

TENT PRAYERS

Jesus' Parables

What is this all about?

A chance to look at some of Jesus' parables (duh!)

Who is it suitable for?

	None	Some	Lots
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Very Suitable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fine	<input type="checkbox"/> Not suitable
Level of faith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Church experience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Age	13, 14	15, 16	17, 18
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Overview of the days please!!

- Sunday : Get to know each other
- Monday : The Good Samaritan
- Tuesday : The Rich Fool
- Wednesday : The Unmerciful Servant
- Thursday : The Prodigal Son
- Friday : The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

TENT PRAYERS

Advice for leading Tent Prayers (1/2)

What is the point of Tent Prayers?

A successful tent prayers provides campers with the opportunity to get to know you and each other, to discuss their faith with each other in a friendly and fun environment and to learn together and from each about God.

Five handy hints

(1) Meet in a TOP place (Together, Out of the tent and Private)

- *Together*: Find a place where everyone feels part of one single group. I would recommend sitting in one circle so that everyone can see each other. It helps if everyone is sitting on the same level (avoid having some on the floor and some on seats). Try not to have anything in the middle of the group like a table (feel free to rearrange the any of the marquees to make the right space for your group).
- *Out of the tent*: Definitely leave the tent. A tent is a bad place to have tent prayers. Campers can't really see each other very well and they get really distracted with their belongings. They also tend to fall asleep! Even if it's raining, don't be tempted to meet in the tent. Take some chairs out of the chapel or main marquee and put them up in field. Or meet in the chapel, lounge, teaside or main marquee.
- *Private*: Try to find a space not too near another group so that your campers will be able to talk in private and won't be too distracted by each other!

(2) Prepare

Prepare what you are going to do in advance. Decide at the beginning of the week which tent leader is going to take responsibility for leading each day. In preparing, you can use the material in this booklet. Everything marked with an **R** is recommended, everything marked **O** is optional. You will need to think what is most appropriate for your campers. You will not have time to do everything!

(3) Stop talking!

As much as possible get the campers talking. Ask them what *they* think, ask them what *they* think of what each other has said. If you are not leading the session, try not to talk at all!!

(4) Be yourself

Be yourself with the campers. If you want the campers to share their personal stories and views, then you need to lead by example (without talking too much!!)

(5) Have fun and let it flow

You're not at school. And even if you were, people learn better if they're enjoying themselves! Having banter and playing games are a critical part of tent prayers – not a waste of time!! Also don't worry too much about covering all the material you have planned if the campers get into a debate or discussion. It is fine to go where the energy is.

Advice for leading Tent Prayers (2/2)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do I have to use all the time?

A: No, definitely not. It is much better to have a really good 15 minute session, than a 30 minute session that drags. However, if you find time is dragging I would encourage you to spend the extra time playing games or walking to the beach together as then you are getting to know each other!

Q: How do I get them out of bed?

A: First of all, expect them to get out of bed. Expect them to do what you say. You are their authority figure and they will tend to do what you say, if you make it clear that you expect them to. However if you appear unsure whether they will do what you say, then they will realise that and not do it. On this basis, tell them what you want them to do and then assume they will do it. When it comes to getting out of bed, give them advance notice of what you expect them to do: i.e. when and where you expect them to be. (You can give them a choice about where they want tent prayers to be – but not in the tent!!) Having told them to get up, try not to hover over them. If you hover, they will feel that you don't believe they are going to do what you say. If they are being very slow go back and tell them once – act amazed that they haven't got up. If they continue to take ages get some 1 on 1 time with them afterwards, ask why they were so late and explain that it is important that they are there on time. If you have any problems here, talk to a Cheese

TENT PRAYERS

Sunday: Get to know each other (1/2)

AIM OF THE SESSION

- Get to know each other a little. Help the campers to feel comfortable with each other and with you by getting them talking (about anything!!)
- Explain what you will be doing in Tent Prayers each morning.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

R Get together

- Get everyone together in a TOP place (Together, Out of the tent and Private)
- Explain that you have until breakfast at 9am to have a bit of time to get to know each other.

R Get to know each other

- Find out a bit about each other. One way to do this is to 'Go round the circle' (described below)

'Go round the circle:'

- Go round the circle asking everyone to say: (leaders should do this too)
 - Their name
 - Where they come from
 - Their favourite TV show as a kid (alternatively their yuckiest food, best dream, ideal job)
- Go round the circle again asking everyone to say: (leaders should do this too)
 - Whether they've come to camp before
 - How they ended up coming this time
 - What they want to get out of the week

O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. It helps to lighten the tone. (I would strongly recommend it – I found it worked with all the boys tents I ever led and girls aren't that different really, are they?!!!!).

Possible games (all explained in more detail in the appendix)

- Yee-ha
- 'Question, Question'
- Monkey Fight
- The 'Yes, No game'
- Call my bluff

TENT PRAYERS

Sunday: Get to know each other (2/2)

R Explain Tent Prayers

- Explain that you'll be meeting every day at 8.30 for Tent Prayers.
- Explain what the point of Tent Prayers is – a chance to get to know our tent and to discuss together some of our thoughts about God.
- Ask them if they would be interested in leading it themselves and say you will be asking one of them later today if they would like to lead it tomorrow. (don't forget to do this!!)

O Read a Bible Verse

- You may want to use a bible verse to illustrate how the aim of tent prayers and camp as a whole is to find out about God

Verses about finding out about God



- Luke 19 v1-4: Zacchaeus was prepared to climb a tree to find out about Jesus. Camp is a great opportunity to 'climb a tree'
- Matthew 7 v7: This passage tells us to you Ask and it will be given, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened. Camp is great chance to have a go at asking, seeking and knocking.

O Find out where you're all at

- You may want to take a moment to find out where you campers are at in their faith. The best way to do this is to use an appropriate analogy which gives everyone an opportunity to say where they are. The football analogy below works well with boys, but there are plenty of others.
 - The Football Analogy: One way to think about faith is think about a football pitch. On a football pitch, you've got your strikers (who are zooming around, everything going well – they might score at any moment). You've got your midfielders (who are doing pretty well too, they're just a bit further back from the strikers but they also might score). You've got your defenders (who are much further back from the action, but they have moments when they get further forward, and they are on the pitch). You've also got the substitutes who are not on the pitch. And then there's the supporters who aren't in a team and aren't likely to get on the pitch. If the strikers are people who feel very strongly about their faith in God, the midfielders less so etc, etc, where would you put yourself?
 - You can also use a train station analogy (are you on the train, thinking of getting on the train, buying a ticket, thinking of buying a ticket, in the car park, at home etc.). There are lots of others – feel free to be imaginative.
- Explain the analogy and give everyone a chance to say where they are at. Make sure you say where you are at. Don't start with the keenest bean otherwise campers will feel that they have to say they are doing brilliantly with God and will be embarrassed to say otherwise. The key thing is to get them opening up about this stuff just a little!

R Close

- One of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

TENT PRAYERS

Monday: The Good Samaritan (1/2)

R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. For possible games, see the appendix.

R Explain what you're doing in tent prayers

- Explain that you're going to look at some of Jesus' parables

? Ask the campers what is a parable?

? Which parables of Jesus can people name? (write them down on the big sheet of paper)

? Why do you think Jesus talks in parables?

Two reasons why Jesus may have spoken in parables

- For his own safety: Jesus was often under surveillance by the Jewish powers of the time. Many of his teachings were critical of the Jewish powers and suggested that they had understood God wrongly. Later in the gospels some of them plan to kill him. He may have spoken in parables so that they could not prove what he was saying.
- To bring his teachings to life: Jesus' parables are like little dramas – which makes them very memorable. They are also based on everyday occurrences for his audience (a journey on a dangerous road, a rich man building barns, a son falling out with his father, etc. etc.)

R Read and understand the passage



Ask one of the campers to read Luke 10 v 25-37

? The main three characters in this story were the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan. What would Jesus' listeners opinions have been of these three groups?

- Priests: Priests would have been seen as holy men
- Levites: Levites were the holiest group of men in Israel. They were especially put aside to serve the Lord
- Samaritans: Samaritans were the sworn enemy of the Israelites. The Israelites had been at war with them. They were very distrusted, and were seen as being likely thieves.

? What would the listeners have expected the Levite and priest to do as they passed the wounded man? And why?

They might well have expected the Levite and priest to walk on! The problem that the Levite and the priest faced was that according to the rules that they had written for themselves they would become spiritually unclean if they stopped to touch a dead body.

TENT PRAYERS

Monday: The Good Samaritan (2/2)

R Read and understand the passage (cont.)

- What would Jesus' listeners have expected the Samaritan to do when he came across the injured man?
- Did the Samaritan just provide the minimal amount of help, or did he go beyond the call of duty?

They would have expected the Samaritan to keep going! Samaritan's were the staunch enemy of the Jews. Further more, the road between Jerusalem and Jericho was known to be a very dangerous road. One common trick used to mug people was for one of a band of robbers to pretend to be injured and the others to hide. They would then attack anyone who stopped to help.

R What does the passage mean?

- Ask the campers to get into groups of two and agree what they think the parable means? Then ask them to tell the others in the group.
- Who is our neighbour and what should we do for them?
- Is this what we are like normally?

O Some further questions

- Do you think it is equally important to help everyone or is it more important to help certain people (maybe your close family, your best friends etc.)
- Doesn't loyalty mean that we should prioritise certain people?
- Baring in mind the huge amount of help that the Samaritan gives to the person in need, is what Jesus is demanding of us impossible?
- Who is the Samaritan in today's society – who is an outcast in your school, your neighbourhood, your country?

O Rewriting the story

- Give the campers five minutes to work in pairs to rewrite the story for today.
- If they need some help: You might suggest that they could change who the priest, Levite and Samaritan are for example. They could set it at school or somewhere in their neighbourhood, or even at camp.

O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders or a couple of the campers could pray these things

R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

Tuesday: The Rich Fool (1/2)

R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. For possible games, see the appendix.

R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- ? Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers.

R Read and understand the passage



Ask one of the campers to read Luke 12 v 13-21

- ? Why does Jesus tell this story?
- ? Why do you think Jesus is so critical of the man in the story?
- ? What does Jesus think is so wrong with being greedy?

Here are some possible answers to this (which may all be true!)

- Jesus thinks that life is all about serving God and putting God first. By thinking only of himself and not consulting God, the man is forgetting that God is LORD. He is relying on himself not God.
- Jesus thinks that the man is not being sensible, as his crops and goods will one day perish but the gift that God gives will last forever. Therefore, it is foolish to invest so much time in worldly goods.
- Jesus thinks that the man is not loving his neighbour. He is not providing any of his food and wealth for them, but instead storing it up in barns where it will rot.
- Jesus thinks that the man is spending his time in a stupid way. He will end up with lots of food and goods but no friends, as he is not living a generous life.

O Some further questions

- ? Do you think it is fair to criticise the man in the story – is it not sensible for him to save up for the future?
- ? Is Jesus opposed to saving?
- ? Is Jesus opposed to people making money?

Future followers of Jesus do make money – for example, Paul works part-time as a tent-maker to provide money to pay for things. Jesus's criticism seems to be more about the way people use their money. Or the way they use their time (if you use all your time to make money but never give any time to prayer or to building your relationship with your family and friends).

TENT PRAYERS

Tuesday: The Rich Fool (2/2)

R Applying the passage

- ❓ Do you think you can be greedy about other things than money? If so, what? (Could it apply to how we spend our time or how we 'spend' our popularity at school?)
- ❓ Do you think a passage like this can apply to people our age (as we don't earn or have much money)?
- ❓ How can we apply this passage to us?

O Rewriting the story

- Give the campers five minutes to work in pairs to rewrite the story for today.
- If they need some help: You might suggest that they could change what the rich man does to make his crops and goods, or they might change the crops and goods for something else (perhaps time or popularity?)

O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders or a couple of the campers could pray these things

R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

Wednesday Tent Prayers do not always happen. If there is no time, then move straight on to Thursday's recommended activities.

TENT PRAYERS

Wednesday: The Unmerciful Servant (1/2)

R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. For possible games, see the appendix.

R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- ? Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers.

R Read and understand the passage



Ask one of the campers to read Matthew 18 vs 21-35

- ? What is a talent (verse 24)? What is a denarii (verse 28)?

A talent is a large amount of money. A denarii is a small amount of money. It is likely that 10 000 talents was equivalent to around 1 million pounds, while a hundred denarii was equivalent to around 100 pounds.

- ? What does Jesus think is wrong with the servant's actions?
- ? In what way is the servant master like God?
- ? Why does Jesus think we ought to forgive each other?

Jesus' main point here is that as God has forgiven us of very serious rebellion, it is terrible hypocrisy of us not to forgive other people. But Jesus seems to also think that forgiveness is important if we are to live at peace with each other – he talks elsewhere about loving your enemies even when they do you wrong.

O Some further questions

- ? Can you think of any modern examples of people who have forgiven other people?
- ? Is it easy to always forgive? Why, why not?
- ? Is it always right to forgive other people?
- ? Do you believe that God will forgive everyone?
- ? Should we forgive criminals and therefore not punish them?

Parts of the bible suggest that discipline is important e.g., Hebrews 12 v7, 10: "What son is not disciplined by his father? ... God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness?" God is clearly also a god of justice, "The Lord is known by his justice" [Psalm 9 v16]

O Rewriting the story

- Give the campers five minutes to work in pairs to rewrite the story for today.
- If they need some help: You might suggest that the servant-master is instead the head of a gang whose son/daughter has been shot.

TENT PRAYERS

Wednesday: The Unmerciful Servant (2/2)

O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders or a couple of the campers could pray these things

R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

Thursday: The Prodigal Son (1/2)

R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. For possible games, see the appendix.

R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- ? Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers.

R Read and understand the passage



Ask one of the campers to read Luke 15 vs 11-31



How do you think the father felt in verse 12?



Why do you think the son wanted his inheritance?



Why did everything go so badly wrong for the son?



Do you think the father's reaction in verse 20 is surprising?

Very upset! Especially as the son is effectively asking for his inheritance, which means wishing that his Father is dead!

It is especially worth noting that he 'runs'. In Jewish culture, it was very embarrassing to be seen running, especially as an older man. For the father to run shows his immense compassion about the return of the son.



Considering how generous the father is, why didn't the son return earlier?



Do you think that the way that the father treats the younger son is fair?



Who do you think Jesus sees as 'younger sons' in real life?



What point do you think Jesus is trying to make here?



What is the reaction of the older son?



Do you think that the older son has a point?



How does the father respond to the older son?

He responds with love – he does not criticise the older son for being mean. He is still 'my son'. But he makes it clear that it is important to him to celebrate the return of his younger son.



Who do you think Jesus sees as the 'older sons' in real life?

The older son is clearly quite self-righteous and thinks he is morally best. Jesus may well have in mind the older, more learned Jews – especially the Pharisees. For us today, it may well be Christians who think they know it all ... maybe that's



What point do you think Jesus is trying to make here?



Which son do you prefer?



Which son does the father prefer?

I think it is important to note that the Father loves them both equally

Thursday: The Prodigal Son (2/2)

Which son are you more like?

- Give each camper a piece of paper and a pen, and ask them to take a moment to think which of the two sons they are more like
 - The younger son: Who leaves the father
 - The older son: Who stays with the father, but tend to think he's better than other people
- Then tell those who have written down younger, this is what God wants to say to them:
 - You are my child! Let me bring you the best robe. Let me put a ring on your finger and sandals on your feet. Whenever you return I will have a feast to celebrate. For when you return, you are alive – when you once were dead; you are found – when you once were lost.
- Then tell those who have written down older, this is what God wants to say to them:
 - You also are my child! You are always with me, and everything I have is yours. Come join me in celebration for the return of my other child who once was dead.

Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders or a couple of the campers could pray these things

Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

TENT PRAYERS

Friday: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (1/2)

R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. For possible games, see the appendix.

R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- ? Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers.

R Read and understand the passage



Ask one of the campers to read Luke 18 vs 9-14

- ? Who were Pharisees and how were they perceived in 1st century Palestine?

The Pharisees were one of three groups of Jewish priests. They were seen as very holy. In a religious state like Palestine, they were also very powerful.

- ? How were tax-collectors perceived in 1st century Palestine?

Tax-collectors are never very popular! But in Palestine they were even more unpopular as they were collecting money for the Roman Empire (who occupied Palestine), they were therefore seen as traitors.

- ? Would the audience have found the parable surprising?
- ? What do you think is Jesus' main point in this passage?

O Further questions

- ? What is Jesus' view of the Pharisee?
- ? What is Jesus' view of the Tax Collector?
- ? Why is arrogance seen as so dangerous to Jesus? Remember what Jesus thinks the point of life is – "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind; and love your neighbour as yourself." (Luke 10 v 27)

Being arrogant and thinking primarily about yourself makes loving God and loving your neighbour as yourself almost impossible

- ? When are we most likely to be like the Pharisee?
- ? What can we do about this?

Friday: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (2/2)

O Take time to pray for each other

- It is great to make time to pray for each other about heading back home. If there is not time to do this on Friday, I would strongly recommend doing this on Saturday morning (you can get up early before set down!)
- There are two obvious ways to do this
 - Give one camper (and leader) the chance to share the things they would like prayer about leaving camp. Then a few of you pray for that person. Then go clockwise to the next person.
 - Get two or three campers/leaders to share the things they would like prayer for. Then the rest of the tent pray for those three people. Then move on to the next three people.
 - Ask everyone to share some things they would like prayer for. After everyone has shared ask the everyone to pray for the person on their left all at the same time. (it is worth telling people before sharing that they will be praying for the person on their left, then they will make the effort to remember what this person has said!!)

R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

Appendix: Games

1 Yee-Haw

- Everyone plays at once
- Great fun – but easier to explain face to face! Ask Jonny Hopper or Mikey Walker to explain it to you

2 Question, Question

- Two people play at a time
- Person 1 asks Person 2 a question. Person 2 needs to respond with a question (that makes sense as a response!). Person 1 has to then respond to that with a question, etc.etc.
- The first person not to be able to respond with a question that makes sense as a response without pausing for too long loses!
- Winner stays on!

3 The Yes, No Game

- Everyone plays at once
- One person is selected to be 'on'. That person is then asked questions by everyone else in any order. They must answer every question without saying Yes or No (or any version of these words – e.g. Yep, Nope.) They are also not allowed to shake or nod their head. They are not allowed to ignore questions. Once they say one of these words, their go is over and a new person is 'on'.
- The person who lasts the longest wins. (if anyone lasts 60 seconds, you might want to stop and declare them a winner)

4 Monkey Fight

- Everyone plays at once
- Great fun – but easier to explain face to face! Ask John Tomlinson, Andrew Tomlinson or Jon Yates to explain it to you!

5 Call my bluff

- Everyone plays at once
- Get one person to come up with three (or four) statements about themselves. One of these should be a lie and the rest should be true. They then tell everyone the statements in any order without telling the group which is the lie. The group then has to vote on which they think is the lie.
- You could play this everyday which a different person doing it everyday. However, you will need to give campers advance notice that they need to come up with some statements or the game will take forever!!