

OUTSIDE WORSHIP/FOREST CHURCH

I love being outside with God, I walk and talk with him every day. In the early Church, when Jesus and the disciples met, it would have been outside in the open air or in one another's homes. They would have sat around together, listening to teachings or walking in small groups chatting about and sharing the good news Jesus had told them. We, as children of God, (that's all of us) can take all we need from the Bible. With the theme of heroes and villains, so many people come to mind from the Bible: David versus Goliath, Esther versus Haman, always God versus Satan. Good versus evil. So, how would that work in our outside worship or Forest Church?

For a start, why not cloud gaze and ask questions? Which cloud looks like a hero and which the villain? Or can you see a battle between good and evil as the clouds move across the sky? On a grey day, it's lovely to watch the sun pierce through the dark clouds and the rays of sun are a great visual illustration of God's power that will never be overcome. As the children are laying down, it's a great opportunity to ask them to pray, either for help to be a better version of themselves or to help with a problem etc.



But remember, we all have good and bad in us; we have free will and the choice to do the right or wrong thing. Why not make clay faces on some trees? If it's a big tree, get them to do nice, happy faces on one side and mean, nasty faces on the other, or use two trees. Look at all the faces; some will obviously look kind and some mean, but others may be hard to tell. Discuss how can we tell the good and bad people apart and the things they / we do. Tip: air drying clay (natural) is great for this craft activity as you can leave the face there and it will not harm the trees. But if using salt dough or Playdough, remember to take it off the trees and take it home.



If you're at the beach, make faces in the sand and use seaweed and shells to decorate your faces.

Another good way of showing your group that we all take wrong turns and make wrong choices in our lives, is by making them follow a nature trail. Using stones, grass and twigs, you can make the trail as easy or hard as you like, depending on age. On the adjacent page you will find some tracking signs you could use. It's great fun putting in some dead ends and finishing at a beautiful spot for a rest and a snack.

Another way to explore good versus evil, or heroes and villains, is to talk about what we are doing to the environment as you walk and talk through a forest, park, playing field, or a beach. Unfortunately, all these places will have litter. Give each person a carrier bag and a pair of gloves and as you walk along, pick up the litter you see. At the end, exchange the bags of litter for bags of sweets. Alternatively, get them to recycle: one idea is to make bird feeders using non-perishable plastic bottles or cartons (villain) into recycled reused feeders (hero).



Or your little ones may like using leaves to make masks for villains and crowns for heroes. Be prepared and dry some leaves in advance as it makes them easier to stick onto recycled card or paper.

























You can be the hero with small acts of kindness to one another and the environment. Don't think just because you are small, your actions won't make a difference, because they will. Worshipping outside and discovering God's amazing world can bring any Bible story to life. Give it a go. Just remember to take everything you bring with you away so that when you leave, so you leave only your footprints behind.

**"Every villain is a hero in his own mind."
Tom Hiddleston**

RESOURCES - PRE-SCHOOL PLUS AND OUTDOOR WORSHIP

Story of Moses told with road signs

 God's people had been slaves in Egypt for many years	 God's sent ten plagues to Egypt to make Pharaoh change his mind.	 Locusts ate all the crops.	 ..and stop the slaves from leaving.
 They had been working hard building Pharaoh's pyramids	 It was going to be a bumpy road ahead. Rivers of blood.	 It was dark as night for three days.	 But then God took the first born of every family and they died.
 But God was with them and had heard their cries for help.	 Frogs everywhere.	 Each time Moses would ask Pharaoh, "Let my people go!"	 Pharaoh had had enough and told Moses and the people of God to go.
 God's had a plan to set the people free. He sent Moses to see Pharaoh.	 Flies and lice all around .	 A few times Pharaoh agreed....	 God's people took their things and ran. They were free!
 Moses said to Pharaoh, "Let my people go!"	 All the cattle died. People got boils.	 ..only to change his mind the next day...	 The end... Or is it just the beginning?
 But Pharaoh refused	 Storms of hail rained down.		



Ahead



Don't go this way






Straight ahead

Left




Right




Trail Signs



I have gone home



Turn left



Turn right