your kingdom,
here and now.
So be it.
Amen.

Prayers For Others And Ourselves

Merciful God,
we thank you for the life you give us,
for the people who journey with us
and the wonders of the natural world
that never cease to amaze us.

Your unconditional love for creation
is overwhelming to us and we are in awe of it all.

Your love continues to pour out upon the world
and you invite us to work with you,
putting all else behind us
and building your kingdom of love and service,
here and now.

You long for the world to become a place
where all are welcome, where all live in peace.

You desire people to work together
to bring equality and justice for everyone.

Lord, we hear your call and ask for your help
as we contemplate what you are asking us,
remembering all you have given for us
and knowing you ask little in return,
even when at times a little can seem a lot.

Lord, we pray for all who know and love you already,
for all who use their gifts to build your kingdom
and who willingly accept the cost of their service.

Lord, we pray for all who don't know you yet
but strive to make the world a better place,
based on love and justice.
May they come to know you as we do
and continue to serve you.

Lord, we pray for all who have come to know you
but feel the cost is too much to bear
and who choose to live their life their own way.
May they know you will always be there for them
and welcome them when they are ready to return.
May they have a sense of your presence in their lives
no matter what choices they make.

Lord, we pray for all who are coming to know you
and wondering what you are asking them to do.
We pray for all who are considering a call
to some kind of ministry in the church.
May they be open to your call
and willing to take the risk of serving you in this way.

Lord, we pray for your church,
facing the cost of fewer members and restructuring.
May all the pruning and change
bring new growth and life,
preparing the church
for this next phase of kingdom building.

Lord, we offer these prayers
and are thankful that you promise
to answer them in your own time and way.
Help us to be ready to receive and act
on the answers when they come.
Amen.

Reflection

Take time and sit down.
Don't be afraid to question.
Making a commitment to follow Jesus
is no bed of roses,
it is such a step that you should pause and consider,
taking time to count the cost
of putting him first in your life,
above your family and friends
and even yourself.
Making compromise is not on the agenda.
It's all or nothing.

Take time and sit down.
Jesus is not commanding you
to throw away your life.
Jesus is not commanding you
to become a mindless zombie.
He wants you to take stock
of what you already have
and to take stock of where you are now
before you can commit yourself to him
and let him be the centre of your life.

Whatever the gifts or talents you have,
they cannot be your top priority
but they can be interweaved with prayer,
letting God enrich them,
so you can share God with other people.

You could include this with an art or craft activity such as making something showing God's hope to someone who need cheering up.

Or encourage people to make a cake, sprinkled with love to take to a lonely neighbour to initiate a conversation.

If someone is good with their hands, they could be encouraged to volunteer with a Community Handyperson Scheme.

If someone is a good singer, they could record themselves singing a hymn or worship song and upload on YouTube to share with others.

The list is endless, encourage people to ask God to show how they can use God's gift for them to share with the world.

Prayer Of Dedication

Gift giver,
we offer these tokens
as symbols of the offering
of our whole selves.
Take the money we offer
for the building of your kingdom.
Take the offering of ourselves
and guide us to where
we can use our gifts each day,
may your kingdom come
now and always.
Amen.

worship ideas

Reflective Prayer

Creator God,
we can never fully know you
or understand you,
yet you long to be known
and understood.

You have given us life
and long for us to seek you out
and love you in return.

You have given us so much
and never count the cost,
you only give more and more.
We are in awe of you.

Jesus came to show us
how we should give of ourselves.

You invite us to open ourselves to you
through the Holy Spirit
and allow her to guide us
where she will,
knowing it will cost us,
but knowing that in the end
it will be more than worth any cost.
So be it.
Amen.

Take Home Ideas

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus talks about the importance of planning before beginning.

- Do you, personally or as a church family, have an idea that you are hoping to take further?
- Have you thought everything through before signing on the dotted line, cutting ground or shaking hands?

If not, take time to reflect, pray and prepare this week and may God bless you as you move forward with all that lies ahead.

Sending

Leader: Thinking
praying
looking
understanding

All: we will walk with you.

Leader: Asking
listening
wondering
hoping

All: we will walk with you.

Leader: Serving
sharing
receiving
giving

All: we will walk with you.

Leader: Amen today,

All: Amen tomorrow.

Leader: We will walk with you, God,

All: we will walk with you.

Praise/Hymns

All over the world	ATAS 9
All that I am	ATAS 11 / CH4 505
Big man standing by the blue waterside	ATAS 26
God is building a house	MP 184
Jesus calls here to meet him	CH4 510
Jesus calls us	CH4 509 / MP 359
Jesus Christ, our living Lord	CH4 524
Jesus had all kinds of friends	ATAS 142
Long have you loved me	Known Unknowns, WGP 46
O God, you search me and you know me	CH4 97
Take this moment sign and space	CH4 501
The wise man-built	ATAS 232
Will you come and follow me	CH4 533
Will your anchor hold	CH4 737 / MP 770
You are before me God	CH4 96



age group ideas

gathering

Guess What It Is

all age

You will need: large cardboard or wooden crosses, create an obstacle course.

Split the children into pairs and then play a game where one child is the leader and the other child has to place a cross on their head or back and then has to follow the leader around the obstacle course. Should they drop their cross as they follow, then they must go back and start the course again! If possible, let all the children be leaders and followers with the cross.

Talk about how easy or difficult it was to follow while carrying their cross and how it felt if you had to go back to the beginning because the cross was dropped—the cost of following—and use this as a way into the story of following Jesus.

games

Copy Cat

age 6-12

You will need: the children or someone who is good at a skill like hula hooping, keepie uppie football, dancing, juggling, or some other talent.

Ask the person to demonstrate their skill and then challenge the children to copy what the person is doing. How difficult was it? Probably very difficult as you need to spend lots of time and energy on developing great skills. That time can be time away from family and friends.

You cannot just be a disciple of Jesus passively, you need to work at it. Discuss how much time the children give to doing good deeds, talking about Jesus and what things get in the way of doing that.

Strong Foundations

all age

You will need: building blocks (such as Duplo, Lego, Jenga).

For the younger children allow them to build anything they want no matter the shape or size. Normally, the younger children will not build the structure with proper support and foundations to talk about making it strong. For the older children build the Jenga up and as each child takes away a brick they could offer a reason why it can be hard to follow Jesus.

Having Jesus in our life gives us a good foundation as children grow in age, knowing right from wrong but sometimes it can be hard as others do not understand what we do and why we do it.

activities

The Price Is Right

age 6-12

You will need: either images or objects to hold up, the cost of the items, pen and paper for each child/team. For older children give them a menu or a catalogue.

Either in teams or individually the children are to guess the price of the item you are holding up. The nearest one to the correct price is the winner. For the younger children you could hold up two image/items and they are to guess highest and lowest price. Again, for the older children give them a budget for a three-course meal or an outfit and see if they can manage it.

What is the cost of being a follower of Jesus? Talk about not following the crowd, forgiving someone when they hurt you mentally or physically, giving your toys to a charity shop, helping others, and so on.

How Good Are You?

age 6-12

You will need: the week before encourage children to bring in something that will help them demonstrate how good they are at something (such as a football, music for a dance routine, a musical instrument, a book of a subject they know about).

Be mindful of any children in your group who may find this a challenging activity.

Ask the children to demonstrate what they are good at, such as singing, dancing, playing an instrument, a sport, drawing. Talk about how long it has taken them to get to the stage they are at, emphasising that it often takes lots of practice, lots of time and sometimes a lot of money.

Discuss how difficult it is in our day to day lives to follow Jesus. What kind of things get in our way? Do we spend time thinking about how we can be better at following Jesus?

Easy Or Not?

all age

You will need: a recipe appropriate for the children, the ingredients required.

Place all the ingredients on one table with all the equipment and utensils needed. Give the recipe to the children and let them get on with it. Likely, the children will be back and forth getting bits and pieces, forgetting to pick up a utensil or an ingredient and basically making a mess of everything.

Did any of the children prepare properly by taking everything to their table that was needed? It would have been much easier to have been prepared. What activities do they do where they need to prepare in advance? Why is it important to be prepared? Why is it important to follow Jesus' commands? We come to church to learn more and be prepared for living a good life in the way Jesus showed us.

age group ideas

crafts

Messy Following

age 3-5

You will need: large cross shapes cut from A4 card, paint in a variety of colours, paper plates, wet wipes, protection for clothes and tables.

Lay out the paint on different paper plates. Give each child a cross shape and ask them to decorate it on one side only by using their fingers and the different colours of paint. Let them dip their finger into the paint of their choice and make fingerprint dots in lots of different colours on their cross until it is completely covered.

Talk with the children about following Jesus and his way of love and how they think they might do that. Discuss if they find it easy or hard to always think of what Jesus would want them to do.

Resisting Cross

age 6-8

You will need: A4 card in a variety of colours, masking tape, scissors, chalk, water jars, pencils, rulers.

Give each child a piece of card and ask them to draw a large cross on it and then cut it out. Get them to lay their cross flat and then cut pieces of masking tape and stick the tape in a random pattern onto their cross. Let the children choose a piece of chalk and dip it into the water and then colour sections of their cross. Let them use as many colours as they wish for the sections created by the tape and it does not matter if they go over the tape. When all sections of the cross are covered let the cross dry a little before getting the children to gently remove the masking tape from their crosses leaving behind a patterned cross.

Talk with the children about what they did and if they followed the instructions carefully. Let them decide if it was easy to follow the instructions or not. Talk about the story and following Jesus: is it always easy to follow or sometimes hard? Discuss what they think it means to follow Jesus and his way of love.



Choices

age 9-12

You will need: A4 coloured card, a flip flop, coloured pipe-cleaners, medium to large sized buttons, scissors, pencils, strong sticky tape, felt tipped pens.

Give each child a piece of card and ask them to draw around the flip-flop onto the card. Get them to mark the left, right and centre holes of the flip flop straps too. Now ask them to cut out their flip flop and make small holes through it where they have marked. Let each child choose their own colour of pipe-cleaner and then get them to place it underneath their flip flop before then pushing one end through the left-hand hole and the other through the right-hand hole. Now let them choose a button. Ask them to push one of the ends—now on top of the flip flop—through one of the button holes and the other end through the other button hole. Now ask them to push both of the pipe-cleaner ends through the central hole back to the underside of the flip flop and secure the ends tightly underneath by twisting together and securing with tape.

Talk with the children about the choices they made to create their flip flop. Talk with them about what they think it means to 'take up your cross' and 'follow Jesus' and if they think this involves choices. Discuss some of the choices they have to make to try and follow Jesus' way of love. Examples could be giving up Sunday activities and also what they do which might show others they are following Jesus' way (respect others, help others, listen to others).

Let the children write some of these actions and choices onto their flip flop, perhaps using one colour for actions and another for choices.

Carrying Your Cross

all age

You will need: Fimo clay in a variety of colours, cocktail sticks, plastic tools, shoelaces or ribbon. Note that air drying clay could also be used but would need to be left to dry for some time before painting.

Give each child a piece of clay and ask them to shape it into a small cross which would fit comfortably around their neck as a necklace. Get them to push a hole in the top of their cross and then ask them to decorate the cross as they wish. Once decorated, leave to dry for as long as possible before then giving each child a shoelace to thread through the hole (or a piece of ribbon). Their cross can then be 'carried' by placing it around their neck and simply tying it at the back.

Talk about the story and following Jesus' way of love. Discuss if it is easy to follow or hard to follow and encourage them to think of what might make it easier or harder.

discussion starters for teens

costly faith

Preparation

This week prepare some pictures of expensive items for the auction in the Opening Activity.

Have available a large sheet of paper and craft materials for making posters.

Opening Activity

Going, Going, Gone!

Hold a mock auction asking folk how much they would be prepared to pay for the following items. They can imagine themselves as millionaires if they wish, or just approach this more seriously and think about how much it is actually worth to them. Offer some pictures of these as you auction them.

1. A Mazzanti
2. A date with your best loved film star
3. A superyacht
4. A round the world trip
5. World peace
6. A pair of Louboutin shoes

Do add your own ideas.

The Word

Read Luke 14:25-33 together asking people to write down the bits of Jesus speech that they find difficult or do not like.

- How do such dramatic and costly words make you feel?
- What words would you use to describe the passage?

Activity/Discussion

Think through some of the words written down after listening to the bible passage.

- Does anyone find church costly?
- In what way is it costly?

Think about the reaction of friends and the impact, if any, on one's social life.

- In what way is church worth the cost?

Think about the amount you can give to church life and the difference it makes to others.

Think about whether it changes how you are towards others.

Think about your own beliefs and how important they are to you.



When Jesus speaks to the disciples and others about following him, he is constantly asking, "Are you sure? Do you realise the cost?"

- Is that how you experience church, or does the church try and make it fun?
- What would be the better method to use?

Posters

Draw up posters for the church and make them more honest about the cost of being part of a faith community.

- What makes church worthwhile?
- What does it cost to follow Jesus, to change the relationships we have with each other to be fairer, and speak truth to power?

Display these posters round the church and listen for any reaction to them.

Living It Out

Keep a diary this week of where your faith has cost you. It may be times when you have felt awkward when others have done something you do not want to do, or you have had to speak out, or you have chosen not to do something. And ask yourself in what ways your faith is worth this cost.

sampler

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Booklet produced by
Sleepless Nights Productions