

# Trust and obey

## **SERIES THEME: GOD'S SPECIAL MESSENGERS**

Bible tells of prophets who were God's special messengers. Their job was to listen to God and pass on his message. Often their task was difficult. Sometimes what God wanted his people to do wasn't easy. Sometimes people didn't want to live God's way. Although the prophets in the Bible lived long ago, we can still learn from the messages God gave them today.

### **SESSION TOPIC**

Abraham

### **AIM**

To help the pupils think about who they trust and obey.

### **SUITABLE FOR**

Years 3 to 6

### **BIBLE BASE**

Genesis 12:1–9

### **YOU WILL NEED**

A chocolate bar (hidden before the assembly begins)

## **BEFORE YOU START**

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Ask for a volunteer. Give them instructions to lead them to the hidden chocolate bar.

When the chocolate has been found, ask the pupils questions which will help them understand that the volunteer had to trust you and obey you in order to find the prize.

### **BIBLE STORY**

Tell the story of Abraham from Genesis 12:1–9 on the next page. Explain that you are going to tell the story with various sound effects or actions, as follows:

Abraham (Bow)  
Sarah (Curtsey)

Sheep ('Baa')

Goats ('Maa')

Donkeys ('Eeyore')

Servants ('Yes sir, no sir', bow)

Good friends (Shake hands, 'How are you?')

You could use the sound effects and actions to help you tell the story in either of these ways:

- Invite pupils to help to lead the actions/sound effects for Abraham, Sarah, the sheep, the goats, the donkeys and the servants. They must do their actions/sound effects at the appropriate point in the story.
- Invite all the pupils to join in with the actions/sound effects.

Abraham and his wife Sarah were living in Haran (in Syria). Abraham was a very rich man. He had sheep, goats, donkeys and servants. Abraham liked living in Haran. He had good neighbours who'd become good friends.

One day God told Abraham and Sarah to leave his country, his relatives and his father's family and go to a different land. God said he would show Abraham and Sarah where to go. He said he would bless Abraham and make him famous. Abraham looked around at Haran where he lived. He looked at his sheep, his goats, his donkeys and his servants. He thought about his neighbours (who'd become good friends) Did he want to leave his home? No. Did he know where was he going? No. Would he ever come back to his neighbours (who had become good friends)? Maybe not.

God had told him to leave. He had promised to show him where to go. He had promised to bless Abraham and make him famous. Did Abraham trust God to show him this new land? Did he trust God enough to take his wife Sarah, his sheep, his goats, his donkeys and his servants and leave his neighbours who'd become good friends? Did he trust God enough to set out on this long journey to an unknown land, with only a tent for his home? *Ask the pupils to put their hands up if they think he should stay, or think he should go.*

Abraham decided to trust God and obey him. He and Sarah said goodbye to his neighbours (who had become good friends), got together his sheep, his goats, his donkeys and his servants, (and his nephew, Lot) and left Haran. He trusted God to show him where to go. He trusted God to bless him and make him famous.

Abraham travelled until he came to Canaan. *Walk around.* And Abraham and Sarah settled in Canaan (with his nephew, Lot), his sheep, his goats, his donkeys and his servants. He put up his tent and before long he had new neighbours (who became good friends).

And God did make Abraham famous. He is still remembered today by Christians, Muslims and Jews. *Thank the pupils who have taken part.*

## **APPLICATION**

### **A Christian viewpoint**

When Christians read this story in the Bible, it encourages them to trust God and obey him like Abraham did. Christians find out from the Bible what God wants them to do and how he wants them to live. They ask God to help them to obey him and do what's right. Abraham had to trust God, although it wasn't easy, and God did what he had promised.

Ask the pupils to think of something they know people should do to obey God – even though it might not be easy.

### **For everyone**

Ask the pupils to think of a person they know they can trust (eg a parent, a teacher). Sometimes they might not understand the reason for what that person asks them to do. Remind the pupils how, in the story, Abraham had to trust God– because he knew God wanted what was best for him. It couldn't have been easy, but he did what God asked. He trusted that God wanted the best thing for him and Sarah and their family.

## **RESPONSE**

Ask the pupils to think of something they must do today, even though they will find it difficult.

You could use this prayer:

'Lord God, when we are asked to do something by someone we trust, even though it might be hard, please help us to do it. Amen.'

# You don't have to be a star

## **SERIES THEME: GOD'S SPECIAL MESSENGERS**

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### **SESSION TOPIC**

Moses

### **AIM**

To help pupils understand that you don't have to be 'a star' to be a leader.

### **SUITABLE FOR**

Years 3 to 6

### **BIBLE BASE**

Exodus 3; 4:10–16; 1 Samuel 16:7

### **YOU WILL NEED**

A flipchart, marker pens

## **BEFORE YOU START**

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tell the pupils that you are going to play 'fantasy football'. Ask them the following questions, writing their suggestions up on the flipchart as you go.

- Choose four or five players who you would pick to play in the first 11 for England.
- Why did you pick those players?
- What qualities would you look for in your team members?
- Who would you choose for captain? Why?

Now ask the pupils to imagine that their team has a big match coming up. Is it important to know who the opposition are? How would it help to know what the opposition is like?

## **BIBLE STORY**

Talk about Moses. Explain that he was adopted. (Be sensitive. Remember that some of the pupils listening might not be living with their natural parents. Moses was given up out of love – his parents believed this would be best for him.)

Explain that he was brought up as a prince – Pharaoh's son. He would have had the best in education and lived in comfort. Then it was discovered that really he was a Jew (the Jews were slaves to the Egyptians). This is not borne out in the text- it was more from his having committed a murder! From having everything and being highly respected as a member of

Pharaoh's family – a very important person – he went to being 'a nobody'.

Tell the pupils about these aspects of Moses:

- he was the son of a slave;
- he was a murderer;
- he couldn't speak very well.

Now refer back to the qualities the pupils said they would look for in a team captain. Tell the pupils that this is the man God chose to be his team captain.

Talk about Moses as the captain of God's team. He knew the opposition very well. After all, he had been brought up in Pharaoh's home. He knew all about the powerful Egyptians. Point out that Moses must have had a lot of courage. He had to ask the man whose home he had lived in to let all the Jews go. He knew the power of the Egyptians and how important the Jewish slaves were to them.

Ask the pupils which 'team' they think was most likely to win: the disgraced, stuttering, son of a slave, Moses, and his team of slave labourers? Or, the powerful ruler, Pharaoh, and his strong team, the mighty Egyptians?

Say that the pupils might think that Pharaoh and the Egyptians would win easily. But Moses and his team had something special. Their team manager was God. And Moses had something else – a friend who worked alongside him. Talk about how Aaron, Moses' brother, spoke for him, because Moses didn't feel he could speak to Pharaoh himself.

## **APPLICATION**

### **A Christian viewpoint**

Talk about how you don't have to be 'a star' to speak up for what is right, or to be brave enough to do what is right.

Talk about how sometimes it takes courage to believe in God and have faith in him, when others don't.

### **For everyone**

Encourage the pupils, like Moses, to stand up for right – even when it's very hard or frightening to do so. Sometimes it helps to find a friend who will support you. Can they think of some times when they might need to stand up for what is right?

## **RESPONSE**

Ask the pupils to think about leaders of the nation or local leaders. Ask them for suggestions (eg the prime minister, the police, their headteacher). Write their suggestions up on the flipchart. Lead the pupils in a prayer for those who are struggling to stand up for right, even though it might be hard.

Pray for people in leadership (like those listed on the flipchart.).

Ask God for his help to be brave enough to stand up for what is right, even when others don't.



# Inside out

## **SERIES THEME: GOD'S SPECIAL MESSENGERS**

Bible tells of prophets who were God's special messengers. Their job was to listen to God and pass on his message. Often their task was difficult. Sometimes what God wanted his people to do wasn't easy. Sometimes people didn't want to live God's way. Although the prophets in the Bible lived long ago, we can still learn from the messages God gave them today.

### **SESSION TOPIC**

Samuel

### **AIM**

To help pupils understand that Christians believe God cares about who people *are*, not just what they look like.

### **SUITABLE FOR**

Years 3 to 6

### **BIBLE BASE**

1 Samuel 16:1–13

### **YOU WILL NEED**

Objects with unexpected things inside (see below), laptop and projector with PowerPoint slides from [www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/interfaith/presence-engagement/ministry-in-schools](http://www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/interfaith/presence-engagement/ministry-in-schools) (optional), vegetable or olive oil (optional)

## **BEFORE YOU START**

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Before collective worship, prepare your objects with unexpected insides. For example, replace the contents of some familiar food products with something the pupils won't like. Another option is to make a hole in the bottom of a tasty looking apple with a knitting needle. Squeeze a little ink from an ink cartridge into the hole and let it soak in. Turn the apple up the right way on a paper towel to allow any excess ink to drain away.

Show the items you have prepared and talk about the way they look on the outside – their 'outward appearance'. Reveal what is on the inside (open the packets/cut the apple in half). Show the pictures of the chrysalis, keeping the butterfly covered, and then reveal the picture of the butterfly. Make the point that in each case we couldn't tell by looking at the outside what was going to be on the inside. We often make the mistake of judging people by what they look like on the outside.

## **BIBLE STORY**

Tell the story of Samuel using 1 Samuel 16:1–13. Invite pupils to the front to take the parts of Samuel, Jesse, seven sons and David.

Samuel was a prophet – one of God’s special messengers. In the land where Samuel lived they needed a new king. They needed a good king who would lead the people wisely and look after them well. But how would they know who to choose?

Samuel listened very carefully to God. God told him, ‘I am sending you to Jesse who lives in Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.’ So Samuel went to Bethlehem and invited Jesse and his sons to come and see him.

When the sons arrived, the first son Samuel saw was Eliab. Eliab was tall and handsome. ‘Surely this is the one God has chosen to be king,’ Samuel said to himself. Samuel listened

to God again. God told Samuel, ‘Don’t look at how handsome Eliab is. Don’t look at how tall he is. I haven’t chosen him. God doesn’t see the same way people see. People look at the outside of a person, but God looks at the heart.’

One by one, seven of Jesse’s sons came to Samuel.

‘No,’ said Samuel, ‘No...no...no...no...no...no... God hasn’t chosen any of these sons. Are these all the sons you have?’ he asked Jesse.

‘I have one more son,’ said Jesse. ‘David. My youngest. He’s out looking after the sheep.’

‘Send for him,’ said Samuel.

So Jesse sent for David. He was a fine boy, tanned and handsome. Samuel listened to God. God told him, ‘Yes. This is the one.’ And there in front of all his older brothers, Samuel poured

some special oil on David to show that he was the one that God had chosen to be king, not because he was handsome, but because God knew the kind of person David was. He loved God and wanted to do the things which pleased God. He was brave and he was kind. He worked hard looking after the sheep and God knew that he would be a wise king and look after the people well too.

## **APPLICATION**

### **A Christian viewpoint**

Christians believe that God knows what people are really like inside. It’s not what people look like on the outside that is most important to him– he looks at people’s ‘hearts’. He knows the kind and unkind thoughts people have.

Sometimes we do things, and we think no one has noticed. Christians believe that God sees even those things!

### **For everyone**

Display on the screen the slide of pictures of different people (young/old; male/female; different ethnic backgrounds). Talk about the pictures, pointing out that we can’t tell what a person is like just by looking at them. What’s important is not the outside of a person (their clothes or good looks), but what a person is like on the inside.

## **RESPONSE**

In a short time of quiet, ask the pupils to think about themselves:

- What do you look like on the outside?
- What are you like on the ‘inside’?
- What kind of person are you?
- Think of something good about yourself. Is there anything not so good that you know you could change?

# Doing good or looking good

## **SERIES THEME: GOD'S SPECIAL MESSENGERS**

Bible tells of prophets who were God's special messengers. Their job was to listen to God and pass on his message. Often their task was difficult. Sometimes what God wanted his people to do wasn't easy. Sometimes people didn't want to live God's way. Although the prophets in the Bible lived long ago, we can still learn from the messages God gave them today.

### **SESSION TOPIC**

Isaiah

### **AIM**

To help pupils see the difference between appearing to do good, and actually doing good.

### **SUITABLE FOR**

Years 3 to 6

### **BIBLE BASE**

Isaiah 58:1–9a

### **YOU WILL NEED**

Paper, a rubbish sack, a small paintbrush, laptop and projector with PowerPoint from [www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/interfaith/presence-engagement/ministry-in-schools](http://www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/interfaith/presence-engagement/ministry-in-schools) (optional)

## **BEFORE YOU START**

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Before collective worship, scrunch up the paper and scatter the balls around at the front so it makes a mess. Place some of the paper on top of things so the pupils will notice it.

Ask for a volunteer to come and clear up all the rubbish and say that you will help. Give them the rubbish sack. As your volunteer starts clearing up, tell the rest of the pupils what a kind person you are and how you are going to help (but don't!). Go on about how nice and helpful you are and how you can't wait to help clear up. Pause after a while and ask the volunteer if a brush would make it easier to collect up the rubbish. Give them the paint brush. As the

volunteer finishes clearing up, carry on telling the pupils how helpful you are. Just as your volunteer finishes, say that you're now ready to help. Then thank your volunteer for all their work.

Ask the pupils who they think was the most helpful: you or your volunteer. Argue your case by saying that you said you were helpful, and you even gave the volunteer a brush to help.

Make the point that it's quite easy to appear to be doing good – working when the teacher is looking, not running down the corridor when you're being watched. Sometimes, though, people seem to be doing good, when really they're not.

## BIBLE STORY

Tell the pupils that in the Bible there is a story about one of God's messengers (prophets) called Isaiah. God had seen that people thought they were being good, when really they weren't. God knew what was going on and he sent Isaiah to tell them. Tell the story, using the pictures on the PowerPoint slides, if you're using them. The story goes like this:

The people of Israel were worshipping God every day. *Show picture 1.* They would pray to God and promise to keep God's laws. They even had special festivals when they fasted and prayed, but God never seemed to answer their prayers so they started to complain.

It was then that God sent Isaiah with a message. *Show picture 2.* God wasn't pleased with them, because even though they were worshipping God, fasting and looking as if they were being good, they were actually being horrible to each other. *Show picture 3.* They were fighting, arguing and bullying people. They looked as if they were doing what was right and good, but in fact, they weren't. God told them that real worship would mean caring for each other, sharing their food with the hungry and looking after people who were homeless and hungry. *Show picture 4.* God told them that if they did that, he would always be with them to protect them.

## APPLICATION

### A Christian viewpoint

Christians believe that the Bible teaches God still wants people to worship him today, and to care for those in need. It's no good people saying they will do what God wants, and then not doing it. The Bible says that being a Christian means loving God and caring for others.

### For everyone

Whoever we are, it's easy to look as if we are a caring person. Talking about caring for others is easy. The real challenge is to *do* it: to be friends with someone at school who has no friends; to share your crisps with someone who hasn't got any; to be the kind of person who doesn't just *say* you care, but actually *does*.

## RESPONSE

Ask the pupils to think of a time when they have pretended to do good, but haven't really. Now ask them to think of any ways in which they can do good things for others today and during the week.

End with a prayer saying sorry for the times they've not really done the right thing, and asking for God's help to care for others during the day.





# Is it good or is it new?

## **SERIES THEME: GOD'S SPECIAL MESSENGERS**

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### **SESSION TOPIC**

Jeremiah

### **AIM**

To challenge pupils to stop and think about whether something is good, rather than just being carried along by the enthusiasm of others for whatever is new.

### **SUITABLE FOR**

Years 3 to 6

### **BIBLE BASE**

Jeremiah 6:16

### **YOU WILL NEED**

Adverts of the latest products (printed out or on PowerPoint), a simple signpost pointing in two directions, marker pen, Jeremiah 6:16 (written out and rolled up like a scroll or on PowerPoint: [www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/interfaith/presence-engagement/ministry-in-schools](http://www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/interfaith/presence-engagement/ministry-in-schools))

## **BEFORE YOU START**

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Show the adverts for a variety of the 'latest', 'new' things, which are also popular. Invite the pupils to comment on the various items. Ask why they think the things are 'good'. Do they like them/want one because everyone likes/has them?

Talk about being in a crowd when everyone is going in one direction and how hard it is to go the opposite way. Then show the signpost. Talk about coming to a crossroads where you have to stop and choose which way to go.

### **BIBLE STORY**

Talk to the pupils about Jeremiah, using the following idea, adapting the style and vocabulary to suit the particular situation:

Over two and a half thousand years ago a man called Jeremiah was living in the country we now call Israel. We can read about him in the Bible. He was a prophet – one of God's special messengers. He listened very carefully to God and then told the people what God had said.

Long before Jeremiah was born, God had given the people some very good instructions about

how to live. He had told them about what was really important in life – loving God and caring for each other. But by Jeremiah’s time they had forgotten all about God’s rules. They were greedy, always wanting more things. They told lies. They didn’t care about helping poor people. They certainly didn’t love God. God’s rules were ‘old’. They were rushing through life towards something ‘new’.

One day, God told Jeremiah to give the people this message.

*Ask the pupils to listen carefully. Then read the Jeremiah’s message from the screen or scroll (Jeremiah 6:16).*

This is what the Lord says:

‘Stand where the roads cross and look.  
Ask where the old way is,  
where the good way is, and walk on it.  
If you do, you will find rest for yourselves.’

*Show pupils the signpost again. Remind the pupils that the message told the people to do several things. Ask the pupils what they were. Talk about each as the pupils respond, explaining as appropriate.*

The instructions were:

- To stand still and look. *Comment that if we’re always rushing from one thing to the next, we’ll never have time to think about what we’re doing.*
- Ask where the ‘old way’ is.
- Ask where the ‘good way’ is. *Write ‘Good’ on the signpost.*
- Walk on it.

Ask the pupils if they remember what the promise was at the end of the message (‘...you will find rest for yourselves’). Explain that the word ‘rest’ here doesn’t mean resting your body. It means being peaceful inside yourself – being at peace with God.

## **APPLICATION**

### **A Christian viewpoint**

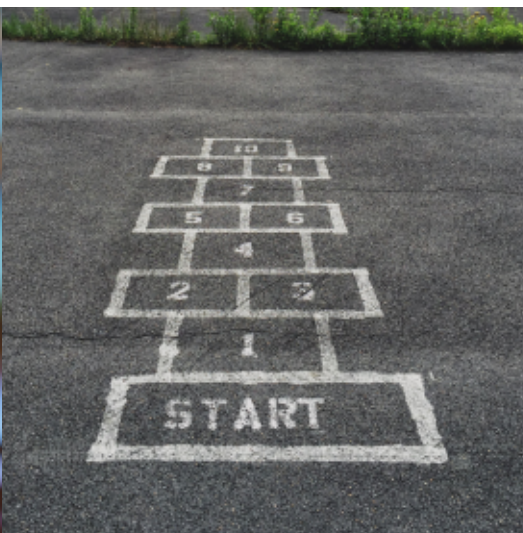
Even though Jeremiah’s message was given thousands of years ago, Christians believe it is still important today to take his message from God seriously. They believe that God’s way is the best way. The Bible is a book full of instructions about how to live God’s way, the good way. Christians believe that Jesus gave us an example of how to do that. For Christians, Jeremiah’s message from God reminds them to stop and take time to read the Bible to find out what God says ‘the good way’ is– and then to follow it!

### **For everyone**

For all of us, it is good to stop sometimes and think about what we are doing, to think about what ‘the good way’ is, and then to go that way.

## **RESPONSE**

Ask the pupils to look at the signpost and think about what they have been doing recently. Have they been walking along ‘the good way’? In a few moments of quiet, ask the pupils to think about whether there is something in their lives they need to change.



# On the level

## **SERIES THEME: GOD'S SPECIAL MESSENGERS**

Bible tells of prophets who were God's special messengers. Their job was to listen to God and pass on his message. Often their task was difficult. Sometimes what God wanted his people to do wasn't easy. Sometimes people didn't want to live God's way. Although the prophets in the Bible lived long ago, we can still learn from the messages God gave them today.

### **SESSION TOPIC**

Amos

### **AIM**

To help pupils understand that selfishness can seriously damage your health!

### **SUITABLE FOR**

Years 3 to 6

### **BIBLE BASE**

Amos 7:7,8

### **YOU WILL NEED**

Blu Tack, A1 sheets of paper, a length of a wallpaper or lining paper, spirit level, piece of string with a weight attached, coloured chalk, marker pens

## **BEFORE YOU START**

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Before collective worship, stick several A1 sheets of paper to a wall, making one large work surface. Also put Blu Tack on the back of the piece of wallpaper ready for use.

Hold up the spirit level and ask the pupils if they know what it is and what it's used for.

Ask the pupils what would happen if we didn't build things level. Ask for two helpers. Tell them that you want them to check that the spirit level is working properly. Send them together to different parts of the hall/room you are meeting in, to inspect the window frames, door frames, shelves etc and check whether they are level. Get them to inspect four items. Have one pupil

check two items, with the other reporting back to you. Swap around and check two more items.

Explain that before the spirit level was invented, builders would use a length of string with a heavy weight attached to one end to give them a straight line. Show the pupils your plumb-line. Ask if anyone knows what it's called.

Demonstrate its use in the following way:

- Chalk heavily along the length of the string.
- Ask someone to hold the end of the string against the sheets of paper attached to the wall.
- When the weight has stopped moving, hold it still against the paper and ask a volunteer to 'ping' along the line, so that you finish with a straight chalk line printed onto the paper.

- Remove the plumb-line.

Ask for a few volunteers who think that they can draw a straight line free hand on the paper. Give them each a marker pen and ask them to draw a vertical or horizontal line (drawing over the chalk line doesn't count!). Ask the rest of the pupils to judge which is the straightest line. Check their choice with the plumb-line or spirit level. Give a round of applause to the person who gets nearest to straight.

Use the chalk line (if it's still there) or draw a new vertical line as a guide for hanging the sheet of wallpaper. Explain that you are going to put up this piece of wallpaper using the line you've drawn to make sure that it goes up straight. Line up your paper, then press it onto the wall.

Explain that if you continued to paper along this wall, all the pieces of wallpaper would be straight, just because of that one line. (Don't mention papering around corners!)

Tell the pupils about Amos, one of God's special messengers, and his message from God about a plumb-line.

Nearly 3,000 years ago, the prophet Amos had a sad job of work to do for God. As a prophet, he had to give messages to people about how God wanted them to live and what he wanted them to be like. Sometimes this was difficult to do.

At this point read, or ask someone else to read, Amos 7:7,8. Then continue telling the pupils about Amos: God showed Amos a plumb-line, just like we used, to show that the wall that had been built was straight. God was saying through Amos that it was as if he was measuring his special people, the Jews, against a plumb-line.

Remind the pupils that a plumb-line is to help you get things right and helps you see when things aren't quite right. Ask the pupils for their ideas about why God would compare his people to a plumb-line.

Explain that the Bible says that God had given his people a way of living which was the very best for them, and they had agreed to live that way. Ask the pupils to imagine that the plumb-line represents that way of living. Now move the piece of wallpaper so that it's crooked, and say that the piece of wallpaper represents the people.

Pointing to the crooked wallpaper, ask the pupils who (or what) has moved. (Answer: the wallpaper.) In the case of God and his people, the people had moved away from the straight line. They had decided to do things their own way and had chosen to ignore God. They were no longer on the level. Their ways were not straight! They were moving away from God. God knew this and told Amos to show the people this picture of the plumb-line to help them understand what they were doing and how sad it made God.

## **APPLICATION**

### **A Christian viewpoint**

The Bible says that God's people had promised to obey him and live the way he said. Like most of us, they thought they knew what was best and decided to ignore God's rules for living. God said, through his messenger Amos, that there would be very serious consequences for everyone who carried on breaking their promises to him, doing things that hurt him and other people.

It's the same for people today. God has given people good rules for living. If people ignore them and insist on living according to their own rules, they hurt themselves and other people.

### **For everyone**

Compare the plumb-line to the rules of the road. The Highway Code says you must stop when the lights are red. Some road-users take a risk and 'jump' a red traffic light, hoping that they will get away with breaking the rule. Sometimes, it doesn't work out. Accidents happen because people choose to disobey the signals (or rules). Or, you might get caught on camera and then be prosecuted by the courts. These things happen because people choose to break the rules, which are there to protect everyone. Explain how the plumb-line is a bit like those rules.

## **RESPONSE**

Ask the pupils to look at the crooked piece of wallpaper. Ask them to follow the line of the paper from top to bottom.

Now ask them to think for a few moments about what their school (home, local community, country etc) would be like if we all chose to ignore the rules.

Straighten the wallpaper and ask them to think again about the difference it makes when we try to live life 'on the level'.

# Help!

## **SERIES THEME: GOD'S SPECIAL MESSENGERS**

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### **SESSION TOPIC**

Zechariah

### **AIM**

To help pupils understand that they need to be willing to rely on outside help.

### **SUITABLE FOR**

Years 3 to 6

### **BIBLE BASE**

Zechariah 4:6,7

### **YOU WILL NEED**

Six footballs (or similar size balls), laptop and projector with PowerPoint slides from [www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/interfaith/presence-engagement/ministry-in-schools](http://www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/interfaith/presence-engagement/ministry-in-schools) (optional)

## **BEFORE YOU START**

Look at the **Way In** pages for tips and ideas on leading collective worship.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ask for a volunteer who likes football. Say that you want someone who has good ball skills and control. Tell the volunteer that they need to balance all the balls one on top of the other to make a straight 'tower'. Let them have a few goes, then ask if they would like someone to help them. Ask for some more volunteers to help, until there are enough people to hold the 'tower' straight.

Make the point that the first volunteer was unable to succeed without help from others. They couldn't do it on their own.

## **BIBLE STORY**

Tell the Bible story of Zechariah, one of God's messengers, and his important message for Zerubbabel. (You may like to explain some of the background briefly.) Numbers in brackets refer to slides in the 'Help' presentation.

Zerubbabel was in charge of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem (1). When the temple had been built many years before, it was the most beautiful building. But it had been destroyed by invading armies (2). Now, after years of neglect, the people of Israel were going to rebuild it. But it was a difficult task. Repairing the temple was a

huge job, especially as they wanted to make it really beautiful to show God how much they loved him. Also there were hardly any workers left in Jerusalem, and there were enemies who wanted to stop them building the temple.

Zerubbabel must have felt as though this job was too difficult to do, even with everyone helping. But God knew how he was feeling and sent his messenger Zechariah to give him this message (3):

‘You will succeed, not by military might or by your own strength, but by my spirit. Obstacles as great as mountains will disappear before you.’

(Zechariah 4:6,7, Good News Bible)

Zerubbabel needed to ask God for help and to rely on him, not just on what he could do himself. It wasn’t all easy after that (4). People tried to stop him and even wrote to the king to ask him to make Zerubbabel stop. But, in the Bible, it records that God helped Zerubbabel, just as his message through Zechariah had promised (5). Eventually, the temple was re-built so that people could worship God there once again (6 and 7).

## **APPLICATION**

### **A Christian viewpoint**

Christians believe that the message God gave to Zerubbabel through his messenger

Zechariah is still important today. Christians ask God to be with them and to help them when things are hard. From this Bible story, Christians teach that God wants people to learn to trust him and rely on his help.

## **For everyone**

There are times when we all need help, just like Zerubbabel did. Are we prepared to ask for help when things are difficult? Are we prepared to rely on others instead of thinking we can do everything on our own?

## **RESPONSE**

Teach the pupils this line from Zechariah 4:6 using the words from the New International Version (8):

‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit.’

Explain that the words ‘my Spirit’ in Zechariah’s message meant Zerubbabel needed to rely on God’s help. Encourage the pupils to use these words as a reminder that Christians believe everyone needs to be ready to rely on God (and others) for help.

Use this prayer. Encourage the pupils to think of someone they know when you pause.

‘Thank you, Lord, for the way you helped Zerubbabel all those years ago. Thank you for all the people who help us when things are difficult. I want to thank you for *[Pause to let pupils think.]* who has helped me many times. Amen.’

