

 **LENT 2020**
God in this Place

A prayer
resource
created by

DIOCESE OF
ST ALBANS
Living God's Love

Journeying with Jacob

*Resources to support the God in this
Place initiative*



'God in this Place' is an initiative taking place in the Diocese of St Albans in Lent 2020. The initiative is designed to support church schools in living out their Christian vision for education, as well as encouraging school communities and parishes to pray for their work and for others across the diocesan schools' network. It will call schools and parishes to worship together and to share their experiences of praying for each other.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to the kind permission of the Diocese of Gloucester for allowing us to base this resource upon the Jumping Fish series (<https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/schools/jumping-fish-publications/>).

Scripture quotations taken from New International Version ®.

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Appendix A

Genesis 28 Images - Jim Padgett, distributed by Distant Shores Media/Sweet Publishing.

Appendix C

Ichthus image – Oliver Wolters.

What is the resource?

Journeying with Jacob provides number of reflective stations which allow pupils to engage with themes drawn out from the Jacob's Ladder narrative (Genesis 28: 10-22) in an interactive and multi-sensory way. The stations can be set up and run in the local parish church by members of the local church community or set up in school.

How does it work?

The resource follows the format of the 'Experience' series published by Jumping Fish (<https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/schools/jumping-fish-publications/>). Pupils are greeted at the church door and invited to sit for an introduction which outlines the 'journey'. After the class has been formally welcomed, pupils organise into their pre-arranged groups (e.g. five groups of six pupils) and spend 12-15 minutes at each station, moving in a clockwise direction. Quiet, calm music could be played. Each of the five stations has a script and suggested activity.

An overview of the stations are as follows:

Station 1 - '**Journeying through life**'

Resources: *Pebbles, sharpies*

Station 2 - '**Dreaming**'

Resources: *Sand in trays, print out of images*

Station 3 - '**Promises**'

Resources: *Fortune Teller sheets, scissors, pencils*

Station 4 - '**Worshipping**'

Resources: *Mini-copter paper templates, scissors, paper clips, felt tip pens*

Station 5 - '**Journeying with God**'

Resources: *Variety of images, shoe template, pens/pencils*

Each station is facilitated by a member of the church family, but schools are asked to bring enough helpers so that an extra adult accompanies each group at all times.

Once all stations have been completed, pupils return to their seats for a final activity. Pupils are given a post-it note each, and are invited to write their response to the following question:

What did you think about/reflect on as you journeyed with Jacob?

The post-it notes can be placed on a display, the church door or collected to use back in school.

It is estimated that the *Journeying with Jacob* station will take two hours.

The activities offered here are but a few that could have been chosen. Please feel free, in keeping with the narrative and themes, to be innovative and create your own reflective stations. It may be that you would like to use the *Journeying with Jacob* resource to inform a display to be shown in church and/or school. It may be that the stations are left available for members of the local community to use.

Welcome

Welcome to (name) Church. It is wonderful to see you all here.

In school, you/we have been looking at a story from the Bible about an experience of a man who had a dream. I wonder if anybody can tell me who this is?

It's Jacob! In this story, a number of things happened. Here are some pictures (**Appendix A**), in a jumbled-up order. What happened in this story? Can you help me put these pictures back in the right order? (Pupils or adults could be asked to hold these).

Journeying

Sleeping on rock

Dream

Waking

Worshipping/realisation

Pillar

[Once the cards are in the correct order as stated above, briefly outline the story, or ask pupils to explain the narrative one card at a time.]

The Journey

Today, we are going to *Journey with Jacob*, as we think about each of these experiences alongside him.

On this journey, you will be visiting different stations with your group. At each station will be an adult, who will invite you to think about, make or do something which links to each part of Jacob's story.

When we have completed all stations, we will return back together to share what we have learnt on our journey.

Station 1: Journeying through life

Resources: a light grey pebble per pupil, sharpies, an example of a prayer pebble ('one we made earlier')

Script

We, like Jacob, all go on journeys in our life. These journeys shape and change us. Sometimes it's the places we go, sometimes it's the people we meet. Sometimes it's a journey we know about. We are going here tomorrow, next week or next year. Occasionally, it's a journey that we didn't quite expect.

Something unexpected happened to Jacob as he was travelling from his home to a place called Haran. It involved an object similar to this (show the pebble). How does this object link into the story? How does a rock link to the story of Jacob? (slept on it, then made a pillar).

Reflection

We are going to use stones to help us think more deeply about journeys in life. Take a stone and hold it between both hands.

Close your eyes and slowly feel the stone in your hand. Feel the smooth edges, and those that feel a little rougher. (pause)

Think about the journey this rock has been on. It has been shaped by years of waves and wind, moving with and against other rocks, and now finds itself here – in your hand. (pause)

We all have been on a similar journey, too. Through good times and bad. Through experiences and life lessons, we have been shaped to be the person we are today. And we will continue to be shaped by, and shape others, as we journey together. (pause)

When you are ready, open your eyes and look this way.

Activity

I wonder...if you had a chance to write something on your stone as a reminder to others on their journey, what would you write? A word or two of encouragement? Advice? A prayer or a message perhaps?

Here are some examples...

What would you write? When you are ready, write your message and decorate.

[If time, ask pupils to share their message. Ask pupils to leave their prayer stone at the station – they will be collected later]



Station 2: Dreaming

Resource: trays of sand (one per pupil and one per adult to demonstrate), printed images of https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Blake_jacobsadder.jpg, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:JacobsLaddertoHeaven.jpg> and https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin_Luther_King,_Jr..jpg

Script

At this station, we will be thinking about dreams. A very famous dream in the Bible is one Jacob has, a dream in which he had a message from God. This has often been shown in art and you can see a few examples here. What do you notice?

You each have a tray of sand in front of you. I am going to read the dream Jacob had and, as I do, invite you to sketch the dream with your finger in the sand.

Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood the Lord, and he said: 'I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out in all directions – north, south, east and west. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I promised you'.

Once you have finished, carefully run your hand over the sand to flatten it.

(NB: It may be appropriate to ask pupils to draw a speech bubble to represent God's voice rather than try and represent God – the latter is seen as inappropriate in some traditions.)

Reflection

Why do you think I asked you to flatten the sand? How does this link to dreams? (e.g. the image disappears)

Why do you think this dream was so important to Jacob? The vision he had certainly had an impact on his life when he woke up - what he believed and what he did as he carried on his journey.

I wonder – how many of our dreams stay with us, even when we wake? I wonder if, like Jacob, you have had a dream which has changed you and made you think about something differently?

Martin Luther King also had a very famous dream, of a different sort (show image). His dream was a vision for a better world, a world where everyone was viewed as equal. A world without racism.

Even now, many years on, his vision still has an impact.

Activity

If you have had a dream which has really impacted you, you may like to draw this with your finger in the sand now. You are allowed to keep this private, to yourself.

If you prefer, think about what your vision/dream for a better world might be? Draw this in the sand. Before you wipe it clear, think on how you might help this vision become a reality.

Station 3: Promises

Resources: cut out 'fortune teller' templates (A3), scissors, pencils

Script

In the story of Jacob that we have been looking at, Jacob has a dream. He saw a stairway (or ladder) reaching from earth to heaven and he saw God standing at the very top. God made a few promises to Jacob in this dream:

- 1) *I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.* [Quick explanation]
- 2) *Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south.*
- 3) *All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.* [Quick explanation]
- 4) *I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go.* [Quick explanation]
- 5) *I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.* [Quick explanation]

We're going to think about the fourth promise here. 'I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go...'

Why do you think God gave *this* promise to Jacob?

How do you think it made Jacob feel?

Reflection

Imagine that Jacob was a pupil at your school today. He would join you for lessons, play on the playground, and may even take part in different clubs. He often really enjoys going to school, but sometimes finds some parts difficult.

When do you think Jacob would like to be reminded of God's promise – 'I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go...'?

Pair/share.

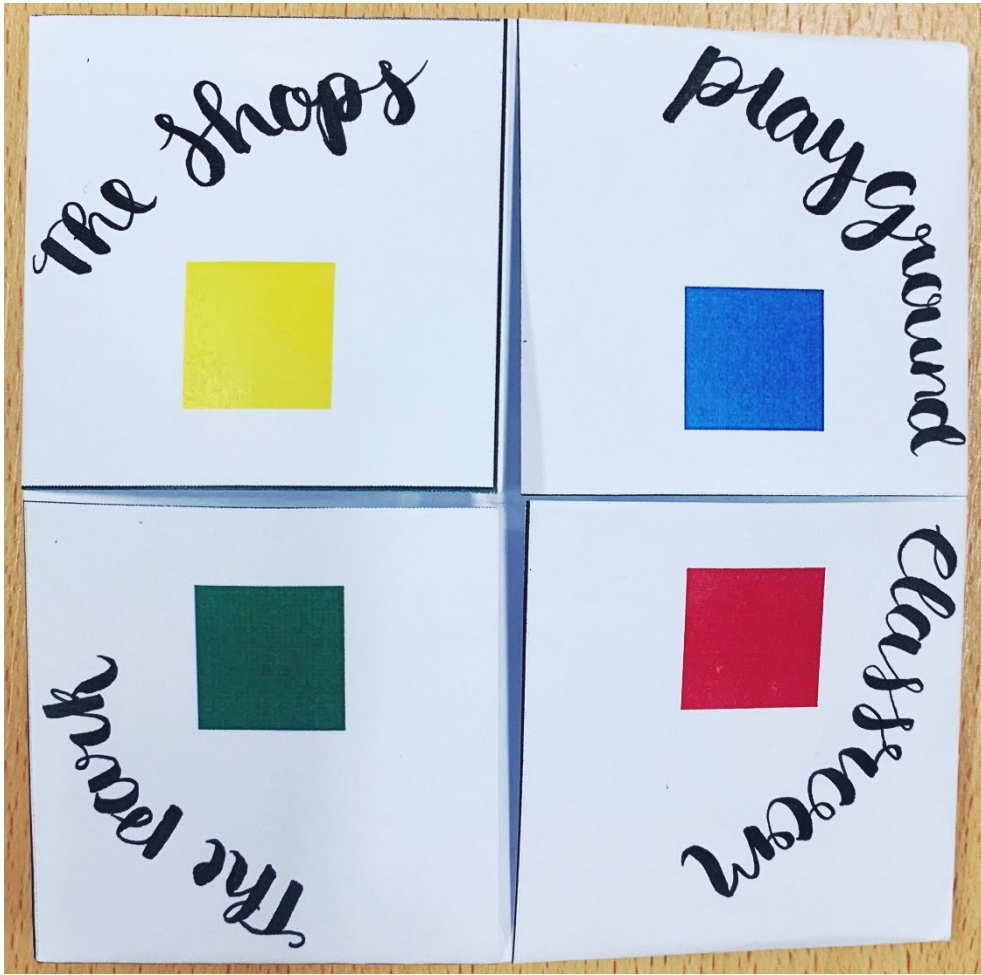
Activity

Imagine Jacob went to your school and lived in your village/town/city today. Make a paper fortune teller using the template and instructions (**Appendix B**).

[Ask pupils to think of four locations that Jacob might be in (e.g. a lesson, playground, local park), writing one by each colour. Following this, pupils should write a brief scenario (good or bad) they may encounter by each place by each number. Examples are found on the next page.]

The answer to each will be, 'I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go'. Which situations do you think Jacob would need to hear this the most?

Then, use the fortune tellers!



Station 4: Worshipping

Resources: Printed paper templates https://www.exploratorium.edu/science_explorer/roto-copter.html, felt tip pens/sharpies, scissors, paper clips, 'one made earlier'

Script

Jacob woke up from his amazing dream. He had seen a ladder. He had seen angels. He had received promises from God himself! When he awoke, he thought, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it'.

Perhaps Jacob imagined that God was only in certain places – perhaps the places he usually prayed and worshipped. Perhaps he didn't expect to meet God at the certain place he stopped as he was travelling to Haran.

Reflection

I wonder where some people expect to find God today.

With the people around you, list some places you think some people would say, 'God is surely in this place'. We will share ideas in a few minutes.

Why have you chosen those places?

Do you think some people would say there are some places where God is not? Where? Why do you think this?

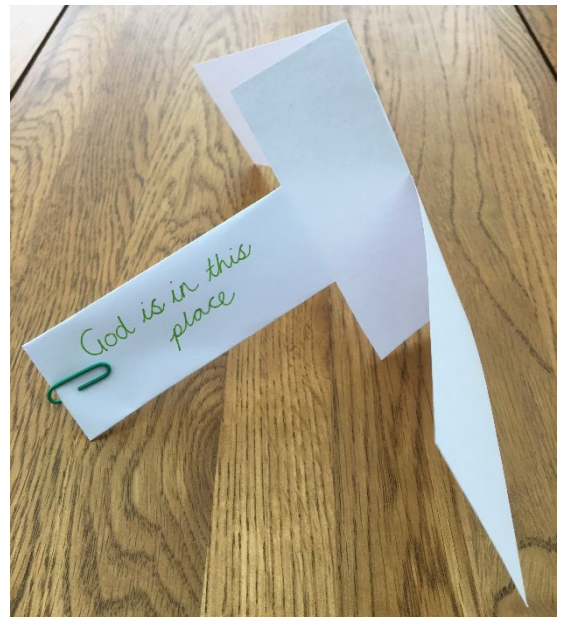
Activity

Following his dream, Jacob started to believe that God was with him everywhere, in all places. To help remind Jacob, we are going to make a mini-helicopter.

[Using the instructions and template (printed from the website), demonstrate how to make a mini-helicopter. Depending on the age of the pupils, you may decide to cut the templates out beforehand.]

Once we have made them, we are going to take a felt tip and write 'God is in this place' on the side of our mini-helicopter as a reminder to Jacob.

Then, we will walk around the church (and even outside if the weather is good) and drop the mini-helicopter in different places.



Station 5: Journeying with God

Resources: Template of shoes, and images to print and show (**Appendix C**), pens/pencils

Script

Jacob's dream had a big impact on him. Not only had he seen a stairway (or ladder) up to heaven, but he had heard God speak to him with a message full of promises for the future. This dream changed Jacob. He started to believe more and more that God was with him and watched over him as he journeyed forward in his life.

Today, many Christians hold this belief too – that God is with them every day, in all places. Some Christians decide to use something as a reminder of this. [Show images of cross necklace, ICHTHUS car symbol and WWJD ('What would Jesus do?') bracelet].

To remind him and celebrate that God was with him always, a professional basketball player in the USA writes a message on his shoes (show image of Stephen Curry's shoe). The verse is from Romans 8:28 – 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'.

Why do you think he has written this on his shoe?

Reflection

One Christian decided to write this message on the sole of their shoe (show image). Do you think this is a powerful message for this person to write? Why? Why not?

If Jacob could have done a similar thing after his dream, I wonder what he would have decided to write under his shoes? What do you think would have been an important message to remember for Jacob, as he journeying forward with God? Pair/share.

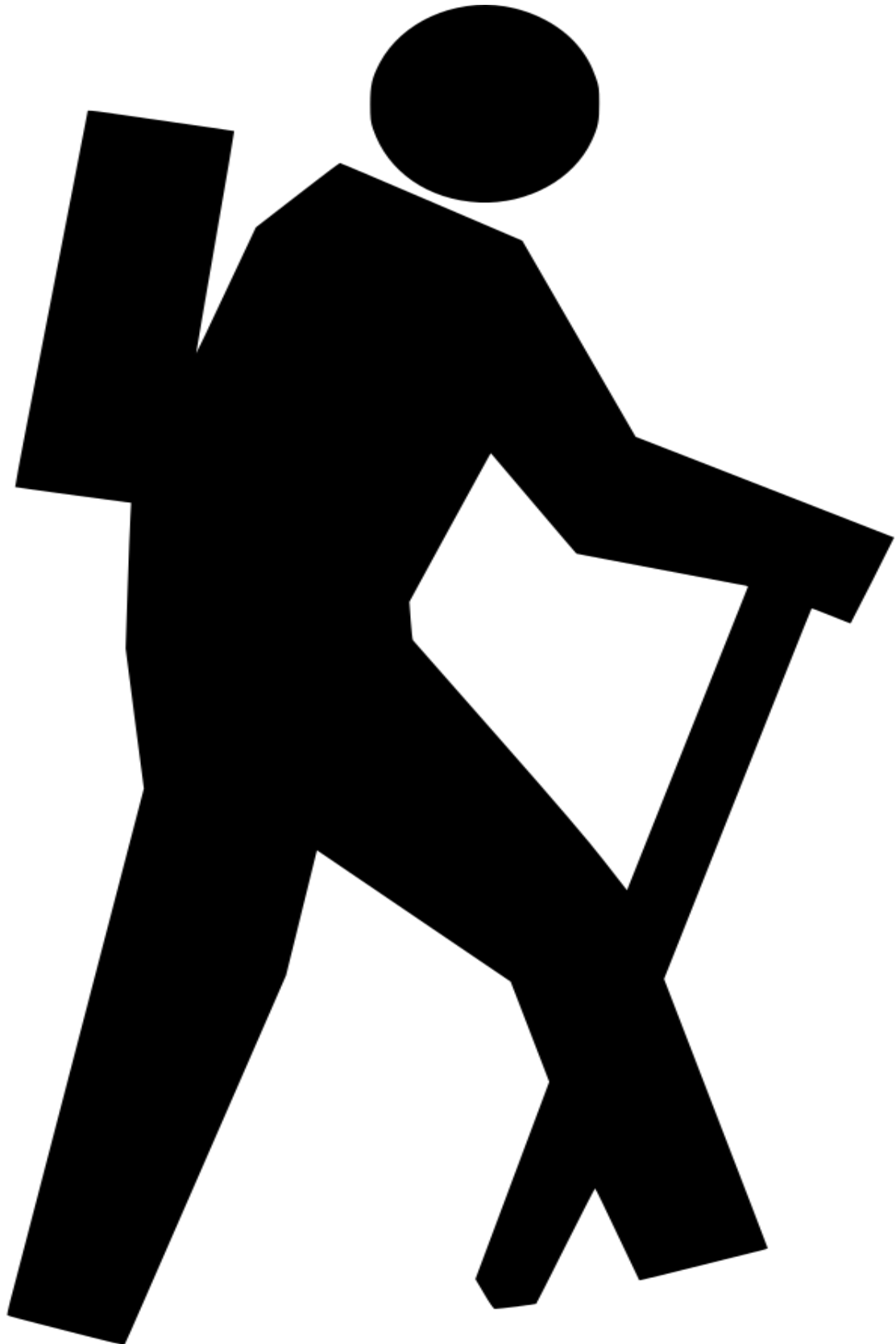
I wonder...if you could, what message might you choose to write on the soles of your shoes? What message would you like to guide your feet and choices in life? What would be an important message for you as you journey forward through life?

Activity

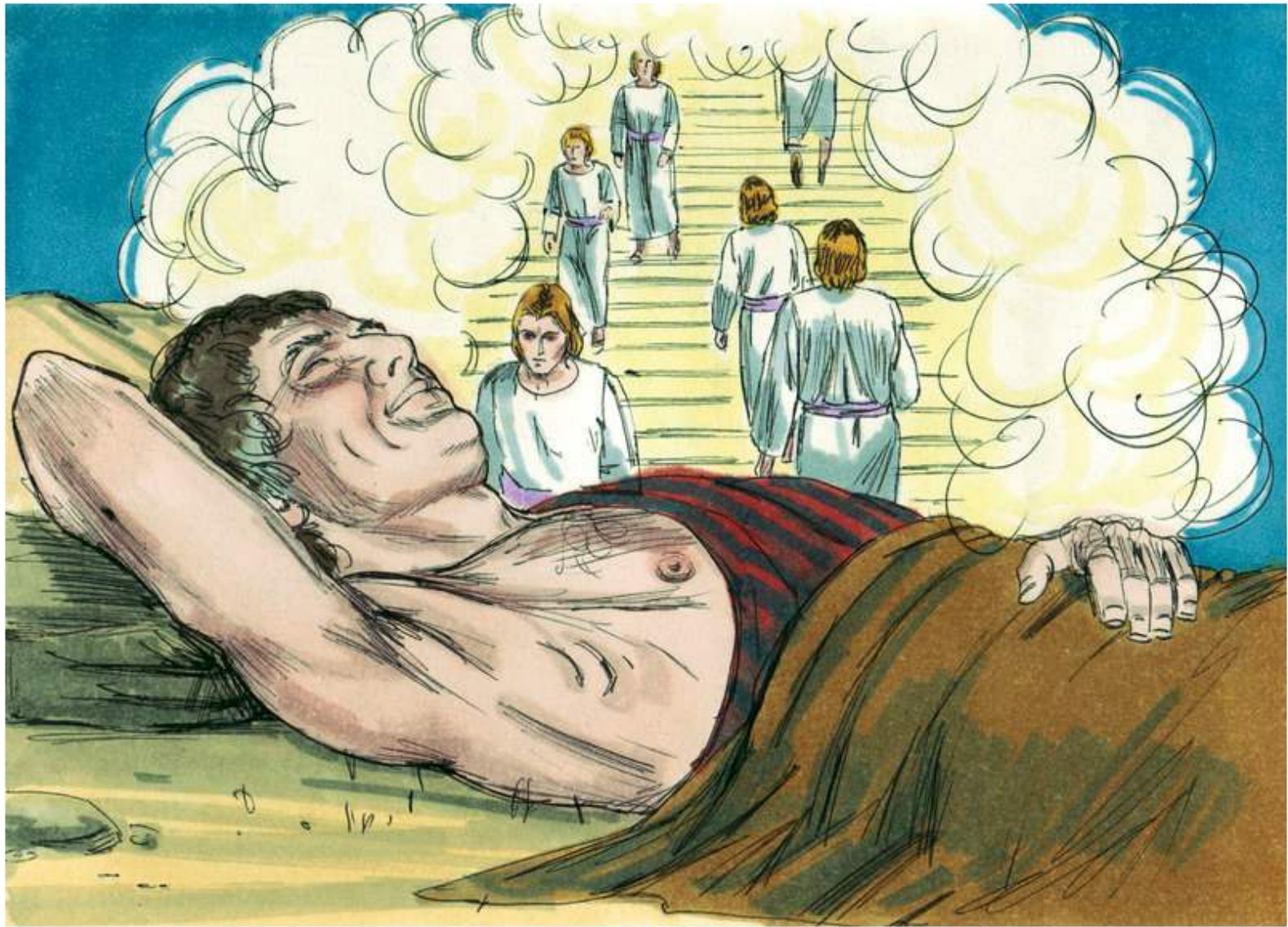
Give pupils the templates of shoes and ask them to write their own message that they would like to guide their journey going forward.

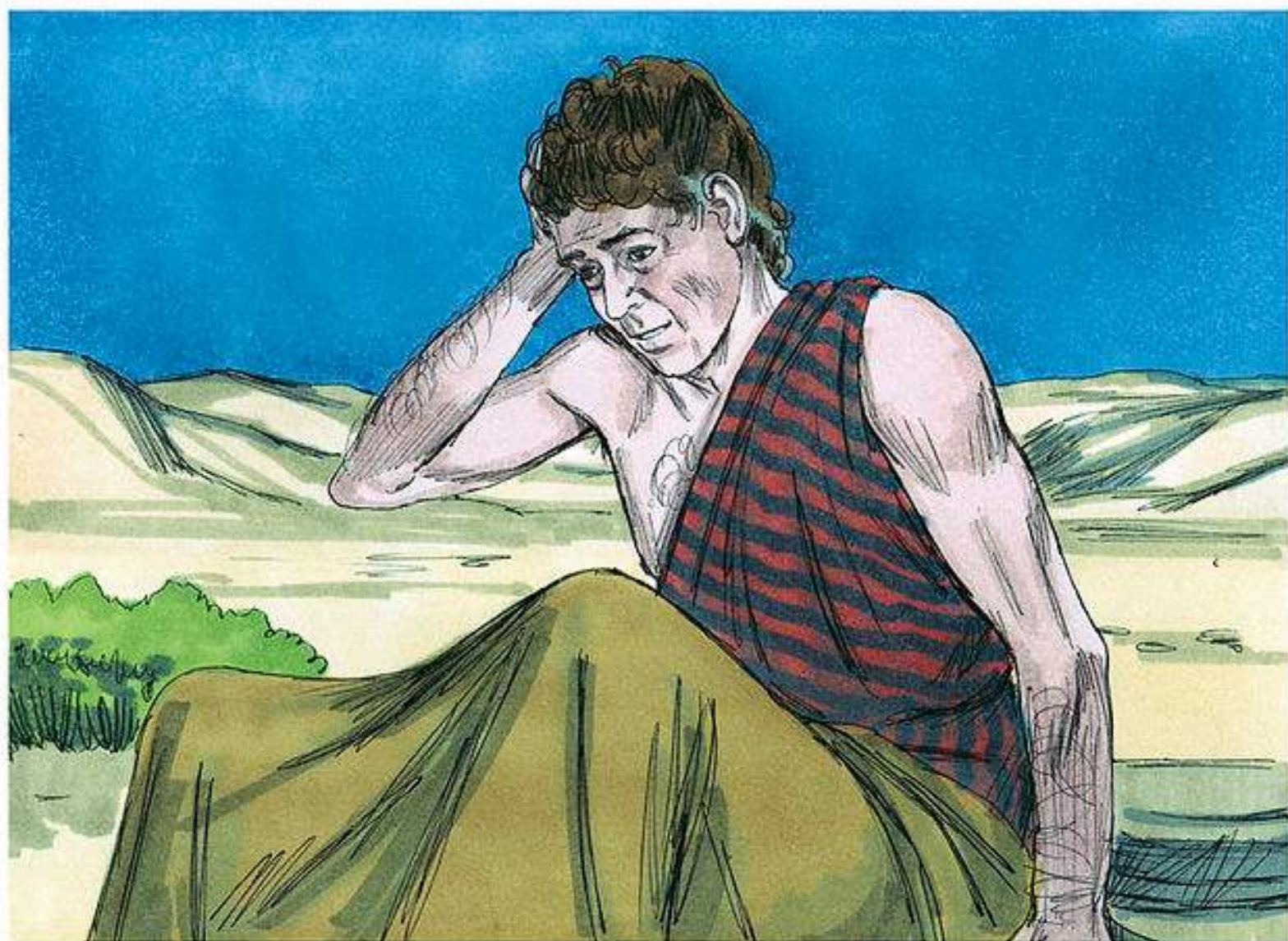
Pupils to share their messages - pupils could even be invited to trace this message on their shoes with their finger.

Appendix A: Welcome images









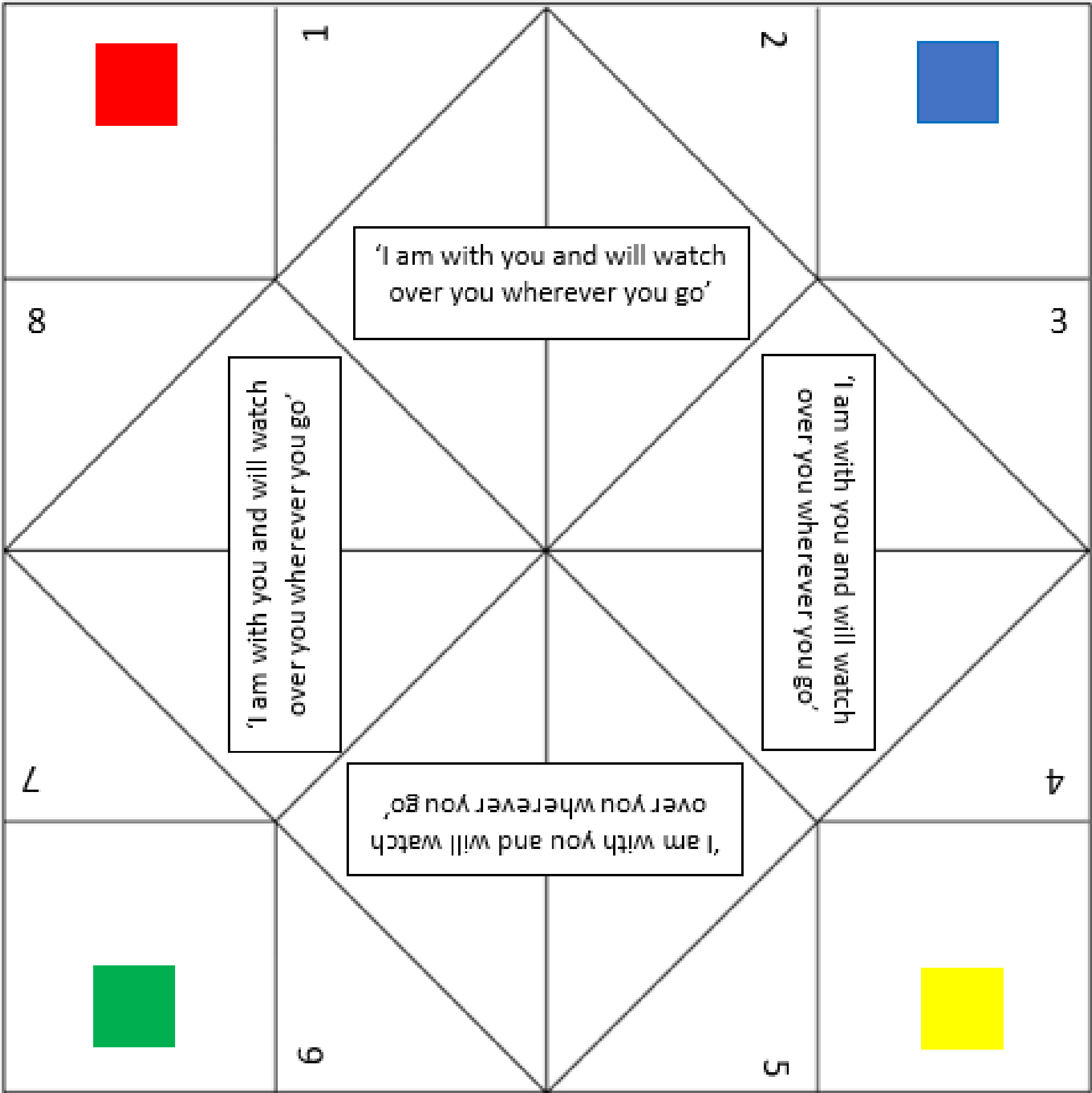




Appendix B: 'Fortune Teller' template

Instructions for Folding

<https://www.dltk-kids.com/world/japan/mfortune-teller.htm>



Appendix C: Station Five images and template









