



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

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An easy to use plan for a Children's Meeting about the question 'which religion is best?'

Make sure you have a little time of worship for yourself and other volunteers before the session – even a couple of minutes are good.

The outline is based on a 45 minutes children's meeting.

Materials: *Additional Resource 72.A* (places of worship) and *Additional Resource 72.B and 72.C* (parable of the ring) from *Journeys in the Spirit* children's work edition Issue 72; *Resources you might need:* A4 paper and card, pens and pencils, pastels, scissors, glue sticks (or PVA glue and brushes), magazines and fabric.

Gather:

Gather in a circle and welcome everybody – it is good to be together! Start with a little time of stillness. Ask if anybody has any news that they would like to share. Listen to what is said and then go on to say that, in this session, we are going to find out and do things about other churches and places people go to worship.

Ask a question like, 'Are people who go to other churches, temples, synagogues or mosques very different to us? Can we say which religion is best? In some Meetings younger and older Friends might have different religious backgrounds! Listen to each other with care. **5 minutes**

Engage: Talking about other religions.

Use the pictures of different places of worship to help conversation – these are on *Additional Resource 72.A* from *Journeys in the Spirit* children's work edition Issue 72. Lay the pictures on the floor or on a table – also have the names of the different places of worship ready to put out. Ask if children know what the different places are called and who might go there. Ask if anybody knows what is different about what people think or believe. Ask if anybody knows what might be the same. When the place or religion has been named lay down the words. Name the places, religions and any differences that you can think of if they are not mentioned. Depending on the age of the children this may take a shorter or longer time. Now say that you are going to tell a story that might help everybody talk about some of the different things that people who go to the churches, mosques or synagogues do or believe. You could also say that is a type of story called a 'parable' – a parable is a story with a secret meaning that you can find. **5 minutes**

Parable of the Ring

There are two versions on *Additional Resource 72.B and 72.C* from *Journeys in the Spirit* children's work edition Issue 72. Choose the version that suits your age group and tell it in a way that suits you and your age group — one has richer, poetic language and one is simpler. You might just want to read the parable to the children, tell it as a storyteller using some props of your devising, use the Godly Play approach if you are familiar with it (see the side bar of page 2 of *Journeys in the Spirit* children's work edition Issue 72 for godly play resource ideas). The Parable's storyline invites you to tell the story in two steps, allowing time to ponder the dilemma in which the father finds himself trapped. As you get to the point where the father doesn't know what to do ask the children what they think might happen. After conversation continue with the Parable. When the story is ended pause for a few moments and then ask some wondering questions such as:

I wonder what you like best about this story. I wonder which is the most important part of the story. I wonder if any part of this story is like your life. I wonder if there is any part you could leave out, and still have all the story you need. **15 minutes**

Respond: . A simple drawing, colouring or collage activity. Ask questions like: if you made a picture about being kind (or gentle or patient) what would it look like? What would be in it? Have a little conversation and then children can draw, colour or make pictures of each or any of these ways of being. **15 minutes**

Reflect: Have a few minutes for all the children to talk about how they feel about the story now, and anything that has come out of it for them. Finish with a short time of stillness. **5 minutes**