

## **Using Guardians of Ancora in ministry**

How excited do you get when children really engage with God's word? Recently I ran a couple of SU Groups and an evening primary event where the children got excited! We used the new app [Guardians of Ancora](#) to have fun exploring the stories in the Bible. Perhaps some wonder how something digitally orientated could be of any use in an SU Group or primary event, but think again! To help I have split the app into two parts: (A) finding out about the story and (B) responding to it.

**A.** The app offers 3 ways to find out about the story. (1) Play the game which leads you through the story, (2) read the story and (3) finally you can watch the story through a short film clip (many of the clips are on the Max 7 web site).

**B.** Guardians of Ancora offers questions to explore the story with various creative ways of responding, e.g. draw a picture, write a prayer etc. I have been particularly impressed with the thoughtfulness of the questions. They really open up the passage and engage with the story to bring it to life.

For example, in the feeding of the 5,000 - instead of asking "how many loaves and fishes were there?" - one of the questions was "how did the boy feel seeing his packed lunch being shared?" It is a super question which encourages to think more about what is happening.

As mentioned, I have used the app in both an SU Group as well as a primary evening event. Below I've outlined how I used Guardians of Ancora in those settings.

### **SU Group**

Given that time was limited at the SU Group, I quickly told the children and young people about the app before diving straight in exploring the calling of the first disciples. It was very easy and straight forward, I...

- introduced the app.
- showed the clip of the calling of first disciples. I had downloaded it from the Max7 website (simply type this into google). I told the group that they could - on the app, at home - play the game exploring the story or read through it. Additionally I showed them where the passage was in my (paper) Bible.
- gave them a lump of playdoh and asked them to design a boat. This was my own idea but not that imaginative.

- asked them questions directly copied from the app.
  - Some were asked from the front when we chatted about the passage.
  - Some in asked in groups where the children and young people either drew a picture or wrote a response in the speech bubble.
- finished by looking at their responses and encouraged them to try the app at home.

Nothing revolutionary here but it was lovely to see the way the group engaged with the story and responded.

### **Evening Primary Event**

I often run evening events for primary aged children. The last one based on Guardians of Ancora has to be one of the best! I adapted the principles similar to the SU Group with the exception that we had stations around the room with varying ways to respond: games, drawing, using scrabble letters, acting etc.

In the preparation for the event, I got all the leaders together to look at the questions and think of different ways we could respond. I pointed out that the main purpose of the activity was to lead the children in exploring the passage and for us to focus on the children as they did that.

We looked at the feeding of the 5,000. There was something to suit every child. To my delight I saw one particular child who can be “tricky to engage with the Bible” beaming with excitement as he thought about why the crowd had stayed with Jesus all day and had not gone home.

To manage the size of group, we split it in half and swapped over activities, giving everyone a chance to do two activities from the following stations:

#### **Activity Choice A**

##### 1. Biscuit making

- Give the children a biscuit to decorate.
- *Q: What do you like to eat? Give thanks to God for the things we like to eat.*

##### 2. Draw & write

- Draw an emotion (show them the emotion sheet). Write their response on white board sheet.
- *Q: What do you think the crowd thought about Jesus? What do you think about him?*

### 3. Scrabble letters and playdoh

- Use scrabble letters to form words and use playdoh to make what we like to say thanks for. Alternatively, use an arty expression.
- *Q: When did you thank God? What things are we thankful for?*

### 4. Dress up

- Dress up and act out the story.
- *Q: While dressed up, ask the different characters "what do we learn about Jesus through this miracle?"*

## **Activity Choice B**

### 1. Picture of a crowd

- Add your drawing to the picture of the crowd. Put a speech bubble above the person and write your response to the question. Also write a question you have or a question the crowd might have.
- *Q: The crowd were there for a long time. What did they learn about Jesus?*

### 2. Balloons

- On a small piece of paper write a question you would ask God and put it inside the balloon. Blow up the balloon and write the answer to the question below on the outside.
- *Q: The crowd were there a very long time. Why did they want to stay?*

### 3. iPad film

- Using the iPad, go round and film people answering the questions.
- *Q: What was it like for the boy to see his food being shared?*

### 4. Game

- Play a game where the winner needs to share.
- *Q: How did the boy feel about sharing his food? What does God want us to share?*

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