



On your marks

Many teachers and children's leaders have found the style of storytelling that has been developed within **Godly Play** to be a very helpful and effective way of opening up the Bible with children. In the *Barnabas* Team we have been experimenting with some additional stories presented in this style. We are making them available so you can try them out with your class or children's group, and we would be interested in any feedback on how they were received. Remember to tell the story slowly, focusing on the objects and on the story itself, *not* on the children who are listening. When you have finished telling the story, leave a short space and then use the wondering questions written out for you at the end of the piece.

The following reflective story is based on the prophecy of hope and restoration found in Isaiah 35. It was first used with early learners at a midweek praise and play service and it promoted some great wonderings from the children about how it will be when God comes to put everything right again. It is particularly suitable for Advent.

Get set

You will need:

Sand-coloured underlay

two blue strips for water

silk flower heads

four wooden people

grey/brown felt strip for a road

Go!

Isaiah 35 - paraphrased for early learners

Once there was a man called Isaiah. Isaiah told people about a special place that God was making for them.

Isaiah said, 'God's special place will be like this...

The wilderness and the dry land will be a happy place.

Lay down the sand coloured underlay.

The desert will grow lots of flowers.



Put down silk flower heads.

It will be a place of joy and singing.

Trace a smile across the wilderness with your finger.

People will know the glory of God.

Place down four wooden people,- spread out in a line.

Those who can't see,

Place one hand over top of head of first person,

will see.

then remove hand.

Those who can't hear,

Place hands on either side of second person,

will hear.

Then remove your hands.

Those who can't walk,

Touch the third person.

will jump like a deer.

Move the third person as if jumping and dancing.

Those who can't speak,

Place hand over the 'mouth' of the fourth person.

will sing for joy.

Move your fingers away from person using a curling action.

Water will spring out of the wilderness

Take one blue strip and lay it down so that it 'undulates'.

and streams in the desert.



Lay down the second blue strip flat in another part of the wilderness.

There will be a road, the Holy Way,

Lay down the road across the middle of the wilderness.

a road only for God's people.

Place the four people on the road.

Move one or two backwards and forward along the road, but bring them back to the group.

No one will get lost.

Make an umbrella shape with both hands over the group.

And everyone will be safe.

Roll forefinger away from the group.

God's people will sing for joy and happiness

And there will be no more sadness and sighing.

Draw a smile with forefinger across the whole wilderness.