

EDUCATION SUNDAY

27 JANUARY 2013

PRIMARY COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

BELIEVING AND BELONGING

Introduce theme: Ask the children if they know what toy has a Latin name that means 'I put together' or 'I study'?

Of course it is Lego .. and just about everyone here will have played with

The word Lego is a combination of two Danish words 'leg' and 'godt', literally meaning play good/well. The brightly-coloured plastic building bricks may have millions of fans around the world but Lego had humble beginnings.

Lego was invented by a carpenter from Denmark, Ole Kirk Christiansen. Years ago, he came up with the idea for Lego bricks in his workshop .. and these bricks were to become one of the most loved toys of all time, enjoyed the world over by millions of children and quite a few adults as well.

Lego was first made in 1955, which comprised 28 different sets and eight toy vehicles. LEGO patented the bricks' "stud-and-tube coupling system" in 1958. Lego continued to gain popularity, with more themed toy sets and building-block variations added all the time. The first LEGO sets were sold in 1961. A larger version of the blocks, DUPLO, was added in 1967, designed for younger children and toddlers. In 1977, LEGO introduced TECHNIC projects for older kids and teens. Today, even students at university use Lego bits to make robotic machines that are run by computer.

Perhaps, what most parents won't admit, you really don't have to be a child to enjoy playing with Lego!

If we were to build a Lego tower .. I wonder how long it would take? How tall do you think it could be?

Note: You might want to get some children to build a Lego tower.

(note: most schools have a box of Lego somewhere!)

In the Old Testament of the Bible there is a great story about a man called Nehemiah, who became a builder.

Tell the story of Nehemiah or use the version below:

Nehemiah rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 8.1-3, 5-6, 8-10)

Nehemiah was a prisoner a long way from home, but his work was from King Cyrus – the King of the country where he now lived. Nehemiah was upset that the city walls of Jerusalem had been destroyed 70 years before hand when Nehemiah's family had been taken prison. He eventually got permission from King Cyrus to travel back to Jerusalem and rebuild.

And our story begins:

Everyone sat around in silence early in the morning in the square by the gate where people collected their water, waiting for Nehemiah to stand up and speak. Eventually, this thin, rather elegant man stood up on top of the city wall above the Water Gate - the pride of Jerusalem.

"Gentlemen," Nehemiah started, "you see this wall I am standing on. When I first came to Jerusalem, there was no wall, no defences, and no city gates. Just rubble. Tonnes of rubble left where Nebuchadnezzar's army left them when they destroyed them over 70 years ago.

"I just wanted to say," continued Nehemiah, "well done! We did it. When I first came back to Jerusalem . . . I was shocked at what I found. Every bit of the city wall around Jerusalem was broken down. The gates of our city were off their hinges and burnt. Our city looked abandoned. And it was. But as you know, I believe God spoke to me and told me to ask Cyrus, King of Persia for permission and materials to come here (he smiled) .. to come back home ... and to tell you to work together and rebuild our city walls and gates!"

Nehemiah's voice grew stronger, "And even though our enemies tried to stop us, we did it. (He looked around the crowd) You did it! Our enemies did not want us to rebuild the walls and defend our city, but you .. everyone .. here has played a part. Some of you rebuilt walls, others carried stones, some cut fresh stones, still others made new gates to replace the one's that Nebuchadnezzar burnt. You have all played your part .. and it was not easy. Some of you are not builders, some of you have never worked so hard with your hands before in your lives. Some of you are shopkeepers, but you became builders! Everyone has done their best .. I could ask for no more."

Nehemiah carried on, "But before we get carried away, we must remember why the walls were broken down in the first place! It was because we forgot God's ways. So I have asked Ezra, the priest, the read out God's laws today."

And so Ezra began to read aloud the scriptures. It took all morning until lunch time and all the people listened without interrupting or even moving. They listened, at times were upset at what they heard because they realised they had not done what they knew they should have done.

By the time Ezra had finished reading, the crowd were silent – ashamed of what the previous generation had done. No wonder their city had been invaded and destroyed! Nehemiah walked across to Ezra and thanked him. "This is a very special day .. I don't want any of you to be upset any more. We were wrong .. but we have now done it right. God will be our strength and will help us to please him in the future. So now let's be happy, rejoice and share a feast together!"

A great story about what people can do when they work together .. they did what seemed impossible .. rebuilt the city walls.

Application

Have you ever noticed that Duplo Lego fits ordinary Lego. In fact, every single Lego piece has the same shaped studs – they all fit. Different colours, shapes .. different functions. Just like the people who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem – they all worked together. It is amazing to think they rebuild the huge walls that went around Jerusalem.

I wonder .. if we gathered together all the Lego bits from around the school and you brought in all the Lego bits you have at home .. and brought them to school .. I wonder how big a model we could build?

Well in a part of England in 1980, a team of Lego enthusiasts built a tower 30.22 m high with 100,000 bricks! But that would seem small compared to the latest, tallest Lego tower, which was a huge 32.5 metres tall and used nearly half a million bricks (450,000). It was started on 5th September 2012 and was finished 4 days later on 9th September!

If Nehemiah could get all the people of Jerusalem to work together and rebuild the walls of the city – what could we do if we all worked together?

Maybe build a better world? But that would mean working and ‘fitting in’ with others. And that is a good place to start and pray together:

Prayer

As we are quiet – we can think about what Paul wrote in the Bible: in a letter to a church in a city called Corinth (12: 14) “Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. V18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.”

Lord God, thank you that we are all like Lego parts – You made us all different sizes, colours, with different uses and yet .. like Lego parts .. you made us to work together to make our world a better, safe place.

Closing comment:

I wonder what would be the best, biggest Lego model we could build today? If everyone went home and brought their Lego bits in, and we raided every classroom .. would it be a big model? (perhaps we can’t do that really) but we can do our best to work together today .. and I think that would make this school an even better place!

