

Slovenia 2019 Children's Service

BEFORE THE SERVICE

You will need to prepare a display table and place on it:

- A cross
- A Slovenian flag
- Pictures of Slovenian animals
- A children's Bible
- A Slovenian map
- A beeswax candle
- Pictures of bees and a beehive

WELCOME WORDS

Explain that your service will be about the small country of Slovenia, which is near Austria and Hungary, a thousand miles away from Britain. You are going to pray for the people there.

[Choose a child to read out the opening prayer which follows. Choose some children to hold speech-bubble "excuse" cards later – see overleaf.]

OPENING PRAYER

Child Dear loving Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the country of Slovenia – for the mountains, the sea and lakes, the farms, flowers, birds and animals.

Thank you that you give us good food every day, and you provide this food for Slovenian people too.

Thank you for all the things they enjoy: honey, apple juice, bread, soup and cakes. Thank you for the love and care that you show to us every day, by giving us good gifts.

HYMN: Thank you for the world so sweet;
Thank you for the food we eat;
Thank you for the birds that sing –
Thank you, God, for everything!

Leader We're thinking about Slovenia, so let's pretend we're on board a plane and we're going to fly over Slovenia. Have you all got your seatbelts fastened? Are you ready for take-off?

Some people think that the country of Slovenia is shaped like a hen, with a beak and legs. (Hold up map.) Can you see it? Where would the hen's head be?

Slovenia is much smaller than our country. Look down out of the window. You can see mountains, lakes, and the sea, and way below us there are farms growing crops: there's wheat, corn, sugar beets, barley, potatoes, apples, and pears. You can see lots of forests where brown bears and lynx hide, and beautiful sunny beaches with white sand where people can go on their holidays.

It's time to come in to land again. Hold on to your tummy – here comes the runway. Right! We've stopped. Undo your seat belts, and you can get out of the plane.

Leader Now let's have a story.

Do you like going to parties? How do you feel when you get an invitation? Do you get excited thinking about all the games you will play, the birthday cake and the food you will eat?

When it's your birthday, do you make a list of all the friends you want to invite? You have to decide what sort of party it will be. Then you go to school or pre-school, and hand out your invitations.

How would you feel if everyone said they couldn't come to your party? They might say things like this:

[Children with cards show them here, and read out what they say].

continued over...

Leader Well, Jesus told a story about this.

STORY One day a man asked Jesus, “Will you come to my party?” And Jesus said yes, he would love to come.

When he got there, one of the other guests saw him and said, “You’re going to have a special party in God’s kingdom someday, aren’t you! I’d love to be there.”

“Yes,” said Jesus, “that will be the best party you could ever go to.” Jesus had been inviting lots of people into God’s kingdom, and he wanted everyone there.

“Shall I tell you a story?” said Jesus. “Once there was a man who wanted to give a big party, so he went round all his friends and said to them: please keep this day free, and when the party is ready, I’ll come and tell you.

“Well, everyone at his house started to get ready. They dusted and brushed and scrubbed and stirred and cooked and got everything in order, until the house shone and the tables were loaded with tasty food. Then a servant went to all the people who had been invited, and said, ‘It’s time! Come to the party!’

“But everybody had excuses:

“I’ve bought some land and I’ve got to go and look at it...

“I’ve bought some cows, and I need to check them...

“And so it went on. Nobody seemed to want to stop what they were doing, and come.

“So the man said to his servant, ‘All right! Go and tell the people that nobody ever invites to parties – people who can’t walk or see or hear, and people who are really poor and have no food to eat.’

“Well, those people said Yes straight away, and they all had a fantastic party. Everybody said they had had a great time.”

Jesus looked at everybody who was listening to his story, and he said, “God loves everybody whether they are healthy and well, or poorly. He loves them whether they are rich or poor. Everybody everywhere is invited to God’s very special party.”

HYMN He’s got the whole wide world in his hands
He’s got the whole wide world in his hands
He’s got the whole wide world in his hands
He’s got the whole world in his hands.

SPEECH BUBBLE “EXCUSE” CARDS

Make big speech bubbles and write one of these excuses on each.

