



drama skills

session 1-10



INTRODUCTION TO KIDSHUBS



KidsHubs is a free global program that helps reach out to and mentor children and young people. It can be used as part of an existing program or group, in a church, a school, a camp or to start a new group in your community. KidsHubs seek to help children learn how to follow Jesus from the Bible at the same time as learning a new skill for life. It is also a great way to encourage adults and teenagers to interact with and disciple children. KidsHubs can be based around just about anything—sport, media, photography, drama, cooking, farming, chess, music and so much more. KidsHubs is not an organisation, but a free idea and a movement.

KIDSHUBS SKILL SESSIONS AND HOW THEY CAN BE USED

KidsHubs Skill Sessions can be used as a plug-in to an existing Bible curriculum lesson such as 7Ways BibleMax (*max7.org*) with a two-hour-plus duration time. A KidsHubs Skill Session could also be used on alternate weeks if a club is limited to one hour Sessions. A group could therefore do a BibleMax lesson one week and a KidsHubs plug-in on the next week, and so on. KidsHubs Skill Sessions used at camps could be extended to three hours by introducing extra activities.

KIDSHUBTV

Alongside KidsHubs Sessions is KidsHubTV, an exciting new kids club-style TV program, which mirrors the local KidsHub groups featuring a Bible story and theme and skills demonstrated by a cast of children along with young adult leaders.

It is being produced in an open-source way so that producers across the world can have free access to core global content. Bible story animations and animated segment titles and music have been created and shared to build local versions of the show.

The long-term goal of this production is to see whole programs and short segments produced by local KidsHubs and shared via mobile phones and the KidsHubTV website with a view to broadcasting if possible.

It is hoped that as a result of seeing KidsHub videos children would be encouraged to participate in a local KidsHub or church group and/or visit the KidsHubTV website. And a church wanting to grow their children's ministry in a region (like India) where the show is screening could download Bible lessons written to complement each episode, and benefit from the momentum of the show.

RESOURCES TO USE WITH THESE SESSIONS

Large sheets of paper, blackboard or whiteboard

Pens or Pencils

Various props may be required for individual sessions

DRAMA SKILLS 1 | BUILDING A CHARACTER

OVERVIEW

Bible Passage:	Jesus heals a paralytic (Mark 2:1-12)
Main Idea:	Jesus can forgive sins because He is God
Drama Skill:	Building a character

SESSION PLAN

Communicate 15 min

1. Read Mark 2:1-12

Choose one activity from **7 ways to explore a Bible story** in **7Ways Training Leader's Guide** on www.max7.org. This may be done in a big group or a small group. Suggestion: **Way2. Interviews** or **Way3. Draw the main events.**

Investigate 15 min

Small group discussion:

- *What unusual things happened?*
- *Why do you think the house was so full?*
- *How would you describe the paralytic's friends?*
- *How did Jesus show He is God?*
- *What was more difficult- to be healed and walk or to be forgiven?*

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO 'BUILD A CHARACTER?'

It's a bit like making a recipe. There are lots of ingredients that need to be mixed together to make a delicious meal. Instead of making a meal, we are making a character. You may be a 9 year old boy from *Phuket* (insert your town name) in real life, but today you are going to pretend to be a man in his 30s, paralysed from birth and living in the Middle East when Jesus was alive on earth. How might that man be feeling? Would he be smiling or frowning? How might he move? How is he *different* to you? These things are his 'ingredients.' Close your eyes and imagine him. Now you need to make people believe that you *are* him.

Taking it further: you might like to ask the children to think about the different 'ingredients' God has put into them to make them uniquely who they are! How do they laugh, walk, run, talk, cry, think etc

Note: This plug-in can be done with the story of the Paralytic. However, it is generic and can be used with any Bible narrative.

INTRODUCE THE SKILL (10-15 MIN)

A Drama warm-up exercise is listed below. This game functions both as a warm-up and as a demonstration of the skills needed to transform oneself into another character. You may have time for more than one exercise. **Additional exercises can be found in the Appendix.**

The Photo Game

In this exercise, children practise freezing (like a statue) as though in a photo and then bringing that Photo to life. Start by asking the children for suggestions about different scenes that you might take photos of. Good examples are the beach, the jungle, the woods, the market, a rock concert etc. Each child then thinks of who they are going to be in this Photo eg. a swimmer at the beach or someone fishing. Remind them that they each have to be someone different. Ask each of them to run into the photo (an imagined area of the room) one at a time and freeze as their character. They should also tell the group which character they are. Note: some children might choose to be a non-human character in the scene eg. the ocean. This is great. Once all children are in the Photo and are all frozen, it is then time to bring it to life. The leader will then pretend to press each child's 'button' and say "beep!" The 'button' is an imaginary circle that is pressed in front of each child in order to bring a frozen character to life. When the child's 'button' is pressed they need to say something and move in some way. For example, if the child's character is a swimmer at the beach then they might start swimming furiously and then scream out in a terrified voice, "Help! A shark is after me!" The leader can turn the character on again by pressing the 'button' again. This will make the children laugh if you keep pressing the same 'button' over and over. Tell the children they only need to prepare one sentence though. If their 'button' is pushed multiple times then they simply repeat their action/sentence. To help keep the children's actions/sentences succinct, an 'off' button (with a different noise) can be added as well.

PRACTICE THE SKILL (25-30 MIN)

Note: It is assumed you and the children would have read through the Bible story already as part of the Session.

If there is time, discuss the following aspects of building good characters with the children before working on performing the Bible story:

Each character needs to be *unique*. This is crucial for this story in particular because the 'main idea' of the Session is about Jesus' uniqueness. He can forgive sins because He alone is God. Emphasise the fact that God made each of them unique too. Ask them what makes each of them unique.

Each character needs to be *important*. The so-called 'minor' roles (eg. the crowd members) can still be important in the story and have their own personalities and reactions. This helps the audience have a wide selection of characters with whom they can identify. Note: it helps to say something like "now being a crowd member is a very special and challenging role. Who thinks they are up to the challenge?" For the more advanced children, you can get them to think about their character's 'story.' What was happening to their character right before they saw Jesus and how might this affect their character? (e.g. They might have been hurrying home from the market when they saw the huge crowd etc)

Each character needs to be *exaggerated*. We are aiming for caricatures to begin with. It is much easier to start 'big' as you can always lessen the exaggeration and make it more 'real' later.

Getting the children to work and rehearse in small groups by themselves can cause problems. If possible practise as one big group so that every person/character is valued. (If you have a large group, try splitting them into smaller groups each with a leader). Firstly divide the Bible story into small sections rather than dealing with it all at once. To do this, imagine the Bible story as a series of photos. A good way to achieve this is to ask the children “*What happened first in the story?*” “*What happened after that?*” Write up their responses on large pieces of paper or a blackboard/whiteboard. Here is an example of how Mark 2:1 - 12 might be divided:

Photo 1: *Jesus is preaching to a crowd. There are four people carrying a paralytic who are unable to get through.*

Photo 2: *The four people lowering the paralytic through the roof*

Photo 3: *Jesus saying “your sins are forgiven” while the teachers of the law rebuke him behind his back.*

Photo 4: *Jesus rebukes the teachers of the law*

Photo 5: *Jesus heals the paralytic.*

We now bring each photo to life as a group. We do this by playing ‘**The Photo Game**’ (p.3). Start with Photo 1. Ideally try performing all 5 photos in order, but if you are running out of time, Photo 3 is the most important. Remember: you don’t need to push every child’s ‘button’ in every photo. Just make sure that every child has had at least one turn by the end of the whole story.

- *Who are the characters in this story? (Jesus, The Crowd, The Paralytic, The 4 people carrying the paralytic, The teachers of the Law)*
- *What would it have been like to be there while all this was happening?*

EVALUATE THE SKILL (5-10 MIN)

Chat to the children about how they felt playing each of their different characters. Then, pick a photo number and say to the children, “Go stand where you (as your real self) would be in the picture.” Press their ‘button’ so they come alive. This should be done on a volunteer basis. Some children will need to watch others to understand what to do. Others might not have a turn at all and this is ok. Try talking to them about it instead. The exercise should help them to respond to the Bible story and talk about their reaction to what Jesus did. It also helps them understand that they are a different person to their character.

The leader asks:

- *Where would you (as your real self) be standing in the picture?*
- *What would you say/do as you ‘come alive’?*
- *Why did you decide to be in that place, doing that activity in the Bible story?*

APPLICATION (5-10 MIN)

Spend some time debriefing the children on what they have experienced during the Session. Encourage them to share within the group. Use the practical skill to impart the Bible message. Summarise what they have learnt in their practical skill and how it relates to the Biblical message.

- *How come Jesus can forgive our sins?*
- *How does that make you feel about your own sin?*
- *Who did you relate to the most in the story? The paralysed man, the friends, Jesus, the crowd, the angry religious leaders? Why?*

HEALTH & SICKNESS (5 min)

Take some time to talk to the children about the paralysed man. He had a body that would not work like ours. Sometimes our bodies get sick. Ask the children: *what do you do to try and get better again?* You could write a list together or draw on a big sheet of paper. If time you could play the 'Photo game' again and create 'still photos' for each idea such as:

Going to a health Clinic.

Praying to God to make it better.

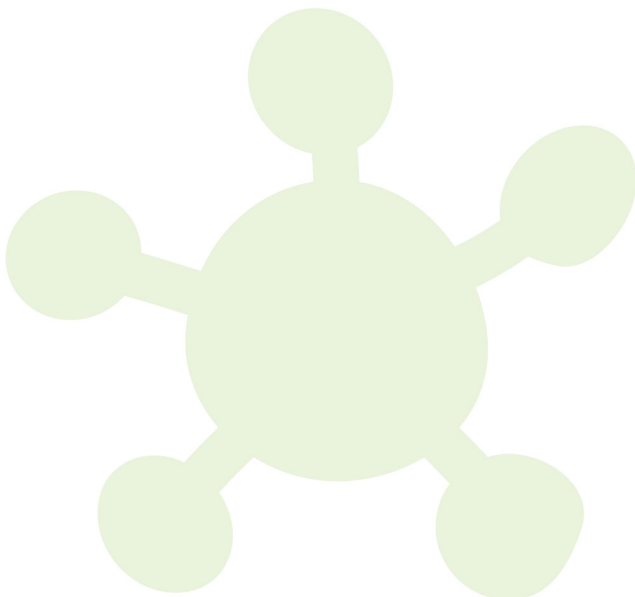
Staying connected to friends so they could help.
etc

PRAY (5-10 MIN)

Involve children in praying. Before you begin praying ask the children for a 'praise report'. When praying together include praise to God for the skills they've learnt and the praise points they have shared.

Pray for what they have learnt in the Session: that God has made every person unique. Thank Jesus that He can forgive our sins because he is God's Son. The children could stand in a circle and thank God for the person on their left (one at a time) for how uniquely they have been made.

Pray for each other, for their families and community and for their world. Use different prayer models (see **7Ways to Pray** in **Max7Ways Leader's Guide** on max7.org for some examples of prayer activities).



DRAMA SKILLS 2 | PHYSICAL THEATRE

OVERVIEW

Bible Passage: Jesus calms the storm (Mark 4: 35-41)

Main Idea: Jesus is ruler over all creation.

Drama Skill: Physical Theatre

SESSION PLAN

Communicate 15 min

1. Read Mark 4:35-41

Choose one activity from **7 ways to explore a Bible story** in **7Ways Training Leader's Guide** on www.max7.org. Suggestion: **Way 5. Story telling sounds story.**

Allow children to make the sound effects from the story as you read it from the Bible. Introduce and practice the sound effects before you read the story to them. For example wind noise, storm noise, sleeping soundly, snoring, 'Be still', and calm.

Investigate 15 min

2. Small group discussion:

- *When have you felt scared? What happens to your body when you're scared?*
- *Why do you think Jesus could stop that storm?*
- *What do you think about Jesus when you know He was able to make the raging storm stop?*
- *If Jesus can stop a storm on a lake, what else can He do?*

Read verse 41 "Now they were more afraid than ever and said to each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!"

- *How would you answer the disciples' question?*
- *Can you trust Jesus completely?*

Important: Help the children realize that worry is normal but that God wants us to trust Him with our whole lives. Jesus has power over everything. He is trustworthy.

Use the **7ways to ask questions** guide for more ideas.

WHAT IS PHYSICAL THEATRE?

Often when we watch a play or a movie, we notice that there are lots of impressive sound effects, sets, props and special effects that are used. These are used so that the audience can easily understand what the character is doing, where they are doing it, when they are doing it and how they are doing it. They help to keep the action real. They appeal to our

senses and transport the audience to the scene of the action. In Physical Theatre, we learn to use only our bodies to do all these things. Our bodies need not be limited to playing human characters only. We can create sound effects, sets, props and special effects with nothing but our bodies. And it's really fun!

Taking it further:

You might like to ask the children to introduce themselves using the KidsHub Introductions exercise which is explained in the Appendix. This will help them get used to using their body creatively.

Note: This plug-in can be done with the story about Jesus calming the storm. However, it is generic and can be used with any Bible narrative.

INTRODUCE A SKILL (20 mins)

A Drama warm-up exercise is listed below. This game functions both as a warm-up and as a demonstration of the skills needed to create physical theatre. If time also play Hot Coals! (see Appendix) and then any other drama exercises as time allows.

Shape it and Make it! In this exercise, children learn to work individually and in groups. They will use their bodies to create sets, props and special effects. Have the children find their own space so that nobody is close enough to touch each other. Start by calling out some simple shapes to form themselves. Letters of the alphabet are a good place to start. Some children will form them lying down and others standing up. This variety is great. Do not give them too much time. 5 seconds is plenty. It helps to count down aloud while they get into position: "5, 4, 3, 2, 1." Other ideas for individual shapes include tree, rock, house, fountain, flower, chair etc.

Now place the children in groups (3-6 children per group is a good size). Tell them you are going to call out some shapes to make again, but this time they must make them as a group. They must always be touching at least one other group member at all times. This time you can call out some shapes that are slightly more complex (eg rocket, boat, car, clock). Ensure you give the 5 second time limit – otherwise they will start arguing with each other. A short time limit forces quick decisions and an awareness of those around them. It also builds teamwork. Advanced groups can try moving their shapes also (eg moving car, moving boat, ticking clock or any type of machine works well).

Back to individual time again, the children find their own space in the room once more. This time they will be practicing special effects rather than simply shapes. These are slightly more abstract. Tell them they are allowed to move and make noises while they display these effects (but also let them know that they shouldn't venture into another child's space). Examples include wind, fire, ocean, rain, thunder. Encourage them to use body percussion and always combine noise with movement (rather than just doing sound effects with their voices). Once they have tried creating effects for wind, fire etc., tell them that when you raise your arm they must get louder and stronger, and when you lower your arm they must get softer and calmer. Practice these dynamics and even try splitting your group in half – one half is calm (following your left arm) while the other half is loud (following your right arm). Encourage the children not to copy those around them. Praise the children whose ideas are original.

Repeat this exercise with the children back in their original groups again. Remind them they must be touching at least one other group member at all times. Give a demonstration if you think it will help: line up 6 children and ask them to do a Mexican wave. Then ask them to do the wave while holding hands. Finally, ask them to make 'swooshing' noises as they do it.

This should be a really effective way of displaying the waves in the ocean. When they are ready to return to their groups to start, tell them they will have 10 seconds for each word this time.

PRACTICE THE SKILL (20 mins)

Note: It is assumed you and the children would have read through the Bible story already as part of the Session.

Tell the children that they are now going to help you bring the Bible story alive in their small groups by playing 'Shape it and Make it!' (as they have just practiced). Identify as a big group the sets/props or effects involved in the story and also the special effects. Write them down so everybody can see. Read the Bible story aloud and very slowly. Pause and place emphasis on the words you have written down. Each time you reach one of these words, yell out "5, 4, 3, 2, 1" and have the children bring that word to life in their small groups. This is done by all small groups simultaneously.

For Advanced Groups: Give the children 5 minutes in their small groups to work out how they are going to bring each of these sets/props or effects to life as the Bible story is read aloud. Ideally there will be enough time for each group to perform for one another. If it helps with their practicing, allocate one child per group to be the narrator. This will help with the rehearsal of timing. You can make the role of narrator sound appealing by emphasising how this person gets to control the strength of all the special effects by raising and lowering their arm as previously demonstrated. Alternatively, the teacher can narrate for all groups. This version is for advanced groups only because the children need to be mature enough to work within a self-supervised rehearsal structure and make decisions together. The additional time will also allow for more complex physical theatre ideas. It may also mean that they can start inserting the human characters (i.e. Jesus and the disciples) into the scene.

- *What are the sets/props in this story? (Boat, Cushion, etc.)*
- *What are the special effects in this story? (Furious squall/storm, Waves - both furious and calm, Wind - both furious and calm, Other storm-related noises/effects)*

EVALUATE THE SKILL (10 mins)

Unless you have an advanced group who were able to insert the human characters into the story, the children will not have yet experienced what it is like to stand amongst the special effects they created and absorb it all up close. Now is a great opportunity to do this and afterwards chat to them about how the disciples must have felt. Ask a child to go and stand in the middle of one of the small groups as they act out the furious storm. Ask them to remain there after the storm calms down. How did they feel? Have they ever experienced a terrifying storm in real life? What would it take to stop such a storm?

SAFETY AND PROTECTION

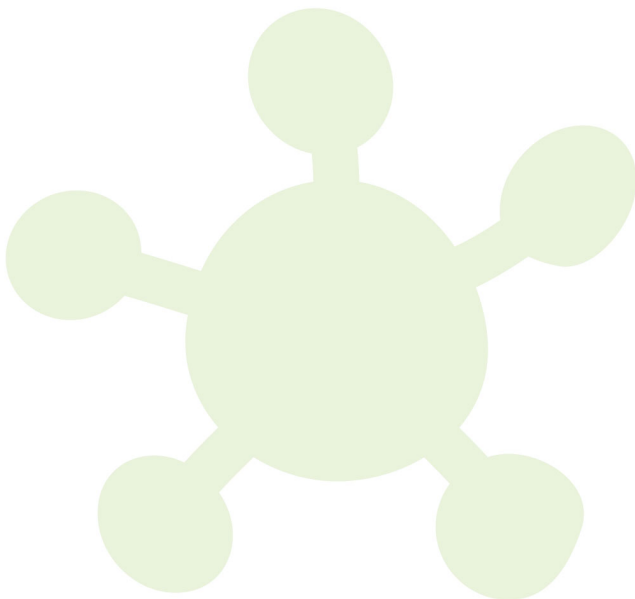
Take some time to talk to the children about the situation the disciples were in. They were in a scary situation and afraid for their lives. What did they do? What do you do when you are scared? Even though we cannot see Him, can we ask Jesus for help too? You could write a list together or draw on a big sheet of paper. Draw a scary situation and then list some ideas for things we can do when we are afraid. Ideas include:

- *Ask God to protect you*
- *Tell a trusted grown-up that you feel scared and ask for help*

PRAY

Thank God that He is ruler over all creation. Thank Jesus that He is so powerful, even the wind and the waves obey Him. The children could stand in a circle and tell God about one thing that makes them scared. They could complete the sentence

“Dear God, I feel scared when _____.” The teacher can then finish the prayer at the end by saying “Please protect us when we feel scared. Thank you that you are more powerful than all these things and that you are always with us. Amen.”



DRAMA SKILLS 3 | OBSERVATION & MIMICRY

OVERVIEW OF THE SESSION

Bible Passage: The request of James and John (Mark 10:35-45)

Main Idea: Jesus is a servant leader. He served us. Serving is great in God's eyes.

Drama Skill: Observation/Mimicry

THE SESSION PLAN

Communicate 15 min

1. Read Mark 10:35-45

Choose one activity from **7 ways to explore a Bible story** in **7Ways Training Leader's Guide** on www.max7.org. This may be done in a big group or a small group. Suggestion: **Way 2. Interviews** or **Way 6. Act out the story**.

Investigate 15 min

2. Small group discussion:

- *What were James and John hoping for when they made their request of Jesus?*
- *What is the most important thing for you about the way Jesus answers their request?*
- *What is God's "right way up" thinking about greatness and glory?*
- *Why is Jesus the greatest Ruler and King, and the greatest servant?*

Important: Help children to realize that serving means helping others by doing what God wants, not what other people force you to do. Children should be free to choose to help in a way that is appropriate to their age and development, where no one gets hurt.

Use the **7ways to ask questions** for more ideas.

What is Observation and Mimicry?

What do 'observation and mimicry' mean in drama? In Session One, we learnt about all the different 'ingredients' that might combine together to make a character. God has made us all unique. We all laugh, walk, run, talk, cry, think and behave in different ways. So how do we get ideas for what some of these 'ingredients' might look like? A great place to start is to watch and notice the people around us in our daily lives! Pay close attention to the different ways people use their voices, how they carry themselves and the things that they do which are 'just them.' Now when you come to perform a particular character, you will have a huge 'menu' of ingredients to choose from and copy. Some actors even carry a notepad around with them at all times so they can write down their observations of others as they occur. You never know where or when inspiration might strike. You might just be sitting on the

bus, noticing the other passengers. Developing an awareness of other people's behaviour will always serve you well as a performer too.

3. Taking it further

Ask the children if any of them can do an impersonation of someone famous. Talk about what characteristics make that famous person unique, e.g. voice, posture, funny habits etc., and be sure to give a big clap to any child who does an impersonation.

Note: This plug-in can be done with the story about the request of James and John. However, it is generic and can be used with any Bible narrative.

INTRODUCE A SKILL (15 mins)

A Drama warm-up exercise is listed below. This game functions both as a warm-up and as a demonstration of the skills needed to observe and mimic another person. You may have time for more than one exercise. An additional warm-up exercise of particular relevance to this Session called **Mime it Down the Line** can be found in the Appendix.

The Mirror Game (15 mins)

In this exercise, children spread out and face each other in pairs. One child is 'person A' and the other 'person B.' Person B must be the mirror image of person A by copying all their movements. This is done without noise. Instruct the children to move slowly at first while they adjust to the game. Music can be played in the background (optional) and changed at regular intervals to help guide the children's ideas and prompt them to vary their movements. After a few minutes, tell the children to swap roles. Person A is now person B and vice versa. Praise the children who are accurately reflecting their partner. If your group is very capable, try telling/reading a simple story (very slowly) and asking the 'As' to do actions that help tell the story. You can help them along by placing emphasis on the words that you think it would be easy for them to mime.

Note: If there are an odd number of children, pair the remaining child with the teacher. Otherwise, the activity can actually work quite successfully in groups of 3. In this instance, allocate 2 of the children to be 'person B.'

PRACTICE THE SKILL (25 mins)

Note: It is assumed you and the children would have read through the Bible story already as part of the Session.

Tell the children that they are now going to help you tell the story about the request of James and John using The Mirror Game. Choose 3 children to play the roles of Jesus, James and John (Persons B) and 2 children to partner with them as a mirror (Persons A). As you (or a very capable child reader) read out the Bible story slowly and expressively, the children will act out what you say (without making a noise). HOWEVER, they are mirroring their partner's actions only, like in the game. The audience will sit facing the actors (Persons B). The actors' partners (Persons A) will stand behind the audience. You may need to stop and remind them that they are only allowed to move when their partner moves. This will be a challenging skill to master. Just encourage the 'Persons A' to move slowly like in the game. Since James and John have exactly the same dialogue in the story, they can both copy the same person. If the 'Persons A' are struggling to know how to act out the story, help them identify and practice some key 'action words' before the performance begins. 'Action words' are words in a story that have simple associated actions. Help the children by placing

emphasis on these words as you read. Always make sure you swap roles and children so that as many children as possible have a chance to perform. If children are grumbling about sitting in the audience, have a chat about what an important skill it is. Being a good audience member is just as important as being a good performer. You can also give audience members the role of playing 'the crowd' too. In this story, verse 41 says "when the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John." You could ask the audience members at this point to shout and jeer for example. You could even hold up a sign to prompt them if it helps them to feel involved.

- *What are some key 'action words' in this story? (Right, Left, Drink, Rulers, Great, Serve).*

EVALUATE THE SKILL (10 mins)

Generally what happens in the above activity is that the children who are 'Bs' will often forget that they can only move when their partner does. Their body will want to do its own thing during the story and they will need frequent reminding to wait and watch throughout. Ask the children if they preferred being an 'A' or a 'B.' Chat to them about which role they found easier and why.

- *How did you feel?*
- *Did it help to go quickly or slowly?*
- *How did the 'As' how it feel when their 'B' did not copy them correctly?*
- *How did the 'Bs' feel when they had to copy an action that they did not like/would not have chosen?*

SPIRITUAL NURTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Take some time to talk to the children about how observation and mimicry is not just a great drama skill, but also a great life skill for those that claim to follow Jesus. In the story, Jesus wanted James and John to be more like Him – more like a servant. He wanted James and John (and also wants us) to observe and mimic Him. This was a hard thing for them to hear and do. Because Jesus was God however, they could trust that listening to His words and mimicking His actions would be the best possible choice. On a large sheet of paper ask the children to help you draw a picture of Jesus. Then ask them to suggest and write on the picture different characteristics of Jesus. Some suggestions include kind, loving, compassionate, merciful, servant-hearted, obedient to God, slow to anger. This may be hard for younger children. Try to steer them towards Jesus' human qualities. If they are starting to mention His divine qualities (e.g. his power and his omniscience etc.) the exercise will not work. We want them to come up with things they can imitate.

PRAY

Stand together in a circle to pray. Ask the children to each state one way in which they would like to mimic Jesus. They might like to complete the sentence

Dear God, Jesus was _____. Please make me more like Him. Amen.

An example of something to fill in the blank might be "a servant." The children can use the picture you drew together to help them.

DRAMA SKILLS 4 | NARRATIVE SKILLS & STORYTELLING

OVERVIEW OF THE SESSION

Bible Passage: Jesus is tested in the Wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11)

Main Idea: Jesus obeyed God and brought Him honor.

Drama Skill: Narrative Skills/Storytelling

THE SESSION PLAN

Communicate 15 min

1. Read Matthew 4:1-11

Choose one activity from **7 ways to explore a Bible story** in **7Ways Training Leader's Guide** on www.max7.org. This may be done in a big group or a small group. Suggestion: **Way 2 Interviews** or **Way 3 Draw the main events**.

Alternative activity: Go on a walk with the children and tell the story as you stop in different places. Before you walk, start the story with verse 1-2.

(Bread) Find a place where there is rubble or rocks: enact the story verses 3-4.

(Temple) Find somewhere suitable to act as a High Place: enact verses 5-7.

(The whole world) Find a place that could represent 'the world' and things that may tempt a child to take their eyes off God e.g. Market/Shopping centre/ car dealership/ food shop/ clothing shop/ sports centre: Enact verses 8-11.

Investigate 15 min

2. Small group discussion:

- *How would you feel if you hadn't eaten in 40 days?*
- *Why was it wrong for Jesus to turn the rocks into bread?*
- *What did Jesus do to resist the temptation?*
- *What were the second and third temptations?*
- *What things tempt us over and over again?*
- *Is temptation the same as sinning?*
- *What strategies can we use to overcome temptation?*

Important: To be tempted is not wrong. It is when we disobey God that we sin. Jesus has given us a strategy to resist temptation and not sin. A child should not fast because they are still growing.

Use the **7ways to ask questions** guide for more ideas.

WHAT ARE NARRATIVE SKILLS IN STORYTELLING?

Children have a very natural appreciation for storytelling. They love to hear stories and they love to tell them. They are also often more creative than adults. They take greater risks with their imaginations. They have so much to teach us in the area of storytelling! This plug-in will develop this skill by demonstrating that good storytelling is not just listing a series of events.

A good story will involve conflict and must explore how a character feels as well as the decisions they need to make. The best stories are the ones where the audience can feel what the character feels. The audience feels personally invested in the character's outcome. Children will learn the structure of storytelling in this plug-in. This will help them engage with the deeper issues at stake in the Bible narrative.

3. Ask the children:

- Can you remember a really excellent story that you have heard someone else tell?
- What made the story so memorable?

Note: This plug-in can be done with the story about Jesus being tested in the Wilderness. However, it is generic, and can be used with any Bible narrative.

INTRODUCE A SKILL (20 mins)

A Drama warm-up exercise is listed below. This game functions both as a warm-up and as a demonstration of the skills needed to tell a good story. You may have time for more than one exercise. A series of other drama exercises of a more generic nature can be found in the Appendix.

4. Tell, Ask, Choose!

In this exercise, there are 3 parts. Progress through as many parts as you have time for.

TELL

The first part is 'Tell.' Have the children sit in a circle and explain that you are going to create your very own story together. It can be about absolutely anything. Each child contributes just one line of the story. They do this by completing a sentence that you give them. The sentences to be completed are as follows:

Once upon a time there was...

And every day...

Until one day...

Because of this...

And because of this...

And every day after that...

This method allows children to be as imaginative as they like whilst still staying within the bounds of a helpful narrative structure that includes conflict and problem solving. If it helps, you can start by giving the children a title for their story. Repeat this exercise as many times as it takes for every child to contribute. Always give encouragement. Write down your best story on a piece of paper in large letters.

ASK

The second part relates to the first part and is called 'Ask.' In this exercise, children (as well as the teacher) are invited to ask questions of the characters in the story. They can ask anything at all, here are some examples.

- *How did you feel when you were chased by that monster?*
- *Why did you make that decision?*

The characters in the story will be played by children in your group. The way to do this is to just start treating one of the children in your group as if they are a character in the story. For instance, rather than saying "Sarah, can you please pretend to play the part of the princess while we ask you questions," instead say "well look everybody, we have the princess herself right here in our midst! Does anybody have any questions for her?" The children will respond quite readily. If possible, designate a special chair as the 'hot seat' where any character undergoing questioning must sit. You can give them a small costume item if available (e.g. a pair of glasses). The aim of this exercise is to help the children get to know the characters and really think about how they might be feeling given their circumstances. There are no right or wrong answers – so long as they can give a reason for their feelings.

CHOOSE

The third and final part is called 'Choose.' This exercise helps children to wrestle with the idea of decision-making and understand the fact that a character's decisions can change the whole course of a story. Tell the children that the story they wrote together might have had a different outcome if the main character had acted differently. Identify together a part of the story where the main character had a decision to make or a problem to solve. Have the group stand in 2 lines facing each other while that character (a child of your choosing) walks in between the two lines. Tell all the children in the lines to give the character their advice about what they should do as they walk through. You can even make it so that children on opposite sides of the line give the character opposing advice. When the character reaches the end of the line they must decide what to do.

Give a few different children a turn and then write up some alternative endings to the original story on some separate pieces of paper.

PRACTICE THE SKILL (20 mins)

Note: It is assumed you and the children would have read through the Bible story already as part of the Session.

Tell the children that they are now going to help you bring the Bible story alive by playing 'Tell, Ask, Choose!' As a group (the children may need significant help), divide the Bible into 6 parts according to the structure outlined in the 'Tell' component. Write it down on a large piece of paper. Then move on to 'Ask' and 'Choose.'

HOW CAN THIS STORY BE DIVIDED INTO 6 PARTS?

Once upon a time there was a man named Jesus who was also the Son of God.
And every day He lived a life that pleased and honoured his father in heaven...
Until one day the Spirit led Him into the desert to be tempted by the devil.
Because of this Jesus said to the devil, "It is written, do not put the Lord your God to the test. Away from me, Satan!"
And because of this the devil left him and angels came and attended Him.

And every day after that Jesus continued to worship the Lord our God and serve Him only.

Note: This 6-part division of the story is a guide only. You can go into as much or as little detail as you like at each point – depending on how advanced your group is. It is also possible to make Satan the main character here. The exercise works best with Jesus as the main character. However, advanced groups can try using Satan.

EVALUATE THE SKILL (10 mins)

Children who are required to play the part of the devil at any point during this plug-in might struggle with the very idea of it. This is a great opportunity to discuss it. Play the 'Ask' component of 'Tell, Ask, Choose!' again at this point. This time the children are not in character. They are their real selves. Take turns asking each other how they felt playing an evil character.

- *Would the story have been the same without an evil character?*
- *Was the Bible narrative an interesting story?*
- *Why or why not?*
- *What would have happened if Jesus had made a different choice?*

For more advanced groups, you might like to talk about the tension an actor feels between their character and their real self. Jesus experienced a different kind of tension: a tension between his humanity and His divinity. He was tempted yet never sinned.

SAFETY AND PROTECTION

Take some time to talk to the children about the situation Jesus was in. He was being pressured by an untrustworthy source to go against what He knew was right. Sometimes we are pressured in similar ways – even by those we think are our friends. Ask the children:

- *Has anyone ever tried to make you do something you knew was wrong or unsafe or just something you did not want to do?*
- *What did you do?*

You could write a list together or draw on a big sheet of paper. If time, you could play the 'Choose' part of 'Tell, Ask, Choose' again. Give the children a situation, play the game and then discuss possible wise decisions. Talk about how it is okay to say 'no' and ask for help from someone you trust.

PRAY

Thank God that He is trustworthy. Thank Jesus that He set the example of being obedient to His father in heaven even when He was tempted to do the wrong thing.

The children could stand in a circle and ask God for protection and safety for the person on their left (one at a time). Alternatively you could join in 'The Lord's Prayer' together, with emphasis on the line "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil."

DRAMA SKILLS 5 | EMOTIONS

OVERVIEW

Bible Passage: Jesus raises Lazarus (John 11:1-43)

Main Idea: Jesus has the power over life and death.

Drama Skill: Emotions

SESSION PLAN

Communicate 15 min

1. Read John 11:1-43

Choose one activity from **7 ways to explore a Bible story** in **7Ways Training Leader's Guide** on www.max7.org. Do this as a big group. Suggestion: **Way 3. Draw the main event, Way 4 Still frame drama or Way 6 Act it out.**

Investigate 15 min

2. Small group discussion:

- *What is strange or unusual about this story?*
- *What things usually happen when someone dies? (Funeral, grief, burial)*
- *Why do you think Jesus didn't rush to be with Lazarus?*
- *How do we know that Jesus was compassionate?*
- *How would you feel if you saw Jesus telling people to roll away the stone of Lazarus' tomb?*
- *What do we learn about Jesus from this story?*
- *How is this linked to Jesus' death?*

Important: Help the children realize that Jesus has power over death. He raised Lazarus and He came back to life Himself after the crucifixion. We can trust Him with our lives.

Use the **7 ways to ask questions** guide for more ideas.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONS IN DRAMA

What do 'emotions' mean in drama? Displaying human feeling in a convincing manner is one of the most important drama skills a performer can have. Teaching this, however, involves more than a series of instructions about how to contort your face if you are trying to look sad versus happy versus angry. Emotions occur naturally in the context of certain circumstances. They happen when we react. This plug-in will teach children to a) focus on the situation a character is in when they practice acting (rather than trying to 'act happy'), b) be guided by their own real-life reactions to certain circumstances, c) learn how to show

rather than tell their emotions and d) appreciate that people can be in the same situation and yet have different emotions.

Note: This plug-in can be done with the story of Lazarus. However, it is generic and can be used with any Bible narrative.

INTRODUCE A SKILL (20 mins)

A Drama warm-up exercise is listed below. This game functions both as a warm-up and as a demonstration of the skills needed to show convincing emotions. You may have time for more than one exercise. A series of other drama exercises of a more generic nature can be found in the Appendix.

"I Can't Believe That Just Happened!"

Ask the children to share some real situations where they felt angry, happy, sad, excited etc. Write down these situations (but don't write down the emotion) on a large piece of paper that everyone can see e.g. "My dog died," "I received a great present," "I saw a big spider" etc. You could also draw them if the children struggle with reading. Try to include straightforward situations that relate to a broad variety of emotions (both positive and negative). Have them choose a situation secretly and then enter the room as though that thing has just happened. As they enter they must say the phrase, "I can't believe that just happened!" Children in the audience then have to guess the situation from your big sheet of paper. Remember, they are to guess the situation, not the emotion. Every time an incorrect guess is made, the performer must do it again. This will teach them to make their feelings more and more obvious so that the audience is able to guess the situation correctly. You can even divide the audience into teams to motivate them. Note: If you are working in an outdoor space, have the performers hide behind something before they make their entrance. This will help communicate that they are entering a space 'in character.'

More advanced groups can try the following exercise in pairs:

Below is a 'Neutral Script.' This means that the script makes sense in a variety of different situations and can be played with a variety of different emotions. Have the pair secretly choose a situation from the list and then perform this scene as though that situation has just happened to person A. Audience members guess as before.

A: Have you been here long?

B: No.

A: I have to leave soon.

B: Where are you going?

A: I have to get back.

B: How is it going?

A: Just the way I predicted.

PRACTICE THE SKILL (20 mins)

Note: It is assumed you and the children would have read through the Bible story already as part of the Session.

Identify together a series of moments from the story of Lazarus that would elicit strong emotions and write these moments on the board so everyone can see (just like you did

before). Again, you could draw them if the children are not confident readers. Do not write up the emotion itself. Allow the children to figure out how they will interpret the situation. Some suggestions of associated emotions have been listed here in parentheses for your own information.

Play the game “I Can’t Believe That Just Happened!” but this time, have the children use the phrase in the present tense: “I can’t believe this is happening!”

What are some of these ‘emotional moments’ from the Bible story?

1. *Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus, telling Him that Lazarus was sick. (scared or sad or hopeful)*
2. *The disciples question Jesus about whether He is really going to go back to Judea, right after the Jews tried to stone Him. (shocked or concerned or disbelieving)*
3. *Jesus tells his disciples He is going to wake Lazarus up. (confident or calm or trusting)*
4. *The disciples tell Jesus that if he is just sleeping he will be okay. (confused)*
5. *Lazarus was dead. Martha heard that Jesus was coming and went out to meet him (devastated or grief-stricken or sad)*
6. *Martha tells Jesus that if He had been there, her brother would not have died. However, she knows Jesus has the power to act. (angry or hurt or still hopeful)*
7. *Jesus wept. (grief-stricken)*
8. *Jesus thanks His Father in Heaven for hearing Him. (thankful or trusting)*
9. *The people witness Lazarus walking out of his tomb in his grave clothes. (awe or shock or amazement or excitement)*

Note: These moments are not an exhaustive list and the associated emotions are a guide only. There might be other moments in the story which stand out to you more. There are also any number of emotions which could be justified in each case. Try to ensure a good cross-section of emotions is used (both positive and negative).

EVALUATE THE SKILL (10 mins)

Ask the children about how they feel after working through the story of Lazarus. Did their feelings change at particular points? Why? Allow as many children to talk as possible so that they can appreciate how their emotions differ from each other, even after hearing the same story. Emphasise that you are interested in hearing how they feel, rather than how the characters in the story felt. You could ask a few of them to show how they feel by coming out the front and saying the phrase “I just heard the story of Lazarus” in a manner that communicates their feelings. Audience members guess the emotion.

EDUCATION

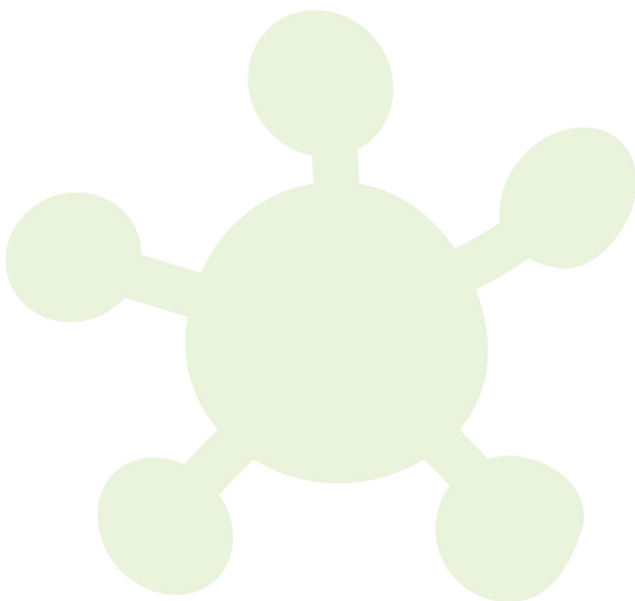
Take some time to talk to the children about death.

- *Have any of you had someone who is close to you or your family die?*
- *Do they know anybody who has?*
- *Are you worried about death?*

Read John 3:16 together and make an artwork or draw a picture together. Talk about how we don't need to be afraid of death if we trust in Jesus. This world is not all there is.

PRAY

Thank God that He has power over life and death and that we have hope of eternal life through Jesus. Thank him also that no matter how we feel He is always with us. Write a list of varying emotions together or draw faces showing different emotions. Allocate each child an emotion. Go round the circle and have the children complete this sentence with their word: *"Thank you Lord that you are with me when I feel _____."*



DRAMA SKILLS 6 | IMPROVISATION #1

OVERVIEW

Bible Passage: Jesus teaches Nicodemus (John 3:1-21)

Main Idea: We become a new person when we begin a friendship with Jesus.

Drama Skill: Improvisation (Part One)

LESSON PLAN

Communicate 15 min

1. Read John 3:1-21

Choose one activity from **7 ways to explore a Bible story** in **7Ways Training Leader's Guide** on www.max7.org. This may be done in a big group or a small group. Suggestion: **Way 5 - Storytelling with flannel graph or a blackboard** or **Way 6 - Act it out**.

Investigate 15 min

2. Small group discussion:

- *Why do you think Nicodemus wanted to know about becoming a child of God and belonging to God's Kingdom?*
- *Was he convinced with the answer Jesus gave him? Why?*
- *Is it easy to follow Jesus and His way?*
- *How do you know that you are following Jesus?*
- *How can you know what Jesus wants you to do with your life?*

Important: Help the children realize that being friends with Jesus will change our whole life. It will be so different that it is like being born all over again.

Use the **7ways to ask questions** for more ideas.

HOW IMPROVISATION WORKS

What does 'improvisation' mean in drama? Improvisation in Drama is a performance for which there is no script and no preparation time. The actors have not memorised dialogue written by someone else. They are usually given a few guidelines and are then asked to invent the action and dialogue as they go along. One key skill to help children improvise successfully is known as 'accepting offers'. In practice, this means that when improvising with other performers children must always try and work with the ideas that the other actors introduce. For example, if an actor enters a scene and says, "I'd like to borrow your dog for the day" and the other actor responds with "I don't have a dog," then they have not accepted the 'offer.' This is called 'blocking' and it stops the scene from developing. Children usually need a lot of practice at accepting offers, as the natural tendency is to enter an improvisation with their own set ideas instead of building on the ideas of others. Praise

the children enthusiastically or give a small reward/treat to those who demonstrate the 'accepting offers' trait quickly.

Note: Improvisation is a useful skill for situations where scripted performances go wrong and actors have to move the action forward whilst disguising the fact that a mistake has been made.

Taking it further

Ask for a volunteer to stand in the middle of the circle and begin acting out a simple task (for example, getting ready for school in the morning). After they have been acting for about ten seconds, have a second volunteer enter the space and ask them, "What are you doing?" The first volunteer then gives the second volunteer a new action to perform by saying something like "I am cleaning my bedroom." The second volunteer begins this task and the game continues in this manner. This is a very simple exercise, but one that introduces the children to the notion of taking their cues from other people who are entering the scene.

Note: This Skill session can be done with the story about Nicodemus. However, it is generic and can be used with other Bible narratives.

INTRODUCE A SKILL (15 mins)

A Drama warm-up exercise is listed below. This game functions both as a warm-up and as a demonstration of the skills needed to improvise with another person. You may have time for more than one exercise. Additional warm-up exercises of a more generic nature can be found in the Appendix.

Yes and... (10 mins)

In this exercise, two children are asked to come up the front. One of them sits in a storytelling chair (a seat that is decorated so that it looks a bit special – draping a piece of fabric over it will do). Both of them are given a silly hat or accessory to wear (these could even be made by the children out of paper). This helps them transform into a different character instead of just using their regular voice and expressions. Audience members are asked to give these two volunteers a title for the story that they are about to create together. The title should be fun and silly. An example is "The Day the Giraffe Turned Purple." The child in the storytelling chair begins the story but is only allowed to say a short sentence. They may like to start with the phrase "Once upon a time there was..." and they can complete it however they wish. They then swap places with the other volunteer so that a different person, who also only contributes a short sentence, continues the story. Each time a new part of the story is added however, that child must begin their contribution with the words "yes, and...." This is to ensure that the children are listening to each other, accepting each other's 'offers' and building on the story rather than taking it in all sorts of different directions.

The activity continues in this manner until the teacher decides the story is complete (more or less!). Give as many pairs a turn as you have time for. Always reward the children who remember to say "yes and..." and accept offers well.

Professor Know-it-all (10 mins)

For this exercise, have about 4 children (this number is flexible) line up next to each other and link arms. Introduce this character (yes it is just one character!) to the audience as 'Professor Know-it-all.' Welcome the audience to the 'World Conference for People who Know Everything.' Inform them that 'Professor Know-it-all' is an expert on any topic they may have questions about and that they should raise their hands if they have something

they wish to ask him. Since the children are at this conference, they too should be ‘in character’ and introduce themselves as experts in their chosen field before they ask any questions. The job for Professor Know-it-all is then to answer their question, but each person linking arms is only allowed to contribute one word each. This is a slightly more complex version of the previous exercise, as they need to listen to each other even more carefully than before if their answers are to make sense. Questions and answers can be as silly as you like.

PRACTICE THE SKILL (20 mins)

Note: It is assumed you and the children would have read through the Bible story (John 3:1 – 21) already as part of the lesson.

The Bible passage tells the story of a Pharisee named Nicodemus. Pharisees were known in Jesus’ day to be a bit like Professor Know-it-all. In this story, however, Nicodemus admitted that there was much he didn’t understand and he came to Jesus for answers.

Have the children play ‘Professor Know-it-all’ but this time call him ‘Pharisee Know-it-all’ and use the activity as an opportunity for the children to ask questions about things in the passage they may not understand. They could use verse 4 and verse 9 as inspiration. ‘Pharisee Know-it-all’ is not supposed to be Nicodemus but rather one of Nicodemus’ friends perhaps – a more stereotypical portrait of a Pharisee. The activity is meant to be fun and of course the answers that the Pharisee gives will be very jumbled and silly. Hopefully this will help ready the children for the discussion afterward.

Alternatively, you might like to play ‘Yes and...’ and have the children build a story from the perspective of two gossiping spectators who are recounting the conversation that they witnessed between Nicodemus and Jesus.

Whichever activity you choose, the aim is to help the children grapple with their understanding of a difficult passage. Improvisation exercises such as these allow them to indicate how well they understand the passage. This should be helpful for you as the teacher.

EVALUATE THE SKILL (10 mins)

Take some time to talk to the children about the importance of taking on new characters when improvising and acting. We might look and sound like the same person we are in real life but when performing our characters have different motivations and different futures.

Note: This idea will be used to open up a discussion about the notion of being ‘born again’ that is introduced in the passage: we become a new person with a new future and different motivations when we begin a friendship with Jesus.

- *Was it hard to answer the questions when playing ‘Pharisee Know-it-all?’*
- *Why do you think Nicodemus asked Jesus about all this and not his other Pharisee friends?*
- *What is it like being another Character with a different motivation and a different future?*
- *How is this like your life?*
- *How is this different?*

- *How is our growth as Christians similar to performing the role of a new Character?*
- *How is it different?*

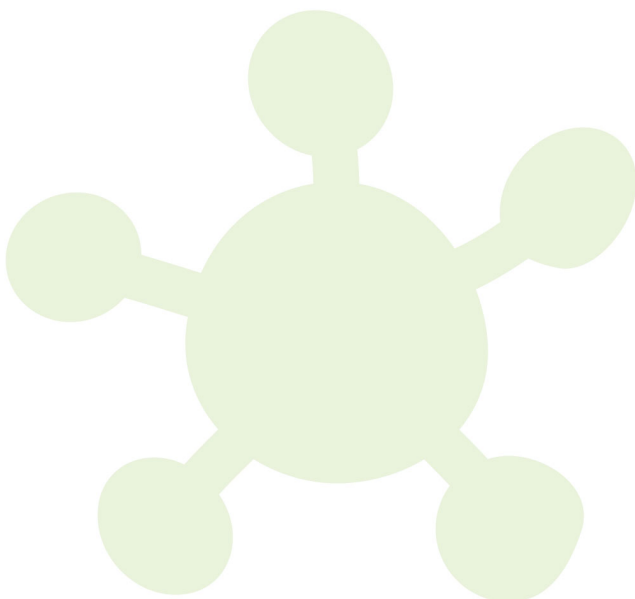
SPIRITUAL NURTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

This is a wonderful opportunity to ask the children where they are at with God.

- *Do they have a friendship with Jesus?*
- *Have they heard the verse John 3:16 before now?*
- *What do they think it means to be a child of God?*
- *Give the children an opportunity at this point to become a new person and become friends with Jesus.*
- *Is there a child present who might like to share their story of how they became friends with Jesus?*

PRAY

Use the 'Yes and...' activity to pray. Make this one a prayer of thanksgiving for all the things that the children have learnt about Jesus in the passage. Maybe this time you can use a 'prayer chair' instead of a 'storytelling chair.' Explain that prayer is improvisation. There is no script, but the Holy Spirit helps us along.



DRAMA SKILLS 7 | IMPROVISATION # 2

OVERVIEW

Bible Passage: Jesus feeds the 4000 (Matthew 15:32-39)

Main Idea: God generously provides all that we need. We can trust Him.

Drama Skill: Improvisation (Part Two)

SESSION PLAN

Communicate 15 min

1. Read Matthew 15:32-39

Choose one activity from **7 ways to explore a Bible story** in **7Ways Training Leader's Guide** on www.max7.org. This may be done in a big group or a small group. Suggestion: **Way 2 - Interviews** or **Way 4 - Still frame drama scene**.

Or have one leader tell the story to another leader. Some questions that children might have in their minds are both asked and answered.

Investigate 15 min

2. Small group discussion:

- *Why were the disciples unsure where Jesus could get the food?(He had already fed 5000)*
- *Is it hard to believe that God can meet our needs? Why?*
- *Can God meet your needs? Why?*
- *Does anyone want to share of a time when God met your needs? (This will help other kids who do not believe that God can provide for our needs; if appropriate, the leader can share a testimony)*

Help the children realize that we can trust God with our whole lives. He can provide everything we need.

Use the **7ways to ask questions** guide for more ideas.

DRAMA SKILLS 7: IMPROVISATION PART TWO

Remind the children what improvisation is from Session 6 (see below)

What does 'improvisation' mean in drama? Improvisation in Drama is a performance for which there is no script and no preparation time. The actors have not memorised dialogue written by someone else. They are usually given a few guidelines and are then asked to invent the action as they go along. One key skill to help children improvise successfully is known as 'accepting offers'. In practice, this means that when improvising with other performers children must always try and work with the ideas that the other actors introduce. For example, if an actor enters a scene and says, "I'd like to borrow your dog for

the day” and the other actor responds with “I don’t have a dog,” then they have not accepted the ‘offer.’ This is called ‘blocking’ and it stops the scene from developing. Children usually need a lot of practice at accepting offers, as the natural tendency is to enter an improvisation with their own set ideas instead of building on the ideas of others. Praise the children enthusiastically or give a small reward/treat to those who demonstrate the ‘accepting offers’ trait quickly.

Note: Improvisation is a useful skill for situations where scripted performances go wrong and actors have to move the action forward whilst disguising the fact that a mistake has been made.

Taking it further:

Ask for a volunteer to stand in the middle of the circle and begin acting out a simple task (for example, getting ready for school in the morning). After they have been acting for about ten seconds, have a second volunteer enter the space and ask them, “What are you doing?” The first volunteer then gives the second volunteer a new action to perform by saying something like “I am cleaning my bedroom.” The second volunteer begins this task and the game continues in this manner. This is a very simple exercise, but one that introduces the children to the notion of taking their cues from other people who are entering the scene.

Note: Ideally this Skill Session will be attempted after having first completed ‘Improvisation Part One.’ The exercises in the first session are more basic and help develop the foundational skills. It is, however, not necessary.

Also, this session can be done with the story about Jesus feeding the 4000. However, it is generic and can be used with other Bible narratives.

INTRODUCE A SKILL (20 mins)

A Drama warm-up exercise is listed below. This game functions both as a warm-up and as a demonstration of the skills needed to improvise. You may have time for more than one exercise. A series of other drama exercises of a more generic nature can be found in the appendix.

Half Time!

In this exercise, children are divided into pairs and given one minute to improvise a scene that solves a problem. No preparation time is allowed. They are given the following ingredients from their audience members:

- *CHARACTERS (eg two puppies)*
- *RELATIONSHIP (eg brother and sister)*
- *OBSTACLE (eg they have lost their owner)*
- *WHERE? (eg the jungle)*

An easy way to remember this is with the acronym ‘CROW.’ To make the task easier, give the pair less information about their scene.

The activity is called ‘Half Time’ because the time limit for the performance is repeatedly reduced by 50%. For the first attempt, the pair are allowed one minute. They must then repeat the exact same performance (or as close to it as they can recall!) in just 30 seconds.

Next, 15 seconds and so on. The shorter the time limit, the more entertaining this exercise becomes.

Emphasise to the children that on their first one minute attempt they must aim to actually solve the problem in that time. They must also use the full minute to do it. A common trap is to either solve the problem too soon or not soon enough.

PRACTICE THE SKILL (20 mins)

Note: It is assumed you and the children would have read through the Bible story already as part of the lesson.

The story of Jesus feeding the 4000, leaves much room for improvised scenes. Choose two characters (or potential characters) from the story whose conversations are not detailed in the passage and play 'Half Time.' Be sure to first establish the characters, their relationship, their obstacle and their location. An example might be a scene between two crowd members (who had been following Jesus for days). They might be father and daughter. The father might be blind. They might be on the mountainside. Alternatively, you could improvise a scene with two of the disciples. It might take place after the miracle this time. Or, you could get really creative and improvise a scene between a fish and a loaf of bread! The possibilities are endless and endlessly useful in helping the children to really bring the scene to life and understand different people's perspectives.

EVALUATE THE SKILL (10 mins)

Talk to the group about the things that they found both easy and difficult in the improvisation exercise. What are the ingredients you need to have in order for an improvisation to work? In our improvisation exercise we were given just 4 pieces of information, yet it was enough to develop a scene. Use this to start a discussion about how even though we do not always get everything that we want (sometimes we might prefer a script instead of having to make up dialogue for a scene as we go along), God generously provides all that we need. We can trust Him. Chat to the kids about all the different people who might have been present at the feeding of the 4000 and how the improvisation task might have helped them to understand a different perspective.

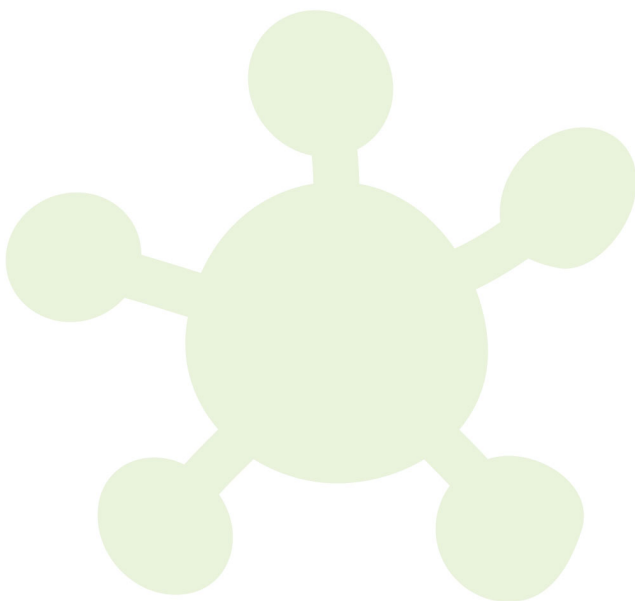
HEALTH AND SICKNESS

Ask the children to notice how in the story Jesus cared about the people's hunger. He cared because he knew that if they were not fed, they might collapse. Spend some time talking about food and what each child likes to eat. Which foods are nutritious and accessible? What do different foods do? Talk about how eating relates to health and a strong immune system. Have there ever been times where you have been hungry and not had enough to eat? You can pray about that too. God cares.

PRAY

Since the children have been thinking about the different perspectives of people in the story, ask them now to write (or draw) a prayer from the perspective of someone who was there when Jesus fed the 4000. It could be a crowd member that was healed or a hungry person who was fed or a person who was still waiting to see Jesus and be healed. It could be

a 'thank you' prayer or a prayer that was asking for something. It could be a prayer that was prayed at any point during that day's events. Ask the children to read their prayers aloud.



DRAMA SKILLS 8 | VOCAL EFFECTS & MUSIC

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Drama Skill: Vocal effects and music

Bible Passage: Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-39)

Main Idea: Holy Spirit speaks to us in accordance to God's direction and we are to trust and obey.

SESSION PLAN

Communicate 15 min

1. Read Acts 8:26-39

Choose one activity from **7 ways to explore a Bible story** in **7Ways Training Leader's Guide** on www.max7.org. Do this as a big group. Suggestion: **Way 2: Interviews** or **Way 6: Act it out**.

Investigate 15 min

2. Small group discussion:

- *What surprised you in this story?*
- *How much is the Holy Spirit involved in the events of the story?*
- *Do you think that the Holy Spirit is very involved in your life? Why or why not?*
- *Why do think it was Philip who was asked to speak to the Ethiopian?*
- *How does God help us to understand the Bible today?*
- *Has the Holy Spirit prompted you to go and help another person? (This is a good time for personal stories)*

Important: As the Holy Spirit lives in us He will prompt us to do things God's way. He never asks us to do anything against what He has already taught us in the Bible. He helps us live out what the Bible says to help others see God.

Use the **7ways to ask questions** guide for more ideas.

HOW ARE VOCAL EFFECTS AND MUSIC USED IN DRAMA?

Both vocal effects and music can be used to either replace or add to the script in a dramatic performance. Both are powerful storytelling devices that fill out (or stand in the place of) the dialogue and drive the mood of the piece. Music & effects are used in movies and they can be as effective in drama – especially when they are produced and incorporated by the actors. Typically, they have the ability to manipulate the reaction of an audience.

Taking it Further:

You might like to come up with some ‘buzz words’ for the session. These are action words which, when spoken, should cue the children/audience to respond with an action or sound effect. For example, every time the teacher says the name ‘Philip’ the children could respond by saying in unison “Hi, Philip!” or whenever the teacher says ‘sheep,’ the audience could respond by making the noise “Baaaaaa” and so on. A musical equivalent would be to have a short theme song that is sung whenever a particular person appears on stage or walks into the room for example. This works best when done by just one person, rather than the group.

Note: This Skill Session can be done with the story of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. However, it is generic and can be used with other Bible narratives.

INTRODUCE A SKILL (20 mins)

A Drama warm-up exercise is listed below. This game functions both as a warm-up and as a demonstration of the skills needed to experiment with vocal effects and music. You may have time for more than one exercise. A series of other drama exercises of a more generic nature can be found in the appendix.

‘Music to my Ears.’

This activity will require some kind of musical instrument. Piano or a drum is ideal but there are many options that would work. The main thing is that you can vary the pitch, pace and general mood of the instrument with ease. Ask a volunteer to stand in front of the other children. Tell them that you would like them to improvise and narrate a story for the other children. Give them a title for the story if they need a little help getting started. Tell them, however, that the nature and events of their story must be prompted by the type of music you are playing on your instrument in the background. The teacher does not need to be particularly accomplished at the chosen instrument – in fact, it is more entertaining if they are not proficient at all! The idea is not to play known melodies but to improvise in a simple manner – one or two notes might be all you need. As you play, be sure to vary the pitch, pace and key (if possible) of the instrument so that the story takes a number of different turns. Stress to the children the importance of projecting their storytelling voice over the top of the instrument and be careful yourself to not play too loudly or obtrusively. Once children become confident with this activity, you can add a mime artist by placing another child next to the Storyteller, whose job it is to act out everything they say.

The variation on this activity is to experiment with vocal effects instead of with music. Instead of playing music on an instrument, compile a list of different sound effects that you can make with your voice. In this instance, you might entrust the job to a capable child if you have the list of sound effects written down for them to follow. Examples include a ticking clock, raindrops, an alarm, snoring, any machine or device with an easily recognisable noise, a telephone, the wind, the ocean or an animal noise. You can take this further by adding noises that can be made with other body parts.

PRACTICE THE SKILL (20 mins)

Note: It is assumed you and the children would have read through the Bible story already as part of the lesson.

The idea for this section is to place music and/or vocal effects in the background while the story of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch is read aloud. There are several ways to do this. While one person is reading, you can have each child on a different instrument (something small and simple is best) taking turns playing in the background or making sound effects with their voice & body. Or you can have one person on one instrument (preferably the teacher) playing in the background while the children take turns reading aloud the various sections of the Bible passage. Make your decision based on the age and reading capabilities of the children in your group.

Prepare the children for the activity by asking them to notice how the music/sound effects change the meaning of the story. You could also get them to list the sounds they might hear as the story is acted out for example: the noise of the chariot wheels on the road, paper noises as the Eunuch reads the Scriptures, the horses hooves & 'neighing' noises, a light wind, water splashing (when the Eunuch is baptised) and so on.

Repeat the exercise a couple of times so that the children can see how different types of music/sound effects can completely change the feel of a story.

EVALUATE THE SKILL (10 mins)

Take some time to chat to the children about how it felt to perform in each of these activities. In the warm-up activity, who was prompting whom? Was the actor following the lead of the musician or was the musician following the actor? Was there a point where the actor stopped listening to the musician altogether and went ahead with their story, ignoring the musical promptings (this tends to happen with this activity)? Use the discussion that to illustrate the way that the Holy Spirit works in our lives. Sometimes it's just easier to ignore the Spirit's quiet voice in the background and go our own way, but we need to remember that the Holy Spirit speaks to us in accordance with God's direction and we are to trust and obey.

If your group is older, ask the children if they noticed their storytelling voices changing to fit the tone of the music as well. Liken this to the way in which our desires and actions begin to align themselves more naturally with the promptings of the Holy Spirit as we continue to acknowledge and obey Him.

EDUCATION

In the story, the Eunuch was confused about something he was reading and he asked Philip for help. Philip knew more about the book he was reading than the Eunuch did and he was not afraid to ask for his wisdom. Talk to the children about the importance of asking questions when they do not understand something. This is a good opportunity to introduce an anonymous question box into the group. You can decorate the box together and the children can write down questions that they have and pop them inside. The questions can be on any topic.

PRAY

Talk to God together with some kind of music playing in the background. It may be some worship music that the children will recognise or just a peaceful and reflective instrumental tune. Reflect together afterwards on how the inclusion of this music affected your prayer time. If the comments are not all positive, this is okay!

DRAMA SKILLS 9 | MIME

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Bible Passage: The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-9 and 18-23)

Main Idea: To help children learn that God wants to work in their lives, they need to listen to His voice and obey His word to be fruitful.

Drama Skill: Mime.

SESSION PLAN

Communicate 15 min

1. Read **Matthew 13:1-9**

Choose one activity from **7 ways to explore a Bible story** in **7Ways Training Leader's Guide** on **www.max7.org**. Suggestion **Way5: Storytelling (use props)**. Bring some objects relating to the Parable of the Soil/Sower.

Investigate 15 min

2. Small group discussion:

- *What did you like about this story?*
- *Did anything seem strange about this story?*
- *What was the reason Satan could snatch away the seed/message that fell along the path?*
- *What are the things that made the seed that fell among the rocks wither away quickly (v21)?*
- *Why did Jesus refer to worries and the deceitfulness of wealth as thorns or weeds in a Christian's life?*
- *What are the things that help us to become good soil? (V 23, hear, understand and produce)*
- *Why do you think it is important to hear and understand the Word?*
- *How can God help us in this?*

Important: Explain to the children that each one of us has the potential to be poor soil and miss the message. God really wants us to be the good soil that will bear good fruit.

Use the **7 ways to ask questions** for more ideas.

WHAT DOES 'MIME' MEAN IN DRAMA?

Mime is where we convey an action or emotion to an audience without using words. Usually (but not always), mime will involve the absence of props and 'set' items also. For example, if a character were cooking dinner, the performance space would be empty. The actor then has to help the audience imagine where everything in the cooking area is located by the way they move around the space. A common trap for the mime artist is that they forget that they have placed a door or a table in a particular spot and they walk straight through it! In mime, we must pay particular attention to the details of our performance. Because the objects we use in a scene are not physically there, it is easy to forget simple yet necessary tasks. Mime is about clear communication. Helping the audience to feel as though invisible objects are actually visible is the key to success.

Taking it further:

You might like to ask the children to try miming an action and seeing whether the other children can guess it. Be sure to give a big clap or a reward to any child whose action is guessed quickly. Children enjoy telling other children that they are incorrect and need to keep guessing, however this is not the aim of this activity! Remind them that good mime artists make their actions *easy* to understand/guess.

A variation is to ask children to pull an imaginary item out of an imaginary box in the middle of the circle, play with it for a while and then return it to the box. Have the other children guess the item afterwards. A child who guessed correctly could then have a turn pulling something out of the imaginary box. Remind them that they must remember the exact location of the box (so as not to trip over it) and they also must remember to open and close the box each time. Very young children will need the teacher to demonstrate several times first, in order to understand the activity.

Note: This Skill Session can be done with the Parable of the Sower. However, it is generic and can be used with other Bible narratives.

INTRODUCE A SKILL (15 mins)

A Drama exercise is listed below. This game functions both as a warm-up and as a demonstration of the skills needed to communicate well using mime. You may have time for more than one exercise. An additional warm-up exercise of particular relevance to this lesson called **Mime it Down the Line** can be found in the Appendix. So too can a series of other drama exercises of a more generic nature.

The Interview Challenge (15 mins)

In this exercise, a business owner (played by the teacher) is looking for a new worker and he is interviewing 4 (this number is flexible) candidates for the job. The problem is, none of these candidates know anything about the job. They have no skills or experience in this area and need some help if they are going to make it to the end of the interview. So, each candidate has secretly brought an expert along to stand outside the interview room and mime the answers through the window. Often the candidates will misinterpret what their expert is miming to them, which makes it very funny.

To set up for this activity, have the four candidates sit down next to each other in a row. The four 'experts' (mime artists) stand facing the candidates (several metres apart) such that each candidate has an 'expert' allocated to them. The business owner sits in between the

two rows (as if at the head of the table) with his/her back to the 'experts,' giving his/her full attention to the candidates.

The business owner can ask the candidates any questions he/she likes. Start simply with questions like 'what is your name?' and move to more challenging questions like 'what is your best quality?' Remind the children that they *must* answer every question by looking to their 'expert' for guidance. This includes questions like 'what is your name?' They might find that their 'expert' is jumping up and down and therefore respond to the question with an answer like 'My name is Mrs Jumping.' This activity is supposed to be silly and fun. When candidates misinterpret their mime artist's answer, this is okay. Keep going. It is all part of the game. Have the children in the audience choose the job and the name of the business owner. Encourage them to be creative and think up some crazy suggestions. The leader should take on the role of the business owner by playing a very vibrant character – usually with a funny accent. This will encourage the children to take on characters themselves.

Note: If there are children in the audience, make sure they're seated so they can see both the miming experts and the job candidates.

PRACTICE THE SKILL (25 mins)

Note: It is assumed you and the children would have read through the Bible story already as part of the lesson.

Tell the children that they are now going to explore the story of the Parable of the Sower using

The Interview Challenge.

Instead of having a business owner who is interviewing potential new workers, this time we will have a farmer interviewing potential 'ground/soil types' for his new special seed. For instance, the characters might be called 'Mr Good Soil' or 'Mr Rocky Places' etc. Suggested questions for the farmer are: 'tell me about the last seed that you looked after?' 'What are your strengths?' 'What are your weaknesses?' 'What makes your ground type so different from the others?' Encourage the mime artists to get their answers from the Bible passage.

The aim here is to help the children differentiate between the 'ground/soil types' in the passage. Yes the activity will be fun and probably a bit silly, but hopefully it will help them think about what the passage said about each different 'ground/soil type' as well. There is not just 'good soil' and 'bad soil' but lots of options in between.

Add a Twist:

A twist to this activity is to make it so that the farmer and the audience do not know which 'ground type' is which and they have to try to figure it out as each one is questioned.

EVALUATE THE SKILL (10 mins)

Talk to the children about the 'ground/soil type' characters: Which one do you think the farmer should hire? Is there just 'good' soil and 'bad' soil or are there other possibilities? How did this activity help you understand the parable? Is there anything you don't understand? For the performers, which characters were difficult to portray and why? Encourage them to think quietly to themselves about which 'soil' they might be. Perhaps they could draw a picture and label the different features.

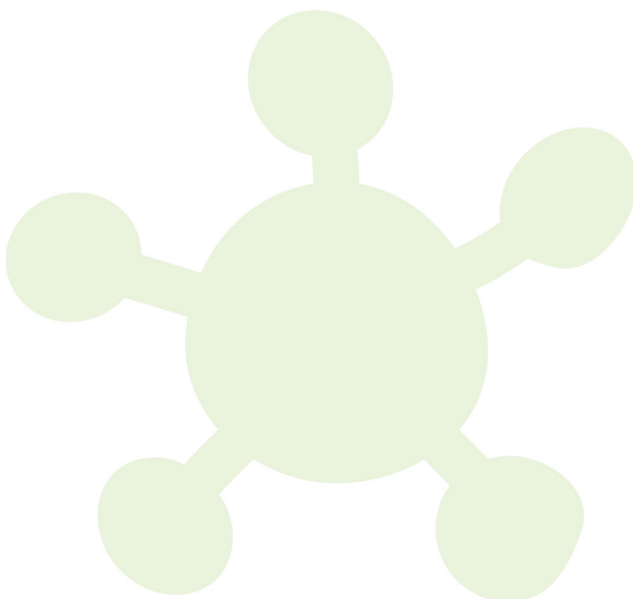
SPIRITUAL NURTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Take some time to talk to the children about how the skills they learnt in the 'Interview Challenge' relate to the skills that we need when we claim to follow Jesus. In the activity, watching and listening to our 'expert' before answering was very important. In the same way, God is the ultimate expert on our lives because He made us. God wants to work in our lives. Sometimes our instinct (like in the activity) is to just jump right in and ignore Him, but we need to listen to His voice and obey His word to be fruitful.

PRAY

Ask the children to curl up like seeds on the ground to pray. Have them each thank God for one thing that He has taught them during the lesson today. Then go round the circle again and ask them each to pray,

"Dear God, please help me grow. Amen." (They could slowly rise up a little at a time after each prayer).



DRAMA SKILLS 10 | CHARACTER BUILDING #2

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

Bible Passage: Our Loving Father (Luke 15: 11-32)

Main Idea: God is a loving Father and is always waiting with open arms if we come back to Him with a repentant heart.

Drama Skill: Character Building (Part 2)

SESSION PLAN

Communicate 15 min

1. Read Luke 15: 11-32

Choose one activity from **7 ways to explore a Bible story** in **7Ways Training Leader's Guide** on www.max7.org. Do this as a big group. Try **Way 4. Still frame drama scene**

Investigate 15 min

2. Small group discussion:

- *Why do you think the younger son wanted to take his inheritance and leave home?*
- *How do you think the Father would have felt?*
- *Why do you think the Prodigal Son missed home?*
- *What reaction do you get from your parents when you do the wrong thing?*
- *Do you think that our Heavenly Father will accept us no matter how sinful we are?*

Important: Help the children realize that God is their loving heavenly Father. He will always welcome His children home again.

Use the **7ways to ask questions** for more ideas.

DRAMA SKILL | CHARACTER BUILDING # 2

What does 'character building' mean in drama? As we discovered in Part 1 of 'Character Building,' there are many different 'ingredients' to consider when putting together a character 'recipe.' Even more than this, however, we need to consider more than just how a character looks and sounds. We need to consider in more detail their perspective. This session will help children understand different perspectives by expanding their understanding of what a character can be. A character does not have to be human. A character can be an inanimate object or an animal or something we cannot see (for instance 'the wind' or 'a germ') or for older children an abstract concept (for instance 'happiness').

Taking it further:

Briefly discuss with the children about the meaning of the word 'character' in acting [it has to do with more than the moral integrity of the person]. Help children to unpack that it includes the personality, behaviour and story of an individual in a drama.

- *How many characters can you suggest from the room/place you are sitting in right now?*

There are infinite possibilities. When the children make their suggestions, have them give each character a name too. Examples include Bob the chair, Sally the door, Jerry the germ and so on.

Note: This plug-in can be done with the story about The Prodigal Son. However, it is generic and can be used with any Bible narrative.

INTRODUCE A SKILL (15 mins)

A Drama exercise is listed below. This exercise functions as a demonstration of the skills needed to build a creative character. You may have time for more than one exercise. Additional warm-up exercises of a more generic nature can be found in the Appendix.

Crazy/Funny Character Circuit (20 mins).

For this activity, have about 6 children (anywhere between 4 and 9 children works well) position themselves around the edge of your meeting space. The audience members should be sitting in the middle and have performers both in front of them and behind them. Ask an audience member to suggest a location for the performance that is about to take place. Examples of locations might be a hospital, a farm, a house, a grocery store, a hairdressing salon and so on. Each of the performers then has to choose (without telling anybody yet) a character that they can be from this location. The character is not allowed to be human. Encourage the children to think of unique non-human characters that they do not think anyone else will think of. For example, if the chosen location was a hospital then a child might choose to be Harry the Hospital Bed or Stanley the Stethoscope or Valery the Virus.

Instruct the performers that their job is to improvise a thirty second story about their day from the perspective of their character. They are allowed to introduce themselves (but don't have to if they prefer to leave a little intrigue for the audience). An example of how a story might begin is, "Hello. My name is Harry the Hospital Bed and today was the best day ever! I got a new patient. I love new patients and he's not too heavy either. My last patient was really big and my back still aches from holding him up...." When one character's thirty seconds is up the teacher calls out 'time' and moves immediately on to listen to the next character. There is no pause or applause in between characters. Tell the children they must make use of the full thirty seconds. If there are children who are particularly nervous from the beginning, tell them they can just start by doing fifteen seconds. Ensure you give the performers their order at the beginning.

Children are usually very good at this activity on their own. However, there is sometimes a tendency for all the characters to end up complaining about something. To add some variety and help the children along, you could ask some of them to start with the sentence, "Today was the worst day of my life...." and some of them to start with "Today was the best day of my life."

Once every child has had a turn, start experimenting. Instead of going in a fixed order you can tell the children that you will just point to them at random. You might even hear from some characters more than once (especially those who didn't quite finish their story within 30 seconds). You can also try doing a serious round and a comedic round. Once again, you

can allocate 'starting sentences' to help with this. Finally, start helping the children to think about their character voice/accent and stance.

PRACTICE THE SKILL (20 mins)

Note: It is assumed you and the children would have read through the Bible story already as part of the lesson.

Play 'Crazy/Funny Character Circuit' using characters from the Prodigal Son. The characters should not be the human ones. Examples include the pigs, the fattened calf — any object or furniture item in the Father's house — anything that can see or overhear things that are mentioned in the Bible passage.

It might help the children if you choose a particular scene from the story as your location. This will bring a little more unity to the performance.

EVALUATE THE SKILL (10 mins)

Take some time to chat to the children about perspectives.

- *How did you feel after watching the performances from all the different characters?*
- *Why do different characters have different perspectives?*
- *Which character from the story do you most identify with and why?*

Have a couple of capable children play 'Crazy/Funny Character Circuit' again — this time with the human characters in the story.

- *What did it feel like to perform?*
- *Do they feel they know the characters more deeply?*
- *What does the story teach us about God's perspective?*

Chat to them about their performances in the previous activity. What are some things that the other children did really well in their performances? What are some areas for improvement?

SAFETY AND PROTECTION

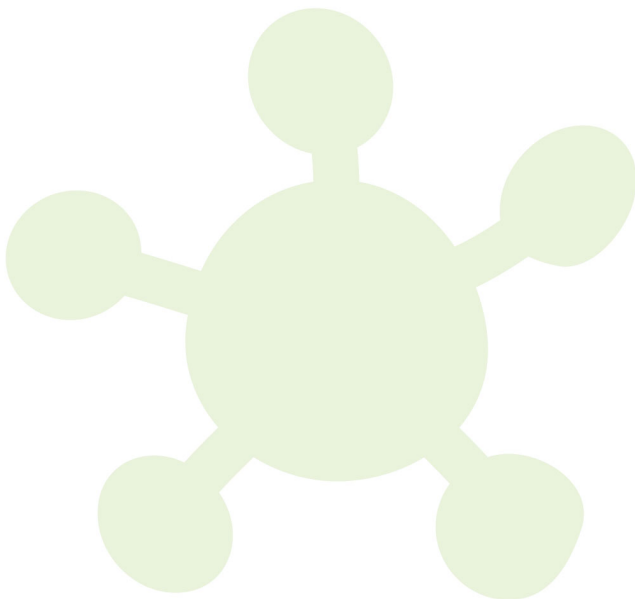
Take some time to talk to the children about how God is a loving Father. He cares about our safety and protection. Just like in the activities, that is His perspective. Are there situations where the children have felt unsafe or in need of protection? We can pray to our loving Heavenly Father, and that is the most powerful thing we can do. Ask them if they are willing to share about their own fathers. For those who have lost their father or have a difficult father/child relationship, remind them that their Heavenly Father is always waiting with open arms. He is our ultimate safety.

PRAY

Stand together in a circle to pray. Ask the children to each state one way in which they would like to seek God's forgiveness. They might like to complete the sentence:

Dear God, I am sorry for the times when I _____. Please forgive me. Thank you that you wait with open arms when we come back to you, the best Father we can hope for! Amen.

Another idea is to draw a big picture together of our Heavenly Father with open arms, and write the prayers in and around the picture.



APPENDIX

KidsHub introductions

In this exercise, children stand in a circle and yell out their name in a funny voice, with an action. They take turns. After every child's turn, the rest of the group copies them in unison with great enthusiasm. This exercise needs to be started by the leader. The leader should do a particularly loud and funny action so that the children learn that there is no need to be embarrassed.

Mime it Down the Line

In this exercise one child (person 1) starts up the front while three others (person 2, person 3 and person 4) wait outside the room (or somewhere where they cannot see or hear what is going on). The remaining children are the audience. Person 1 decides on a job to start miming (e.g. a cook). Person 2 enters and quietly observes what Person 1 is doing. Once they think they have figured it out (but without saying it aloud), they give Person 1 a big clap. The audience joins in and claps also. This is Person 3's cue to enter and Person 1 sits down. Person 3 now observes as Person 2 attempts to copy exactly what Person 1 had been doing. When Person 3 thinks they know what the job is they clap. The audience joins in and Person 4 enters as Person 2 sits down. The sequence repeats itself and at the end Person 4 describes what they think the job was. Ask each of the people involved what they thought the job was at each different stage. Ask Person 1 to reveal the answer. Then swap so that the children in the audience now have a chance to perform and vice versa.

Hot Coals!

In this exercise, children pretend to walk on/through different surfaces. In doing this, they are able to think about the different ways their body can move and the different ways a character might walk. Line them up on one side of the room and tell them that they need to make it to the other side (it's not a race) but that the floor is covered with something. Examples include hot coals, thick mud, snakes, lollies, glue etc. For the older/more-advanced children you can try whispering a surface to one child and then ask the rest of the group to guess what it is and/or suggest characters that might walk that way. For instance, an old person might walk like there is glue on the floor.

Miming it!

In this exercise, children need to guess what one child up the front is miming. The leader can whisper to this child a basic emotion e.g. sadness, or they can whisper an actual activity to act out e.g. cooking dinner. Try to keep the suggestions simple. For advanced groups, you can divide your group into teams and make it a guessing race. This way the mime artist knows that their body needs to be communicating their action very clearly in order for people to be able to guess it. Remember, there is no talking in mime!

Who wears this hat?

Note: The hats can be made in advance from newspaper if hats aren't available. In this exercise, the leader shows the children a selection of different hats and asks them who might wear each one e.g. A doctor, a pirate, a police officer, a sleepy person, builder, etc.

The children then take turns in coming out the front, putting on a hat and then entering the room as that character who might wear the hat. Encourage those watching to applaud enthusiastically each time.

Lead With Different Body Parts

In this exercise, children learn how different characters move around the room in different ways. Start by asking the children to begin walking round the room by themselves in no particular formation. Once they look like they are moving at a regular pace, yell out a body part e.g. chin. All the children will then start walking as though they are being 'led' by their chin. This might make them stick their necks out and lean forward slightly. Whichever body part is yelled out is the part they need to 'lead' with. If you yell out "hips" they might need to bend their knees and lean back slightly and so on. After doing this multiple times, then as:

What kind of person might walk in each of those different ways? E.g. a very proud person might lead with their chest.

Build a Character from Scratch/ Nothing!

(Particularly good with older/more-advanced children) In this exercise, children make a recipe. Instead of making a meal, however, they are mixing together lots of different parts to make a character. One child stands like limp clay in front of the audience. Each child in the audience is allowed to add one 'ingredient' to this character e.g. 'sneezes' or 'a limp' and the child up the front needs to do what they say. The 'ingredients' need to be a combination of vocal and physical 'ingredients' along with some catchphrases. Tell the children from the audience to act like they are making a recipe and actually 'pour' on the new ingredient. Ask, "What are you adding?" They may answer, "I'm adding a cup of sneezes." Kids will enjoy making each other look silly. This is good because it helps them to feel comfortable looking crazy or different to their normal selves. Make sure the child up the front remembers to maintain all ingredients that have been added to them.

