

WONDERFULLY INCLUDED

Key Concept

Jesus looks deeper than the outside appearance of a person. He sees who a person really is. He sees the things that make us special. He sees the qualities that make us unique and rare. He also sees the reasons for the bad decisions that we sometimes make. Most importantly, he makes a choice. He makes a choice to love and include us as we are. He sees that no matter who we are, we are all wonders.

Key Scripture

A body is made up of many parts, and each of them has its own use. That's how it is with us. There are many of us, but we each are part of the body of Christ, as well as part of one another.

ROMANS 12:4-5 (CEV)

Preparation and Supplies

You will need

- ☐ One or two balls
- ☐ Markers or pens
- ☐ Enough coins for each child to use one (any coins will work)
- ☐ Jar lids or similar to use as circle templates for 'Tying In' (Page 4)
- ☐ Several hoops or chalk or tape to create circles on the ground

Prepare

- ☐ Print a large copy of the body outlines provided or draw them on butcher's paper
 - Create a large jigsaw by writing the words of the memory verse in different sections of the large body outline.
- ☐ Print a blank A4 size copy of the body outlines for each child (Page 7-8)



Connecting in

Today is the first part of a four week celebration.

Together we are celebrating what it means to be wonders, made by the God of wonders.

In this series we will also be referring to the story of Auggie from the book, *Wonder* (PALACIO, 2012).

In this lesson we are learning about what it means to be inclusive.

What ideas do you already have about inclusion? Allow time for responses.

Let's see what else we can learn...

Game - Catch the Ball

Ask the children to stand in a circle. Choose a child to begin with the ball.

Explain that they need to throw the ball to someone else in the circle. As they throw the ball they must say their own name then the name of the person they are passing to.

If you drop the ball or say the wrong name you must move outside of the circle.

If you have the ball you may choose to throw it to someone outside of the circle. If they catch the ball and say the names correctly then they can join back in. But, if they drop the ball or make a mistake with the names then you are both out!

*Consider having a separate circle for younger children – proceed in the same way but ask them only to say their own name as they pass the ball.

Game discussion – Catch the Ball

After a few minutes, ask the children to sit down.

1. *What did you find challenging about the game?*
2. *If you passed the ball to someone outside of the circle...*
...Why did you decide to do so?
3. *If you only passed the ball to people inside the circle...*
...Why did you choose not to include anyone outside of the circle?
4. *If you had a turn outside of the circle...*
...How did it feel to be excluded from the circle?
5. *If you were outside of the circle then came back into it...*
...What was it like when someone took a risk and passed you the ball even though you were outside the circle?

Memory Verse Activity

God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient.

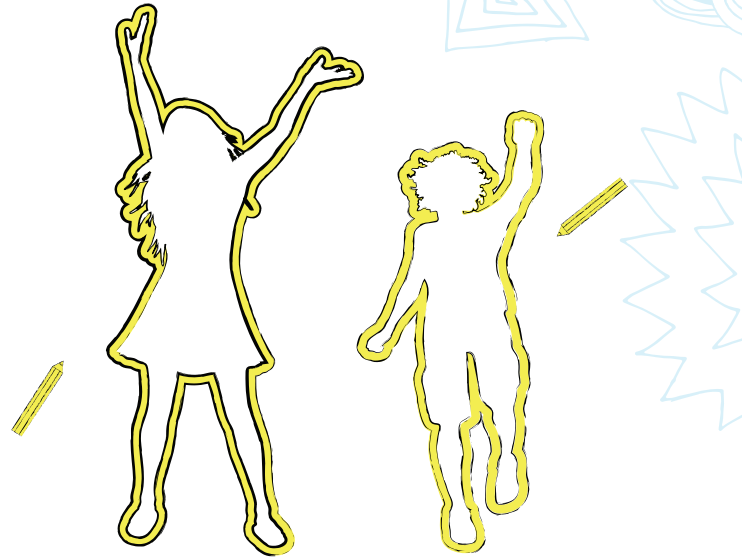
COLOSSIANS 3:12 (CEV)

Over the next few weeks we will be learning a new memory verse. This verse helps us to understand how God wants us to treat each other.

Distribute the prepared pieces of the memory verse amongst the children.

Ask them to work together to assemble the memory verse into the large body outline. Ask the children to say the memory verses.

Give each of the children an A4 size copy of the outlines and ask them to write the words in the bodies. (Page 8-9)



The Main Thing

Game – In or Out?

Before you commence, choose a group of your children that will be ‘out’ from the beginning. For example, ‘everyone who is ten or older’, ‘everyone who is wearing something red’ or ‘everyone with blonde hair’.

We are going to play a game. Everyone please stand up. Unfortunately, some of you are already ‘out’. Everyone who is _____ is out. If you are out then you need to sit down.

Distribute one coin to each of the remaining children and ask them to hold it and spread out around your space.

When I say ‘go’ I would like you to flip your coin. If the coin lands ‘heads’ up, then you are out. If the coin lands ‘tails’ up, then you are in.

Ask all of the children who are ‘out’ to sit down on one side of the room and those who are ‘in’ to sit on the other side.

Game Discussion – In or Out

- 1. For those of you who were ‘out’ from the start of the game, how did it feel?*
- 2. How did it feel for those of you who were ‘out’ after flipping a coin?*
- 3. What was it like to flip a coin and find that you were ‘in’?*

For many different reasons, some people are 'out' right from the beginning of life; they never really fit in. These people never feel accepted or part of the crowd. They might live their whole lives feeling like they have lost even before they started playing.

Auggie is one of those people who was born with differences that excluded him right from the start of life (PALACIO, 2012, P.6).

Some people start life as part of the crowd; they fit in and feel loved and accepted; they belong. Then something happens. It might feel as random as flipping a coin. Suddenly they are 'out'.

Think about what happened to *Via* in WONDER. She was used to being part of the crowd. Miranda and Ella helped her to feel that she belonged. When she started high school the group fell apart. Miranda and Ella no longer included her and she realised that she was suddenly on the *outside* (PALACIO, 2012, P.94).

"A body is made up of many parts, and each of them has its own use. That's how it is with us. There are many of us, but we each are part of the body of Christ, as well as part of one another."

ROMANS 12:4-5

We are all part of the body of Christ as well as part of one another. God created us all to belong but we sometimes make choices to exclude each other.

There are many different reasons that we exclude people. Sometimes we exclude people because they look different to us or because they are mean to us or because they are new and we don't want to take the risk of getting to know them. It's actually a normal response for us to feel this way. Even adults feel most comfortable with people that are like them. Jesus showed us a different example. He did not exclude anyone. He included those who were sick or looked different to him. He included people who were rich and those who had nothing. He included the people that really annoyed him and the people that were horribly cruel to him. He included men and women and children and people from other countries. Why do you think he did this?

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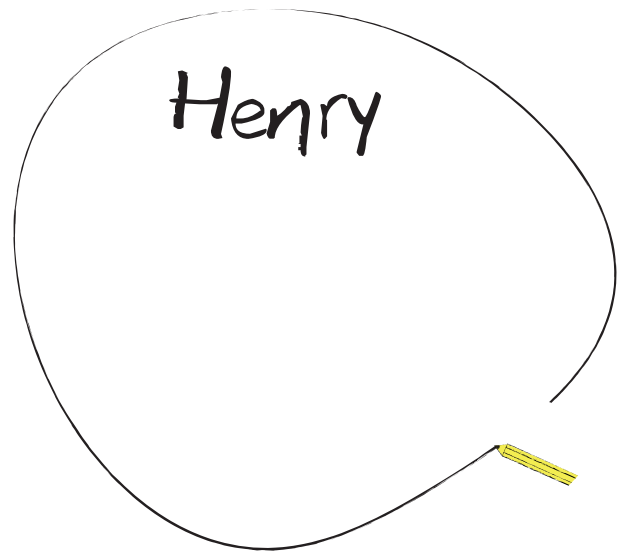
Tying In

Tying in - Questions

Think about all the different places you visit during a week... home, school, sport, church, the playground etc.

Can you think of anyone who is excluded in these places?

Think about here at church... what happens when a new kid comes in? What do you do? How do you treat them?



Tying in - Activity

Ask the children to use the back of the paper from their memory verse activity.

Draw a circle on your page.

Write your name in the middle.

Inside the circle, write the names of some people that are included in your circle.

Outside of the circle, write the names of people that you have noticed are often excluded.

Next to each name that you have written outside of the circle, write one thing you could do to include them.

Prayer activity

Create some circles on the ground using hoops, chalk or tape.

Ask the children to place their worksheet on the ground inside the circle.

Thank God for the people who are inside your circle – your family, your friends, the people who see you as a wonder.

Now ask the children to move their worksheet outside of the circle.

Ask God to help you to notice the people who are outside of your circle, to get to know them and to love them as wonders of his creation.



