



On your marks

It's amazing how special a book the Bible is! It contains rich themes and connected ideas that come again and again in its pages from cover to cover; as one well-known Christian saying about the relationship between the Old and New Testaments goes: 'The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed!' On this website we have run a recent series from *Barnabas*, exploring some of these links, such as 'light and dark', 'death and life' and 'lost and found' with accompanying reflective stories and ideas to use with your group. This is one way to give children a big view of the Bible as a whole and how its stories really do belong together, slowly revealing to us more about God's character, more about what we are like and more about who we are called to be. The following reflective story also does this, using stories that involve stones from across scripture.

Get set

You will need to collect some different sorts of stones for this story and also prepare a large blue circle of felt on which to place them, story by story, around 'the clock' of the whole Bible.

The following ideas from our website could be used to develop some of the stories into a full session with your group:

- [Abraham's altars](#)
- [Moses and the commandments](#)
- [David on the run](#)
- [Jesus - the temptations](#)
- [The call of Peter- the rock](#)
- [House on the rock rap](#)

Go!

Lay out the blue circle of felt on the floor slowly and carefully to get ready for the story. Make sure everyone can see the story and then, in the style of other reflective stories of this type, read the text slowly, focusing on the story itself rather than the audience. In the spaces indicated below (), pause each time before placing down the next stone or set of stones according to the picture.*

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

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The earth is the Lord's and all that fills it.

God founded it on the seas and established it upon the rivers.

And God made from one, every nation to live on the face of the earth, so that in many places and at



different times, they should seek after God, feel after God and find God, because God is not far from each one of us.

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And so it was that, after the great flood, Noah built an altar to honour the Lord.

And so too, after his long journey, Abraham built altars to honour the Lord who had appeared to him.

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And from time to time, God took some people by surprise. Jacob's stone pillow became a holy place... the house of God... even the gateway to heaven.

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In the desert, God appeared to Moses and gave him the Ten Words, written on tablets of stone. This was the work of God, written on both sides. They were God's laws of life for the world.

*

At the River Jordan, God appeared to Joshua and showed him the way to cross over into the Promised Land. They took up stones from the river bed and Joshua said: 'These stones will serve as a reminder to you. In days to come, your children will ask you, "What do these stones mean? ". When they do this, tell them the story of how we crossed over the waters.'

*

In the wilderness, in a time of fear and loneliness, God appeared to David. God was a rock of refuge; a rock of salvation; a rock of strength. And David prayed to be led to the rock that was higher than he was.

*

In the time of exile, the prophet Ezekiel promised that one day God would sprinkle the people clean from all their sins and give them a new heart: a heart of flesh instead of a heart of stone; no longer stubborn hearts but hearts that would obey God.

*

When Jesus came, he showed people the way to live.

He could have turned stones into bread but he said, 'No.' He wanted people to know that we need more than food to be really alive. We need all the words that come from God.

*



When Jesus came, he called people to follow him.

He called Simon and renamed him Peter - the rock. And he promised that upon that rock he would build his church and the gates of hell would not be strong enough to destroy it.

*

When Jesus came, he told surprising stories: stories about building a house upon a rock; and stories of someone who owned a vineyard, which he let out to tenants. But they refused to hand over the grapes when it was harvest time. They even killed the son of the owner when he came... who became like a stone thrown away.

**(N.B. Place the 'rejected stone,' with the cross on its underside, on the edge of the cloth first at about nine o'clock from the audience's viewpoint)*

But, Jesus said, the stone that was rejected would become the most important stone of all.

**(N.B. Now turn over the 'rejected stone' to reveal the cross and place it in the centre of the circle)*

After Jesus had risen from the dead, a new people of God was formed, built on the foundation stones of the apostles and the prophets. A church of living stones - you and me - in which Jesus Christ is the most important stone of all.

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And one day, Jesus will give each one of us our own white stone with our new name on it - revealing the person who from the beginning we were always meant to be.

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And we will then take our place in a new heaven and the new earth; in a New Jerusalem, a place whose foundations are precious stones and whose gates are pearls; whose light is God and a place where there is no more death and dying; where everything and everyone is made new.

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Leave some time for everyone to reflect on the story; and then prompt them with some wondering questions, as to which stone story they liked... which stone story means something special to them... and which stone story still puzzles them, and so on.