

God's love

Aim of the assembly

Love is a vast subject. This assembly focusses on love that is patient, forgiving, always listening and protective. The story of the lost son illustrates the qualities of love which are portrayed in the behaviour of the father. It also shows that selfishness and rudeness are bad qualities. We made up a simple song based on 1 Corinthians 13 to the tune of "Frere Jacques". Hopefully the children learn the words of the song and this will remain with them as a good explanation what true love is really about.

Before we pray with them, we like to point out that God is the Father in the story and that his love is always patient, he forgives, he always listens and he protects us.

Props needed

Puppet stage, Chip puppet, musical instrument, farm worker outfit and tools, bags of pretend seeds, big flowers prop

Puppet sketch

Intro: Wendy welcomes everyone, introduces theme of "True love is...maybe asks the children for some ideas about what love is. After a minute or so, Chips comes up!

Puppet:

Chip comes up, making silly comments about slushy love, saying that love is all about holding hands, hugs and kissy kissy!

Wendy interacts with Chips and tells him that true love is not just about the slushy stuff. In fact the Bible tells us it's something a little different to that. Love is not just a feeling, but it is also a choice, for example if we decide to forgive someone when they have said something rude to us, or if we choose to listen to someone when they are hurting, or if we choose to be patient and to wait, rather than being impatient and rude, then we are truly showing love to someone else. This is what the Bible says!

Wendy sings each line with Chip repeating it (To the tune of "Frere Jacques")

LOVE IS PATIENT

LOVE FORGIVES

LOVE WILL ALWAYS LISTEN

LOVE PROTECTS

Chip says he really likes that and it will remind him of the words from the Bible and it has helped him to understand what love really means. He disappears humming the tune to himself and saying thank you!

Wendy then briefly talks to the children about what Chip has learnt and wishes that Bob was here to help with the singing as he's great on the ukulele (Or guitar, or harmonica or whatever instrument you can muster. Blowing on a comb or kazoo is good too!)

Sing song

Bob appears with Ukulele: Did I just hear Chip sing the love song? I can play it too! Plays song and Lois puts out boxes with the key words for all to see.

Choose judges

Introduce story asking for 3 volunteers to help with the judging. Explain that half way through and then again at the end, we will pause the story to ask the panel if the people are making good Bible choices. Explain that they will do thumbs up or thumbs down for whether the character is showing love to the other person.

Bible story

Story one: (Bob telling story and Wendy acting out in farmworker costume with appropriate tools)

Once upon a Bible time there was a Father who had a son. A good strong son, who worked on the farm with him. The work was hot and hard.

Wendy DIGS

He did a lot of digging and working and one day the son got really cross and angry. He was really fed up. He threw down his spade

Wendy THROWS DOWN THE SPADE

and stomped up to his Dad. He said:

Wendy: 'DAD! You must sell half the farm and give me the money now.'

His Dad said: Really, but that is really bad for our business!

The son said '**DAD! I CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER! GIVE ME MY SHARE OF YOUR MONEY NOW!**'

So his Dad handed over the money. The boy jumped for joy.

Wendy JUMPS AND SHOUTS 'WOO HOO!'

Then he shouted

Wendy: I'VE GOT LOTS OF MONEY! MONEY! MONEY!

And he set out on a long journey away from home.

Wendy WAVES GOOD-BYE

Eventually he got to a great city and began spending all the money his father had given him, but he spent it all on silly and selfish things.

He started by getting lots of new clothes for himself...

Wendy MODELS CLOTHES ...

But he still had some a lot of money left, so he thought I shall buy myself a lot of food and drink and lots of sweets!!

Wendy MIMES EATING AND DRINKING

But he still had some a lot of money left, so to make himself popular with his friends, he started throwing lots of parties.

Wendy MIMES DANCING

But then the money ran out. And all his new friends left him,

Wendy WAVES GOOD-BYE

And he got very hungry

Wendy RUBS TUMMY

The only way he could earn some money now was by working on a farm again. But this time he had to work on a very smelly pig farm

Wendy POINTS TO A TOY PIG HOLDS HER NOSE IN DISGUST

And it was not a good job and he was still hungry.

Wendy RUBS TUMMY

After some days he even thought, **"I COULD EAT SOME OF THE FOOD THE PIGS HAVE LEFT OVER..."**

Wendy TRIES FOOD FROM PIG'S BOWL and does not like it!!!

End of part one!

Judges please....what do you think of the behaviour of the son so far. Is he showing good, loving behaviour – thumbs up if yes – thumbs down is no

Wendy WALKS UP AND DOWN THE STAGE

Life was getting very hard, no parties to enjoy, no food to eat, no friends to admire him. The son thought about his Father and all the food they used to have at home

Wendy WALKS UP AND DOWN THE STAGE some more

The Son was not feeling very good about himself. He had been rude, unkind and angry, and he had spent all the farm money his father had given him and he been very selfish all the time.

He thought: IF I GO HOME NOW, WILL MY FATHER STILL LOVE ME? I HAVE BEEN UNKIND AND RUDE TO HIM. IF HE HEARS THAT I HAVE SPENT ALL HIS MONEY, HE WILL BE VERY ANGRY WITH ME. OH, DEAR, I THINK I HAVE BEEN VERY SELFISH.

Thinking about himself in this way made him even sadder and more upset than he had already been. After a while he broke down in tears and cried:

BUT I WILL GO HOME ANYWAY. PERHAPS MY FATHER STILL LOVES ME. I'VE GOT TO GO AND FIND OUT. PERHAPS HE WILL BE KIND!

So the son walked back towards his Father's house. The Father had actually been on the lookout for his son every single day. Today was no different. The Father looked out of his window...he saw a familiar shape at the horizon...could it be his son. The shape came closer...yes, it was his son! The Father jumped for joy...and he ran out of the house to meet his son.

MY SON, I AM SO GLAD THAT YOU ARE HOME. WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A BIG PARTY. YOU LOOK THIN, I THINK WE NEED TO COOK A BIG DINNER FOR YOU, I AM SO HAPPY TO HAVE YOU BACK.

The Father did not even mention how naughty his son had been. He brought him back home showed him how much he loved him in lots of different ways.

Judges please.... what do you think now. How do you rate the behaviour of the son now... and what did you think of the way the Father showed his love?

Summing up:

Today we are talking about love in action and we have discovered through our story that real love is not the slushy kissy kind, but the Bible kind, and our judges a moment ago decided that the Father in the story showed great patience and he showed great forgiveness towards his son who had been rude and impatient.

Wendy starts building the tower and Bob talks about how when we show patience, when we show forgiveness, when we listen, when we protect someone who is hurting, we then start showing love, just like Jesus wants us to. He tells us that in the Bible.

It says in the Bible that true love is kind, generous, forgiving und unselfish. That's amazing! Did you know that Jesus said that it is quite easy to love people who are nice to us, but that true love loves even when the other person does not deserve it. And this kind of love changes people's lives!

Sing song again as a round

Prayer

Dear God, help us to show love to people, to forgive, to be kind, to be generous and patient. Help us to listen, help us not to be rude. And thank you heavenly Father, that you love us even when we mess up and get things wrong, just as we saw in the story.