



transforming church
for all ages

Resourcing

Sermon Outline

Resourcing: Luke 12: 22-34

Does your church fail to invest in ministry with children and young people, and risk losing these young disciples?

With the economic climate not looking like it is going to improve any time soon, the issue of resourcing ministry amongst children and young people might not be a popular one. The problem is, though, that for too long this area of the Church's ministry has often been reduced to running on empty where resources are concerned.

It is not enough to simply say we believe children and young people's ministry is a key part of the life of our churches. If we are serious about it, we need to prioritise it within the churches' funding, budgeting and commitment to practical involvement.

For the local church, this means asking questions about how much of the budget is apportioned to the ministry it is involved with amongst children and young people. It requires proper consideration to the challenge of it being an area of church life that always needs more support, help and input. It is about modelling to children and young people the proper use of what God blesses us with, which undoubtedly starts with how we practically invest in this area of ministry.

The notes below are offered as suggestions to prompt your own thinking rather than as a ready-made sermon structure.

Background

The passage, which can also be seen in Matthew's gospel, follows the Parable of the Rich Fool. Jesus, having responded to the question from the crowd (v13), as he often did, turns to his disciples to develop what he has just said further. The message of verses 33 and 34, 'where your treasure is, there your heart will also be', is seen throughout Jesus' ministry - the focus on the coming of God's kingdom.



The sermon – questions and suggestions

- » Jesus' initial instructions to his disciples in the passage are clear: do not worry about the practical things in life.
- » The topic of resources - financial, physical and in terms of people (in this instance regarding ministry amongst children and young people) - is not about building a store-house, but about delivering the work God has set before.
- » How do we encourage people to give towards the ministry amongst children and young people that our churches are involved in?
- » There is a danger we can go to the extreme of seeing the request for resources as 'ungodly', but rather we need to be good stewards of the things God blesses us with.
- » How are we communicating the challenge of verse 34, 'where your treasure is, there your heart will be also', to the children and young people we work amongst.
- » The passage is a reminder of the need to trust God.

What does it mean to responsibly provide for the ministry amongst children and young people?

- » Firstly, it is about investing. The easy thing is to become defensive, but we need to be honest and own up to how we probably haven't provided adequately for the ministry amongst children and young people. We need to invest with money, recognising that, yes, it is great if groups, activities and areas of ministry pay for themselves, but what message does that send? Surely we should want the best for our children and young people? We need to invest with time - not passing the buck to someone else, but seriously grappling with how we all can be involved in one way or other, even if not directly leading activities or groups.
- » Secondly, it is about a two-way dialogue. We can be great at getting feedback from children and youth about the ministry we deliver, but we are not always so good at getting them to input into what is planned. There needs to be an on-going two-way dialogue as to how the ministry is developing. Are children and young people part of the planning groups, the ministry teams, the think tanks or do we simply tell them what is going to happen?
- » Thirdly, it is about educating in terms of stewardship of our resources. Whether we have done a good job up to now or not, we need to be educating children and young people to make the best use of the resources God blesses us with - not just in a financial way, but with our time too.



Questions for further thought and discussion

- » What message does the way we resource the children and young people's ministry send to the children and young people who are a part of our church?
- » Has the ministry amongst children and young people been adequately funded and resourced?
- » How, as a church, are we all 'taking responsibility' for the provision towards ministry amongst children and young people?

Notes and illustrations

You could revert back to using song books instead of having the words projected onto a screen.

What would be the response if, instead of tea and coffee after the service, people were only offered water – is that very different from the lack of resources we often provide for our ministry amongst children and young people?

What if the church budget was broken down into percentages - where would the ministry amongst children and young people come? Would we be unhappy to share the result with the church because of what the bulk of the offerings is spent on.



Children's Session

Resourcing: Luke 12: 22-34

How can we give towards and make the most of the resources we have?

Introduction

These sessions are designed to complement the sermon outlines that are part of this resource. These sessions use the same passages to explore the same themes in a way that is relevant to children, and to enable to cross-over in terms of discussion between children and their parents.

Each session is divided into eight sections: Welcome, Game, Quick Quiz, Bible Story, Thought, Activity, Prayer response and Finish. Apart from the activity, about five minutes should be allowed for each section. The activity is likely to take longer, nearer ten minutes.

The session outlines are not intended to be rigid programmes you must stick to. If there are regular elements to the times when you meet with the children in your group, include these, and do not be afraid to add in extra games or activities that you think would further enhance the session.

It is a good idea to plan ahead in order to ensure you have the resources needed for the session. If there is a rota of people who teach the children's groups at your church, it would be a good idea to get together ahead of the sessions so you can ensure as much continuity, and an overall sense of unified direction in terms of what you will be communicating.

Please note that these sessions are written to be used with children aged 5-11, however some elements may need to be adapted to suit younger children.

Welcome

As the children gather have the banner/poster from the previous sessions for them to decorate together. With the words 'Today...not tomorrow - Transforming the church for all ages' written on it, provide colouring pens or pencils for the children to use, remembering that this does not have to be completed in one session, but is designed to take the six weeks.

As the children gather and start to colour, begin by asking how they are doing that day. Once they've had a chance to share briefly, ask them the following two questions:

- » What colour would you use to describe the week you've just had?
- » What is one thing that you can thank God for that happened this week?

Share with the children that this is the final session when you will be looking at different topics that will help everyone think about the phrase on the banner and what it means.



Game

Depending on the size of your group, split them into appropriately-sized groups. Give each group 30 pieces of paper (business card sized). Ten of the pieces need to have the letter A written on them and be one colour, 10 the letter B and another colour and 10 the letter C and a further colour. Ensuring the pieces of paper are mixed up, explain to the children that when you say "go" they need to sort the papers out and carry them across the room to a designated space - use buckets/boxes clearly labelled A, B and C.

Share with the children how today you are going to be thinking about how God provides for all our needs and so we mustn't worry, but also how we each have the opportunity to give to God, through money, time and our skills and abilities. The hard thing is knowing what to do sometimes and when exactly, just like getting the right pieces of paper in the right boxes.

Quick quiz

The following three questions are designed to help get the children thinking. You may simply want to ask them for their response, you could get them to write them on post-its and stick them up, maybe talk with the person next to them or something else.

- 1 Do they think the work amongst children is important to the rest of the church, or just something that happens so the adults can do their bits?
- 2 What do they think the word stewardship means?
- 3 Do they think they can give towards the work of God and the church, or is that just something for adults to do?

Bible Story

Before the session either find a picture of a bird, a flower and a treasure chest or bring objects representing each one. Read the passage from Luke in the following three sections, producing the appropriate picture or item for each section:

- » Luke 12:22-26 (bird)
- » Luke 12:27-31 (flower)
- » Luke 12:32-34 (treasure chest)

Ask the children what they think the main point of the passage is? Explain that Jesus is encouraging his disciples and his listeners not to worry and to put their trust in God.

Thought

The thoughts are split into three subsections; the 'Grab' serves as an introduction and something to 'grab' their attention. The 'What does it say?', refers to the bible passage and brings out something of the teaching from the bible directly. The 'What should we do?' then applies the teaching to their lives, helping them think through what difference this should all make in their lives.



Grab

Show the clip from the film *Despicable Me* where Gru tells his Minions that they will not be able to steal the moon because the bank refused to give him another loan. Finish the clip once they start building the rocket, everyone having given him whatever they can to put towards the cost of the rocket.

What does it say?

Using the three pictures or objects that you have brought in and already used to tell the bible story, go through the three sections again with the children. Ask the children what they think each of the pictures or objects in the passage teaches them.

Share with the children that Jesus is firstly teaching about not worrying, trusting God for what we need. He is then secondly teaching about how it is not wrong to have 'things' here on earth, but if we are greedy and have lots, and others do not, that is not how it should be. Also that the 'things' we have on the earth will not last forever, but our treasure in heaven will. What do the children think is meant by 'treasure in heaven'?

What should we do?

Remind the children that in the clip from *Despicable Me*, everyone gave whatever they could to help Gru build his rocket. In the same way, share with the children that when we talk about giving to God it is not just about giving money. Can we give other things too - for example our time, and the shoebox appeal organised by Samaritan's Purse? Work through the following questions with the children, seeing what they come up with:

- » What can we give?
- » How can we give?
- » Do we give?
- » Should everyone in the church give or is it just for some people?

Activity

Explain to the children how they are going to have the opportunity make a money box, reminding them both of what God gives to them, but also what they can give back to him.

You will need a yoghurt pot or similar container for each child. Ensure that the pot is clean. Depending on the age of the children you may wish to pre-cut a strip of paper that can go around the side of the yoghurt pot, or they may be able to do that themselves. Encourage the children to decorate the paper before sticking it around the yoghurt pot. They could write a bible verse - some suggestions could be:

- » 1 Chronicles 16:8
- » 1 Chronicles 16:34
- » Psalm 118:1
- » Psalm 147:7
- » 2 Corinthians 9:15
- » Revelation 11:17



Use sticky tape to cover the top of the pot, ensuring there is a slit remaining for the children to put any money in. Explain that the final thing they need to do, having decorated the strip of paper, is to stick it round the pot.

Prayer

As you draw the session to a close, ask the children if there is anything they would like to talk to Jesus about, to pray about. It could be about something from the session today or something else. Make sure the children are given a chance to share and do not belittle any of their requests, however trivial we might think them to be.

Having given them all a chance to share, explain how you will now have a time talking to Jesus and any of them who would like to talk out loud can do so, although they can also talk to him quietly in their heads. You might like to pass a bible round at this point so the child holding the bible prays, although ensure they know that they can pass it on without saying anything. It is a good idea to start and end the time of prayer by praying yourself.

Finish

As the children go, leave them with the challenge:

- » How will they help to make the most of the resources God gives them and the church? Do they think it is not for them to worry about?



Youth Session

Resourcing

Introduction

These sessions are designed to complement the sermon outlines that are part of this resource. Because youth groups may meet during the week and may also hear the sermons, these sessions use different passages to explore the same themes in a way that is more relevant to young people.

Each session is divided into four sections: Welcome, Worship, Word, and Witness. This approach has been used to provide a simple structure which lends itself to involving young people in leading. With support, young people (especially older ones) can be encouraged to lead a section of the session; or the whole session could even be shared out amongst them. For this to happen it is worth planning ahead to think who can be asked and how they can be best supported to do their bit. It may be appropriate to meet with them in advance, or communicate in some way about what is required.

Another reason to plan ahead is in order to ensure you have the resources needed for the session. For example, this session requires a copy of the *Guinness book of world records* along with paper, pens, paints, modelling clay, musical instruments, etc. You will also need a way to play video clips from the internet.

At the end of the session are a number of additional resources. There is a song suggestion (with YouTube link) and an optional movie clip for each session should these be appropriate. There are also some suggestions for making the sessions more active – particularly for younger groups or those who just enjoy more physicality. There are also books listed which may be helpful to young people interested in exploring further and who like to read.

Welcome

Encourage people to bring a copy of the *Guinness book of world records*, or use the website to find information about the achievements/gifts of young people. Share these together and be amazed!
www.guinnessworldrecords.com/Search.aspx?q=youngest

See if anyone has any special talents of their own they would like to share/demonstrate!

Worship

Feed back responses from session 4 and discuss them. After a while, ask the young people to be quiet and to think about what God might be saying to them, or they might need to ask God to help them with how they are feeling.



After a few minutes encourage everyone to find a creative way to express their thoughts and feelings to God.

Provide whatever materials you have available for this – paper, pens, paints, modelling clay, musical instruments, etc. Encourage them to draw/paint pictures, write songs or poems, sculpt something – whatever is helpful to them.

If group members feel it's appropriate, they may want to share what they have created with the rest of the group.

Word

Read 1 Timothy 4:12-14

Say: Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, who was a young church leader, to provide him with encouragement and advice.

Ask:

- » Do you ever feel like older people look down on you because you are young?
- » Why?
- » Is this true in the life of the church?
- » How do Paul's words to Timothy encourage you?
- » Does this mean you don't need to listen to adults when they tell you something you don't want to hear?
- » How do you work out what's the right thing to do?
- » What role does the rest of the church have to play in this?
- » What does it mean for us to 'set an example' to the rest of the believers in terms of speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity?

Ask:

- » What gifts does verse 13 suggest Timothy had?
- » What are the gifts we have which could be used in the life of the church? (If people struggle to know what their gifts are, then a better way to approach this may be to take each person in turn and ask the rest of the group to say any things they think that person is gifted in. Done sensitively, this can be hugely affirming and encouraging!)
- » Do we use these gifts?
- » Why/why not?
- » How could we use them and play a part in the life of the church as a whole?



Read verse 14.

Ask:

- » Who gives us these gifts?
- » Is it the elders when they lay hands on someone, or is it from God by the Holy Spirit?

Witness

The adults have been exploring the need to resource work with children and young people, but it's not a one-way street! Children and young people are also a resource for the rest of the church!

Brainstorm practical ways in which the young people as individuals and as a group could play a bigger part in the life of the church. How could they be more involved in what the church is planning? It may be an appropriate time to discuss becoming church members and taking part in church meetings!!!

Other resources

Song: Build Your Kingdom Here by Rend Collective Experiment: <http://youtu.be/YcSWpVKKMcs>

Movie Clip: Use this clip from *Cloudy With A Chance of Meatballs* as a discussion starter around themes of how important encouragement is in developing gifts and also having the opportunity to try (and to fail) at things!

www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/cloudy-with-a-chance-of-meatballs/flints-invention

For younger (or more active) groups

Welcome: Set some challenges for the group which may reveal some hidden talents – eg keepy uppy with a ball (or balloons without touching them – ie blow them); tongue twisters; eating doughnuts; hula-hooping; spelling; singing the highest or lowest note, doing the most press ups.

Witness: Make an advert highlighting the various ways in which the young people are a resource to the church. This could be a video production!

Book: A book, written for young people looking at developing and using gifts, that may be helpful is *Congratulations... You're Gifted!* by Doug Fields and Erik Rees (Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 2008).

