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# St James' Day and welcoming tourists

## Prayer stations activity sheet

### 1 The font

Being baptised makes us members of God's family. People have been baptised in this font for centuries.

- Dabble your fingers in the water and give thanks for your own baptism.
- Remember your godparents and give thanks for them.
- If you have godchildren, pray for them in whatever they are doing today.
- Pray for the outreach of this church to children and their families.

Jesus said, 'Before you can get into God's kingdom, you must be born not only by water, but by the Spirit' (John 3:5).

Would anyone know that you have been baptised?

### 2 Prayer board

Think of people whom you wish to pray for.

- Write their first names on a slip of paper and add them to the board. They will be prayed for by others making a pilgrimage here today.
- Please pray for the people who are already mentioned on the board.

Jesus told his disciples that they should always pray and never become discouraged (based on Luke 18:1).

In what ways has God answered any prayers for you this week?

### 3 Sand

There are so many problems in the world—war, famine, hunger, poverty, violence, disease, greed and selfishness.

- Think of one particular thing from this list that you would like God to put right.
- Draw the problem in the sand, and say sorry in your heart.
- Gently tap the tray and thank God that he can make things smooth again.

The one who sits on the throne of heaven says, 'See, now I make all things new' (Revelation 21:5).

What could you do to help change things in the world?

### 4 People portraits

Everyone connected with our local school and pre-school—pupils, teachers, governors and support staff—has drawn a self-portrait.

- Pray for them as you look at their portraits.
- Pray for the work of our school and pre-school.
- Pray for the links between our church and our school.
- Pray for the work of all schools.
- Give thanks for everyone who has taught you.

Moses said, 'Teach the Lord's commands to your children' (Deuteronomy 11:19).

Has God given you the gift of teaching?

### 5 Pillar

Solid foundations and strong pillars support the roof of this church.

- Feel how solid the pillar is.
- Think about the weight it holds up.
- Ask God to keep your faith solid and firm so that you can bear the burdens he asks you to carry.

Jesus said, 'Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock' (Matthew 7:24, NIV).

Is there any area of your life where you need God's help to stand firm at the moment?

### 6 Globe

The inflatable globe reminds us that God created the world and everything in it. Think about the beauty of his creation that you saw as you journeyed to the church today.

- Pick up the globe, put your arms round it and imagine God holding his world in the same way.
- Picture your favourite aspect of creation—a special view, someone's smile, the amazingly complexity of the human body and mind—and express your adoration to the Creator.

The psalmist said, 'The earth and everything on it belong to the Lord. The world and its people belong to him' (Psalm 24:1).

We are created in God's image. What do you do that is creative?

## 7 The pulpit

The word of God has been taught in this place for centuries. Many people have listened, but others have ignored the good news of God's message.

- Pray for all who preach and teach in this church and throughout the world.
- Pray for the mission of the church through friendships, social action and outreach.
- Pray for your own involvement in sharing God's good news.

'Everything in the Scriptures is God's Word. All of it is useful for teaching and helping people and for correcting them and showing them how to live' (2 Timothy 3:16).

What story can you tell of God's good news?

## 8 The altar

Jesus' sacrifice is regularly remembered in the sacrament of Holy Communion at this altar.

- Take a little of the bread. As you taste and eat it, reflect that Jesus died for each of us.
- Remember all those who are physically or spiritually hungry.

Jesus said, 'I am the bread that gives life! No one who comes to me will ever be hungry' (John 6:35)

Where do you go to satisfy your spiritual hunger?

## 9 Candles

Candles in church, as well as the Easter candle or Christingles, remind us that God sent Jesus to lighten the darkness of the world.

- Light a candle to show that you are called to share God's light in the world.
- Pray for people who are called to be God's light in very dark, frightening or lonely places.

Jesus said, 'I am the light for the world! Follow me, and you won't be walking in the dark. You will have the light that gives life' (John 8:12).

Where is God asking you to share his light at the moment?

## 10 The lectern

The Bible is one way in which God speaks to us. Traditional words and new translations help us to understand more about the Christian faith.

- Look up a favourite verse or passage and reflect on why it is so special to you.
- Give thanks that we can buy and read Bibles freely in this country.
- Pray for Christians who do not enjoy this freedom.

John said, 'From the very beginning the Word was with God... Everything that was created received its life from him, and his life gave light to everyone' (John 1:2, 4).

How often do you read the Bible or hear it read?

## 11 Music

Music has helped people worship in this church for generations.

- Listen to the music for a while and thank God for the gift of music and listening.
- Think of all the other creative gifts God gives us to enliven our worship and our lives, such as dance, drama, art and so on.

'When you meet together, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, as you praise the Lord with all your heart' (Ephesians 5:19).

Which hymns or songs do you know by heart?

## 12 Whiteboard

We are all precious in God's sight, and Jesus encouraged us to bring our own needs before him.

- Write your name on the board so that others visiting the church may pray for you by name.
- Think about one particular request you want to bring before God today.
- Pray for some of the people already named on the board.

God says, 'Don't be afraid. I have rescued you. I have called you by name; now you belong to me' (Isaiah 43:1).

Who gave you your name?

## 13 Window

The windows in our church are high. If we look out, we see the sky, or we may rest our eyes on the stained glass.

- Look at, or through, one of the windows and reflect on what you see.
- Ask God to give you sight to see what he would have you look at.
- Think how sunlight floods in during the summer, and artificial light shines out in the dark winter months and at night.

'Daniel heard about the law, but when he returned home, he went upstairs and prayed in front of the window that faced Jerusalem. In the same way that he had always done, he knelt down in prayer three times a day, giving thanks to God' (Daniel 6:10).

What is your outlook?

# Harvest activity sheet

How many things can you think of, beginning with the letters that spell HARVEST, to say thank you to God for?

H
A
R
V
E
S
T

Can you find all the following words in this harvest thanksgiving wordsearch?  
Some of the words may be backwards or even diagonally in the grid.

All, bless, bread, earth, farmers, fed, fish, flowers, gifts, God, good, harvest, his,  
land, Lord, love, meal, nuts, plant, plenty, rain, seeds, shower, snow, stream, sun,  
thanksgiving, water, wind

T	H	A	N	K	S	G	I	V	I	N	G
C	A	M	E	S	R	O	I	D	Z	U	R
B	R	E	A	D	E	D	E	F	T	S	E
N	V	A	R	E	W	K	O	H	T	N	W
U	E	L	T	E	O	B	S	O	I	S	O
T	S	X	H	S	L	I	D	A	G	V	H
S	T	I	U	R	F	A	R	M	E	R	S
S	W	A	L	L	Q	L	O	V	E	E	P
E	I	T	N	A	L	P	L	E	N	T	Y
L	N	E	M	N	G	S	T	R	E	A	M
B	D	W	Y	D	H	I	S	N	O	W	V

- What 'key' has legs but can't open doors?
- What cheese is made backwards?
- What do cats eat for breakfast?
- What two things can't you have for breakfast?

Did you know that the first harvest festival was organised by Revd Robert Stephen Hawker on 1 October 1843? He was vicar of Morwenstow, a small parish on the coast of north Cornwall.

Tearfund is a Christian charity that helps people to improve their living conditions, right round the world. They have a great website for children. Visit: <http://actionpack.tearfund.org>.

Lots of churches use Psalm 65 at harvest time to help people thank God for all his gifts. Here are verses 9–11 of Psalm 65:

You take care of the earth and send rain to help the soil grow all kinds of crops.  
 Your rivers never run dry, and you prepare the earth to produce much grain.  
 You water all of its fields and level the lumpy ground.  
 You send showers of rain to soften the soil and help the plants sprout.  
 Wherever your footsteps touch the earth, a rich harvest is gathered.  
 Thank you, amazing God!

**Answers:** A tur-key; Edam; Mice Crispies; Lunch and supper.

# The story of Christmas

Hello!

In this bag you will find lots of interesting items to help you think about what happened at the first Christmas.

Lay the items out in this order in front of you.

- Paper blower
- Feet picture
- Strip of cloth
- Cotton wool ball
- Party streamer
- Star
- Paper crown
- Gold-covered chocolate coin

Now read the story and follow the instructions.

More than 2000 years ago, God began something new. He sent Gabriel, one of his angels, to visit Mary. Mary was a teenage girl who lived in the town of Nazareth. Gabriel had a message for her from God. (*Blow the paper blower.*) 'You will have a baby. You will call him Jesus. He will be the son of God.'

Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph. When the baby was nearly due to be born, Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted in a census. (*Pick up the feet picture and think about walking a long way.*)

When they arrived in Bethlehem, they could not stay in the inn because there was no room for them. The baby was born and Mary laid him in a manger. (*Touch the cloth and imagine it wrapped around baby Jesus.*)

Meanwhile, there were some shepherds looking after their sheep in a field. (*Stroke the cotton wool ball to think about the sheep.*) An angel appeared in the sky and spoke to them. (*Blow the paper blower.*) 'Don't be afraid of me! Your Saviour has been born and you can find him in Bethlehem.' Suddenly a huge band of angels appeared in the sky, praising God. 'Glory to God in the highest.' (*Shake the party streamer to imagine the angels in the sky.*) The shepherds hurried to visit the new baby in Bethlehem and they were very excited.

A new star had appeared in the sky. (*Take the star and hold it high in the air.*) The star had been seen by some kings from the east. (*Put on the paper crown and pretend to be one of the kings.*) The kings followed the star until it stopped just where baby Jesus was to be found. They brought special presents for Jesus: gold, frankincense and myrrh. (*Eat the chocolate coin as you think about what present you would like to bring to Jesus.*)

You may want to say this prayer:

'Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care; prepare us for heaven, to live with you there. Amen'

## Have a very happy Christmas!

# Nativity from scratch

## Opening prayer

*If possible, dim the lights for the opening prayer and first reading.*

Leader: Heavenly Father, take us now to Bethlehem to learn more about the birth of your Son, Jesus. May we share in the excitement of the first Christmas. Amen

## Bible reading: Prophecy from Isaiah

Those who walked in the dark have seen a bright light. (*Light the candle*)  
And it shines upon everyone who lives in the land of darkest shadows...  
A child has been born for us. We have been given a son who will be our ruler.  
His names will be Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of Peace.  
His power will never end; peace will last for ever.  
He will rule David's kingdom and make it grow strong.  
He will always rule with honesty and justice.  
The Lord All-Powerful will make certain that all of this is done.

ISAIAH 9:2, 6–7

*Turn the lights up full.*

*Carol: Soon and very soon we are going to see the king (sung twice)*

*Invite everyone who is playing Mary to sit at the front. Ask them to pretend to do cleaning. Ask those playing the angel Gabriel to stand by the altar, and then to come forward to greet Mary.*

## Bible reading: An angel appears to Mary

God sent the angel Gabriel to the Galilean village of Nazareth to a virgin engaged to... a man descended from David. His name was Joseph, and the virgin's name, Mary... Gabriel greeted her: 'Good morning! You're beautiful with God's beauty, beautiful inside and out! God be with you.' She was thoroughly shaken, wondering what was behind a greeting like that. But the angel reassured her, 'Mary, you have nothing to fear. God has a surprise for you: you will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus. He will be great, be called "Son of the Highest". The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; he will rule Jacob's house forever—no end, ever, to his kingdom.'

Mary said to the angel, 'But how? I've never slept with a man.' The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the Highest hover over you; therefore, the child you bring to birth will be called Holy, Son of God... Nothing, you see, is impossible with God.'

And Mary said, 'Yes, I see it all now: I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve. Let it be with me just as you say.' Then the angel left her.

LUKE 1:26–38 (THE MESSAGE)

*Carol: Kum ba yah (three verses: Kum ba yah; someone's singing; someone's praying)*

*Ask those playing Gabriel to sit down and those playing Mary to stay by the carpet. Invite those playing Joseph or the donkey to join the Marys.*

## Bible reading: Mary and Joseph (and the donkey) go to Bethlehem

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

LUKE 2:1-5 (NIV)

*Send those playing Mary, Joseph and the donkey around the church in a procession during the singing of the following carol.*

*Carol: Little donkey*

*Ask for those playing the innkeeper to come to the front. Those playing Mary, Joseph and the donkey stand in front of the innkeeper(s). The innkeeper(s) turn them away, but point to a side aisle or space.*

*Bible reading: The innkeeper turns Mary and Joseph away but suggests they use the stable*

*Send those playing Mary and Joseph to the side aisle and invite any stable animals to come to the front.*

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

LUKE 2:6-7 (NIV)

*Carol: Away in a manger (verses 1 and 2)*

*Invite all the shepherds and sheep to gather in another part of the church, possibly at the back.*

## Bible reading: The shepherds are surprised by angels

That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. But the angel said, 'Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. This very day, in King David's home town a Saviour was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay.'

Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. (*Invite those playing angels to join you and lead them to the shepherds.*)

They said: 'Praise God in heaven! Peace on earth to everyone who pleases God.' (*Direct the angels to go back to their places.*)

After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about.' They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay. (*Lead the shepherds and sheep to the side aisle to visit the holy family.*)

When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. Everyone listened and was surprised. But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

LUKE 2:8-19

*Carol: Silent night (verses 1 and 2)*

*Bible reading continues:*

As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

LUKE 2:20

*Lead the shepherds and sheep back to their place with shouts of praise such as 'Hallelujah'. Then invite those playing wise men, pages, camels and so on to assemble at the back so that they can make a procession.*

## Bible reading: Wise men visit the baby

When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king. During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. *(Invite the wise men's procession to front.)*

[They] said, 'Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.' When King Herod heard about this, he was worried, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. *(Invite those playing Herod to come to the front. If there are no volunteers, ask a willing adult to play the part and give them a paper crown to wear.)*

Herod brought together the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses. *(Invite those playing a chief priest or teacher of the law to come to the front. If there are no volunteers, again ask a willing adult to play the part. Alternatively, ask everyone to imagine Herod consulting the priests.)*

[Herod] asked them, 'Where will the Messiah be born?' They told him, 'He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote, "Bethlehem in the land of Judea, you are very important among the towns of Judea. From your town will come a leader, who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel."' *(Send the priests and teachers to sit down. Ask Herod to turn to the wise men.)*

Herod secretly called in the wise men and asked them when they had first seen the star. He told them, 'Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I want to go and worship him too.' *(Invite those who wish to play the part of a star to come to the front. If there are no volunteers, have a star suspended from a rod and invite someone to walk in front of the wise men's procession to lead the way.)*

The wise men listened to what the king said and then left. And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were thrilled and excited to see the star. *(The wise men's procession, led by the star, arrives at the stable area.)*

When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshipped him. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him.

MATTHEW 2:1-11

*Carol: We three kings (first and last verses)*

## Bible reading: Herod makes real trouble

Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, and they went back home by another road... *(Send the wise men, camels and star back to their places.)*

When Herod found out that the wise men from the east had tricked him, he was very angry. He gave orders for his men to kill all the boys who lived in or near Bethlehem and were two years old and younger. This was based on what he had learnt from the wise men.

MATTHEW 2:12, 16

*Carol: Unto us a boy is born (verses 1 and 3)*

*Invite those playing angels to go to the side aisle.*

## Bible reading: Mary, Joseph and Jesus head off to Egypt

After the wise men had gone, an angel from the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up! Hurry and take the child and his mother to Egypt! Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is looking for the child and wants to kill him.' *(Send those playing Mary and Joseph to sit in another corner of the church, and ask the angels to return to their places.)*

That night, Joseph got up and took his wife and the child to Egypt, where they stayed until Herod died.

MATTHEW 2:13-15

*Brief pause.*

*Conclusion: Explain that this is not the end of the story. When Jesus grew up he said...*

## Bible reading

I came so [all of you] can have real and eternal life, more and better life than [you] ever dreamed of.

JOHN 10:10 (THE MESSAGE)

Leader: Today, we are an important part of the continuing story of God's love for the world he created and for his people.

How can we show God's love to everyone during the seasons of Advent and Christmas? How would our lives change if we had the opportunity to visit Jesus lying in the manger?

Please will the people who played Mary and Joseph come back to the stable area. I invite everyone else to gather around the stable area with their service sheets to sing the last carol if you wish to do so. It is all right to remain in your seat if you prefer. The chorus of the carol has the words, 'O now carry me to Bethlehem to see the Lord appear to men', and so I invite you to imagine that is happening as we sing.

After we have sung the carol, there will be the opportunity for you to make an offering here in the stable area.

*You may wish to announce that the offering will be given to a charity, such as The Children's Society.*

*Carol: See him lying on a bed of straw*

## Closing prayer

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be ours this Christmas.

FROM THE PROMISE OF HIS GLORY.

# Easter garden competition

On Good Friday we remember that Jesus was nailed to a cross to die. Two criminals were crucified at the same time and their crosses were put on either side of Jesus' cross. When he had died, the body of Jesus was put into a stone tomb with a big stone to close the entrance.

On Easter Sunday we remember that some of Jesus' special friends, the disciples, came to visit the tomb. They found that the big stone had been rolled away. Inside they could see the white cloths that had been used to wrap Jesus' body.

The full account of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection can be found in the Gospels as follows: Matthew 26:47—28:10; Mark 14:43—16:26; Luke 22:47—24:12; John 18:1—21:14.

## Easter Garden Competition!

Create an Easter garden on a plate and bring your entry to:

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of church)

At \_\_\_\_\_

On \_\_\_\_\_

Viewing from \_\_\_\_\_

Entrance will be judged at \_\_\_\_\_

Entry fee \_\_\_\_\_

All proceeds to \_\_\_\_\_

Everyone welcome!

## Easter Garden Competition! Entry form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Contact telephone number (parent / guardian)  
\_\_\_\_\_

# A bear story for Christian Aid Week

You will need a big bear and a small bear, plus some extra bears to be pushed aside; two towels for beds; drinks cans; plastic bottles; a screw of paper; a big box; a lemonade bottle; sticky tack; a Christian Aid collecting box or envelope; a maraca or rainstick for sound effect.

This is Big Bear. She pushes people aside if they get in her way. (*Push the other bears aside.*)

This is Small Bear. He holds the door open for people. (*Mime this.*) Big Bear goes through, and doesn't say thank you.

Big Bear throws litter all over the place. Paper, tins AND bottles. (*Do this with the props.*)

Small Bear picks up the litter and puts it in the recycling box. (*Mime this.*)

Big Bear never listens. As soon as someone starts talking, she starts talking even louder! (*Mime this.*)

Small Bear listens. He sits very quietly and listens for the Holy Spirit. (*Soft maraca or rainstick noise.*)

Big Bear likes lemonade, but she will NOT let anyone else have any. (*Mime this.*)

Small Bear likes Christian Aid. The Holy Spirit told him about poor people in other countries. So he puts some money into an envelope and gives the envelope to Christian Aid to help them. (*Mime this.*)

Big Bear is going to bed. (*Lay out a rumpled towel.*) She feels cross and thinks, 'The garden is full of litter. The kitchen is a mess. So is my bed. It hasn't been made properly. It feels sticky. Yuk! There's some chewing gum in it.' Big Bear hasn't done anything interesting or helpful all day.

Small Bear is going to bed. (*Lay out a neatly folded towel.*) He feels happy and thinks, 'I listened to the Holy Spirit and thought about people in need. I did something helpful today. I sent them some help through Christian Aid.' Small Bear turns out the light and goes to sleep.

Big Bear is still trying to get rid of the chewing gum. Oh dear!

# St Peter's Day progress

## Gathering: Jesus chooses Peter

You will need a paper or card person shape for each individual attending (this could already have printed on it, 'Jesus chose Peter to be his disciple and Jesus chooses... [space for people to insert their own name] to follow him'); pens; fishing rod or net (or garden netting if necessary); sticky labels as name badges if required.

As everyone registers, invite them to write their name on to a person outline. The outlines can then be attached to the edge of a fishing net or on to the handle of a fishing rod. If the group do not know each other well, make sure everyone also has a name badge.

## Game

Play a version of 'Simon says'. When the leader calls, 'Jesus says', everyone has to do that action. If the instruction is given without 'Jesus says' at the beginning, no one must do it. The 'Jesus says' actions could include 'smile'; 'rest' (with everyone sitting down); 'follow me' (walking behind the leader); 'pick up your cross' (mime putting something on their shoulder); 'praise God' (wave hands in the air); 'pray' (hands together) and so on. The instructions that are not to be done could include 'growl'; 'stand on one leg'; 'jump on the spot' and so on.

**Narrator:** Peter and his friends started to live alongside Jesus. Peter listened to Jesus telling stories and teaching people. He watched him healing those who were unwell, and performing miracles. Peter must have been really puzzled about what was happening. Then, one night, after Jesus had managed to feed 5000 people from just five loaves of bread and two fish, something quite scary happened. Jesus sent the disciples ahead of him in a boat to get to the other side of the lake. The water of the lake was quite rough because the wind was blowing strongly. In the middle of the night, Jesus came across the lake to the disciples, walking on the surface of the water. Now the disciples were scared because they thought they were looking at a ghost, but Jesus told them not to be afraid because it really was him. Then Peter got out of the boat to walk alongside Jesus. When Peter looked down at the water, he began to sink, but Jesus grabbed hold of

him and helped him into the boat. In our next activity we are going to pretend that we are walking on the water beside Jesus—and trusting him to look after us.

## Walking on water activity

You will need two double-spread sheets of newspaper (or A2 sheets of card) for each group.

Divide everyone into groups of four or five with a mix of ages in each group. Give each group two double-spread sheets of newspaper. Everyone starts by standing on one newsheet at the side of the room. Each group then spreads the next sheet out and helps each member to step on to it before gathering up the first sheet. They continue in this fashion across the room with everyone only standing on one sheet of newspaper at a time. If the event is taking place outside, use sheets of cardboard from packaging, as newspaper will disintegrate too quickly.

## Song

'He's got the whole world in his hand' or 'The journey of life' would be good choices to sing at this point.

**Narrator:** Soon after this, Jesus asked his disciples, his special friends, who people thought he was. Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.'

## Memory verse

You will need each word of the memory verse written on to a separate A4 sheet of paper, or on a PowerPoint display, as follows: Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God' (Matthew 16:16).

A way to learn this verse is to display all the words and then to chant them together at least three times. Next, remove the words 'Messiah', 'Son' and 'God' before chanting it again. Then remove 'Peter', 'you' and 'living' and chant it once more. Finally, hide all the words and get everyone to repeat again.

Another way to do this is to learn to sign it in British Sign Language, if someone in the group can demonstrate it clearly.

**Narrator:** Jesus was pleased that Peter described him as the Messiah because he thought it showed that God was really speaking to

Peter. So Jesus said to Peter, 'I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and God in heaven will allow whatever you allow on earth.'

### Keys of heaven craft activity

You will need key shapes, preprinted stickers and felt-tipped pens.

Provide everyone with a key shape, about 10cm long, cut out of card. It is also possible to order wooden keys. One side could have a sticker with the words of the memory verse printed on it. Everyone then decorates the other side of the key with something that will help them to think about Jesus being the Messiah, God's chosen one.

Narrator: A short while afterwards, Jesus took Peter, James and John with him to the top of a high mountain.

### Transfiguration craft activity

Follow the instructions for creating an edible mountain of the transfiguration (see page 198 of *Creative Mission*). If everyone works in small groups, the account of the transfiguration can be told by the group leader at the same time as the instructions for creating the edible treat are given.

Alternatively, lead an imagination activity. Invite everyone to sit or lie on the floor with their eyes closed and encourage them to see what pictures come into their mind as they listen to an account of the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–9) taken from a modern translation. Pause briefly as the reading is finished and then, as everyone keeps their eyes closed, ask if anyone wants to share what picture they have seen in their mind.

Narrator: Peter travelled all around Palestine with Jesus and the other disciples for three years.

### Active game

Play 'follow-my-leader' with everyone following instructions to mime, such as climbing high mountains, rowing across the lake, sitting to rest, sleeping, walking and so on. Play this as a series of movements that follow each other around the space or, alternatively, after demonstrating the actions, call them out so that everyone has to do the action on the spot.

Narrator: Finally, Jesus led Peter and the other disciples to Jerusalem. They shared the Passover meal together, but before they ate Jesus washed his disciples' feet.

### Foot-washing activity

You will need buckets or bowls of water and some towels.

Invite everyone who wants to, to wash someone else's feet. Remember that some people will feel uncomfortable with this activity so do not make it compulsory! Equally, ensure that children have the opportunity to wash the feet of adults, rather than it being something they have to have done to them. Some churches may choose to celebrate the Eucharist at this juncture.

### Refreshments

Depending on the timing of your event, pause here to share lunch, which could simply be to eat packed lunches or to share drinks and biscuits.

Narrator: After the disciples had shared the Passover meal, Jesus took them to the garden of Gethsemane so they could pray.

### Prayer activity

You will need one sheet of thick A4 green paper or thin card per person; pens or pencils; several thick paper plates; glue.

Give everyone a sheet of green paper to represent the garden. Invite everyone to draw or write the prayers that they would like to share with Jesus in Gethsemane. Younger children will need parents or leaders to help them with this activity. Completed prayer sheets should then be rolled diagonally to make trumpet shapes. Glue several of these around the edge of thick paper plates to make flower shapes. Display the flower shapes on the wall or lay them around the fishing rod or net of the gathering activity.

### Game

Remind everyone that Peter and the other disciples fell asleep while Jesus was praying. Then play 'Sleeping disciples', in which everyone has to pretend to be asleep without moving at all (see page 206 of *Creative Mission*).

Narrator: Jesus was arrested and taken to the house of the high priest. Peter followed behind to see what would happen to Jesus. As he watched, he was challenged three times about being a follower of Jesus. Each time he denied it. Then a cock crowed and Peter remembered that Jesus had predicted that he would say he didn't know him.

## Game

Play a version of ‘Grandma’s footsteps’ with everyone creeping up behind the accuser. When the accuser spins round to challenge someone with being a follower of Jesus, everyone has to run back to the beginning. When one person manages to creep up to the accuser without being caught, they tap them on the shoulder and take a turn of being the accuser.

Narrator: Jesus was killed on a cross on a Friday, and his body was placed in a tomb. Early on the Sunday morning, Peter went to the tomb with another disciple, John. Peter went into the tomb because the stone that had sealed it had been rolled away. He saw the linen clothes, in which Jesus had been wrapped, lying there. Suddenly Peter and John believed that Jesus had come back to life.

## Prayer activity

You will need a space to represent the tomb. It could be a ‘pop-up’ garden tent covered with stone-coloured fabric, or perhaps a cupboard can be used to create a tomb to peer into. Arrange some white fabric to represent the folded grave-clothes, and a large lit candle if this can be done safely. If possible, find a large, rugged stone to place near the entrance. Put children’s play sand into small polystyrene food trays so that people can draw patterns with their finger as they ponder, and provide tealight candles to be lit from the main candle and displayed, possibly in a tray of sand (make sure someone supervises this activity). Supply writing and drawing materials and a heap of small, rugged stones.

Explain that there is a choice of ways to reflect at the empty tomb, so everyone can make their own selection. Make it clear that there will be at least five minutes for people to pray and that they can try as many or as few activities as they wish. Remind them that the quiet corner has books to look at as well.

Narrator: The last time we read in the Bible about Jesus and Peter being together is at Lake Tiberias.

## Acting out what came next

*Take everyone back to the fishing net used for the gathering activity. Get everyone to stand in tight groups and pretend to fish on one side of a boat.*

Narrator: Jesus appeared on the beach while Peter and his friends were fishing... unsuccessfully. Jesus told them to throw their net on the other side of the boat to catch something.

*Invite everyone to pretend to heave up the net and cast it over to the other side.*

Narrator: They caught so many fish—153 in total—that it was impossible to lift the net into the boat.

*Pretend to haul the net in.*

Narrator: Peter suddenly realised that it was Jesus on the beach. He gathered his coat around him and jumped into the water to swim ashore because he was so excited.

*Invite everyone to mime putting on a coat, jumping out of the boat and then swimming across the room to the shore.*

Narrator: The other disciples brought the net full of fish ashore, and Jesus took some of the fish and put it on to a small fire to cook. Then he took some bread and shared it with the disciples.

*Pretend to eat fish and bread.*

Narrator: Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him. Then Jesus said to Peter one final time, ‘Follow me!’

## Refreshments

If the exploration of Peter’s life is going to be concluded at this point, this could be the moment to share a picnic. It may be possible to provide fish and chips for everyone if there is a local shop or van.

## Game

Play ‘Follow my leader’ again as a reminder that Jesus chooses everyone, and to lead the group into a space that can be the house where the disciples met on the day of Pentecost.

Narrator: On the day of Pentecost, Peter was in a house with the other people who believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Suddenly the house was filled with the sound of a strong wind blowing. As they looked at each other, there seemed to be tongues of fire spreading out and touching them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to talk in other languages.

## Bubbles activity

Provide everyone with a small pot of bubbles so that they can play and have fun. Let everyone share the excitement and playfulness.

## Song

Sing 'O God of burning, cleansing flame' or 'The Spirit lives to set us free'.

Narrator: Pentecost was not the end of Peter's story. It was the beginning of a new and exciting chapter. He had been just a fisherman, but he found himself standing up to teach huge crowds of people about God, and he found himself explaining what he believed to the council of the Jewish elders. He found that the Holy Spirit sent him out into the world. He found himself in prison, bound up with chains. And he found himself set free from his chains, set free from prison by the power of the Holy Spirit. He also wrote letters to encourage people who wanted to follow Jesus. The letters were so important that they were kept and were included in the Bible.

# Occasional offices: Baptism

## Activity sheet

### Wordsearch

How many of these words can you find in the wordsearch?

All of the words are used in the baptism service.

Look up and down, forwards and backwards, and even diagonally.

baptism, bless, Christ, faith, gift, grace, help, Jesus, light, Lord, love, promise, shine, spirit, water, welcome



About that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptised him in the Jordan River.  
MARK 1:9

How many smaller words can you make from the word 'baptism'?  
bap, sat...

Look around the church. How many of these things can you see?

- Font
- Stained-glass window
- Cross
- Candle

Did you know that 150,000 babies, children and adults are baptised in the Church of England every year?

Help the baby find her way to the font!

