

Growing Together

Inspired by the Christian Faith

IS THERE ROOM FOR GOD IN HALLOWEEN?

Read together



Daniel 5: A Mysterious Story from the Bible

Chatter, chomp, cheers! The noise was incredible – a thousand important people at the King's party, all being busy and important. King Belshazzar was in good spirits. He sent for precious cups and asked for them to be filled with drink.

Now, these cups were stolen goods. They had been stolen from the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, by the King's own father. A thousand important people drank from the precious cups and praised their gods made of metal, wood and stone. Their gods were false gods – they couldn't see, hear or understand anything.

Hush, tremble, fears! At that very moment a thousand important people stood absolutely still, as the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the wall of the palace.

The King went as white as a ghost, scared out of his wits. His legs went limp and his knees knocked.

He yelled for the enchanters, the fortune tellers, and the mystics to come. He told them, "Anyone who can tell me what this writing means, will be famous and rich." They all tried really hard but couldn't make sense of it. Now the King was really frightened.

A thousand terribly important people panicked.

Help, scream, tears! The Queen heard the commotion and came to sort them out. She sent for Daniel.

Daniel believed in the living God. Daniel was full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. He could understand dreams, solve mysteries, explain puzzles. Daniel was brilliant.

Look, listen, ears! The King told Daniel, "If you can tell me what this writing means, you will be rich and famous".

Daniel answered the King, 'You can keep your gifts, or give them to someone else. But I will read the writing and tell you what it means'.

Now the King's father, Nebuchadnezzar had a great kingdom and was famous. But he was a proud king and a bully who thought he was greater than the living God. So, God had taken away his fame, fortune and friends and Nebuchadnezzar lived, ate and thought like an animal, until he learned that only God is God.

King Belshazzar knew all this, but he didn't learn anything and thought that he, too, was greater than the Living God. When he used the precious cups, stolen from the Lord's temple, to worship the false gods made from metal, wood and stone, he disrespected God.

It was God who made the hand write the strange words on the wall. These were the words; Mene, Tekel, Parsin.

Days, weeks, years? A thousand important people wondered just how long they would be important for as Daniel told King Belshazzar what the strange words meant.

'Mene – God has counted the days until your kingdom will end.'

'Tekel – You have been weighed on the scales and you are a light weight.'

'Parsin – Your kingdom will be given to other nations, to the Medes and Persians.'

This was not good news, but King Belshazzar kept his promise and ordered for Daniel to be made rich and famous. That may have been the last order he gave, for that very same night, King Belshazzar of Babylon was killed. A man named Darius the Mede became the new king.

And a thousand important people? Well, they weren't important anymore.



Did you know



Is it a cake? Is it a biscuit? Is it a scone? No – it's a soul cake! Soul Cakes are small, round, spiced cakes with a cross marked on them, made for All Soul's Day to celebrate and remember the lives of people who have died. Traditionally, soul cakes would be given out to children and people without much money who went from door to door, asking for help or "Souling", on All Soul's Day. This tradition began in the Middle Ages and is believed to be the beginning of trick or treating. Every cake eaten would represent a prayer for someone who had died.

There is a rhyme about it.

Soul cake, a soul cake!
I pray thee, good missus, a soul cake!
One for Peter, two for Paul,
three for Him what made us all!

A recipe for Soul Cakes.

www.thesimplethings.com/blog/soulcakesrecipe



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Trick and Treat: add a twist to this by collecting for the food bank rather than collecting for yourself, or knock on doors and offer treats, or offer sweets with Bible verses attached. If you decide to do this it might be worth telling your friends and neighbours in advance what you are going to do.

Prayer space ideas



A knotty time – find a range of materials around the house that you can tie into knots – things that won't be missed! Place them in a basket. Then whenever you feel a knot of fear, take a knot and as you untie it pray for peace and for the situation that is worrying you. Remember the words from the Bible, 'Perfect love drives out all fear...' 1 John 4: 18

Create & make



Pumpkin pictures/sculpture with Christian symbols of hope and joy.

Family Fun



One of reasons people love Halloween is because there is lots of fun stuff which people enjoy. Have an All Hallows party or join in a light party at one of your local churches

- Wear your favourite super hero costume
- Read a favourite safe, scary story
- Marshmallow races – push them along with your nose
- Make a pumpkin lantern with a cross, fish or hearts instead of faces.
- Eat doughnuts without licking your lips
- Play hide and seek using torches
- Light hunt – hide battery operated tea lights



Web Links & Extended Ideas



The Unworry Book by Alice James. We all have worries and fears. This write-in book is a toolkit, full of things to help you discover places to put your worries. It is co-written with a psychologist, and there are links to websites for tips, advice and support too.

The Huge bag of Worries by Virginia Ironside is a book to help young school aged children to share their worries and know which worries are other people's responsibility.

