**FIRST STEPS TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Session 4 of 4

# The talents

### MEETING AIM

To discover that God has given us gifts and talents that we can use to serve him.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 25:14-30

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your particular situation.

This kingdom parable explores ideas around the blessings God has given us (money, skills, gifts and talents) and how we should use those to serve him and bless others in turn. Younger children might not yet know what their gifts and skills are, but they are still able to use who they are and what they can do to show God’s love to others. Involving children in outreach of this kind can help them to see their growing faith in action: God loves them, and they can love others; this love has a huge impact on the people they reach.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome the children and share any refreshments you have. Talk about any unusual talents that the children have. If safe to do so, get them to show the group!

### PLAY – 10 mins

**You will need:** any toys, games or sports equipment you have which the children have skills at using

Ask the children to go and find whatever they love to play with – games, toys or sporting equipment. Help them to access your store cupboards safely! Have a fun time of playing those games or demonstrating their skills. Make sure you catch children (and adults!) doing well at their chosen skill.

As you play, expand this ‘catching’ to complimenting the children on playing well together being kind, how they support each other and share. You might also want to share what you see as the group’s gifts and skills, and how they have had an impact on others in the past.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** Bible

Show the group the Bible and the Gospel of Matthew. If you did the other sessions in this series, then remind them that you have already read some stories Jesus told about the kingdom of heaven. Then tell this story:

Olivia and Noah sat at the kitchen table. They were creating some pictures using paint and crayons and coloured paper.

Olivia was very good at cutting and sticking. She was working on a big picture of their dog, Fozzie. She had cut out lots of pieces of brown paper and stuck them down. She had found some wool and glued it on to make Fozzie’s face. Now she was working on the dog’s tail.

Noah loved painting. He was using his fingers to make a spotty pattern. There were lots of blue dots. There were lots of red dots. Now he was getting ready to add orange dots to the pattern.

Daddy came in and looked at what they were doing. “What lovely pictures!” he said.

“I’m going to give mine to Granny,” said Olivia. “She loves Fozzie, but she hasn’t been able to see him.” Granny hadn’t been very well and so she wasn’t able to come and visit Olivia, Noah and Fozzie the dog.

“What are you going to do with your picture, Noah?” asked Daddy. “I know Auntie Katie loves your patterns.”

“I’m going to keep it for myself,” said Noah.

When you’ve finished the story, read Matthew 25:14-27 (or continue to verse 30, if you’re happy to read verse 30 to the children).

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

* Who was sharing their talents with others? Why?
* What talents and gifts do you have (remind the children of what you did in ‘Play’)?
* How can you use those talents to help others?
* What might this story tell us about being a friend of Jesus?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** art and craft materials; large sheets of paper; cover-up and clean-up equipment

Gather together all the art and craft materials that the children like to use and have special talents with. Enjoy creating pictures and collages together. Praise the children on how they are doing and the effort they are putting in. As you work, tell the group about a time when you used your own gifts to bless others and tell them about Jesus. This might be writing and recording a song, making and sharing cakes, helping people to budget, or simply providing a listening ear for someone who needed to talk.

Once you have finished, decide who you might give your pictures and collages to. Chat about why it is good to use our skills and gifts to bless others. What might motivate us to do this?

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** soft balls (such as sponge balls or ball-pit balls) or balloons; praise music and the means to play it

Play some lively praise music and enjoy dancing around. Throw the balls or balloons in the air and as they float or fall to the ground, thank God for something that you’re good at (remind the group that it might not necessarily be something concrete like being good at cooking or painting; it could be something like listening to others or being kind).

After a few moments of dancing and throwing the balls and balloons in the air, turn the music off and stand in a circle. Thank God for everything that he has given you and ask him to help you use those things to bless others and show them how much God loves them!

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