

A REFLECTIVE STORY ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD



You might use this at an all-age service or in a home group.

The story is in the style of Godly Play storytelling. It loosely uses the symbol of light to represent the kingdom of God. Perhaps equally importantly is the idea of the kingdom, for us in a post-resurrection era, being all around us already, but still to come in the future. This idea is shown by the box in which all your visuals are held – you can see some things from it already, but there will always be more to come out of it, even after the end of this story. So make sure there are some spare nightlights left in at the end, in case anyone peers in.

You will need: a circular background cloth; matches; at least 15 nightlights (real ones if you have plenty of time to practise and a disciplined audience, otherwise battery-operated ones are fine); symbols for parables as below; small figures of people; a cross.

- Jesus told everyone he met the secret of the kingdom of God. It was a kingdom that was all around *(Place four, unlit nightlights around the edge of the circle)* and still to come.
- *(Look inside the box and show in your face that you can see there's so much more to come out.)*
- He told his friends what this kingdom is like. He said it's a different sort of kingdom from anywhere they knew. He said it's like a net full of different fish, or seeds sown in a field, or a mustard seed that grows enormous, or a tiny piece of yeast in dough. He said it's like finding treasure in a field, or a precious pearl. He said it's like a great party.
- *(For each parable, bring something from the box and place in the circle as a visual reminder of that parable. Suggestions: a fruit net filled with cardboard fish, a packet of seeds, one tiny seed, a bread roll, a picture of a treasure chest or better, a wooden box full of craft jewels, a pearl bead, a party popper.)*
- He told them to search for it
- *(Lift up one or two of the items and puzzle over them in turn, not knowing the full meaning of each one.)*
- And he told them to pray for this kingdom to come.
- *(Look in the box again and notice how much more there is to come out.)*
- Even after he'd risen from the dead, he talked about it: this kingdom that was all around and still to come.
- *(Gesture with your hand towards the parable things you can already see and towards the box of what is still to come.)*
- He showed people with his life what this kingdom is like. He noticed people, he healed people, he fed people and set them free from what was holding them back.

(Place four wooden figures or small play figures down, one each to represent the sort of people Jesus met.)

- And he told them who this kingdom is for. He said it belongs to the little people, like children, like people who are poor, like people who suffer for what they believe, and that the only way in is to be born again.
- *(Again, place a representative figure down for each sort of person.)*
- He died on the cross and rose again
- *(Place a cross down.)*
- So everyone can enter the kingdom, this kingdom that was all around and is still to come.
- *(Gesture with your hand towards the things you can already see and towards the box of what is still to come.)*
- And it grew and grew, this kingdom that is all around and still to come.
- *(Light the four nightlights.)*
- And his friends saw for themselves how great this kingdom is and wanted everyone to know that they could belong. So, with the help of the Holy Spirit, they prayed Jesus' prayer: "Your kingdom come". And they told everyone they met about the kingdom, and lived lives that showed what this kingdom was like. And the kingdom grew all around and is still to come.
- *(Add four more lit nightlights to the ones already around the circle. Move the people figures towards the edge of the circle.)*
- And even today, people who follow Jesus still pray for that kingdom to keep coming. They love living in that kingdom. They show in their lives what the kingdom is like. They can't stop telling people about it.
- *(Add four more lit nightlights and more figures to the circle.)*
- And the kingdom is growing and growing. Like a mustard seed. Like rising bread dough. Like a field of wheat. This kingdom that is all around and still to come.
- *(Gesture with your hand towards the parable things you can already see and towards the box of what is still to come.)*

Questions

- I wonder what you like best about this kingdom?
- I wonder what puzzles you most about it?
- I wonder what is already here?
- I wonder what is still to come?