

Bible background

Luke 7:1-10

Aim of lesson

To show the faith of the centurion and his humility and the compassion of Jesus.

Preparation required

Collect dressing-up clothes suitable for Roman centurion - breastplate and helmet and shield may need to be made from cardboard, etc.

Suggested outline of lesson

1. Explain to the children the importance of a centurion's job, i.e. commands many (100) men and is in charge. Let the children take turns in dressing up as a centurion and each give the others an order.
2. Read the Bible story and explain so the children will understand.
3. Talk about the humility of the centurion. Do we like to give orders? Does it make us feel good/important? Refer to how they felt whilst pretending to be a centurion. The centurion was still humble before Jesus - he did not feel good enough to meet him. The centurion also cared for his servant and did all he could to make him well again.
4. A suggestion of how to show the children the extent of his faith: ask the children what things they might wish to be at home waiting for them when they get back from Sunday School. Then ask them if they believe that their wishes will come true when they arrive home. (This analogy obviously has limitations but may be helpful.) The centurion believed as soon as Jesus said his servant was well. Jesus wants us to believe in him.
5. The older children will understand what it means that the centurion was 'under authority' - that his authority over the soldiers was real because there was an even more important soldier above him. In the same way the centurion understood that Jesus' authority was real because his power came from God. Compare the extra confidence they have when their father or mother, or an older brother or sister, is with them.
6. Explain the ability Jesus had from God to heal and emphasise his compassion. Ask the children if they have any pets. Does it make them sad if they are not well? Do they try to make them better? God and Jesus care for us like this.
7. Mime the story. Each child could be one of the characters in the story with the teacher guiding them through with narration.

Alternative activities

1. Cut out a cardboard centurion figure for each child. Get them to stick on some armour to dress him.
2. Make the Centurion's house from boxes/boxes. Put a matchbox bed inside with a sick servant made from pipe cleaners, play dough or a small play figure. Make some more figures to be Jesus/centurion/messengers/disciples. Act out the story using the models.

Relevance to the children's lives

Discuss ways of becoming like the centurion in his faith and humility. We should not think ourselves to be better than others and should care for others. We should remember that God cares for us and wants us to depend on him.

Prayer

Ask God to help us to believe and trust in him and to help us to care for others and have a clear and humble view of ourselves in relation to Jesus and God.

Verse

'Trust in the Lord, and do good.' Psalm 37:3.