

From Welcome to Slavery

Bible Readings

OT

Psalm 104

Exodus 1:1-14

Epistle

Romans 7:14-25a

Gospel

Luke 12:13-21

This session creates opportunities for people of all ages to:

- remember and enjoy what God has provided
- praise God the creator
- reflect on attitudes to poverty and wealth
- tell and hear stories of people trapped by poverty and some trapped by their wealth.

Main idea

In this first week of our series on Exodus it is important to set the scene carefully if we are to understand the Exodus story and in particular the theme of gifts and possessions in the story. We have to start by thinking about two things that seem to be totally contradictory. Firstly, the Bible speaks of God as a God of abundance; God the Creator provides abundantly all that we need. But Israel in Chapter 1 of Exodus is a captive people, with a broken spirit (Ex 6:9) and in poverty. This contradiction is what the Bible calls sin. Sin means that in place of the abundance that God gives many people experience poverty in all its many forms. Many are enslaved by not having enough; others are enslaved by their attitudes to wealth and possessions.

This first session explores both of these elements. Some of the activities look at the abundance of God's creation through creation. Other activities look at the experience of slavery and the poverty it involved for the people of Israel. When planning all age worship it is important to cover both elements within the service. In particular read the [Warming Up, Warming Down](#) notes carefully. Some of the activities there may best be suited to a separate evening or Saturday activity. In the early part of the service or group time focus on Psalm 104. The activity suggestions are designed to help people of all ages to be astonished at God's creation and to thank him for his generosity in all he gives us through it.

This then gives the background for the second part, looking at the strongly contrasting situation in Exodus 1. Linked activities look at the enslavement of the Hebrews. It is a powerful image. Many people today are enslaved by wealth and possessions; it may be a golden cage, but a cage nonetheless. If you begin your service with all ages together and then split up, you could focus on Psalm 104 for the time together and Exodus 1 for the separate groups.

Background

Begin by reading the main Exodus [Introduction](#) for an overview of the Exodus story and the importance of the gifts within the story. It may also be helpful to read through the adult sermon notes for this week to grasp the background to the Exodus story. When we start thinking about money and possessions our starting point is to celebrate the provision of God in his creation. All that we have, including our money, is a gift from God to be celebrated, enjoyed and shared gladly. We also have to recognise the unique power of money to enslave us and others either by having too much like Pharaoh or too little, like the Israelites - and also the majority of the Egyptians who served the power of the Pharaoh.