Billy and the Ants: Teacher's Guide v1.0

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At a glance

Billy and the Ants is a projected, click-through story game that lets the class discover why God became man. It turns the Ant Story from slides 13 and 14 into choices the class makes together.

Class	Form 2 Peter, Week 32: Jesus is the Son of God (The Incarnation)
File	Billy_and_the_Ants_v1.1.html, in the Week 32 folder
Time	About 15 minutes with discussion; about 6 minutes if played straight through
You need	A laptop, a projector and a mouse. No internet and no sound
Players	One volunteer at the laptop as Billy; the rest of the class votes

The game shows no questions on screen. Every question for the class is in this guide, marked **Ask**.

Before class

Play the game once on the classroom laptop before the lesson. The timings in this guide are estimates and have not been tested with a class.

- [ ] Copy Billy_and_the_Ants_v1.1.html to the laptop and open it by double-clicking
- [ ] Click **Full screen** at the top right once the projector is connected
- [ ] Check the bottom line of text can be read from the back row
- [ ] Practise the hold-to-shrink button: it must be held down for about four seconds
- [ ] Decide how the class will vote: hands, or moving to a side of the room
- [ ] Have slide 15 ready to return to when the game ends

Where it fits in the slides

Play the game in place of slides 13 and 14, straight after slide 12 asks "What is the plan?".

1. Teach slides 1 to 12 as usual, ending on "God had a special plan to reconcile us with Him".
2. Switch to the game and play it through to the reveal table.
3. Return to slide 15 (100% human and 100% divine), then the Creed on slide 16 and slide 17.

The game's first three wrong choices pick up the question from slide 3: why God did not simply keep sending prophets.

Screen by screen

The game has eight screens and four places to stop and ask the class. The "listen for" lines are suggested answers, not a script.

1. The garden

On screen: Billy watches the ants. Three lines of story appear, one per click; the pest-control van drives in on the second.

Do: Choose a volunteer to be Billy before you start. Read each line aloud, then have the volunteer click Next, and Start after the third line.

2. How will you warn the ants?

On screen: Four choices along the bottom. Choice D is locked until one of the others has been tried.

Do: Take a class vote on A, B or C. The volunteer clicks the winner.

Choice	What Billy does
A	Shouts a warning
B	Tells the biggest ant
C	Claps and stamps to scare them out
D	Becomes one of them (unlocks after one failure)

3. It does not work

On screen: A short clip of the attempt failing, about five seconds, then a Try another way button. The sun sinks lower after each failure.

Ask (after the first failure): God sent prophets and messengers. Why was that not enough?

Listen for: People heard the words but did not truly understand or change. God seemed too far away and too different from us.

Do: Click Try another way. Let the class try a second or third choice if time allows, or go straight to D. You do not need to repeat the question each time.

4. Billy becomes an ant

On screen: Mum's advice, then a Hold to shrink button. The garden grows around Billy as he shrinks, and he reappears as an ant in his red cap.

Do: The volunteer holds the button down without letting go. Stay silent while it runs; the text disappears on purpose. Click Continue when the last line appears.

5. Now they understand you

On screen: Billy calls "Danger! Follow me!" and the ants listen. Spray drifts over the nest. After about six seconds two choices appear.

Do: Take a class vote between A, Get out while you can, and B, Go back in for them.

5b. Safe outside (only if the class chose A)

On screen: Billy is safe and looks back at the nest. After about five seconds one button appears: Go back in for them.

Do: Let the pause run. Then say something like "Billy could stop here. He is safe." before the volunteer clicks.

6. Billy goes back in

On screen: A clip of about 27 seconds with no buttons. Billy walks into the spray, the ants stream out to safety, the colour fades, and his red cap is left on the ground.

Do: Say nothing while it plays. Wait for the What does this mean? button, and ask the question before anyone clicks it.

Ask: He knew what it would cost him. Why did he still go?

Listen for: Because he loved them. Because nobody else could save them.

7. What does this mean?

On screen: A table with five rows. The left column is the story; each right-hand cell says Click to reveal.

Do: For each row, ask the class what it stands for before the volunteer clicks. Once all five are showing, ask the four questions below.

What the story means

The reveal table maps each part of the story to the lesson, and four questions take the class from the story to the Incarnation and the Cross.

In the story	What it stands for
Billy	God the Son
The ants	Us
The spray	Sin and death
Becoming an ant	The Incarnation
Going back in	The Cross

Questions for the class

Ask	Listen for
Why did shouting not work?	Billy was too big and too different for the ants to understand.
What did Billy give up to become an ant?	His size, his safety and his comfort. He chose to be small.
When Billy was an ant, was he still Billy?	Yes. This leads into slide 15.
What did going back in cost Billy? What did the Cross cost Jesus?	Billy's life. Jesus suffered and died for us.

Where the story falls short

No story explains the Incarnation fully, and this one breaks at the third question. Billy stopped being a boy when he became an ant. Jesus did not stop being God when he became man: slide 15 teaches that he is 100% human and 100% divine. Say this plainly so the class does not carry the wrong idea away.

The ending

The game stops at Billy's death. The last screen quotes the Apostles' Creed, "On the third day he rose again from the dead", so the class knows the real story goes on. Slide 16 shows the Creed in full.

Three parts of the game are additions to the story in the slide notes: the choice to scare the ants out, the choice between getting out and going back in, and the red cap left on the ground.

Controls and troubleshooting

Two small buttons sit at the top right of every screen: Restart returns to the first screen, and Full screen fills the projector.

If this happens	Do this
The picture is small with black bars	Click Full screen at the top right

If this happens	Do this
The shrink stops part-way	Hold the button down again; it continues from where it stopped
No button on the screen	Wait. Some screens show their button only after the clip ends, up to 27 seconds
The class wants to try the other ending	Click Restart; there is no back button
The file will not open	Right-click it and choose Open with, then pick Chrome, Edge or Safari