Exodus

Cry Freedom!

All age service resources
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Using Preach Exodus!

Preach Exodus! is a comprehensive and extensive resource designed to help congregations think about the resources we have and how we should be using them. It is devised for the whole household of God to explore together, regardless of age, although there is also material to use for peer group learning, whether adults together or children together.

Some congregations may be new to the concept of learning and worshipping together as the whole household of faith, but this is an important experiential aspect of the material we are exploring. By learning and worshipping together we are exploring the riches of the gifts and blessings God has given to his whole people. It is also an opportunity to let everyone begin to think about their response to a generous God and to get involved in serving his world. Children, especially those aged 7 to 11 years, are often highly motivated towards giving in order to make a difference to the world. They are some of the most active participants in fund-raising for Children in Need or Blue Peter, and almost all the major charities have web pages and resources that particularly engage children and families. The joyful experience of giving in response to God’s call and purposes is for the whole people of God to explore.

How to Use this Pack

There are five weeks in the Preach Exodus! material. Each week is presented in the same way, and offers material that can be put together to create a Sunday worship service or midweek activity.

There is also a special Thanksgiving or Harvest Festival service that could be used to bring the series to a close or as a stand-alone celebration.

Setting the Scene

This offers suggestions for visual imagery that can be displayed in the worship space to reflect the theme for the service. Sometimes these items are used directly in the worship; at other times they simply provide a focal point.

Activities

These can be used in any order or at any time. All can be used by a group of children or a group of adults, but will work best with mixed-age groups. The activities are laid out in an order that will fit within a worship framework, and there are suggestions as to how best each activity might be used in worship.

There will be one activity that might be used to begin worship and to set the scene.

There will be an activity that might provide a focus for confession, although within the Church of England the activity should always be accompanied by an authorised confession and absolution.
Exploring the Scriptures
This section includes brief suggestions about how to present the word. Drama scripts are provided in the appendix to each week where appropriate.
There will be one or more activities that allow a congregation to engage in learning and exploring the Scriptures together. These might be used to create a focus for a talk. They may include discussion, open questions, craft activities and games, all of which will help unpack the theme for the day.
There will be an activity to provide a focus for intercessory prayer. The activity will pick up on the theme of the day and may involve moving about the space, creating prayer stations or reflecting on words and music.

Mission Challenge
This is a suggestion for follow-through during the week ahead. It could be included with notices (whether written or spoken) or as part of the talk and exploration.

Peer Group Learning
There are two sets of material offered. One is for occasions when children may be learning with their peer group either during a worship service or at a midweek activity. The second is for adult peer group learning, either during worship or at a midweek group.

For Children
There is a suggestion that children work on a weekly journal built around the themes. In addition, there is a further activity suggested that could be used alongside any of the other material offered.

For Adults
This is envisaged as supplementary material for a midweek study group or as an alternative to a sermon or talk. This material includes Action Scenes, which are specially-commissioned A4 pictures that retell the Exodus story for the week. They are designed to be used interactively and to stimulate discussion and questions.
There is also a method for Lectio Divina each week, with a suggested passage. This is an open-ended method of prayerful Bible study that allows people to bring their own thoughts and insights, share experiences and dig more deeply into one of the passages. There are no right answers, and this can be a very empowering approach to the bible. Often a further discussion topic is suggested as well.
It is possible to create a full service based around the activities suggested. It is also acceptable to choose one or two approaches to help develop the theme. All ideas can be seen as jumping-off points, and users should feel free to develop ideas to work effectively in their own contexts.

Harvest festival
A fully-featured all age Harvest festival service themed around the Jewish festival of Shelters can complement these all-age resources. Download this Harvest resource from the More Resources tab under Designing the Programme on the Giving in Grace website.
Week One: Trapped!

Bible Readings

OT: Psalm 104, Exodus 1:1-14
Epistle: Romans 7:14-25a

This session creates opportunities for people of all ages to:

- Think about what it means to be trapped by other people’s actions
- Think about what it means to be trapped by our own attitudes and behaviours.

Key Focus

These five weeks are going to use some of the key stories in the book of Exodus to explore our attitudes to what we have and what we give. The starting point is thinking about how we have been blessed, but also what it means to be trapped.

There are two main ways in which we find ourselves trapped – and they are not mutually exclusive. The passage from Exodus looks at how God’s people find themselves as slaves, harshly and cruelly treated, because of the political system in place. The Gospel reading helps us think about how we as individuals can be trapped by our own greed and selfishness.

The worship begins with a sense of joy and thanksgiving at all that God has done for us, and might include a sense that we are glad to be God’s people gathered together. It may also be appropriate to think about how we have failed and how our world has failed to live up to the blessing.

In the household teaching, everyone will explore the Scriptures together before turning to prayer for those who are unjustly treated in God’s world.

In the peer group learning option there is material for children to explore together, and some ideas for adult study, whether in church or midweek.

Background Preparation

Read the beginning of the Exodus story and also the other readings. Take some time to reflect on how they speak of being trapped and about how we become free.

Scene Setting

Decorate the church as if for a welcome celebration: put up balloons, provide cushions to sit on, and make it as welcoming as possible. Have people walking about offering tasty treats, small gifts etc. as blessings.
Everything and Everybody

(could be used as an opening activity)

Place people at several points around and in the midst of the congregation. As the service begins, one by one they stand up and shout around ‘Welcome, welcome, welcome!’ until it becomes a crescendo of sound. This could involve laughter, back slapping and other enthusiastic gestures.

Introduce the theme of the day by talking about welcome and blessing. The children of Israel were blessed as they settled in Egypt, initially made welcome, and able to enjoy all God’s good gifts.

Follow this with a praise litany – with the refrain ‘We bless your name’

NB Write your own verses based on Psalm 104, and invite different groups to say/sing the words, with everyone joining in the refrain.

You are a great and mighty God,
stretching out the heavens,
striding across the earth,
creating every good and lovely thing, O Lord.

R: We bless your name!

We love the sun, we love the rain,
we love the earth, we love the sky,
we love everything you give us, O Lord.

R: We bless your name!

The food is good, the wine is great,
the earth gives us all we need;
the birds are safe, the animals are fed.
For you bless it all, O Lord.

R: We bless your name!

We love your world; we love your people,
we love this place, we love this day,
we love you and all that you are, O Lord.

R: We bless your name!

You are a great and mighty God,
welcoming everyone from every place,
giving us all we need,
showering us with blessings, O Lord.

R: We bless your name!
Chained Down and Chained Up
(This activity could be used in place of a confession or as a response to the word.)

You will need enough paper chains or 20 cm strips of paper to give eight to each person OR you could do this activity using hands to encircle, as suggested.

Invite everyone to take their first two chains and join them together OR encircle left wrist with right hand.

Invite people to think about times when they have been unwelcoming to strangers, and use these or similar words:

Forgive us when we forget that everyone is welcomed into your kingdom.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Invite everyone to take the second two chains and join them to the first two OR encircle right wrist with left hand.

Invite people to think about times when they have been selfish with the things they own, and use these or similar words:

Forgive us when we won’t share with others the things you have blessed us with.
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Invite people to take the third set of two chains and join them to the others OR encircle left ankle with right hand.

Invite people to think of how we stop people becoming who they were created to be, and use these or similar words:

Forgive us when our words and actions make other people feel of little value.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Invite people to take the last two chains and join them to the rest OR encircle right ankle with left hand.

Invite people to think of how we don’t give people what they need to live a full life, and use these or similar words:

Forgive us when we make plans that exclude other people.
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Finally, invite everyone to hold their chain up high, held between two hands OR invite them to stretch arms high, crossed at the wrists as if manacled.

Invite people to keep still for a moment and think of all that holds us back from following Jesus.

Then invite everyone to throw/pass their chains to the front and place them by the table OR simply invite people to pull their arms apart sharply as if breaking chains.

If using this as a confession, a minister will say the absolution.
Who is the Slave? Exploring the Scriptures

To read the Exodus passage, try using two voices from two different points in the building.

An announcer goes into the pulpit and points to the first voice, saying: ‘And now, let the good times roll!’

After these verses have been read, the announcer points to the second voice, saying: ‘But all good things come to an end. The hard times begin.’

Trapped

(This could be used as the basis for the talk)

Begin by talking about how things changed for the children of Israel. First, they had been made really welcome and for centuries it seemed as if nothing bad would ever happen.

Ask some questions about what changed.

Explain that the new Pharaoh was getting worried about their prosperity, so decided to squash them.

Write the following words on cards or put on a screen: ‘Hard work’ ‘Limited food’ ‘Poor housing’ ‘No choices’

Talk about how these actions were affecting the people, who had gone from freedom to slavery.

Then invite a child aged about 11 to come and tell a story (this story is from www.anti-slavery.org) but there are similar stories on other sites such as Christian Aid or Tearfund.

'My name is Ashique. I am eleven years old and have been working in the brick kilns for the past six years with my father and three brothers. My father borrowed 20,000 rupees (about £400) to pay for my sister’s marriage and now we have to work hard to pay off the loan. I work every day except Sunday. My father, brother and myself are paid 30 rupees (50p) for every 1000 bricks. Then our wage is cut by half for loan repayments. I am given no time to play. My father sent me to school but, after three months, the kiln owner took me out of school and put me back to work. I liked going to school. I liked being free.’

Invite people to talk for a few moments in small groups about how people are slaves today in the world because of economic inequality and injustice.

Talk about how it’s not just the people who have nothing who become slaves. Pharaoh was enslaved too, as was Zacchaeus in the Gospel story.

Invite one person to the front and load them up with lots of empty boxes until they can barely see.

Explain that this is like Zacchaeus. He collected up so many possessions that he couldn’t reach out to people around him. He couldn’t see that people had needs, and he couldn’t see that people might want to be his friend. He was chained too.

Write or display these words: ‘Greedy’ ‘Mean’ ‘Ungrateful’ ‘Selfish’

 Invite people to talk for a few moments in small groups about how any of us can be trapped by our attitudes to what we have. Think about how it affected Zacchaeus and Pharaoh.

People can be and are slaves in our world because of the actions of other people, but any one of us can be trapped by our own attitudes.
‘Let My People Go’: A Prayer Activity

This prayer activity is built around several stations, each of which represents something that traps people in the world today.

When you create a prayer station, ideally choose a small table or shelf. Cover the area with fabric or a tablecloth to act as a backdrop to the objects. Use imagination and creativity to make a good visual display.

At each station there is an activity, and then people should be invited to stand and say quietly ‘let my people go’, before moving to the next station.

Depending on the size of your congregation you will need at least four stations, and possibly ten, (which can be repeats of the same thing, simply allowing more people to gather round). There is also one ‘station’ that invites people to remain in their seats (or return to their seats) for a few moments and look at some images on the screen or to look at printed images/articles from recent news stories.

The stations can be prayed in any order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trapped by work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Display some objects related to work – a spade; builders’ tools, an apron, phone, etc. Place a bowl of water nearby. On a card write these or similar words:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some people are trapped by the work they do for little pay, with little joy. Others are trapped because they cannot find work. As you gently splash water on the objects, think about how water gives life and creates growth. Pray that people will find new work and new life, using the words ‘Let my people go’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trapped by hunger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Display a loaf of bread, a bowl of fruit and a box of chocolates, etc. Place a pile of empty plates nearby. On a card, write these or similar words:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some people are trapped by a lack of food. Hunger makes it hard for them to get through each day. The rains might not have come or floods might have washed things away. War might have damaged the land. They might not have enough money. Hold an empty plate for a few seconds, and pray for them and for those who make big decisions in the world, using the words ‘Let my people go’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trapped by illness</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Display a selection of medical items: bandages, crutches, first-aid kit, etc. Place a bowl containing plasters nearby. On a card, write these or similar words:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some people are trapped by illness. Illness makes it hard to do things every day: to work, to shop, to play. Illness might be in our bodies or in our minds. Hold a plaster to the back of your hand and pray for these people and those who help them, using the words ‘Let my people go’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Week One: Trapped!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</table>
| **Trapped by debt**    | Display a big heap of toy money, a toy till, piggy banks, an empty purse, etc. Place a bowl of chocolate coins and an empty bowl next to each other. On a card, write these or similar words:  
Some people are trapped by debt, unable to pay back the money they have borrowed. Debt makes it hard to make choices. It can make it hard to eat well. It makes people argue in families. As you move a chocolate coin from the bowl to the empty bowl, pray for people in debt and for those who work in financial businesses, using the world ‘Let my people go’.

| **Trapped by war**     | Display a collage of images and headlines of war-torn countries. Cover the table with a map of the world or display a globe. Place a bowl full of white petals or confetti nearby.  
On a card, write these or similar words:  
Some people are trapped by war and the effects of war. Their homes might be destroyed; people they love may be killed or injured. They might have had to leave their homes for another country. As you scatter the petals/confetti over the map, pray that these places may find peace, using the words ‘Let my people go’.

| **Trapped by fear**    | This ‘station’ takes the form of a presentation of a montage of images that reflect some of the other themes, plus other images taken from recent news stories. (NB ensure that images and language used are child-suitable. The BBC Newsround site is a good place to check or the children’s pages of large agencies such as Christian Aid or Send-a-cow.) On a card or screen. write these or similar words:  
Some people are trapped by fear: fear of the future, fear of people, fear and anxiety about other people. As you watch/read, pray for them using the words ‘Let my people go’.

When people have spent enough time visiting the various stations, gather everyone and join all the prayers by saying the Lord’s Prayer together.

**Mission Challenge**

During the week ahead, invite each family/individual to choose a situation where people are trapped today. Set aside some time as a family to think about how you could share the time and/or resources you have to help make a difference.
Peer Group Time – Children

You could adapt any of the above activities to do with children or young people. You might also like to make a journal book, either one for each person or make one large book for the whole group.

You will need:

- Enough journal books for everyone, made from 6 sheets of A4 paper joined together either as a booklet or as a concertina.
- The cover should be headed ‘Blessing, having, giving, blessing’ written as a circle of words. The children can then colour/illustrate the cover.
- On the first page, write the word ‘Trapped’. Then divide the page in half. Head one part ‘By others’ . Head the other ‘By ourselves’. Invite the children to talk about what they would like to draw in each section.

Explain that the book is going to be a journal as they think about the story in Exodus.

Peer Group Time – Adults

EITHER use Action Scene 1 to stimulate discussion about what enslaves people.

Questions/activities might include:

1. What catches your attention as you look at this picture while the story is read aloud?
2. With which person do you find yourself identifying or empathising?
3. Which part of the picture most attracts you?
4. Which part of the picture most disturbs you?
5. Is there anything in the picture that resonates with anything happening in the twenty-first-century world?

Use these questions to deepen the discussion and draw towards the key question about ‘Whether we are trapped by having too much or by having too little’.

OR use Lectio Divina

Print copies of the reading so that everyone has the same text and translation, and only this passage.

Explain the process.

Read the passage round the group a verse at a time. Then keep silence for a few minutes. Then go round the group, each person saying aloud a word that has caught their attention from the passage, without further comment.

Silence.

Then read the passage again round the group (starting with a different person). Keep silence for a few minutes. Then go round the group, each person saying a sentence or phrase that may elaborate the first word or be different.

Silence.
Read the passage again round the group (starting with a different person).
Then invite discussion and comment on the words/phrases chosen.
After a period of time, move into time of prayer.
Read the passage a final time.

**Whose Fault Is It?**

Prepare a number of images and/or articles about some of the major social problems in your community and in the wider world. These might include homelessness, asylum seekers, addicts, war victims. You should also include some images of (apparently) problem-free individuals and families.

Invite people to look at the images and then consider how each person might be trapped and what might have trapped them.

Look at those images where there is no obvious issue – what might be going on for these people? Talk about the more socially acceptable addictions and behaviours, and those hidden altogether.

How can the gospel help people to break free and make a new start?
Week Two: Walking Free

Bible Readings
OT: Exodus 6:2-8; 12:29-39
Epistle: Ephesians 1:3-12

This session creates opportunities for people of all ages to:
- Think about what it means to be free.
- Think about what it means to be rescued and blessed by God.

Key Focus
Last week we were thinking about the different ways in which people find themselves trapped, whether by unjust actions that they experience or by their own choices and behaviour. For the children of Israel, being trapped was in stark contrast to the welcome they had experienced some 400 years earlier – a welcome that had seen them prosper and become successful.

The story now moves forward, past the plagues and the disappointments, to the time when the people walk free from Egypt. The passage tells us that they are able to leave with a great deal of wealth, as well as a great number of people. One of the challenges they faced was how to use the wealth that was part of the freedom. We are God’s people today, set free by all that Jesus did for us. We too walk into freedom with all kinds of blessings. We too face the challenge of learning how to handle money and possessions as a gift from God.

This week’s material is based on two passages from Exodus. In the first we hear God’s promise of freedom given to Moses, and in the second we hear of the terrible night when the promise became reality. In some ways this is a difficult story – the freedom was won at the expense of Egyptian families, who paid with the lives of their firstborn children. This can link back to last week’s material and the consequences of actions. However, in the foreground is the story of the long march to freedom and the riches that went along with the people.

Alongside this story is the parable of the Prodigal Son – which might equally be called the parable of the prodigal God. The word ‘prodigal’ means extravagant – and as the son unexpectedly walks to freedom, he finds himself showered with gifts. We walk into the freedom of God’s love to find ourselves inundated by God’s abundant riches and prodigal generosity – not materially, but the riches of becoming his people and of knowing him.

Background Preparation
Read the Exodus story and also the other readings. Take some time to reflect on how they speak of freedom, wealth and also of responsibility.
Scene Setting

Place a number of bags and cases at the front in a pile. Make sure some are heavy and overflowing. If possible, also place a trunk with lots of jewellery and signs of wealth.

Freedom Walk

(which could be used as an opening worship activity)

Play a secular song such as ‘I want to break free’ by Queen. One person gets up and taps another on the shoulder, beckoning them to follow. Gradually get a chain of people walking until everyone who is able is on their feet.

Switch to ‘We are marching in the light of God’, and lead the march to the front of the space.

Pick up and hand out the bags, grab the jewellery and put it in bags and pockets.

Keep singing and marching a few times round the church, perhaps even outside.

When everyone is back in their seats, probably breathless and laughing, ask which part of the activity people enjoyed, which they found puzzling, or any other reaction.

Introduce the theme of the service, and then pray using these or similar words:

Generous, powerful God,
you love your people so much.
You lead us into freedom
and shower us with generous gifts.
We are glad to give you praise,
glad to shout with joy,
glad that you are our God.
Alleluia!
Amen.

Follow My Leader

(This could be a confession activity)

You will need lots of footprint shapes to give to each person present OR take a few moments and invite people to draw round their own foot and cut out the shape.

Give people a few moments to think about times in their life when they have made wrong choices, walked away from other people and ignored God.

Invite everyone to choose a space to place their footprint, facing away from the front of the building, standing with their backs to the chancel area.

EITHER follow with prayer using these or similar words, OR briefly reflect on the way our actions sometimes affect other people.

Lord God,
forgive us for turning our backs on you.
Forgive us for walking away from those in need.
Forgive us for ignoring the consequences of our choices.

Then invite everyone to turn round and face the footprints forward. EITHER talk about how great it is that, when we turn away from our wrongdoing, God is ready to forgive us and give us a new start as we walk to freedom/OR a minister will pray a prayer of absolution.
Exploring the Scriptures: Free and Full

If you have used the marching activity outlined earlier, simply recall that activity and then tell the story of the walk to freedom. Otherwise, use two or more voices to read it as a drama.

If you are not going to use the activity below, read the Gospel reading from a children's version e.g. The Big Bible Storybook (Scripture Union), to keep it succinct.

What Would You Do? (Activity/Talk)

Split the congregation into small groups of about 12 mixed-age groups. Give each group one of the case studies in Appendix 1 and invite them to talk together about how they would feel, what kinds of actions they might take, and if there are any bible stories that come to mind.

Simply, make notes about the kinds of responses people have, without correcting or trying to arrive at a 'right answer'. Allow about 10 minutes. (NB children aged 7–11 tend to be very clear in their understanding of right and wrong, which can seem very unforgiving.)

After 10 minutes, ask the groups to recount the story of the Prodigal Son without being tempted to look it up in a bible! Again, this is not about getting it right. It's about noting down everything people remember about this story – which may well include details from story versions, dramas and art.

After 10 minutes, ask the groups to see if there are any similarities or differences between how they judged the case studies and how the characters in the parable responded.

Finally, gather some responses to share in the wider group before noting some parallels between the Exodus text and the Prodigal Son story.

- God is a generous God who wants to bless his people.
- God’s people walk to freedom – even when things have not been perfect - with joy.
- Freedom might be from external circumstances or from the consequences of our own actions.

Returning to Life: The Narnia Link (Prayer activity)

You will need a variety of craft materials, which might include: clay or play dough, art straws, cornstarch craft noodles, collage materials, etc.

If you are able, you might like to show this clip from the film of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis, or read chapter 16 – ‘What happened to the statues?’

After reading/showing the film briefly, introduce the activity by explaining that, just as God’s love for his people enables them to walk free to freedom, so too God’s love through Jesus helps us all to walk into freedom. That freedom means that we are blessed with all kinds of good things.

As music is played, encourage people to make some object(s) that represents those for whom they are praying who need to find freedom. Suggestions might include making a model to represent walking to freedom, or a model of someone enjoying freedom, or a collage showing the change from captivity to freedom, etc. Encourage each individual or group to pray for specific situations as they make their models.
Close this time with a prayer using these or similar words:

Loving God, you promise that you will lead us into life. You promised us life in all its fullness. We thank you for everything you have given to us, and pray that you would help others to discover the same freedom in you. Help us to have thankful hearts and generous hands. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Mission Challenge: Stand in the Doorway

Observant Jews always take a moment before eating or drinking anything to give thanks to God for all his blessings. This week the challenge is to pause for a second every time you go out of the (main) door of your home/school/office. As you pause, give thanks for all that God has given you and ask him to help you use all that you have wisely.

Peer Group Time – Children

You could adapt any of the above activities to do with children or young people.

Continue with the journal book.

Divide the second page into two sections. Cover/colour the top half with darker colours. Cover/colour the other section with bright colours and lots of symbols of the things with which the people of Israel were able to leave.

You could include the title ‘walking to life’.

Freedom cake

Spend some talking about how we celebrate special events, e.g. give presents, have a party, wear new clothes, have a cake.

Think about how God sets us free and how that might be celebrated. Canvas suggestions of words we might put on a cake or a banner. Then spend some time decorating cakes or cookies or making a banner with the suggestions. These might include: Jesus sets us free, or lots of smaller pennants with words such as ‘Free to love’, ‘Free to give’, ‘Free to learn’ and ‘Free to share’.

Share the cake or cookies with as many people as possible.

Display the banner.

Peer Group Time – Adults

EITHER use Action Scene 2 to stimulate discussion about what enslaves people.

Questions/activities might include:

1. What catches your attention as you look at this picture while the story is read aloud?
2. With which person do you find yourself identifying or empathising?
3. Which part of the picture most attracts you?
4. Which part of the picture most disturbs you?
5. Is there anything in the picture that resonates with anything happening in the twenty-first-century world?

Use these questions to deepen the discussion and draw towards the key question about ‘Whether we are trapped by having too much or by having too little?’

OR Lectio Divina

This week the passage from Ephesians 1:3-12 might make a good choice for this activity.

Print copies of the reading so that everyone has the same text and translation, and only this passage.
Explain the process.
Read the passage round the group a verse at a time. Then keep silence for a few minutes. Then go round the group, each person saying aloud a word that has caught their attention from the passage, without further comment.
Silence.
Then read the passage again round the group (starting with a different person). Keep silence for a few minutes. Then go round the group, each person saying a sentence or phrase that may elaborate on the first word or be different.
Silence.
Read the passage again round the group (starting with a different person). Then invite discussion and comment on the words/phrases chosen.
After a period of time, move into a time of prayer.
Read the passage a final time.

OR Captivity vs. Freedom
 Invite people to spend a few moments thinking about real-life stories of people being set free after being in a limited environment for long periods. Examples might include the story of the Chilean miners trapped underground in October 2010 (see film Los 33), thinking about mental health patients released from institutions into the community in the 1970s and 1980s, individuals released from prison after serving sentences.

Questions to consider could include:
1. What do people have with them when circumstances change? (This can range from nothing to a lot!)
2. What do they have to contend with when free that they didn’t have to contend with in the limited circumstances? (Things like having to choose food, prepare own meals, pay taxes, spend time with family.)
3. What might people enjoy as blessings when they are released? (This might include fresh air, money, having choices, etc.)
4. What different responsibilities and pressures might emerge in changing circumstances? (Celebrity, compensation, civic duties, family responsibilities, etc.)

Think about the people of Israel walking to freedom, and the wealth they took with them. What might they have to adjust to as they carried all this with them?

What might we have to adjust to as we think about all that we have been given in Christ?
*Appendix 1: Scenarios

Josh is 14 years old. He is due to go on a school trip and his parents have been paying in instalments. One day Josh asks if he can have all the money that is still owing. They give Josh £200 without asking any questions. But he goes out with his mates after school and buys loads of stuff – games for his play station, new t-shirt, and treats everyone to a McDonalds.

Then he realises he has no money left, not even enough to get a bus home. He feels terrible as he slowly walks home, late, wet and with nothing much to show.

What happens when he gets close to home? What should his parents do?

Maureen and Jim have a lovely granddaughter, Emma. They have been saving for years so they can help Emma out when she gets married or sets up in her own home. Emma has just finished university and wants a gap year. Marriage or a home seems a long way off.

She decides to ask her grandparents for the money – and they give her everything they have saved for her. They tell her to use it wisely. Emma is really excited and sets off on her gap year. She has never had so much money in her life!! She decides to stay in hotels, treats her friends, and eats at famous restaurants. Then, after about 4 months, the money runs out. She tries to get a job but the only job she can find is cleaning toilets in a nightclub. It’s horrible.

What should she do now? How will different people react?

Five years ago, Jane’s sister Louise disappeared. Before she left, she stole all the money from Jane’s purse, took her bank cards and emptied the savings account. Nobody has heard anything since. Every day Jane thinks about her sister. She remembers when they were children, and she feels terrible when she meets up with their mum, who cries when she thinks about Louise.

Then one day Jane comes home from work to find Louise on her doorstep.

What should she do? How might she feel?
Week Three: All We Need

Bible Readings
OT: Exodus 16:9-26
Epistle: Philippians 4:10-20
Gospel: John 6:1-14

This session creates opportunities for people of all ages to:
- Remember how God provides for us as individuals and as a church.
- Give thanks for the good things that God provides.

Key Focus
This week brings us to one of the central stories in the Exodus narrative. As they journey onwards towards full freedom, God’s people have to learn how to live, how to trust God and how to obey. In this story we hear how God meets their needs in the midst of the desert and in the midst of their moaning. As the reality of their circumstances begins to dawn, many of them begin to look back towards the days in Egypt where everything they needed was readily available. They knew what to expect each day. Now they are vulnerable and at risk, for the desert is a harsh and demanding environment. God’s answer is to provide them with what they need on a daily basis. There is to be no hoarding or storing – yet, in God’s provision, there is enough for everyone, including the weak and unwell.

Alongside this story we hear the story of the feeding of the 5,000 from John’s Gospel, another situation where people were vulnerable and at risk. Once again, God meets their basic needs, providing for that situation, on that day. The wonderful passage from Philippians includes the glorious promise that God can supply all our needs out of the riches of his grace.

This week is an opportunity to reflect on how God meets our needs today and how we need to live in response to that care. It is not easy to develop this deep level of trust and obedience in a culture that is based on 24-hour access to anything we might need or want. Yet our attitudes to our needs and resources still need to be shaped by our understanding of God as our provider, whether to us individually or as a church.

Background Preparation
Read the Exodus story and also the other readings. It would also be helpful to reflect during the week on how our culture creates needs that are never satisfied and how this can impact on our Christian lives. In contrast, we are called to trust God for all our needs, give thanks for all that he has given us previously and handle all that we have, in a way that acknowledges God’s generosity to us.

Scene Setting
You will need lots of pictures of food or pictures to colour (see www.printablecolouringpages.co.uk), glue, banqueting roll/tablecloths. (A good tip is to buy old cookery books from charity shops/church fetes and cut out the photos.) You will also need about a dozen balloons already blown up.
Create a display at the front of church made up of lots of everyday foods. If possible, make a collage of various food adverts taken from magazines or the internet.

Roll a large banqueting roll down the centre of the worship space OR set a large table out, covered with a paper tablecloth. As people arrive, invite them to stick food pictures all over the tablecloth.

**Saying Grace**

(which could be used as an opening worship activity)

When the table is set (i.e. covered in pictures of food), remind people that God calls us to his great feast, and every time we have a meal it’s like a pale copy of the great feast that he will provide. Every time we have a meal we should pause and give thanks. If possible, lift high the banqueting cloth and sing/say different forms of grace, such as:

- Thank you for the world so sweet/thank you for the food we eat/thank you for the birds that sing/thank you, God, for everything
- For fun, friends and food, we thank you, Lord. Amen
- In a world where many are hungry, we thank you for all that you have given us. Amen

Place the tablecloth down on the floor (or move to a safe place)

Invite people to find one of the balloons. Explain that we are going to try to prevent the balloons from touching the floor. Each time one comes near, individuals must bat it back and shout out something for which they are thankful to God.

After a suitable time, end with a lively praise song.

**Holding On or Letting Go**

(This could be a confession activity)

(This activity will work with or without the first part, which works best with smaller numbers.)

You will need several small tubes or containers, e.g. mini jam jars or mini sweet tubes.

Two large piles of small sweets e.g. dolly mixtures or jelly tots, placed on tables at either end of the space.

Select two teams. Place them between the two tables, one team facing in each direction. Give each team member a small container. Time the teams to see which team can return to the starting point first with all their containers filled with sweets.

Pause.

Then time how long it takes for them to give away all the sweets and return to the starting point with all their containers empty.

Pause.

Invite people to talk to each other about how it felt to be able to grab as much as they wanted. Then talk about how it felt to give it all away. (NB if there are younger children playing, do give them some of the sweets after the activity – after all, God is a generous God!)

Conclude with a prayer, using these actions or similar words.
Invite people to hold out both hands as if receiving something:

Dear God, thank you for giving us so much to enjoy in our lives and in our church.

Forgive us when we are ungrateful and when we complain.

Invite people to clasp both hands together tightly:

Dear God, sometimes we want to hold very tightly to all the things we have.

Forgive us when we are greedy and when we are mean.

Invite people to turn hands towards the floor and open as if letting go of something:

Dear God, we want to use all that we have to help other people.

Forgive us when we are selfish and when we forget to care.

A minister could end this section with an absolution prayer.

Exploring the Scriptures: Plenty for everyone

Present these stories as a news story (or you could invite some young people to re-imagine the events as a Twitter thread or Facebook wall conversation).

See Appendix 1 for script ideas

Enough is Enough: Activity/talk

Split the congregation into teams of between 12 and 20. Each team will need a leader.

There will be 4 rounds of this game.

In each round the teams are given one minute to shout out as many answers to the given question as they can think of. The leader ticks them off on the list – but only if they match. The team with the most ticks wins the round.

The question and the timekeeping can be done from the front.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 1: Name 10 food items that were rationed or restricted in WW2</th>
<th>Round 2: Name 10 top food items in a supermarket basket in the present decade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bacon</td>
<td>Cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter</td>
<td>Eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>Cooking fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>Sweets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jam</td>
<td>Cereals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fizzy drinks</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisps</td>
<td>Biscuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>Bread rolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornflakes</td>
<td>Pasta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 3: Name 10 foods that were on the menu for athletes at the Olympics 2012</th>
<th>Round 4: Name 10 things that are essential supplies for a refugee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lamb</td>
<td>Eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clotted cream</td>
<td>Porridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hummus</td>
<td>Strawberries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olives</td>
<td>Burgers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitta bread</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blankets</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water purifying tablets</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosquito net</td>
<td>Milk powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour</td>
<td>Lentils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>Cereal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When all the rounds have been completed, invite the groups to talk about the differences between the lists.
What would they consider essential food items?

The Israelites were hungry and vulnerable. Although they had carried a lot with them when they left Egypt, fresh supplies ran out quickly. They were learning that God would meet all their needs, but only one day at a time. The manna and the quails were enough for everyone for a day, but they couldn’t be stored up.

When Jesus fed the 5,000 with five loaves and two fish, God provided enough for everyone, with some leftovers as well.

Encourage people to talk about how God has met their needs.

How has God met our needs in the church?

**Blessed to Bless: A Prayer Activity**

You will need six shoeboxes with different items as indicated. (If you have a large congregation, you may need to make two or more sets.)

Split people into groups of about 8 to 10.

Collect a box, open it, look at the contents, discuss and pray.

After two minutes, swap to another box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1: Our Church</th>
<th>Box 2: Our Community</th>
<th>Box 3: Our Nation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place a postcard/picture of the church, the church magazine, the accounts, something to represent the music or other special feature of the church; some communion wafers inside the box.</td>
<td>Local map, magazine or newspaper, school information, something to represent local interests. Write these or similar words on a card: <em>Talk together about all the good things about our church. Think about people as well as things. Pray together asking God to show us how we can best use these blessings to share the good news with others.</em></td>
<td>Map of Britain, national newspaper, union flag, picture of the Queen, etc. Write these or similar words on a card: <em>Talk together about how our nation has been blessed. Take time to pray for national leadership and those in public life.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Box 4: Our World**
Small globe, some information about a country with which your church has links, some exotic foods/fruits etc.

Write these or similar words on a card:

"Talk together about the good things in other countries, but also think about the needs that may be there. Pass the globe round the group and invite each person to name a country to pray for."

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**Box 5: Our Homes**
A Lego™ model of a house, some toy people, photos of different types of houses and families, etc.

Write these or similar words on a card:

"Talk about what makes your family and home a blessing. In a moment of quiet, pick one room to visit in your imagination and give thanks for all that is good. Take a moment to pray for those without homes and those without people to love."

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**Box 6: Ourselves**
Some small mirrored tiles and an empty photo frame.

Write these or similar words on a card:

"Take a moment to pass the mirror round the group, inviting each person to name one thing about themselves that is a blessing from God. Pray for any needs in the group."

---

When the time is up or all boxes have been prayed with, read Philippians 4:19 as a closing promise and reminder that God is our provider. All that we have comes from him.

**Mission Challenge: Go Without**

This week has helped us become aware of how much many of us have in our lives. We have so much food to choose from, so many luxuries that we take for granted. This week the challenge is to choose something to do without – ideas might include a particular foodstuff or an activity such as a PlayStation or something like the dishwasher. In the absence of that item, take time to think about how we value and use all that God has provided for us.

**Peer Group Time – Children**

You could adapt any of the above activities to do with children or young people.

Continue with the journal book.

Head the third page ‘Jehovah Jireh – God provides’

Encourage each child to make a list of 10 things that make them happy. Illustrate as appropriate.

**What is it?**

Prepare a number of food items in opaque containers. Make sure there are enough items for every child to have a chance to take part. Blindfold the child and invite them to guess what is in the box/bag. Ideas might include oranges, cheese, chocolate, cooked peas or rice, bread (children really like the idea of something with potential to be gross – so feeling a bag of squashed peas and trying to guess is fun!).

Talk about foods that they like and foods they think they hate! But if there were no food at all – what then? Talk about the manna that was provided for the Israelites by God as a reminder that they should trust God for everything. It’s more difficult for us to remember because we can get so much so easily. But we give thanks, and think about how we can use what we have wisely.
Peer Group Time – Adults

Either use Action Scene 3 to stimulate discussion about God’s provision in our lives.

There are four scenes – encourage people to take time to look at each one and think about what they would say, feel or do.

Use these questions to deepen the discussion and draw towards the key question about whether we are trapped by having too much or by having too little.

OR Lectio Divina

This week the passage from John might make a good choice for this activity.

Print copies of the reading so that everyone has the same text and translation, and only this passage.

Explain the process.

Read the passage round the group a verse at a time. Then keep silence for a few minutes. Then go round the group, each person saying aloud a word that has caught their attention from the passage, without further comment.

Silence.

Then read the passage again round the group (starting with a different person). Keep silence for a few minutes. Then go round the group, each person saying a sentence or phrase that may elaborate on the first word or be different.

Silence.

Read the passage again round the group (starting with a different person).

Then invite discussion and comment on the words/phrases chosen.

After a period of time, move into a time of prayer.

Read the passage a final time.

OR Hierarchy of Needs

Give people a few moments to think of five things they would take with them if they had to flee their home suddenly. Share these ideas and talk about what these items represent. They may not be physically essential, but they may well carry with them a sense of God’s blessing and provision for the less obvious things in life.

Introduce the idea of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, explaining the theory that our basic needs have to be taken care of before we can begin to think about things like creativity, beauty and self-worth.

God is the one who meets all our needs – think about how the Exodus story illustrates God’s concern for basic needs. Only when people are no longer hungry and insecure can they begin to turn their attention towards others.

Talk about how the Israelites contributed to the miracle of the manna – each day they had to harvest the manna and the quails. They still had to prepare food, take care of the weak, clean up, etc. Think about how we also have to work, and yet still remember that God is meeting all our needs.

Share stories of times when people have had a deep awareness of God meeting their needs.

What difference does it make to our attitude to what we earn and what we own when we recall that God is ultimately the provider?
Appendix 1: Headlines

You will need two presenters sitting at the front and a roving reporter elsewhere in the space plus people to be interviewed as indicated.

Programme 1

Play music e.g. BBC news channel

Presenter A: Good morning, everyone.

Presenter B: And a fine morning it is too. This morning we are about to hear from Billie Bates on how dieting helped him to score that goal on Saturday.

A: And how it might help you meet your life goals.

B: We have music from the great new singing sensation Homesick Helen, who’s going to tell us what it’s like to become a star 5,000 miles from home.

A: But first, this week’s incredible story of the food that falls from the skies.

B: Let’s hear from our reporter who is on the spot in the deserts of the Middle East. Ben/Abi?

Reporter: Morning! It’s another hot day here in the desert. Around me are some of those who have been enjoying this morning’s breakfast. Are you feeling good?

Crowd: Yeah! (Cheers, etc.)

Reporter: But it hasn’t always been like this. Let’s hear what Ruth and Jake had to tell us yesterday:

Ruth: It’s been so hard over the past few weeks. I mean, it was wonderful at first – no more slavery, no more Egyptians, just us walking to a new life.

Jake: Yeah, it was great. But then, well, I hate to say this, but it just got boring. And difficult.

Reporter: So what was happening?

Jake: Well, everyone started moaning. Some people started to say they wanted to go back. Not me, I mean, I’ve always thought freedom is good. But others, the food ran out, we don’t seem to be getting anywhere, and people began to blame Moses.

Ruth: Yep. It seemed like we were going to die of hunger out here in the desert.

Reporter: Let’s bring in Moses here for a moment. How did you respond to this?

Mo: I prayed. I talked to God. I reminded them all that God knows what people need. Then I told them that God promised bread in the morning and meat in the evening.

Reporter: A bold statement, Mo. It’s not easy to deliver on promises like that.

Mo: Not if it was down to us, but this was down to God.

Reporter: So what happened, Ruth?
Ruth: We got up in the morning and there it was – manna, everywhere, white, crunchy – unusual but delicious. All the children ate it – and my sick mum.

Jake: And at night there were quails everywhere. It was fantastic.

Reporter: So you’ve been able to pack your bags? Got food to travel with?

Jake: No. It doesn’t keep.

Moses: We only have enough for each day. If we keep it, it goes mouldy – except just before the Sabbath, when we get a double portion.

Reporter: This is amazing! Will the people stop moaning now, Moses?

Mo: For the moment. For the moment!

Reporter: So it’s back here live in the desert. Another day of manna, another meal of quails.

How are you doing guys?

Crowd: (cheers)

Reporter: It’s clear that something amazing has happened here. It’s quite a story.

Presenter 1: Thanks – sounds like it might be worth a visit!
Save on food bills, eh?

Presenter 2: (laughs) Too right. And now it’s over to Levi for the desert – and the rest of the weather.
Programme 2
Begins in same way.

Presenter A: Good morning, everyone.
Presenter B: And a fine morning it is too. This morning we hear from Tammy Tinner about how dieting helped her to score that goal on Saturday.

A: And how it might help you meet your life goals.
B: We have music from the great new singing sensation Plain Bob, who’s going to tell us what it’s like to become a star 5,000 miles from home.
A: But first, this week’s incredible story of the food that appears in the desert.
B: Let’s hear from our reporter who is on the spot in the wilderness of Palestine. Ben/Abi?

Reporter: Morning! It’s another hot day here in the desert. Around me are some of those who were there for yesterday’s feast. Are you feeling good?
Crowd: Yeah! (Cheers etc.)

Reporter: But it didn’t start this way. Let’s hear from Mary and her son Zac.

Mary: It was a lovely day, and I wanted to go with Zac, but I just couldn’t get away. So I sent him off with his Uncle Sim and a lovely bit of lunch. It was your favourite, wasn’t it?
Zac: I like olives really. (Mary glares at him)

Reporter: So what happened, Zac?
Zac: I was just poking around in my backpack, getting out my lunch. This guy looked dead worried. So I just grabbed his arm and said. ‘You wanna share mine?’ And he just took it!

Reporter: You must have been worried.
Zac: Well, I followed him right to the front of the crowd. There were thousands there. It was hot and late, and we were all hungry. So then this other bloke...

Mary: …he means Jesus
Zac: …yeah. He smiled at me. And he just took my lunch, said a prayer, and started to break the bread and fish in pieces.

Reporter: …and there was enough for everyone. That bread and fish just kept on coming until the whole crowd had eaten! What happened?
Zac: It’s obvious, innit? God did it. God provides.
Mary: It’s shaken me up a bit. But, yeah, I remember God does care.

Reporter: Well, back to you in the studio from the amazing picnic.
Presenter 1: Thanks so much. Wow!
Presenter 2: We’ve been here before, I think. Do you remember a couple of thousand years ago, the manna in the desert? Wasn’t that God too?
Presenter 1: (laughs) It surely was! Well let’s go over to the weather news now and see if it’s another picnic day today.
Week Four: What Comes First?

Bible Readings
OT: Exodus 32:1-20
Epistle: 1 Timothy 6:6-12
Gospel: Matthew 6:19-24

This session creates opportunities for people of all ages to:
- Reflect on priorities and attitudes to all that we have.
- Think about the reasons why we sometimes forget God and the consequences when we do.

Key Focus
This week brings us to one of the low points for the people of God as they wandered in the desert. Moses is on Mount Sinai listening to God, thinking about how to create a special tent of meeting, but without Moses’ leadership the people become restless. They decide to build a golden calf, and use much of the wealth they have brought with them from Egypt, to be the focus of their hopes and dreams. The contrast is stark between the way that God wants them to live, laid out in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and the actions they end up taking. They could not meet the challenge of putting God first in their lives.

The Gospel reading poses the same stark challenge. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) there is an unfolding call to discipleship and a realisation that this is not a soft option. It will involve hard choices and, just as for the children of Israel, just as for the disciples of Jesus, so too for us, it is often when we feel most distant from God that we turn to other things.

No one builds golden calves in our society. Most of our congregations know that idolatry is wrong. Yet it is easy to use our resources first to meet our own needs, and then think about giving to God. This week’s activities aim to help people be honest about this struggle and to begin to look at what happens when we get our priorities wrong.

Background Preparation
Read the Exodus story and also the other readings. It would also be helpful to continue to reflect on how the messages in society and culture influence us as individuals and as a church when it comes to setting priorities and using our resources.

Scene Setting
Clear a large open area in the centre of the worship space, making it as clear and empty as possible. (In a traditional church this may be as simple as making sure the table is bare and the chancel area is clear.)
Week Four: What Comes First?

Why God?
(This could be an opening worship activity)
You will need some coloured sheets of A3 and A4 paper, a few garden canes, and a staple gun.

Invite people to make placards and banners as if for a demonstration. The demonstration is in support of God, so the slogans they write need to reflect all the reasons why God is worthy of our praise. They could also reflect the need to give God glory and put him first e.g. ‘God is love’; ‘God is beauty’; ‘God is my rock’.

When the banners and placards have been made, invite everyone to march round the outside of the church, carrying the banners and singing songs of praise or making praise chants e.g. God is the one we praise/he is with us all our days.

These could be accompanied by African drums or other rhythmic instruments.

When everyone has returned to their seats, draw the activity to a close by reflecting briefly on how wonderful it is to give God praise and thanks. Explain that, in today’s service, we are going to think about what happens when we forget that God comes first in our lives.

Pray in these or similar words:

Almighty God,
we worship and adore you this day.
Fill us with your love
and speak to us, we pray,
so that we might always be people
who give you honour and praise
in all we do and say. Amen.

Building Barriers
(This could be a confession activity)

You will need lots of empty boxes of different sizes.

Some construction bricks, e.g. Lego™.

Scatter the boxes round the edge of the open space. Then invite everyone to come to the front and build a wall or tower using all the materials. Give those who are unable to come forward a handful of construction bricks and ask them to build something similar but on a small scale.

During this activity you might like to play songs like ‘Another brick in the wall’ by Pink Floyd or ‘Wonder wall’ by Oasis.

When the wall is finished, invite everyone to sit down and look at it. Think for a moment about what you can no longer see, and how it changes the nature of the empty space.

Then invite people to be still while one or more voices read this or a similar reflection:

Walls
Walls are good.
They protect and hold, contain and support.
We are proud of our walls,
standing strong and stable,
confident and secure.

But walls shut out, oppress and limit.
They shout ‘keep out’ and proclaim danger.
They challenge us, restrict us, limit our vision and define our possibilities.

Oh God, we build so many walls in front of you. Walls of anger, walls of pride, walls of things and walls of words. We fill the space where we should see your face with all that we can do and all that we can own.

Forgive us for the walls we build between us and you, between us and others. Forgive us and show us how to break them down.

(Invite some people to come forward and dismantle the wall in silence, laying some of the boxes into a path or stepping-stone design instead.)

Help us to build bridges and lay pathways, just as you have laid a path to lead us back to you. Lord, forgive us.

R: Forgive us and heal us.

A minister could end with a prayer of absolution.

Exploring the Scriptures:

See Appendix 1 for a drama script for Exodus reading.

Suggest printing the Gospel on a long scroll and reading it from a high point in the building.

‘Our survey said...’(Activity/Talk)

You will need a large bag containing the following items:

A picture of a really famous celebrity e.g. Justin Bieber; Some appropriate football team supporter souvenirs; a lottery ticket or a pile of money; a model or picture of a cottage or idyllic home; a make-up bag or hairdryer.

Invite two teams to come to the front. Each team should consist of three or four members of the same family. Explain that we are playing 'Family Fortunes'. You have surveyed lots(!) of people to find out their answers to the question:

Name something people worship in today’s world.

If the team gives a right answer, put thumbs up and make a sound like ‘ping!’ Take the appropriate object out of the bag and display it.

They get a second guess.

If the team gives a wrong answer, put thumbs down and make a sound like ‘uh-uh’. The other team now has a turn.

(“Check the programme out beforehand to be sure of the right noises.”)

Continue until all five objects have been guessed or every person in each team has had a guess.

Answers:

Celebrities (top answer)

Football teams

Money

Home

Looks
Invite people to turn and talk to each other about the answers and whether they would have chosen something different. Talk about how the Israelites literally built something to worship – the golden calf. They were looking for something that represented all their hopes and dreams for the future. They spent a lot of money creating the golden calf. Yet they knew all that God had done for them.

Talk about how sometimes we forget God in our lives, and then we spend more time and money on other things. They become like idols to us.

**Ladder of treats**

(This could be done separately or as a follow-on to the activity above.)

You will need a stepladder or an illustration of a ladder and paper/pens/sticky tack ready to attach things.

Invite people to think about hobbies and treats they enjoy – after they have paid all their bills. How much might they spend? Adjust these suggestions according to your community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treat</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bottle of wine</td>
<td>£7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal out for the family</td>
<td>£50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinema for two (with popcorn)</td>
<td>£22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session at the gym</td>
<td>£30 monthly membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New shoes/clothes</td>
<td>£75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury chocolates</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Add the suggestions to the ladder with the prices going upwards.

Then write ‘God’ on a piece of paper. Ask what this might mean and where it might come on the ladder. Will the amount be at the bottom or the top? When do we think about it? After we’ve done everything else or first?

Link to the readings and to the other activities.
Consequences: (A Prayer Activity)

Begin by talking about how our choices can affect people in different parts of the world.

Everything we buy comes from somewhere – and it may be that our purchase is helping other people to have a good quality of life or not.

Everything we spend on ourselves means we may not be able to help people who have very little.

For each section of prayers, simply read out the advertising slogan and invite people to name the product. Then show the images as indicated and pray with the actions suggested.

You might want to use current or local slogans and develop similar ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slogan</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m lovin it’ – McDonald’s</td>
<td>Display pictures of people in different contexts enjoying work and play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Invite people to make a gesture as if giving themselves a big hug and pray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in these or similar words:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loving God, we thank you for all that brings us joy at work or at play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We pray today for those who have no work and those who have no time for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>laughter. Help us to make wise choices in our lives so that our actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>will benefit other people.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| ‘Here come the girls’ – Boots | Display pictures of women and girls in different cultures.                  |
|                              | Invite everyone to take the hand of a woman or girl in the congregation and |
|                              | pray in these or similar words:                                            |
|                              | Loving God, we pray for all those organisations that work to help girls and |
|                              | women have a better future. We pray that one day our world and our church  |
|                              | will truly be a place where everyone is treated equally.                    |

| ‘Every little helps’ – Tesco  | Display pictures of small projects in communities e.g. toy box charity;     |
|                              | blankets for the homeless, food bank.                                      |
|                              | Invite everyone to take hold of their little finger and pray in these or    |
|                              | similar words:                                                            |
|                              | Loving God, we pray for all those organisations that are helping others and |
|                              | for all those individuals who are showing care in our communities. Help us |
|                              | to be people who do small things for others as we show your love in our    |
|                              | world.                                                                    |

| ‘Go compare’ – Go Compare     | Display pictures of refugee camps and makeshift housing, or homeless people |
|                              | sleeping on the streets.                                                   |
|                              | Invite everyone to make the shape of a house roof using two hands. Pray in|
|                              | these or similar words:                                                    |
|                              | Loving God, we give you thanks for our homes and families. We pray for     |
|                              | those whose homes are threatened through war or disaster and those who have|
|                              | nowhere to call home. We ask that you would draw close to them and help us |
|                              | to support them with prayer and love.                                      |

| ‘Because you’re worth it’ – L’Oréal | Display pictures of babies and children from across the world. |
|                                     | Invite everyone to point at themselves. Pray in these or similar words:  |
|                                     | Loving God, you love each person and hold us in the palm of your hand.   |
|                                     | Help us to remember your great love for us and to live our lives well as |
|                                     | we share that love with others.                                           |
Mission Challenge: First Things First
The challenge is to give time to God before anything else this week. Invite people to offer praise to God as soon as they wake by saying:

‘Lord God, you are the first and the best.’

Peer Group Time – Children
You could adapt any of the above activities to do with children or young people.
Continue with the journal book.
Head the fourth page ‘Think God first’.
Illustrate with a picture of a golden calf. Recap the story of the Israelites and the golden calf. Wonder together about why they might have decided to disobey God.
Think about what kinds of things they do when they forget to follow Jesus. Write or draw some of these on the page.
I want some now!
This is based on a popular party game.
You will need a large bar of chocolate on a plate, and a knife and fork, plus a scarf, hat and gloves.
The children shake a die in turn. When someone get a six they have to put on the garments, grab the knife and fork, and try to cut a piece of chocolate. The rest continue to shake the die while they do this and the next person to get a six swaps places. Continue until the chocolate is eaten or time runs out!
Talk about how much energy we put into getting things that we want – forgetting about how our actions might affect us and other people.

Peer Group Time – Adults
Either use Action Scene 4 to stimulate discussion about how things went wrong for the Israelites and how they might go wrong in our lives.
Think about how Moses, Aaron and the people each might have felt that day.
Moses – had stayed a long time in prayer with God. Do we sometimes ignore people’s feelings when we get caught up with God? Do we get angry with other people’s misuse of wealth and possessions?
Aaron – how did he feel when he suddenly became the leader? How easy is it sometimes to persuade ourselves that we are doing the right thing?
The people – how did they feel when Moses didn’t return? What made them create the calf and ignore God? Reflect on times when we feel far from God, and then take things into our own hands instead.
Use these questions to deepen the discussion and draw towards the key question of how we set priorities in our own lives.

OR Lectio Divina
This week the passage from Matthew might make a good choice for this activity.
Print copies of the reading so that everyone has the same text and translation, and only this passage.
Explain the process.
Read the passage round the group a verse at a time. Then keep silence for a few minutes. Then go round the group, each person saying aloud a word that has caught their attention from the passage, without further comment.

Silence.

Then read the passage again round the group (starting with a different person). Keep silence for a few minutes.

Then go round the group, each person saying a sentence or phrase that may elaborate on the first word or be different.

Silence.

Read the passage again round the group (starting with a different person).

Then invite discussion and comment on the words/phrases chosen.

After a period of time, move into a time of prayer.

Read the passage a final time.

**Where Your Heart Is**

Introduce a discussion about things in the world that people think are wrong and need changing, e.g. poverty, children being hungry, cruelty, and exploitation.

Do these concerns reflect their Christian values or are they personal agendas?

Make available a whole range of promotional material from charities, including some that are very large and some that are very local and directed.

Pass the material round and discuss the various projects.

How do people decide which to support, if any? Do their choices match their earlier passions?

Then display a church collecting plate. How does the mission of the church fit in with their giving choices?
Appendix 1: What the People Did

This is a dramatic telling of the story, where the congregation takes part. You will also need a person to be Moses and a person to be Aaron.

The stage directions for the congregation should be displayed on a screen or on large cards that someone parades about with at the right time (as indicated).

Moses walks to a far point in the church, for example kneeling or sitting out of sight near the table.

**Narrator:** When the people realised that Moses still hadn’t come back, they began to get restless and annoyed. *(Stand up and wave your hands about as if arguing)*

They went to Aaron *(Aaron wanders into the middle of the congregation)*, demanding that he take charge and tell them what to do. Aaron thought to himself and decided that what they all needed was a project, something to do. So he told them to take off their rings and their earrings and bring them to him.

*(Mime taking off jewellery and passing to Aaron)*

Aaron took the gold, melted it down and, with the help of some others, moulded it into a great golden calf. The people were amazed! *(Oooh! Aaah!)*

The next day he lit a fire and offered sacrifices in front of the calf and the people loved it! There was a great feast, eating, drinking and dancing long into the night.

*(Mime eating, drinking and do some air guitar and dad-dancing!)*

Meanwhile, God alerted Moses to what was happening. And God was angry with the people. But Moses pleaded and prayed and God’s anger was turned away from the people. Moses set off to come down the mountain, carrying with him the stone tablets with the commandments engraved on them.

*(Moses moves from his hiding place into full view of everyone)*

When he heard the noise and saw the dancing... *(Mime eating, drinking and do some air guitar and dad-dancing! Make cat calls etc.)*

He was horrified. So horrified, that he threw up his hands in horror and dropped the stone tablets.

The commandments of God lay broken on the ground.

And in front of Moses the commandments of God lay broken by the people.

*(Everyone becomes very still and silent)*

Moses made sure the golden calf was destroyed. And all the people repented.

*(Everyone kneel)*
Week Five: Presence and Gifts

Bible Readings
OT: Exodus 35:1-10 (19); 40:34-38
Epistle: Ephesians 4:1-16

This session creates opportunities for people of all ages to:
- Think about God’s presence in the church and the world.
- Respond joyfully and generously in appropriate ways.

Key Focus

In this last extract from the Exodus story, we find the Israelites reversing the actions we explored last week. They have repented and want to journey on with God’s presence always with them. Now they are gladly and generously bringing gifts to help build a special Tent of Meeting – and they are so generous, Moses has to tell them to stop! All kinds of gifts are received, from the functional to the beautiful – everything is acceptable and needed.

For us, the focus of God’s presence is no longer limited to a building. It is found among his people, the body of Christ. Our response is to give generously of all that God has given us and share with each other, with the vulnerable and to help serve God in the world.

During this final session a positive link should be made to the Giving in Grace literature. (For more general information on this, see the Communications page of the Giving in Grace website. For more on using response forms, see the Response Forms web page.)

The Israelites brought their gifts joyfully and generously, in the same way, so church members are invited to renew their own commitment. However, this is not simply about the buildings we enjoy. Giving is much wider than that. For us, God is present through his Holy Spirit in every place, every time, in every situation. So rather than thinking, as the Israelites did, that we are giving back to God, we need to think that we are sharing what we have with each other to achieve our purposes – serving each other, caring for each other, living for God in the world, spreading the good news. The way we use money is just one aspect of the way we live joyful and generous lives. Everyone – of whatever age – is part of the body of Christ. Everyone can respond with joy to God’s presence among us, and everyone can share the gifts they have with others.

Background Preparation

Read the Exodus story and also the other readings. Take some time to look back over the previous four weeks and reflect on the threads that are running through the material and the way the story has been unfolding in your context.
Scene Setting

If you use projection, display a rolling montage of scenes from your local church and community life – or scenes that reflect the activities of everyday life. (This will require some preparation, and care will need to be taken to make sure no inappropriate photographs are used, or are used without the permission of people in the images).

Play appropriate music in the background that reflects the idea that God’s people are the living church inspired by the Holy Spirit, such as ‘For I’m building a people of power’.

If you don’t use projection, make a frieze that shows scenes of life for your church and community. Each scene could display photos, publicity posters, information, etc. Make this large enough to display somewhere noticeable in the worship space. Scenes might include church life, at the school gate, at the shops, in the park, etc.

You will also need a table with a range of objects representing activities that people are engaged with, e.g. toys for different age groups, musical instruments, a laptop, gardening tools, baking trays, school books, medical accessories. (You will need to choose things that reflect the life and interests of your congregation.)

God Is With Us

(This could be an opening worship activity)

If you have been showing pictures or displaying the frieze, talk about the variety of life in your church and community. In the past week people will have been doing all kinds of things – at work, in the home, at school, at play, alone and with others.

Invite people to go and choose something from the table that represents an activity they have been involved with. You could also suggest that, if there is nothing there to symbolise their world, they could mime an activity, e.g. swimming or dancing.

When those who wish to have chosen an item or an action, invite them to come forward and place the object or do the action at the front saying:

When we (e.g.) swim, dance, cook,

God is with us.

After each object/action, everyone shouts:

God is with us.

When everyone has taken part, you could end with this or a similar prayer:

In every place,
in every action,
in every moment,

God is with us!
**Walking to the Tent:**

(This could be a confession activity)

Invite everyone who is able to gather at the back of the worship space.

Talk about how the Israelites felt when they realised that God’s presence was really important to them. They were truly sorry that they had let God down. They wanted things to be right again so they could rejoice.

Invite people to hold hands out in front, palms upwards, and follow the instructions as they listen and join in.

We want to come into your presence, Lord, but sometimes we forget that you are always with us.

Lord, have mercy.

**R: Lord, have mercy.**

Take four paces forward

We want to come into your presence, Lord, but sometimes we forget to include others in your love.

Christ, have mercy.

**R: Christ, have mercy.**

Take four paces forward

We want to come into your presence, Lord, but sometimes we get busy doing other things.

Lord, have mercy.

**R: Lord, have mercy.**

A minister ends with a prayer of absolution.

Then you could invite everyone to light a candle as a sign of God’s light and presence with us.

**Exploring the Scriptures:**

See Appendix 1 for the drama script for the Exodus reading.

If you are using the Gospel reading, you might like to read from a story bible.

**What Size Tent? Activity/Talk**

Using a camping store catalogue or similar, plus images from the internet, prepare some A4 cards with about six pictures of different-sized tents. Make a single card with a picture of a big top. You will need a very tiny tent e.g. an Action Man tent, or you could make a model.

If you are really keen, you could set up a small tent inside the church, and a large one outside!

Start with the small tent.

Invite people to think about what uses this tent might have; who it might be for.

Point out that it’s not very functional!

Then hand out the picture cards and invite people to gather in groups to look at them and discuss their uses and possibilities. If you have set up some tents, they could go and check them over. Gather some feedback.

Ask for suggestions as to the biggest tent anyone has ever seen (marquees etc. will be suggested). Then show the picture of the big top, which might seat 5,000!!
The Israelites were going to build a special tent of meeting as a sign of God’s presence with them. How big does a tent that suggests God’s presence need to be? The Psalms sometimes talk about how God stretches out the whole of the heavens like a tent – so maybe God’s tent is the world. But also we know God’s presence is with us all the time – through the Holy Spirit he is with each person. Each of us is a tent! We are the special tent. God’s presence is no longer about a building but is about people – people who do God’s work in the world. The Israelites brought all that they had to help build the tent – we offer our gifts and resources to help build God’s kingdom in the world.

**What Can We Bring?**

You will need enough mini-box templates for everyone, plus glue, pens and decorative items.

The Israelites brought all kinds of gifts with them – ask if anyone can remember any from the reading, or read out some of the items e.g. gold, silver, yarn, goat’s hair, acacia wood, spices.

But when Paul spoke to the Ephesians about gifts, it was about teaching, or being good at paperwork or helping others.

As the church, God’s living people, we need all kinds of gifts. We still need resources to do God’s work – which might include money, making things or taking on jobs.

Invite people to take a few moments to think about what gift they can offer and then share with others nearby. Give people time to write this on the inside of their box, and then glue the box together and decorate it.

During a hymn, take an offering of all these gifts, explaining that these are a symbol of all that we can give to the life of the church.

**Memory Hunt: A Prayer Activity**

NB You will need to adapt this activity for the specifics of your building.

Prepare a list of between six and ten locations in your church with clues to take people there. Places should include stained glass windows, memorial stones, special objects as well as the obvious places listed below. Photocopy enough for everyone to have one.

When they find the place, there will be a prayer card with ideas for prayer. Encourage people to do this in families or in twos and threes, and to pray together.

When they have prayed at the place, tick it off on the sheet and find the next place.

**Possible list of places, clues and prayers**

- Find a place that reminds us that listening to God’s word is important – **Lectern**
  
  **Prayer idea**

  Pause for a moment and think of a bible story that means a lot to you. Pray for those who read in church, and give thanks for the gift of God’s word.

- Discover the place where everybody’s Christian journey begins – **Font**
  
  **Prayer idea**

  Spend a few moments remembering all the many generations of children baptised in the church and pray for families in your church and community.
Knock, knock, who’s there?? **Main entrance door**

**Prayer idea**
Turn your back on the door and pray for the people who live nearby; turn towards the door and pray that many people will find their way to the church and discover God’s love.

Many words are heard but few people go up here – **The pulpit**

**Prayer idea**
Think about all those who preach and teach in the church and pray that they will be inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Lives that are lived well, deaths that are hard to live with – **A war memorial**

**Prayer idea**
Invite everyone to make a dove shape with their hands and pray for places that are still at war today.

Find something common yet special – **A cross**

**Prayer idea**
Invite each person to touch the cross and, as they do, silently pray that they will be able to follow Jesus more and more each day.

We eat, we drink, we remember – **Chalice/paten and communion vessels**

**Prayer idea**
Pray together for those people who can’t come to church and who are visited at home with communion, asking that God’s presence will be very close to them.

The tent of meeting or tabernacle was a special place that would remind the Israelites of God’s character and attributes. We all have special items that remind us of people or events that meant a lot to us – maybe ask for suggestions before beginning this activity.

Our church building is full of such memories – some things remind us of why we worship, some things remind us of people who did special things. Encourage people to pause and pray at each of the special places – and maybe even find some places that are not in the memory hunt.

**Mission Challenge: Presence and Gifts**

The challenge is to be aware of God’s presence this week in all that we do, pausing to say silently ‘You are with me’ in every new situation. The challenge might also be to spend some time thinking about how you can joyfully commit to giving at church.
Peer Group Time – Children
You could adapt any of the above activities to do with children or young people.

Continue with the journal book.

Head the fifth page ‘Presence and gifts’
For non-readers, the word ‘presence’ is heard as identical to ‘presents’! So the presence of God is inextricably linked for children with the idea of gifts, probably the gifts that God gives to us.

Encourage children to illustrate this page with a drawing of a tent and then place lots of illustrations of ‘presents’ around the tent, but on the gift boxes write the things that they would like to offer back to God.

Jewellery making
One of the things the Israelites gave to help build the tent of meeting was their jewellery made of gold and silver, but they also gave coloured yarns and other items.

Each child is to make a ‘friendship bracelet’ to remind them of their own special friendship with God that means his presence is with us always. But one of the strands will also represent the gift that they want to offer to God – that could be something they are good at, or it might be an idea about raising money for the church.

Suggest that three of the colours of either beads or wool are:

Green – to remind us that God is the creator of all things
Yellow – to remind us that we have so many blessings in our lives
Red – to remind us of God’s love shown through Jesus

Then have a selection of other colours to choose from, for example, orange might be a gift of making people laugh or of having lots of energy; gold might be about giving money; pink might be about a gift of movement, and so on. It’s up to each child, and they don’t have to explain their choices.

When the bracelets are made, tie them round the wrists and invite each child to touch the bracelet as prayers are offered.

Peer Group Time – Adults
Either use Action Scene 5 to think about the life of the church as people identify themselves with figures in the picture.

Ask: If this was a picture of us as a church, which person in it is most like you at the moment? Which would you like to be? What might make the difference?

Use the picture to identify the various gifts and attitudes and talk about whether they are present in the life of the church.

Use the discussion to help relate the story of the Israelites bringing their gifts to the need for church members to make their own response to God within Giving in Grace.

OR Lectio Divina
This week the passage from Ephesians might make a good choice for this activity.

Print copies of the reading so that everyone has the same text and translation, and only this passage.

Explain the process.
Read the passage round the group a verse at a time. Then keep silence for a few minutes. Then go round the group, each person saying aloud a word that has caught their attention from the passage, without further comment.

Silence.

Then read the passage again round the group (starting with a different person). Keep silence for a few minutes. Then go round the group, each person saying a sentence or phrase that may elaborate on the first word or be different.

Silence.

Read the passage again round the group (starting with a different person).

Then invite discussion and comment on the words/phrases chosen.

After a period of time, move into a time of prayer.

Read the passage a final time.

**Straight talking**

Show a clip from the BBC 2012 series The Syndicate (for a trailer of the series – check YouTube).

Talk about people’s response to the idea of suddenly acquiring a lot of money – either through luck or as an inheritance. How do they think they would react? How would they establish priorities about what to do with the money?

Recap the journey through Preach Exodus!, asking people to reflect on any particular things that have stood out for them. Ultimately, we are being faced with the question of how we are going to use the resources that God has blessed us with.

Encourage an open, confidential discussion as to how people feel when talking about giving to the church as a priority. Hand out the Giving in Grace materials for further discussion and ask people to return the response forms at the designated time.
Appendix 1: Bringing Stuff

This could be done either as a reading using voices or prepared and improvised by a group of people beforehand.

You will need: large plan of the tabernacle, large piece of plain fabric; other fabrics in different colours, balls of wool in different colours; animal hides (sheepskin rugs or leather jackets!), olive oil, spices, jewellery; items that look gold, silver or bronze.

The main character, Bez, is sitting in the centre of the stage, miming sewing the cloth.

He keeps getting interrupted – add other interruptions if you wish!!

Israeelite 1: Where shall I put this?
Bez: What is it?

Israeelite: Olive oil.
Bez: Olive oil over there.

Israeelite: Cheers, mate.

Israeelite: Hi there, I’ve got some wool here; do you know where it goes?
Bez: Wool goes over there.

Israeelite: Thanks. This is great, isn’t it? You look busy…Mustn’t stop you.
Bez: Thanks.

Israeelite family: Oh hi. We’ve got a load of spices here. Everyone is so excited. Even little Ruthie is carrying some. Doesn’t she look sweet?
Bez: Very cute (doesn’t look up).

Israeelite: Where do we put this then?
Bez: Spices to the right, eyes down and carry on.

Israeelite: Thank you so much.
Israelite: Got some wood for you, bro.

Bez: I can see that.

Israelite: So what shall I do with it then?

Bez: Leave it over there.

Israelite: What here?

Bez: Yes, yes, just leave it and go.

Jez enters with empty hands. Bez jumps up.

Bez: So what have you brought then?

Jez: Me? Brought?

Bez: Yep – olive oil there, wood, gold, silver (Sweeps arm around the room)

Jez: (Wanders over to the gold) Wow!

Bez: You brought some gold then?

Jez: Why would I?

Bez: Thank you so much for wasting my time. Now, if you wouldn’t mind, just leave. I have a tabernacle to make.

Jez: Gold! (Bez ignores him) Is this all for real? It must be worth a fortune. This isn’t any old rubbish. (Wanders to the wood) This is great – real quality, you could work this up a treat.

Bez: So you haven’t brought anything then?

Jez: Nah. I don’t have stuff like this lying around. Seems folks have been pretty generous though.

Bez: It’s been amazing. They all want to do something for God. I mean after all that’s happened – Egypt, through the sea, food and water, messing it up with the golden calf.

Jez: Oh yeah. A bad scene that!

Bez: But they reckon God is going to stick with us.

Jez: Cool. God is going to stick with us.

Bez: So you know a bit about wood, then?

Jez: Me? Well, I could...

Bez: If you fancy working on that wood.

Jez: That wood?

Bez: Yep. For God. For the tabernacle.

Jez: God? Yeah, well...

Bez moves over to the plans. He beckons Jez over to look, then leaves him alone.

Jez starts to follow him, but suddenly walks back to the gold pile and removes an earring to add to the pile.

Exit
Alternative dramatic reading: Moses and the people (based on Exodus 35:4-29)

One person is Moses – and addresses the congregation as if they were the people of Israel.

Moses: Now listen! Pay attention, everyone. This is what the Lord has commanded.

Note: commanded. Not just asked, but commanded. So pay attention.

From among all of you there is to be an offering to the Lord. Everyone who is feeling generous is to bring gold, silver, bronze, blue, purple, crimson yarns; fine linen – oh, and you can bring goats’ hair, rams’ skins and leather. Bring acacia wood, oil, spices, and any valuable gemstones you happen to have.

And then any of you who are good with your hands come and make the tabernacle, just as God has commanded. We’ll need a tent, and then we’ll need the tabernacle itself – with clasps, frames, pillars, bases. We’ll need a curtain for the screen, a table, with poles. All the utensils need to be made, the incense prepared, the screen, the hangings, everything, right down to the pegs to keep the tent in place. Oh, and we’ll need finely-worked vestments for the priest and the servers – so there will be something for everyone to do, young and old, men and women.

Narrator: Then the people went away and thought about this. Then they came. They came, men, women, and children. They came carrying brooches and earrings and necklaces; old bits of wood, new bits of wood. They brought leather and skins. Everyone who could make an offering of gold, silver or bronze brought something. Everyone who could brought fine wood. The women spun with their hands, and the children helped. All the Israelites whose hearts were willing brought things as an offering to the Lord. And they were glad!