



## On your marks

Often, the simplest visual aids are the best. This idea uses the numbers on a standard set of dice to share the heart of the good news about Jesus, to explore the story of the Bible, to establish a pattern for prayer and to offer a short psalm of praise. It is simple and easy to use and could be the outline for a talk at an all-age service or used as part of a session with a children's group or at a celebration in Messy Church.

## Get set

You will need some dice - the larger the better. Look out for some blow-up or foam versions, or you could make your own large dice from cardboard cubes. Templates can be found on the Internet.

The idea of using lists to help people remember truths about their faith and the Bible are found in the Bible itself, such as in those psalms that in Hebrew take the letters of the alphabet to start each of its verses (for example, Psalm 119) or some of the lists in Proverbs (see chapters 6 and 30, for example).

## Go!

### 1. The history of dice

The singular of dice is die. In geometric terms, dice are polyhedrons and the most common form of a die is the cube, with each side marked with from one to six small dots (spots). In most games played with dice, the dice are thrown from the hand or from a receptacle, in such a way that they will fall at random. Dice have also been used for at least 5000 years in connection with board games, primarily for the movement of playing pieces.

In Greek and Roman times, most dice were made of bone and ivory. Cubical dice with markings practically equivalent to those of modern dice have been found in Chinese excavations from 600 BC and in Egyptian tombs dating from 2000 BC. Pyramidal dice (with four sides) are as old as cubical ones. Such dice were found with the so-called Royal Game of Ur, one of the oldest complete board games ever discovered, dating back to the third millennium BC. Perhaps Abram used dice with this game! In the New Testament the soldiers at the cross were probably gambling with dice to win possession of Jesus' clothes (Mark 15:24).

### 2. Play some simple games with the dice

- Who will be the first to throw a double six?
- Who will throw the highest number?
- Who will throw the lowest number?
- Who will reach 25 first?
- Who will throw a double first?

If you're using this idea with a small group, then play a simple board game that involves throwing dice - such as Ludo.

### 3. Exploring the good news of the gospel with the dice

Here is a way to remember the good news of the gospel as you turn the die so that each number from 1 to 6 is uppermost in turn.



There is one God, who made the world and everything in it, including...



You and me - made by God to reflect his character and his love and...



God longs that we should love him with all our heart and soul and strength, but because we cannot do this on our own...



*(trace the cross shape in the diamond)* ...God sent Jesus to help us. He showed us God's love by dying on a cross to bring forgiveness for all the wrong that we have done and this is good news for...



... every corner of the earth... for all people everywhere...



... because God wants to live among us, at the heart of our lives, our churches and our community...



... so that one day all the world (all six inhabited continents) will be filled with the love of God just as the waters cover the sea.

#### 4. Exploring the Bible with the dice

Here is a way of exploring the Bible using dice. Encourage discussion and some looking up of Bible books and verses with each of the following lines. (NB: With younger groups just use numbers 1 to 6.)



The Bible is just one book but is made up of



66 books



The Bible is divided into two parts - the Old Testament and the New Testament.



All these books explore God's character as the 'maker', 'rescuer' and 'transformer' - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



There are four books about Jesus the rescuer - called the gospels.



There are five books of the Law that show us what God the maker is like and how to love him and other people.



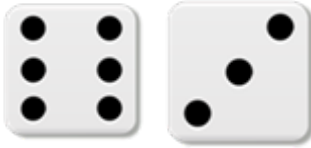
There are six types of books in the whole Bible - namely, history books, song books, books of prophecy, letters, books of wise sayings, books of the Law.



Jesus describes himself in seven ways in John's Gospel (see the 'I am' statements) and there are seven descriptions of God's Spirit in the Old Testament (see Isaiah 11).



There are eight blessings spoken by Jesus in the New Testament (Matthew 5).



There are nine fruits of the Spirit described by Paul in his letter to the Galatians (5:22-23).



There are Ten Commandments in the Old Testament (Exodus 20).



There are at least eleven ways the Bible describes itself throughout the Bible and these include light, honey, sword, hammer, treasure, food, mirror, guidebook, foundation, seed and anchor. (See Psalm 119, Psalm 19, Jeremiah 23, Hebrews 4, Psalm 119, Deuteronomy 8, James 1, Joshua 1, Matthew 7, James 1, Ecclesiastes 12.)



There are twelve tribes of Israel, whose history is described in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, there are twelve disciples, who go on to become apostles, some of whose lives we can read about in Acts.

### 5. **Praying with the dice**

Here is a way to pray just using the numbers on the side of one of the dice.



Pray that, as you spend time alone with God, you will learn to listen to his voice better everyday.



Pray for those who are closest to you.



Pray for your family.



Pray for your school or workplace.



Pray for your community, town or city.



Pray for God's work in the whole created world.

## 6. Creating a psalm of praise to God using the dice

You are the



I love

Because you came



us in Jesus

To set us



(free) from the power of evil

So we could show love



you and others

And be really a -



(alive) forever, starting right now

As a part of a new day



of recreation, which you describe as 'very good'.

**Amen**