

# Take up your cross

JESUS INVITES US TO SHARE HIS STORY, WHICH IS AS  
TOUGH AS IT IS GOOD MATTHEW 16.21-28 • 30 AUG-5 SEPT 2020

Summer Camp  
ROOTS

Read the [Introduction for leaders](#), or [Introduction for parents and carers](#) for guidance on how to use these ideas.

**You will need these items:** sweets or chocolates; books or heavyish items you've got several of; play figures, a road map and a cloth; scraps of wood, nails, string and a hammer or card, string and scissors; potatoes or sponges, paints; equipment to play a DVD, the film *Frozen* [PG]; paper, paint, paintbrushes, felt tip pens, other art materials.

## Part 1

### Hold it!

Invite everyone to line up against a wall. Keeping their backs against the wall, ask them to walk their feet outwards until their thighs are parallel with the floor. Challenge everyone to hold this position for as long as possible. It will soon start to hurt. See who can hold the position for the longest – you may wish to reward them with a prize. Afterwards, ask: what keeps us going in difficult times in life? Does it make a difference if there is a clear reward?

### Can you resist?

Have a bag of sweets or chocolates ready and give one to each person. Tell them that if they can resist eating it until the end of Part 5, they will receive another one, but they won't get another one if they eat it before you finish.

### A prayer of thanksgiving

Heavenly Father,  
thank you for your promise,  
that no matter how hard  
the path we walk,  
we can be confident that we will share in your reward.

**Amen.**

## Part 2

### One line each

Read Matthew 16.21-28, with everyone taking it in turns to read one sentence each. The first reader must hold a heavy book or other heavyish item while reading, the second reader two books, the third reader three books, and so on. Afterwards, reward the readers with a number of sweets, equal to the number of books they had to hold.

*The followers of Jesus didn't like everything he told them. Some things he talked about were difficult to hear and others were difficult to do.*

*Peter had just been praised by Jesus, for saying that Jesus was the Messiah, but as Peter listened now, he couldn't believe what he was hearing. Jesus was saying that he would have to suffer and die. 'I will be killed,' he said, 'but on the third day I will rise again.'*

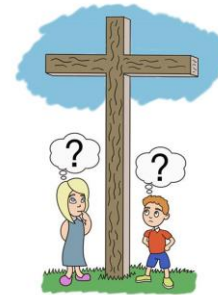
*The Messiah can't die, Peter thought. 'God forbid it, Lord!' he said. 'This must never happen to you.'*

Jesus got angry. 'You're not thinking as God thinks, Peter. You can only see things like humans do. If I thought like that, it would make me stumble instead of doing the right thing. Get behind me, Satan!'

This was hard for Peter to hear, but then Jesus told his followers to do things that sounded very tough too.

'If someone wants to follow me, they have to stop putting themselves first and take up their cross. If they want to save their own lives, they will lose them, but if they lose their lives following me, they will find them again.

'What is the point of having whatever you want, if it means losing your life? What can someone give in exchange for their life?'



Jesus said, 'When the Son of Man comes in glory with his angels, he will repay everyone for what they've done. Truly, I say, some of you standing here now will see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom before you die.'

### Retell the story

Provide play figures, a road map and a cloth. Allow everyone to use these to retell the story in their own way.

### Prayer picture

If space allows, everyone stands and makes the shape of a cross together.

We bring our crosses  
as we gather here today,  
crosses of worry, fear, hope or love. Thank you, God,  
that you are always ready to welcome us,  
whatever crosses we are carrying.

**Amen.**

## Part 3

### Take up your cross

Provide scraps of wood, nails, string and hammers, or card, string and scissors. Invite everyone to create simple crosses – ensure careful supervision at all times. Discuss what Jesus means when he challenges us to 'take up our cross'. Is it just about carrying a piece of wood around? If not, what does it mean?

### Print it

Cut cross shapes into potatoes or sponges. Put paint onto plates and encourage everyone to print lots of crosses onto a large sheet of paper.

### A prayer for others

For those who carry crosses of:  
uncertainty or anxiety,  
fear or hurt,  
sorrow or concern,  
joy or laughter,  
goodness or hope,  
peace or love,  
we ask you to walk with them.  
**Amen.**

## Part 4

### Frozen heart

Play a clip from Disney's Frozen: from 1:19:10 to 1:25:25 – or watch the whole film if you have time. Talk about the way Anna was prepared to sacrifice her own life to save her sister, and how that sacrifice resulted in both of them being saved from harm. Make the connection between Anna and Elsa, and the concept that those who try to save their lives will lose them, and those who give up their lives will save themselves.

### Sacrifice artwork

Invite everyone to use paint, pens or any other resources available to create their own picture depicting sacrifice – thinking about Jesus' death on the cross and his words to us about 'taking up' our own cross.

### A rhyming prayer

It may be good,  
it may be tough,  
but God you are with us  
and your love is enough.  
**Amen.**

## Part 5

### Rewards

Bring out a special snack, e.g. a box of chocolates, for anyone who successfully denied themselves the snacks and drinks earlier (see Part 1). However, ensure everyone has something nice to eat. Let everyone enjoy the chocolates and reflect on the rewards Jesus offers his followers, and thank him for the good things he gives us.

### Picture discussion

Look at the picture together and discuss the following question:

- How do you respond when life is tough?



### A prayer for forgiveness

Pass around a simple holding cross or any cross you have/have made as you pray:

Lord Jesus,  
thank you that you went to the cross,  
and that through your death  
we can be forgiven.  
We are sorry for the times  
when we fail to pick up our own cross  
and walk in your way,  
choosing instead to do things our way.  
Help us to follow you always.  
**Amen.**