

The Flying Doctor

This unit of study has been designed for use in conjunction with other Beacon Media resources:

Themes for Christian Studies Level 5: God is a servant

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The Flying Doctor

God is a servant

Do you know what a servant is?

A servant is a helper. A king or queen has servants to help them with running the palace. Servants do whatever their master wants them to do.

When you are a Christian you have a master. That master is Jesus. We do whatever Jesus wants us to do. We find out what he wants us to do by reading the Bible and listening to his voice.

We are servants of Jesus. But to be a servant of Jesus is not a difficult or boring job. It is a very exciting job because Jesus is with us in the job he calls us to do.

Many years ago there was a Christian man called John Flynn who was called by God to help people in outback Australia. There were often emergencies, and the people lived too far away from medical help. Maybe they had an accident or got bitten by a snake. What would they do so far away from a doctor?

Then John Flynn thought of an idea. He would start the Flying Doctor Service, so that a plane could quickly get to people in need. John Flynn was a servant of God.

One day God may call you to do a special job for him. You can be God's servant. God will use your special talents to serve him. You can pray about being a servant of God while you are young. God wants us all to use our talents for him.

Read the story of the talents from Matthew 25:14-29.

The story of John Flynn

John Flynn believed that God wanted him to become a minister and go to the centre of Australia. It was a time when much of the outback was being opened up for sheep and cattle stations. People had to travel hundreds of miles for medical help. There were also hundreds of people in the outback who had not heard the Gospel, because there was no one to tell it.

John began working in the outback of South Australia in 1911. He travelled over the hot, sandy country in a horse and buggy. He often had to act as doctor, dentist, school teacher as well as preacher.

John knew that people in remote places must have better access to medical centres, or many would die. In his time there were 15 inland hospitals set up, where station people could receive medical help more quickly.

However this was not the complete answer. One day, John was visiting Adelaide and saw an aeroplane.

"That's what we need," he said.

John Flynn now ran a mission, and with the help of others worked towards establishing a Flying Doctor service, so that doctors could fly to visit patients, and patients could be flown to hospital. One of the problems in the outback was the sending of messages. With the help of his friend Alfred Traegar, John managed to develop a pedal wireless, which could send and receive messages, if the people worked the pedals as they used it.

The radio receiver was not just used by people in an emergency, but enabled lonely, isolated people talk with others every day.

Activities

PART A

1. Why did John want to go to the outback?
2. How did he travel in the early days?
3. How did he *want* to travel?
4. How could an aeroplane help his work?
5. What is the name of the special service he began?
6. How did the people of the outback get messages to John?
7. What were some of the gifts and talents John may have had as a young boy?
8. Why do you think John was so successful?
9. Read the story Jesus told, from Matthew 25: 14-29. It is not just a story about servants receiving bags of money. The hidden meaning is to do with God's servants receiving gifts from Him.
 - a) Write a list of the different gifts that God gives to people. Don't just think of people who are very clever. Think about people who are kind, friendly or patient. They are gifts too!
 - b) Choose one of the following and explain how it could be used for God:
music helping crafts building speaking computers

PART B

God is a faithful servant

God never gets tired of helping us. We can depend on Him. God wants us to be faithful too. Can God depend on us? Can He depend on us to use our talents for Him? We can serve God in many different _____. Just as the men in the Bible story had to use their _____ to earn more money, Christians should serve God with the _____ God has given them. God used the talents of John Flynn's. Because John was a faithful servant, many, many people were helped.

Missing words: money talents ways

How can I be a faithful servant?

I can _____ out what my gifts and talents are.

I can work hard at becoming _____ at using these gifts.

I can say, "Yes, I will help," when God asks me to _____ my gifts for Him.

Missing words: use better find

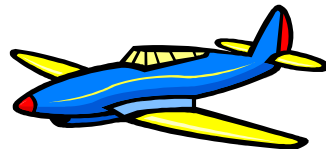
Something more to read

Jesus once told a story about three servants. It is a story about using our gifts for God.

The story of the talents is not just a story about servants receiving bags of money. The hidden meaning is to do with God's servants receiving gifts from Him. The servants received different amounts of money. We cannot measure God's gifts to people in 'amounts', but we can say that God gives people different KINDS of gifts.

To some He gives a gift of music. To others He gives the gift of caring. There are many different ways in which we can serve Him. Just as the men in the story had to use their money to earn money, Christians should serve God with the talents God has given them. God used John Flynn's talents and multiplied them, so that many more people were reached.

10. Write a list of your talents.
11. How do you think God may use you to serve him in the future?



The Flying Doctor, 1928

(Newspaper article)

Suddenly the fear of illness in the Outback is eased

A man cut his throat in Western Queensland in May 1928 and lay down to die. But out of the cloudless sky came a gentleman with a black bag and the lonely man's life was saved. The outback had become a better place to live. This was the first errand for the new Cloncurry –based flying doctor, the only one in the inland. Within a decade, centres would be established or planned in Port Hedland, Wyndham, Kalgoorlie (Western Australia), Broken Hill (New South Wales), Alice Springs (Northern Territory) and people scattered over 5 million square kilometers would be under their protection.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service was the brainchild of the Reverend Dr. John Flynn, (' Flynn of the Inland'), who left Victoria for Central Australia before the first World War when pregnant white women traveled a thousand kilometers by camel to Oodnadatta to give birth to their children, and a thousand kilometers home again. For people who fell seriously ill suddenly there was often no hope. So Flynn came to the Inland and dreamed of a better life for these people. And slowly new technology made his dream come true. Two things made the development of the Flying Doctor Service possible: the inventions of reliable flying machines and less complicated wireless transmitters.

In 1920, Qantas established its service in Western Queensland and soon afterwards Flynn met the young electrician Alfred Traeger in Adelaide who promised to develop a pedal-powered radio set. In 1928 the first message was pedaled over the airwaves from Hermannsburg Mission to Alice Springs. Before long pedal-wireless sets were being distributed throughout the Outback. People could call the flying doctor, but how could he come to their aid?

Flynn's Australian Inland Mission arranged with Qantas for the sole use of a *De Havilland 50* plane stationed at Cloncurry. It could carry a pilot and four passengers, or be converted to an ambulance with room for stretchers and a nurse. Early in May 1928, Dr Kenyon St Vincent Welch left his practice in Macquarie St, Sydney and went to Cloncurry to become the first flying doctor. Of course the Flying

Doctor network was more than a medical service: It was a great support to isolated housewives who could chat to each other, and as radio communications improved and the pedal sets gave way to more sophisticated transceivers, children could be brought daily for lessons over the Schools of the Air.

1. What differences would there be between the Flying Doctor service in 1928 and the Flying Doctor service of today?
2. What was John Flynn's other name?
3. What prompted him to start the Flying Doctor Service?
4. Was John Flynn a doctor?
5. What was his profession?
6. What might it have been difficult for John to start the Flying Doctor service?
7. Describe the first Flying Doctor service plane.
8. Which airlines supplied the plane?
9. What equipment did they need?
10. Who was the first pilot?
11. On a map of Australia, mark the six towns mentioned in the first paragraph of this article.

Morse Code

Some words that we use today come from people's names. The term Morse code is a good example. Every good etymologist should know about the person named Samuel Morse. He found a way of using a special code to send messages.

Samuel Morse

Samuel Morse had a lively mind. He liked to create things. He invented a pump for fire engines and made a marble-cutting machine.

Samuel Morse's best and most famous invention was the telegraph. The telegraph is a machine for sending messages in code by electricity. This was much faster than waiting for a letter. Telephones hadn't been invented at this stage. Samuel Morse thought that his invention should be used for sending secret codes by the United States government.

The first telegraph message was sent from a room in the Capitol in Washington D.C. to Baltimore, Maryland. Many people came to Capitol to see Samuel Morse use his new invention. Everyone watched as Morse sent his first message. Would the man in Baltimore get his message? Everyone waited. The man in Baltimore sent a message that Morse's code had been understood! All the people in the room cheered.

How does morse code work?

The sender taps the messages in codes. The code is sent in jolts of electricity called dots and dashes. Dots are short spurts of electricity. Dashes are longer jolts of electricity. Groups of the dots and dashes stand for the letters of the alphabet. The person at the other end gets the message. He figures out what letters the dots and dashes stand for. Then he can understand the message. When Morse code is written on a piece of paper, a dot looks like this . and a dash looks like this - .

Here is the code that Samuel Morse made up:

A. - B-... C-.-. D -.. E. F ..-. G - - . H I .. J.- - -
K -.-. L .-.. M- - N-. O - - - P .-.-. Q - - .- R .. S ...
T- U ..- V ...- W .-- X .-- Y -.- Z - - ..

Can you read the secret message written below in Morse code?

.-. - - - - . . - . - -.. -.

The message says:

1. Use your dictionary to find the meaning of *etymologist*.
2. What was Samuel Morse's most famous invention?
3. John Flynn could not have started the Flying Doctor service on his own. List some people who helped him.
4. The story of the Flying Doctor service shows us that God uses teams of people to work together for one purpose, in serving him. Think of a Christian organization or ministry where people work together to serve God.
5. When we work for God, it is important to pray that God will be in charge of the work. This is how great things are done for God. Think of another great achievement that has been made by a Christian who prayed and trusted in God.

The Flying Doctor today

Who Uses the Flying Doctor and Why?

People in Outback Australia use the flying doctor for quick medical help when they live a long way from a doctor or a hospital.

The plane goes to clinics every week for check ups and attends to emergencies as well. Everyone comes for check ups and most of the patients are aboriginals. The doctor and people who use the flying doctor use the radio to communicate to each other. They don't often have a phone.

Sometimes the doctor tells people what to do over the radio without even seeing them.

Out stations need special first aid boxes. The boxes have maps of the body so people can say exactly where it hurts and the doctor can help without seeing them. Sometimes they are just too far away and it's not a real emergency.

Rev. John Flynn started the flying doctor service in 1928. He had one plane.

Today they have many planes. The flying doctors see about 65,000 patients a year. There is also a flying dentist available.

Questions:

1. Who uses the flying doctor?
2. Why do people use the flying doctor and not an ordinary doctor?
3. Where is the closest base to Adelaide?
4. Who goes on a flying doctor plane?
5. How many patients can the plane carry?
6. What two jobs does the flying doctor do?
7. What happens at the clinics?
8. What do outback people and the flying doctor use to talk to each other? Why do they use this?
9. How much do the First Aid boxes outstations have costs?
10. Why do the outstations have such good First Aid boxes?
11. Who started the Flying Doctor service?
12. How many patients do the doctors see in one year?