

Warming Up, Warming Down

God is with us

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

Invite volunteers to choose and act out an everyday activity from their life in the past seven days. Everyone else has to guess the activity. Write a list of all the activities and places mentioned. At the end of the exercise explain that God is with us wherever we go and whatever we do. Explain that this weeks service or class will explore how the Israelites built a special tent as a symbol of God's presence with them in the desert.

One option is to turn the list of activities and places into a set of responses, as suggested below. Alternatively keep the list and use the following responses as a lead into the intercessions.

When we ... (activity from the list)

God is with us.

When we ... (activity from the list)

God is with us.

You could finish with this prayer:

*In every place,
in every action,
at every moment.*

Father, you are with us.

Jesus, you stay beside us.

Spirit of God, you live in us.

Souvenirs

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

You will need to set up this activity in Week 4 by asking people to bring something with them for this service or session. Invite them to select an item that reminds them of some particularly significant event, person or place. It might be something they carry with them all the time: a photograph or a wedding ring. Or it may be something such as jewellery or a framed picture.

Invite some to tell the story behind the item or invite people to share with each other for a few minutes. Reflect briefly on how memories of people, places and events can be so precious to us that we keep permanent reminders of them. They point beyond themselves to something real and important to us.

Note that today we will be finding out about the tabernacle that the people of Israel built. You could explain the reality to which it pointed: the presence of God with his people – or leave this to be revealed later.

Richie Rich

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

Richie Rich is a Warner Bros. children's film from the early 1990's. This activity involves viewing part of the video so appropriate care needs to be taken to do this legally. In the film Richie is a very rich boy whose parents are kidnapped and then forced to open the family treasure vault. Instead of holding vast sums of money as expected the riches inside are all precious memories of family life. They have no financial value, but are beyond price to proud parents. The relevant sequence lasts around 15 minutes. Alternatively kids could have a special midweek video and pizza party and discuss the film and what it has to say about riches. The following questions could be used for discussion:

- What would you like to have if you were wealthy like Richie?
- In what ways was Richie not as well off as 'poorer' children? (He had no friends.)
- How did Richie find friends? (By sharing what he had.)
- Can you think of ways in which poor people can be rich, and rich people can be poor?
- How can something like an old photograph be 'valuable'?



- What memories do your parents have of you? What things remind them of you?

Something to offer

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

This sketch is set during the preparations for making the tabernacle. Use the sketch after the Bible reading to bring out some of the main points of the reading. No props or great dramatic talent are required for this. If it is used in an all age service simply ask a group to practise and perform the sketch. If possible include children in the roles of those bringing gifts.

When using the sketch in an older children's or teenagers group work on the script together using the following outline. Set the scene by talking about Moses' instructions to the Israelites to bring materials for the tabernacle (Exodus 35:4-10). Introduce the character of Bezalel (Exodus 35:33-35). Read the first twelve lines of dialogue. Break into twos and threes to make up different scenes of what happens when someone interrupts Bez in his work (the third person acts as the director). Enjoy these together.

Hand out the rest of the script. Work in the same groups to practise reading the dialogue. Encourage the group to think about how the two characters are feeling at each point – and how they can show this in the way they say the words. Again listen to the results – just a short section from each group if there are a number to include.

Finish by chatting about the character of Jez. What might have been going through his mind at the end? Might they have ended the sketch differently? Are we ever faced with choices like his?

Optional extra Outside the group time, some group members may enjoy working on an updated version of the first part of the script. The story line is that your minister/treasurer is trying to get on with an important job and keeps being phoned by people wanting to give money to church funds or to offer their help in different ways. The frustration mounts. Get them to think of a funny ending. (For example: the phone rings, and the minister yells down it before discovering it is the Archbishop of Canterbury calling.) Write up the script and perform it to the rest of the church.

Cast: **Bezalel** (in charge of making the tabernacle); **Jez** (who wears a clip-on earring); **Israelites 1,2,3,4,5**.... (male or female, of any age)

Props: Large plan of tabernacle; large piece of plain fabric; needle and thread; items brought to make the tabernacle: wood; plain fabric; blue, purple and red yarn/wool; animal hides (leather jackets); olive oil; spices; jewellery; 'gold', 'silver' and 'bronze' items.

Place most of the props in piles around the stage. Bezalel is centre stage stitching a large piece of cloth. He is repeatedly interrupted by Israelites entering with items for the tabernacle. They are all enthusiastic and excited. Bez becomes increasingly frustrated about not getting on with his work. Improvise dialogue for each interruption along the following lines:

Israelite 1: Where should I put this?
Bez: What is it?
Israelite 1: Some olive oil for the tabernacle.
Bez: Olive oil over there.
Israelite 1: Great, thanks.

After three or four interruptions, Bez is very frustrated:

Israelite 2: Got some wood for you.
Bez: Yes, I can see that.
Israelite 2: So what do you want me to do with it?
Bez: Leave it over there.
Israelite 2: Where?
Bez: Anywhere. Just anywhere. Just leave it and go.

Preach Exodus! **Week Five**

Israelite 2: Ah, yes. Great. Er... Thanks.

Jez enters, carrying nothing. Bez leaps up from his work, brandishing his needle.

Bez: Right. So what have you brought then?

Jez: Brought?

Bez: Olive oil over there, wood over there, gold, silver and gemstones over there.

Jez: Over there? (*He heads that way.*)

Bez: Yes, over there. Is it gold you've brought then?

Jez: (*Looking at the gold*) Gold? What for?

Bez: Thank you very much for wasting my time. Now if you've quite finished, I have a tabernacle to make.

Jez: Gold! (*Bez starts working, making a show of ignoring Jez who wanders round picking up and testing the items that have been brought.*) Wow! Great stuff. Is this real? This lot must be worth a fortune. And look here. This is your real top-quality wood you know. Don't want to leave that lying round. Work up a treat that will.

Bez looks up, interested.

Bez: So you haven't brought anything for the tabernacle, then?

Jez: No mate. I haven't got this sort of stuff, have I? Looks like some people have been pretty generous though.

Bez: It's been amazing. They just want to do something for God.

Jez: Ah, yes, I suppose so.

Bez: I mean, after all that's happened – out of Egypt, through the sea, food and water in the desert, the pillar of cloud, the fiasco with the golden calf...

Jez: A bad one, that.

Bez: They've seen that God is with us and is going to stick with us.

Jez: Right. Stick with us.

Bez: So, it seems you know a bit about wood.

Jez: A little bit. I was a fifth under-carpenter. That was back in Egypt.

Bez: I think you may be just the man I need.

Jez: Me?

Bez: If you fancy working with that wood.

Jez: That wood?

Bez: For God?

Jez: (*Not quite decided.*) Right. Yes. Right.

Bez moves away and gets out some plans. He beckons Jez over then exits, leaving Jez looking at the plans. Jez rolls up the plans and begins to exit. He stops suddenly and walks back to the gold pile, removes his earring and adds it to the pile. Exit.

God in every place

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

Use this reflective activity as a Warming Down exercise which can lead into or part of the intercessions. It requires some preparation in the week ahead of the service. Ask one or more people to take a photo with a digital camera to reflect aspects of the everyday lives of congregation members. For example:

- arriving at church
- 'everyday places' in your area: shops, work place, health centre, pub
- people in their homes, at work, in School or out and about
- church activities.

Please be aware of sensitivities regarding photography: no pictures without permission of those concerned. If taking a picture of a school, the simplest approach would be to take a picture of the building with no pupils or staff in shot. Put these together, in a fairly random order, as a sequence for data projector or OHP. Use the song 'Be Still for the presence of the Lord' and show the images as the song is sung. The tent of meeting was a declaration of the presence of God among his people. This prayerful activity underlines the presence of God in our communities, homes and church.