

## Warming Up, Warming Down

### Play dough creation

*{=children}{=11-18s}{=all-age services}*

This activity can be used to make a link back to the creation theme from the previous week and to introduce the theme for today: God's gift of freedom to a people, a new call and the promise of a new homeland. Distribute golf-ball sized pieces of play dough to the group. Invite them to make a model of something as creatively as they can. Or use the dough to express how you feel at the moment – squashed flat, out of shape, hollowed out? Share with a neighbour or in the group what your model is all about and how it felt to be creative and make something or say something. Reflect briefly on God's expression of himself in creation and his amazing creativity. Another option is to invite the congregation to shape and re-shape their dough through the service and explore in sharing whether and why their shape changed as the service progressed. Perhaps at a specific point in the service people could bring their creations to the front of the church. Use this idea to help people understand the concept of a living creator – who can take us, re-shape our lives and use us for his glory (Isaiah 64:8).

### Play dough recipe:

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup warm water
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- ¼ cup salt
- vanilla essence
- food colouring.

Mix all ingredients, adding food colouring last. Place in an old saucepan. Stir over medium heat until mixture begins to form into stiff dough. Remove dough from pan and knead until smooth. When the dough is cool, place in plastic bag or airtight container. It will last for a long time if kept refrigerated.

### Good game! Good game?

*{=children}{=11-18s}{=all-age services}*

The Israelites had to watch as the Egyptians grew ever wealthier on the back of their slavery. What kind of desire does that create in people? Use this activity to introduce the theme of money and possessions and the Bible story of Israel's captivity. This is the old Kim's game popularised on TV by The Generation Game so don't forget the cuddly toy! You will need a selection of ten or twelve everyday items that can be easily carried. You will need one volunteer to carry each item and a volunteer 'contestant'. The contestant sits with his/her back to the congregation while the other volunteers form a 'human conveyor belt' to pass the various items in front of him/her. The contestant has to try to remember as many as possible of the items displayed. In smaller groups, simply use small items on a tray.

### Briefly explore reactions to the game.

- How did contestants play, what was their strategy?
- Did they think about a couple of things they really wanted, or try to get everything on the conveyor belt?
- Did they feel they had to win by getting more than anyone else – and does that ring any bells for how we think about money?
- How did it feel as an observer to watch someone else getting more and more while you had nothing? Would it have been different if the items had been very valuable?
- Have any adults seen or taken part in a supermarket trolley dash? Would you like to and how would you play it? What is the attraction, or what turns you off?

## The Seder Plate

*{=children}{=11-18s}{=all-age services}*

At the annual celebration of the Passover in their homes Jewish people have a Seder plate which contains symbolic items of food and drink which tell the story of the Passover: for example, a piece of unleavened bread because at the escape from Egypt there was no time to wait for bread to rise. Collect the items for a Seder plate. A web search for “Seder plate” will find plenty of background information; a local Jewish friend is ideal. Although it is no part of the Seder plate you could add to the display some coins or jewellery to represent the gifts given to Israel on leaving Egypt. The activity is a simple visual way into reminding people of the story of the Exodus by explaining the meaning of the symbols. It can be done interactively in a small group of adults, teens or children or even a small congregation. In a larger church the visual element is harder. Some simple explanation could be given and the Seder plate left as a display in church during the Exodus preaching series.

## Freedom songs

*{=children}{=11-18s}{=all-age services}*

As people arrive before the service play a number of secular songs that mention freedom and at the start of the service ask for the link between them. Suggestions include: Queen, ‘I want to break free’; Sting, ‘Set them free’; Nina Simone, ‘I wish I knew how it would feel to be free’; ‘Va pensiero’, the chorus of the Hebrew slaves from Verdi’s Nabucco; Shania Twain ‘Blue Jeans’.

## What comes next?

Use this simple quiz to set the freedom theme for the service and reflect on how widespread the idea of freedom is in our worship and thinking. A musician could supply musical clues for each snippet. Display each quotation in turn and invite the congregation to supply the words that ‘come next’. A list of possible songs can be found in the appendix.

## Freedom stories

*{=children}{=11-18s}{=all-age services}*

Use this activity after the sermon or main teaching section to reflect upon the impact of God’s freedom in the area of money and possessions. Tell two or three of the Bible stories below to explore the way in which the impact of meeting Jesus and being set free influences attitudes to wealth and possessions. It would be ideal to add a local story from the church community, for example an older church member who is a good example of generous giving or a church member working in a difficult situation (in industry, in education, as a mission partner).

The storytelling can be made more effective by the use of some very simple props and costume. They could be prepared in children’s or young people’s groups and presented to the wider congregation as a mimed drama with narration. Alternatively tell the stories in the service as very brief ‘interviews’ with the four people – three represented by ‘actors’ – the fourth via an interview with the person concerned. These can be interspersed through the service.

### After hearing all four stories, ask the following questions:

- In what way was each person ‘set free’ by God?
- What difference did this make to their attitudes to wealth and possessions?

This could lead into sharing stories and experiences in the group or congregation or alternatively some quiet reflection, perhaps accompanied by one of the “freedom” hymns or a chorus listed in the appendix. Does the idea of being ‘set free’ by God mean anything to you? What difference does knowing God’s love make to your attitude to possessions? It is helpful if the leader talks about his or her experiences.

### Story 1: ‘Miriam’ (Luke 7:36-50)

Let’s call her Miriam as we know so little of her story. All we do know is that she lived in a way that made all those around call her a ‘sinner’. The wrong things Miriam had done were well known. No respectable person who cared about God’s laws would be seen having anything to do with her. Miriam heard news that Jesus was eating nearby

## Preach Exodus! **Week Two**

at the very respectable house of a very respectable man. She took an expensive jar of sweet-smelling oil and went to Simon's house. The open setting of the meal, and the number of people there, meant that she was able to get close to Jesus. But as she stood there, all she could do was cry. The tears fell on Jesus' feet, so she wiped them away with her hair. Then she kissed his feet and poured the perfumed oil over them. Before all the people there, Jesus spoke of Miriam's love towards him and of how everything she had done wrong had been forgiven.

*Figure: Miriam wiping tears from her eyes, carries an empty jar.*

### **Story 2: Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)**

Zacchaeus was a rich man living in the city of Jericho. He was a chief tax collector, gathering the money which the people had to pay to the powerful Romans who had conquered that country. Other people in Jericho despised him. His work for the Romans meant he was betraying his own people and many said such contact with non-Jews made him 'unclean'. They would have nothing to do with him if they could help it. They would certainly not eat with him or allow him in their houses. To make it worse, his powerful job meant he could easily cheat the people of money, collecting extra to keep for himself. When Jesus passed through Jericho, he chose to stay at Zacchaeus' house. Zacchaeus was amazed and delighted. He told Jesus that he would give away half of all he owned to people in need. He also promised to pay back everything he had got by cheating – not just the amount he had cheated, but four times as much.

*Figure: Zacchaeus is giving away an expensive overcoat with one hand and a bag of money with the other.*

### **Story 3: The rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-22)**

Simply read the text in a modern translation or paraphrase.

*Figure: Ruler walking sadly away clutching money bags*

## **Freedom cake**

*{=children}{=11–18s}{=all-age services}*

Use this activity in Sunday School or perhaps as an all age activity after a service. Work together to decorate a cake to celebrate that Jesus sets us free. This is an activity which one or more age groups could work on and then share the results with everyone. To increase participation by the whole congregation, several individuals, families or groups (e.g. of adults) could make and ice the tops of similar square cakes beforehand. Different groups may then decorate them (e.g. of children and young people) before the cakes are brought together as one big 'Freedom cake'.

Before decorating, discuss ways of celebrating when something wonderful happens. Recall what has been said earlier about God setting us free. Canvass ideas on how to decorate your celebration cake appropriately. Here are some suggestions:

- Write words in M&Ms: 'Jesus has set us free'
- Create an Egyptian design to link to the story: Toblerone pyramids, blue icing for the Nile – and so on
- Use writing icing to make broken chains
- Discuss the many ways in which God sets us free. Invite people to use cocktail sticks and folded-over adhesive labels to create flags with freedom designs or slogans ('Free to love', 'Free to give', 'Free to know'). Use them to decorate the cake.

Make sure everyone has a good chance to look at the completed cake and hear an explanation of how it has been put together, before it is cut up and enjoyed.

## **Rescue!**

*{=all-age services} All-age talk*

Ask people if they have any personal experience of being rescued.

## Preach Exodus! **Week Two**

Tell a story of rescue (survivors from the Titanic, Apollo 13, Dunkirk or the terrible Tsunami in December 2004). If possible, get someone alive at the time of Dunkirk to tell the story. Illustrate with pictures from the Internet. Make the point that survivors are often left with nothing – just the clothes they are wearing.

Referring to Exodus 12:31-39 ask, 'With what did the Israelites leave Egypt?' Make a list of the responses and then ask: 'What do we gain from God's rescue of us through the cross of Jesus?' Again record people's comments.

Finally ask, 'What, as God's rescued people, do we have?' Make a list that includes:

- one another
- a family
- a home
- God's love, promises and faithfulness.

Close by making the point that though as God's church we often feel poor, we're actually very rich. We're not simply left with the clothes we're standing up in. We haven't escaped by the skin of our teeth. Thank God in prayer.

### Appendix: Freedom songs

My chains fell off, <i>my heart was free</i> ; (‘And can it be’, Charles Wesley)	Gather Thou Thy people in, Free from sorrow..... <i>free from sin</i> ; (‘Come you thankful people, come’, Henry Alford)
Jesus is Lord! From Him all life proceeding, Yet gave His life a ransom Thus <i>setting us free</i> . (‘Jesus is Lord!’, David J Mansell)	My Lord, what love is this That pays so dearly, That I, the guilty one... <i>May go free?</i> (‘My Lord what love is this?’ Graham Kendrick)
Led out to die on Calvary... <i>Risen from death to set us free</i> (‘Lord Jesus Christ’, Patrick Appleford)	Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us... <i>Set us free by the truth You now bring us</i> (‘Shine Jesus shine’, Graham Kendrick)
He breaks the power of cancelled sin; <i>He sets the prisoner free...</i> (‘O for a thousand tongues to sing’, Charles Wesley.)	He is able to keep us from falling, And to..... <i>set us free from sin</i> ; (‘Thanks be to God’, Robert Stoodley)
You are the only one who died for me, <i>Gave Your life to set me free</i> , (‘You laid aside your majesty’, Noel Richards)	God is so good, He took my sin, Now I am free... <i>He’s so good to me</i> .
If the Son, if the Son shall make you free... <i>You shall be free indeed</i> .	(‘I will sing, I will sing a song unto the Lord’, Max Dyer)
He comes to... <i>...break oppression, To set the captive free</i> , (‘Hail to the Lord’s anointed’, James Montgomery)	Will you let the blinded see If I but call your name? Will you set the prisoners free... <i>And never be the same?</i> (‘Will you come and follow me?’ G Maule and J L Bell)
You have broken chains that bound me... <i>You’ve set this captive free</i> (‘I give you all the honour’, Carl Tuttle)	<i>Spreading out into the desert, Setting all the captives free.</i> (‘Peace is flowing’)