

GOD MADE ME TO BE PATIENT

3-4

BIBLE VERSES: Genesis 12-21, Psalm 130:5, Luke 15:11-32, Ephesians 4:2, James 5:7-8.

In this session, we'll look at what it means to be patient.

LEADER'S NOTES

For small children, being patient is really, really hard. They have no real concept of how long time lasts so although their constant clamouring of 'are we nearly there yet?', 'when will it be time?', etc, may drive you crazy, they have no frame of reference for your answers! I'm not sure that in our heart of hearts patience ever gets any easier. Sure, we may learn to hide our impatience under the veneer of being grown up, but I suspect it's still there underneath to some extent.

Of course patience has two sides to it - the idea of waiting for something patiently and the idea of not being impatient with others. Today's session focuses more on the first aspect but there is a small focus on the second aspect too in the prodigal son story. The bottom line is that God is infinitely patient with us, both when it takes us a long time to respond and when we are just plain getting it wrong!

Welcome Activities: If this session is being run as a 'Sunday School' session then the idea is that all 3 activities are provided, allowing the children choice. If it is being run as part of a Toddler Group then these activities can be provided as part of the all the other activities on offer. If it is part of a short Toddler and Parent worship session (e.g. Pram Service) then it may only be practical to offer one of the activities.

The idea is that these activities give the children and any parents time to relax and become used to the environment. As the activities will be linked in some way to the theme they will provide a bit of a bridge or introduction to the Bible story.

Today's activities link to the farmer story and to the idea of waiting for something.

Story Time: Choose whichever Story Time activity best suits your circumstances. It would be best to use the same area and seating arrangement each time. Probably helpful if it's separate from other distractions. Perhaps with a special chair for the story teller to sit on.

Today's stories are about Abraham, the lost son and the farmer described in James 5.

Get Creative: A choice of 3 activities reflecting the Bible Story in some way. If you have lots of time and space then you could offer all 3, but just to offer 1 is fine. Children of this age are exploring their own ideas and ways of creating so may go off on their own tangent e.g. if you ask them to make a sheep they may well turn it into something else – don't be anxious about this – 3 year olds especially are much more interested in the 'doing' than the finished product.

The fourth Get Creative Activity will be a suggestion for a creative prayer activity. This is specifically for any parents/carers who are staying with their children. The activity is not intended for the children and you may like to have a leader on hand to talk or pray with any adult who needs this interaction.

If you are in a Sunday School setting where no parents stay then you would not need to organise this activity.

Revisiting The Story: Similar to the three welcome activities and may well include some of those. An opportunity for the children to revisit and retell the story themselves using small world figures, dressing up etc. The idea would be that if you chose a making activity in the Get Creative section then the children could move on to the Revisiting The Story activities when they've finished – there is no need for the whole group to finish together.

The fourth activity "Time To Go Home" in this section suggests a take home activity and also a short prayer or song which you can use if you want to round up the sessions with all the children together again. If you want to you could adopt your own special good bye song. In other circumstances it may be better to have an informal ending with parents collecting children as the children are continuing to play.

ON THE FARM

ACTIVITY | WELCOME ACTIVITY

Lay out a farm set for the children to explore.

The Point: A welcome activity.

EQUIPMENT

Farm toys - tractors, animals, etc.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

PLANTING

ACTIVITY | WELCOME ACTIVITY

Let the children plant the pebbles in the sand tray or buckets.

The Point: A welcome activity.

EQUIPMENT

Sand box (you could use soil instead but that might be very messy!), spades, buckets, pebbles, watering

cans (for pouring sand!).

DURATION: 10 MINS.

WAITING FOR A BUS

ACTIVITY |  **WATCHER** |  **WELCOME ACTIVITY**

Let the children enjoy the travel-based toys.

The Point: A welcome activity.

EQUIPMENT

Any sort of travel-based small world toys or PlayMobil - airport, bus, train, etc.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

ABE AND THE AMAZING PROMISE

VISUAL AND AUDIO CLIPS |  **STORY TIME**

There are two choices of material to use from this DVD. Either use the main feature of the story of Abraham and Sarah or use the Blunders in Boo-Boo-Ville episode.

Whichever part you use, at the end ask the children if they can tell you what patience is. Ask them for an example of how not to be patient. Ask them for an example of how to be patient.

The Point: To think about patience.

EQUIPMENT

DVD of VeggieTales Abe and the Amazing Promise.

DURATION: 20 MINS.

THE LOST SON

STORY |  **WATCHER** |  **STORY TIME**

[Download activity worksheet](#)

As you tell the story, give each picture to a different child to hold up.

Once upon a time there was a man (big man picture) who had two sons (two smaller men picture). One day the younger son decided that he didn't want to live with his dad anymore - he wanted an adventure. So he asked his dad for lots of money and said that he was leaving. This made his dad very sad (draw a sad face on the father).

The father gave the son the money and he left to have his adventure (purse picture). The boy was very excited and for a while he had a lovely time spending all the money. But then - disaster! - the money ran out and the boy was left with nothing. He had to get a job - a horrible job feeding pigs (pig picture).

Meanwhile at home, dad was still really, really sad. Everyday he would look down the road to see if he could see his son coming home. He hoped that if he was patient, one day his boy would come back.

Finally the son had had enough. He wanted to go home (second picture of the boy - draw his face). He decided to go back to his dad and ask if he could be his dad's servant - he thought that he had been too bad to be his son again. So the son set off. It was a long journey and by the end he was dirty and smelly.

The father was looking down the road like he did everyday, waiting patiently for his son to come back and he thought his eyes were playing tricks on him: he thought he could see his son walking up the road! It was his son! He had come home. The father ran out of the gate as fast as he could and didn't stop until he reached his son and gave him a big cuddle (second picture of father - draw a happy face).

The boy tried to say that he would be his dad's servant but his dad wouldn't let him say it - he said "I'm so glad to have you home - let's have a massive party to celebrate!" (Balloons picture.)

Ask the children how the dad was patient in the story. He waited a long time but also he forgave the son and wasn't mad at him for making a big mistake. What might we need to be patient for or with?

The Point: To tell a story of patience.

EQUIPMENT

The attachment pictures printed onto card and with a stick taped on for holding, marker pen.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

THE FARMER'S SEEDS

ILLUSTRATIONS |  WATCHER |  STORY TIME

[Download activity worksheet](#)

This activity is based on James 5:7-8.

Say to the children that a farmer wants to grow some vegetables. What will he need? Show the picture of the pot. He'll need some soil. What else? Show the picture of the seeds. He'll need the seeds. The farmer plants the seeds in the soil. Show them the picture of the pot again. Can they see the vegetables? No! They are still seeds under the ground.

The farmer waters the seeds - show them the watering can. The seeds begin to sprout. Show them the picture of the shoot. Can they eat the vegetables yet? No! They haven't grown enough. The farmer has to wait and wait for the vegetables to be ready - it takes months!

Show them the picture of the crops. Can they see the vegetables yet? No! The farmer has to do some work when the vegetables are ready to be dug up. Show them the final picture of the vegetables. Now the vegetables are ready to be eaten. But it was a long wait!

Say that the farmer has to be patient in waiting for his vegetables. Say that God made us to be patient too. What kind of things do we have to wait for?

The Point: To think about patience.

EQUIPMENT

The pictures in the attachment, or some physical items that correlate instead.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

PATIENCE LEAVES

CRAFT IDEAS | 🙌 **GET CREATIVE**

Let the children cut out a leaf and help them to write patience on them - or get the adults to. Add them to your tree display.

The Point: To build a series reminder.

EQUIPMENT

Paper in leaf colours, scissors, pens.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

WAITING

CRAFT IDEAS | 🙌 **GET CREATIVE**

Let the children make clocks. They will need some adult help so this is perfect in a mums and tots type of

session. Start by having them stick the number stickers around the edge of the plate. Take two strips of black card - one shorter than the other. Put them on top of each other, and have them attach one end to the centre of the plate using a paper fastener. You can now make the clock tell the time.

The Point: A session reminder.

EQUIPMENT

Paper plates, strips of black card, number stickers, paper fasteners.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

PLANT AND WAIT

ACTIVITY | 🙌 **GET CREATIVE**

Give everyone a pot of some kind. If you want, they can decorate it with stickers. Put some damp kitchen towel or cotton wool in the bottom of the pot and sprinkle with cress seeds. Tell the children to keep the seeds damp and in a week or so they will see some growth. If the adults are not with their children, be sure to send home some instructions to keep the seeds damp.

The Point: A story reminder.

EQUIPMENT

Small margarine tubs or yoghurt pots, kitchen towel or cotton wool, cress seeds.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

HAVE A LITTLE PATIENCE

WORSHIP AND REFLECTION | 🧐 **WATCHER** | 🙌 **GET CREATIVE**

[🔗 Download activity worksheet](#)

Allow adults some time and space with the attached sheet.

The Point: To respond to God.

EQUIPMENT

The attachment, pens.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

ON THE FARM

ACTIVITY | ↻ REVISITING THE STORY

Let the children play with the farm toys again. They may be prompted by the story activity.

The Point: To revisit the story.

EQUIPMENT

Farm toys

DURATION: 10 MINS.

PLANTING

ACTIVITY | ↻ REVISITING THE STORY

Let the children plant the pebbles in the sand box again.

The Point: To revisit the story.

EQUIPMENT

Sand box, buckets, spades, pebbles, watering cans.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

WAITING FOR A BUS

ACTIVITY | ↻ REVISITING THE STORY

Let the children play with the travel toys again. They may have picked up on the idea of waiting.

The Point: To revisit the story.

EQUIPMENT

Travel-based small world toys.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

PATIENCE LEAF

CRAFT IDEAS |  **WATCHER** |  **TIME TO GO HOME**

 [Download activity worksheet](#)

This activity adds to those in previous weeks. Have the sheet with the instructions for making the tree available for those who missed the first session. Give everyone a peace leaf to take home, cut out and colour and put on their tree.

The Point: A take home activity.

EQUIPMENT

The attachment - one leaf per child.

DURATION: 5 MINS.
