



# Play and Pray

## SESSION 1

### Play Prompt

Bible inspiration: John 12:12-16 (Palm Sunday)

In the bible in John's gospel chapter 12: 12-16 we learn about Jesus coming into a city called Jerusalem. Now Jerusalem was an important place and Jesus was an important person. Everyone thought that important people should come looking important. But He was a very surprising king. Instead of coming looking important, He came on a donkey! That did not look very important. Jesus' followers, his disciples didn't understand. Why if He was so important would He come into the city looking silly?!

But later on, they realised that Jesus had been teaching them and us that He isn't the kind of king who acts very important and tells people what to do. He is a king who gives everything to the people of His kingdom. He was a very surprising king. He was teaching us that everything in His Kingdom is upside down and back to front. In His kingdom the important people are not the people who look important but the people who give themselves up for others and follow God. It was predicted that that the one to save God's people would come on a donkey, and so He did! Even if it meant looking silly.

Now I've been thinking about this surprising, upside down, kind of kingdom and I was wondering how we might we need to do the surprising thing if we follow Jesus. Perhaps your mum or dad or auntie can tell you about a time they did a surprising thing because of God.

And I was imagining if Jesus came to London today, what would people expect of an important person now? Would we expect him to come in a helicopter? Or in a fancy car? And how might Jesus actually come? What would be the surprisingly way? Perhaps you can think of something even more surprising than a donkey!

Can you act out Jesus coming in an important way and Jesus coming in a surprising way with your toys?

Give it a go!

## Time to play!

**Qs you could explore together**

**Tip: Don't use them all! Follow the natural flow of the play**

*How did Jesus surprise people then?*

*How does Jesus surprise people nowadays?*

*Do you think Jesus' disciples felt a bit silly following Jesus on a donkey? Do we ever feel silly following God?*

*How can we be surprising in a good way like Jesus?*

## Prayer for after or during play

**Thank you God for teaching us that the important people are those that serve others. Thank you that you never cared about being silly or surprising. Thank you for loving me that much. Help us to live our lives in ways that serve and love other people. Amen.**

## Play & Pray: Notes for Parents

### What is Play and Pray?

*Play and pray is our series which uses God's gift of play to connect with our children and explore God together using toys! You can use any kind of toy really. There are two ways you can do it.*

*Option 1) is to watch the prompt video with your child and play together*

*Option 2) is to print out the session sheet, pop it wherever you keep your toys, and use it whenever you get a moment alone with your child - waiting for the dinner to cook, after a busy day at work or early in the morning when your mind isn't quite in gear. It works for anytime. All you need is a willingness to play, some toys and 10 minutes of your undivided attention.*

### Principles of Play and Pray

- **There is no wrong way to play!**

*Let your child take this prompt in their own direction, remember that they might use this play opportunity and our undivided attention to bring up something that is worrying them or an idea they have been mulling over - that's fine. In fact it's great as we get to pray for the very things that are on the minds of our children. Praise God!*

- **You can use any toys**

*I'm using lego here but you can use anything really - playmobile, duplo, dolls, animals - even cars!*

- **God's works through play too**

*Take a second before you play with your child to commit the time to God. Some days your child might want to pray with you, other times they might be resistant. We don't need to force anything. We can ask the Holy Spirit to be at work in our play. I believe when we dedicate time to explore God through play that He speaks to us and our children. He is a God of play and He embraces when children come to him as children at play. This is a pressure free zone. It's a time to find joy in exploring God together.*