

Read Mark 7.24-37

You may like to use this material as a basis for discussion in your family.

Can you remember what it was like when you first went to school? Or when you went to an event where you knew no-one else? Or when you started a new job? It's really hard to be on your own in situations like these. Can you remember how you felt? Were you shy and quiet, or did you talk too loudly because you were nervous? Who helped you to settle in? Was someone kind to you? What did it feel like to be welcomed?

In today's reading Jesus performs two miracles – healing a woman's daughter who is very ill and healing a man who is deaf. In the Bible there are lots of stories of Jesus healing people. But these two examples are different because both people were "outsiders". The woman who asks Jesus to heal her daughter is a Greek woman – she isn't Jewish. At first Jesus tells her that he has come to help Jewish people not people from other countries. But the woman challenges Jesus, showing that she has great faith in him. So, Jesus welcomes her and helps her. The man who is deaf can't speak properly; he can't ask Jesus for help but his friends speak for him. Jesus welcomes him and helps him.



Last week many people had to leave Afghanistan because of the difficult and dangerous situation there. Some of those people have come to live in Britain. They will be "outsiders" at first. They will feel awkward and nervous. It will take them a long time to get used to a different country, language and way of life.

How can we make them feel welcome, in the way that Jesus made people feel welcome?

Are there other people you know who need to be made welcome with a word of love or an act of kindness? Think of how you can help them.

Activity

- Find out how to say the word "Welcome" in other languages. How many can you find? Can you create a picture or drawing that shows "Welcome" in a way that anybody could understand?
- The families from Afghanistan have left everything behind. In some areas of Britain there are collection points where donations of clothing, toiletries and toys are being gathered together. Find out if there is a collection point near you. Can you donate anything to help these families and make them feel welcome?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for our ears – help us to listen.

Thank you for our minds – help us to think clearly.

Thank you for our voices – help us to say kind words. Amen.