

The Rainbow - A Symbol of Hope

Ask for 2 volunteers to chairs at the front facing each other.

Tie them together [www.professorwonder.com/magic22.htm].

I really hope we can manage to get you two apart again.

DISCUSSION: What is hope? When might we say “I hope...” ?

We hope for what we don't yet have. We hope things will get better.

I hope I can separate these two ... but it's not happened yet.

We hope for something when we want it, but we don't have it yet, but for some reason we feel it might be possible.

If we felt it was impossible, we wouldn't say that we *hope* for it: we wouldn't say we *hoped* to get an aeroplane for our birthday, even if we wanted one. When I was at school I might have said that I *hope* to get good marks in a maths test but I would never have *hoped* to get picked for a sports team.

But I think I can say that I hope to be able to separate these two, because I'd like to do it and I think it might be possible.

DISCUSSION: So what is it that makes us feel that it might be possible? What gives us confidence that things might turn out the way we want?

Maybe we've seen it happen before.

Or maybe someone we trust has told us that it's possible.

The reason why I feel pretty hopeful about separating these two is that I've seen it done before. Let's see if it works again this time...

Separate the volunteers and send them back to their seats.

DISCUSSION: Who remembers the story of Noah and his ark?

Noah built his ark because God told him that a great flood was coming, and he needed to keep his family and all the animals safe. Noah obeyed God because he trusted him. He knew that God never lies.

God sent the flood because people had made such a mess of the world.

Then, when the rain stopped and the flood went away, God sent a rainbow. It was a sign to Noah of God's promise that he would never again flood the whole world.

We know that people are still making a mess of things - hurting each other, and fighting each other and damaging the world.

What makes us hope that things might get better?

Remember: we hope for something when we want it, but we don't have it yet, but *for some reason* we think it might be possible.

The Bible says that Jesus gives us that hope. No matter how bad things are, because of what we know about Jesus, we can never lose hope.

Jesus was born and died because God loves us. He rose again because God has so much awesome power that he could raise Jesus from the dead.

And the rainbow is a reminder - a symbol - of that hope. Rainbows tend to come along when a rainstorm is nearly over and the sun is just beginning to come out.

They're a sign of hope: a promise that things are going to get better.

Whenever we see one, it reminds us that God loves us and will never let us down.

So, whenever we're scared or sad or worried, we need to remember the rainbow and go to Father God with a prayer like this one.

Father God,

we bring before you all the things that make us feel sad or scared or worried.

We want them to get better. We want them to change.

That hasn't happened yet,

but because you sent Jesus and raised him from the dead,

we know that you love us and that nothing is impossible for you.

So, Father, we come to you in hope,

in Jesus' name,

trusting you to make things better.

Amen.