

Paul's Pictures: An Intergenerational Reading

Phillippians 2:12-18

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world. It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labour in vain. But even if I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you—and in the same way you also must be glad and rejoice with me.

Metaphors/Imagery

Working out	Spotlessness
Children	Crooked
Stars	Holding on
Running	Labouring
Drink offering	Sacrifice
Celebration	

This can also be presented as a Kids' talk in a larger gathering, allocating the metaphors to pairs of children to demonstrate, replacing the small groups. Ask half a dozen grown ups then to bring prayers using some of the metaphors to pray over the children.

INTRO: We are going to read a bit from Phillipians today. This is a letter written by Paul. Paul's style of writing is extreme. He loves to use similes, metaphors, word pictures, parables and take on surprising characters himself in his writing.

In the 6 short verses we are going to read today, Paul uses roughly 10 different images as he is enthusiastically encouraging the Phillipians to keep on following Jesus.

As we read, listen out for as many of these images as you can.

READ: > Ask for a volunteer to read passage.

ACT: > In pairs or small groups, choose a metaphor/simile/image from the passage and work out together how you can mime that for us so we can guess it.

(Allow a minute or two for pairs to prepare.)

Invite the pairs to demonstrate their metaphor, and field guesses for which part of the passage it is.

Have a volunteer keep a running list on a whiteboard of the images as they are presented.

If not all of the images are highlighted in this process, go a second round, but this time allocate a metaphor to each group.

SUMMARY: Well, look at all the different ways Paul has of talking about our faith. It's a race, it's a drink, it's a host of stars...

Can't he make up his mind? Well of course it's not indecision that causes Paul to binge on metaphorical imagery, it's his passion for faith to connect with everyone in every part of life. He sees opportunities to speak of faith everywhere.

SHARE YOUR FAITH: > Which of these images do you connect with the best and why? Tell the person next to you.

PRAYER: > Write a Prayer of encouragement or a blessing for someone else here, using one of the images from the passage that you identify with them. Example:

"Timothy, God has made you a strong runner, able to keep your stamina for long distances. May you run your faith race steadily and strongly over the long distance of your life: you can bet that we'll be cheering you on and God will give you strength. Amen"