

The Rock, Sunday 11th October 2020

James

Warm up

Dance to, join in with the actions and sing our Rock song.

This video has the words:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcAG4PbNXaA>

This video has the actions: <https://youtu.be/8dbOgbRxC1M>



Getting started

Say that you're going to create the most fantastical, unbelievable story that you can. You start with "Once upon a time, there was..." and then take it in turns to continue the story. Encourage the children to be as 'out of the box' as they can - it's got to be the most unbelievable story!

At the end of the story, say that we'd call that sort of story a tall story because it's hard to believe. Say that today's character, James, was Jesus brother but he found it hard to believe that Jesus was who he said he was - the Son of God.

The Point: Just for fun and to open up the session.

Teaching time

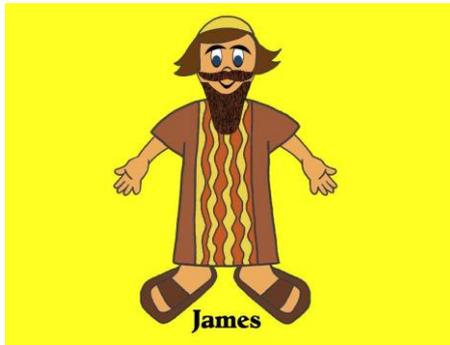
Say to the children that you're having a party. Say that you'd love them to come but they have to follow some rules to be able to come - after all, it is your party! Come up with some rules that they must adhere to (suggestions below) and after you introduce each rule, ask them if they still want to come - or, indeed, if they are able to obey the rule so that they can come. Feel free to add your own rules.

- Everyone must have a haircut on the morning of the party
- Everyone must have had a bath on the morning of the party
- You must have your ears pierced
- You must bring a present costing more than £10
- The writing in the card must be small and neat
- You must listen to Justin Bieber all the time for a week beforehand
- You mustn't eat any meat on that day
- You mustn't have any sweets or fizzy drinks for one week beforehand
- You can't come if you've had a cold in the last month

Ask if you are making it easy for the children to come to your party. Do they feel that you really want them to come? How do they feel about keeping all these rules?

Say that when the church first started, many of the people who decided to follow Jesus and join the church had been Jewish people beforehand. Jewish people had lots and lots of rules that they had to obey - 613 in fact. But then people who weren't Jewish started to want to follow Jesus too - they were known as Gentiles. Some of

the Christians said that if the Gentiles wanted to be Christians, they had to follow all of the Jewish rules as well.



Some of the leaders of the church had a special meeting in Jerusalem to talk about this problem. One man called Peter said that making the Gentiles obey all the rules was like giving them something really heavy to carry - they couldn't manage it. There was a man called James there - he was Jesus' brother and he understood that Jesus didn't want Christians to have hundreds of rules to keep. Jesus knew that the people would never manage it and they would end up feeling tired and guilty. In

fact, Jesus died on the cross to save us from having to follow lots of rules. James knew all this so he said to all the people at the meeting that he thought they should write to the Gentiles and tell them that they didn't have to struggle anymore to follow all the rules. There were some basic things they should stick to but the stuff that had been so heavy and tricky wasn't going to be a problem anymore.

Say that most of us would be descended from Gentiles and if James hadn't got everyone to make this decision, our lives might look very different.

Ask the children if they can think of some rules that it's good to follow as Christians (the Ten Commandments would be a good basis, I suggest). Are there other rules that we try and add in? Say that sometimes we can be guilty of adding our own rules in and that can make it difficult for people who don't know Jesus to become Christians. See if the group can think of anything that Christians are in the habit of doing that makes it hard for those who don't know Jesus.

Be sure to bring out the idea that we can never get it all right on our own - that's why Jesus died, to pay the price for the things that we get wrong. That's called grace - when we get what we don't deserve. So if we live trying to follow millions of rules, we're not enjoying the grace that Jesus gives us. Encourage the children that we need to be like James and help people to be able to follow Jesus - not put things in their way.

The Point: To show that James was interested in making the gospel easy for people to respond to.

Craft and activity ideas

1. Equipment

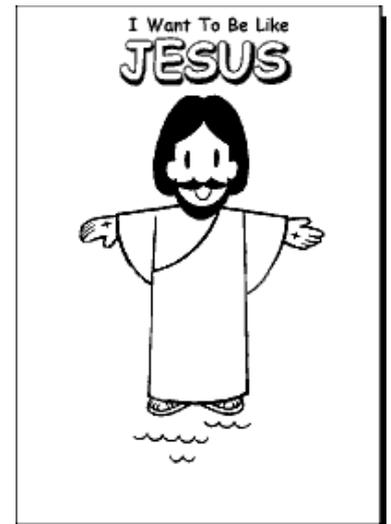
Paper, coloured pens or pencils, Bibles.

Say that you're going to think about Jesus' family. Start by asking the children to draw a picture of Jesus. Ask the children who Jesus' mum and dad were. Explain that Jesus' dad was God but Joseph did the job whilst he was on earth and his mum was Mary. Ask the children to draw these two as well. Now ask the children if Jesus had

brothers and sisters. Get them to look up **Matthew 13:55** and **Mark 6:3** to find the answer. Get them to draw these named brothers and some sisters too.

Say that today's character, James, is the best-known of Jesus' siblings and he went on to be an important leader in the first church. Ask the children what they think it was like growing up in the same family as Jesus.

Now read **Mark 3:31-35**. What do they think of this little bit? Isn't that really awful? It might sound as if Jesus is ignoring his mum and his brothers, but what he's really saying is that anyone who follows God is Jesus' brother or sister because they are part of the same spiritual family. Jesus was God's son and we are God's sons and daughters too which makes us his brothers and sisters!



Ask everyone to add a picture of themselves. What should it be like growing up in Jesus' spiritual family?

The Point: To flag up James' place in Jesus' physical family, and our place in his spiritual one.

2. Equipment

paper, coloured pens and pencils, optional: other papers, glue, scissors.

Remind the children that James might have had a hard time believing that his brother Jesus really was the Son of God. Ask the children to draw the most amazing picture from their imagination below (they could also collage using magazines and other bits and bobs if you have the resources). The idea is that they can draw things that don't really exist (e.g. Star Wars battles, unicorns, dragons, etc.) but know that Jesus is more amazing and real as well!

The Point: To follow up the teaching.

Worship and Reflection

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xeV8qoYtDbc>

Use this song to reinforce the themes of the session. If you want, you could talk about the things that might make people feel that they are not welcome into God's family.

The Point: To give the children an opportunity to respond to the teaching of this session.



THE ROCK

(Material taken from Energize by Urban Saints - <https://www.energize.uk.net/>)

