

## JESUS MEETS ZACCHAEUS

### MEETING AIM

To discover how Jesus can change lives.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 19:1-10

### BACKGROUND

Zacchaeus is a well-known story, but sometimes familiarity means that the impact of such a story is lessened. Zacchaeus' life is completely transformed by his meeting with Jesus, and Jericho itself must have been a different place after Zacchaeus changed his ways. Such a life-changing, life-giving transformation can get lost in that familiarity, so try to help people engage with the story as if it were the first time they have heard it.

This service is designed to be use over video-conferencing software, such as Zoom. Adapt the ideas to fit the way you are doing church as you continue to emerge from lockdown, including adding any songs and liturgy you are using. If people need any resources for use during the service, make sure they know beforehand.

### SIGNING IN

5 MINS

As people join your service, welcome them and ask them about their week.

### WELCOME

5 MINS

#### OPTION ONE: Natural transformations

Show the videos of animals transforming (you can find some butterfly examples here). Time lapse videos are good, as they speed up the process. Chat about the dramatic transformation. You might have families who, during lockdown, have hatched some butterflies of their own. If so, ask them what happened.

#### OPTION TWO: Testimony

**You will need:** video clip of people transformed by Jesus (or a volunteer from your own church)

Before the service, find a video of people transformed by Jesus (you could use this one published by London City Mission). Alternatively, if you have someone in your church with an appropriate story, then you could prime them to share their story.

Show the film clip or invite your volunteer to share their story. Comment that you're going to hear about another life transformed by Jesus today.

### BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

**You will need:** a volunteer (from your household, if you are doing this over video conferencing); a set of stepladders; 'cheer' sound effect; 'boo' sound effect; play money (eg from Monopoly)

Set up the ladders towards the back of your shot, start with the volunteer (who will be playing Zacchaeus) standing behind you, counting the money. Tell this story:

Once, in the town of Jericho, there was a man called Zacchaeus. He was one of God's people. *Play the 'cheer' sound effect.* But he didn't act like it. He collected taxes for the Romans, who ruled the land of Judea. *Play the 'boo' sound effect.* More than that, he demanded people pay him more than the Romans wanted, and kept the difference for himself. *Zacchaeus puts some of the play money in his pocket, while laughing evilly. Play the 'boo' sound effect.*

One day, there was great excitement in Jericho. Jesus was coming to town. The main square filled up with people straining and jostling to hear what Jesus had to say. Zacchaeus wanted to hear Jesus too. But he was a small man. And no one liked him enough to let him push to the front. *Play the 'boo' sound effect.* *Zacchaeus hops on his toes as if trying to see over the heads of an imaginary crowd.*

No matter what he tried, he couldn't see Jesus. So, he decided to climb a tree in the square. That way he could hide from the people and still catch a glimpse of Jesus. *Zacchaeus climbs the ladder.*

Jesus was halfway through speaking when he looked up at the tree. Zacchaeus held his breath...

"Zacchaeus," said Jesus up into the tree. "Come down here. I'm coming to your house for a meal!"

Zacchaeus rushed down the tree and pushed through the crowd to Jesus. Then, he led Jesus and the disciples off to his house. Zacchaeus walks out of shot. The crowd couldn't believe it. Surely Jesus knew that Zacchaeus was a horrible man. *Play the 'boo' sound effect.*

Suddenly, the doors to Zacchaeus' house flew open and Zacchaeus appeared, chucking his money around. Zacchaeus comes back on screen, throwing some of the money in the air. "I'm sorry everyone," he shouted. "I'm giving half my property to the poor and will pay back four times what I stole from people!" *Play the 'cheer' sound effect. Zacchaeus throws more money around.*

Jesus said to him: "Today you have been saved." Turning to the crowd he said; "The Son of Man came to look for and to save people who are lost!"

**SMALL GROUPS**

10 MINS

If your software allows, send everyone off into different breakout rooms made up of a few households. Put these questions into each group's chat box:

- What's your favourite part of the story?
- Which character do you identify with in this story?
- What do you think happened in Zacchaeus' house?
- What do you think happened after this story?
- What does this story mean to you?

Give the groups time to chat about these questions, referring to the Bible passage if they need to.

If you can't put people into breakout rooms, ask individual households to discuss them, and link up those who live on their own using another messaging or video calling app.

**REVIEW**

5 MINS

Get some feedback from 'Small groups', encouraging everyone to take part who wants to.

**RESPONSE ACTIVITIES**

10 MINS

Invite people to do one of these activities in response:

**OPTION ONE: Testimony**

**You will need:** people from your congregation who might talk about their story of faith

Before the session, ask one or two people whose stories are similar to Zacchaeus to lead a discussion. Invite people to join a breakout room where they can hear these stories and ask questions.

**OPTION TWO: Creative response**

**You will need:** art materials

Encourage people to create a piece of art or writing that reflects what God is saying to them through this parable. Invite the congregation to continue listening and talking with God as they work.

**OPTION THREE: Meeting Jesus**

If anyone doesn't yet know Jesus and would like to more, invite them to join a breakout group. Ask one or two members of the church leadership / evangelism team / Alpha group leader to facilitate this group discussion

**CLOSING**

5 MINS

Bring everyone back together and ask if anyone would like to share anything from the response time. Thank everyone for taking part and say an appropriate blessing to close the service.



## TEMI AND THE TERRIBLE TIMING

Temi stared at the groaning table: “So, we’ve got salmon and sardine sandwiches, cheese and pineapple on sticks, jam roly-poly...”

Tobi picked up a strange looking nibble from a plate.

“What’s this?” waving it in her sister’s face.

“It’s a beef and berry bite,” said Temi.

“A what?”

“Look, I read online that he was a fan of them. So I found a recipe and gave them a go,” Temi shrugged. Her sister was always like this, picking holes in her cooking.

“And is Bruno Lamar-Z a fan of Nigerian cuisine?” Tobi asked, poking at a dish of jollof rice.

“No, but I thought he might appreciate trying something a bit different, maybe he could get to know me and where my family’s from.”

“He’s married, Temi, what did you think was going to happen? Did you think your eyes were going to meet over some pounded yams?”

Temi had won a competition for Bruno Lamar-Z to come to her house back in February, but the visit had been delayed by the pandemic. Now that lockdown had eased, the online mag had organised for the singer to visit Temi’s garden. Temi had been cooking all morning, hoping that a magnificent buffet would make the visit go with a swing.

“Girls!” their dad, Joseph, shouted from the front room. “A black limo has just pulled up outside!”

“Oh no! I’m not ready!” shouted Temi. “I’ve not finished the tiramisu!” She rushed back to the kitchen.

“But Temi, he’s here!” Tobi shouted after her, but there was no reply. “OK,” she said to herself, “I’ll go and meet him, shall I?”

Back inside, Temi was slaving over mascarpone cheese, cold coffee and soggy sponge fingers. Suddenly she heard her sister shriek with laughter, followed by the chuckle someone who must have been Bruno Lamar-Z.

Temi was fuming, she ran out into the garden and snapped at her sister: “Will you give me a hand? I’ve still got a dish of pepper soup to bring out.”

Bruno looked at the sisters, who were glowering silently at each other. “You must be Temi,” he said. “Look, I can only stay for half an hour – the record company double-booked me and I have to open a supermarket in Manchesterford in a bit. Sit down and have a chat! Your sister’s got the right idea, we’ve been having a right laugh.”

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

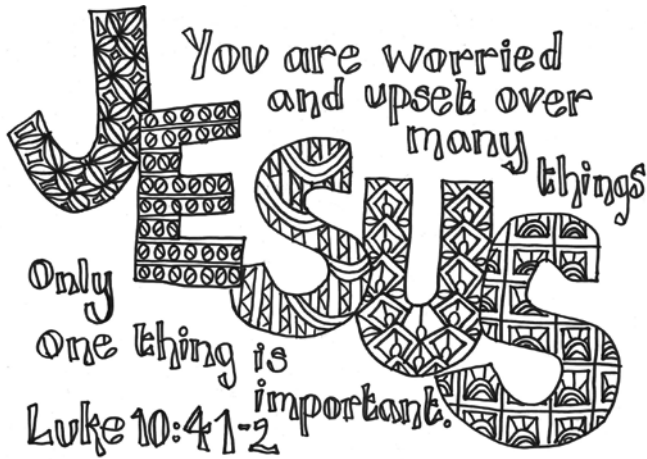
Chat about the story, what the family members liked and didn’t like. You could use some of these questions in your discussion:

- Who was acted in the right way? Temi or Tobi?
- Who would you like to visit you in your garden?
- If you were in that situation, what would you have done?

This story is based on Luke 10:38-42. If you’d like to add a more explicit faith element to your discussion, then read this passage together. Compare the two stories and wonder together about the actions and motivations of Mary and Martha.

## PEOPLE JESUS MET

These four craft ideas each accompany one of the stories explored in this month's Together sessions. Supplement those sessions with these activities, or just do them on their own!



### REFLECTIVE COLOURING SHEET

Mary and Martha: Luke 10:38-42

**You will need:** colouring pens or pencils; a print-out of the reflective colouring sheet

A big question in the story of Martha and Mary is: "Where do we choose to focus our attention?" Mary is commended because she puts her focus on Jesus while he is with her, while Martha is distracted by housework. We can also get really busy and distracted. This reflective colouring sheet will allow creative time to focus on slowing down and connecting with or thinking about Jesus.

Set a relaxing atmosphere, maybe by playing some soft music, and lay out a selection of colouring pens and pencils. Spend time colouring in the sheet and reflecting on the words and images.



### COMBINING COLOURS

The Canaanite woman: Matthew 15:21-28

**You will need:** two cups; water; kitchen towel; food colouring in two different colours; spoon

This can be a tricky passage to explain. It's a bit awkward to hear Jesus refer to the Canaanite woman as a dog! This craft will help children to explore the idea of Jesus as a person who can bring help to very different groups.

Cut the kitchen towel into strips 5cm wide and one sheet long. Fill both cups two thirds full with water. Use different food colouring to colour the water in each cup. Place one end of the kitchen towel in one cup and the other end in the second cup. The coloured water will gradually start to be absorbed and 'climb up' the strip. Eventually the colours will meet in the middle and start to combine.

Link this to the two groups of people in this story – the Jewish people and the Canaanites. Even though he first says he has come for the Jewish people, Jesus also finds other people who have faith in him and he helps them too. Jesus has the power to bring different people together because they share faith in him.

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### PEG PAINTBRUSHES

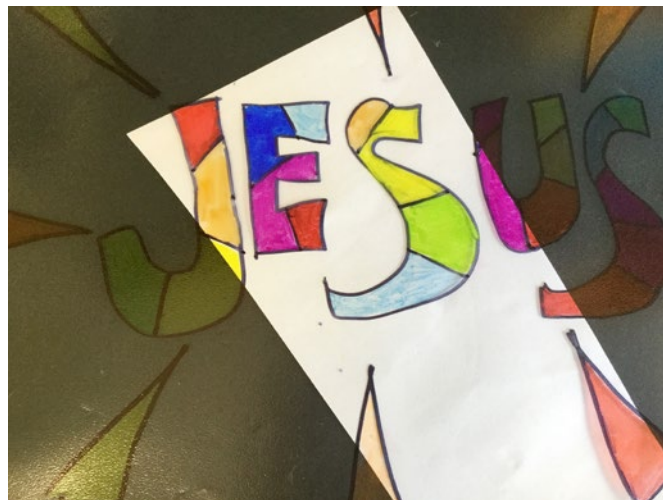
Zacchaeus: Luke 19:1-10

**You will need:** pegs; a variety of objects to clip into the pegs to make 'brushes' eg pompoms, pipe cleaners, feathers, leaves, twigs, fabric; paper to paint on; paint

In the story of Zacchaeus, Jesus shocks people by inviting himself to the home of a tax collector. Jesus does the unexpected and proves that he wants to include everyone, even though other people might be shocked by his choices. This is a fun craft that explores the ideas of inclusion and of doing something unexpected.

Make brushes by clipping some of your random collection of objects between a peg. Use the brushes to paint pictures on the paper. What kind of effect does each brush have? How does each brush add to the texture of the whole picture?

Use the experience to think about how the brushes were made of unexpected materials, but each brush had its very own effect to contribute to the whole painting. Link this to the fact that people who follow Jesus can be very unexpected, but we all contribute something different and Jesus gives us all a chance.



### 'JESUS IS ALIVE' PICTURE

Mary Magdalene: Matthew 28:1-10

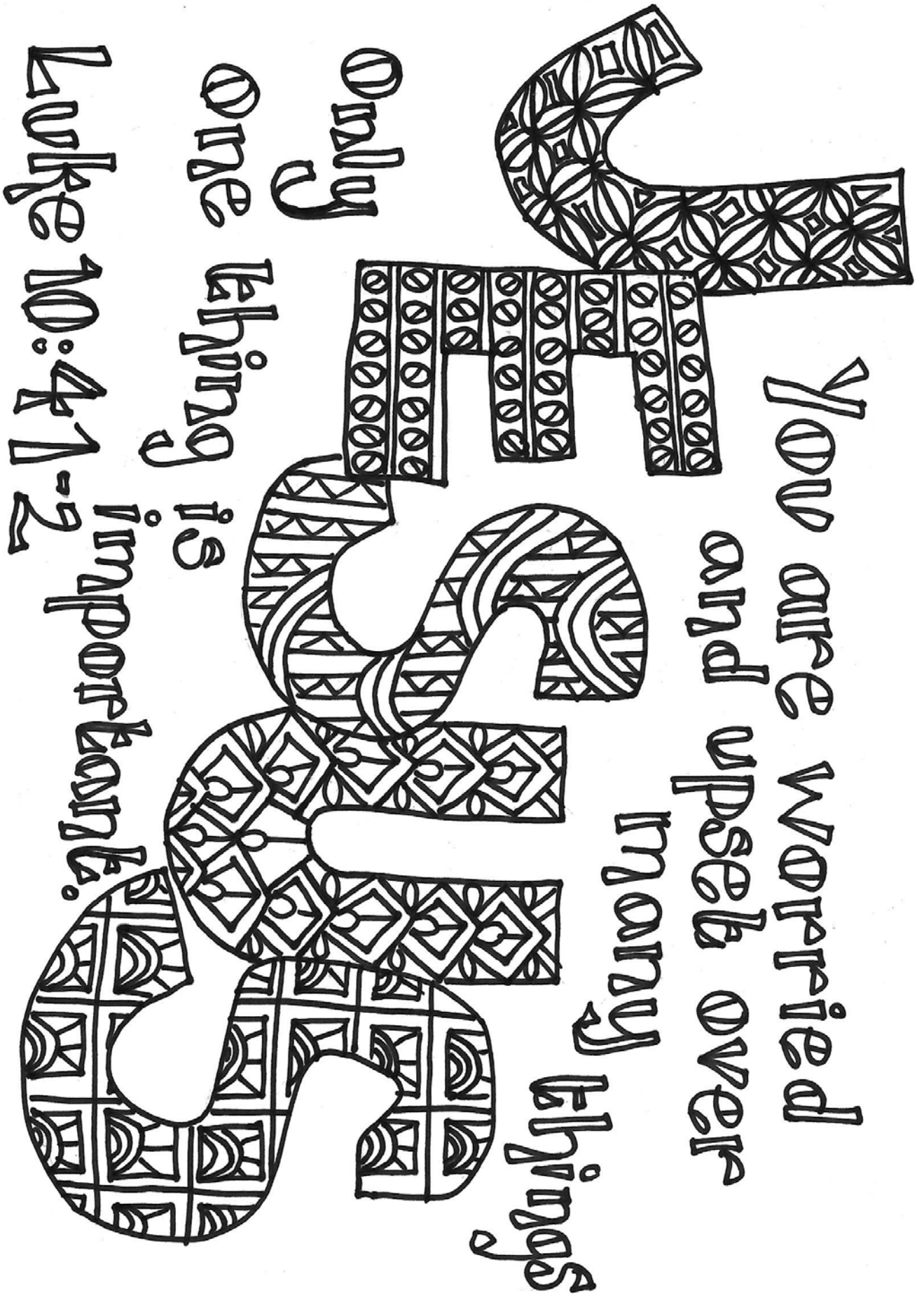
**You will need:** plastic wallets (I used ones that are open on the top and one side); Sharpies or permanent markers; black card or paper; white card or paper; scissors

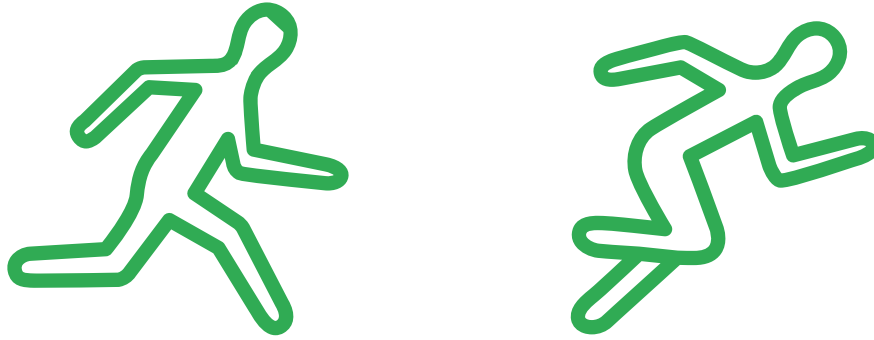
In Matthew 28, Mary Magdalene meets a man in blazing white who tells her that Jesus is alive. Not only is the man dressed in white and looking like 'lightning', but the sadness and depression of grief that Jesus is dead is pushed away by the amazing news that he is alive. This craft explores that notion of light breaking into darkness.

Using Sharpies, decorate the front of a plastic wallet with pictures and / or words from the story. If you put a sheet of white paper into the folder while you do this, it gives a clear background to help you when you are drawing and colouring your design. When you have finished, take the white paper out of the folder and replace it with black paper. It will now be much harder to see your design. Cut a piece of white paper to look a little bit like a torch beam or a ray of light and place it inside the folder, between the folder and the black paper.

### MINA MUNNS

is founder of Flame: Creative Children's Ministry [flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk](http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk).





## SOCIALLY DISTANT OUTDOOR GAMES

As some groups are meeting face to face again, particularly outside, here are some games that you can play outside (September weather permitting), while staying socially distant and not sharing equipment.

Risk assess all your games and your playing area, and make sure you have hand sanitiser available.

### RACES

Nothing says 'school sports day' like some races. However, these are ideal games to play when trying to remain 1m-plus apart! Simple running, hopping or jumping races might be a good place to start. You could have a sack race, if you ask your group to bring an old pillowcase with them.

Mix things up by combining different movements – run up to this point, then hop to this point, then get in your pillowcase and jump up to this point. Shout out different themes – gallop like a horse, waltz like you're on *Strictly Come Dancing* – to introduce another layer to your race.

### TOPIC TAG

Before you start the game, choose a subject, such as TV shows, musicians or football teams. One person is 'on', but instead of tagging a player, they should try to get to a metre away. When the tagger gets close to someone, that person should shout out an example of your chosen topic: "*Pinky and Perky!*", "*Shakin' Stevens!*" or "*Bolton Wanderers!*" (Yes, we know those are unlikely examples...) Anyone who can't think of something or repeats something that's already been said is out for this round.

### HUMAN CONNECT 4

**You will need:** masking tape or chalk; red and yellow items of clothing, brought by the players themselves

Tape or chalk out a grid of two-metre squares, five by five (if you have lots of space, you could tape out a grid seven by six, the dimensions of a Connect 4 board). Split your young people into two teams – red and yellow – ask them to wear something red or yellow that they have brought from home. In turn, members of the red and yellow teams stand in the squares to try and get a row of four. Just as in the real Connect 4, they should fill up the squares on the bottom of the grid before building upwards.

Once you have run out of players, the teams can leave something red or yellow they have brought with them in the squares. (If the young people don't have any red or yellow clothing, choose two colours that are more in fashion!)

### SHADOW TAG

Play this on a sunny day, should September provide one! In this variation of tag, the player who is 'on', has to step on a player's shadow to tag them. They should stand still until another player steps on their shadow. Play for as long as the children or young people are interested.

### KICK THE CAN

**You will need:** a tin can; a football sock; a sponge ball (the size of a tennis ball)

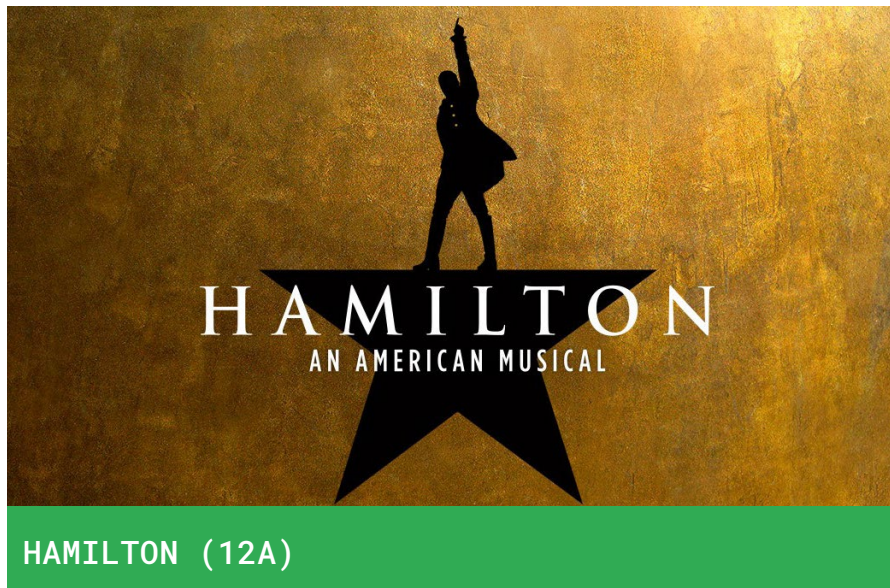
This is a variant on hide and seek. Before you start the game, put the sponge ball into the toe of the sock. Place the can at your feet, close your eyes and count to an agreed number. All the players should go and hide.

Once you reach the number, go off and try to 'capture' the players. You capture a player by swinging the sponge ball in the sock at them and hitting them. The players should try to kick the can, without being captured. Once they are captured, they are out of this round. The first player to kick the can wins.

Play as many times as you like, keeping score of how many times each player kicks the can. If you want to vary the person who is on, ask people to bring their own football sock with them.

### ALEX TAYLOR

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.



Watch the whole film together or concentrate on the clip:  
02:09:55 to 02:14:32.

## SYNOPSIS

*Hamilton* is the story of America then, told by America now. Featuring a score that blends hip-hop, jazz, R&B and show tunes, *Hamilton* takes the story of American founding father Alexander Hamilton and has proved a revolutionary moment in theatre – a musical that has had a profound impact on culture, politics, and education. Captured at the Richard Rodgers Theater on Broadway in June 2016, the film transports its audience into the world of the Broadway show in a uniquely intimate way.

Conceived and written by Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton* started its run on Broadway in 2015, before being produced all around the world. Originally slated to be released in 2021, this production was brought forward a year due to the pandemic. Filmed with the original cast over a few performances, *Hamilton* provides a great deal to discuss in a home or youth group context.

## DISCUSS

Ask your young people if they have seen *Hamilton* either on the stage or on Disney+. If they have, ask them to share their favourite song or moment from the production and explain why. If they haven't seen the production, ask if they have seen any other musicals and see how many they can name. After this introduction, discuss all or some of the following questions to begin to get your group thinking:

- Why do you think that musicals are so popular?
- What is your favourite musical?
- Have you ever been to the theatre? What was that experience like?

This clip takes place in act two of the production (so you may need to give some backstory) after the tragic death of Hamilton's son. This leads to the most sombre moment of

the production with the beautiful song 'It's quiet uptown'. The song describes Hamilton and his wife Eliza's grief as they try to accept their son's death. During this number they are seen reflecting on their lives as they silently walk the streets at night, as people look on with pity. The theme of this song is that Hamilton and Eliza are going through the 'unimaginable'.

After showing the clip, chat about these questions:

- How is the character of Hamilton feeling during this clip?
- How did the stage production and music make you feel during this clip?
- What do you think the overall message of the clip is?
- Hamilton is seen asking his wife for forgiveness (after previously having an affair) – is this something he should be forgiven for?

Going through a pandemic has brought to light a lot of conversations about death – how do we cope when we are surrounded by the idea of it every day? The Bible has many passages that focus on death and the idea of comforting the grieving. Focus on John 11:17-37 and the story of Jesus comforting the sisters of Lazarus.

After reading the passage, discuss the following questions:

- How is the behaviour and emotions of Mary and Martha different in this passage?
- Is Jesus' response in verses 25-26 encouraging or not?
- If God is 'good' why do people we love die?
- The views expressed in verses 36-37 take a different tone – are these opinions understandable?

*Hamilton* is now available on Disney+.

## TOM WADE

is head of humanities at Haileybury School.





## RAIN ON ME

ARTIST: Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande  
SUITABLE FOR: over-13s

### INTRODUCTION

This song tells the singers' stories of dealing with trauma in the public eye. This session explores the way that, as followers of Jesus, we are not promised a problem-free life, but are told that God is always with us, in every circumstance.

Begin the session with a general conversation about how the young people are, and how their week has been. Have they had a good week? What particular challenges have they faced? Depending upon your group, and their faith journey, you could open up the discussion further to talk about where they may have felt close to God and where perhaps they have struggled to feel God with them.

Explain to the group that often, when we are experiencing challenging times, we want to fight back, we get angry at the circumstance, perhaps feel like life is unfair, and can sometimes become bitter about the fact that we are struggling in the first place.

### LISTEN AND DISCUSS

Play the track, distributing copies of the lyrics if useful. As a group, discuss:

- How do you feel about this song?
- What do you think of the line: "I'd rather be dry but at least I'm alive?"
- When might we ever feel like this? Is this always a healthy way to react?

Explain to the group that we are not suggesting that we should passively accept when people do wrong to us, and not deal with problems. Remind your young people that you are always here to help, as needed.

That said, it is also true that there are lots of examples of times when we need to be able to let go of the pain we are feeling; perhaps when there is no one to blame for our circumstances, or when the problem has been dealt with, and we just need to let go of the pain we are feeling.

Remind the group that as Christians, we need to remember that we are not promised a life free from problems. In fact, there are times when the Bible makes it clear we can expect to go through problems because of our faith. However, God does promise to be with us in every situation. Share Isaiah 43:2 with the young people and pray for your young people, as you draw to a close, for any particular issues raised, and that they would know God's presence with them.

### BECKY MAY

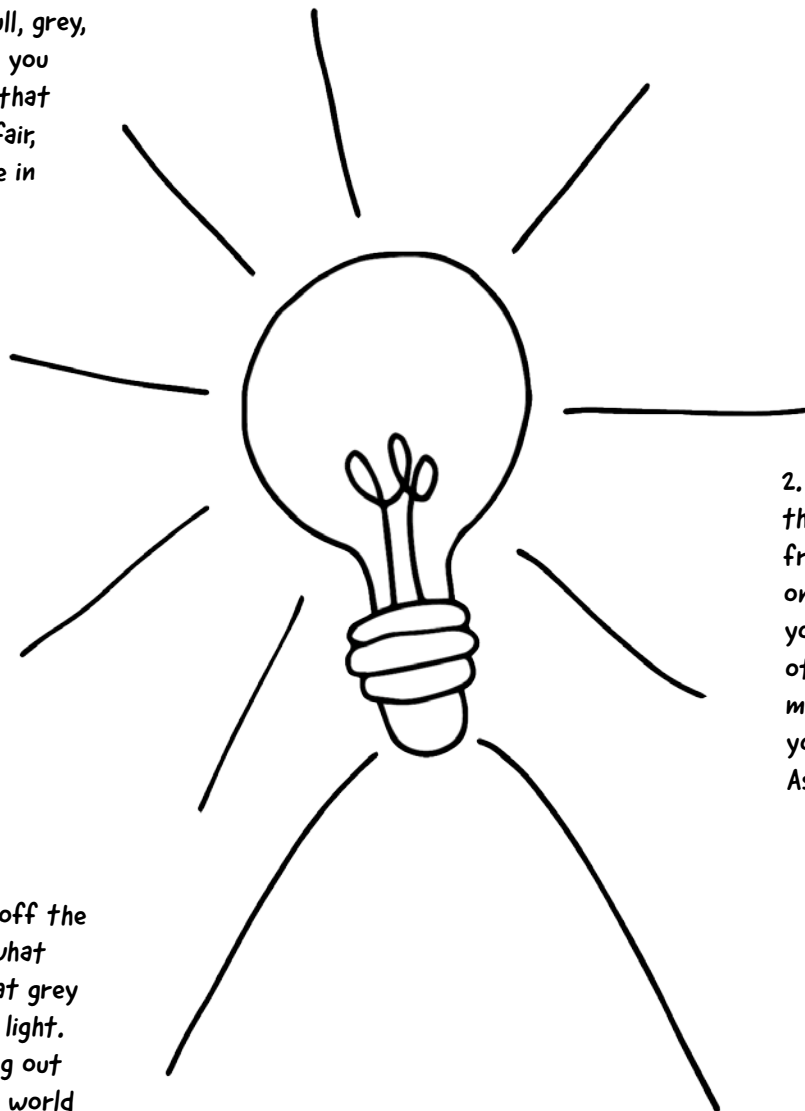
is a freelance writer and experienced children's and youth leader. She can be found at [theresourcescupboard.co.uk](http://theresourcescupboard.co.uk).

# SHINING THE GOD COLOURS

Read these words of Jesus from Matthew 5:14-15 (the Message):

**“You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world... We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you?... I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand – shine!”**

1. Can you think of dull, grey, lifeless things around you in the world? Things that are sad, difficult, unfair, hopeless? Draw these in grey around the bulb.



2. Put your hand over the bulb. What stops you from shining God’s light on these things? Perhaps you’re worried what others might think? Or maybe you don’t feel like you have much to offer? Ask God to help you shine.

3. Now lift your hand off the lightbulb and imagine what would happen if all that grey got shone on by God’s light. Draw colours streaming out from your light to the world around you. Pray for a world with all the God-colours shining brightly.



## PROCESSING LOCKDOWN

On a long walk on a camping trip this summer my six-year-old suddenly went very quiet and eventually confided that she was sad that at school her name wasn't put on the tree for good work. That was three weeks earlier, during her week back at school before summer holidays. She often surprises me with deep thoughts and emotions seemingly out of the blue. The point is that it's not out of the blue for her, it has been hiding under the surface. It just comes out when it's ready and has the chance.

We must give our children and young people these outlets. It's up to them whether they take them or have anything that needs to come out. With so much uncertainty recently young people are having to learn the skills to navigate these turbulent times faster and further than ever before. So, as mentors we need to be there to help facilitate their grappling with the questions and aid their grasping of these skills.

We won't necessarily be able to answer the questions or give them the skills, but we can help them think through the questions and give them a context within which to develop the skills they need. So this month, give them space, give them questions and allow them to ask questions of you too. Start easy and go further as is appropriate and comfortable (for them not you!). Even the youngest of children may surprise you with what they have been thinking about.

### ROUND ONE

You could start with general knowledge to build confidence and get them talking, for example:

- Who is the Prime Minister?
- Which country is hosting the Olympics in 2021?
- Who is your favourite Disney princess?

### ROUND TWO

Ask them to pick their specialist subject – you'll have to think on your feet to come up with some good questions!

### ROUND THREE

Try to give them space to articulate the potentially traumatic changes, experiences and hurdles they've had to face:

- Has anything been worrying you lately?
- What was the worst moment of the pandemic so far?
- What have you been thinking about during lockdown?
- What event got cancelled that you really miss?
- What has changed (permanently)?
- What has changed but will return to normal?
- What has remained the same for you?
- What have we learnt? After all this, how should we change?

You could try a question for question deal: you ask one question, then they get to ask you one!

### JOEL TOOMBS

has an MA in Christian mentoring and wrote the *Mentoring and Young People* Grove booklet. He is a volunteer youth worker.