

# Back to School

—→ with God ←—



## All-age Service Outline

This service is designed to suit both virtual and live services. If you wish to include PPT slides, the slide numbers given in the service match those in the downloadable [BSG22 All-age Service PPT Slides Compressed](#). Check these before the service and remove the slides that are not required. If you wish to print off your service to give to the person in charge of advancing slides, remember to renumber them in this service outline beforehand.

PPT slides for optional activities are to be found in [BSG22 Activity PPT Slides](#) – again, once you decide which activities you will include, remove the slides you don't need.

Timings given are approximate and will vary according to the activities selected. There is plentiful material for a service lasting from 60 to 90 minutes. See [BSG22 Children's Prayers, Activities & Crafts](#) for resources to use in Sunday School (or whatever it is called in your church!) or a midweek club.

### Section 1: Welcome & introducing the theme

#### LEADER

3 mins

**PPT Slide 1** Welcome to our **Back to School with God** service. Another school year is about to begin, with lots of us going to nursery, school, college, or university. **PPT Slide 2** I wonder, are you ready and prepared for the new school year? Hands up if you've got a new uniform/school shoes/school bag/pencil case/files, or had a haircut? Maybe someone in your house will be helping you get ready by setting the alarm clock again and encouraging you to go to bed a little earlier – **PPT Slide 3** or perhaps they will take your photo by the front door to mark a new year at school? Maybe you can look back to when you did the same last year and see how much you have grown!

It is important to take time for all these things, so we are ready to return to school in the best way possible and are ready to learn and grow in the year ahead. It is also very important to take time to ask God to prepare our hearts and minds as we start another school year, and that's what we will do today.

We want to remind you that whatever this year holds, you don't go back to school on your own, you go *back with God*. Whether you are a staff member or a student, you also go with the encouragement and prayers of us all – your church family.

As we begin our service, we remind ourselves that we are here to worship God. Let's hear some words from Luke 10:27, which is part of the Bible passage we are looking at today. **PPT Slide 4**

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart  
and with all your soul  
and with all your strength  
and with all your mind; and  
Love your neighbour as yourself. Luke 10:27 (NIV)*

Let us pray.

## PRAYER

1 min

### Opening prayer (*own words or suggested prayer below*)

Father God, may we be reminded of your incredible love for us and for those around us this morning. Your love is patient and kind, it doesn't envy nor boast. Your love is not proud and doesn't dishonour others, it keeps no record of wrongs, it doesn't delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. Your love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. We praise you that your love never fails. Help us to experience your love today. We thank you that you do not leave us guessing how we are to live as your followers: you show us through how Jesus lived his life. Help us to follow his example and his commands as we explore your word today. Teach us to love others, knowing that when we do so, we show our love for you. As we start another academic year at nursery, school, college, university, or work, we want to give all of ourselves to you and seek your plans and purposes every day. Have your way in and through us. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

## PRAISE

5 mins

*Choose your own hymn or song of praise or use one of the suggestions below: please check your church's copyright license before you live stream songs and videos.*

- [Great are you Lord](#), All Sons and Daughters
- [How Great is Your Love](#), Phil Wickham
- [How Great is our God](#) (The Splendour of the King), Chris Tomlin
- [I could sing of your love forever](#), Martin Smith
- [I stand amazed in the presence](#), Charles Hutchinson Gabriel (traditional)

## LEADER

4 mins

**PPT Slide 5** Rules are things we are familiar with at school, aren't we? Some schools call them 'Golden Rules'. Other schools call them *values* instead of rules.  
**Addressing the children:**

- What are some of the rules or values in your school?
- Why are they important, do you think?

In the Old Testament of our Bible, God gave some very good rules to his people. We know them as the 10 commandments. In the New Testament, in Luke 10:25-37, we find a man asking Jesus some questions about these commandments and how to please God. Let's find out what happens.

## BIBLE

3-10 mins

### Luke 10:25-37. Options for the Bible reading:

- Invite a young person, student, or a teacher to read the passage.
- Download [BSG22 PPT Bible Story Script](#). The passage can be read by one person or by three different people playing the parts of the narrator, the Expert in the Law, and Jesus. Images that go with the script are provided in [BSG22 PPT Bible Story Images](#). These are courtesy of [Free Bible Images](#). The website offers different styles, so feel free to download alternatives.

- Download [BSG22 Children's Talk](#) and act out the Parable of the Good Samaritan.
- There are a few video Bible story options available to live stream from YouTube:
  - o [God's Story](#): The Good Samaritan. Crossroads Kids' Club.
  - o [The Miracle of Mercy](#): Saddleback Kids.
  - o [Lumo Bible Project](#): Gospel of Luke 10:25-37 (images from the film, suitable for all ages).

## Section 2: God's Golden Rules Part 1

### GAME

5 mins

**OPTIONAL:** Choose one of the following to introduce the Bible teaching, if time allows.

### a) 10 Questions (based on the game 20 Questions)

I'm thinking of a word from the story we have just heard about the traveller who was attacked and then helped by a stranger. We're going to play a game called "20 Questions", except we are going to see if you can guess what I am thinking in only 10 questions.

You can put up your hand to ask me a question, but I am only allowed to answer, 'Yes' or 'No'. For example, you could ask me: "Is it an animal?", "Is it a person?", "Is it a place?" and I would answer by saying yes or no. Let's begin!

*Suggested words to choose from the story:*

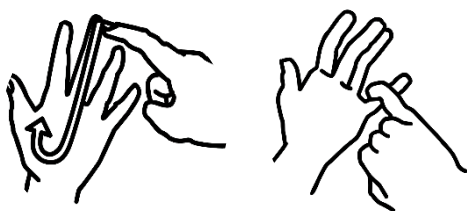
Robber; Good Samaritan; Donkey; Inn

*If the first word is chosen very quickly then decide if there is time to play with a new word.*

### b) Quiz on the Bible Story (for slides, see [BSG22 Activity PPT Slides 1-6](#))

We are going to have a short quiz on the Bible story we just heard.

**PPT Slide 1:** The answer to each question starts with either the letter 'J' or the letter 'S'. Sign your answer in the following way.



British Sign Language signs for J and S can be found [here](#) as well as on Slide 1. After asking the question give people time to sign their answer, pick someone with the correct sign and ask what their answer is.

*Note: clicking on each slide after each question reveals the answer.*

**PPT Slide 2:** 1. In the Bible passage an expert in the law was trying to test Jesus. He asked how he could get eternal life. Jesus replied by saying, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your ??????? and with all your mind?" (*repeat*). Remember the answer starts with either a J or an S!

*Answer: S for strength.*

**PPT Slide 3:** 2. We then heard a parable about a traveller who was attacked and helped by a stranger. This story helps us understand who our neighbour is. Who told this story in the Bible?

*Answer: J for Jesus.*

**PPT Slide 4:** 3. In the story, after the traveller was robbed, beaten, and left injured on the road, a Priest and then a Levite came along. Did the Priest and Levite 'J' - Just walk by, or 'S' - Stay to help?

*Answer: J, Just walk by.*

**PPT Slide 5:** 4. Where was the traveller going in this story?

*Answer: J for Jericho.*

**PPT Slide 6:** 5. Who helped the hurt person in the story by giving him first aid and making sure he was cared for at an inn? The Good ??????????

*Answer: S for Samaritan.*

### **c) Would you rather?** (for slides, see **BSG22 Activity PPT Slides 7-10**)

Ask the following questions. Invite the congregation to perform a different action according to which they choose: A or B.

#### **Would you rather...**

##### **PPT Slide 7**

- A – Give up all your TV and computer time for a year, or
- B – Give up listening to any kind of music for a year?

##### **PPT Slide 8**

- A – Be able to read very fast, or
- B – Be able to run very fast?

##### **PPT Slide 9**

- A – Get up early, or
- B – Have a long lie?

##### **PPT Slide 10**

- A – Be able to draw stories that come to life, or
- B – Write stories that become true?

## **TEACHING**

10 mins

I wonder if you are a person who asks lots of questions? At school, do you put your hand up if you don't understand something? Questions are good!

Our Bible passage today starts with a man asking Jesus a question. **PPT Slide 6** The question was, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" The man was asking how he might live eternally with God, even after he died. Today, people might use different words, such as "What do I need to do to get to heaven?"

The question was good, but it wasn't a genuine question. The man already knew the answer! The Bible tells us that this man was an expert in the law. That means, he knew the first five books of the Bible very well indeed. In fact, had there been an exam in the Law, this man would have passed with a very good mark!

Now, I know some of you children here are experts in some things. Some of you know everything there is to know about dinosaurs for instance, or Lego (*choose a topic you know a child in your church knows a lot about*). Many of you know more facts than adults! If you watch *Pointless* on television, you will know that they sometimes include questions posed by children. They are exceptionally difficult! Children are very knowledgeable. So, think about this for a minute. When you ask a question, is it always because you want to know the answer – or is it sometimes because you want to show off what you already know? That is what was happening here. The expert in the Law asked Jesus the question because he wanted to test him. He wanted to see if Jesus was as smart as him, and if Jesus' answer would be the same as his.

**PPT Slide 6 animation** Jesus already knew this of course. After all, Jesus knows everything. And so, he didn't reply to the man's question. Instead, he asked him a question in return. "What is written in the Law? How do you read it? Or, in modern words – "What do you think the Bible says?"

Jesus often asked people questions. Their answer revealed what they were thinking. Teachers ask us questions for the same reason: to check what we are learning and what we are understanding.

The man's answer proved he was an expert in the Bible. He quoted the verse we read earlier. Can you remember it? Let's say it together. **PPT Slide 7**

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and love your neighbour as yourself.  
(Luke 10:27)

There was nothing wrong with the answer he gave. It was a good answer, and it showed he knew his Bible. He knew the commands God gave in the Old Testament. **PPT Slide 8** The answer he gave could be called "God's Golden Rules", they are so important. He knew that God asks us to love him, and love other people too.

Jesus told the man he had answered correctly. Now, if I am told I have given the right answer, I am pleased! The Jewish leader might have gone away happy. But he pressed on with another question. I wonder if he really wanted to know the answer, or was he trying to trick Jesus? The next question he asked Jesus was, "Who is my neighbour?" **Click again to make question appear on PPT Slide 8.**

**I wonder, how would you answer the question, "Who is my neighbour?" Why not take a few minutes to chat to the person next to you?**

***Pause for this to happen. Ask for a few people to share their answers.***

When we think of a neighbour, we tend to think of the person who lives next door; or the person who sits beside us in our class at school.

But for the man a neighbour would have meant so much more. He would have known these verses in Deuteronomy 24:19 where God says: **PPT Slide 9**

You might be gathering your harvest in the field. You might not see a bundle of grain. Don't go back and get it. Leave it there for foreigners, orphans and widows. Then the Lord your God can bless everything you do.

The challenge in these verses is to look beyond the person next door, beyond our immediate neighbour. It is to help *anyone* who is in need.

**PPT Slide 10** The man already knew that is what God wanted him to do – to show his love for God by loving other people and helping them. He knew this in his head, but Jesus saw into his heart. Was he really loving others the way God meant? Loving others shouldn't be about *having* to do something. It should be thoughtful. It should flow from our love for God and all he has done for us. When we realise how much God loves us, we are grateful, and it causes us to *want* to reach out in love to the people God made – people whom he also loves and died for. That's challenging for all of us, particularly in school.

**PRAISE ITEM** *Children's praise item. We suggest:*

4 mins

- [The Golden Rule](#): Nick & Becky Drake
- [Love the Lord your God](#): Kids Worship Motions with Lyrics
- [Micah 6:8](#): Veggie Tales

## Section 3: God's Golden Rules Part 2

**ACTIVITY** **OPTIONAL:** Choose one of the following to introduce the Bible teaching, if time allows.

4 mins

**a) Dingbats** (for slides, see [BSG22 Activity PPT Slides 11-16](#))

Dingbats are visual images from which a well-known phrase or saying can be identified. Just like we had to try and work out what the picture was saying, we have to work out what Jesus was meaning when he told a story.

**a) Optical Illusions** (for slides, see [BSG22 Activity PPT Slides 17-22](#))

Jesus' parables are stories within stories. They make us think again. In some ways they are like optical illusions. We think we see what's there but suddenly we realise there is something else too. Just like with optical illusions...

**TEACHING** **PPT Slide 11.** Jesus was the best Teacher of all. Maybe you can think of a teacher who told good stories or gave illustrations. Hopefully you can remember the teaching point and not just the good story! To help the man understand who a neighbour might be, Jesus told a very interesting story – a story that would make the man think.

10 mins

Jesus' stories were called Parables – stories with a hidden meaning. We need to think hard when we read and hear them. Like Dingbats or optical illusions, we think we see what is there, but suddenly realise there is something else there too.

First, we meet a man on a journey. **PPT Slide 12** We know he was a Jewish man travelling from Jerusalem, his capital city, to Jericho. This character would have been instantly recognised by the Expert in the Law. He was a man just like him. Perhaps this was a journey he had made. The road was famous, called "The Way of Blood". It was rocky, barren, and steep, and it was well known for its danger. **PPT Slide 13** Just like highway robbers attacked stagecoaches in Victorian Britain, thieves lay in wait ready to attack the people who went that way.

No surprise then that this is exactly what happened to the man! Robbers jumped out, stripped him of his clothes, beat him up and ran off. **PPT Slide 14** He was left half-dead, hurt and alone. Who would help him? I wonder if you have ever been in a situation where you needed someone to help you? (*Perhaps share a personal story*)



*here, even of something simple like losing your car keys, or breaking down on a lonely road.)*

The man was left for dead in the hot sun. He was in danger. **PPT Slide 15** Along came a Priest, who was like (*name of minister, pastor, church leader*). Now you would expect them to help, wouldn't you?! This is where the story takes a turn. What we expect to happen doesn't take place. The Priest just walks on by. **PPT Slide 16** Not only that, but a Priest's assistant, a Levite, does the very same thing. He just walks on by.

Imagine you were the Jewish Expert in the Law, listening to this story. The story doesn't have the same impact on us today as it would have had on him. This was shocking. The Priest and the Levite would have been expected to help! They were good men. They were worshippers of God and upstanding citizens. Why didn't they help? Why did they pass on by? What do you think? (*Invite answers.*)

Maybe they were afraid of being attacked, or of becoming 'unclean' by touching a dirty, smelly, injured man. Maybe they were just too busy: they had a meeting they were rushing off to, or an appointment to see someone. Maybe we are just like them. We too get so caught up in ourselves we forget the needs of others. They may have thought – "Someone else will come along and deal with the problem." Does that sound familiar? There is a mess in the classroom, and rather than helping, we leave it for someone else to sort? Or in college, university, work – there is a person in need. We are tempted to keep our head down and walk on by.

The startling thing is that in the story, the person who helps is someone who was the injured man's enemy. He was someone the Expert in the Law would have looked down on, would never have talked to, would have despised. The helper was a Samaritan. **PPT Slide 17** Samaritans were traditional enemies of the Jews. The Samaritan had a good reason to pass by, because the injured man was his enemy, but he didn't. He saw a person who needed help. And he stopped.

I wonder, who is the person you would normally pass by? Who would you normally never talk to because you don't like what they wear, or where they come from, or the way they talk? This is challenging, not just for the Expert in the Law who had to confront his own prejudices, but for us! In the parable, the injured man represents ANYONE who is different from us, who isn't part of our crowd. What does that look like for me, in my school, my place of work, my street, my area? If someone needed help, would we help them no matter who they were?

**PPT Slide 18** The Samaritan didn't just help. He was extravagant in his help. He shared his donkey, he spent his money, and he invested his time. He didn't give the man a quick dose of first aid – he went far beyond what would have been considered reasonable. Verse 33 in the NIV says he 'took pity on him'. Other versions say, "he was moved with compassion.'

This is radical, challenging love. It is love that stepped into the mess. It is love that didn't count the cost. Does that remind you of someone else? It is a picture of Jesus' love – coming to earth from the glory of heaven, setting aside his own comfort, going to the cross, paying the price of sin for those who don't deserve his love and forgiveness.

Jesus ends the story by telling the man to go and do likewise. So, what was it he was wanting him to do? Jesus was wanting the Jewish expert to love like he loves, and he calls us to do the same today. **PPT Slide 19** He calls us to Love the Lord our God with all our heart. That is number one. Then he tells us to love our neighbour as ourselves. These are God's Golden Rules!

## Section 4: Response Activity

**ACTIVITY** **OPTIONAL:** Choose one of the following if time allows.

5 mins

### a) Prayer hand

*Equipment required: sheets of paper and pens, scissors; or else, pre-cut hand shapes, one per person. A pen each. **PPT Slide 23** from **BSG22 Activity PPT Slides**.*

On each finger write the name of people you can think of who might need your help – people you live or study or work beside. Choose a finger each day and pray for that person. *As people do this, you might like to play the reflective song [God is Love](#) by Nick & Becky Drake in the background. It fits well with the theme.*

### b) Paper chain responses

*Equipment required: strips of coloured paper to fashion into paper chains; stapler. Before the service, lay strips of coloured paper on seats or invite children or teenagers to hand them out as people come into church. **PPT Slides 24 and 25** from **BSG22 Activity PPT Slides**.*

**PPT Slide 24** What might you do to show Jesus' love and kindness to someone? Write your idea on a coloured piece of paper and we will make it into a paper chain. Here are some suggestions: **PPT Slide 25**

- Ask someone how their day is going
- Play with someone who is on their own
- Help the teacher tidy up
- Text a friend you haven't seen for a while
- Smile at someone you don't normally talk to
- Bake a cake for someone who is sad
- Offer to cut someone's grass or get them shopping.

Pray, asking for God's help to show practical love to other people.

*After the service the paper strips could be left on a chair or dropped in a box on exiting the church. Afterwards your teenagers and older children might like to make them into paper chains which can be displayed another week.*

## PRAYERS

5 min

This is Back to School with God Sunday, and so we want to finish our service by praying for students and staff in schools, thanking God for them as they start a new academic year.

*Choose one of the following options.*

### a) Prayers for Schools

*Before the service, ask people to lead in the following prayers which can be downloaded and printed separately: see **BSG22 Prayers for Schools**.*



## Adult

Thank you that we can meet today to support those in our church family who are going back to school. Thank you for the Parable of the Good Samaritan and what we have learned about the need to love you and love others as we love ourselves. We thank you for Jesus, who loved us so much that he gave himself for us on the cross, dying for our sins and being resurrected to glory, so that we can be forever with you. Please help us to love you more each day and to follow your example in loving others. Help us to react with love, kindness, and compassion when a situation arises, and we are faced with someone in need. Help us not to be judgmental, but humbly give of our time, energy, and other resources to support them. As we pause for a few moments just now, help us to think of people who need our kindness. We lift them to you in prayer.

*Short pause.*

## Student

Heavenly Father, we pray for our Headteachers, teachers and all staff in our school communities. There are many different jobs people do to make the school day happen, and we thank you for each one who works so hard. Give them the skills and good health they need to carry out their tasks and help them to enjoy their work. We pray that when staff shortages arise, they will be quickly filled, and that you would call more Christians into teaching. We thank you for those who serve on Parent Councils or Management Teams. Help them make good and wise decisions. And we thank you for volunteers who give their time and resources to help in schools. We pray particularly for lots of opportunities this coming year for them to visit and share their faith in lessons, assemblies, SU Groups and other activities. Give them favour in the school we pray.

## Primary Pupil

Heavenly Father, thank you that Jesus is the best teacher of all. Help us to be good students and to listen to your voice and teachings in the Bible. We want to be really kind to others and be like the Good Samaritan, loving people, no matter who they are. We pray for all pupils going to school this term, and those who are learning at home. We think of those starting nursery, school, college, or university. Help them to settle quickly and make good friends. Thank you that you are with us all at this exciting time, and that we go back to school with you.

**All: Amen.**

## b) Responsive prayers

We are going to have a series of prayers. Each prayer will end with the phrase 'help us to love you', after which everyone will respond by saying together, **'Help us to love you, and love our neighbour'**.

**PPT Slide 20** Heavenly Father, we praise you for your great love for us in Jesus, who left the glory of heaven to die on a cross, bearing our sins, and being resurrected to glory. **Help us to love you, and love our neighbour.**

We confess that we are like the Expert in the Law. We are so often self-righteous and proud, with hearts that are far from pleasing you. Please forgive us. **Help us to love you, and love our neighbour.**

**PPT Slide 21** Thank you for the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Help us to be good neighbours. May we reach out to others with joy, compassion and kindness, flowing out of love for you. **Help us to love you, and love our neighbour.**

Heavenly Father, strengthen and bless those who are going back to school. May they know that you love them, that you go with them and that you are ready to help them each day. **Help them to love you, and love their neighbour. Amen.**

### c) A prayer led by the leader

Pray in your own words for local schools. Suggestions include:

- Church family who are starting nursery, primary or secondary school, college, or university; for those who are moving away to start at a new place of education.
- Members of the church who work in schools as staff, visiting workers, chaplains, or volunteers (including parent council members or governors). Pray for the role they carry out and the organisations they represent.
- Your local schools (you could contact Senior Management and explain about the service, asking if they have any prayer needs).
- Your church's partnership with local schools.
- The message from the Bible today, that God would help us love him and love our neighbour more, particularly at school.

#### PRAISE

*Your own choice, or we suggest:*

5 mins

[God of the Poor](#) (Beauty for Brokenness), Graham Kendrick

[God of Justice](#), Tim Hughes

[Hear the Call of the Kingdom](#), Stuart Townend

[The servant King](#), Graham Kendrick

[Build Your Kingdom Here](#), Rend Collective Experiment

#### GIFT

*As a reminder of today's teaching you might like to give children and young people (or the whole congregation) pencils with the slogan "Love One Another as Jesus Loves Us!" These are available from the [Christian Shop](#) and cost 50p each.*