

God's Abundant Presence

Date: 26th July, 2009

Reading: John 6:1-21

Doing the Impossible

John tells the story of Jesus appearing to the disciples straight after the story of Jesus using five loaves and two fish to feed a large crowd of people. These stories are meant to illustrate that Jesus was an exceptional person, someone of whom we should sit up and take notice.

This experiment shows that we too can do difficult things, even do 'the impossible', if we let Jesus be like salt in our lives: invisible but powerful.

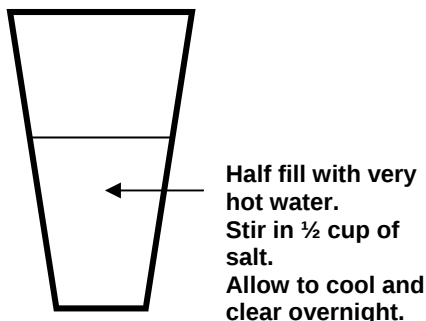
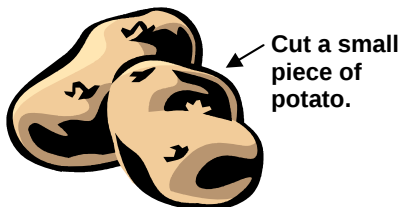
You can use this as part of your devotions or follow the Bible story with it. It might lead to discussions about why the story was told in the gospels.

You will need:

- ♦ salt
- ♦ a small measuring jug
- ♦ a clear glass
- ♦ water
- ♦ a raw potato
- ♦ a knife
- ♦ a pencil or wooden stirrer

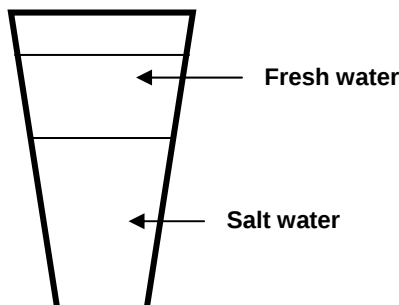
What to do:

If you want clear water, you'll need to prepare the salt water mixture the night before. If you're happy to work with cloudy salt water (which means the kids can see the difference between the layers of water) you can make it up on the morning you use it. However, you do need to give it time to cool down.



Preparation:

- ♦ Fill a clear glass half full of very hot water.
- ♦ Add half a cup of salt to the water and stir till it dissolves.
- ♦ Cut a piece of potato and put it in the glass. If it floats you have enough salt. If it sinks, add some more salt until it floats.
- ♦ Remove the potato and let the water cool down overnight. The cloudy water should be clear by morning.
- ♦ Just before you demonstrate the 'miracle', on the table where you are going to do the demo (so you don't have to move the glass afterwards), very carefully pour fresh tap water very, very slowly down the side of the glass until it is nearly full. Be careful not to let the fresh water mix with the salt water – tricky, but it can be done! (You might like to try it with cloudy water the night before so you can practice while you can see what you are doing.)
- ♦ You should end up with what looks like a glass of ordinary water.
- ♦ Have a pencil or wooden stirrer and your piece of potato next to the glass.



With the children:

- ♦ Ask the children what they think might happen if you drop the potato in the glass. (it will sink to the bottom.)
- ♦ Place the potato on top of the water and watch as it sinks till it hits the salty water.
- ♦ I wonder why it stopped? (Allow children to surmise)
- ♦ I wonder what might happen if I stir the water up? (Allow children to surmise)
- ♦ Give the water a stir with the pencil or wooden stirrer, and watch as the potato rises to the top. You might like to take the piece of potato out and put it back in to see if it still floats. Ask if anyone knows why it floats?
- ♦ Explain about the salt, and say:

Jesus is like salt in our lives. You can't see it, but it can be very powerful.

Today's Bible story talks about Jesus doing something that seemed impossible. The story teaches us that Jesus can help us do things that we might think are too hard, or even impossible – like be kind to people we don't like, stand up for people who are being picked on even if we might get picked on too, be honest when others around us are telling lies or taking things that don't belong to them, share our money and belongings with people who don't have enough... See what other things children can come up with.

- ♦ You might like to have a jug of salty water made up so children can try the experiment for themselves, and see how difficult things can be done if we try the right way or keep on trying if we mess up at first.