



# JUNIOR SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

YEAR 4

LESSONS 21 – 40

Aim: To celebrate the joy and wonder of the birth of the Promised Child.

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils; Christmas cards, decorations, gifts, etc. (optional).*

### **Introduction**

Ask the children about the preparations they make for Christmas and listen to their plans and ideas. Encourage them to think about gifts they will give (rather than receive!)

Establish that Christmas is a time of celebration, and ask what it is we are celebrating. Try to convey the simple joy and excitement of the birth of Jesus, and the fact that God fulfilled His promise of the birth of a special Baby.

### **Point 1 The Journey**

As the children know this story really well, ask them to help you to tell it, checking the prophecies from Isaiah as you go.

By question and answer establish where Mary and Joseph lived (Luke 1:23; cf. Isaiah 9b). Ask where they had to go and why (Luke 1:5) and point out that Joseph was a descendant of David (Isaiah 7:13a, 9:7b), and that there was no post, telephone or e-mail at that time.

Summarise that the baby God had promised is about to be born, that it will take place in Galilee, and that He will be a descendant of the throne of David – just as He had promised in Isaiah (9:1, 6-7).

### **Point 2 The Stable**

Ask the children to tell you about the arrival in Bethlehem, the lack of accommodation, and the birth of the Saviour in a common animal shed. (The children may like to act out the hunt for a room in Bethlehem, and the eventual shelter of a stable, where the Baby was born).

### **Point 3 Not just any Baby**

Suggest that it is very exciting when a new baby is born (share any stories about the birth of a brother or sister, cousin or friend). By question and answer, talk together about the shepherds (Luke 2:8-14). Try to bring out the wonder (and terror!) of the experience of the shepherds as together you imagine the contrast of the dark, still night with the awesome brilliance of the light; the words of the angel (Luke 2:11-12); the mind-blowing experience of the heavenly choir praising God). Find Luke 2:14 and say the verse all together.

Ask competent reader to read Isaiah 9:6; this was not just any baby, but the Child God had promised so long ago with all those amazing titles.

#### **Point 4      The News is Spread**

Talk together about the reaction of the shepherds (Luke 2:13-20) – what they must have thought and felt, what they said to each other and what they did.

Talk about Mary (Luke 2:10), how she must have felt when she heard the shepherds' story, and thought back to what the angel had told her (Luke 1:30-33).

Imagine the excitement of the shepherds as they went away, glorifying and praising God for what they had seen and heard, and telling everyone they met about this wonderful Child (Luke 2:17).

#### **Conclusion**

Remind the children that this is what we are celebrating at Christmas – that God sent a Child, His Son, as He had promised, Who came to save His people (Matthew 1:21). Try to convey the joy and excitement of the real meaning of Christmas, and that it lasts for ever (Isaiah 9:7), unlike the Christmas lights and decorations which are soon put away and forgotten. Talk more about this if you feel it is appropriate.

*Pray with the children, that they might have a joyful and blessed Christmas, and remember the One Who came into the world as a Baby to be our Saviour and Lord.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

Aim: To show how God foiled the plot to destroy His Son.

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils; pictures of planets and/or night sky, map or diagrams of constellations (optional).*

### **Introduction**

Ask the children what they know about space and allow them to tell you for a few minutes what they know about the planets and stars. Ask if anyone has been out on a dark, starry night (or perhaps visited a planetarium) and whether they recognise or know the names of any of the constellations (show your diagram, if you have one). Marvel at the wonder of the night sky, and show your pictures of planets/galaxies if you have any, reminding the children that all this was created by our wonderful God (Genesis 1:16). Ask if they think it would be easy to spot a new star in the sky, and say that this is what the Wise Men from the East were able to do.

### **Point 1 The Star**

Help the children to find Matthew 2 and ask a volunteer to read verses 11 & 12. Discuss with the children why the Wise Men (Magi in the NIV) had gone to Jerusalem, and what they expected to find there. Ask why the king was 'disturbed' (verse 3) and talk about his reaction. Note that the king, along with the teachers of the Law, were expecting the Messiah to be born, and were able to find the prophecy about Him (verse 6, cf. Micah 5:2). Ask a volunteer to read verses 7 & 8 and ask what King Herod asked the Wise Men to do when they had found the Child. Ask if the children believed him.

### **Point 2 The Visit of the Wise Men**

Ask the children to tell you about the visit of the Magi (noting that by this time the family were living in a house) and how they bowed down and worshipped Him, and offered their precious gifts. Ask what Mary and Joseph must have thought about the important visitors, and the strange gifts they gave to the Baby.

### **Point 3 Two Dreams**

Ask if the Wise Men went back to King Herod, and if not, why not (verse 12). Ask a volunteer to read verses 13 & 14 to find out what happened when the Wise Men left. Notice the urgency of the escape – Joseph wasted no time, but got up straight away and they made their escape during the night to the safety of Egypt.

### **Point 4 King Herod**

Read the first part of verse 16 (older children could read it for themselves) and find out the king's reaction. Ask why they think the king was so very angry at the idea of a new King, and talk about this. Then the king did something very dreadful – read the rest of verse 16 yourself. Point out that the visit of the Wise Men, contrary to many pictures, would have taken place sometime after the birth of Jesus – they would have to find the star, go to Jerusalem and then find their way to Bethlehem. Explain that Herod was taking no chances in his evil plan to kill the Baby King, and ordered that all little boys up to the age

of 2, not only in Bethlehem but all the area round about were to be killed. What a terrible time of sadness for their families (as prophesied in Jeremiah 31:15) who were at the mercy of a brutal king. Meanwhile the Lord Jesus and His family lived in safety in Egypt until it was safe for them to come back some time later after King Herod had died, when they returned to live in Nazareth.

## **Conclusion**

You may have to deal very sensitively with this as it is very hard, especially for young children, to understand how such a brutal act could have taken place.

Explain that there are many things in the Bible that it is hard for us to understand, but emphasise that God is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9) and that the destruction of the baby boys, as with other tragedies that occur in our world, was not of His making, and causes Him deep sadness.

*Pray with the children, thanking God for the Lord Jesus and praying for the many who are caught up in the tragic circumstances of war, famine, flood, etc. through no fault of their own.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

**LESSON 23 IS A REVISION LESSON USING THE NOTES FOR LESSONS 19-22**

Aim: To learn about Paul's stand for Jesus in Philippi.

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils; map (optional).*

### Introduction

Ask the children about times they have been in trouble, and allow them to talk about it, if they are willing to do so. Now ask them how they would feel if they were punished and 'grounded' for something they had not done. Chat together about this and, if you feel it is appropriate, role play a scene with a previously primed and confident child.

Explain that today we'll learn about Paul and Silas going to prison.

### Point 1 Lydia (verses 11-15)

Using a map if you have one, show Paul's progress to Philippi (note: "we" in verse 11, showing that Luke, the writer of Acts, was with them), and explain that Philippi was an important Roman colony.

Read verses 14-16 and point out that Paul was in the habit of meeting with others for worship on the Sabbath Day. Explain that apparently it was customary, when there was no synagogue, for places of prayer to be outside near running water. Discuss what happened, and explain that, as a seller of purple cloth, Lydia was likely to have been a wealthy business woman. Talk together about her response to Paul's message, and her immediate invitation to Paul and his companions.

### Point 2 The Slave Girl (verses 16-24)

Explain that this poor girl (verse 16) was not responsible and probably did not know what she was saying, and that she was being exploited by her so-called masters who made lots of money from her.

Ask the children why the slave-owners were so mad at Paul and Silas, and discuss the action they took (verses 20-21) and the severity of the punishment. Ask what the children think about that, and how Paul and Silas must have felt.

### Point 3 The Earthquake (verses 25-28)

Read verses 25-28 as dramatically as you can and point out that, in spite of their sore and bleeding backs, Paul and Silas were praising God. Ask what effect that would have had on the other prisoners. Discuss what the jailer was about to do, and why.

### Point 4 The Jailer (verses 29-34)

Read verse 29-34 and explain that the jailer was so overwhelmed that the prisoners had not run away that he had no doubt that were men of God (and he too would have heard them singing). Ask a volunteer to read his question (verse 30) and suggest that he may have expected to have had to pay money, or do some difficult task. Ask a volunteer to read Paul's reply (verse 31). Talk together about this, explaining the difference between believing **about** and believing **in** the Lord Jesus.

Talk together about the happiness of the jailer and his whole family.

### **Point 5      The Departure (verses 35-40)**

Explain that the Roman authorities could not wait to get rid of Paul and Silas, and would have been worried about Paul's response (verse 37). Explain that as Roman citizens they had been beaten and imprisoned illegally, and Paul wanted to establish their innocence of any crime, not for themselves but also for the sake of the Church and Christians in Philippi. Note that they did not leave without visiting the believers again.

### **Conclusion**

Say that this was one visit in Paul's very busy and exciting life, as he travelled extensively with the message of the Gospel, explaining the necessity of being saved through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Talk appropriately about the need for salvation, which cannot be earned by good deeds, but it is a gift from God, through believing in Jesus. Stress again the difference between believing about (which even demons do – James 2:19) and believing and trusting in the Lord Jesus, and talk about this in a way you feel is relevant to your class.

*Pray with the children, thanking God for the Lord Jesus and asking that we would all put our faith and trust in Him, and thanking also for those who teach the message of Jesus, sometimes in very dangerous situations.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

Aim: To show Paul's single-mindedness in serving Christ.

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils; letter, mobile phone, old ties or scarves (all optional).*

### Introduction

Ask the children about different ways of communicating with family or friends at a distance, and allow them to tell you about any of the latest electronic methods they know about. (If you have a mobile phone you could ask a child who knows how to demonstrate how to send a text).

Say that before telephone, text, e-mail, Skype, etc. the method was by letter. Show your letter if you have one, and ask the children if they have ever sent or received a letter by post, and let anyone who has tell you about it. (You may want to encourage them to send a letter or picture to 'Compass').

Say that Paul was a very busy letter-writer and that much of the New Testament is made up of his letters. Say that today we are going to find out about the letter he sent to the Christians in Philippi.

### Point 1 Paul's Joy

Read, or ask a volunteer to read Phil. 1:3 and ask the children to remind you of some of the people he is writing to (lesson 24). Read verse 4 and point out that he has happy memories of his time in Philippi, yet some of the things that happened were not happy at all. Help the children to remember some of the things that happened (illegal arrest, flogging, imprisonment). Ask the children why they think Paul looks back with joy, and help them to understand that Paul rejoiced that through his suffering the jailer and his family came to know Jesus, the poor slave-girl was delivered from the evil spirit, and he remembered them and Lydia and all the other Christians with joy.

### Point 2 In Chains

Explain that Paul was not sitting in his study writing this letter, but that he was in prison and chained to a soldier. (If you have ties or scarves, help volunteers to be tied together). Explain that Paul was chained to a soldier 24 hours a day and that they normally worked six hour shifts, so that would be four soldiers every day. Explain that Paul's imprisonment in Rome was a bit like house arrest – he could have visitors and probably dictated his letter to one of his friends.

Ask the children to imagine they are a soldier chained to Paul. What would they see and hear?

Read verses 12-14 (or ask a volunteer) and point out that Paul says his chains were working for good – not only did the soldiers and all the Palace Guard hear about Jesus, but the local Christians were becoming bolder in talking about Jesus because of Paul's example. Talk together about Paul's joy and his attitude to being in chains.

### **Point 3 Contented (verses 25-28)**

Explain that Paul did not know what was going to happen to him, but that the most important thing was that people heard about Jesus (verse 14) and that He would be given the glory, whether Paul lived or died (verse 21). Explain that if he died he would be with Jesus, which was what he longed for (verse 23), and he would be with Jesus for ever. Explain that he knew his friends would be sad, and they needed him to teach them, and he still wanted to teach more people about Jesus.

Ask a volunteer to read verses 22-23. Explain that as a prisoner Paul would soon come to trial. He might be acquitted or he might be executed. He did not know. Point out that Paul's one thought was for Jesus – to serve Him and support the believers while he was alive, and to with Him forever, if he was killed.

The secret of Paul's happiness was that his whole heart and mind were filled with love for Jesus, and the desire that others would come to love Him too.

### **Conclusion**

Point out that life was not easy for Paul – he suffered beatings and imprisonment, and all sorts of other things (2Cor. 11:23-29), but this is a happy letter, full of joy. Explain that we can know this peace and happiness in our hearts, even when things are going wrong, at home or at school or with our friends, if we put our faith and trust in Jesus, and know His peace, and like Paul we can know that one day we will be with Him forever. Talk about this in a way you feel is appropriate for your class.

*Pray with the children, asking that we would all know and trust Jesus in our hearts, and know His love and peace.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet. (Don't forget to untie the children!)*

Aim: To learn from the attitude of the Lord Jesus.

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils.*

### **Introduction**

Ask the children about anything new they have learned in the past few months, either at school, in a sports or other club, or elsewhere (e.g. harder sums, a new language, new move at judo, learned to knit, etc.)

Ask about what they learned and about the person who taught them (club leader, granny, etc.) and talk together about this for a few minutes.

Say that in the next part of his letter Paul urges his readers to learn from the most wonderful teacher of all.

### **Point 1 Considering Others**

Ask the children to remind you of Paul's circumstances when he wrote this letter and about some of the people he was writing to (Acts 16, lesson 24). Explain that as part of God's inspired Word this letter is for us too. Explain that in this part of the letter Paul is encouraging the folk in Philippi to show their love for Jesus by getting on well together (verses 1-4) – not pushing forward to be the one in charge, not to say, 'me first' but to consider other people, and not just themselves. Talk together about this and how we could show our love for Jesus by the way we behave with our friends, at home and in school. Discuss whether we always like to be the boss when playing a game, or to have the first choice of TV programme, or the biggest cake on the plate. As you talk together about this, encourage the children to think about it.

### **Point 2 The Mind of Jesus**

Paul encourages the Philippians, in a sort of poem, to think like the Lord Jesus. Read verses 6-11 together (or share out among confident readers) and summarize for the children in your own words, pointing out that although Jesus is the Lord of glory, He humbled Himself by becoming human like us, acting as a servant and being completely obedient to God, even to the point of dying on a cross like a common criminal. Ask the children for some examples from the life of Jesus. Go on to say that Paul reminds his readers that now the Lord Jesus is exalted to the very Highest Place. Read verses 9-11 again and point out to the children the wonderful fact that one day every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord, and every knee bow before Him. Help the children to see the wonder of this, and talk about it together.

### **Point 3 Shining like Stars**

With the example of the Lord Jesus, Paul urges his readers to shine like stars (verse 15) and carry on working and witnessing for Jesus. Explain that we can't earn our salvation by working, but Paul is saying that if they love the Lord Jesus they will want to work for Him by the way they behave and tell others about Him without complaining or arguing (verse 14) but doing everything cheerfully. Talk with the children about what this could mean in

our lives when asked to tidy our room, walk the dog, empty the dish-washer, or when someone else gets the part we wanted, or is chosen to be team captain instead of us. Spend time chatting about this if you feel it useful.

## **Conclusion**

Explain that Paul is concerned here with how we think, and our attitude to other people, urging his readers to have the same attitude as Jesus (verse 5). Tell the children the (old-fashioned) definition of **JOY** – **J**esus, **O**thers, **Y**ourself, and challenge them to think about this. Talk together in a way you feel is appropriate.

*Pray with the children, giving thanks for Jesus and asking that He would help us to be more like Him, and that He would help us not to be selfish, but to think of others, as He does.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

Aim: To learn to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils; pictures of sportsmen/women (optional).*

### Introduction

Ask the children about their favourite sport. Ask them if they are in a team or have ever competed (e.g. school sports). Ask if they have had to train, and let them tell you about it. Show your pictures (if you have them) and invite the children to guess who they are, and the sport they play.

Ask about their favourite sports people, and talk together about the dedication and training necessary to be at the top of their sport.

### Point 1 Rejoice!

Ask the children again about the circumstances and recipients of Paul's letter. He reminds them again to rejoice (verse 1) and be happy, even although he is in prison. Ask the children how they think Paul was able to rejoice, chained as he was to a soldier, and explain that Paul was not looking at his circumstances (which were very bleak) but his eyes were on the Lord Jesus, and he urged his readers to do the same.

### Point 2 Keeping Rules

Explain that in the next part of the letter (verses 2-6) Paul warns them about those who put their trust in rules and regulations and keeping all the laws of the Pharisees, thinking that made them good enough for God. But Paul says, "No". It is only those who worship and trust in the Lord Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, who can become part of God's Kingdom. Explain that Paul knew what it was like to trust in laws and rules. Read verses 5 and 6 (or ask a volunteer) where Paul lists all his credentials as a very important and well-educated Pharisee. Remind the children how he thought he was pleasing God when he persecuted believers in Jesus (verse 6) when he was Saul of Tarsus. Help the children to recall what happened to him on his way to Damascus to imprison Christians (Acts 9:1-9).

### Point 3 Rubbish

Explain that Paul now knew that all the things he used to think were so important were like rubbish (verse 8) compared to knowing the Lord Jesus. Paul had been an important man and looked up to as a Pharisee, but now he knew he couldn't please God through keeping the Law (verse 9) but only through faith in the Lord Jesus (verse 9).

Explain to the children that it is good to go to Church and Sunday School, and to read the Bible and be kind and helpful at home, but if we're trusting in these things alone to please God, we're a bit like the Pharisees. Like Paul, we must trust in the Lord Jesus, and love Him with our whole heart.

Paul wants to know Him more and more and to share with Him in His sufferings (verse 10). Ask the children about times Paul suffered for the Gospel.

## **Point 4      Keep Going!**

Remind the children of the athletes mentioned at the start of the lesson, and say that athletes and other sportsmen and women are training for the next Olympics – talk about the things they might do (e.g. training in all kinds of weather), and the things they will avoid (e.g. fancy food, late nights, etc.) Ask them to imagine an athlete looking round and waving in the middle of a race, or stopping for a rest! Paul took this as an example – he hadn't finished the race yet (verse 14) but he is keeping going, like a runner in a race, not distracted by anything round about him, but determined to keep going and win the prize; not a gold medal, but much better: Heaven with Jesus, and to hear His "Well done!"

### **Conclusion**

Explain that Paul wanted the Philippians, and us, to keep our eyes on Jesus, and not be distracted by things – often good things – that would make us give up "running the race". Talk together about some of the things that might get in the way – friends, hobbies, TV, sport – as much as you feel appropriate.

*Pray with the children, asking God to help us all know and love Jesus, and that He would help us to keep on following Jesus and not be distracted by other things.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

Aim: To learn how to live God's Way.

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils; street or road maps.*

### Introduction

Show your maps and give the children a few minutes to look at them. Ask them what maps are used for, explaining how to use them if they are unfamiliar with them.

Set them some challenges, either in pairs or in a group, e.g. the best way from street X to street Y, or from village A to town B. Stress that you are looking for the **best** way to go between the places. When they have completed the challenges, say that today we will learn some guidance from Paul about the best way to live for God.

### Point 1 Don't Fall Out!

Explain that Paul is near the end of his letter, written from prison to the Christians in Philippi, and is giving some last thoughts to help them live for Jesus. Read verses 2 and 3. Explain that we don't know what these women fell out about (perhaps they both wanted to be in charge of something). Whatever it was, it would affect the others and make them sad if they didn't make up. Jesus wants His friends to show their love for Him by the way they love each other (John 13:35). Remind the children that as part of God's Word, Paul is talking to us too and asking us not to fall out with our friends and refuse to make up. Talk to the children about this for a few minutes, discouraging the use of names if they are telling personal stories. Help them to understand the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation.

### Point 2 Don't Worry!

Once again Paul reminds his readers to rejoice and be happy in Jesus (verse 4). Read verses 5 and 6 and explain that 'anxious' means 'worried'. Read verse 6 again, and translate in your own words for the children. Ask what we are to do with our worries (tell God about them), not forgetting to thank Him for His goodness to us. Ask the children to suggest things we can be thankful to God for. Explain that there is nothing we cannot tell God about, and we can bring all the things that worry us to Him with confidence.

Read verse 7 and ask what happens when we tell God about our worries (He gives us His peace in our hearts).

[Suggest, sensitively, that it is often a good idea for children to share something that worries them with a grown-up they trust. Be available to listen to any children who have a worry they wish to share, but be careful not to force a confidence, and remember not to be alone in a room with a child in these circumstances.]

### Point 3 Watch your Thoughts!

Read verse 8 and help the children to understand that Paul is talking about the things they think about. Talk together about the things that influence our minds, and help the children to understand that the things we read, watch and listen to can make a big impression on

the things we think about. Talk together about this. Ask what sort of things Paul says we should think about. Discuss how this would influence the way we behave and treat other people.

#### **Point 4      Being Contented**

Ask the children if they have ever written a 'Thank you letter', and explain that Paul finishes off his letter by thanking the Philippians for the gifts they sent when he was in need (verse 14). He tells them that God has taught him to be contented whatever the circumstances (verse 11 – remember, he was in prison) but that he was very pleased to receive their gifts, and happy for them that they showed their love for God by helping him (verse 17). Say that God wants us too to show our love for Him by being generous to others and not being greedy for more ourselves.

#### **Conclusion**

Paul knew that living God's way is often not easy. Read verse 19 all together, and marvel at our wonderful God who meets all our needs out of His glorious riches, and who will be with us in every situation as we keep our eyes on Him. Give the children a few moments of quiet to think about this.

*Pray with the children, asking God to help us keep our eyes on Jesus, and ask for His help in living to please Him.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

**LESSON 29 IS A REVISION LESSON USING THE NOTES FOR LESSONS 24-28**

Aim: To learn how God chose Isaiah to be His messenger.

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils; pictures/web clips of special occasions (optional), picture/photo of sprouting tree-stump (optional).*

### **Introduction**

Ask the children if they have ever been at, or seen on TV, a really spectacular occasion (e.g. Olympic Opening Ceremony, Royal Parade or Wedding, etc.) Talk about that for a few minutes, and show your pictures or web-clip (if you have them).

Say that in today's lesson Isaiah saw something more spectacular and wonderful than anything we can ever imagine.

### **Point 1      Isaiah**

Help the children find the Book of Isaiah, and explain that he was a prophet (a messenger of God) who had lived more than 700 years before Jesus was born, at a time when there was fighting with the Assyrians, and God's people had turned their back on Him and were almost completely destroyed. Explain God chose Isaiah to bring His message to the people, both spoken and written, and point out that this is an important Book in the Old Testament.

### **Point 2      The Vision**

Turn to Isaiah ch. 6 and read verses 1-4 (or ask a volunteer). Talk together about this wonderful vision, about what Isaiah saw and heard. Ask the children to describe the winged creatures and if they can think why they had wings covering their faces. (They were unable to look at the Glory of God). Look at verse 3 and read altogether what the seraphs were calling. Ask what happened at the sound of their voices. Try to bring out the magnificence and the glory of the scene.

### **Point 3      Sin Forgiven**

Ask how Isaiah must have felt and if necessary say that he was really afraid – read verse 5 to find out why. Explain that he knew he was a sinful man, he had seen the LORD with his eyes – he could not expect live (Exodus 33:20).

Read what happened next (verses 6 and 7) and by question and answer help the children to understand that Isaiah was put right with God and forgiven, and his sin paid for, not because of something special in the coal, but by God's power.

Ask the children if they know how we can be forgiven and know that our sin has already been paid for, and spend as long as you feel appropriate talking about this.

#### **Point 4 Chosen by God**

Ask 2 volunteers to read the question and answer in verse 8, explaining that God needed someone to take a special message to His people, and Isaiah was immediately willing to go, no longer fearful, but ready to go where God wanted.

#### **Point 5 The Message**

Explain that Isaiah was given a very difficult message from the LORD, even although God knew that the people would harden their hearts and not listen (verses 9 and 10). Isaiah was to tell them that they would be defeated and scattered and that they would harden their hearts towards God and be almost wiped out.

But there was hope. Show your picture/photo of a sprouting tree stump (if you have one). Ask the children if they have ever seen a tree like that, cut down but starting to grow again, and explain that this often happens, and a new life begins from a tree that seems dead. Say that this is what God said would happen here – the nation would be almost destroyed, but would grow again, and again be God's people as the seed of His Word took root.

#### **Conclusion**

Remind the children of Isaiah's words (verse 8b) and suggest that we too could be messengers for God, helping to spread the news of His love for us. Talk together about how we could do this at home, at school, out with friends, by the things we do or say, or perhaps don't do or say. Talk together about problems the children face as they witness for Jesus, and offer encouragement and support.

*Pray with the children, thanking God for His great love for us, and asking His help to let others know that we belong to Him.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

Aim: To show we can trust God with all our problems.

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils.*

### **Introduction**

Ask the children if they watch adverts on TV (they will probably want to tell you their favourites!) Challenge them to make up an advert for a new drink/chocolate biscuit / shampoo (or all 3 – you choose). Encourage them to make their product seem too good to be true and far superior to any rivals, and point out that they are using words to boost their own efforts while belittling others.

Ask if anyone has heard the word ‘propaganda’ and explain (if necessary) that it means using words to give (often false) information to damage and undermine the confidence of a government or cause, or even a football team, by telling them that they are ‘rubbish’ and could not possibly win. Boxers sometimes do this before a fight.

Explain that this is what is happening in today’s story when King Hezekiah’s enemy, Sennacherib, King of Assyria, tries to undermine his confidence with propaganda and threats.

### **Point 1 The Situation**

Explain that the powerful King of Assyria was at war with Hezekiah, and was threatening to destroy Jerusalem. Explain that the Assyrian army commander met with some of Hezekiah’s men (36:2, 3) telling them to make peace with him, that no other nation or their gods could stand against him, and not to listen to Hezekiah when he said God would help them (36:18). The commander made sure he spoke in a loud voice so that the people could overhear and be discouraged, afraid and terrified (36:13).

### **Point 2 The Reaction (verses 1-4)**

Summarise verses 1-4 for the children in your own words, explaining how upset Hezekiah was (verses 1 & 2) and how he sent some of his leaders to Isaiah the prophet to pray and to ask for God’s help. Ask a confident reader to read verse 4.

### **Point 3 Encouragement (verses 5-7)**

Read verse 6 all together, and ask how the men would feel when they heard this encouraging reply from Isaiah. Summarise these verses (5-7) in your own words, explaining what was going to happen to the Assyrians who dared to ridicule the Living God.

### **Point 4 The Letter (verses 9-13)**

Continue in your own words, explaining that when Sennacherib heard that one of Hezekiah’s allies was marching to help him, he sent him a letter threatening to destroy Jerusalem, and reminding him again that no other nation, or any of their gods, had been able to stand up against him and that Hezekiah’s God would be no different. Ask the

children if they think this is true, and what it was that Sennacherib did not realise or understand.

### **Point 5      The Prayer (verses 14-20)**

Say that Hezekiah did a very sensible thing when he got the letter – ask the children to read verse 14 for themselves and tell you what he did. Read Hezekiah's prayer together, helping the children to note that first he praised and acknowledged God for who He is before setting the problem before Him. Point out that he agreed that the Assyrians had destroyed all the other countries and their gods. Read verses 19-20 again to the children and ask what the difference is between the other gods and the Lord God, and also what Hezekiah asked Him to do, and why. Read verse 20 together.

### **Point 6      The Result (verses 36-38)**

God is always true to His Word. Summarise these verses for the children, noting how God destroyed the Assyrians, and how Sennacherib himself was killed just as God, through Isaiah, had said he would be (37:7).

### **Conclusion**

Remind the children that Hezekiah had a very serious and worrying situation to face, but that he did exactly the right thing – he took the problem to God, and trusted Him to do what was best.

Say that sometimes we have things that upset and worry us – at home, at school, with our friends, etc. Assure the children that there is no problem too big or too small to bring before God, and share with Him, explaining that we can always trust Him to do what is best for us, even if it is not in the way we expect.

Spend whatever time you think is appropriate talking together about this.

*Pray with the children, thanking God that we can bring all our problems to Him and trust in Him completely. Give a few moments for the children to pray silently if you feel it is appropriate.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

Aim: To show that God is in control.

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils.*

### **Introduction**

Play a quick game of 'good news/bad news', e.g. the good news is that you have two weeks of extra holidays – the bad news is that you have to go to school on Saturday mornings to make up for it; or the good news is that your mum made your favourite dinner – the bad news is that the dog ate it! Think of some other examples or allow the children to try some. Say that something like this happened in today's story.

Go on to ask the children if anyone has been off school sick – let them tell you about it – and what it feels like to be at home when all their friends are in school. Ask if anyone has been in hospital, and let them tell you about it if they wish to.

### **Point 1 Ready to Die (verse 1)**

Ask if anyone can remember the name of the king in last week's story. Remind them that he spread the letter before God, to jog their memories. Say that in today's story Hezekiah is not well. In fact, he is very ill indeed. Help the children to find Isaiah ch. 38. Either read or tell in your own words about Hezekiah's severe illness and how the prophet, Isaiah, told him to sort out all his business as he was not expected to get any better.

### **Point 2 The Prayer for Mercy (verses 2-3)**

Go on reading or telling in your own words and explain how upset Hezekiah was (ask the children to look at the last few words of verse 3) and how he reminded God that he had been true and faithful to Him.

### **Point 3 Good News (verses 4-6)**

Ask two confident readers to share the reading of these verses, and ask the children to listen carefully, as you'll be asking them questions. Ask what God promised to do about Hezekiah's illness, and what else He promised to do for him and his people. Point out that God heard his prayer (and revealed the right medicine to help him get better (verse 21)). Remind the children that God always hears our prayers and answers them in a way and at a time that is best for us.

### **Point 4 The Miraculous Sign (verses 7-8)**

Explain that at Hezekiah's request (verse 22) God gave a sign that He would keep His promise. Read verses 7 and 8, or ask a volunteer, and help the children to understand the miraculous nature of this sign, using diagrams, simple drama, or the position of the shadows in the room if the sun is shining. Help the children to see that only God, the One who made the universe and everything in it could make the sun appear to move backwards.

## **Point 5      The Visitors (Is. 39:1-4)**

Ask the children who have been in hospital if they had any visitors, or if anyone has visited someone in hospital, or a friend who has been ill. Explain that this is what happened here. Read verse 1 to find out who sent the message and gifts to Hezekiah. Read verse 2, or ask a volunteer, and discuss Hezekiah's reaction to the visitors, and what he did; then read verses 3 and 4 to find out the prophet Isaiah's reaction to the visitors.

## **Point 6      Good and Bad News (verses 5-8)**

Read or summarise in your own words the message from God given through the prophet Isaiah about what was going to happen to Jerusalem (verses 5-7). Talk about this together, asking the children if they think this is good or bad news, and listening to their opinions.

Now read verse 8 and ask what Hezekiah thought. Ask what the children think about that. Point out that God showed great mercy to Hezekiah, not because he deserved it, or as a reward, but because our God is a God of love and mercy.

## **Conclusion**

Say that we too, like Hezekiah, can know God's love and mercy if we put our trust in Him. Stress that this is not something that can be earned by good works, or as a reward for anything, but as a gift from God Who loves us, and gave His own Son to save us. Talk about this as you feel is appropriate for your class.

*Pray with the children, thanking God that we can trust Him to do what is best for us in every situation, and asking for His help to put our trust fully in Him.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

Aim: To show the love and forgiveness of God.

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils.*

### **Introduction**

Ask the children if they have ever made an agreement at home to do some extra chores in return for extra pocket money, or to go to bed early on school nights without a fuss in return for being allowed to stay up late at weekends. (You will probably think of better examples). Ask if they were able to keep their side of the agreement.

Explain that when someone starts a job (whether a paper-round or in a bank) there is an agreement (often called a contract) to do the job properly in return for suitable wages.

Say that God had made an agreement (usually called a covenant in the Bible) with His people right back in the time of Abraham (Gen. 12:1, Gen. 15:5) that He would be with them and bless them and take care of them in return for their obedience to Him and His Law (Ex. 19:4, 5). He would be their God, and they would be His people (Lev. 26:12).

### **Point 1 The Messenger (verse 1)**

Remind the children that Isaiah was a prophet sent by God to bring His message to the people of Jerusalem and Judah at a time when it was greatly needed, during the reigns of the four kings mentioned in verse 1.

But there was a problem with the people.

### **Point 2 The Problem (verses 2-10)**

Read verse 2 to the children to see if they can work out what had gone wrong, pointing out, if necessary, that they had broken their covenant with God and rebelled against Him. Summarise verses 2 to 9, explaining that the people had forgotten their covenant with God and had turned their backs on Him. They had forgotten His care for them while they had been wandering in the Wilderness. Ask the children to remind you of some of the things He had done for them e.g. crossing the Red Sea, providing the manna and quails, water from the rock, crossing the Jordan, Jericho, etc. Their land was now in ruins because they no longer asked God's help against foreign invasions and it was all but wiped out (verse 9). Say that this was the situation that God sent Isaiah into with His message.

### **Point 3 True Worship (verses 11-17)**

Read verse 11. Explain that offering animal sacrifices was a way of worshipping God at the time. Read or summarise in your own words verses 12 to 14, and God's reaction to their worship. He even said He would not listen to their prayers and ask how that could possibly be!

Read verses 16 and 17 and explain that God wants sincere worship from our hearts. Say that the Israelites' hearts were far from Him. They did things that were wrong and cruel and they completely ignored His law, but thought that as long as they prayed and offered

sacrifices they could behave any way they liked. Ask what the children think about that. Explain that God is interested in what is in our hearts, that if we go to church just to make us look good but the rest of the time we ignore Him and His laws by quarrelling, swearing, picking fights and being nasty, this will make God sad. Ask if we pray to Him but don't really mean it whether we can expect Him to answer. Explain that God wants the sincere worship of our hearts, not just the outward show, which is what the people who heard Isaiah's message were doing.

Chat together about this.

#### **Point 4      The Message of Love and Forgiveness (verses 18-20)**

This was a very serious situation, but our God did not leave it there. Read verses 18 to 20 while the children follow in their Bibles. Help them to understand the symbolism of the scarlet and the pure white snow; the crimson and the wool. Our loving, merciful God is telling His people that however bad their sin He is ready to forgive, even after all they've done, if they come to Him in penitence and are ready to live their lives in willing obedience and submission to His law. But the choice is theirs (verse 20)

#### **Conclusion**

The message from Isaiah is for us too. Chat with the children, helping them to understand that each one of us needs God's forgiveness for our sin, secured for us at such a high price through the death of the Lord Jesus, not just for the things we do wrong like fighting, telling lies or using His Name as a swear-word, but for our neglect of Him and His Word, and not giving Him the first place in our lives. Assure the children that those who come to God for forgiveness are never turned away, and that He delights to hear prayers offered sincerely to Him.

*Pray with the children, thanking God for His love and care over us, and especially for sending the Lord Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins, and ask that He would help us to give our lives to Him.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

Aim: To learn about the promise of a Saviour.

*You will need – Bibles (child-friendly version, e.g. GNB if possible), worksheets, pens/pencils.*

### Introduction

Use drama or role-play, or simply tell the story below; you may wish to adapt it for your situation.

You really shouldn't have taken it to school, but it was a brand-new ball and you were longing to try it out. At play-time you find a space near the school building in a part of the playground where playing with balls is banned. Surely one little kick/throw won't matter! But one kick/throw leads to another .... and another, until ..... well you can guess what happened! Before you have time to run you see a teacher's face, framed in a jagged hole in the window. Later, in the head teacher's room, you are given detention, a letter home and told you must pay for the window. While the head teacher is still talking there is a tap on the door, and a boy you don't know very well comes in. He had been nowhere near you in the playground.

"I'll do it", he said. "I'll take the punishment and I'll pay for the window ....."!

Ask the children what they think about the story. Could such a thing ever happen? Chat together about it. (Some of the children may be familiar with "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" in CS Lewis' Narnia series, and know the story of Aslan's sacrifice for Edmund).

Help the children to find Isaiah 53. Ask questions to remind them about Isaiah, and his role as God's messenger. Say that in this chapter Isaiah is bringing a wonderful message about one who is to come.

Say that today the children are going to help you to do some detective work to find out about the meaning of this message.

### Point 1 Suffering for Others (verses 1-5)

Read verses 1-5 to the children (if possible from a child-friendly translation, eg. the GNB) or read verse about with them to help them to focus. Read verses 4 and 5 again slowly, or summarise, explaining the long words. Explain that Isaiah is talking about someone who was to come, and who would be punished, not for things He had done Himself (verse 5), but for the wrongs of others, and because of His punishment people would be healed (forgiven).

Ask the children if they have heard anything like this before. Listen to their suggestions and guide their thinking.

### Point 2 All We Like Sheep ... (verse 6)

Read verse 6 and ask what animal is mentioned. Ask what the children know about sheep, and explain (if necessary) how sheep like to go their own way. If they find a hole in

the fence, they will go through, and where one goes, the rest will follow. Explain that in verse 6 Isaiah says that's what we are like. We wander away and follow the ways of the world (TV, celebrities, money, etc.) ignoring God. We deserve God's punishment. Ask what verse 6 says about the punishment, and talk together about this.

### **Point 3      Arrest and Death (verses 7-9)**

Help the children find Matthew 27 verses 11-14. Read Isaiah 53:7 and then read Matt.27:11-14. Ask the children what they think about that. Ask them to keep a finger in Matt. 27; read Isaiah 53 verses 8-9, and compare and check with the section headings in Matt. 27 between verses 11 and 61 (eg. Jesus before Pilate, The soldiers mock Jesus, etc.)

[Try not to over-emphasise the physical suffering of our Lord with this age group, as they can find it really traumatic and upsetting].

Point out that the Lord Jesus was put to death, not for His own sin, but for the sins of others.

### **Point 4      The Place of Honour (verses 10-12)**

Read verses 10-12 together, explaining as you go. Turn back to Matt. 28 and read the first section heading, reminding the children that the death of Jesus was not the end of the story, and allow them to tell you what happened. Ask the children if they can remember what happened to Jesus after He rose from the dead. Show them Luke 24:50 and read the section heading, then read Is. 53:12a. Remind the children that the Lord Jesus is now in Heaven at the right hand of God the Father, in the "place of honour" (GNB).

### **Conclusion**

Explain that this message through Isaiah was written several hundred years before the birth of Jesus, and it would have been difficult for the people to understand at the time. But we can look back, and through our 'detective work' into the wonders of God's Word. We can see that this message matches the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, who came into the world to save us by His death on the cross, and who suffered to take the punishment that should have been ours, so that we can be forgiven and have eternal life, if we believe and trust in Him (John 3:16). Talk about this together in a way you feel appropriate to your class.

*Pray with the children, thanking God for His wonderful Word, and for His great love that sent the Lord Jesus into the world to take the punishment for our sins, and that He would help us to put our trust in Him.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

**LESSON 35 IS A REVISION LESSONS USING THE NOTES FOR LESSONS 30-34**

## Lesson 36

## The Pilgrim Fathers

Aim: To learn what people were prepared to do because they loved the Lord Jesus.

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils.*

### Introduction

Ask the children whether they were breaking the law by coming to a Free Church Sunday School. Explain that they would have been long ago. Talk with them about what that would have felt like.

### Point 1 England in the Early 1600s

England was not a happy place for Christians in the early 1600s. It was illegal to attend any church other than the Church of England and it was illegal to preach anywhere other than a Church of England pulpit. A growing number of Bible-believers wanted to hear God's Word preached in other places and among them were preachers who were not approved by the Church of England. Some of these preachers were imprisoned for proclaiming God's Word in unauthorised places. These Christians became known as Puritans.

### Point 2 Move to the Netherlands

A group of believers (about 150) left England for the Netherlands in 1608. There they had freedom to worship. Their hope was to live in a Christian community and to grow in numbers. Over the years the English Christians found it difficult there, partly because of the language, but also because older members died off and the children were becoming increasingly Dutch in their language and outlook. The leaders of the group realised that it faced extinction before too long. Eventually it was decided to abandon settlement there.

### Point 3 Planning for America

Meanwhile, back in England, a number of Puritans were making plans to move to America – the New World. Sir Walter Raleigh had been to America and glowing reports were reaching England about opportunities for colonisation. The Puritans decided that this was their opportunity. They would sail to America and set up a Christian colony, establishing their community on Biblical grounds. 121 men, women and children sailed for America in 1620 aboard The Mayflower. About half of these people had been in the group that spent time in the Netherlands. One crew member and one passenger died on the crossing. One baby was born and was named Oceanus. Those who went to America became known as the Pilgrim Fathers. They left from Plymouth and called the place they eventually landed in New Plymouth.

### Point 4 Early Days in America

Their first settlement was a village that had been abandoned by native Americans about three years earlier following an outbreak of plague. Each Pilgrim family was given a plot of land. Single men were allocated to families and house-building began. The aim of the Pilgrim Fathers was to set up a town in America. Their laws were to be based on the Bible and their trading and lifestyle too. Show the children Exodus 20 in their Bibles and point out the Ten Commandments. Talk about how a community would try to keep God's laws.

## **Point 5      Troubled Times**

The area of America in which the Pilgrim Fathers settled became known as New England. Sickness struck the colonists almost as soon as they landed and many died within the following few months. Not only that, the native Americans were not always friendly towards them, although some of them were.

## **Point 6      America Today**

Today, descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers are to be found all over America. Many famous Americans, including several Presidents, were descended from the 121 who crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1620. Also among their descendants have been some great Christian men and women.

## **Conclusion**

The Pilgrim Fathers believed God's Word. They weren't prepared to compromise what they read in their Bibles in order to fit in with the laws of the land. They were very brave and they risked their lives (many of them actually gave their lives) to try to establish a true Christian community in which to bring up their families and which would be an example to others.

*Pray with the children, thanking God for his Word and asking him to help us understand and believe what it says to us, and pray that he will give us courage to use the Bible as the basis for our lives.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils.*

### **Introduction**

Ask the children how people come to hear about the Lord Jesus. They hear about him from parents, at church and in Sunday School. What about those who don't? Explain what a missionary is.

### **Point 1      America in the early 1800s**

In the early 1800s Christians in America were beginning to look across the oceans to different parts of the world and wonder about those who lived far away. A few began to realise that they should be spreading the good news about the Lord Jesus to other countries. Among them was a young man called Adoniram Judson. Adoniram's father was a minister. By the time he was three years old Adoniram could read, and the book he read was his Bible.

### **Point 2      The Call to Missionary Service**

Judson began teaching when he was a teenager. After he became a Christian he kept remembering Jesus' words to go into all the world and make disciples. A small group of men about the same age as Adoniram all felt that the Lord was calling them to preach the Gospel overseas.

### **Point 3      Setting Sail from America**

Adoniram married Ann and they, along with some others, set sail for India. When they were refused entry to India, the Judsons went on to Burma where they settled down to work. It was very lonely and they were often ill, sometimes with diseases they had never heard of. For six years they did all they could to tell the Burmese people about Jesus and all that time not one single person believed what they said. Then one man became a Christian. Try to encourage the children to see how marvellous that must have been for the Judsons.

### **Point 4      Translation**

Adoniram was very clever at languages and he started translating the New Testament into Burmese. He also wrote a grammar book to help other people who came to Burma as missionaries to learn the language. Translating the New Testament was a very long job. Show the children how long the New Testament is.

### **Point 5      The Spotted Faces**

It was dangerous being a missionary in Burma and Adoniram was even put in prison. Every day Ann took rice wrapped in leaves to the prison for her husband to eat. But she had to think of more precious things than food. Ann knew that the guards, the dreaded Spotted Faces, might come and take away the New Testament that Adoniram was working on. So she wrapped it up in cloth and made it into a waterproof parcel and then buried it. The Spotted Faces searched the house but they didn't find the parcel.

## **Point 6      Adoniram's Pillow**

Sometime later, while Adoniram was still in prison, Ann had the precious parcel dug up. She put the translation work into a pillow and had the pillow taken to Adoniram in prison because she knew he would want to get on with the work. It was a very bumpy and uncomfortable pillow, but having it in prison with him meant that Adoniram could continue translating the New Testament into Burmese.

## **Point 7      A Missionary for Life**

Many sad things happened to Adoniram but God used him to take the good news about the Lord Jesus to Burma. He died in a boat off the coast of Burma in 1850.

## **Conclusion**

Adoniram Judson knew that God was calling him to go far away to tell people about Jesus. Adoniram and Ann knew that life would be hard, and it certainly was, but they went and they were faithful missionaries for the rest of their lives.

*Pray with the children, thanking God for those who told us about the Lord Jesus Christ and asking him to bless today's missionaries both at home and abroad, especially those who are having a difficult time.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils.*

### **Introduction**

Ask the children if they are interested in faraway places. Have any of them been overseas on holiday? Get them to tell you about it briefly.

#### **Point 1 William Carey as a Boy**

William was a boy who was interested in everything. He loved stories about faraway places and used to imagine he could go to different countries of the world. He was also interested in wild life and collected all kind of insects. As a boy he shared his bedroom with his insect collection and with pet mice, injured birds and many other creatures besides.

#### **Point 2 Apprenticeship**

William was apprenticed to a shoemaker along with another boy the same age. One day William tried to cheat the shoemaker of a small sum of money and was found out. That started him thinking and eventually he became a Christian.

#### **Point 3 Teacher Carey**

After a time William Carey gave up shoemaking and became a teacher. He taught his pupils about different countries. He even made a globe by sewing bits of leather together like a football. Then he drew the outlines of the different countries on his sewn-together ball in order to teach his pupils about the world.

#### **Point 4 India**

God called William to become a missionary but by then he was married with a family. It was very hard for a young family to go all the way to India in 1793. William wore a wig because his hair all fell out when he was young. His wig blew off when he was on the ship to India. That was the last he saw of it, much to the amusement of his young sons.

#### **Point 5 Life in India**

Life in India was very hard, especially for Mrs Carey who didn't keep well. William was very good at languages and he started to learn Bengali right away. Before long he had written a Bengali grammar book and started translating parts of the Bible for the Indian people. The Mission got a printing press and was able to print parts of the Bible as they were translated. They advertised in the local paper and queues of Indian men came to buy parts of the Bible.

#### **Point 6 Translation**

William Carey and his Indian colleagues were responsible for translating the entire Bible into six different Indian languages – Bengali, Oriya, Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi and Assamese, and parts of the Bible into 29 other languages! William died in India in 1834.

## **Conclusion**

God gives everyone different gifts. He gave William the gift of curiosity as a boy and made him want to travel. And he gave him the gift of learning and translating different languages and William used that to translate God's Word. God gives every one of us gifts and he wants us all to use them in his service.

*Pray with the children, thanking God for those who translated the Bible into English and into Gaelic. Pray for those who are still working at Bible translation today and for those who still don't have a Bible in their own language.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

*You will need – Bibles, worksheets, pens/pencils.*

### **Introduction**

Ask the children what they know about their grandparents. Do they know where they lived when they were children? Where do they live now?

### **Point 1 Dimitry as a Boy**

Dimitry was born in the 1950s in Russia. At school he was taught that there was no god, and that only very old people and silly people believed in a god. That was what children all over Russia were taught at that time. Dimitry was a very clever boy and he did well at school and then went on to university where he studied science. He married and had a little baby girl.

### **Point 2 A Year in Italy**

Dimitry worked hard and did so well that he became a professor in a university in Moscow. Still people were being taught that there was no god. Russian scientists were not often allowed out of their country in Communist times but Dimitry was allowed to go to do research at a university in Italy for a year. He was not allowed to take his wife and little girl with him in case he didn't go back. If you like, you could tell the children about defections from Communist Russia. While he was in Italy he saw a Bible. It was a forbidden book in Russia, but he read it and became a Christian. Encourage the children to imagine that their Bibles are illegal books. How would they carry them to church? Where would they hide them at home? Would they read them? Do they actually read their Bibles?

### **Point 3 Back to Russia**

When Dimitry went back to Russia he hid Bibles in his suitcase and so became a Bible smuggler as this was against the law. When he gave a Bible to his mum, she told him a sad story. Her dad, Dimitry's granddad had been a minister and he had been killed for preaching about Jesus. Dimitry hadn't known the story of his granddad.

### **Point 4 Giving out Bibles**

In 1991, with the fall of Communism in Russia, it became legal to read the Bible, to go to church, and even to distribute Bibles. Dimitry and a few other Christian men started giving out Gideon New Testaments (the children may know about them from older brothers and sisters). They gave them out in hospitals, prisons, schools, colleges and orphanages. In the last 20 years that little group of men have distributed hundreds of thousands of New Testaments.

### **Point 5 Jura's Story**

Jura was a little orphan boy. Dimitry was given money to bring some poor Russian orphans to Wales for a holiday and Jura was one of those who came. He spent a lot of time with Dimitry while they were on holiday and loved holding his hand. Jura couldn't remember having a dad and he maybe liked pretending that Dimitry was his dad. The children all had a wonderful time. Before they went back to Russia and to their orphanages the children were all given a little money to buy something for themselves. Instead of buying something

for himself, Jura bought a plastic daddy-long-legs as a present for Dimitry. He bought it because he loved the name of the insect. Jura didn't have a daddy and the plastic toy was a daddy-long-legs. Of course, Dimitry told Jura about the Lord Jesus and that God would be his heavenly Father if he trusted in Him.

## **Conclusion**

There are still people today who don't know about the Lord Jesus. Missionaries still go to faraway countries to tell the good news. And many people, like Dimitry, are missionaries in their own country. All God's people are called to be missionaries, even children.

*Pray with the children, thanking God for all those who have heard about the Lord Jesus recently and praying that they will trust in him. Ask for blessing on all missionaries, whether at home or abroad, and pray for a special blessing on boys and girls who are Christians and who try to share their faith with their friends.*

*Remember the topics in the Prayer Spot for this week.*

*Help the children to complete the worksheet.*

## **LESSON 40 REVISES THE YEAR'S MEMORY VERSES**