



Prayer Activations and Encounters

LEADING CHILDREN AND YOUTH
TO HEAR THE VOICE OF GOD
AND ENCOUNTER HIS PRESENCE

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AND ENCOUNTER HIS PRESENCE

Resource Book (Second Edition)



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INTRODUCTION

I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me...

They will listen to my voice.

John 10:14.16

My relationship with God was radically transformed when I began my own journey of pursuing His voice and presence. While I loved God, it was not until I had the revelation of the person of Holy Spirit in my late teens and His very real presence in our lives that I fell *in love* with Him. Alongside some of my peers, we discovered an intimacy with our Father that we didn't know was possible, and have never looked back. And like all things from Him, we could not help but overflow. It has since become my passion in ministry to see kids experience intimacy with their loving God, and to know deep in their hearts that He is in a good mood and always near. I am convinced there is nothing quite as beautiful as seeing the joy spread across a child's face when they realise *God*, the creator and king of the universe, has spoken to *them*. It truly is a life transforming event and a divine privilege for any parent or leader to witness.

Over the last five years, God has brought our kids leadership team and myself on an incredible journey, slowly showing us how best to facilitate these God encounters. We are definitely still on this journey of learning. While all the practicalities we have learnt are needed and useful, our biggest lesson has been and continues to be, to never doubt God and His unwavering desire to speak to His kids. He will do it anyway He can!

It is with incredible joy that I present this resource to parents, leaders and teachers. This book is not meant to be a theological explanation, but a practical resource. After some key principles that should be applied to each activation, there are 13 activations for you to use, try, explore and adapt.

I strongly believe that this generation will bring a revival to our city and nation, and it will come from a deep confidence in their hearts of their identity in Christ, the unwavering love of the Father, and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. My prayer is that this resource will help families and leaders guide this generation and ignite hearts for Jesus everywhere, and that as you do so, child like faith will be restored in your own lives.

With love and expectation,

Sophie

KEY PRINCIPLES

It is so fun to have different ways to encounter God! Each activation opens people up to experience different facets of their relationship with God. No matter which activation is used, the purpose remains the same: **to develop, experience and enjoy intimacy with our God**. We have found there are some key principles that can be applied to all cases:

GROUNDED IN THE TRUTH

It is of the utmost importance to know that these encounters are not to replace the Bible or its vital importance in our lives as Jesus followers. The Bible is God's Word and we are sure it is from Him. Therefore, it is how we affirm what we receive from God is from Him as we practice hearing Holy Spirit's whisper, and sharing His pictures (cf Thessalonians 5:20-21). As you read these exercises, you will see we have based them off scripture, have referred to scripture regularly and see God's word permeating the language. These activations seek to help kids (and us!) be engaged in God's word in real, personal and relevant ways that go to the heart, not just the head.

As you lead your kids through these activations, it is important to **constantly show how what they heard is from the bible**. Look it up together in the kid's bible, underline it and write in the margins how God shared that truth/promise. Our kids need to know that if God is speaking to them in His Holy Spirit quiet whisper, in dreams, through pictures/visions and through others, it will ALWAYS match the truth and message of the Bible.

THEY NEED YOU (WHAT A PRIVILEGE!)

God, with His bias to include (and therefore bless) as many people as possible in His kingdom work, sometimes speaks to kids in ways that they do not always understand themselves. I remember when I was with a child who got a "sword that was sharp on both sides" in a present from Jesus. I confess I was a little frustrated with God in this moment and said to Him, "Jesus, why did you give something that is not significant to Him and that I have to explain?" To which Jesus chuckled, 'Exactly! I want you to share this heaven moment.'

There are times our kids get deeply significant and biblical symbols. You get to explain what it means! **Before you do, ensure you ask them, 'What do you think it means?'**

STAY CURIOUS, POSITIVE AND GENTLE

It is so easy to miss a spiritual moment with kids, because while there are times like the one fore mentioned, there are also many times when God speaks in their language. If you feel they have given an 'unspiritual answer', ask them, 'Why did you think of/say that?' You may be surprised what their thought process is!

If you find the answer shows that they are not quite getting the purpose of what you are doing that is fine too! For example, we often get kids saying Jesus gives them Play stations and Xboxes as their presents from Him. Once you ask curious questions, some of them get to why themselves saying, "It is cool Jesus knows what I want. He knows me!" This is just a way to reinforce Jesus' love, rather than hearing from God per se. Others might not, and that is when we just take it as another step closer to learning to hear from God. You could say something like **'That sounds cool and like something you want! Jesus knows what we want because He knows all about us. How cool is that? Remember our Jesus gifts can look a bit different to our other gifts and is something we receive in our heart. They are way better than any gift on earth. They are things like His love, His peace even in scary times...'**

It takes faith on our part, but stay curious with the expectation God is speaking, it is just trying to find out how.

YOUR LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT

This has been one of the biggest things we have learnt! Especially for kids new to visual prayer activations, start each one by saying **"imagine"** not 'God will give you a picture'. The latter language can lead some kids to think they will close their eyes and a full picture movie image will come to them. They then get disappointed and start to think God will not speak to them which then further stops them from hearing or seeing what God is sharing. The same goes for saying 'Did God speak to you' all the time. Instead say, **'What did God say, show or tell you?'**

SOMETIMES LESS IS MORE

We can disrupt Holy Spirit's mojo if we keep talking and giving prompts when a kid is listening to God. Leave extended pauses between instructions and prompts. In the following exercises, we have included example scripts. Whenever there is a new line marked by a space, that indicates time to pause for silence.

EASE INTO IT

There is no rush! Some kids take to this straight away, others don't. This could be for a number of reasons but we found there are three main ones. The first is they don't want to hear from God/do not see the point. The second is they have in their mind hearing from God looks a certain way and that is not happening for them (see above principle). The last is that they encounter God in different ways. There are some kids that encounter God when they play an instrument, are in His creation, etc. That said,

while these visual prayer activations may not be everyone's primary way of encountering God, everyone can use them!

You can see Appendix A for an idea of how to ease into it. The idea is to just begin with them imagining Jesus and you provide full instructions on what they are to imagine. You then slowly allow space for Jesus to 'take over' and speak into small things (like a present or a jewel) until they can lead themselves in these activations.

REINFORCE AND RECORD

At the end of activations, it is great to finish with a reinforcing statement, **"That was God speaking to you"** or **"That was God speaking to you through a picture"** or **"You just spent time in Jesus' presence."** We often get our River Kids to create 'heart art', prayers or poems after an activation. This is how we record what God has said, and reinforce the powerful moment that occurred. It also helps our kids to articulate what they are hearing or seeing in ways that they may not have been able to. We can then also keep up to date with what God is saying to our kids, and have the ability to share the message/prophecy the way God wished it to be shared. If you are a parent or guardian, we would recommend having a scrapbook for each of your children, so you can look back over all God has been saying.

ABCD'S OF PROPHECY

When it comes to receiving words or pictures for other people, we use the ABCD's of prophecy (*copyright language of Bethel Church Kids*):


Always

Build up

Cheer up

Draw near.

When kids are learning to share, they must always first check if what they have to share edifies (to build up), exhorts (to cheer up), and comforts (to draw near) (cf 1 Corinthians 14:3).



The following are *thirteen activations* we have used over the last 5 years. We have included testimonies, example scripts and alternate variations to the activation to assist you in applying these to your context.

1

Secret Place with Jesus

*Everything else is worthless compared to knowing Christ...
Philippians 3:8*

All age, no prep, beginner, intimacy, guidance

DESCRIPTION

→ Kids are asked to picture Jesus in front of them. They are then asked to take note of where they are with Jesus (e.g. garden, beach, house). This is what we refer to as their secret (or happy or quiet) place with Jesus. We have found that Jesus then uses their secret place to speak, teach, encourage and empower them.

→ This activation is a foundational exercise that can be used to help all children focus their attention on Jesus whenever they are praying. It is something they can keep coming back to. This activation, in its very nature, reminds children that praying is talking *and* listening to God.

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY

One child had a beach as a secret place with Jesus. When they were imagining themselves with Jesus, they saw themselves lying on the sand with Jesus looking at the stars. Jesus said that just as he knows all the stars by name, he knows all about them and loves them the most. They are his best creation.

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Close yours eyes and I want you to imagine Jesus.

There is no wrong way to do this, you are just using your God given imagination to picture Jesus. Now think, what does He look like? What is He wearing? What is He doing? Where is He? Is He close? If not, do you want to move closer to Him?

Now, take note of where you are with Jesus? If you can't see where you are, picture yourself in a place that is safe and full of love.

Now you notice Jesus is pointing to something where you are? What is He pointing at? Why do you think He is drawing your attention to that?

To finish: Wow, you just spent time with Jesus in your secret place. This is a gift from him, that whenever you are praying or want to, you can imagine Jesus with you in your secret place and He will speak to you. Jesus is always with us- and this helps us remember.

ALTERNATIVES

Preschool – This exercise is broken into a couple of smaller exercises that slowly build up (see Appendix A for how you would slowly build up to this).

Some promptings our Preschool leaders found useful:

- Close your eyes and imagine Jesus walking with you?
- Where are you walking?
- Is He holding your hand?
- Is He in front of you, beside you or behind you?
- Is He talking to you?

Using yes or no questions helps create a scaffold for our younger kids in sharing how God is speaking to them.

Youth – Take the time to unpack with the teen why that is their secret place. It will be a powerful moment of sharing about their personality and current spiritual season.

Once they have it – We often begin all prayer/activation times saying, “You may want to imagine Jesus with you in your secret place...” So if they are getting a present from Jesus for example, that is happening in their secret place too.

This exercise is continued over and over, as Jesus speaks using different parts of their secret place environment. You would only need to say, “Imagine yourself with Jesus in your secret place...” rather than the whole beginning.

A gift from Jesus

*... He gives good gifts to His children ...
Matt 7:11*

All age, no prep, beginner, calling, identity

DESCRIPTION

→ Kids are asked to picture Jesus giving them a gift.

→ An explanation may be required that Jesus' gifts look different to the gifts we get on birthdays. Just like Jesus did with His parables, He loves to give us gifts that mean something else. The clue to what different gifts mean are found in God's Word.

TESTIMONY EXAMPLE

One child got a present of a feather. We were then able to show them Psalm 91:4 (he will cover you with His feathers...) and explain what it means to find refuge in God.

One child got their old teddy bear they had lost. This might seem like nothing special, but once some questions were asked, we found out that they took their teddy bear everywhere. We then discerned God was saying to them, "I am with you every where, so you don't have to be afraid. You are not going to lose me like you lost your bear." (cf Psalm 16:9).

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Imagine yourself with Jesus (in your secret/happy place).

Now you notice Jesus is holding a present for you. What does it look like? What is its shape? How is it wrapped?

Now Jesus is outstretching his arms to give you the present. Do you want it?

If you want it take it from Jesus and open it up. What is inside? What can you see?

If you are not sure, why not ask Jesus what your present means?

ALTERNATIVES

A letter – Instead of a gift/present, it can be changed slightly by having Jesus give them a letter or drawing.

Preschool – This works pretty well for our young ones as it is. Consider describing the present for them as they 'warm up' their imagination the first time you do this.



Greatest Treasure

*You are His masterpiece...
Ephesians 2:10*

All age, no prep, beginner, identity

DESCRIPTION

This is a very similar activation to 'Present from Jesus' (2). Kids are asked to picture Jesus in front of them, holding a gem stone/treasure. They are guided to take it and they noticed there is something engraved on the gem stone. This is what God calls you.

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY

This was our day 1 activation in Kids Games 2016. Sophie was astounded to hear her entire group saw the words, 'special', 'child', 'mine' and 'treasure.' One Year 3 girl said, 'I think God is telling me I am His greatest treasure, wow!'

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Picture yourself with Jesus (in your secret/happy place).

Now you notice Jesus is holding a very special gem in his hand. What does it look like? What colour is it? Shape?

Now Jesus is outstretching his arms to give you the gem. Do you want it? If you want it take it from Jesus and look at what is engraved on it. What is it? This is what Jesus thinks and call you.

ALTERNATIVES

Preschool – The activation just needs to be more structured. Get them to picture Jesus holding a purple gem and explain that is because purple is the colour of kings and he is a king. “He hands it to you because He calls you a prince/princess. What can you imagine Jesus saying?”

Youth – Use this experience to ask them if they believe what Jesus says about their identity is true. How would we live if we believed what Jesus calls us?

This seems to be a one off activation as it is already an alternative to the Gift from Jesus (2).

4

Hands down, hands up

*Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you.
1 Peter 5:7*

All age/Older, no prep, intermediate, surrender, guidance

DESCRIPTION

→ Kids are taken through a prayer experience that requires them to surrender and let go of any burdens or worries they are carrying. This leaves them empty handed to receive afresh from God. They use their hands to demonstrate what is happening in their heart. Their hands start facing down on their knees, representing that we are handing things over to God. You will then ask them to flip their hands up when it is time to receive from God.

→ This is a powerful testimony that we use to begin lessons, before talks and sessions, or if we feel our kids are distracted or looking scattered.

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Close your eyes and face your hands down. Just take a deep breath in and a deep breath out. Spend this next moment just giving God the things that are on your mind. The bible says in 1 Peter 5 that we can give our worries to Jesus because He cares.

Are there any relationships that are worrying you? School work? What area of your life do you want to give over to God again? *(you can give more promptings as you feel lead by Holy Spirit)*

He carries those things for you. As a symbol that you are ready to receive from God, turn your hands up and ask God, 'What do you want to say?'

What does Jesus call you? What is He calling you to? Is there a bible verse that Jesus is bringing to mind? *(you can give your own prophecies or words of wisdom for kids to receive as you feel lead. For e.g. "I feel God is saying to someone who handed over a bully situation, that He is calling you to be a warm glowing light in your school. If that's you- just say to Jesus in your head that you heard Him and you want to put that promise on your life.")*

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY

We do this regularly and we can testify as leaders that the peace that comes from this exercise is supernatural! When facilitating the 'hands down' section, a leader got a word from God that some one was being bullied and has had the words spoken over them 'No one likes you!'. This was the exact experience of a girl in the group, who then following that, powerfully heard from God, 'I will never stop loving and liking you!' in the hands up section.

ALTERNATIVES

Preschool – You may want to use this exercise with a specific issue you know your child is having.

For example, they are anxious about going to preschool. 'Now with your hands down, just picture yourself giving your scared feeling to Jesus. Now let's flip our hands up. Jesus has taken our scared feeling and is giving us happiness instead.'

If they have done it before – We have found its not good to over do it on the instructions and prompting, but allow for long extended times of silence. Only prompt at the beginning or if you are feeling particularly lead by Holy Spirit. Ensure you speak to your child after the activation is completed to ask about their experience and what was happening for them.

Play Time with Jesus

*The Lord is right beside me...
Psalm 16:8*

Younger, no prep, beginner, presence

DESCRIPTION

- Kids are asked to imagine something they do that they do often and love. They are then asked to picture Jesus doing it with them.
- This is a great starter activation for our younger kids. It is non confronting and reinforces the simple but powerful truth that God is always near and His presence is very real even if we cannot see Him with our eyes.
- This activity can step into the role of the secret place for young kids (1), as Jesus begins to speak to them as they play.

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY

One of our Year 1 boys loves to imagine themselves playing soccer with Jesus. They just have fun! Another one of our pre-schoolers can see Jesus when she is in the garden with mum.

Interesting- we have also had kids picture things they do not like, like big waves at the beach. But they saw Jesus there and were encouraged that if Jesus is with them in the scary places, He is with them everywhere!

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Close your eyes and imagine you are doing your absolute favourite thing!

I want you to use your imagination to see that Jesus is now playing with you. Where is He? Is He playing with you or watching you?

Open you eyes!
What did you see?
How do you feel being with Jesus in your favourite place?

You may then want to share what you picture doing with Jesus to model that to your kids.

Lectio Divina

But they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night...
Psalm 1:2

Older, small prep, intermediate, truth, promises, obedience

DESCRIPTION

→ Kids meditate on a passage of scripture by reading through it slowly three times before practicing hearing Holy Spirit's prompting on where He is asking them to focus. This is an old monk way of reading the Bible and the kids love the fancy name!

→ The process is:

1. Pre select a bible passage
2. Ask God to show you something from His Word (this could be done silently as an individual or as a family/group)
3. Read the bible passage slowly
4. Read it again but stop when you feel a phrase stands out
5. Read that phrase three times, letting it sit in your mind
6. Think: What does that mean? Ask: What are you trying to teach me God?
7. Ask: How does that change what I do/ see/ feel?

You can either print off the instructions (Appendix) or explain it at the beginning.

EXAMPLES

We have found these passages were particularly effective for this process:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Psalm 23

Ephesians 3:14-21

Romans 8:31-

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Before: We are going to look at a *Bible passage* using Lectio Divina. This is a slow way of reading that helps us hear what Holy Spirit is pointing out to us through His Word. This is something you are going to do yourself. Read the bible slowly, all the way through this section. Then go back and read it again but stop at a phrase that stands out. Read that three more times. Ask God what he is saying in this phrase to you and just spend some time thinking about it.

After: Lets think together on how this might change you and your life if you apply this.

7 Picturing Psalms

*Let every created thing bring praise to the Lord ...
Psalm 148:5*

All age/older, small prep, beginner, praise, creation, promises

DESCRIPTION

→ Kids are asked to use their imagination to bring the imagery alive as you read them a Psalm (use NLT or CEV).

→ This is a simple and effective way to help kids engage in the Bible, teach them about genre and how to step into what the passage is saying.

EXAMPLES

These Psalms contain imagery useful for this experience:

Psalm 23

Psalm 104

Psalm 139

Psalm 148

Job 39:4-41

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Before: Get yourself comfortable and close your eyes. As I read I want you to imagine what is being said. Just let your mind explore!

Read chosen passage slowly. Consider only doing a section if it is too long for your child.

After: How did you find that? What part of what you imagined stood out to you?

ALTERNATIVES

Preschool- Consider just doing a verse of two from a passage. You may want to pick a picture book that talks about all God has created instead. Read the book and get them to imagine it. Then read the book, looking at the pictures together and discuss how they saw the picture in their head compared to the one drawn.

By themselves- The Bible App allows you to listen to the bible being read. When they feel comfortable, they can find a Psalm on the app and imagine it happening as it is read out.

Recording it- This activation can result in powerful drawings and poems. Get paint out to draw starry skies praising Jesus, create your own Psalms, or help your child make music to what it would sound like for the earth to praise God. Be creative and allow them to 'play with it'.



What are you carrying?

*Nothing can separate us from God's love...
Romans 8:29*

Older, no prep, advanced, intimacy, surrender

DESCRIPTION

- Kids are asked to picture Jesus inviting them to do something they love and will be guided to see if there may be something they need to surrender afresh to Jesus before they can embrace that with Jesus.
- This activation has a similar style and goal as Hands Down, Hands Up (4). It seeks to develop the spiritual pattern of everyday surrender.
- You will need to discuss before hand what Jesus will ask them to do. It might be something they always do in their secret place with Jesus (like the example below) or a favourite hobby (for e.g. playing soccer, playing guitar).

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY

This has been a powerful aspect of Sophie's quiet times. Her secret place with Jesus is dancing together in a clearing in the forest. She imagines Jesus inviting her to dance, but sometimes there are things in her hands she needs to let go of first before she can physically start dancing. This could be worries, goals, fears etc. It is not that Jesus will not start dancing with her before she lets go of them (nothing separates us from Jesus!) but rather it is a gift to be able to hand things over so that you can fully embrace what Jesus has planned to lavish on you.

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Imagine yourself with Jesus (in your secret/happy place).

Now imagine Jesus is asking you to ----- with Him. Would you like to?

Imagine yourself looking down at your hands? Is there anything you are carrying that might stop you from doing that fully? If so- just give it over to Jesus as we can give anything to Him!

When you are ready, join Jesus in -----.



Your Season Path

*For everything, there is a season...
Ecclesiastes 3:1*

Older, no prep, intermediate, presence, guidance, thanksgiving

DESCRIPTION

- Kids are asked to picture themselves on a path that represents their life right now. They will be asked what the path is like, and then to imagine Jesus in the midst of this visual.
- The aim of this activation is to reinforce that Jesus is with us in the ups and downs, the good and bad and He is everything we need in each season.

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY

One child saw a windy path in a darker forest. They felt they were going through a hard time. But when they were asked to picture Jesus, they saw Him behind them, whispering the way, and holding a lamp so they could still see the path ahead (cf Psalm 119:105). They were reassured by God's presence and His confidence to let them lead the way.

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

I want you to imagine you are walking on a path. This path is to represent how you feel life is going right now. What does your path look like? Is it windy or straight? What are your surroundings? Are you in an open space or going through something?

Now I want you to imagine Jesus. He is definitely there. Can you see Him? Where is He? Is He walking with you? Are you walking to Him?

To finish: No matter what is happening in life, Jesus is always with us. Sometimes we do not feel like it, but He is.

Dinner feast with Jesus

You prepare a feast for me...
Psalm 23:5

All age/Older, no prep, advanced, communion, fellowship, forgiveness

DESCRIPTION

- Kids are guided through an activation that gets them to imagine their own feast table that Jesus has prepared.
- They are then asked to picture Jesus inviting someone to their table to commune and feast with. It is important that kids ask Jesus and reflect on why Jesus showed them that person (it could be for forgiveness, to speak to them about Jesus, encourage them etc).
- This activation is a useful launch pad for talking about the power and symbolism of the Lord's Supper/Communion and the authority Jesus has given us as His children to invite others into His presence by loving them. Also, it helps reinforce the significance that eating together is a powerful time of community. Jesus ate with all sorts of people, and when He did, He was giving us a message that everyone can come and be in God's presence.

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY

We have had people share stories of imagining feasts fit for kings! We had one of our kids see Jesus serving them and their friend. He gave their friend a whole BBQ chicken and split the last between himself and her. Her parent asked her if she was upset by that but she said, 'No I think she needs more from Jesus because she doesn't know Him yet. Plus, I got to share Jesus' chicken!'

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

I want you to imagine you are entering a house. You walk through the hallway, into a living room where you see Jesus standing and smiling! He is at a dinner table with a feast for you. What does your feast table look like? What sort of food can you see?

Jesus invites you to sit and eat.

Jesus calls someone's name and invites them to join you at *your* feast table. You see them come through the door. Who is it? Do you want to ask them to sit?

Ask Jesus why He asked this person to join you? What is He asking of you?

ALTERNATIVES

Communion Focus- If you desire, you could guide them to see a 'communion feast'. You may want to guide them to seeing Jesus grabbing bread and giving it to them. And taking wine/juice and giving it to them.

Evangelism Focus- If you desire, you could direct them to see who Jesus is asking them to share His love and presence with. "Jesus is now inviting someone you know to the table who doesn't know Him yet because He wants you to reveal Him to them. Who is it? What do they do? What does Jesus say to them?"

Preschool- This is a complicated one for younger kids. You could simplify it by saying Jesus has made a feast for them and He wants to eat with them. Ask them what food they see and get them to just practice imagining Jesus with them in different activities. This variation allows you to teach into why we say grace before dinner (He provides for us and Jesus loved eating with people), and lead them to picture Jesus at the table with the family before you eat together.

Words for God and words from God

I will be your God, and you will be my people...
Jeremiah 30:22

All age/Older, medium prep, beginner, worship, promises, declarations

DESCRIPTION

- Kids are asked to reflect on some of the things God is for us and pick one they need to hold on to as a promise (see Appendix)
- They are then asked to reflect on what God calls us and pick one they feel they need to understand in their own heart.
- This activation asks kids to begin to take ownership of their own discipleship and be self reflective.

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY

We have done these activities as two separate encounters in our children's ministry. We have seen kids pick the word 'comforter' for God because "I just feel sad right now but I know He is with me."

In Kids Games 2016, our kids were asked to pick an identity word. One girl picked the word 'special' which made her smile! They then wrote them on wooden necklaces so they could keep that word close to their heart!

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Have a look at some of these different words to describe God and what He is for us. A lot of these were taken from the book in the Bible called Psalms, which is full of songs and poems to God.

Have a look and a read and when you feel ready, pick the one you feel stands out to you and something you want to keep as promise.

Discuss them.

Now have a look at these words, which are things God calls us as his children. Whether you believe it or not, the bible says we are all these things! Part of our journey as Jesus' disciples is thinking about ourselves like God does. Have a look and read and when you feel ready, pick one you feel you do not fully believe yet.

ALTERNATIVES

Preschool- This activity can still work if you have fewer options for them to pick from, and change the words to pictures. For example, to replace royalty, you could print off a picture of a crown. Simplify language by saying, "These are things God is. Which one do you like?" and "These are things God calls you. Which one do you like?"

Recording- We have had kids write their own Psalms and prayers based on the word they picked from God.

Youth - Have youth write two declarations and put them in their phones so that they can go back to them when they need to renew their thinking. For example, if their words were 'present' and 'precious' their declarations could be: God is present and will never leave me, even when I do not feel like it and I am more precious than I will ever know.

Another powerful variation of this activation for youth is to get them to consider what the opposite is of the word they chose about themselves. For example, if they picked 'courageous' the opposite would be 'fearful'. You can then enter into a discussion with them about when they feel fearful and how God wants to make them courageous in those moments. Finish the time with getting them to pray out a declaration. For example, "Thank you Jesus that I do not have to be fearful. I am courageous!"

12

Object draw

*He has prepared good things in advance for you to do
Ephesians 2:10*

Older, medium prep, advanced, calling, purpose, prophecy

DESCRIPTION

→ Kids are asked to close their eyes to pick an object from a bowl as if it was a lucky dip. Using the object as stimulus, they discern what God is saying about their identity.

→ You will need to fill a bowl with everyday objects around your home (batteries, paper clips, ribbons, leaves, magnets etc) before doing this activation.

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY

We did this in our Year 6-8 group a couple of times. One of our girls pulled out a paper clip. The leader prayed for her and she felt God was speaking into her calling. Like a paper clip, she will help hold people together and be Jesus' presence for people in tough times.

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Pray together that God will speak to them.

I have a bowl of everyday objects here. I am going to ask you pick an object from the bowl without looking as I feel God will guide you to one so He can remind you of what he thinks about you and what you are called to.

Oh you have got _____. What draws your attention when you look at your object? What is its purpose? If God directed you to this object, what do you think He is trying to say to you?

ALTERNATIVES

Creative Image- Instead of objects, you can print off a couple of different images online by typing 'creative writing image stimulus'. In our programs we use creative writing stimulus' (if you are a teacher!) or the playing cards from the board game, Dixit. This can be done like the object draw, where the kids don't choose themselves or by spreading the images out on the floor and kids are to pick on that that they feel God is speaking too.

Youth- When we have done this with youth, we usually let them pick the object or image to express how they feel and what is happening rather than the 'lucky dip' style. In Rev Camp 2017, we used creative images from Dixit to ask a small group of girls where they feel they are with God after the week. It was extremely powerful moment and there wasn't a dry eye. People shared very deeply because the image they had allowed for it, and allowed leaders to ask more questions.

For youth, you can also use this activity at the beginning of the year to say, which object or image described last year for you. Then which object or image describes what you think God will do this year?

For someone else- If you are starting to stretch the child to be hearing God for others, they could pick an object for someone else and use that to develop a prophetic message/letter for that person.

My seed of faith

I do believe my Lord, but help me with my unbelief!
Mark 9:24

Older, no prep, advanced, worry, faith, courage, transformation

DESCRIPTION

- Kids are encouraged to see how God can transform things for His good and how he multiples whatever we give Him
- Kids are to think of all the things going on in their head. Their worries, their stresses, the things they are working on and trying to get better at etc. They are to picture them represent as images or objects in their hands. The facilitator then explains how these things all shrink to be a little seed. They are to give the seed to Jesus, He plants it and tends to it. What does it grow too?
- This is a great activation to do at the beginning of the year, when a child feel they are facing something difficult, or when a child is questioning or angry at God.

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY

Sophie herself had a very powerful experience as Jesus lead her through this. She saw Jesus water the seed with His own tears, crying alongside her for the sad thing she had handed over to Him. The seed then grew to be two sunflowers (representing joy) that intertwined together. Jesus was reminding Sophie that intimacy with Him can grow most in the sad times and we always have the hope for joy.

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Let's imagine ourselves with Jesus in our secret place.

I want you to think of the first thing and main thing that is on your mind. It could be a task, a job, or worry. Imagine that thing as an object in your hands.

Now picture that thing changing and shrinking to be a little seed.
Hand that seed to Jesus.

He plants that seed and tends to it. What does He do? What does that seed grow too?
Does Jesus say anything about it?

After: What did you give to Jesus? What did it become? Wow- it's amazing how God can turn the hard to good, or take our small thing and turn in into something even better.

14

My backpack

Don't worry about anything, instead pray about everything!
Philippians 4:6

All age, no prep, intermediate, worry, trust, surrender

DESCRIPTION

→ Kids are encouraged to give their worries over to Jesus by picturing them as objects in a backpack that they hand over to Jesus.

→ This activation has similar themes to Hands down, Hands Up (4) and What are you Carrying (8) but it was too powerful not to include! This activation can be used when your child is feeling anxious or showing signs of anxiety (not sleeping, distracted, emotional) and you can't pinpoint why!

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY

We had had extremely powerful testimonies come out of this. Many kids shared that they didn't realise how heavy their backpack was until they gave it to Jesus. One girl saw Jesus take her worries and walk through a waterfall with them which disintegrated the backpack to be completely gone! Another child had Jesus throw her backpack out into the water and then ask them to walk out on it with Him!

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Let's imagine ourselves with Jesus in our secret place.

You notice that you have a backpack on your back. It is full of the things you are worried or stressed about. Is it heavy or light? Do you look inside or you already know what is in there?

Now if you want, give your backpack over to Jesus. What does He do?

Car or flower?

Let love be your highest goal! But you should also desire the special abilities the Spirit gives – especially prophecy.
1 Corinthians 14:1

All age, no prep, intermediate, calling, prophecy

DESCRIPTION

- Kids are encouraged to get an encouraging word from God for someone else.
- Kids ask God whether the person they are praying for is more like a car or flower. They are then asked to picture the type of car or flower they are and what God is saying about that person in that.
- This is a beginning activation for starting to speak over other people. Before doing this activation, consider going through the ABCD's of prophecy with them.

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY

This activity is one we have yet to do with kids. When Sophie was praying over another adult using this activation, she saw a yellow sunflower. This ended up being that person's favourite flower. It was a lovely reinforcement that God is keen to speak to us!

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Let's pick someone to encourage. Who would you like to pick? (*you could do it in pairs to each other as a family/group*).

Now let's just close our eyes to focus our attention on Jesus. You may want to imagine Him in front of you to help you to do this.

Let's ask Jesus: Is _____ more like a car or flower?

What does your car/flower look like? What do you think Jesus is saying about that person that we can tell them?

ALTERNATIVES

Preschool- This activation could work for a pre-schooler who is getting more confident in hearing from God. You may want to consider just giving them the one option. You could say, "Let's imagine _____ is like a flower. What type of flower would they be? Why do you think that?"

Other options- There are many possibilities:

- If they were an animal...
- If they were like a bible character...
- If they were a colour...

Treasure Hunting

...I will search for my sheep and seek them out..
Ezekiel 34:11

Older, small prep, advanced, prophecy, identity, miracles

DESCRIPTION

- Kids are empowered to get an encouraging word from God for someone else in their group or in the church. They don't know who this is exactly and have to ask God to help them find their 'treasure'.
- Kids are given about 5 minutes to just sit quietly with Jesus and ask him, 'Who is your treasure today Jesus?' They use the table found in the appendix to help them work out who this treasure is and what encounter God wants to have with them.
- After this time, discuss together to see who the treasures are. You will be surprised, sometime God does a 'Jehovah-sneaky' and gives the kids all the same person. They then are to write on another piece of paper what they feel God is wanting to encourage that person with. If it is that the person needs healing, they don't need to write anything.
- Then go hunting! With a leader, kids are to go searching for their treasure after church when people are mingling. When they find them, they are to approach them with a leader. Kids can get quite nervous about that so that is why we have them write down the prophecy so they can just hand the paper over.
- Before doing this activation, consider going through the ABCD's of prophecy with them.
- Please note this term and concept has been adapted from the book *The Ultimate Treasure Hunt: A Guide to Supernatural Evangelism through Supernatural encounters* by Kevin Demon (part of the Bethel Family). Treasure Hunting is a form of evangelism that is mostly directed at strangers in public areas. For our purposes, the kids just treasure hunt within church and with church people to ensure they are safe. As kids approach people from church, they should always be with a leader who can help explain and facilitate.

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY

We have too many to count! We have had adults in tears as God singles them out and give them the exact word their heart needs from someone who doesn't know anything about it!

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

We are going to spend some time now asking God for a word for someone in our church. We will use this table here to help us hear from God and see which treasure He wants us to find.

When speaking to the treasure: Hi there, we have been practicing hearing from God and we/I feel God has given me a word for you to encourage you. *Give word.* Can we pray for you?

Process for Activations with Preschoolers

Encounters	Language/Activity
1-2	<p>- We are just going to spend some time focusing our attention on Jesus</p> <p>- We can hear Jesus and spend time with him in lots of different ways</p> <p>Activity: Play Time with Jesus (5)</p>
3-4	<p>Picture Jesus in front of you. What is he wearing? What is he doing? (You are just imagining this, there isn't a wrong way). I want you to picture him smiling, because he is always smiling when he is thinking of you.</p> <p>- Don't forget to reinforce that was Jesus speaking to them because 'he talks to us in lots of different ways'</p> <p>Activities: A gift from Jesus (2) and Greatest Treasure (3)</p>
5-6	<p>- Picture Jesus and you are in a special place with him. Somewhere you feel safe and comfortable, where is it? You are with Jesus in this secret place with him.</p> <p>- Reinforce that whenever they are talking to Jesus they can picture themselves talking to Jesus in their secret place in their heads. It helps us concentrate and focus on Him.</p> <p>- Get them to picture Jesus in front of them and he has a flower in his hand and he hands it to them and he says that he thought of you when he saw this. What colour is it? What does it look like? What is Jesus saying?</p> <p>Activities: Secret Place with Jesus (1) and Picturing Psalms</p>

LECTIO DIVINA

1. Pray and ask God to show you something from His Word

2. Read the bible passage slowly

2. Read it again but stop when you feel a phrase stands out

3. Read that Phrase three times, letting it sit in your mind

4. Think: What does that Mean?

Ask: What are you trying to teach Me God?

5. How does that change what I do/See/Feel/Act?

Able

Loving

My rock

There

With me

Understanding

Surprising

Funny

Fun

Steady

Faithful

Powerful

Awesome

Big

Great

Mine

Adventurous

Brave

Strong

Everywhere

My shelter

helpful

My shield

My all

For me

Good

Gentle

Close

Holy

Gigantic

Steadfast

Kind

Patient

Is not angry

Righteous

Proud of me

My Father

My provider

Friendly

My friend

Everlasting

Neverending

Beautiful

Capable

my healer

exciting

delightful

interesting

inspiring

joy

peaceful

passionate

thoughtful

warm

watchful

wonderful

zealous

Accepted

Loved

Blameless

Special

Royalty

Forgiven

Important

**With out
fault**

Warrior

Cherished

New

Brave

Strong

Empowered

**His
Favourite**

Chosen

Precious

Cared for

Valued

Protected

Fearless

**With
purpose**

Child

Unique

Treasure Hunting Table

Details about person (clothing/appearance)	Location	Healing	Word to give

Details about person (clothing/appearance)	Location	Healing	Word to give