

# DAY 1

## SMALL GROUPS IN POTTING SHEDS

### Small Groups in Potting Sheds

- including optional **Gone to Pot** drink and snack time

Using an age-appropriate children's Bible, read the creation account from Genesis 1 and 2.

**Activity:** After reading, hand out **playdough** to each child and ask them to make their favourite bird. Let each child show what they've made.

Put all the birds on a tray or set them aside for the end of group time. Then ask them to make another bird... without anything! Pause and wait for their questions and confusion... then jokingly ask: can't you create a brand-new bird out of nothing? Don't you know how to make feathers? Or eggs? Or wings?

But that's how God created everything! He didn't have playdough or moulding clay or paper and paint – God is the ultimate creator because he made everything out of nothing!

**Activity:** Prepare ahead a mirror in the bottom of a box, with the lid on.

Bring out the box and tell the children: in this box is the best, most amazing and special thing God made. It's so special that only one person can look at a time. Invite one child at a time to leave the circle and secretly look in the box, and to not spoil it for the others!

Once they've all looked, have the children reveal all at once what they saw in the box: themselves! Because the most amazing, special thing that God created was you! God loves you and made you to be like him – you are his precious child.

20 mins

A simple recipe can be found at [bbcgoodfood.com/how-to/guide/playdough-recipe](http://bbcgoodfood.com/how-to/guide/playdough-recipe) We suggest you make a large batch for use in day 1 and 4.

### Prayer activity

Invite the children to unmake their playdoh animals, and instead to make a heart shape together from their combined playdoh, representing the size of the perfect love that God feels for people and his creation.

(Some children may not want to unmake their bird, this is OK and can still be used to illustrate the point.)

Once made, ask children in turn to hold the heart and out loud or silently say thank you to God for his love for them, and for making whatever their favourite part of creation is.

# DAY 2

## SMALL GROUPS IN POTTING SHEDS

### Small Groups in Potting Sheds

- including optional **Gone to Pot** drink and snack time

Chat through the story with your Bibles open at Genesis 2 and 3.

- What changed when Eve decided to disobey God's rule?
- Whose fault was it?

Draw out that ultimately it was her/their decision to choose the wrong option.

- How did she know she had made the wrong choice?
- Have you ever felt ashamed of something you have done, not done, or said?
- Is it a good feeling?

We have chosen to step away from God and his perfect plan. Even though it was the Serpent's persuasion it was ultimately Eve's decision to disobey, and we can always invent excuses, but it is our choice when we do wrong.

Chat about ways in which our world is messed up because people disobey/turn their back on God; the Bible calls this sin.

Ask for two volunteers and give them a tube of toothpaste each and race to squirt it onto a paper plate. Now challenge them to get it back in the tube as quickly as possible.

When we sin, lives get messy. It's not always easy to go back to how it was. Sometimes even impossible.

- How was the relationship with God ruined?
- How do you think God felt when Eve and Adam disobeyed him?
- How does he feel when we disobey him now?
- Did God walk away from Adam and Eve because of what they did?

Read Genesis 3:8 together. God knew what they had done and knew they were hiding but he still calls them! Yes, they messed up, and knew they did wrong, but God did not abandon them.

There are consequences of what happened. The garden is now messy. But God came to them and tried to teach them why! He tried to make them live better. He must love them very much.

Sometimes when we mess up things cannot get back to as they were before, but God still comes to us in the mess to help us too.

20  
mins



### **Prayer activity**

Explain that prayer is having a conversation with God. One way to pray is to write to God.

*(Hand out pre-cut paper leaves to everyone)*

We have all messed up too. But we can still say sorry to God.

- Encourage children to write down/draw wrong things in their lives which they may regret
- Say we are going to **put our leaves in a compost bin** to show we are sorry and ask God to take away the sins and bad things to make us new and good instead. *(Put "compost" aside in a secure place during the club. You can pray over the prayers later)*
- Explain that prayer is also asking God to help us make good decisions and know the right things to do. Pray that for your group.

# DAY 3

## SMALL GROUPS IN POTTING SHEDS

### Small Groups in Potting Sheds

- including optional **Gone to Pot** drink and snack time

20 mins

Ask the children if they think anyone can fix the mess. Chat with them as they share their answers.

Ask a child to lie on top of a large sheet of lining paper. Trace around them. Select two hands from the gathering activity, using them as the hands. Add facial features etc. to make it look like a child but be careful this doesn't take up all your time.

An alternative to tracing around a person would be to ask each child to draw a self-portrait of their head and shoulders and stick the hands on the side.

Ask, "What makes someone a good friend?" Invite them to write or draw their ideas inside the child's outline (ensure space remains in the middle of the outline). Once done, talk about God being the perfect friend and write "God" in the space you have left.

Remind the children only God can fix the mess of the world. We can try, but it never works, and more importantly the broken friendship with us. What we need to do is remember how special the friendship with God is and put him first.

Read Deuteronomy 6:5 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

Ask "I wonder how we put God first?" Invite them to add their responses by drawing or writing using a different colour than before on the outline of the child.

### Prayer activity

Finish by saying that it would be good to give thanks to God for being our rescuer and best friend ever, and to ask him to help us to put him first.

Ask the children to repeat the prayer:

"Thank you, God, that you know me. You know what makes me happy and sad, the things I like and you know all about me. Please help me to put you first in my life. Amen."



# DAY 4

## SMALL GROUPS IN POTTING SHEDS

### Small Groups in Potting Sheds

- including optional **Gone to Pot** drink and snack time

Start with chatting about how this story is central to what Christians believe. That Jesus died and came back to life again and that just being good isn't enough to fix the relationship, Jesus willingly took the consequence for our sins.

Read Romans 6:23 and then John 3:16-17.

20  
mins

### Activity – On the Cross

Equipment: pieces of broken pottery (large enough to write on), grouting, felt pens, decoration glass beads, cross of wood (either one large enough for the whole club or smaller ones for each group)

- Everyone takes a piece of the pottery and writes on the back of it either:
  - ◊ Something they want/need to say sorry to God for
  - ◊ Or something more general that people do wrong
- They stick it to the cross with the grouting, ensuring the writing is facing in towards the cross
- Children can do this more than once
- Then each take a glass bead and think of something to say thank you to God for
- Stick the beads to the cross using grouting
- Children can do this more than once



### Prayer activity

When everyone has finished, pray thanking God that Jesus was willing to take the consequence of our sin and we leave it with God on the cross.

# DAY 5

## SMALL GROUPS IN POTTING SHEDS

### Small Groups in Potting Sheds

- including optional **Gone to Pot** drink and snack time

Explain that Jesus has made a way for everything to be put right when he died on the cross. Our spoiled hearts can be cleaned when we are forgiven by him, just like we spoke about yesterday. And Jesus promised to return and finish the job for the whole world someday! Let's read again about what Jesus promised us, and while I read, listen carefully and draw a picture of what this new world will look like.

Read Revelation 21:1-4

**Share the drawn pictures with the group (P1-P3 go straight to Prayer activity)**

Now let me read another part of the Bible that says when this is going to happen:

"But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." *2 Peter 3:8-9*

So, we are all waiting for Jesus to return, for him to finish making the world perfect again, and it sometimes seems like a long time to wait, but we can be pretty impatient sometimes, can't we? Even one minute can seem like a long time. Let's play a quick game.

### **Challenge: Think about it - application**

I want you to stand up/raise your hand when you think one minute has gone by. But the trick is that only I will have a watch to look at! So, you have to guess when it's been a minute. The person who is closest to the one minute mark gets a prize.

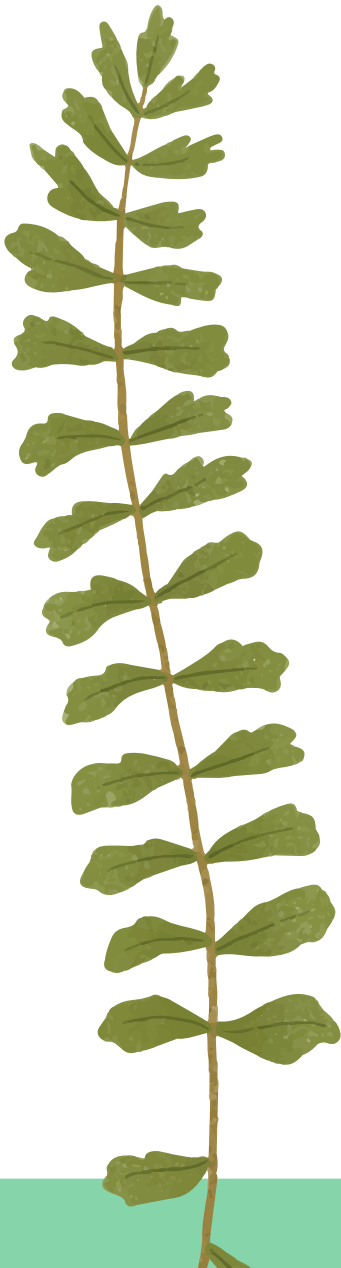
So, it may seem like God is being really slow about his promise! Why is Jesus taking so long, even thousands of years to come back? Well, it's because he wants to give everyone the chance to choose him, to believe in what he did on the cross, to be forgiven and to enjoy the new world he will make. Because he will come back to make the world brand new!

### **Prayer activity**

Print a copy of the invitation on page 59 for each child. Have a big post box they can post their invitations into.

Let's pray to Jesus about this together now. To think about this, I have an invitation for each of you. Not just to our Garden Party but an invitation from Jesus to know him better. For some of you that may be to believe in and to follow him for a first time, to be forgiven and to be a part of God's big plan for the world.

25  
mins



**Prayer activity**

Print a copy of the invitation on page 59 for each child.  
Have a big post box they can post their invitations into.

Let's pray to Jesus about this together now. To think about this, I have an invitation for each of you. Not just to our Garden Party but an invitation from Jesus to know him better. For some of you that may be to believe in and to follow him for a first time, to be forgiven and to be a part of God's big plan for the world.

Look at the invitation and write on the back what you think. Are you thinking "*Definitely Yes*" you want to follow Jesus? "*Maybe Yes*" you're thinking about it. "*Maybe No*" you don't think you want to or "*Definitely No*" - you're not interested. Or you can leave it blank too! Then post it in the big post box, and that will be like sending your prayer to God this morning.

Let me pray for us all now: Jesus, we know that you want to fix our hearts and our world, and you invite us all to trust and follow you. I pray for all the children here, that you would speak to each of their hearts and protect and guide them.

