

# Children's Resources



"Do good things for the city where I sent you...  
Pray to the Lord for the city where you are living.  
If there is peace in that city, you will have peace also."  
Jeremiah 29:7

## Explanation of locations

---

### Zambia

**In Zambia, the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) have realised as a church that most of their young children have no form of early childhood learning experience before they enter school at seven years of age.**

Diane Cusick (PCI Global Mission Worker) is working with the church to initiate a programme of setting up early years centres at their existing congregations. The CCAP also have some community primary schools which have been set up to run alongside the Government schools. At many of the community schools which belong to CCAP, there is already an Early Childhood Development centre attached. However, most of these are being run like schools where young children are sitting at desks and have writing books and pens. They are supposed to be writing and reading when in reality they are failing to hold a pencil.

Diane's job is to train the teachers that are in place about how to set out a nursery school properly and to teach them how children learn and develop, and to be self-sustaining in the materials that they will need for the play areas. The aim of the programme is to ensure that as many young children as possible have early learning experiences before they begin formal learning.

### Maynooth

**Maynooth Community Church is one of the youngest congregations within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. It will celebrate its 10th anniversary in November 2017.**

Since its beginnings, the church has grown and meets on a Sunday morning in the Manor Mills Shopping Centre. There they gather together for corporate worship and fellowship, hold children's ministry and do church in their own unique way.

However, the congregation is now at the point where they need their own space; not simply because of increasing numbers but because of a desire to live out a vision to create a space not only for their church to use, but a place that can be used by the community and as a place of outreach and mission.

The church has recently been granted a piece of land on which to build their new church that they plan to use to serve the community. The land is adjacent to Carton Avenue which is a pedestrian walkway leading to a large estate and golf courses. A community café is part of the dream to reach out to the many people walking past.

## What is church

---

### Introduction for leaders

At the very start of the Book of Acts, Luke records Jesus telling his disciples that after He leaves them to return to His Father, they will receive the Holy Spirit and they will be His witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). In the very next chapter, Luke then tells us of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and, as thousands came to faith, of the formation and characteristics of the New Testament church as well as the beginning of its spread across the world.

This year's Youth & Children's Project, in seeking to encourage our children and young people to reflect on what the church is will help all of us – whatever age we are – to clarify and get excited about who we are and what God expects of us in the villages, towns and cities that He has placed us in.

Key to this is the project's focus on two main Bible passages – the picture painted for us by Luke in Acts 2 of the New Testament Church in action and God's call, through the prophet Jeremiah, to bless the people in the places He has put them (Jeremiah 29). These two passages, in many ways, say exactly the same thing – as you seek to be distinctive as my people remember to look out and be a blessing to the people around you – whether you're in Maynooth or Zambia (where we find the members of PCI living and working that this year's Project will support) or somewhere else altogether.

So as you reflect on what the church is as leaders and with your children and young people, may God's Spirit work in you in order that you might increasingly be the church that God wants you to be. And may you see His Spirit at work through you as you seek the peace and prosperity of the place that He has put you and as you serve as His witnesses to the very ends of the earth.

### You will need:

- Outline of church building
- 2 different coloured marker pens
- Bibles or copies of the Bible passage
- Introductory DVD
- Church template photocopied onto light card
- Supplies to decorate church – pipe cleaners, paints, coloured paper, coffee filters, felt tip pens
- Memory verse word relay activity resources



## Introductory activities

### OUR CHURCH

Have a large piece of paper with the outline of a church drawn on it. It could look like your church or simply be a generic church shape.

**Ask** the children what are the things that they like about church?

(Allow the children to answer. Encourage them to think about all aspects of church life.) Write their answers on the church outline in a marker pen.

**Ask** the children what the things are that they do not like about church?

(Again allow the children to answer).

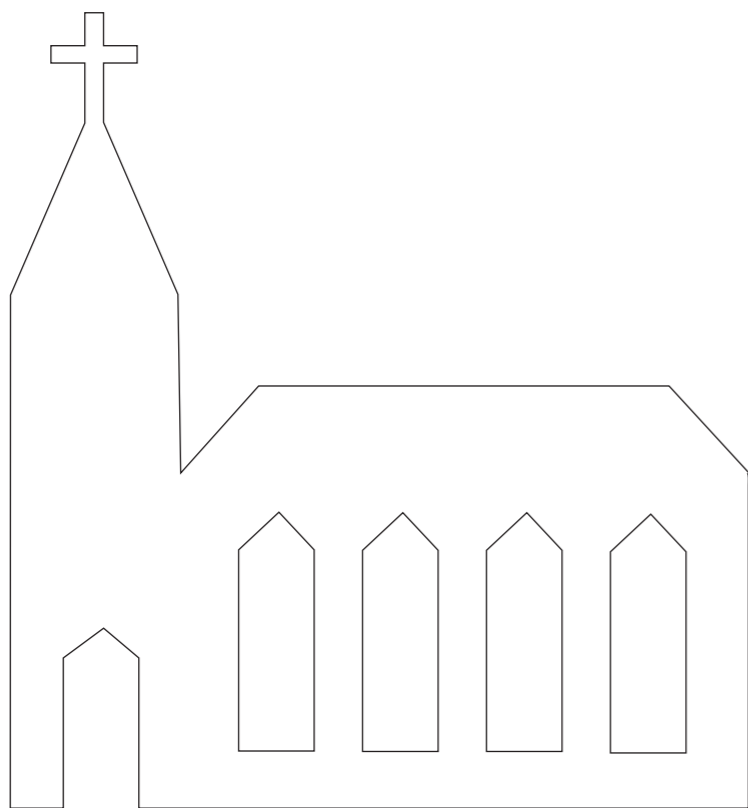
Write their answers on the sheet in a different colour of marker pen.

**Explain** that church is the place that was created for Jesus' followers to come together, learn about Jesus, and worship God through singing, reading the Bible and praying. They were to then go out into the world and live out their faith for others to see and they in turn would also want to become followers of Jesus.

Church today is still to be that place. It is somewhere that we come to have *fellowship* (be together), to *worship* (read the Bible, pray and sing to God) and then to do *mission* (go out into the world and live our lives for Jesus so that other people are attracted to faith in God as well).

Sometimes there are things that we do not like about church and that we may find boring, but when we remember what church is really about, it can make it easier to put up with the difficult bits and to make sure we focus on the positive bits.

Church is a family. We are all different but we are there to worship God together and then show other people, by how we live as part of that church, who He is.



## Bible bit

**Explain** to the children that in this lesson we are going to think about what the very first Christian church was like and then about how two different modern day churches live out their faith for other people to see.

**Say:** We are going to start with what the Bible describes about the very first church. It started not long after Jesus died, rose again and then gone back to heaven. Jesus had told His disciples to go to Jerusalem and to wait there. He promised that He was going to send them a helper – the Holy Spirit – which He did on the first Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit came to help the disciples and other followers of Jesus, they had the courage to live out their faith and tell others about what Jesus had done for them.

This is when the first church started and, after the Holy Spirit came, there is a description of what that church was like.

**Read** Acts 2:42-47

**Say:** Let's think about the activities that this first church were involved in. Can anyone remember any of them? Encourage the children to answer (teaching, fellowship, eating together, prayer, miracles and signs, shared everything they had, gave to the poor, met together every day, went to each other's houses to eat, praised God, found favour with people.)

**Ask:** Which of these things do we still do in church today?

**Ask:** Which do we not do?

Allow the children to think about your church. Encourage them to be creative in how they think about what you do as a congregation. You may do something similar but different to the early church.

**Ask:** What could we do better?

This might be something that the children want to think about in terms of their role in the church or they may think of the church as a whole.

**Say:** There are other people in both Ireland and other parts of the world who are trying to live out what it means to be church where they are.

The early church wasn't about a building! It was all about a community of people who believed in and were following Jesus. The people loved God and they loved each other. They lived out their faith every day and it says that each day people believed in Jesus and the numbers of Christians increased.

There are lots of people all over the world who go to church. They learn together, grow together in their faith, they sing songs, read the Bible and pray to God. The church that you go to is not just a part of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland but is part of the Christian church all over the world who try their best to follow Jesus.

There are some people who are living out what it means to be church in slightly different ways, showing us that it is not all about just being in church on a Sunday morning; we are going to learn about two of them.

### ACTS 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people.

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.



## Stories

The next pages outline stories of different people who are involved in church in different ways. One of these stories is in Ireland, in Maynooth outside Dublin. The other is from Zambia where the church is doing something a little differently to make an impact in the community around them.

It would be good to make sure that you have time to tell both stories within the lesson to get two different ways of how the church is making a difference.

**Show the “What is church?” video on the DVD.**

### ZAMBIA

**Explain:** In Zambia, children have the opportunity to go to preschool. They start primary school at age seven but going to preschool helps the children to prepare for primary school. They can learn how to socialise and make friends, as well as learning skills such as reading, writing and counting. The preschools are free to go to but the children have to wear uniforms and buy some resources. For many families in Zambia, this is too expensive and so the children end up staying at home. This means that when they start school, they are further behind other children and find it harder to catch up.

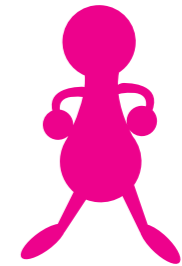
In the video, we learnt about one such child. She is called Bessy and she is four years old. Bessy’s mum stays at home and her dad is the caretaker at the local church. She has an older sister Naomi who is ten years old and an older brother, Gilbert, who is eight years old. Bessy and her family live in a small house. Bessy loves going to the local preschool that is run by the CCAP church. However, if Bessy did not go to this school she would have to stay at home with her mum and would miss out on the opportunities to learn, to make friends and to play with other children. Bessy’s family, like many others, cannot afford to pay for the uniform and resources required at the government preschools and are so grateful for the church-run preschools that they can go to.

The CCAP are living out what it means to be church. They meet as we do on a Sunday morning but they also know that church is more than just Christians meeting together. They also have to follow Jesus by making a difference in the local community. They are able to do this by local congregations setting up preschools to make a difference to the education of children like Bessy.

Diane Cusick is a global mission worker who has been sent to Zambia by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Her job is to work with these local churches to train teachers and to help the schools to be the best that they can be to help the children learn. She helps the teachers to know how to set up a preschool, to gather all the materials that the children need to learn and play well together, and to help the teachers teach the children to count, read and write.

The CCAP understand that *church* is not simply a building. When they read the Bible and follow Jesus, they understand that the church is the people. They want to make a difference in the communities where they are. They want to help the children to be educated and to be able to go to primary school more easily. They also teach the children about Jesus and what it means to follow Him.

They are making a big difference to the people in their villages, towns and cities by living out what it really means to be church.



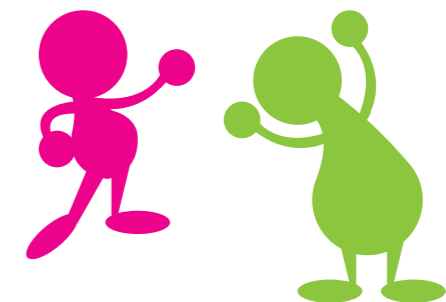
### MAYNOOTH

In Maynooth, the local Presbyterian Church (Maynooth Community Church) is also trying to be more than just a building where people meet on a Sunday morning. In fact, they do not even have a building of their own to meet in!

Rachel is 12 years old and she goes to Maynooth Community Church. She first came to the church when she was seven years old. She is involved in JAM (Sunday school). She really enjoys learning stories from the Bible, being involved in games, crafts and other activities, like making videos. There are only one or two other people in Rachel’s class in school who believe in God or go to church. Rachel believes that being a Christian makes a difference because you know that God is there with you and helps you. She also knows that reading the Bible helps you to understand more about this and what it means to live as a Christian.

Maynooth Community Church have never had their own building. They have church in the corridor of the upstairs of a shopping centre in the middle of Maynooth. Although the space has worked for them, they believe that God wants them as a church, as a community of believers, to make a bigger impact on the community. They have acquired a piece of land and are going to build a church, not just for them to meet in on a Sunday but to serve the community and provide space that can be used by lots of people. They want the people of Maynooth to see that being a church is much more than an hour on a Sunday morning but is about sharing who Jesus is in lots of different ways.

**We all belong to local churches who meet on a Sunday but God calls us as well to be more as a church. He wants us to help others and to show them who God is by how we live our lives and by telling people about Jesus.**



## Activity

**Explain** that you are going to make little churches to remember what we are supposed to be as a church. Although we meet in church buildings, the real church are the people inside. We are to come together to learn about God, read the Bible, pray together, sing songs of worship and to give to those who are in need.

What is church? Church is the people of God, disciples of Jesus, living out their faith for all to see. And you do not have to be a grown up to be a disciple!

### Instructions to make a church:

1. Give each child a coffee filter to scribble colours on in felt tip pen. Then flick it with some water to make the colours spread. Set it aside to let it dry. (This will become your stained glass windows).
2. Give each child a church template photocopied onto light card. Cut along the solid lines and fold all the dotted lines. Fold into a box shape and glue down all the tabs. Gently press in the sides of the box to get the milk carton shape.
3. Put your milk carton to the side to dry and have your kids select bright sections of the coffee filter for their stained glass windows.
4. Cut bright sections from the coffee filter to make stained glass windows and attach the windows with glue. Cut out and glue on a roof from coloured paper. Finally, lay your church on its back so you can glue on a “steeple” made with pipe cleaners.

**Say:** We need to remember that as part of our local churches we are called to be people who share God’s love with everyone around us in whatever way they need – just like the churches in Zambia and Maynooth. Keep this church as a reminder that the church is more than just a building.



## Memory verse

“Do good things for the city where I sent you...  
Pray to the Lord for the city where you are living.  
If there is peace in that city, you will have peace also.”

Jeremiah 29:7

**Say:** God has called us all to live in a certain place. You might think that it is just where your family live but God wants us to be in different places where we can live for Him. He does not just want us to live there and ignore everyone else. When we are part of the church, we are to live out our faith for people around us to see.

**Explain:** We have been learning that the church is not the building but is the people who belong to that church. **We are the church.** And we are Jesus’ disciples. We need to live out our faith for all to see. Our memory verse helps to remind us of that.

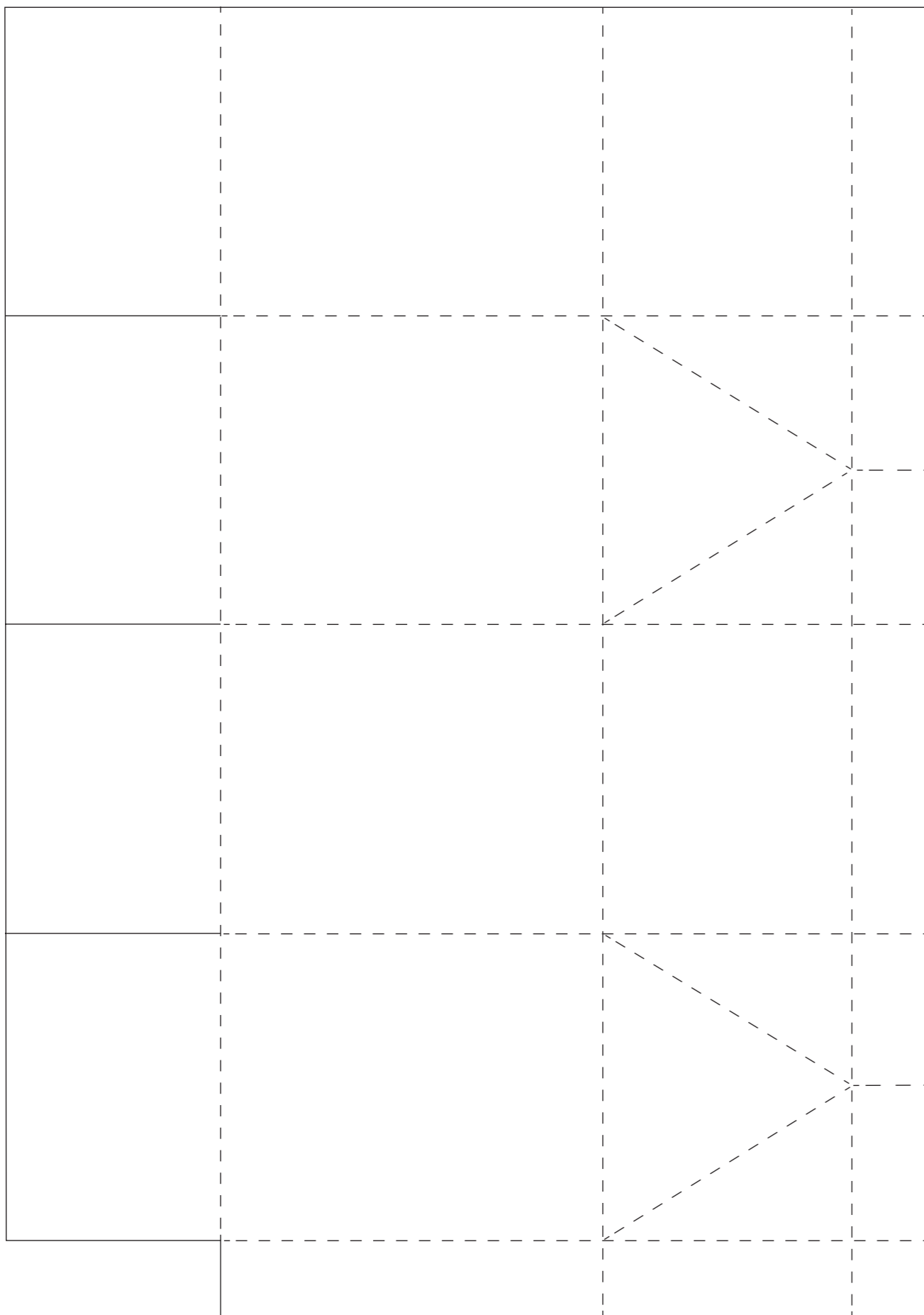
**Note to leaders:** Teach the memory verse to the children so that they learn it. However, make sure that what the verse means is the important factor in this exercise. The children do not have to get the words all in the right order to be able to understand the meaning and context of this verse. It is more important that the words and meaning are hidden in the children’s hearts than that they win a prize for stringing words together in the right order.

**Word relay activity:** Read the verse together as a group a few times so that the children are familiar with the verse. Write each word on a separate piece of card and place in a box on one side of the room. You may want multiple sets if you have lots of children. Form the children into teams and have one child at a time run to the box, pick out a word and run back to their team. As soon as the next person is touched, they can go and collect a word. As the children are collecting words, the rest of the team can be assembling the words into the correct order.

## Prayer

Spend some time as a group praying for the children and young people in the church in Maynooth and also the children in Zambia who are receiving education because of the ministry through the church in Zambia.

## Activity template



## Fundraising ideas

**For leaders:** Decide as a group what you can do to raise some money to support the Project. Here's a few ideas to get you started...

- Family Fun Day • Coffee morning • Pancake Night •
- Talent Auction • Concert • Barn Dance • Craft Fair •
- Sponsored Sing • Victorian Tea party • Car Boot Sale •
- Cake Sale • Ice-Cream Sundaes • Table Quiz • Art Competition •
- Indian Themed night • Bag Packing • Movie Night • Curry Night
- Car Wash • Treasure Hunt • Sponsored Walk •
- Church Picnic • Church Breakfast • Smarties Tubes •
- Christmas Card Delivery • Christmas Gift Wrapping •
- Barbeque • Sponsored Go Without any electronic devices for a week! • Helping Hands (parents pay children for jobs at home)
- Sell bedding plants and flowers • Cupcake Sunday

## Children and money

**Often in church, we either exclude children from giving money or we do not teach them what it means. One of the important parts of the Youth and Children's Project is the raising of money to help support the locations that we are highlighting. We want to encourage this as part of the whole teaching of the Project.**

We want children to make formative connections between giving and following Jesus.

In the Gospels, Jesus says a great deal about money and possessions. Not that He was obsessed by money itself. He was obsessed by the abundant life that He promised to His followers. Jesus knew that how we handle money can either help or hinder us in finding that life.

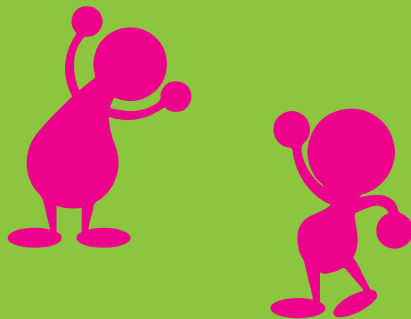
Ensure that you explain as part of the Project and the fundraising, the importance of our role of giving out of our plenty to help resource God's work in the world.

**For more information on this subject check out**

[http://www.givinggrace.org/classic/preaching/children\\_P6.html](http://www.givinggrace.org/classic/preaching/children_P6.html)

**PCI video on the Grace of Giving at**

[vimeo.com/presbyterianireland/graceisgiving](https://vimeo.com/presbyterianireland/graceisgiving)



Assembly Buildings, 2-10 Fisherwick Place, Belfast BT1 6DW  
Tel: +44 (0)28 9032 2284 Email: [info@presbyterianireland.org](mailto:info@presbyterianireland.org)

[www.presbyterianireland.org](http://www.presbyterianireland.org)