

Shed for Lent

Station Two - Poustinia

Story:

- Poustina - Russian 'shed' for seeking the desert

Focus:

- becoming still, realising that sometimes the desert is within you

Scene:

- gazebo to look like Poustinia, with Bible/Cross/chair in, sheet hung at the back as a screen, data projector for film, floor sheets + materials for making models

Activities:

- watching film in Poustinia shelter
- making a model Poustinia (before and after journey to other stations)

Timings:

settling in room	3 min
story	3 min
film	4min
craft	20 min (?)

Things to bear in mind

- you will have 30 children initially, think through smaller group departures
- seat the children so that they don't have to move to see the film
- you need to check & protect projector etc.
- the materials for craftwork will need replenishing, tidying, rescuing and so on
- the story is short and designed to lead into stillness, so tell it slowly and think through how to help the children be still for a moment

Text for Story

Welcome! Now we have been to the water and gathered ourselves together, we are ready for the next part of the journey. The next part is ... taking time to be still in this place. It's easy to get restless and to want to get to the next place, the next idea, the next story. But an important part of this journey is to slow down. You might even miss the journey altogether if you go too fast. This whole exhibition is called 'Shed for Lent' and now you have reached a place that really is a kind of shed. A shed where you can sit and be peaceful and have time to think. Come in .. and shut the door on all the things that make your brain race and keep you worried and hopping about. This a kind of prayer shed.

People build sheds like this in Russia. They are called 'poustinia', which comes from the word for 'desert'. People live in simple sheds like this, sometimes for days or weeks. They have just a bed, perhaps a chair, a cross, a Bible and some simple food. Some people stay in a place like this all the way through Lent, which is forty days. When people want to find the desert, they don't always travel to the actual desert, sometimes they build a place where they can be alone, with very few things around them. When they sit quietly in an almost empty shed, when they think and



pray, sometimes they find that the desert isn't 'out there' at all - sometimes the desert is within you.

Take a moment to be still. Feel your breath coming in .. going out. Concentrate totally on being here, in this room. Let your soul catch up with your body. This is your poustinia. Feel its peacefulness.

Introduction to Activity

Put on the film without further comment. At the end say:

A Poustinia can be an important place on your journey. You can travel a long way without actually moving by sitting in a Poustinia. In a while, you are going to go out and travel through the things that Jesus experienced when he went out into the desert. There will also be time to make your own model Poustinia. Group One will do that now, Group Two will start now and finish it at the end of the tour, Group Three will make theirs after they have travelled. There will be plenty of time and plenty of materials, so you will be able to complete your design. Please make sure you put one of these labels on your model Poustinia with your name on it so that you can find it again.

When leader of Station Three/accompanier arrives send Group One off through the door to begin desert journey. Show the card base for Poustinia, explain that they can make any design of shelter they like as long as it fits that size. Show examples. Arrange children in groups around floor cloths with glue spots and lolly sticks, etc. Support them in their work. After agreed time period, give Group Two a warning that they need to come to a stop and label their models, so that they are ready to travel. Reassure them that they will be coming back to finish.

Materials you need:

gazebo with Bible, cross, camping chair

computer/iPad, projector, cloth screen at back of gazebo

craft materials - floor cloths with glue dots, pre-cut card bases, lolly sticks, art straws etc.

Preparation:

Learn story and make it your own

set up scene and think through practicalities of seeing film, then moving into craft work

Notes