

FREE to GO

The Bible – God's love liberating lives

These activities can be adapted to suit your local situation. They have been designed for use in an all-age service with activities for the start, middle and conclusion. Use them alongside the sermon, which you can adapt as appropriate. Other active ideas can be found in the *Free to Go* junior church and youth materials (but please liaise with your young people's leaders before using their best activities!).

Activity 1: Confused about good news

An all-age ice breaker for the start of the service.

Reading

Luke 4.18–19 in other languages, so that the congregation can't understand the 'good news' in these verses.

Either:

Invite several people fluent in languages other than English to read out Luke 4.18–19 from their own Bibles or invite people who can read French, Spanish, Welsh and Chinese to read the versions below. After each is read out ask the congregation how excited they are and how it changed their lives to hear that 'good news'. (If you have projection facilities you can put the words up on screen.)

Or:

Have sheets of paper handed out for people to read out in an unfamiliar language and see if they know what it means and ask them how excited they are or how it has changed their life. Children can be asked: 'How excited are

you about that?' 'Why would you feel confused or disinterested?', etc.

Then:

Read Luke 4.18–19 in English. Explain the privilege we have of hearing and reading the good news in our own language. Explain the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible and the positive impact its publication had on the history of the nations that make up the United Kingdom.

Please see the link below for more translations:

everytongue.com/john/index.htm

Spanish (*Rainer-Valera, 1995*)

«El Espíritu del Señor está sobre mí, por cuanto me ha ungido para dar buenas nuevas a los pobres; me ha enviado a sanar a los quebrantados de corazón, a pregonar libertad a los cautivos y a vista a los ciegos, a poner en libertad a los oprimidos y a predicar el año agradable del Señor».

French (*Louis Segond*)

'L'Esprit du Seigneur est sur moi, Parce qu'il m'a oint pour annoncer une bonne nouvelle aux pauvres; Il m'a envoyé pour guérir ceux qui ont le coeur brisé, Pour proclamer aux captifs la délivrance, Et aux aveugles le recouvrement de la vue, Pour renvoyer libres les opprimés, Pour publier une année de grâce du Seigneur.'

Welsh (*Y Beibl Cymraeg Newydd*)

'Y mae Ysbryd yr Arglwydd arnaf, oherwydd iddo f'eneinio i bregethu'r newydd da dlonion.

Y mae wedi f'anfon i gyhoeddi rhyddhad I garcharorion, ac adferiad golwyg i ddeillion, i beri i'r gorthrymedig gerdded yn rhydd, i gyhoeddi blwyddyn ffafr yr Arglwydd.'

Mandarin Chinese

主的灵在我身上，
因为他用膏膏我，
叫我传福音给贫穷的人；
差遣我报告：
被掳的得释放，
瞎眼的得看见，
叫那受压制的得自由，
报告神悦纳人的禧年。

English (*Contemporary English Version*)

'The Lord's Spirit has come to me, because he has chosen me to tell the good news to the poor. The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers, and to say, "This is the year the Lord has chosen".'

Activity 2: Do as you're told!

Position a flip chart at the front where all can see. Ask for a volunteer to draw. Choose another to be the instructor.

The object of the game is for the artist to follow the exact instructions given. The instructor is given a piece of paper with the name of an object (e.g. tractor, Christmas tree, bell). Without telling the drawer what the object is, and without making hand signals, the instructor must give instructions for the drawer to follow without looking at the 'masterpiece' being created. Encourage interaction from the congregation!

The point of the game is to show how hard it is to do things when we don't understand what we are being asked to do! Yet when we have Jesus' words in our own language – like these

spoken in Nazareth – we are free to grasp right away what his message was about:

- Telling good news to poor people
- Announcing freedom for prisoners
- Giving sight to the blind
- Freeing everyone who suffers

It is a message of freedom for ourselves and our world.

Activity 3: Free to find

Take a young volunteer, add a blindfold and lightly tie the person's hands in front. Explain that a bar of fair trade chocolate is openly displayed somewhere in the church and the volunteer needs to listen to instructions being shouted from the congregation to find the chocolate and then pick it up. This can be repeated a few times to find the best choc-hunter.

The point of the game is to show how we are hampered if we cannot see and move freely. Without the Bible in our language, we cannot know how God wants to set us and our communities free as the people he wants us to be. Those who translate the Bible and look for ways for people to understand it are removing the hindrances to finding freedom.

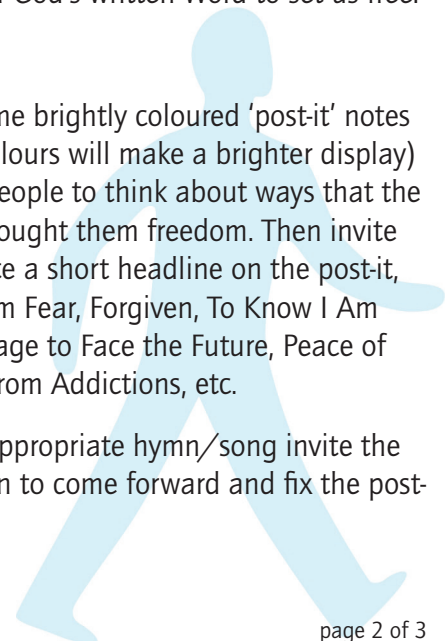
Activity 4: God's story and our story

This is suggested as a final activity underlining the power of God's written Word to set us free.

Either:

Give out some brightly coloured 'post-it' notes (different colours will make a brighter display) and invite people to think about ways that the Bible has brought them freedom. Then invite them to write a short headline on the post-it, e.g. Free from Fear, Forgiven, To Know I Am Loved, Courage to Face the Future, Peace of Mind, Free from Addictions, etc.

During an appropriate hymn/song invite the congregation to come forward and fix the post-



its to a large board at the front of the church, which is inscribed with a suitable heading such as Free to Go or God's Love Liberating Lives!

Note: This could be a dispersal exercise as people leave the service. In this case, place a board(s) at the main exit(s). The board(s) can be shown the following Sunday, followed by prayers of thanks for the power of God's written Word.

Or:

Invite members of the congregation to share how the Bible has set them free. These should be short (1-2 mins.) explanations. You may choose to set the ball rolling with two pre-planned stories as examples.

Conclusion

Give prayers of thanksgiving for the power of God's written Word.

These all-age activities are written by **Revd Ian Coffey**. Ian is Director of Leadership Training at Moorlands College, Dorset. An ordained Baptist Minister, he has led churches in suburban, city centre and international contexts. He has authored 14 books and is publishing consultant to IVP. He is married to Ruth and they have four adult sons and two granddaughters.

