

Light up the Darkness - Footsteps to the Feast for All Saints Day

Footmarks

Spend time with a Bible story by presenting it using 3-dimensional materials. This is a reflective approach to the Bible, based on the method known as Godly Play.

1. Gather the group in a semicircle, using a back row of benches or chairs if necessary so that all the children can see the following presentation of the story clearly.
2. Tell the story using some carefully chosen items that you draw out of a golden box or from a tray, in the style of Godly Play.
3. The following reflective presentation of the story of Moses at the burning bush.

You will need the following. The objects should all be of about the same size.

- a large bowl or tray of sand
- a dried flower arrangement in a weighted oasis that is made up of bright red plants that look as if they are on fire
- a figure for Moses and some sheep

Remember to tell the story slowly, with your focus on the figures, not the children. Leave space at the end for some silent reflection before prompting further thoughts with the suggested wondering questions.

Arrange that the children, as far as is possible, are sitting in a circle (or three-quarter circle) around an open space for the story. Introduce the desert tray or bowl carefully and wait for quiet before you start. Tell this story from your heart with your full attention on what you are saying.

Storyteller

This is the desert. It is a dangerous place. People do not go into the desert unless they have to. There is no water there, and without water we die. There is no food there. Without food we die.

Move your hand back and forth across the sand, changing the shape of the desert.

When the wind blows, it changes the shape of the desert. People get lost. Some never come back.

Indicate heat and cold by the movement of your hand on the surface of the sand.

In the daytime the sun is so hot that people must wear lots of clothes to protect themselves from the sun and the blowing sand. The sand stings when it hits your skin. The sun scorches you by day. At night it is cold. You need many clothes to keep warm. The desert is a dangerous place. People only go there if they have to.

Introduce the figure of Moses and then some sheep, placing them on the sand nearest to the children to your right.

The people of God were trapped as slaves in Egypt. Moses was no longer in Egypt. He had run away and was a shepherd in the desert. He looked after the sheep belonging to his father-in-law Jethro. He used to guide them from place to place to find food to eat.

Move Moses and the sheep slowly across the sand to your left, nearest the children.

Moses was travelling west when he came close to Mount Sinai. This was God's mountain. As he walked by he noticed a bush that seemed to be on fire.

Introduce the flame-like dried flower arrangement and place it in the centre of the desert.

But it was a strange fire because it did not burn. The bush remained the same even in the midst of the flames. It was a sign from God.

Moses paused and decided to go towards the bush to see it more closely.

Accompany the next words by cupping your hand reverently above Moses to indicate the presence of God

It was when Moses turned aside that God then came so close to Moses and Moses came so close to God that Moses knew what God was saying.

As you say these next words, slowly draw a circle in the sand around the bush.

God told Moses to take off his shoes because this was a holy place. He was in the presence of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Moses was so frightened that he hid his face.

Then God said to Moses, 'I have seen the pain of my people in Egypt and I have heard their prayers for help. I know how much they are suffering and I am coming to rescue them. I will bring them to a safe place, to a land it is good and which flows with milk and honey. I am sending you, Moses, to Pharaoh to rescue my people.'

Pause.

Now Moses was very afraid and said to God that he could never do such a thing. But God said that he would go with Moses and promised him that he would bring the people out of Egypt right back to this very mountain to worship him. But then Moses said, 'Who shall I say has sent me, when they ask me for your name?'

As you say these next words, carefully and deliberately write the letters **Y H W H** in the sand, in front of the bush on the children's side. You will need to write these capitals

upside down so the children can read them. You will need to have practised this. This is God's Holy Name.

And God said, 'This is my name. I am Yahweh, which means

"I am who I am" and "I will be who I will be". Tell them that Yahweh, the "I am", has sent you. This is my name forever and by this name I will be remembered for all generations.'

All the while the bush kept burning. Its flame did not diminish. Its light remained strong. God's light did not dim.

Wondering questions

- I wonder what you like best about this story?
- I wonder what is the most important part of this story?
- I wonder which part of this story means most to you at the moment?
- I wonder if there is any part of this story we could leave out but still have all the story we need?

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