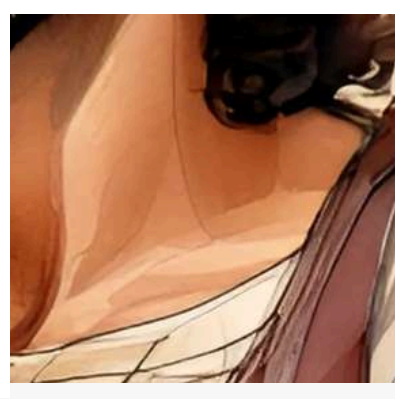
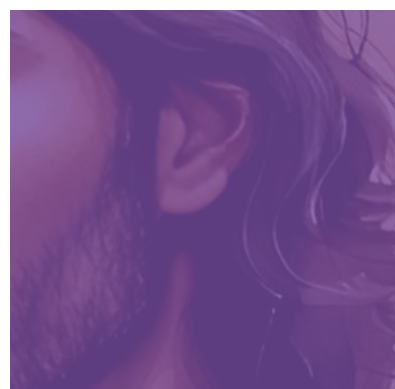
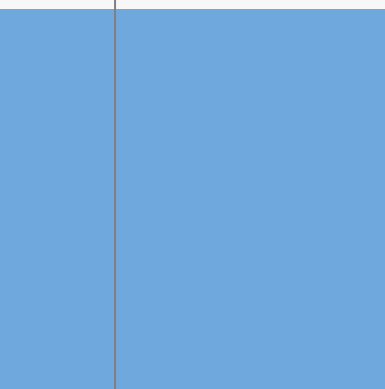
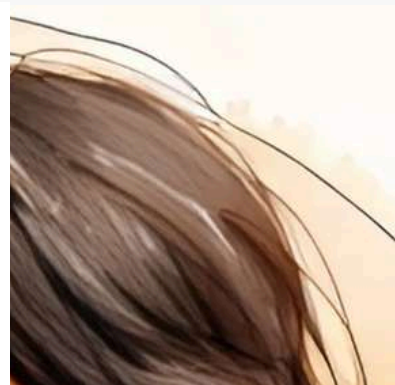


Jesus the Storyteller

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God"

-John 1:1



Sharing God's Story

Storytelling is a fundamental part of human communication. It is how we share our experiences, make sense of the world, and pass on our values and beliefs. Jesus, as the master teacher, understood this power of story. He used vivid imagery, relatable characters, and surprising twists to engage his listeners and make his message memorable.

The Religious Education Directory for Catholic Schools emphasises the importance of scripture within RE. It calls for a "**systematic study** of the mystery of God" and the "life and teaching of Jesus Christ" **through scripture** and tradition. The directory recognises the power of story to engage pupils and help them connect with the message of the Gospel.



Storytelling leads naturally into deeper questions of wonder and meaning, and gentle movement beyond the literal into the spiritual.

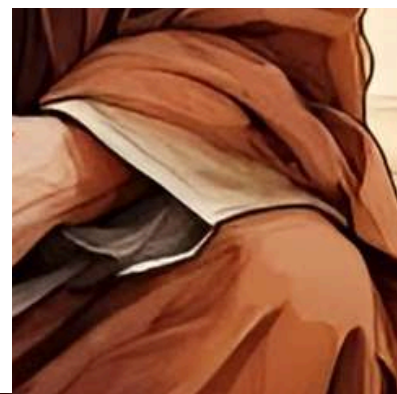
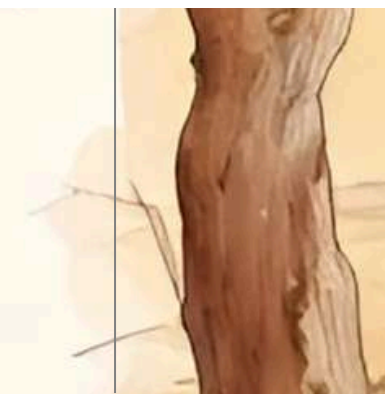
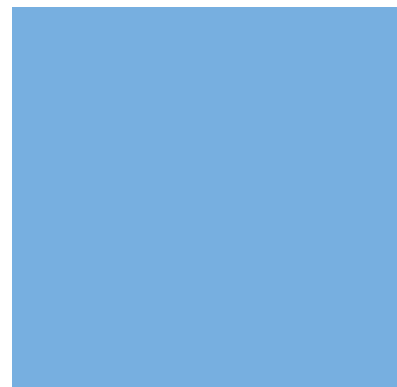
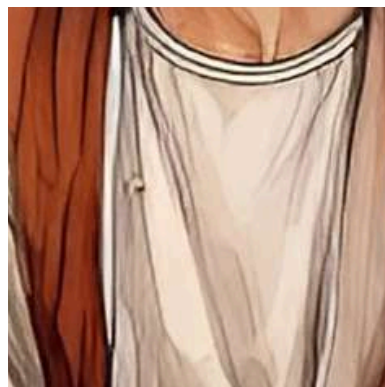
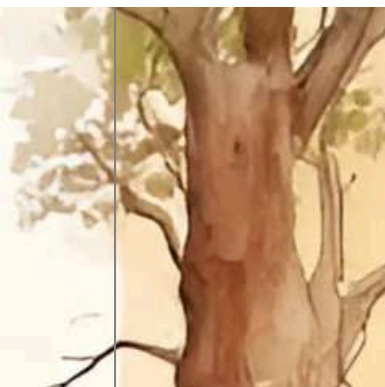
-Religious Education Directory



From the Head to the Heart

"The Church describes a two-fold process for an authentic reading of Sacred Scripture. The first level involves analysing passages, in ways common to the development of more general literacy skill and competence and familiar in classroom settings... However, such academic analysis, even when it leads to an ability to retell a passage, cannot be the final goal for the reading of Sacred Scripture... Added to an analytical reading, therefore, must be a *lectio divina*, a sacred reading, which allows the reality of faith expressed in the words that are studied, to be uncovered. A spiritual reading moves attention from the head to the heart as it seeks to interpret what is signified by the words. Purposefully seeking meaning, and truths, conveyed in the author's words, it reads passages through the eyes of faith."

- Religious Education Directory



Christ in the Curriculum

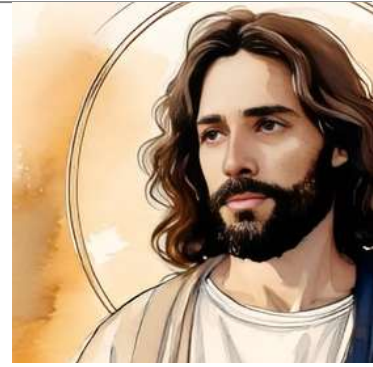
This resource provides an approach to teaching and exploring Scripture rooted in the principles of the Religious Education Directory. It draws students into an **encounter with the narrative** of God's relationship with humanity and allows them to make tangible, relatable links with their own lives. 'Jesus the Storyteller' also supports the RED's emphasis on using Scripture as a primary source, understanding different literary forms, appreciating the historical and cultural context, and exploring the emotional, spiritual and personal dimensions of Bible stories.

This resource offers seven approaches which give us tools and techniques to align our practice with the intent of the RED and the mission of the Church.

- 1) **Jesus the Picture Painter:** Helps engage students' *senses and imaginations through vivid imagery and descriptive language.*
- 2) **Jesus the Contextualiser:** Supports the RED's emphasis on understanding the *historical, cultural, and social context of Bible stories.*
- 3) **Jesus the Location Scout:** encourages students to connect Bible stories to their *own lives and environments.*
- 4) **Jesus the Empathizer:** Allows students to explore the *emotional dimensions* of Bible stories.
- 5) **Jesus the Prop Master:** Encourages the use of *visual aids and objects to bring Bible stories to life.*
- 6) **Jesus the Character Crafter:** Deepens understanding of the *characters in Bible stories* and understanding their motivations, actions, and relationships.
- 7) **Jesus the Joker:** Encourages students to look at how Bible stories can *engage and connect*



Jesus the Picture Painter



Concept

Jesus used vivid and descriptive language to paint pictures with his words, appealing to the senses of sight, sound, smell, touch, and even taste. This immersive approach helped his listeners to connect with the stories on a physical level and make them more memorable. He wanted them to experience the story, not just hear it.

Example

Matthew 6:28–29 ESV–CE

“And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

Jesus isn't just talking about flowers. He's using vivid imagery to make a point about God's provision. Consider the sensory details:

- **Sight & Smell:** "Lilies of the field" evokes a picture of beautiful, vibrant, fragrant flowers. The comparison to "Solomon in all his glory" paints a picture of unparalleled splendour. We can almost see the rich robes and dazzling adornments. The contrast between the simple beauty of the lilies and Solomon's elaborate attire emphasizes the point Jesus is making.
- **Touch:** While not explicitly stated, the imagery invites us to imagine the delicate texture of the flower petals.
- **Feelings:** The verse connects with the feeling of anxiety. By contrasting it with the serene beauty of the lilies, Jesus offers a powerful visual representation of trust and peace.

Jesus could have just said, "Don't worry about clothes, God will provide." But that wouldn't have the same impact. By using the example of the lilies, he engages the listeners' senses and emotions, making the message more memorable and impactful. The image of the lilies in their natural beauty, surpassing even the magnificence of Solomon, sticks with the listener long after the words are spoken. It's a powerful way to convey the message of God's care for even the smallest details of creation, and by extension, for us.

This is a consistent element of Jesus' teaching. Think of the parable of the sower (different types of soil, sprouting seeds, birds eating the seed), the prodigal son (the feast, the fatted calf, the older brother's anger), or the description of the final judgment (separating the sheep from the goats). These vivid images aren't just decorative; they are essential to the message itself, helping listeners to truly see what Jesus is talking about and connect with it on a deeper level.

Jesus the Picture Painter



Example Script Delivery

When sharing scripture passages, use rich and descriptive language, engage students' imaginations, and help them to experience the stories with all their senses. This can be done by adding context and depth to the narration at suitable times using sensory descriptors.

Luke 1:5-20 ESV-CE

Teacher: Today, we're going to hear a story about a very special visitor, but we're not just going to listen, we're going to try and imagine we're there! Close your eyes for a moment. (Pause) Imagine it's a long, long time ago. (Pause) You're in a big, beautiful building called the Temple. (Pause) What do you think you might see? (Allow students to answer. Possible answers: Gold, candles, people in special clothes.) That's right! Maybe shiny gold things, flickering candles, and people wearing special clothes. **(Read Luke 1:5-7)**

Teacher: Zechariah was a priest. That means he helped people in the Temple. (Pause) Imagine him wearing his special clothes. (Pause) What sounds might he hear in the Temple? (Allow students to answer. Possible answers: Singing, music, people praying.) Yes! Maybe lots of singing, beautiful music, and people whispering their prayers. (Pause) You might even smell something nice and sweet burning. (Pause) It's incense! (Pause) It makes the Temple smell wonderful. **(Read Luke 1:8-11)**

Teacher: (Pause) Suddenly, a bright light flashed! (Pause) Open your eyes! (Pause) Imagine a very bright light shining in the Temple. (Pause) It's so bright, it almost makes you close your eyes again! (Pause) And in the middle of the light... (Pause) an angel! (Pause) Wow! (Pause) What do you think the angel might look like? (Allow students to answer. Possible answers: Wings, shiny clothes, a beautiful face.) **(Read Luke 1:12-17)**

Teacher: (Pause) Imagine how surprised Zechariah was! (Pause) He and Elizabeth had waited a long time for a baby. (Pause) What do you think he felt? (Allow students to answer. Possible answers: Happy, excited, amazed.) **(Read Luke 1:18-20)**

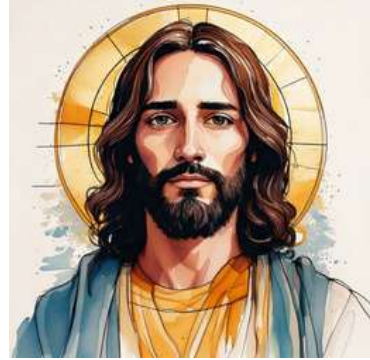
Teacher: (Pause) Uh oh! (Pause) Zechariah tried to talk, but no words came out. (Pause) He couldn't even say how happy he was! (Pause) Imagine not being able to talk. (Pause) How would you feel? (Allow students to answer.)

Teacher: Zechariah couldn't talk, but he knew in his heart that the angel had told him the truth. (Pause) He had seen a very special visitor, and he knew something amazing was going to happen.

Teacher: Close your eyes again. (Pause) Imagine the bright light, the smell of incense, the angel's words. (Pause) This was a very special visit, a visit Zechariah would never forget. And it reminds us that God loves us and hears our prayers.



Jesus the Contextualiser



Concept

Jesus often provided historical, cultural, and social context for his stories and teachings. He explained customs, referenced familiar events, and clarified the meaning of specific terms or concepts. This background information helped his audience to understand the full significance of his message and avoid misinterpretations. He understood that knowing the why behind the story was just as important as the what.

Example

Matthew 15:1-9 (and specifically, verse 3-6) ESV-CE

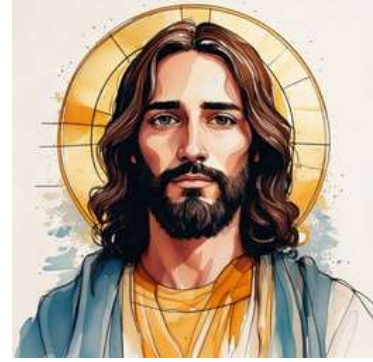
"He answered them, 'And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God commanded, 'Honour your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to God," he need not honour his father.' So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God."

The Pharisees and scribes challenge Jesus about his disciples not following the 'tradition of the elders' regarding handwashing. This is similar to Mark 7, but in Matthew, we see Jesus himself providing the crucial context and explanation.

- **The Challenge:** The religious leaders are upset about the disciples' apparent disregard for ritual purity. They're not just talking about hygiene; it's about religious tradition and what they consider to be defilement.
- **Jesus' Response:** Jesus doesn't just defend his disciples' actions. He goes on the offensive, accusing the Pharisees of hypocrisy. He quotes Isaiah 29:13, "These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules."
- **The Contextual Explanation (Verses 4-6):** This is where Jesus provides the crucial context. He says, "For God commanded, 'Honour your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.'"

In this passage, Jesus himself provides the historical, cultural, and religious context for his teaching. He clarifies the specific tradition he's challenging and explains how it conflicts with established scripture. This is a clear example of Jesus providing the "why" behind his words, preventing misinterpretations and revealing the true heart of the issue. He's not just rejecting tradition; he's demonstrating how some traditions can actually undermine true religious devotion.

Jesus the Contextualiser



Example Script Delivery

To enrich the sharing of scripture, provide sufficient background information, explain unfamiliar customs, and help students understand the context in which the story took place. This can be supported by accessing background information, bible commentary, and through formation within the resources.

Luke 1:26–38 ESV–CE

Teacher: Today, we're going to look at a very important story about a young woman named Mary, but before we do, we need to understand a little bit about what life was like back then. Knowing the "why" behind the story is just as important as the "what." (Read Luke 1:26–27)

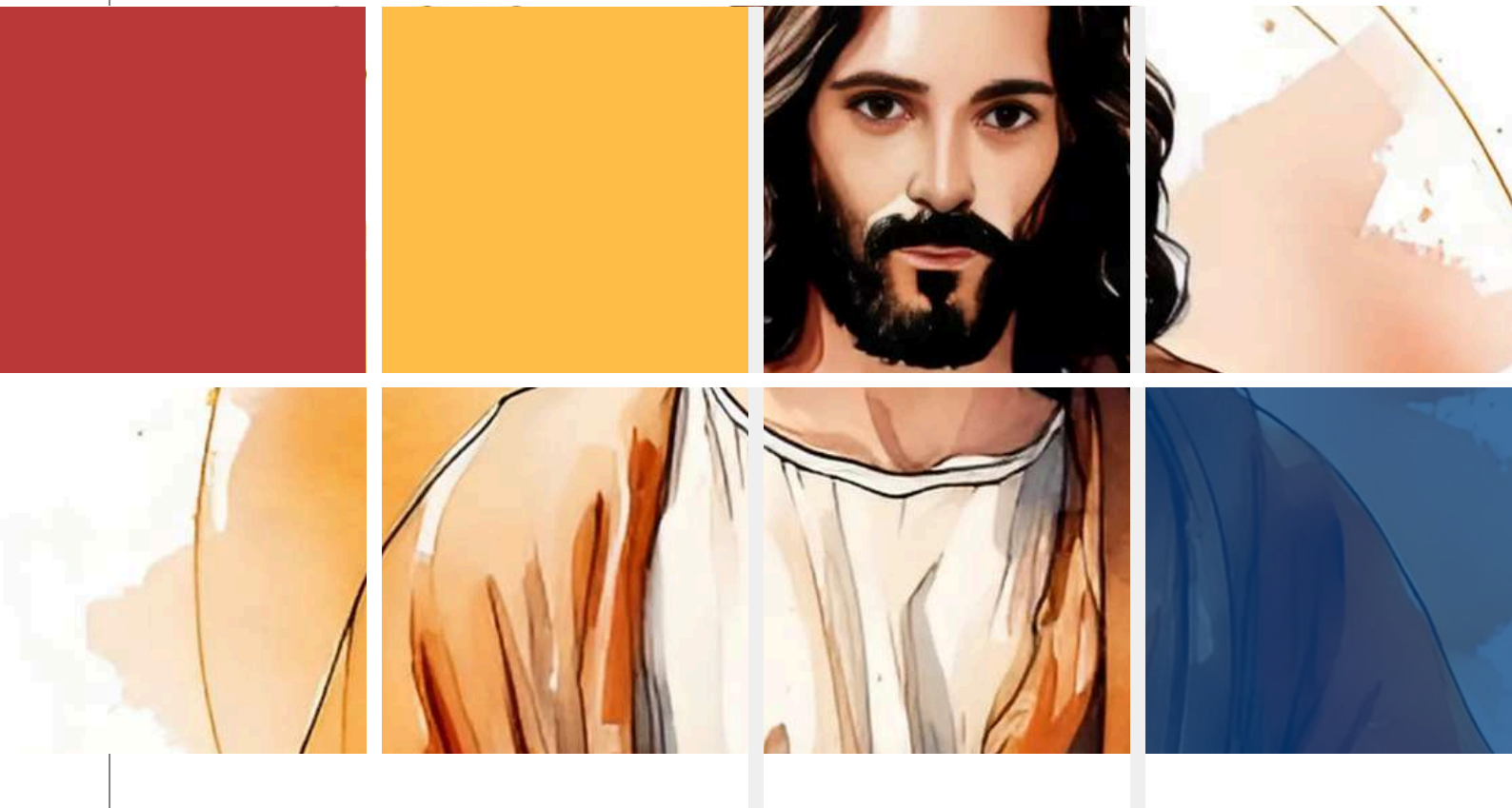
Teacher: This story takes place in a town called Nazareth, in Galilee. (Pause) Now, Galilee was a region that was looked down upon by some people in Judea. It wasn't considered as important. (Pause) So, Mary lived in a small, perhaps not very fancy town. (Pause) It was a different time, too. (Pause) Girls often got married at a young age, and Mary was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph. (Pause) Being engaged was a very serious commitment, almost like being married already. (Pause) It was a big deal. (Pause) So, think about Mary. She's young, living in a small town, and engaged to be married. This is her context, her background. (Read Luke 1:28–33)

Teacher: Now, something amazing happens. (Pause) An angel, Gabriel, comes to visit Mary. (Pause) Imagine that! (Pause) Angels are messengers from God. (Pause) They are powerful and important. (Pause) The angel says to Mary, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you." (Pause) This is a huge compliment! (Pause) It means God has chosen Mary for something very special. (Pause) The angel tells Mary she will have a baby, even though she's never been with a man. (Pause) This was completely unheard of! (Pause) It was something that had never happened before. This is important context. The people of that time understood how babies were conceived. This news was shocking and revolutionary. (Read Luke 1:34–37)

Teacher: Mary is understandably confused. (Pause) She asks, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" (Pause) She's asking a very logical question! (Pause) The angel explains that the Holy Spirit will come upon her, and the baby will be the Son of God. (Pause) Think about what this means. (Pause) The people of that time knew about the Holy Spirit, God's power at work in the world. (Pause) The angel is telling Mary that God himself will be involved in this amazing miracle. (Pause) This helps us understand just how special Jesus is. (Read Luke 1:38)

Teacher: Mary responds, "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled." (Pause) This is a very brave thing to say. (Pause) Mary is agreeing to something that will completely change her life. (Pause) She's trusting in God, even though she doesn't fully understand what's going to happen. (Pause) In that time, this could have been very difficult for Mary. People might not have believed her story. (Pause) She was taking a big risk. (Pause) Understanding the social context of the time helps us appreciate Mary's courage and faith.

Teacher: So, by understanding the background – where Mary lived, what her life was like, and the importance of angels and the Holy Spirit – we can understand the story of Mary and Gabriel much better. It helps us see just how amazing and important this event was. It's not just a story; it's a real event that changed the world.



Jesus the Location Scout



Concept

Jesus often tailored his stories and teachings to the specific location where he was speaking. He drew inspiration from the surrounding environment, using local landmarks, natural phenomena, and cultural practices to illustrate his points. This made his message relevant and memorable for his audience. He understood the power of place in learning.

Example

John 4:7–15 ESV–CE

A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink’,

Jesus is in Samaria, near a well. This isn't just any well; it's likely Jacob's well, a place steeped in history and tradition. Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman is deeply rooted in the place where it occurs:

- **The Well Itself:** The well is central to the story. It's a place of physical need (water) and social interaction (women would gather there). Jesus uses the well as a metaphor for spiritual thirst. He offers "living water" that will quench that thirst forever, contrasting it with the physical water of the well that requires constant drawing. The very presence of the well makes this analogy powerful and immediate for the woman.
- **Samaria:** The location is crucial. Samaritans and Jews had a complex and often hostile relationship. By engaging with a Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus is breaking down social and religious barriers. The fact that he, a Jewish man, is talking to her, a Samaritan woman, in public, is a powerful statement in itself. It challenges the prejudices of his audience.
- **Time of Day:** The text mentions it was around noon. This is significant because it was not the usual time for women to draw water. They typically did so in the cooler parts of the day, morning or evening. This detail subtly hints that this woman may have been ostracized or had a reason to avoid the usual crowds, adding another layer to her story and Jesus' interaction with her.

Jesus could have talked about spiritual thirst anywhere, but the setting of the well, with its rich symbolism and social implications, makes the message resonate more deeply. The woman's daily experience of drawing water becomes a powerful illustration of the spiritual refreshment Jesus offers. The location, the well, and the time of day all contribute to the richness and impact of Jesus' teaching. He uses the very fabric of the place to weave his message.

Jesus the Location Scout



Example Script Delivery

Using the physical spaces you have available can really help you connect Bible stories to students' own lives and environments. By using the physical space to set the scene and create atmosphere you can root scripture in their lived reality and create a more tangible connection to it's meaning.

Luke 1:39-40 ESV-CE

Teacher: Today, we're going to look at another story about Mary and think about where she went and why that place was important. Just like Jesus used the places around him to help people understand his message, we're going to use our space today to help us understand this story. (Read Luke 1:39-40)

Teacher: Right after the angel Gabriel visits Mary, she goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Now, Elizabeth lived in a town in the hill country of Judah. (Pause) Imagine what that might be like. (Point to a corner of the room) Let's pretend that corner of our room is the hill country of Judah. (Invite the children to imagine the landscape) What do you think you might see if you were Mary, traveling to visit Elizabeth? (Allow students to answer. Possible answers: Hills, valleys, maybe small villages.) That's right! Maybe lots of rolling hills, green valleys, and small, quiet villages.

Teacher: It would have been a long journey for Mary. (Motion with your hand across the room, as if showing a long journey) Let's pretend this space between where we are now and that corner is Mary's journey. (Walk a few steps in that direction) She probably travelled on foot or by donkey. Think about the journey itself. (Pause) She might have travelled through fields, along winding paths, perhaps even passing by other small towns. (Pause) The journey itself is part of the story. It shows Mary's eagerness to share her good news and be with her family. (Ask a child to "be" Mary and "travel" to the designated corner.) (Read Luke 1:41-42)

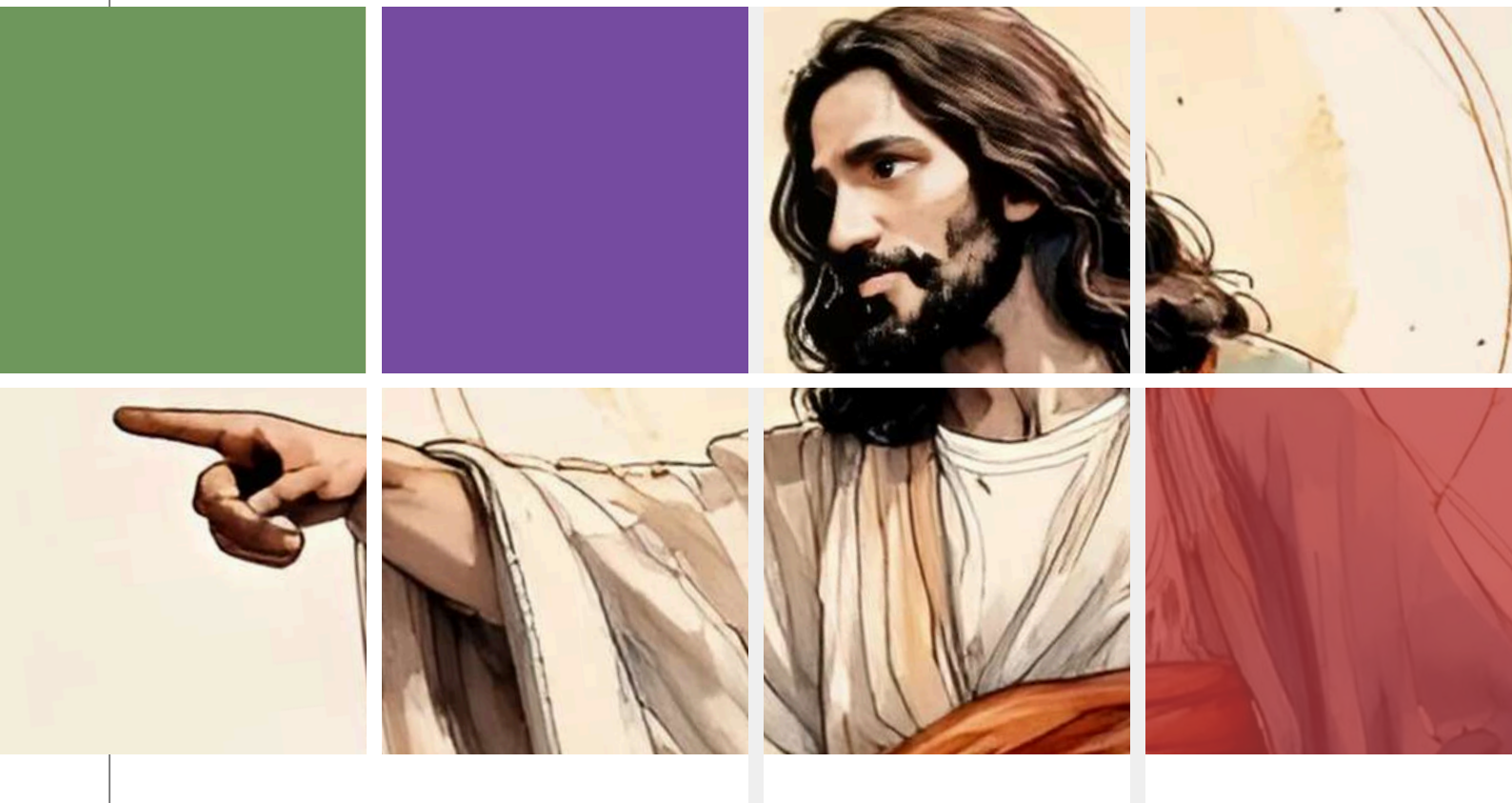
Teacher: When Mary arrives (at the designated corner) something amazing happens. Elizabeth's baby, John, leaps in her womb! (Pause) This is a very special baby, remember? He will grow up to be John the Baptist, who will tell people about Jesus. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and says to Mary, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!" (Pause) This is a huge blessing! It's a recognition of the special role Mary will play in God's plan.

Teacher: (Turn to the children near the designated corner, representing Elizabeth's home.) Imagine being Elizabeth, hearing Mary arrive. (Pause) Imagine the joy you would feel! (Pause) The fact that this happens in Elizabeth's home, a place of family and love, makes it even more special. (Encourage the children at the "home" corner to act out joy and welcome.) (Read Luke 1:43-45)

Teacher: Elizabeth calls Mary "the mother of my Lord!" (Pause) This is a very important title. It shows that Elizabeth understands that Mary's baby will be very special, even the Lord himself! Elizabeth says it is a blessing that Mary has visited her. (Pause) Imagine Mary and Elizabeth together in Elizabeth's home, (at the designated corner) sharing this incredible moment. (Pause) The setting, a home filled with love and family, emphasizes the joy and excitement surrounding the coming of Jesus.

Teacher: (Gather the children together again.) So, the place where Mary visited Elizabeth is important. It's a home, a place of family, nestled in the hills of Judah. (Point to the corner of the room again.) It's a place where God's blessing is shared between two women, a place filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. (Pause) Just like in our little corner of the room, (gesture to the room) Elizabeth's home was a special place. It wasn't just something that happened in a grand temple; it happened in someone's home, making it relatable and personal. (Ask the children: How did using our room like this help you understand the story better? What did you imagine about Mary's journey? What did you imagine about Elizabeth's home?)

Teacher: By thinking about where Mary went and what that place was like, we can understand the story even better. It helps us see how important family and community are, and how God often works in ordinary places, in ordinary lives.



Jesus the Empathiser



Concept

Jesus was deeply attuned to human emotions, and he often used stories to evoke empathy, compassion, and other feelings in his listeners. He understood the power of emotions to connect with people on a deeper level and to make his message more resonant. He wasn't afraid to portray the full spectrum of human experience. He knew that feeling the story was key to remembering it.

Example

Luke 15:11–32 ESV–CE

...And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

This parable is a masterpiece of emotional storytelling. Jesus masterfully evokes a range of emotions in the listener:

- **Compassion/Empathy for the Younger Son:** We feel his youthful impulsiveness, his desire for independence, and ultimately, his desperation and regret when he squanders his inheritance. We're drawn to sympathize with his plight, even though we recognize his mistakes.
- **Love/Forgiveness of the Father:** The father's unconditional love is the emotional core of the story. We feel his longing for his lost son, his overwhelming joy at his return, and his compassionate plea to the older son. This portrayal of a loving and forgiving parent resonates deeply with our own desires for acceptance and love.
- **Sadness/Disappointment:** The parable also hints at the father's potential sadness and disappointment during the younger son's absence. We can imagine the father's worry and heartache, adding another layer of emotional depth.

Jesus doesn't just tell us about forgiveness; he makes us feel it. He allows us to inhabit the emotional landscape of each character, fostering empathy and understanding. The parable isn't simply about a wayward son; it's about family dynamics, forgiveness, resentment, and ultimately, the boundless love of God. By engaging our emotions, Jesus makes the message of the parable far more powerful and memorable. We don't just understand the concept of forgiveness; we feel its transformative power. This emotional connection is crucial to the parable's enduring impact.

Jesus the Empathiser



Example Script Delivery

We can add a whole new dimension to scripture and truly engage the heart when we draw upon the emotions in each passage. When we emphasise the emotional dimensions of Bible stories, we can connect those feelings to students' own experiences.

Luke 1:46–53 ESV–CE

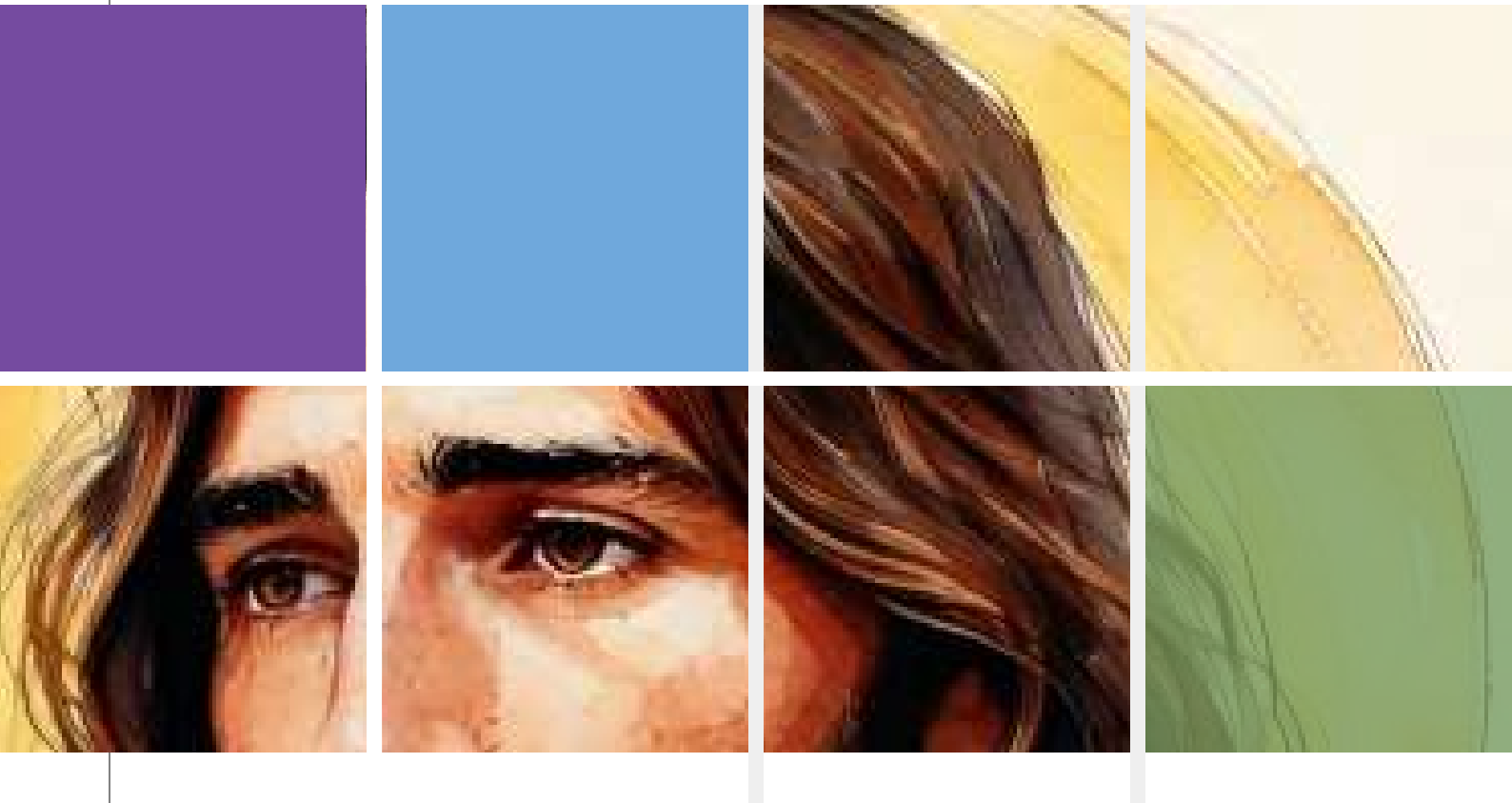
Teacher: Today, we're going to explore Mary's song, a beautiful passage filled with joy and praise. But more than just reading the words, we're going to try to feel what Mary might have felt. Jesus understood the power of emotions, and so we'll try to connect with Mary's emotions as we explore her song. (Read Luke 1:46–50)

Teacher: Mary has just experienced an incredible thing. (Pause) She's been told she will be the mother of Jesus! (Pause) Think about that for a moment. (Pause) How do you think you would feel if an angel told you something like that? (Excited, scared, amazed, confused.) That's right! Mary probably felt a mix of all those things! (Pause) Imagine the excitement bubbling up inside her, the wonder, maybe even a little bit of fear. (Pause) She's chosen for this amazing, important role. How do you think that might make her feel? (Honoured, humbled, proud.)

Teacher: Mary begins to sing. (Read Luke 1:46–47) "My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." (Pause) Can you hear the joy in her voice? (Pause) Imagine her heart overflowing with happiness and gratitude. (Pause) She's praising God for this incredible blessing. (Pause) Have you ever felt so happy that you just wanted to sing? (Allow students to share if they have.) That's probably how Mary felt! (Read Luke 1:48–49) "for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name." 1 (Pause) Mary says God has been mindful of her "humble state." (Pause) What do you think that means? Mary recognizes that she's just a regular person, chosen by God for something extraordinary. (Pause) She feels humble and grateful. (Pause) Have you ever been chosen for something special? (Pause) How did that make you feel? (Allow students to share.) Mary feels that same sense of wonder and gratitude, but on a much grander scale. (Read Luke 1:50)

Teacher: His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation." (Pause) Mary talks about God's mercy. (Pause) Mercy is when someone is kind and forgiving, especially to those who don't deserve it. (Pause) Mary knows that God is merciful, and she praises him for that. (Pause) How does knowing that God is merciful make you feel? (Allow students to answer. Possible answers: Safe, loved, grateful.) (Read Luke 1:53) "He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty." (Pause) Mary's song also talks about God's care for those who are in need. (Pause) She says God fills the hungry with good things. (Pause) This shows God's compassion for those who are struggling. (Pause) How might the people who were hungry feel when they received food? (Allow students to answer. Possible answers: Happy, relieved, grateful.) Mary's song reminds us that God sees those who are suffering and wants to help them.

Teacher: Mary's song is full of powerful emotions: joy, humility, gratitude, and awe. (Pause) By connecting with these emotions, we can understand Mary's song on a deeper level. (Pause) It's not just a song; it's an expression of her heart, her faith, and her love for God. (Pause) It reminds us that God sees us, loves us, and wants to do amazing things through us, even when we feel like we're just ordinary people.



Jesus the Prop Master



Concept

Jesus used physical objects or symbolic actions as props to illustrate his teachings. These tangible elements added a visual dimension to his stories and made his message more memorable and impactful, turning abstract ideas into something concrete. He knew that sometimes, showing was more powerful than telling.

Example

John 13:1-17 ESV-CE

"When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, 'Do you understand what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.'"

The washing of the disciples' feet is far more than just a nice gesture; it's a powerful symbolic action that illustrates Jesus' teaching on humility and service.

- **The Physical Action:** Foot washing was a common practice in that time and culture, primarily done by servants for guests. It was a lowly task. Jesus, as their teacher and leader, taking on this role was a radical reversal of expectations. The disciples would have been shocked and likely uncomfortable. This physical act created a powerful visual and emotional impact.
- **Symbolic Meaning:** The act of washing feet symbolized humility and servanthood. Jesus wasn't just demonstrating these qualities; he was embodying them. He was showing them, in a tangible way, what it meant to be a servant-leader. He connected the physical act to a deeper spiritual truth.
- **Impact on the Disciples:** The disciples' reaction is telling. Peter initially refuses to let Jesus wash his feet, highlighting the discomfort and social awkwardness of the situation. This resistance underscores the power of Jesus' action. It wasn't just a lesson; it was an experience that challenged their preconceptions about leadership.

Jesus could have simply told his disciples to be humble and serve one another. But the act of washing their feet drove the point home in a way that words alone could not. It was a visual, tactile experience that they would never forget. The physical action served as a powerful metaphor for the kind of selfless love and service that Jesus expected from his followers.

Jesus the Prop Master



Example Script Delivery

When sharing scripture we can take the opportunity to use visual aids, objects, or even simple physical gestures and actions to bring Bible stories to life. This can help students to visualise the events and connect with the message in a tangible and tactile way.

Luke 1:57-66 ESV-CE

Teacher: Today, we're going to talk about the birth of John the Baptist, and we're going to use some props to help us understand the story better. Just like Jesus used objects to teach, we'll use things to make this story come to life! (Read Luke 1:57)

Teacher: The time came for Elizabeth to have her baby. (Hold up a baby doll or a wrapped-up bundle of cloth to represent the baby.) Elizabeth and Zechariah had waited a long time for this baby. (Pause) They were very old, and they hadn't been able to have children before. (Pause) This baby was a miracle, a promise from God. (Read Luke 1:58)

Teacher: All their neighbours and relatives heard about it and came to celebrate with them. (Hold up several small toy figures or have some students represent the neighbours and relatives.) Imagine the excitement! (Pause) Everyone was so happy for Elizabeth and Zechariah. (Move the toy figures closer to the "baby".) They had waited so long for this joyous occasion. Teacher: Now, let's think about Zechariah. (Pick up a small whiteboard or piece of paper and a marker or pen.) Remember, Zechariah couldn't talk. (Make a "shhh" gesture with your hand.) He hadn't believed the angel, so he couldn't speak until the baby was born. (Write "Zechariah" on the whiteboard/paper.) He was probably very excited and eager to see his baby. (Make the toy figure representing Zechariah look towards the "baby".) (Read Luke 1:59-60)

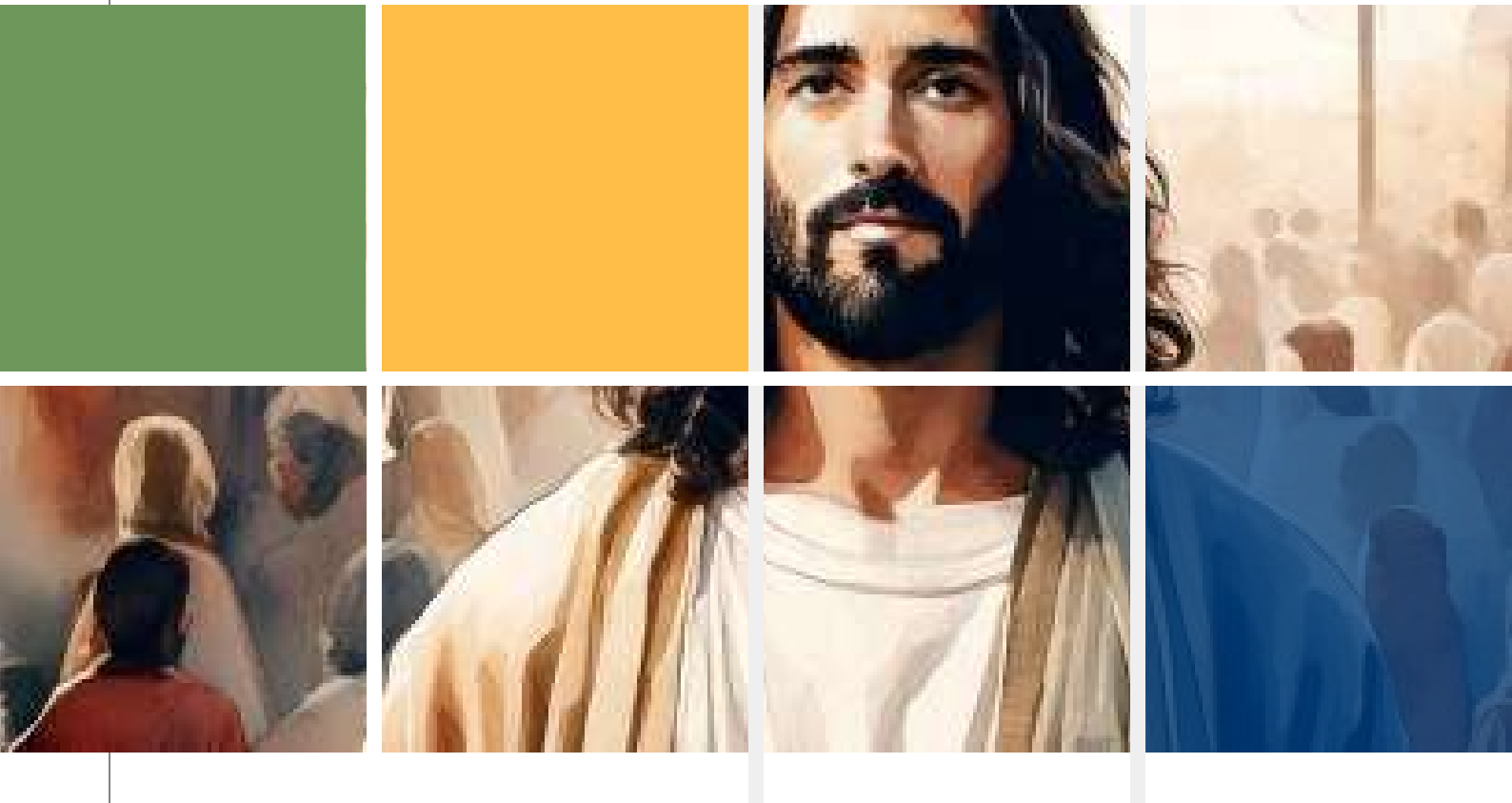
Teacher: Everyone came to celebrate and give the baby a name. They were going to name him Zechariah, after his father. (Point to the whiteboard/paper with Zechariah's name.) But Elizabeth said, "No! He is to be called John." (Have one of the toy figures, or a student, "speak" these words.) This surprised everyone. (Make the other toy figures look surprised.) No one in their family had been named John before. (Read Luke 1:61-63)

Teacher: So, they asked Zechariah. (Point to the toy figure representing Zechariah.) How could he tell them the baby's name if he couldn't talk? (Pause) Zechariah asked for a writing tablet. (Hold up a small notepad or piece of paper.) (Pretend to write on it.) And he wrote, "His name is John." (Write "John" on the notepad/paper and show it to the class.) (Read Luke 1:64)

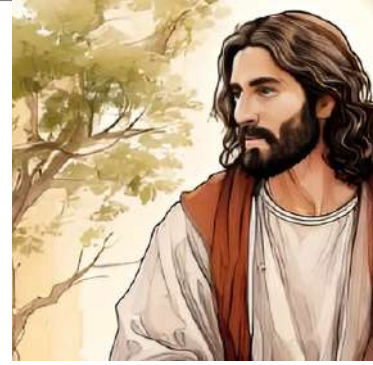
Teacher: (Take away the "shhh" gesture.) Suddenly, Zechariah could talk again! (Pause) He started praising God! (Make the Zechariah figure "praise" by raising its arms.) He was so happy and grateful. (Read Luke 1:65-66)

Teacher: Everyone was amazed. (Make the toy figures look amazed.) They knew this was a very special baby. (Hold up the "baby" again.) They wondered what John would grow up to be.

Teacher: So, by using these simple props, we can see the story of John's birth more clearly. (Gather the props together.) The baby doll reminds us of the miracle, the toy figures remind us of the people celebrating, and the notepad reminds us of John's special name and how Zechariah wrote it down. These objects help us remember the story and understand how important John the Baptist was. Just like Jesus used objects, we used these props to help bring the Bible story to life.



Jesus the Character Crafter



Concept

Jesus was a master of character development, creating vivid and memorable personalities in his stories. He used a few words to paint a picture of their appearance, motivations, and actions, bringing them to life for his listeners. He understood that relatable and engaging characters draw people into the story and make the message more impactful.

Example

Luke 18:9-14 ESV-CE

"The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

In this parable, Jesus contrasts two characters: a Pharisee and a tax collector. With just a few details, he creates vivid images of these individuals and their contrasting attitudes towards God.

The Pharisee:

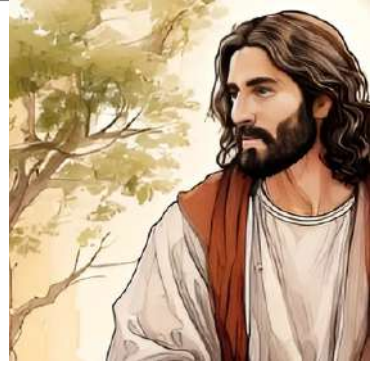
- Appearance: Stands by himself, prays aloud, lists his accomplishments.
- Motivations: Self-righteous, proud, seeks to impress others with his piety.
- Actions: Prays boastfully, thanks God that he is not like other people, looks down on the tax collector.

The Tax Collector:

- Appearance: Stands at a distance, beats his breast, eyes downcast.
- Motivations: Humble, repentant, seeks God's mercy.
- Actions: Prays for forgiveness, acknowledges his sinfulness, avoids drawing attention to himself.

Jesus juxtaposes the Pharisee and the tax collector to highlight their contrasting attitudes and actions. This contrast makes the characters more memorable and the message more impactful. The characters embody relatable human traits, such as pride, humility, self-righteousness, and repentance. This makes them more engaging and allows listeners to see themselves in the story. The characters also represent different approaches to faith and spirituality. The Pharisee symbolises those who rely on their own righteousness, while the tax collector symbolises those who humbly seek God's mercy.

Jesus the Character Crafter



Example Script Delivery

Explore the characters in Bible stories and students to understand their motivations, actions, and relationships. Encourage students to analyse the characters in the stories, noting their physical descriptions, personality traits, and motivations.

Luke 2:1-7 ESV-CE

Teacher: Today we're heading to Bethlehem, just around the time Jesus was born. And guess what? You get to be part of the story! (Read Luke 2:1-7)

Teacher: Okay, I need a few brave volunteers. I need a Mary, a Joseph, an innkeeper, and a few shepherds. (Choose volunteers and have them come to the front of the class.)

Teacher: Alright, Mary, you've been traveling for days and you're about to have a baby. How are you feeling? Show us! (Encourage the student playing Mary to show exhaustion, perhaps some discomfort, but also excitement and anticipation.)

Teacher: Joseph, you're trying to find a place for Mary to rest. How are you feeling? What are you doing? (Encourage the student playing Joseph to show concern for Mary, maybe some frustration at not finding a room, and a sense of responsibility.)

Teacher: Innkeeper, you see this couple arrive. They look tired. What do you say to them? Do you have any room? (Encourage the student playing the innkeeper to portray someone busy and possibly a bit flustered, who unfortunately has no room at the inn. Maybe they can offer an alternative, like the stable.)

Teacher: Mary and Joseph, how do you react to the innkeeper's words? (Encourage the students to show relief at finding somewhere, even if it's not ideal.)

Teacher: Now, shepherds, you're out in the fields at night, watching your sheep. What are you doing? What are you talking about? (Encourage the shepherds to mime actions like looking around, listening for noises, maybe even complaining about the cold or telling stories to pass the time.)

Teacher: Suddenly, a bright light appears! An angel! How do you react? (Encourage the shepherds to show surprise, maybe fear, and then awe as they listen to the angel's message.)

Teacher: The angel tells you amazing news – the Saviour is born! What do you do? (Encourage the shepherds to show excitement and eagerness to go and find the baby.)

Teacher: Okay, everyone freeze! Let's take a look. What do you notice about how everyone is acting and feeling? How does this help us understand the story better? (Lead a class discussion, drawing attention to the different characters portrayed by the students. Discuss how this helps to visualise the story and connect with the meaning.)

Teacher: By becoming part of the story, we can understand the emotions and experiences of the people who were there. It helps us see that this isn't just a story in a book; it's about real people, with real feelings, who were part of this amazing event.



Jesus the Joker



Concept

Jesus sometimes incorporated humour, wit, and wordplay into his teachings. This unexpected approach surprised and delighted his listeners, making his message more memorable and engaging. He understood the power of humour to disarm, connect, and convey profound truths in a light-hearted manner.

Example

Matthew 23:24 ESV-CE

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!"

In this passage, Jesus uses vivid imagery and humour to criticise the Pharisees' hypocrisy. He compares them to "blind guides who strain out a gnat but swallow a camel." This image is not only humorous but also effectively conveys the absurdity of their behaviour. They meticulously focus on minor details of the law while neglecting the weightier matters.

Humorous Elements:

- **Exaggeration:** The image of straining out a tiny gnat while swallowing a massive camel is a hyperbolic comparison that creates a humorous effect.
- **Irony:** The Pharisees' meticulousness in observing minor regulations is contrasted with their blindness to their own hypocrisy, creating a sense of irony.
- **Shock:** Unexpected responses and comments that were surprising helped make Jesus' stories more engaging and memorable.

Impact of Humour:

- **Disarming:** Humour can disarm listeners and make them more receptive to a message, even if it is critical.
- **Connecting:** Humour creates a sense of connection between the speaker and the listener, making the message more engaging.
- **Memorability:** Humorous images and wordplay are often more memorable than straightforward statements.

Jesus the Joker



Example Script Delivery

Use humour appropriately, and ensure it is appropriate for the age and context of the audience. By help students understand the use humour and its purpose in scripture, we can then encourage students to explore the use of humour in their own communication and storytelling – looking out for ways to add impact.

Matthew 7:3–5 ESV–CE

Teacher: Today we're going to discover a surprising side of Jesus – Jesus the Joker! That's right, Jesus sometimes used humour to teach important lessons. (Read Matthew 7:3–5)

Teacher: In this passage, Jesus talks about noticing a tiny speck in someone else's eye, while ignoring a giant log in your own! Can you imagine that? What do you think Jesus is trying to say here? (Allow students to respond. Guide them towards the idea of hypocrisy and judging others while ignoring our own faults.)

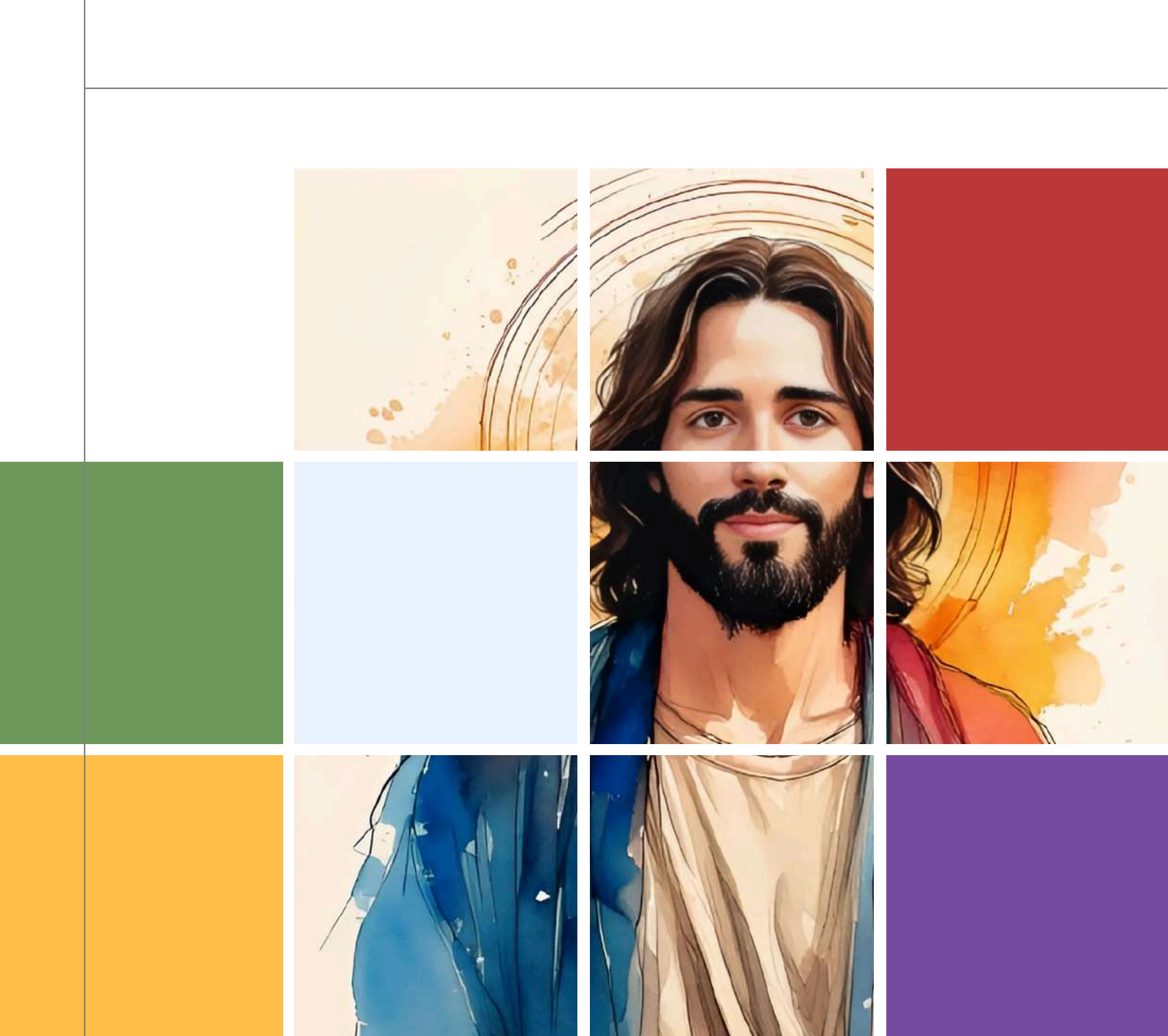
Teacher: Imagine someone trying to get a tiny speck of dust out of their friend's eye when they have a huge log sticking out of their own! What would that look like? Show me! (Encourage students to act out this scenario in a humorous way. It might involve exaggerated gestures, silly faces, and lots of laughter.)

Teacher: Now, let's think about the words Jesus uses. A "speck" and a "log"! Why do you think he chose those words? (Allow students to respond. Highlight the contrast and exaggeration, and how this makes the message more memorable and impactful.)

Teacher: Can you think of any other funny or silly sayings? (Allow students to share examples of idioms, proverbs, or jokes that use humour to make a point. Discuss how these sayings can be both funny and insightful.)

Teacher: Have you ever tried to help someone with a problem, but you had the same problem yourself? (Allow students to share personal experiences. This could lead to a discussion about self-awareness, humility, and helping others.)

Teacher: Jesus used humour to help people understand important truths. He knew that sometimes, a good laugh can make a message stick! So next time you hear a funny saying, remember that it might also have a deeper meaning, just like Jesus' teachings!



Reading the Bible is not easy; teaching it is more difficult. However, if we want our pupils to encounter the God who touched the lives of those we read about, who inspired those whose words we read, and who transformed those whose lives were built on their own reading of it, it is a task we must tackle and face with courage and passion.

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