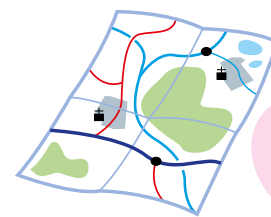


## We're going on a journey

# Alison Hulse provides four flexible sessions of drama, prayers and activities



## Introduction

This series of sessions can be used in many ways. They can be used together as an activity day focusing on journeys, as the basis of a week's sessions, or over a number of weeks. There is a suggested Bible story focus for each session looking at one of the many journeys made by people in the Bible. If you are using this material you could read the story from an age-appropriate Bible.

Additional games to supplement the ones here are available on the [WEB](#).

### SESSION ONE

## Prepare for the journey

### Focus

In this session the children begin to explore how we prepare for our journey.

Look at Exodus 12. The Israelites must prepare to leave Egypt after the Passover. Moses tells them what they will need to take, the food they will prepare and the ways they will thank God. He reminds them that God will be with them on their journey.

### Gather

- Place a box on the floor filled with things you may need for a journey – maps, bag, food, shoes, magazine, book, travel game, CD, sweets, passport, vehicle. Also include non-journey related items.
- Display a large sign saying, 'Getting Ready for the Journey'. Ask the children to sort through the box and to put the things that they may need for a journey under the sign.

### Gathering prayer

We're getting ready for a journey, a long journey.

God is going with us and will be there all the way.

We trust God on our journey.

Amen.

## Respond

### Game: Shoe hunt

**You will need:** a selection of footwear for different occasions (e.g. slippers, football boots, flip flops, trainers).

- Before the session, hide one shoe from each pair.
- Give the other shoe to one of the group. Try and make sure everyone (or each group) has one shoe or one in each small group. Challenge them to find their hidden shoe.
- Invite the group to look at each pair of shoes and ask when they would be worn.
- Remind the group that choosing the right footwear is important at the start of our journey.

### Crafts: Suitcases

**You will need:** paper, catalogues or magazines, glue, tape, scissors.

- First make your suitcase. There is a template for this on the [WEB](#).
- Talk to the children about what they would pack if they were going on a long journey. Help them to find pictures of these items in magazines or catalogues and stick them in to the suitcases.
- Remind the children of some of the journey stories you have heard or think about the story of Moses preparing the Israelites to leave. Everyone in these stories knew that God was with them on their journey and this was more important than anything they took with them.

### Drama: Travelling mime

Before the session write a series of cards which say: 'You are travelling from x [add place] to x [add place]. You will be travelling by [add form of transport]'. Choose destinations familiar to the children and forms of transport they will be able to mime.

- Remind the group that when we are going on a journey there are lots of different ways we can travel depending on where we are going.
- Divide them into small groups (in a wide-ranging age group try and mix the ages up). Give each group one of the cards and ask them to devise a mime to show how they will go on their journey.

### Prayer: Preparing for the journey

**You will need:** items made during the session, reflective music, Bible.



- Place an empty table at one end of the room. Play a piece of reflective music.
- Invite the group to place anything they have made during the session and place them onto the table.
- Say: 'As we prepare for the journey we remember the most important preparation – that God goes with each of us on our journey'. Place the Bible on the table as a symbol of this.

## Send out

Ready for the journey.  
Everything packed.  
Directions sorted.  
Transport arranged.  
May we not forget the most important thing – that God goes with us, at all times and in all places on our journey.  
Amen.

## SESSION TWO

# We're off on our journey

Before the session, get permission (from parents and carers) to take the children on a short walk around the local neighbourhood.

## Focus

God goes with us on our journey. He provides companions, takes us to different places and provides different experiences along the way. The Bible story suggested today is from Genesis 12 and 13.

God told Abram to leave his home and go to the land that God would show him. With Abram went his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot and their slaves. They came to Canaan where Abram built an altar to worship God. When the crops failed they went to live in Egypt. They had to leave Egypt and went back to the Southern Desert. When they reached Bethel they built another altar to worship God. Abram and Lot realised there was not enough grass for all their animals to graze so they separated and went different ways. Abram moved on and pitched his tents in Canaan. God said to Abram: 'Look around you. I will give you and your family all the land you can see. You will have more descendants than there are specks of dust on the earth. This is the land I am giving you'.

Abram's name changed to Abraham when he entered into the covenant with God.

## Gather

- Place a large map of your local area onto the floor.
- As they arrive, ask the children to mark on the map journeys that they make around the area, e.g. to school, sports clubs, to visit friends and family, to go to events at church.
- Display the map under the words, 'We are all on a journey'.

## Gathering prayer

As we go on our journey God go with us, take us to new places, into new experiences and give us people to travel with.

Thank you, God, that you journey with us.  
**Amen.**

## Respond

### Game

A simple game based on road signs is available on the [WEB](#). Any 'traffic light' type game could be played.

### Craft: Journey stick

Create a journey stick reminder of Abram's journey.

**You will need:** long twigs or pieces of dowling, small stones, strips of fabric, small cup of sand, small cup of grass cuttings, tape.

- Give each person a stick and tell them they are going to create a journey stick for Abram's journey.
- Read Abram's story to the children (from the Focus section). Explain that you are going to read the story again, this time adding symbols to the journey sticks as you journey with Abram.
- Re-read the story. Each time **altar** is mentioned fix a **stone** to the journey stick with tape. Each time **tent** is mentioned tape a piece of **fabric** to the stick. When Lot and Abram decide to go their **separate** ways fix **grass** to the stick. When God tells Abram he will have more **descendants** than there are specks of dust on the earth fix some **grains of sand** to the stick.

When everyone has completed their journey stick encourage them to retell the story of Abram's journey using their journey stick.

### Drama: Going on a lion hunt

#### For younger children

This activity might best be used at the start of the session as an introduction to journeys. After acting out the story tell the group that today you are going to find out that God is with us on our journeys.

Walk round the room and read the rhyme with the children encouraging them to join in the mime with you.

“ We're going on a lion hunt. We're going to catch a big one.

Uh oh grass, tall wavy grass!

We can't go over it. We can't go under it.

We'll have to go through it!

> MIME CUTTING YOUR WAY THROUGH THE GRASS.

We're going on a lion hunt. We're going to catch a big one.

Uh oh a river, a cold, deep river.

We can't go over it. We can't go under it.

We'll have to go through it!

> MIME SWIMMING THROUGH THE RIVER.

We're going on a lion hunt. We're going to catch a big one.

Uh oh mud, slimy, smelly mud.

We can't go over it. We can't go under it.

We'll have to go through it!

> MIME SQUELCHING THROUGH THE MUD.

We're going on a lion hunt. We're going to catch a big one!

Uh oh a cave. Lets look inside. Aaagh it's a lion – quick run home! ”

### Prayer: Prayer walk

- Before the session get permission (from parents and carers) to take the group on a short walk around the local neighbourhood. Make sure you have the right ratio of leaders to children to do this.
- Walk around and stop at significant points. Talk with the group about what they can see, what happens here, reasons people would come here. Then ask them if there is anything to say thank you for here or any concerns to pray for. Write all these down.
- When you return from your walk draw a large map of the route. On it write the prayers of thanks and concern the group have talked about.
- If it isn't possible to go outside, create a route of pictures and objects from your local area around the room. Invite your group to walk around these praying for the different people and things that happen in these places.



## Send out

As we go from here, thank you that you go with us.

You are with us as we go to new places, you are with us as we meet new people, you are with us as we try new things.

Thank you.

**Amen.**

## SESSION THREE

# Problems on the journey

## Focus

In this session we look at the problems we face as we travel on our journey. There are opportunities for the children to discover, explore and reflect on the fact that God is with us in all these times.

We focus on the story of Jonah. God asks Jonah to go to Nineveh but Jonah doesn't want to go there and so runs away from God and gets on a ship to Joppa. And that is when the problems on his journey begin! There are bad weather conditions at sea. The sailors turn against Jonah. Jonah is thrown into the sea and finally he is swallowed by a whale. Even though he has been trying to run from God, Jonah knows God is with him throughout his journey. And at his worst point, inside the whale, Jonah turns to God and God is with him.

## Gather

Prepare and photocopy a sheet of road signs from the Highway Code. Include ones such as bumpy road, no U-turns, steep climb ahead.

As people arrive divide them into small groups. Give each group a sheet of road signs and ask them to try and decide what the signs mean.

### Gathering prayer

When the journey becomes difficult  
thank you, God, for being with us.  
We trust you on our journey.  
Amen.

## Respond

### Game: Parachute game

**You will need:** a parachute or a large sheet of fabric.

Most parachutes come with game suggestions. You could create a game presenting different weather patterns using the parachute or find additional ideas on the [WEB](#).

### Crafts: Wristbands

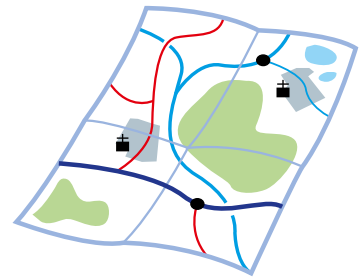
**You will need:** paper strips, coloured pens, sticky shapes.

- Cut strips of wide paper to fit around each person's wrist.
- On one side write 'God is with me' and invite people to decorate it using the coloured pens and sticky shapes.
- Help them to wrap the band loosely round their wrists with the words facing up. Secure with tape. Tell people that each time they look at the wristband they will be reminded that God is with them wherever they go on their journey.
- Shout together, 'God is with me on my journey' and raise your wristband arms in the air.

### Story: Rosie's Walk

**You will need:** *Rosie's Walk*, by Pat Hutchins.

- Read the story, in which Rosie is followed by a fox who is trying to catch her. The text tells a simple story of Rosie's journey but the pictures tell a different story of the danger Rosie faces and the accidents that happen to the fox.
- As you read, encourage the children to look at the pictures and 'read' the story of the fox's journey as well.
- Ask the children what the danger is on Rosie's journey? (The fox is trying to catch her.) But what is happening to the fox on his journey?
- Talk with the children about times when they might be scared or in trouble. Remind them that God is always with them.



### Prayer: Difficult road map

**You will need:** winding path sheets, pens, reflective music, chalks.

- Beforehand, prepare a sheet with a footpath winding across it. You will need one to give out to each person.
- Ask each child to sit in a space on their own. Encourage them to think about some of the difficult things that have happened on their life journey.
- Play some quiet music and invite them to write or draw these on the path.
- Remind them that God is with them to in the difficult times as well as the good.
- Allow time for the group to look at their path and thank God for being with them.
- Alternatively, if you have a flagged outside area you could go outside and chalk a winding path onto the flags.
- Play the music and ask the children to take turns to walk along the winding path thinking about some of the difficult times there have been on their journey.

### For younger children

Either use the outdoor activity or do the same inside thing marking a winding path using a length of rope or string.

## Send out

When times are difficult, when things are tough,  
when there are problems on our journey,  
we know that you go with us, Lord.  
Thank you.  
Amen.

## SESSION FOUR

## Coming home

## Focus

During this session we think about what happens when we return home from the journey. What have we missed? How do we celebrate being home? How do we mark an end to the journey?

Look at the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15.11-32). Home is a place where the son feels he can be safe after everything he has been through. Home is a place where there are people waiting for him. But he is not sure how he will be welcomed.

When the Prodigal Son returns home he is greeted by his father but his brother turns away from him. The father gives a party to celebrate his son's return.

## Gather

- Lay out a large sheet of paper or a roll of lining paper and put the heading, 'Back from the journey' onto it.
- As people arrive, ask them to write their name or draw a picture of themselves onto the sheet. Ask the leaders to also do this.

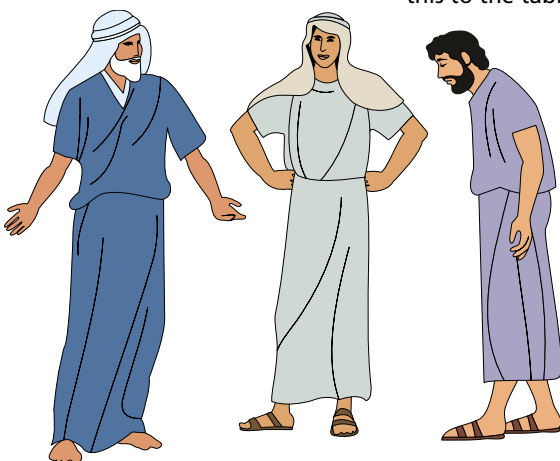
## Gathering prayer

The journey is coming to an end,  
we are coming home.

Back to home comforts and people we  
know.

Be with us, Lord, as we return.

**Amen.**



## Respond

## Games: Treasure hunt

**You will need:** a selection of items for the 'treasure', printed list of the treasure to be found, bags.

Create and run a treasure hunt. Suggestions can be found on the **WEB**.

## Craft: Welcome home party

**You will need:** large sheets of paper or disposable table cloths, paper plates, colouring pens, paper napkins, small cakes, icing, small sweets or dried fruit to decorate, other party food.

- Remind the children that when the Prodigal Son returned home his father held a party for him. Often when people return from journeys or trips away a 'Welcome Home' party is held. Tell the group that you are going to prepare a welcome home party.
- Lay out the paper sheets or table cloth and provide people with colouring pens. Ask them to decorate the table cloths ready for the party. Can they decorate the cloths with images of journeys? Put out tables and cover them with the paper cloths.
- Give another group the paper plates and ask them to write 'Welcome Home' onto these. Place the plates on the table and put the paper napkins onto them.
- When the table is ready tell the group that you are going to decorate some cakes for the party.
- Make some icing and put the sweets or dried fruit into small bowls. Give everyone a cake and ask them to decorate it for the party. Add the cakes to the table. If you are having any additional party food, add this to the table now.

- Sit around the table together. Read the end of the Prodigal Son story (Luke 15.20-32). Say that just as the father held a party to celebrate so God celebrates when we come to him. Then enjoy the party!

## Mime: Coming home

■ Ask the group what they need to do when they return from a journey or trip away. Encourage them to think of things such as unlocking the door, unpacking the suitcase, checking if there is food in the house, switching the lights on.

■ Ask them to work in pairs to devise a mime to show them coming home. Show these to the rest of the group.

■ Talk about what it feels like to return home from a journey. Do they like being back in their own room? Do they enjoy having their toys and gadgets around them? Or do they prefer to be away? Remind them that God wants us to feel at home, safe and secure.



## Prayer: Footprint prayers

**You will need:** paper, pens, scissors, sticky tac.

- Invite people to draw around each of their feet (with shoes on) and cut them out.
- Place all the foot outlines in a line across the floor as though they are walking. Fix in place with sticky tac.
- As they go on their journey remind people of the journeys you have been finding out about.
- As they walk along the footprints invite people to say: 'Thank you God that you are with us as we come to the end of our journey'.

## Send out

We have been on a journey.  
God has been with us all the way.  
God has been with us when the journey  
is good,  
and with us when the journey has been  
difficult.  
God is ready to welcome us home.  
**Amen.**