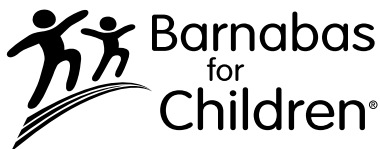


# **FILL THE GAP!**

**120 instant Bible games for  
Sunday schools and midweek groups**

**Rebecca Parkinson**



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# FOREWORD

Jesus said, 'I promise you this. If you don't change and become like a child, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 18:3).

We are called to this childlikeness, but it takes greater spiritual insight and communication skills to carry great truths of the Bible to small children, I would say, than to almost any other audience in the world.

The fundamental needs of children are moral and intimately related to the gospel, and the way they discover, create and understand is something that the church needs to really engage with, to communicate the story to the next generation. In this respect, children brought up in our most visually sophisticated age need creative, dynamic, participative material. Rebecca, with her expertise, creativity and scriptural basis, provides a fantastic opportunity for children to engage with scripture so that it becomes a part of their everyday lives.

When we understand the preciousness of children and their ability to grasp things in a way that others often don't, we will provide some amazing tools with which they can live their lives. Rebecca has sought to achieve such a goal with clear objectives, starting with the Bible, releasing creativity and engaging in a relevant way to different age groups.

For anyone engaged in children's ministry, this will provide a fantastic resource, and I want to affirm anyone in children's ministry to see the potential of that transformation happening in children's lives.

*Roy Crowne, Executive Director, HOPE*  
[www.hopetogether.org.uk](http://www.hopetogether.org.uk) / [www.hope-revolution.com](http://www.hope-revolution.com)



# INTRODUCTION

If you have ever needed a time-filler because a church service has overrun or your session has finished too early... felt that you wanted to include a fun element to your session but been unsure what to do... looked in a games book and been overwhelmed by the amount of equipment needed for every game... then *Fill the Gap!* is for you!

*Fill the Gap!* covers 60 well-known Bible stories and suggests two games for each story, one aimed at younger children aged 4–7 and the other at older children aged 8–11 years. Each game is designed to bring a fun element to every Bible story, to help children remember what they have learnt. Many of the games can be easily adapted to fit different Bible stories (see ‘Helpful hints’).

The ideas have been designed to be quick and easy to use. The games are clearly presented so that the book can be taken off the shelf and a game read and played immediately. The games have been tried and tested by children’s and youth workers and are a great way of reinforcing a teaching point.

## Health and safety

The safety of the children is of utmost importance when playing games. It is recommended that you check the room for potential hazards, such as stacked chairs, trailing cables or unobserved exits, before any game is played, but particularly when high-energy games are being used. It is also recommended that less physical games are played if there is a wide age range of children involved (see ‘Age bandings’ below).

## **Group sizes**

Most of the games in this book are suitable for both smaller and larger groups of children. For large groups, it is suggested that more teams are used rather than having large numbers of children in each team. It is hoped that leaders will join in with the games and will make up numbers where necessary.

## **Age bandings**

The age bandings given in this book are only suggestions. Most games can be modified slightly to make them appropriate for older or younger children. Where children of mixed ages are playing a game, particular care should be taken of the safety of the younger children; it is suggested that less physical games are used with younger children. For groups with a wide age range, the most suitable game relating to each story is also noted as 'All ages'. In some cases, both games are appropriate for mixed age ranges and are therefore both noted as such.

## **Commonly used objects**

Most of the games need no equipment. On the occasions when a resource is required, it is always an item that is easily available in most places. Below is a list of equipment that is occasionally required. It is recommended that you prepare a 'ready box' so that the resources are available at short notice.

- paper or card
- pencils
- blindfold (scarf)

- music (CD and CD player or MP3 player, docking station and suitable downloads)
- sticky tape
- chairs
- two pairs of large socks
- scissors
- something with which to mark start and finish lines, such as chairs, masking tape, or chalk
- a coin
- a watch, clock, or mobile phone to time seconds
- a small ball or beanbag

# **GAMES FOR OLD TESTAMENT STORIES**



# CREATION

Story reference: Genesis 1:1—2:3

## Creation corners

### Age banding

4–7 (Reception to Year 3)

All ages

### Aim

To help children learn the days of creation; to reinforce the story of creation and to emphasise that God made everything.

### You will need

A blindfold for the leader (optional); music CD and CD player (optional); some pictures drawn quickly and simply on pieces of paper (you could write the words for older children).

The pictures can show anything that God created, such as different animals or different flowers. Alternatively, they can show the days of creation. For example:

- Day 1: Light and dark
- Day 2: Sky and water
- Day 3: Plants
- Day 4: Sun, moon, stars
- Day 5: Fish and birds
- Day 6: Animals and people



## How to play

Place the pictures of things that God created around the room. Explain that when you ask them to, everyone will choose one of the pictures and stand next to it. (You may like to play music while the children are moving.) One leader should be blindfolded or should look away from the children as they move. When all the children have chosen their picture, the music stops and the leader shouts out the name of one of the pictures without looking.

If you want an overall winner, all the children standing at the picture that is called are out and sit down. The children remaining repeat the game; each time, those standing at the picture that is called sit down. Eventually there will be only one child remaining—the winner.

If you want all the children to join in the game the whole time, all the children standing at the picture that is called are declared the winners of that round and everyone has another go.

### Helpful hint

This game can be played to reinforce any Bible story by renaming the corners: for example, the tribes of Israel, names of prophets, Jesus' miracles and so on.

Fill the Gap!

## God made...

### Age banding

7–11 (Years 3 to 6)

### Aim

To help the children learn the days of creation.

### You will need

No equipment is needed.

### How to play

Explain the following actions to the children.

#### Day 1: Light and dark

Grab a partner and sit facing each other. One child covers their eyes for darkness and the other lifts their head and opens their arms to indicate light.

#### Day 2: Water

Lie flat on the floor on your back.

#### Day 3: Plants

Stand upright, with arms outstretched like a tree.

#### Day 4: Sun, moon, stars

Star jumps.

#### Day 5: Fish and birds

Flap like a fish or bird.

### Day 6: Animals and people

Grab a partner. One child kneels down on all fours; the other pets the first child.

Shout out the descriptions listed above, allowing enough time for the children to respond to each call. For example, 'Water!' (all the children quickly lie on the floor); 'Sun, moon and stars!' (the children do star jumps until the next instruction is given). Gradually get quicker with the instructions, and try to alternate standing-up actions with those that are on the floor.

This game needs to be played quickly. By the end of the game, the children should be out of breath. The game can just be played for fun or the last child to do an action can be out, repeating until a winner is found.

#### **Helpful hint**

When the children have firmly grasped the game, you may like to shout out 'Day 1', 'Day 5' and so on rather than the words 'Light and dark' or 'Animals and people'.



# ADAM AND EVE

Story reference: Genesis 2:4—3:24

## Snaking around!

### Age banding

4–7 (Reception to Year 3)

### Aim

To remind the children that Eve listened to what the snake said and disobeyed God. This meant that people couldn't be close friends with God any more.

### You will need

Chairs to act as simple obstacles.

### How to play

Ask all the children to line up behind a leader. To get them warmed up, ask each one to hold on to the waist of the child in front, with the front child holding the leader's waist. The leader now leads them round the room, in and out between the obstacles, twisting and turning like a snake squirming across the floor. The children must not let go of each other and must follow the leader wherever he or she goes.

Explain that the leader is going to repeat the above, but this time he or she is going to do actions that the children have to copy. The children must always keep hold of the child in front with at least one hand.

For example, the leader may hop on one leg; the children must try to do the same while holding on to the chain. The leader may tap his head with one hand; the children must try to tap their own head while keeping hold of the child in front with their other hand.

When the children have got used to the game, allow one of them to go at the front of the 'snake' and make up actions for everyone to follow.

### **Helpful hint**

Don't let the leading child move too quickly. Emphasise that it is the actions that are important, not the speed at which the children move.

## **Tempting keys**

### **Age banding**

7–11 (Years 3 to 6)

All ages

### **Aim**

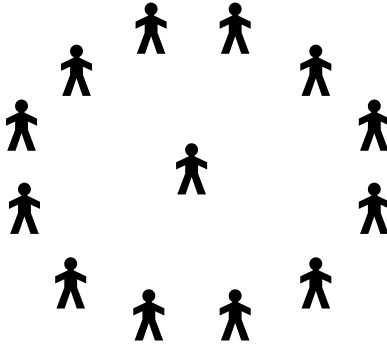
To remind the children that when we do wrong things, we often sneak around in the hope that no one will notice what we have done.

### **You will need**

Car keys on a keyring (the larger the bunch, the better); a blindfold.

## How to play

Ask the children to sit in a circle, with one child sitting cross-legged in the middle. Spread the circle out so that there is a reasonable distance between the child in the centre and those in the circle.



Place some keys on the floor in front of the central child and cover the child's eyes with a blindfold. Explain that you will point to a child in the circle, who must then tiptoe forward and pick up the keys without the child in the middle noticing. If the central child hears anyone approaching, they must point in the direction of the noise. If they point directly at the 'robber', the 'robber' must return to his or her place and another child will be selected to try to take the keys. If the robber succeeds in stealing the keys, he or she replaces the central child, who moves into the circle.

### Helpful hint

If no keys are available, a shaker, a screwed-up plastic bag, a packet of crisps, or anything that makes a noise when touched, can be used.

**GAMES FOR  
NEW TESTAMENT  
STORIES**



# JOHN THE BAPTIST

Story reference: Luke 1:5–25, 39–45, 57–80

## What am I?

### Age banding

4–7 (Reception to Year 3)

All ages

### Aim

To remind the children that Zechariah couldn't speak during the time leading up to the birth of John the Baptist.

### You will need

No equipment is needed.

### How to play

Explain to the children that, just like Zechariah, they are going to pretend they can't speak. Whisper an action from the list below to one of the children and ask them to act out the action so that the rest of the children can guess what they are doing.

Suggestions for actions might include the following:

- Tying a shoelace
- Riding a bicycle
- Kicking a ball
- Getting dressed



- Opening a packet of crisps
- Making a cake
- Climbing into the car
- Running in a race
- Eating tea
- Making a bed
- Climbing the stairs
- Driving a car

Once the children have had a go at miming the actions, you could move them on to acting out different jobs that people do, from the list below.

- Doctor
- Fire-fighter
- Builder
- Hairdresser
- Teacher
- Post deliverer
- Ballet dancer
- Dentist
- Nurse
- Footballer
- Singer
- Police officer
- Pilot
- Farmer
- Vicar
- Truck driver
- Vet
- Pianist
- Optician
- Athlete

### Helpful hint

Children often like to make up their own actions for everyone to guess. If the children are too shy to have a go at miming on their own, ask them to act out an action in pairs and give them a minute to prepare what they are going to do.

## Without words

### Age banding

7–11 (Years 3 to 6)

### Aim

To remind the children that Zechariah couldn't speak during the time leading up to the birth of John the Baptist.

### You will need

The list of words on the next page.

### How to play

Split the children into teams of about six. Explain that you have a list of 15 words written down that the children are going to mime to each other in their teams. Explain that one child from each team will come to you and be given a word (the same word for every team). Each child has to go back to their team and, without speaking, mime the word to them. The team has to guess what the word is. When anyone in the team gives an answer, the person miming can nod or shake their head but they must not speak.

Remind the children that if the teams shout out ideas too loudly, the other teams may hear the right answers.

When someone guesses the word being mimed, a different child in the team comes to you, says the word and is given the second word. They then return to their team and mime the second word for the others to guess. The other teams continue with the first word until they come to tell you that word, at which point they are given the second word on the list. The game continues until the end of the list is reached by one team. The first team to complete the list is the winner.

Examples of words might include the following:

ball, lion, fork, ballet dancer, bed, motorbike, necklace, bird, umbrella, pencil, potato peeler, football goal, bath, rollercoaster, giraffe, bus, carrot, wardrobe, tennis racket, newspaper, cricket ball, ice cream, watering can, oak tree, hairdryer, sieve, telephone, doctor, bonfire, window

### **Helpful hints**

- If necessary, use the words out of order to give particularly shy or struggling children words that they can mime easily.
- Use the game to reinforce the parts of any Bible story. For example, for the story of the feeding of the 5000, you could use boy, bread, water, lake, hill, basket, fish, grass, children, boat and so on.
- This game is good as an introduction to a lesson, where the game is played and then the children guess which story they are going to hear.



# THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Story reference: Luke 1:26–38; 2:1–20; Matthew 1:18—2:12

## Mary's in her house

### Age banding

4–7 (Reception to Year 3)

### Aim

To remind the children what happened in the Christmas story.

#### You will need

The tune to the well-known children's rhyme 'The farmer's in his den'.

### How to play

Check that the children know the tune to the song 'The farmer's in his den'. Explain that you are going to teach them special Christmas words. The game begins with the children holding hands in a circle, with a child as Mary standing in the centre. As the children sing the words, they walk round, keeping hold of each other's hands.

#### Verse 1

*Mary's in her house*

*Mary's in her house*

*An angel came to visit her*

*Mary's in her house*

Mary now chooses someone to be the angel. The angel joins her in the middle of the circle as the second verse is sung.

**Verse 2**

*Mary marries Joe*  
*Mary marries Joe*  
*Then off they go to Bethlehem*  
*Mary marries Joe*

The angel chooses a Joseph to join them in the middle.

**Verse 3**

*The baby boy is born*  
*The baby boy is born*  
*The baby's name is Jesus*  
*The baby boy is born*

Joseph chooses someone to play the part of the child.

**Verse 4**

*The shepherds come to see*  
*The shepherds come to see*  
*The angel told them they must come*  
*The shepherds come to see*

The child chooses a shepherd to join them.

**Verse 5**

*The wise men bring their gifts*  
*The wise men bring their gifts*  
*Frankincense and gold and myrrh*  
*The wise men bring their gifts*

The shepherd chooses a wise man to join them in the middle.

Fill the Gap!

### Verse Six

*We all shout 'hurray'*

*We all shout 'hurray'*

*Because it's nearly Christmas*

*We all shout 'hurray'*

As this verse is sung, all the children can swing in toward the middle and shout 'Hurray' loudly together.

#### Helpful hint

If there are a lot of children, more than one shepherd or wise man can be chosen to stand in the middle.

## Noughts and crosses

### Age banding

7–11 (Years 3 to 6)

All ages

### Aim

To add a twist to a quiz about the Christmas story.

#### You will need

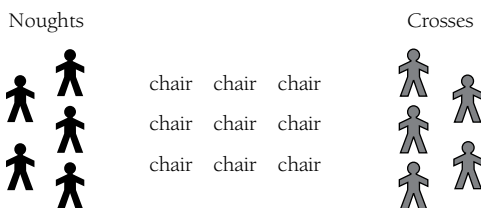
Nine chairs; a list of questions (see page 132); five pieces of A4 paper with the letter 'O' drawn on them and five pieces with the letter 'X' drawn on them (optional).

## How to play

This game is based on 'noughts and crosses', except that the children themselves are the noughts and crosses.

Divide the children into two teams with an equal balance of ages. Work out a way of identifying each team. For example, one team could have their coats on, place their hands on their heads or wear stickers, or all players could hold pieces of paper marked 'O' or 'X'.

Set out nine chairs in a square formation. Ask the two teams to stand on opposite sides of the square and decide which team is to be noughts and which team is to be crosses. It is a good idea to place a marked piece of paper in front of the teams to indicate which symbol will represent each team.



Explain that you are going to ask each team in turn a question about the Christmas story. If the children know the answer, they must put up their hand. If someone in the first team answers the question correctly, one member of that team positions themselves on the noughts and crosses board by sitting down on a chair. If the first team gets the question wrong, the question swaps to the other team. If this team gives the correct answer, one member of the team positions themselves on the board. It is then the second team's question.

If either team positions their children in a straight line of three, they have won that game. The chairs are emptied and a fresh game begins.

Fill the Gap!

Questions could include the following:

- What was the name of Jesus' mum? (*Mary*)
- How did Mary know she was going to have a baby? (*An angel told her*)
- What was the name of Mary's husband? (*Joseph*)
- What was the name of the town in which Jesus was born? (*Bethlehem*)
- Why did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem? (*To be counted in the census*)
- Which Old Testament prophet spoke about Bethlehem being the place where God's special ruler would be born? (*Micah*)
- What was the baby wrapped in? (*Strips of cloth*)
- Where did Mary place baby Jesus? (*In a manger*)
- Who went to visit Jesus on the night he was born? (*Shepherds*)
- How did the shepherds know Jesus had been born? (*Angels told them*)
- Who did the wise men call to see on the way to find Jesus? (*King Herod*)
- Why was Herod worried? (*He didn't want another king to take his place*)
- What presents did the wise men give to Jesus? (*Gold, frankincense and myrrh: this could count as either one answer or three separate answers*)
- Why did the wise men not return to Herod's palace? (*They were warned about him in a dream*)
- When God warned Joseph in a dream that Herod was looking for Jesus, where did Joseph go with Mary and the baby? (*Egypt*)
- After Herod had died, where did Joseph take Mary and Jesus to live? (*Nazareth*)
- When Jesus was presented at the temple, which elderly woman announced that Jesus was very special? (*Anna*)
- What special promise had God made to Simeon, an elderly man at the temple? (*He would see Jesus before he died*)



### **Helpful hint**

If any children have limited Bible knowledge or younger children are playing, encourage them to be the noughts and crosses so they feel part of things. Make sure you ask the appropriate children the easier questions so that everyone gets a fair go. This is a quick and fun way to revise any Bible story.