

# Using ROOTS in church worship (creche and pew)

At the beginning of the children's session we offer some support for leaders to prepare their session. This includes a consideration of how to offer provision for under 5s. Here you will find a suggestion for play materials for very young children. These are perfect for offering in a creche or a pew situation where you are keen to have provision for under 5s to help them engage with what's going on in church worship.

10-16 January 2021

## The whole world changed

**Mark 1.4-11** Baptism of the Lord

This passage is the first appearance of Jesus as an adult and comes at the beginning of his ministry. His baptism is a new beginning and a transformation. John the baptizer says that he is not worthy to untie Jesus' shoes. He recognises that Jesus will be able to do much greater things by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*This week we explore the opportunity for a new beginning that comes with Jesus.*

**Prepare your children's session**

Read Bible notes on [CDS](#).

Our new beginnings come through the forgiveness God offers which is not just a one-off in a life-time opportunity, like baptism, but something that God offers us each and every day. Take an opportunity now to say sorry to God and receive forgiveness.

Children face many new beginnings that can transform their lives, e.g. learning to read, changing school. Reflecting together on the transitions those in your group have made recently may help children understand how significant this episode was for Jesus.

**Provide the following play materials for very young children throughout the session:** plastic toys, e.g. dolls, bowls of water and sponges to wash them.

Go to [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com) for all links, templates and images. Extra ideas can be found on page 12.

### Children's session

#### Gather

Use the song, prayer and activity to gather the group and introduce the theme. (5 mins)

♪ Sing to the tune: *The wheels on the bus*

Welcome back to church this year, church this year, church this year. Welcome back to church this year, we're glad to have you here.

Loving God,  
we thank you for John the Baptist  
whose voice spoke truth;  
for the voice of Jesus' baptism  
which spoke of delight;  
and for Jesus himself  
whose voice calls us to follow him to new beginnings.  
**Amen.**

#### Wash your hands

E S

**You will need:** a bowl of water, soap, towels – or this can be an imaginary activity.

- Invite the children and adults to take turns to wash their hands to prepare for the session.
- Ask when they usually wash their hands. Talk about the occasions when we wash our hands and how it can mark the end of one, possibly messy, activity and preparation for a new activity, such as eating.

### Share the Word [Mark 1.4-11](#)

#### Stop and share

Read the story on p.10 and pause at the [CDS](#) to share these points with the children. Then use the activity to explore the passage together. (10 mins)

- Remind the children that John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin.
- Explain that repent means saying sorry to God for what you have done; having a change of heart.
- At the end, show the picture of a modern baptism and discuss the differences between baptism today and what happened to Jesus.

#### Create a story scene

W E S

**You will need:** a strip of blue paper, play figures, a picture or cut-out of a dove.

- Lay out the blue paper and ask the children to imagine it is a river.
- Then use the play figures as you introduce different characters in the story. Finally bring the dove down to rest on the 'Jesus' figure, as you read the last words of the passage.

See p.12 for a version of the story for very young children.

### Explore and respond

Use these ideas to help the children make connections between the Bible passage and their lives. (20 mins)

#### Play with bubbles

E S

Explore the difference water can make

**You will need:** a beaker for each child; water, washing-up liquid, straws, a towel.

- Half fill each beaker with water. Offer everyone a beaker and add a squirt of washing-up liquid.
- Invite the children to describe what they can see in their beaker. Now give each child a straw and invite them to blow into the mixture.
- Discuss what changes the air has made to the mixture. Remind the group that everything changed for Jesus when he was baptized.

#### Create a story card reminder

E

Illustrate the main characters

**You will need:** copies of the template (on [CDS](#)), one per child, pens or pencils.

- Help the children to cut out the template and fold to make doors that open. Talk together about the story as a new beginning for Jesus, like a door opening or a new chapter.
- Ask the children to draw on the outside of their door: John the Baptist on one side, and a crowd of people on the other.
- Invite the children to open their door and draw the scene of Jesus coming up out of the river in the centre, with the dove above him inside the top semi-circle.

### Sing

[CDS](#) Songs from Same Boat Music.

♪ As The Sun Rises

#### Talk together and talk to God

Use these questions to discuss the Bible passage and then bring your thoughts together in prayer using the activity below.

- What does it feel like when you start something new?
- How do you think Jesus felt about his new beginning which started with this story?
- What new beginnings might you ask God to help you with?

#### Watch for the transformation

E S

Reflect on the change that can come with water

**You will need:** Smarties<sup>®</sup>, a large plate with a rim, water.

- Invite the children to suggest things in their lives that need God's help to change. Add a Smartie to the plate for each suggestion, spacing them apart as much as possible.
- When all the suggestions have been made, invite everyone to pray silently as you add water to the plate. Encourage the children to keep silent as the colours slowly start to dissolve to create a beautiful pattern. Point out the change that has taken place on the plate, and give thanks for the way God's love can transform us.

Use the [Activity Sheet](#) [CDS](#) as needed.

### Go with God

Consider together what you have explored, what that means for each of you and how it might influence your daily lives. (10 mins)

- Ask the children to think about one situation in their life or in the world where they'd like to ask God to give them a new beginning.
- Invite them to come and dip their finger in a bowl of water as they ask God for that help and guidance.

**May the God of new beginnings give you courage to face each new challenge, joy in each new day, and friends to journey with you through this new week. Amen.**

#### Go with God 24/7

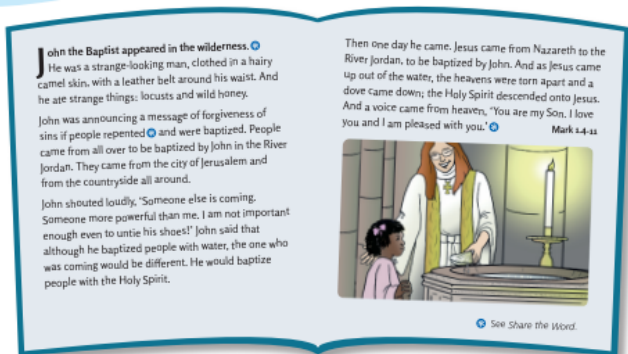
Encourage the children to put their faith into action.

Every time you use water, remember to thank God for loving you just as God loved Jesus. [E S](#)

Before you finish, sing and give out the **ROOTS at home** resources [CDS](#) to encourage faith at home.

♪ Sing to the tune: *I'm a little teapot*

At this new beginning, God is near, guiding, helping, bringing cheer. When we feel uncertain, we can shout – God will always help us out!



See Share the Word.

Spiritual styles (as defined by David Cairns) key: **Word, Emotion, Symbol, Action.**  
Find out more [CDS](#) in Worship and learning support.

All ROOTS magazine materials are online at [www.rootsontheweb.com](http://www.rootsontheweb.com) 11

# Using ROOTS in church worship (creche and pew)

These play materials are taken from an established list, created by the writers of our material for very young children. It's not an exhaustive list but it provides a wide variety. It's also not a list which every church should be expected to have straight away, but can be added to over time. It is something which is good to aim for as a church which aims to put the child in the centre.

## Sensory play

- Large shallow tray and sieves, funnels, sponges, cups etc.
- Sand
- Shiny crafts items (shiny paper, sequins, shiny stickers, tinsel, eco-friendly glitter etc.)
- Balloons
- A bag or box that looks special (could easily be handmade) to use as a storybox, or to hide things in for a game
- Percussion instruments
- Child-safe mirrors
- Battery-operated tea lights and other light sources, including torches
- Ribbon, wool or string
- Play dough and tools (inc. shape cutters)
- Pots of bubbles

## Fine motor skills

- Wooden building blocks
- Stacking cups
- Shape sorter
- Selection of puzzles – jigsaw, lift and reveal, interlocking toys

## Gross motor skills

- A play tunnel
- Hula hoop
- Soft balls and/or bean bags

## Small world play

- A model church
- A Noah's ark
- A nativity set
- Dolls' house
- Toy cars and car mat
- Train set
- Toy farm set and extra toy sheep of different shapes and sizes
- Toy boats, fish and nets
- Small world people (dolls house, Playmobil, Happyland etc.)

## Creative play

- Play food, cups, plates, pans
- Plastic plant pots and toy gardening equipment
- Dolls and teddies
- Toy doctor's kit
- Dressing up items – particularly nativity costumes, crowns etc.
- Toy treasure, coins, jewels
- Hand and finger puppets

# Using ROOTS in church worship (creche and pew)


Each week we provide a version of the story for very young children, as well as activities to play, create and pray for under 5s. These can be found on the third page of the weekly materials in the magazine or in our organised session for very young children online. These examples show how easily these materials could be provided within a creche or even within the pew-setting for children

to do with their parents.

They are simple, usually only require a small amount of 'kit' and can really help children of this age to be part of what their parents and carers are experiencing in worship.

## A story with simple actions

### Share the Word

 A version of the story for very young children.

Teach the children some simple actions for: 'come and follow' and 'come and see.'

When Jesus was just beginning his work on earth, he asked some people to come and follow him.

One day, he met Philip.

'Come and follow me!' he said, so Philip followed Jesus.

Philip went to tell his friend, Nathanael,

'We have found the man who was promised to us, come and see!'

Nathanael wasn't so sure,

but he went with Philip.

He realised Jesus was the special one

who had been promised,

so Jesus invited Nathanael

to come and follow them too.

'Come and follow me!' he said.

## Simple activities to play, create and pray

### Wipe-away drawings

Play and wonder about God's forgiveness

Provide some chalkboards or wipe-clean boards for the children to make marks on, and then wipe them away.

### Jesus is special

Create artwork to mark Jesus' authority

Write the word 'Jesus' in large bubble letters on a large roll of paper. Lay it out between the children and invite them to work together, using special things (e.g. collage materials, sparkly stickers, shiny papers and gemstones) to decorate it.

### Pray with play dough

Give each child a lump of play dough. Invite them to make one thing then squash it and make something new.

# Using ROOTS in church worship (creche and pew)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## ROOTS Activity Sheet

14-20 March 2021  
Lent 4



John 3.14-21

Jesus speaks about eternal life and living in the light of God.



Jesus says, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die, but may have eternal life.'

Jesus loves  
Write

Can you come up with something to thank God for, beginning with each letter of the word 'light'?



In the flame, draw a way we can show the love of God in the world.



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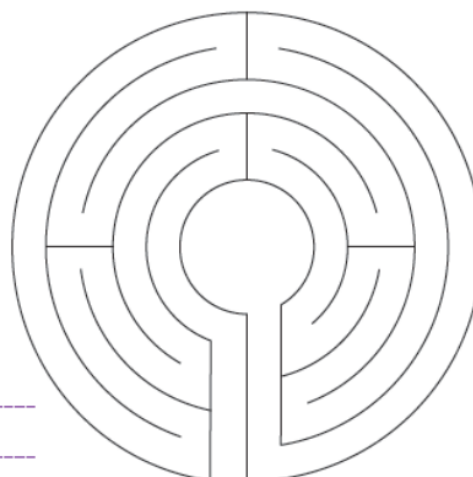
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Use your finger or a pencil to follow the labyrinth path as you think about God loving you for ever. You can start the journey wherever you like.



The ROOTS activity sheet is perfect for under 5s to use in the pew as they contain a colouring picture, as well as other simple activities which often under 5s are able to engage with as well. This example (which can be downloaded from our website) shows a simple colouring picture, another picture which could be coloured in or drawn into as the activity suggests and a finger labyrinth which the children can follow. The parents could also write for the children as they talk together about words to thank God for, beginning with each letter of the word 'light' – a perfect way for parents/carers to work together in worship with their under 5s.