

GUIDES' THINKING DAY SERVICE
IT'S BETTER TOGETHER

Have some volunteers to burst balloons! You get them to stand facing each other and the task is simple, to burst the balloon by squeezing together! There were four groups working at the same time to see which one can break it the quickest. *Sadly none of them was able to burst the balloon!*

Theme of this service is "I can..." which is all about things that we can do to make our life better or make the world a better place. I first came across people trying to burst balloons in this way in Cambodia; our friend told me that the children play this game because it teaches them that "it's better together", that the hard things they face in life are overcome more easily by helping one another and by working together. They face lots of hard things in their lives: not having much food to eat, sometimes there is no-one to look after them because their parents abandon them, or they have no money to go to school; but by helping one another, it makes these problems easier to overcome.

The story of Ruth is a great story. Jean is going to read a bit of it in a minute; it is her favourite Bible reading and she'll tell you why. It is a story in which people helping each other make hard things easier.

Naomi had 2 sons and Ruth married one of these sons; Naomi was living in a foreign country. Her sons then both died and she and Ruth are both very sad. Naomi decides to return to her own country, to the town called Bethlehem and Ruth comes with her. She will not be put off and this is what she says to Naomi: "*where you go, I will go and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.*" (1:16) Ruth promises to help Naomi and support her and be with her; she promises to help her when life is hard and to be her friend in all days of her life.

In this way life is better together. In the hard things we face, we can often get by better when we help each other; sometimes helping each other makes everything better!

WHERE DOES THE POWER COME FROM?

Imagine that I'm at home and it's dark and I'm trying to find my phone which I've lost. I know, I'll get the torch and then I can find my phone. But the torch is not working; it has no power; so, no I can't find my phone! That's fine, I've got a light that I can switch on and that will help me find my phone, but switch light on and it's not working, it has no power; so, no I can't find my phone. Why is the torch not working; why is the light not working? When I put batteries in the torch, and when I plug the light into the electricity, then I can look, I can see and I can find my phone! Power makes all the difference.

"I can..." – we've heard these two words lots of times today; they are about all the things that we can do to make our life better, to make the world a better place and sometimes it's not even very big things that we need to do; we can do some small and simple things that make our lives better, and our world better. The magnificent thing is that when we do small, simple things in our part of the world, we can make the world and life better for people all across the world.

But, I don't know about you, but there are times when I feel as if "I can't..." Maybe you've had days when you've been at school and the teacher is trying to explain some complicated Maths problem like how to do division and you think "I can't do

this”; or for homework you have a problem to solve or a question to answer and you think “I can’t do this”. Or you have to deal with some issue at work and it seems as if it will just never be solved and you think “no, I can’t do this!” We all feel like that at times for some reason or another.

All way through its story, the Bible tells us that there is a way by which we can connect with God’s power and that’s prayer. We read a prayer that Paul wrote for a Church that must have been feeling weak; maybe they were thinking about all their problems and that they would never be able to solve them. So Paul prayed for them: “*I pray...*” (*Ephesians 3:16*) Again later, he prays that they may have power to grasp how big is God’s love for them. ‘Dynamite’ – that’s word that Paul uses for ‘power’; well, it comes from same place; dynamite is power to blow things up, but power can be used to make good things, to do good in the world and it’s that good sense of power that Paul prays that these people know in their lives; connecting to God’s power they would be able to live life well, to live by faith, to love others and to serve God.

The power for us to do anything comes from God at work in us. We can do all the things we’ve talked about this morning with the power that God gives; God makes us strong and able to do all kinds of good and great things. Sometimes I feel like the torch with no batteries or the light that’s not plugged in, weak and powerless and as if I can’t do anything. God’s power makes us able to do all sorts of good things in the world: we are able to live by faith, able to love other people, able to serve people in need, able to help other people in the community, able to be the best people that we can be in guiding, at school, at work, in the Church, wherever. Prayer, asking God for help, connects us with God’s power; asking God for His help, He listens, He answers and He gives us what we need. “I can...?” Well, on my own I’m not sure, but God is able and with His help “yes, I can!”