



By Emma Wright
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About *The Island*

The Island is an exciting collection of Bible-based resources for weekly children's ministry. It provides a range of lessons and activities adaptable for your work with primary school aged children, whether that be Children's Church, Sunday School or a midweek Kids' Club.

The Island is designed to help you offer structured teaching and positive reinforcement through materials which can be tailored to your group of children. You will be able to:

- Plan your time with your children easily and efficiently
- Present a range of activities to suit different learner types
- Enrich your presentation with visual images

The Island can help you to be better equipped with effective Bible-based lesson plans to lead your children into a relationship with Jesus and to disciple young believers.

Session leaders are encouraged to focus on the Bible text, using effective story-telling techniques, songs, fun memory verse activities and a range of creative crafts and games to facilitate children's engagement. These methods work together to introduce and consolidate the Bible concepts, and to encourage children's response, personalisation and life application of what they have learnt, as well as building community among the children.

The material is available in an electronic format (PDF) per quarter (autumn, winter, spring, summer). New material will be released each quarter as the programme develops. From within the United Kingdom, order at www.carricknaz.com. From outside the United Kingdom, order at hbowes@eurasiaregion.org.

It is our hope that *The Island* will significantly affect the lives of our children as they journey along the road of discovering new life in Jesus Christ. We pray that *The Island* will help and support you as you work with and minister to a new generation of young disciples.

Carrickfergus Church of the Nazarene Children's Team

The Island Curriculum

The Island curriculum is designed for children's work that is child-targeted and creative, and which allows volunteer leaders to develop skills and talents by contributing to a team-based ministry.

Child-targeted

Drama and music are incorporated into the lessons, along with engaging age-appropriate games and activities. Ideally, the classroom(s) should be **decorated** to make children feel comfortable and special. For example, in Carrickfergus, our room is decorated with foldaway palm trees, flowery window skirts, hanging flower decorations and a tropical island scene setter which covers one entire wall. We have monkey **puppets**, called Rocky and Ringo, who live in a Hessian-covered box in one corner of our room. Memory verses are displayed, and we have a notice board to display the children's work for adults to see during the week. The decoration, as well as the curriculum design, ensures that the ministry is child-targeted.

Creative

The Island structure is based on a group of between 10 and 40 children, although it may be adapted for smaller or larger groups. Each week's material is written in two sections – we use the first section at morning Children's Church, and the second section at evening Children's Church. Each section is timed to last around 40 minutes. This set-up may also be adapted. You could, for example, choose elements from both sections to use in one meeting each week. You may want to use the first section in a large group setting, and the second section for small groups. Adapt the material to suit your children's needs.

When our children arrive in church, they pick up their **name tags** from a leader who is waiting at the children's **welcome desk** in the main church foyer. This serves as a short period of personal interaction between children and the leader, as well as an opportunity for the leader to make contact with parents and other family members. (Name tag templates are included in this package. We purchased lanyards and clear ID card wallets to carry the name tags.)

During the church service, the children participate in corporate worship and prayer until they see *The Island* **logo** appear on the screen – then they leave the sanctuary and move to their designated room where they are welcomed by a leader and/or the puppets, and join in singing contemporary childtargeted songs. We use **Hillsong Kids DVDs**, projected onto a large screen in our room, which present Bible-based songs in a relevant way to children with excellent visuals and accompanying dance and actions.

Children then each pick up a mat from the back of the room and sit on it for the next stage of the lesson. We provide large multi-coloured **foam play mats**, rather than chairs, for the children to sit on – which they love!

A leader begins this stage by opening our **treasure chest** (we use a wicker 'chest') and lifting out a prop which was placed there the previous week. The leader asks questions, including the puppet(s) in the conversation, to elicit from the children what we learnt last week, using the prop as a reminder. This is an effective recap activity which may surprise you to hear how much even the youngest child remembers through association with the prop.

The Bible passage is then taught creatively from a **scripted lesson**, with ideas for using props, drama and visual aids to bring the Bible story to life. The lesson is not intended to be read word-for-word, but to act as a guide for the storyteller. **Images and backgrounds** are contained in this package to maintain continuity of *The Island* theme and to help with your presentation each week. At the end of the story, a **prop** is placed into the treasure chest to be taken out next week during the recap stage as detailed above.

Following the story, a leader begins a prayer time with the children. We have a child's **fishing net** which hangs on our puppet box. Each week, a different child is chosen to hold out the net. The leader spends a few minutes explaining and eliciting the nature of prayer, relating how God can help us apply the Bible concept just learnt. The leader pulls out prayer cards which the children placed in the net the previous week and asks for updates on those situations. The leader then allows the children to share prayer requests with the group. The leader writes each prayer topic on a small card. The child is encouraged to say a prayer and may then put their **prayer card** into the prayer net. When the children have finished sharing their specific requests, the leader closes in prayer and the child holding the net hangs it back in its place. Those prayer requests will be taken out of the prayer net next week during the prayer time. This is an important time of sharing, discussion and relationship building, where children are open to encouragement and discipling. It is also an opportunity for the leader(s) to share his or her own life experiences, thereby providing examples of faith in Jesus and, at the same time, promoting community between leaders and children.

Children are challenged to remember the Bible truth and to come back for the evening session (you may want to adapt the session structure as outlined above). The session is concluded with a prayer and a song.

The children's name tags are collected in a box before they leave. The collected names are then marked on *The Island* **register** before the name tags are placed back on the welcome desk for the children to collect before the next session.

The routine is repeated in the evening when children arrive to pick up their name tags from a leader at the children's welcome desk in the church foyer. When *The Island* logo is displayed during the church service, the children leave the sanctuary to move to their room. There, they are welcomed by a leader and the puppets before they sing together.

A leader begins by asking a few questions to recap the morning's story, and spending some time in simple explanation of the truths and concepts learnt.

This acts as an introduction to the **memory verse activity**. A variety of **games** are used to engage children's attention. Both group and individual **drill exercises** encourage memorisation of the verse. The memory verse acts as reinforcement and internalisation of the Bible story and concept learnt earlier.

Children are then guided to the next stage of the lesson which consolidates the story and concept in a practical and creative way. Sometimes, children complete an easy **craft project** which they can take home. Sometimes, they participate in **team games**. Activities are clearly outlined with directions, explanatory pictures and checklists of materials required.

The session is closed with a prayer and a song, and a reminder to come back next week.

From time to time, we have a Family Service in Carrickfergus, when The Island comes to church. This helps to encourage community and acceptance of children into the larger fellowship, as well as attracting parents and families who do not usually attend church. On these Sunday mornings, the church sanctuary is decorated with props from the classroom. The children participate in communal worship and then remain in the sanctuary. The Island programme on these days is designed to let the children's parents and the wider congregation see and hear what the children have been learning in terms of songs, Scripture and Bible truths. The lesson plans for these services are written as church service outlines but, of course, may be adapted. You may want to use them on normal days on The Island. Use the material to benefit your kids and your situation.

Team Ministry

While it would be possible for one person to prepare and deliver the lessons each week, *The Island* suggests that a team of leaders can make a joint impact on the children's church experience. Each leader can contribute to an element of the programme using their skills and abilities to create the best overall experience for the children. Working in a team also fosters the concept of community among the children's workers as they serve God, the children and each other.

The Island at a glance

- Relevant, child-targeted curriculum, tested and evaluated
- Complete curriculum with graphics, worksheets and preparation checklists to save time
- Bible-based lessons with life application reinforcement (NIV version used unless otherwise stated)
- Key concepts help children learn and apply Bible truths
- God's plan of salvation presented throughout with invitations to children to enter into a relationship with Jesus
- Creative and fun methods used to present and teach the Bible and its principles
- Variety of learning activities considering multiple intelligences and therefore accessible to different learner types
- Children are valued individually and community is encouraged through interactive discussion and shared prayer
- A team approach to children's ministry, where leaders contribute in their chosen area of skill or ability