

# Joseph



## Find

- Barney' the sheep
- Some nails (Hide the nails behind Barney)
- A Pack of cards

## Introduce

Introduce Barney as the sheep who has been on a Christmas Adventure. Explain that on his travels he has picked up a clue for us, and hidden it behind his back. Ask a volunteer to come and find what Barney's hiding. Get the volunteer to show the hidden nails, explain that the nails are a clue to where the sheep has been on his Christmas adventure this week. Ask the school which part of the Christmas story they think Barney has visited. Where would Barney have found nails in the Christmas story? Who do we know from the story that may need to use some nails?

It is Joseph the carpenter. The clue leads us to think about Joseph

The bible tells us very little about Joseph other than he was a carpenter or craftsman, Jesus' earthly father, a distant relative of King David who famous for killing Goliath when he was a boy, and that at some time his family came from Bethlehem. Joseph is a mysterious Christmas character and yet his faithfulness is key to the Christmas story.

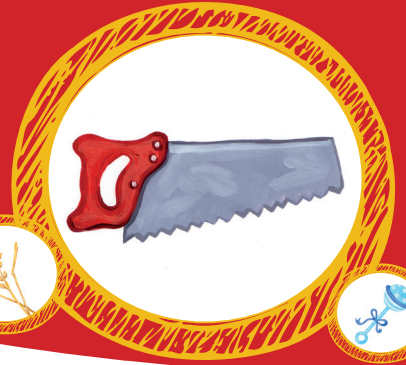
## Play

Set someone the task of building a card tower whilst you carry on with the assembly. If they are doing too well you could always make sure that it gets 'accidentally' knocked down so that they have to start again.

The idea of this is to show someone who is faithful and trustworthy sticks at the job set even if it seems an impossible task. Just like Joseph your volunteer is being faithful and loyal. You can get a member of staff to help too.



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## Talk

As we know very little about Joseph we will have to use our imagination somewhat today.

Joseph was engaged to be married to Mary but before the wedding day had arrived Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant. What made the situation even more complicated was that Mary claimed that the baby was God's son – the Messiah sent from heaven to help show people God's love for them. At first it would seem that Joseph did not believe Mary, and he made plans to break off their engagement without anyone knowing. However, after he had considered doing this God appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to marry Mary because the baby that she carries is from God. She will give birth to a son and you will call him Jesus which means God saves."

After Joseph woke up the Bible tells us that straight away he took Mary to be his wife. I cannot imagine how Joseph was feeling at this stage. Dreams can sometimes be strange but I don't know of anyone else who has been told in a dream that they would soon become a father to God's own son. I would think that Joseph would have had every right to run off but he didn't – he remained faithful to God and faithful to Mary.

To be faithful means that Joseph was loyal – he could be trusted. God knew this about Joseph – he knew that Joseph could be trusted with one of the greatest tasks ever expected of a man – to be a father to Jesus. That was a great responsibility.

The challenge for us is whether we are as faithful and trustworthy as Joseph was. If we were given a task no matter how big or small would we be willing to do it wholeheartedly and to the best of our ability? It may be a job that we do not particularly want to do, or it may be a job that we think someone else should do and not us. The job does not matter. What matters is our attitude towards it. Today are we going to be like Joseph – trustworthy, honest and loyal – so people and God, know that we can be relied upon?

Reward the person for persistently building the card tower, as an example or someone who remained faithful to the challenge even when it felt impossible.

## Pray

Dear God may we be more like Joseph in everything we do. May we be willing to help and go the extra mile for others. Like Joseph help us to be trustworthy and faithful in all that we do. Amen

### Classroom follow up:

You may like to set up a Joseph award scheme where pupils who prove to be trustworthy can gain some reward

Write a diary account of the Christmas story from Joseph's point of view

Be a carpenter, like Joseph and make a Christmas craft out of wood

