

# spill the beans

worship and learning resources for all ages

issue 32

pentecost 12 to reign of christ

1 september to  
24 november 2019



A resource with a Scottish flavour for  
Worship Leaders, Sunday Schools,  
Junior Churches and Youth Leaders.

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# introduction

Welcome to the fourth of a series of five issues of Spill the Beans that will take us through the remainder of the Pentecost season from Pentecost 12 to Reign of Christ Sunday. We are using our own lectionary plan of readings for this series which includes a six week series looking at four stories from the Apocrypha which we hope will be an enjoyable and enlightening journey.

The Spill the Beans Resource Team asked for feedback from congregations on both favourite Bible stories and those stories that we do not often hear in worship and many congregations wrote back to us. This information was most helpful. While we asked about favourite Bible stories, we were most interested in the stories people felt were not covered in the normal course of worship.

Using these ideas, and carefully considering what is already covered by the Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary, we have created a plan that will take us on a different journey through the scripture, dipping into stories we do not often hear, or with which we spend little time.

We are excited about this new journey along lanes lesser travelled in the scriptures that it will be stimulating for us as worship and age group leaders, and will provide our congregations with an engaging and enlightening basis for our worship over the next year.

## Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary Resources

We have two Overspill packages that provide complete sets of past issues that give a huge library of resources for both the Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary.

### The Revised Common Lectionary Overspill Pack

Issues 1-12

1,536 pages

£50

Purchase through this link: <https://pul.ly/b/108820>

### The Narrative Lectionary Overspill Pack

Issues 13-27 (plus summer extra) in higher quality render

2,082 pages

£60

Purchase through this link: <https://pul.ly/b/207215>

You are downloading a compressed archive of files which need to be unpacked so we recommend downloading these to a desktop or laptop computer rather than phone or tablet. Note that depending on future years there may not be resources for some Sundays depending on the timing of Easter and changes to the readings as a result.

## Who Are We?

At the beginning of 2009 a conversation began amongst a couple, then a few, then a group about collaboratively creating resources that enabled us to tell the story of faith in a worship context and within age groups for younger people and teens. Spill the Beans was born as the result of that conversation and has grown and developed over the intervening years.

The ethos has remained the same, however. It is all about story. For we believe story is the lifeblood of faith. In story we can tell the truth and speak with honesty about things for which there are not yet words. Story contains mystery and is the poetry that forms faith. Stories grow as we grow and can reveal new truths at different times in our lives.

So we believe giving stories to people is one of the most important things we can do in sharing our faith. Children and adults hold stories in their being and keep coming back to them throughout life. Our culture is stored in story. The same is true for our faith.

Spill the Beans is a work of love. None of the contributors are paid for their contributions, these contributions are written and prepared with our own congregations in mind. Instead of working in isolation, we bring this work together, give it some spit and polish, and share it with others. This is how we can keep the cost so low.

In addition, we regularly pay it forward by using surplus monies to support other new ministries and projects.

## Using Issue 32

In this issue of Spill the Beans you will find an extensive collection of things to use each week. Because each piece is written with specific congregations in mind there may be the need to be a little creative yourselves in adapting and evolving some of the ideas to suit your own place and culture and congregation. That is entirely purposeful.

Of course, if you are creative and would like to share what you have done, then have a look at our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/spillbeansresources> and the associated Facebook group that provides space for discussion and support. On our blog at <http://spillbeans.org.uk> you will find PowerPoint backgrounds for most weeks.

Each week we provide a selection of words, ideas and creative moments to take the theme and the passage a little further. We do not provide a ready made service or perfect prayers but ideas and pointers that hopefully scratch at your own creativity and provoke heaven's imagination within you.

Here are some tips to guide your use of the material in age groups:

1. It presumes some introduction to the story will have taken place in worship together or will play a part in the service when children join it later.
2. Depending on the make-up of your own groups of children you will need to remain flexible in how you use the material.
3. Each idea has been given a guide age range to help your planning, but this is only a guide so use your own judgement about what will work with your group.
4. Before the sit-down activities if you have a group of young children or lots of boys, you may want to add a run-around type game to expend some energy.
5. Use the gathering time exercise with the whole group to get into the story together across the ages.
6. We encourage you to retell the story together.
7. Follow that by choosing as many or as few activities your space and time allow. You could offer a number of activities each at different stations all at the same time for all ages to self-select with a teacher staffing each one, or have traditional classes.
8. During activities, ask children to retell the story to you and ask about their week, what was happy and what was sad and if this week's story reminds them of other biblical and personal stories.
9. The intention is not to complete "the tasks" brilliantly, but rather to provide opportunities to begin conversations, build relationships, retell the story of the day, and talk about what it means for us today.
10. There are many websites that provide handout-type sheets that will have images, crosswords and word searches for the story of that week. They can be helpful in an emergency, but try to be more creative as leaders, the rewards are worth it.

## Information

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Cover image: bas-relief of Deborah (Judges 4) by A.V. Loganovsky (1849) in Donskoy Monastery, Moscow, Russia.

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Sleepless Nights Publications

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Please remember you can use the bookmark system within Adobe Reader to quickly move around this document.

# spill the beans resource team

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## Key to Abbreviations

In the worship ideas section the following abbreviations may be used to indicate different sources of worship music:

ATAS	All the Assembly Songs You'll Ever Need
CG	Common Ground
CH4	Church Hymnary, 4th Edition
CH3	Church Hymnary, 3rd Edition
JP	Junior Praise
MP	Complete Mission Praise
SGP	Songs of God's People
WGP	Wild Goose Publications





creating an intergenerational event to prayerfully reflect on Hebrews 11

## Introduction

The purpose of the ideas here is to create an event that will allow all ages to explore the faith heroes talked about in Hebrews 11. This will give a chance for people to move around the different zones you create considering people who, because of their faith, were able to follow and serve God. Each zone also provides a space to wonder about our own faith and what God may be asking us to do.

You will need a Bible open at Hebrews 11 at each zone. You may want to print out instructions for each zone so people know what to do.

## Reflective Zones

### 1. Enoch KEPT GOING

Reading: Hebrews 11:5

*You will need: big wooden feet, several marker cones.*

Make a set of big wooden feet. You will need pieces of wood around 180 cm long and wide enough for an adult foot to fit on it. A long strong rope cut in to six pieces. These will form the handles and need to be long enough for the tallest adult who will take part.



Drill three holes in each board. Run rope through each drilled hole and tie a knot at the bottom, these become the "handles".

### Instructions

Find out a bit more about Enoch by reading from Genesis 5:23. Create a team of people and stand on the big feet, working as a team make your way around the course marked out with the cones. Time how long it takes your team and see which team can do it the fastest. A small person and much larger person could probably function as "one" person as part of the feet! Chat together about what

helped them to walk together and what was a hindrance! Enoch kept on going with God through his very long life, what do you think helped him do that? What would have been difficult?

## 2. Abraham TRUSTED

Reading: Hebrews 11:8-12

*You will need: blankets/sheets, tables, chairs, cardboard stars, pens, cushions, safety pins.*

### Instructions

Work together using the blankets and tables and chairs to create a large tent, or lots of little tents. Once the tent is built take a star and write or draw on it a prayer about something in the future that you are worried about and want God to help you trust him with. Pin these star prayers onto the blankets that make up the makeshift tent. Take time to lie down and look up at the star prayers, remembering that God made his promise come true that he gave to Abraham. Abraham did not live long enough to see it all happen, he had to trust God that he would work it out. Talk to God about things you cannot work out and need to leave for God to do.

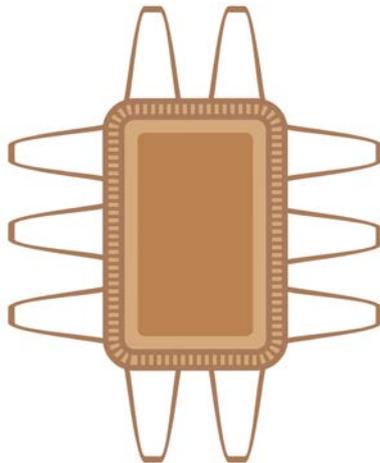
## 3. Moses's Mum And Dad LOVED AND PROTECTED

Reading: Hebrews 11:23

*You will need: basin or paddling pool filled with water, paper, coloured pencils, scissors, templates of basket (see page 138).*

### Instructions

Find out a bit more about Moses' parents by reading Exodus 2:1-4. Take one of the basket shapes. In the middle of the basket shape write or draw a prayer for a child or an adult you know asking God that they would know that they are loved and protected by God and his people. Colour in the basket and fold the "finger like" edges into the middle of the basket.



Place or throw the basket into the water and watch as it opens up. As you watch, pray quietly that the person would be open to God's love in their life.

## 4. The People MOVED ON

Reading: Hebrews 11:29

*You will need: blue material, paper/card, pens, scissors.*

Create a 'corridor' with blue material forming a wall on either side, with a strip of white or sandy coloured card down the middle of the floor.

### Instructions

Find out a bit more about the people moving on through the Red Sea by reading Exodus 14:21-22. Draw around your shoe onto a piece of paper and then cut it out. Write on the shoe shape a prayer about where you think God's people (the Church) should be 'going' in Scotland today thinking about what we should be doing, what really matters, and what God wants us to do.

Place your cut-out shoe shape alongside everyone else's to form a path of footprints through the 'water' that is formed on either side of the pathway.

## 5. Rahab WELCOMED

Reading: Hebrews 11:31

*You will need: large city wall scene, red strips of paper, pens.*

Create a large city wall scene on cardboard or paper, with lots of windows in the walls of the city. Have available lots of red strips of paper.

### Instructions

Find out more about Rahab by reading Joshua 2:15-21. She tied red rope in her window and the Israelites saved her when their army attacked Jericho.

Take a piece of red paper and write or draw on it people that you would like to welcome to your church family. Stick the red paper onto one of the windows of the city. Ask God to give you faith to welcome people just as Rahab welcomed the spies and they welcomed her.

## 6. Lots Of Other People BIG ADVENTURES

Reading: Hebrews 11:32-40

*You will need: craft lollipop sticks, pens, glass jars.*

### Instructions

Read together all the things that happened to people that the writer did not have time to comment on, note at the end he says that God planned something better for all of us and we are part of it.

Take one of the wooden craft sticks and decorate it with your name. Place your stick in one of the empty jars. Thanking God as you do so that we are all heroes of faith!

# time together

## Gathered Time

Gather everyone together and read Hebrews 11:1-40 with the following responses for everyone to join in with.

- Teach everyone the British Sign Language for FAITH (see <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/faith>) and every time that word is read in the passage sign it together.
- Whenever someone's name is mentioned everyone should cheer. Leave space at the names for this to happen.

Say this prayer together:

Thank you, God,  
we have so many people that show us what faith means!

Thank you for Enoch (cheer!)  
and help us to keep going.

Thank you for Abraham (cheer!)  
and help us to trust you.

Thank you for Moses' Mum and Dad (Cheer)  
and help us to love and protect each other.

Thank you for all the people of Israel (cheer)  
and help us to keep moving on.

Thank you for Rahab (cheer)  
and help us to welcome people always.

Thank you for so many people (cheer)  
and show us how to live with faith in you.  
Amen.

## The Race Of Life

*You will need: Nintendo Wii Fit, four handsets, large screen on which to watch the action, the jar containing lollipop sticks with names from Reflective Zone 6.*

If it is possible set up a Wii Fit on a big screen with four handsets invite four people to come forward and take part in a short running race. Split the rest of the congregation into four groups and encourage each group to cheer on one of the competitors.

If you are unable to use a Wii Fit then just get four people to jog on the spot while being cheered on.

After everyone has run for just a few minutes ask the competitors how it felt to know that people were cheering them on? Did it help their running?

Read from Hebrews 12:1-3 and explain that in the race of life, we need each other to 'cheer' each other on in our faith, remembering that all the people in the past, including those in the past that we read about today in Hebrews are part of that great cheering crowd.

Pass around the jar of wooden lollipop sticks and ask everyone to take one of the wooden sticks, and ideally not their own. Invite everyone to take that stick home and pray for the person whose name is on the stick every day, praying that they would keep on "running the race and looking to Jesus."

## Scottish Bible Society

This intergenerational event has been prepared by Jen Robertson. Jen is the Children's Resource Manager for the Scottish Bible Society. You can find out more about the work of the society at:

<https://scottishbiblesociety.org>

And for more resources have a look at:

<https://scottishbiblesociety.org/our-work-in-scotland/>



# through the season

## Introduction

**T**hrough the Season naturally comes in three sections in this issue. For the first two sections the suggestion is to carry on with the 'book' used during the summer. This is particularly the case as the first three weeks of this issue continue the final two weeks of the previous issue's section on Judges. Each week the Scripture readings lend themselves to being read as story.

If you are new to Spill the Beans or did not use this idea during the summer you will need to do some preparation. To facilitate the suggestions for each of the sections it would be helpful if a free standing artists easel could be purchased or acquired. Although if you have projection facilities each of the suggestions could be projected instead. Each section requires preparation and so we would advise reading through the whole of this section and plan ahead.

For the first two parts you will need to create a large book either by covering a big book and creating a new cover for each section 'The Judges' and 'Revelation' by using A1 sheets of card and paper. Each week in this section a new 'chapter' will be looked at and an appropriate image opened up in the 'book'. This could be a great creative project for someone in your congregation or even a team. A Google images search will produce an interesting array of images. Do be sensitive as to those you use and careful over copyright. Or you may wish to simply create your own design of title page.

Each week the 'book' could be opened at an appropriate part of the service. For example if you have a Bible carried in at the beginning of the service the book could be carried in too and placed on the easel and opened at the appropriate page. Or it could be opened just prior to the readings being read. You could even develop the idea further by using the large book to read from.

Part 3 has different suggestions of a visual aid for each week

## Part 1

### The Judges

#### 1 Sept Pentecost 12

Scripture: Judges 4:1-16; 5:1-9  
Psalm 84:9-18

Title: Deborah The Judge

Visual: An image of Deborah.

#### 8 Sept Pentecost 13

Scripture: Judges 6:11-18,25-40; 7:2-9,19-23  
1 Kings 18:20-40

Title: Gideon The Warrior Farmer

Visual: An image of Gideon.

#### 15 Sept Pentecost 14

Scripture: Judges 11:1-10,29-40  
Deuteronomy 23:21-23

Title: Jephthah The Reckless

Visual: An image of Jephthah's daughter at the garden gate.

### Double-Take Tales

#### 22 Sept Pentecost 15

Scripture: 2 Kings 2:15-25  
Proverbs 3:1-8

Title: Elisha Taunted

Visual: An image of Elisha and the She-Bears.

#### 29 Sept Pentecost 16

Scripture: Genesis 38:6-26  
1 Samuel 16:8-19

Title: Judah Humbled

Visual: An image of Tamar.

#### 6 Oct Pentecost 17

Scripture: 2 Samuel 9:2-13  
1 Samuel 20:14-17

Title: David's Care

Visual: An image of Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth.

## Part 2

### A Revelation For The Church

#### 13 Oct Pentecost 18

Scripture: Revelation 2:1-29  
1 John 4:1-6

Title: Messages To Churches Part 1

Visual: A large ornate number 7.

#### 20 Oct Pentecost 19

Scripture: Revelation 3:1-22  
Colossians 1:15-20

Title: Messages To Churches Part 2

Visual: A picture or photograph of your church building.

#### 27 Oct Pentecost 20

Scripture: Revelation 4:1-11  
Psalm 33:1-9

Title: The Throne Of God

Visual: An artist's depiction of the throne of God (searching for images using Revelation 4:1-11 will open your eyes).

#### 3 Nov Pentecost 21

Scripture: Revelation 21:1-14  
Isaiah 65:17-25

Title: The New Jerusalem

Visual: An aerial image of your parish (a screenshot of a satellite image from Google Maps would work).

# through the season

## Part 3

### Closing Stories

In the final three weeks of this issue and the final weeks of the Spill the Beans Lectionary .

#### 10 Nov Pentecost 22

Scripture: James 1:19-27  
Psalm 146:1-10

Title: Remembrance

Visual: Your usual decorations if you are holding a Remembrance Sunday service.

#### 17 Nov Pentecost 23

Scripture: Hebrews 11:1-40  
Judges 5:12-15  
Esther 7:2-4  
Acts 16:14-15

Title: Faith Heroes

Visual: Have someone create a new superhero logo and paint it on a large sheet of card to display at the front of the church. Or have a collection of superhero logos.

#### 24 Nov Reign Of Christ

Scripture: Matthew 15:21-28  
1 Samuel 16:14-19

Title: Changing The Divine Mind

Visual: A purple cloak or piece of cloth with a beaten/bashed crown or crown of thorns.





pentecost 12  
sunday 1 september 2019

the judges

# deborah the judge

## bible notes

Judges 4:1-16; 5:1-9  
Psalm 84:9-18

### The Queen Bee

Our series on the Judges continues from the last issue which we ended by looking at the life of the Nazirite Samson. The time of the judges is an interim period between the death of Joshua, a very short time when leadership was by a group of elders, and the later rule of the kings.

The judges were a disparate group of leaders and we should keep in mind that the modern sense of a 'judge' is not what we should have in mind here. They were rulers as well as adjudicators, chieftains as well as vindicators.

Another thing to keep in mind is that this collection of writing about this period, the second of the historical books in the Bible, comes from much later. There is inevitably a process of interpreting of events handed down across the generations in the light of the later kingdoms that dominated so much of Israelite history. There is evidence throughout Judges of building a case for the later kings, alongside the wider message that God is at work in the history of this people.

The book of Judges follows a repeated pattern depicting the Israelites falling into wickedness and evil, a time of punishment under the rule of another, their salvation by one of the judges, and then a period of relative peace before the cycle repeats again. For modern ears too, the sheer blood-thirstiness of these narratives can be overwhelming, and requires some deft unpacking to find the good news.

Which brings us to this week's prophetic judge: Deborah. The name means 'bee' and you cannot but imagine Deborah as the Queen Bee at the centre of activity within the Israelite hive.

Today gender equality is rightfully placed high in our aspirations for society. We tend to look back at the patriarchal time of the Hebrew Bible with a monolithic view but then we come upon a story such as Deborah's (or

Huldah (2 Kings 22) or Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14) or Isaiah's wife (Isaiah 8:3)) and ponder whether there is more subtlety than we usually credit. The sheer matter-of-factness of the descriptions of some of the women mentioned is notable; there is no question about their role. Yet even so, Deborah's position of leadership and her role as a prophet, the go-between for God and the people, is notable.

She is not only a leader politically, she is also a military leader, devising campaign strategy, and the military under her command are hesitant to go to battle without her presence, particularly against a large, well-equipped army. Her presence, symbolic of God's presence, means the oppressing army of Sisera was routed.

Not included in our set readings, but worth noting, is that another woman enters the story: Jael, from whom Sisera, the enemy commander, seeks sanctuary. Lulling him, with a mother's tenderness, into a false sense of security, she does away with him with a tent peg! This is no simple random violence and breaking of hospitality ethic, for Jael's husband was in a pact with the oppressor King Jabin. She breaks with her husband's pact in order to bring about justice, for she, as her name suggests proclaims by her actions "YHWH is God".

This leads to the great theophany after the victory was won recounted in chapter 5—a song of praise and thanksgiving which is estimated to date back to the 12th century BCE.

These stories helped to define for a people their national myth, their story and place in the world. What are the stories that we turn to today to help people place themselves in the world? Many stories are being told, some with scant connection to reality but with powerful imagery nonetheless of betrayal and self-pity, the currency of much populist politics. Through what actions of ours today would we see Jesus being declared Lord?

# the story

## Deborah's Leadership

*A retelling for five voices.*

**Narrator:** For twenty years the Israelites had been oppressed by Jabin, a king of Canaan. The commander of Jabin's army was Sisera. He was in command of 900 iron chariots.

At that time Deborah was a prophetess and a judge among the Israelites. She was a wise woman. She settled disputes among her people.

One day Deborah sent for a man called Barak. She told him:

**Deborah:** God has a message for you. You are to take 10,000 men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun and go to Mount Tabor. God says: "I will lure Sisera and all his troops and chariots to the Kishon river and I will deliver them into your hands."

**Narrator:** Barak said to Deborah:

**Barak:** I'll go, but only if you'll go with me. If you won't go with me, I won't go.

**Deborah:** I will go with you, but because of your hesitation you won't get any credit for the victory over Sisera. The honour will belong to a woman instead.

**Narrator:** So Barak summoned 10,000 men from the tribes and Deborah went with them to Mount Tabor. When Sisera learned that Barak had gone up to Mount Tabor he called together all his troops and his 900 iron chariots and went with them to the river Kishon.

When Deborah saw the arrival of Sisera she said to Barak:

**Deborah:** Go. God is leading you. Today God will give you victory.

**Narrator:** So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with his ten thousand men and attacked. In the confusion of battle Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot. Barak and the Israelites pursued the chariots and killed all of Sisera's army. Not a man was left.

Sisera fled to the tent of Heber the Kenite who he thought would give him shelter and he was met by Jael, Heber's wife.

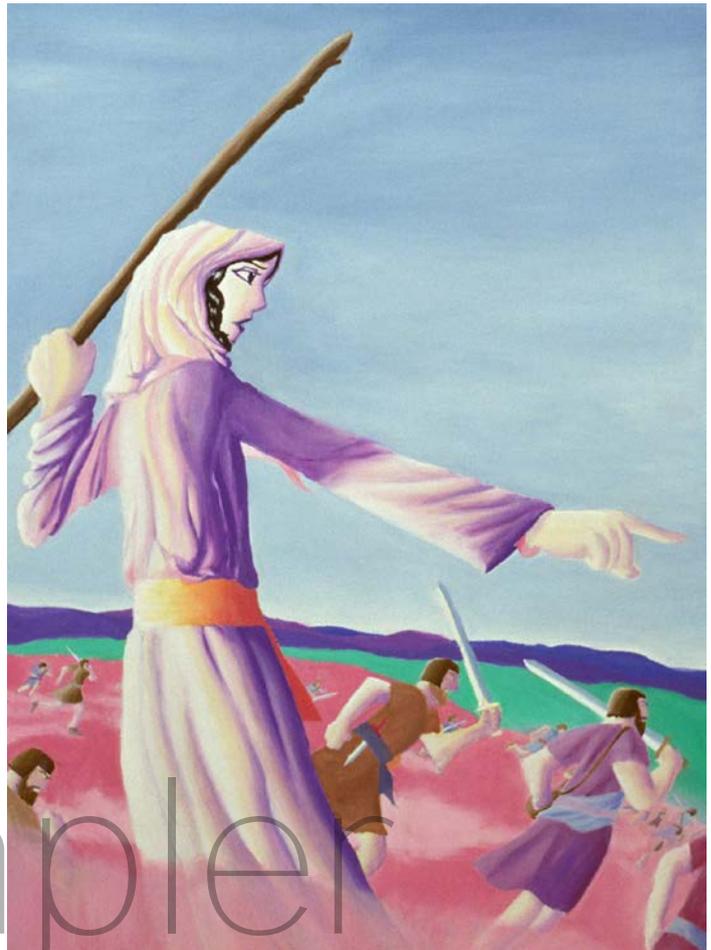
**Jael:** Come in, sir, come right into my tent, don't be afraid.

**Narrator:** So Sisera went into Jael's tent and she hid him behind a curtain. He asked her,

**Sisera:** Please give me a drink, I'm very thirsty!

**Narrator:** And Jael fetched him some milk. He said to her,

**Sisera:** If anyone comes to the tent door and asks if you have seen me, say no.



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**Narrator:** And then exhausted, he fell asleep.

While he was sleeping, Jael picked up a tent peg and a hammer, crept quietly up to Sisera and drove the tent peg right through his head into the ground, and he died.

Barak, meanwhile, was looking for Sisera. All Sisera's troops were dead but of Sisera there was no sign. Jael saw Barak coming and she went out from her tent to meet him.

**Jael:** Come in, Barak, come and look and I will show you the man you are looking for.

**Narrator:** So Barak went into the tent with her, and there was Sisera on the ground dead, with the tent peg through his head.

On that day Deborah and Barak sang a song:

**Deborah:** Listen Kings. I will sing to God.

**Barak:** I will make music to the Lord.

**Deborah:** I arose, a mother in Israel.

**Barak:** The people shouted your name.

**Deborah:** Sisera came with his army.

**Barak:** The river swept them away.

**Deborah:** Most blessed of women be Jael.

Barak: She welcomed Sisera into her tent.  
 Deborah: Her left hand reached for a tent peg.  
 Barak: Her right hand for a workman's hammer.  
 Deborah: She struck Sisera and crushed his head  
 Barak: She shattered and pierced his skull.  
 Deborah: At her feet he sank and fell.  
 Barak: He fell, he fell down dead.

Deborah: The mother of Sisera watches for his return.  
 Barak: She looks in vain for the return of his chariots.  
 Deborah: O God, may all your enemies die.  
 Barak: May your friends grow in strength like the rising sun.  
 Narrator: And after this, there was peace in the land for forty years.

## Retelling For Young People

### Paul's First Big Journey With Barnabas

- Did you know there are really gory stories in the bible?

Today we are going to hear one of them. Put your hands over your ears if you do not want to listen. Once there was a brave and wise woman called Deborah. Her name means 'bee'. She was the ruler of the Israelites.

In the land where they lived there was a powerful king called Jabin.

Jabin was very cruel to the Israelites. He had nine hundred iron chariots and the commander of his army was called Sisera.

One day Deborah sent for a man called Barak. She gave him a message. She told him that God wanted him to take ten thousand men and go and fight Jabin's army.

Barak was wary. He told Deborah he would only fight Jabin's army if she came with him. Deborah smiled. All right Barak I'll come with you she said, but you won't get any credit when you win the battle – a woman will get all the honour instead.

So, on the one side, the soldiers of the army of Jabin, Sisera the army commander, and nine hundred iron chariots.

On the other side Deborah, Barak, ten thousand men and, as far as we know, no chariots at all.

Deborah and Barak gathered their men and set off for a mountain called Tabor. Sisera called his army together and with all their chariots set off after them.

When Deborah saw that Sisera had got as far as the river Kishon she told Barak it was time for him to attack.

As Barak and his men came down the mountain, the wheels of Sisera's chariots got stuck in the mud of the river bed. There was great confusion, mud and blood everywhere (told you it was a gory story), and Sisera's soldiers abandoned their chariots and ran for it. They didn't get very far. Barak and his men chased them and killed all of them. Well, not quite all of them, because when Sisera saw what was happening he got down from his chariot and managed to escape.

So Barak won the battle but Sisera escaped.

- Where do you think he went?

Near to the site of the battle a woman called Jael was living in a tent, and her husband was a friend of King Jabin. So Sisera ran to Jael's tent and asked her to hide him. Jael invited Sisera into the tent and gave him a drink of milk. He asked her to guard the tent door and told her if anyone asked if she had seen him, she was to say no.

Sisera hid behind a curtain in the tent and he was so tired that he fell asleep. Now comes the really gory bit, are you ready? It's so gory that Deborah and Barak later wrote a song about it. When Sisera fell asleep Jael grabbed a tent peg in one hand and a hammer in another. She quietly crept up beside Sisera and hammered the tent peg into his head so hard that it went right through his skull and pinned his head to the ground.

When Barak came looking for Sisera, Jael came out of her tent and called him over.

Come here, she said, and I'll show you the man you are looking for. And Barak went into the tent with her, and there on the ground was Sisera.

This is a version of the story told by someone who was on the side of the Israelites.

- How would you tell the story if you were on King Jabin's side?

If you want to read Deborah and Barak's song it's in Judges chapter 5.

Here's a chant they could have sung:

*Sisera,  
Where's Sisera?*

*Dead, dead, dead,  
with a tent peg through his head.*

*Bloody and gory,  
end of story.*

- Can you think of other any other songs or poems about battles?

# worship ideas

## Through the Season

Please visit [pages 7-8](#) where you will find ideas that can be used to help create a linking theme through each series in this season.

## Gathering Activity

In the passage today, we see that the Israelites were oppressed for 20 years before they cried out for help.

- What oppressions happening around our communities, country or world, would we cry out to God for help?
- Think of those who have helped us in the past, and ask yourself in what ways could we as God's people seek to act and help those in need today?

## Call to Worship

This desert is never silent.  
The wind whines, the rocks crack,  
the pebbles vibrate, the clouds scrape,  
but that is not the noise.

As people come running to the judge,  
a judge who is a woman,  
sat under a palm tree  
who judges with fairness and equality,  
love and compassion  
settling disputes, giving advice.

A judge who listens to God,  
who seeks God's will,  
and then leads those who are trapped,  
to freedom...that is the love of God.

But this cry for help is held in a promise  
where those who are rejected  
by one story teller  
are loved into their own story  
by a God whose promise  
is bigger than covenant.

e gather, before the judge,  
who judges not like the world,  
where blame and punishment take priority,  
but we gather before a judge who offers freedom,  
in love, compassion and justice.

## Prayer of Dedication

Generous God,  
all that we have is a gift from you.  
We bring before you gifts of money  
which we ask you to receive and use  
for the growth of your kingdom.  
Amen.

## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Holy One,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
clouds pour out water over the earth,  
mountain tops stretch up to the sky.

Your hand is seen in all of nature.  
Humans are but a tiny speck of dust  
in an ever growing and changing universe.

Human nature is fickle,  
we seem never to learn from the past.  
We cry to you when we are in need  
and turn away once we have what we want.

Lord, forgive us for our foolish ways,  
guide us back to your way.  
Open our hearts so that we may  
know you more fully.

We acknowledge the work  
of the prophets and teachers  
who have come before us,  
and for the people who  
bravely listened and responded.

We give thanks for the prophets and teachers  
who are present in our lives today.  
Give each of us ears to hear their words  
and courage to respond appropriately.

Holy One, we come with thankful hearts,  
aware of the generous gifts you have given us  
and acknowledging that too often we  
have abused or misused those gifts  
and that our generation and  
those who will come after us  
are suffering the consequences.  
Amen.

## All-Age Prayer

Loving Parent,  
we are made in your image,  
you give us life  
and you offer us friendship.

You also give us a universe  
that is amazing and wonderful,  
with so much variety.

You made the stars  
that twinkle in the night sky,  
and the sun that shines a light  
on our days.

You made the seeds that grow into  
trees, plants and flowers,  
and you made all manner  
of animals, fish and birds.

We are glad to be able to enjoy  
all you have created and  
also to learn about you  
through all creation.

We are glad too for the people  
who help us learn more about you,  
and who encourage and challenge us  
to become more like Jesus.  
Amen.

## Reflective Prayer

Wisdom is a gift  
you bestow on many people:  
women, men and children,  
throughout all time.

Wisdom is a gift  
that we all need to seek  
for ourselves and for  
our brothers and sisters.

Wisdom is a gift  
given freely to be used  
so that everyone benefits  
from it.

Wisdom is a gift  
we must learn to  
look out for and listen to  
when we see it or hear it.

Wisdom is a gift  
you long to share with us.  
O Lord, help us  
to use it wisely,  
broadly and well.  
Amen.

## Prayers for Others and Ourselves

Loving God,  
thank you for providing people  
who are willing to lead us forward  
and guide us in your way.

Help us to hear the cries of  
our brothers and sisters around the world  
who so desperately need  
leaders who can help them  
move forward.

Help us to hear the cries of  
children demanding our attention  
and asking to be loved and cared for.

Help us to hear the cries of  
women struggling to be heard  
above the noise of men,  
who would seek to silence their voices  
and who would deny them equality  
in daily living.

Help us to hear the cries of  
men weeping at the loss  
of their families or  
their homes or careers  
due to powers beyond their control.

Lord, help us to hear  
and to respond,  
to raise up women and men  
who will be wise leaders  
and guide us in how  
we can best assist  
our brothers and sisters  
around the world.

Help us to be brave  
and to use our voices  
and our resources  
to help all in need  
today and every day.  
Amen.

# worship ideas

## Reflection

The stories of the people of God:  
bloody and bitter,  
gory and gruesome,  
tales that baffle and bemuse,  
that seem so outlandish  
yet hold a mirror, only slightly exaggerated,  
to the plight of humans today  
caught up in gender stereotypes  
and patriarchal privilege,  
struggling to make sense  
of space and time,  
of divinity and humanity;  
hiding in absurdity  
because reality is too painful to contemplate  
and the strangeness of life and relationships  
plays out in every generation  
in every tribe and culture  
and it seems we never learn  
the lessons of our ancestors  
or live into  
the hope of our God.

## Take Home Ideas

Take time to reflect on your own or as a small group on powerful women in the past and present.

- Is it right to still talk of 'women MPs', or 'lady doctors', or 'lady judges', and so on?
- What do we need to change in our culture that enables us to treat each other as equal individuals?

Look through the news or papers and circle the stories that still define people by their gender first.

## Sending

May we go now;  
always into the future  
with you beside us,  
travelling where we have not been before.

May we have ears to hear  
a wisdom of years,  
and a concern for love  
from those who lead us.

And may we be shaped  
in every day we journey  
by your greater love  
that includes us all into your kingdom.

## Praise/Hymns

All my hope on God is founded	CH4 192 / MP 16
Be thou my vision	CH4 165 / MP 51
Christ is the world's redeemer	CH4 450
God's people aren't super-brave	ATAS 88
I, the Lord of sea and sky	CH4 251
Let us build a house	CH4 198
Mine eyes have seen the glory	CH4 476
O God of blessings	CH4 177
Sing for God's glory	CH4 172
The time has come	<i>Known Unknowns</i> , WGP, 75
There is a line of women	<i>Known Unknowns</i> , WGP, 78
What shall we pray for those who died?	CH4 712
When a knight won his spurs	online at <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/When_a_Knight_Won_His_Spurs">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/When_a_Knight_Won_His_Spurs</a>



# age group ideas

## gathering

### Travelling Bags

all age

*You will need: a tree of some kind (artificial twig tree, inflatable palm tree, branches from a tree, Christmas tree), cushion.*

Set up a tree in a corner of the space where you meet. Place a cushion beside the tree. Ask one of the children to sit on the cushion as other children gather together. Did the children notice the tree and the person sitting beside it? Talk about how Deborah sat under a tree and people came to her for help and advice because she was considered wise. Use this as a way into the story.

## crafts

### Under The Palm Tree 1

age 3-5

*You will need: A4 card in light colours, paper drinking straws, PVA glue, glue spreaders, green tissue paper torn into small pieces.*

Give each child a sheet of A4 card and four or five paper straws. Ask the children to glue the straws to the card using PVA glue. The straws should be placed vertically and side by side to form the trunk of the tree. Ask the children to make palm leaves for the tree by taking small pieces of tissue paper and scrunching it up then glue the scrunched-up balls onto card. It is easier to put the glue on the card than onto the scrunched-up tissue paper. Repeat until the tree has enough leaves.

Talk about the story and how Deborah sat under the palm tree and people came to her for help and advice. Talk with the children about people they could go to for help.

### Under The Palm Tree 2

age 6-8

*You will need: cardboard tubes, small pieces of fabric (grey or sandy coloured, cut into circles measuring 10 cm diameter), elastic bands, sand or small stones, green paper, pencils, scissors, PVA glue, glue spreaders.*

Give each child a cardboard tube, a piece of fabric and a few elastic bands. Ask the children to lay the fabric circle in front of them with the right side of fabric facing down. Ask the children to put a little pile of sand or tiny stones in the middle of the fabric and then to put cardboard tube into the centre of stones/sand. Gathering the fabric up round the bottom of the tube, ask the children to put a few elastic bands round the fabric so making a weighted base for the palm tree. Give the children some green paper and ask them to draw and cut out palm leaves. Ask the children to attach the palm leaves to both the outside and the inside of the top of the cardboard tube using PVA glue.

Talk about the story and how Deborah sat under the palm tree and people went to her for help and advice. Chat with the children about people they could go to for help and

advice at home, school and church. Talk about ways the children think they can help, support and give advice to each other.

### Who Is Wise

age 9-12

*You will need: fist-sized smooth stones, permanent markers (such as Sharpies), wooden discs or plain square bathroom tiles, strong adhesive or glue gun, twigs.*

Ask the children to choose a stone and to draw an owl on the stone using markers. Give the children a wooden disc or bathroom tile and ask them to glue the stone onto the disc or tile. Ask the children to glue a twig under the owl as though the owl is sitting on a branch and then leave the disc/tile flat to allow the glue to dry.

Talk about how the owl is used as an image/symbol of wisdom. Discuss with the children who they think of as wise and why. Talk about the story and the wisdom of Deborah (an unusual role for a woman at that time). Talk with the children about people they would go to for advice at home, school and church. Discuss with the children ways they can help, support and give advice to each other and to those younger than them. Some children might already be buddies or mentors in school or in other settings.

### Under The Palm Tree 3

all age

*You will need: corrugated card from boxes, newspaper, strong cardboard tubes, string, scissors, strong tape, green crepe paper.*

Divide children into groups of four or five with a variety of ages in each group. Give each group a square of corrugated card about 50 cm by 50 cm to act as a base for their tree. Ask the children to work together to make a tree using newspaper as the trunk and crepe paper for branches. A possible way of doing this is to twist sheets of newspaper and then to tape the twists together but no doubt the children will have their own ideas. Aim for the tree to be about 50/60 cm tall.

Talk about the story and how Deborah sat under the palm tree and people went to her for help and advice. Chat with the children about people they know that they could go to for help and advice at home, school and church. Talk about the ways the children think they can help, support and give advice to each other.

# age group ideas

## activities

### Right And Wrong

age 3-5

*You will need: create some cards with a tick on them and others with a cross on them (representing right and wrong), a list of questions suitable for your group that can be answered using the cards (for instance: Is it good to be kind? It is okay to hit somebody? Can I take someone else's toy? Should we eat lunch with a friend?).*

As you ask the questions and have the children hold up the cards, talk about why some situations are right and some are wrong. It is easiest to do this by reference to how some of these situations will make people hurt or sad.

Ask the children what happens to them if they do something wrong: are their carers happy or sad? Carers need to decide what is right and wrong for their children and family and Deborah had to decide what was right and wrong for people and their area.

### Words Of Wisdom

age 6-12

*You will need: copies of the activity sheet available on page 139, pens, images of people who you think are wise.*

Ask the children to underline the words that they think relate to the word 'wisdom'. After this has been completed show them a few of the images that you brought along of people who you believe to have wisdom, whether in the past or present day. Discuss who they are and why you think they are wise people. Do the children agree? Can they name anyone they think has 'wisdom'?

Deborah was classed a very wise woman and she worked well with others. Many people looked up to her with great respect. Who are the people today that have such wisdom and command a great deal of respect?

### Women Of The World

age 6-12

*You will need: images and information about all the women that have held powerful positions in a variety of situations (Queen Elizabeth I & II, Angela Merkel, Margaret Thatcher, Queen Victoria, Mother Theresa, Rosa Park, Florence Nightingale, Mary Slessor, Jane Haining, Michelle Obama, Christine Lagarde).*

Ask the children to select a picture of one of the women. Just by looking at them do they have any idea of who they are? What they did/do? Why are they women of wisdom?

Wisdom can come in many formats and in all areas of life. Deborah was way ahead of her time and lived in an extremely patriarchal time. Talk about why people thought Deborah had wisdom and then ask the children who they know today, woman or man, who they think has a great deal of wisdom.

## games

### A Mirror Of Deborah

age 9-12

*You will need: paper, pens, mirrors.*

Ask the children to write down their name on the paper and on another sheet of paper write down 'Deborah'. After this is done place it in front of a mirror, it doesn't look right. Now ask the children to write those names again only writing it backwards just looking in the mirror so that it looks correct in reflection. The letters need to be backwards too. Look at these using a mirror, how does it look this time? They may need to do it again!

The children may have noticed that ambulances have that word written backwards on the front of them. It is so it look right in the rear-view mirror.

To be people of wisdom like Deborah or the people we have spoken about already, we need to learn from others and from our surroundings and one day we can maybe mirror those people we respect for their wisdom.

### Grand Old Duke Of York

all age

Line the children up in pairs facing each other. The top couple start down the middle of the gap and go and down as many times as the song allows. They cast off at the top to go behind their lines and everyone follows. At the bottom they form an arm bridge and all the children go under it in pairs and the song starts again.

You will find copies of this old song online.

The Grand Old Duke had 10,000 men just like our story today and to move a large number of men you needed rules and discipline. These men obeyed Deborah because of her position as a judge.

### Froggy, Froggy

all age

One person is 'IT' in the middle of the room. The other children at one end of the room chorus together "Froggy, Froggy, may we cross your golden river?" The 'IT' person says not unless you have the colour ..... on. If a child is wearing the colour they cross over. If not, when commanded they must run across the room past the 'IT' person trying not to be captured. If caught they stay in the middle with the 'IT' person. It then repeats with more people in the middle able to capture others.

A 'Wadi' is mentioned in the passage. This is a Hebrew word for valley or riverbed. The riverbed is usually dried out and only fills with water when the rainfall is exceptionally heavy. Talk about how dangerous it is to cross water when it is high and/or fast flowing. See if the children can name any other wadis or rivers in the bible, or perhaps their local river.

# discussion starters for teens leaders



## Preparation

You will need some art materials today. You could even build a leader from junk.

## Opening Activity

### Our Leaders

- How do we choose our leaders?
- What skills, abilities and characteristics do you think an ideal leader would have?
- Are there things we think make some people better leaders than others?

Think about the different ways people lead: making decisions, by example, inspiring others.

- Do these all need the same kinds of people and skills?
- Are there some people you think can't be leaders?

## Activity/Discussion

### My Leader

Bring out the art or junk materials and have everyone get busy creating their ideal leader. They could do this individually or in pairs.

Once they have created their leaders, ask them to explain their leader and the attributes of that leader to everyone else.

- How wisely were the different attributes chosen?
- What abilities would you add, having talked about it further with others?

### Living It Out

Encourage the young people to look out for people who are leaders this week. Remind them that they might be looking at one when they look in the mirror!

# sampler

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