

Luke 1: 1 – 6

'For all ...'

**Introduction ...**

Imagine that an outdoor ice-rink was to be made for Whitchurch – starting next Saturday – for 2 weeks in Jubilee Park – where the football pitch is. The advertising went out ... Facebook, Twitter, the Herald, posters ... the organisers were keen to do everything that they could ... it would open from 11am to 8pm ... and they were keen to stress that everyone was welcome ... **“come well wrapped up and bring your skates.”**

They were dreadfully disappointed when hardly anyone came over the first 3 days. “We said it was for all ... what’s gone wrong??”

If they were to ask you that question ... what would you say? *(time to chat and get ideas)*

**Possibilities:**

- **I don't have any ice-skates**
- **I work from 8pm to 8am**
- **I have trouble walking, never mind skating – you've not said anything about help for someone like me**
- **I've never skated before – I'd be scared to try on my own**
- **I'd have to bring my baby and toddler ... how can that work?**
- **Better publicity**
- **Word of mouth ... sharing of skates**

That – I hope – has helped us to see that – even if the intention is that something is open to everyone – there might be a lot of barriers ... people don't all have the same starting point – they need different help to achieve the same result.

Towards the end of our Gospel reading – we heard that God wants to remove all the barriers for anyone and everyone – for all flesh – to know and experience his love and help – the salvation God offers.

And God wants our help.

Some people might say – well, the church is here – if people want to know more – they know where to come ... But what do you think might stop them? *(again chat among yourselves and get ideas)*

**Possibilities:**

**You're only there on a Sunday and**

- **I work**
- **I have to go and see granny**
- **My club meets**

**I tried once and I had a really bad experience ...**

**I'd need to bring my toddler and baby**

**I'm too shy to come in on my own**

**I don't know what I believe**

**I'm disabled**

- **Deaf**
- **Blind**
- **In a wheel-chair**

**I won't know what to do and people will stare at me**

So let's have some helpful replies – replies that show we've listened and yet also that we still want to spread the Good News about Jesus to them.

**e.g.**

**Knowing what happens that isn't on a Sunday**

**Offering to come with them / sit with them**

**Invite them round for coffee with some other church people so that they get to know us**

**Chat about what might be helpful for those with a disability**

**Talk about the toys for children and Junior Church**

**If you moved here and found a welcome – talk about your own experience**

Replies that are like making the crooked path straight and the rough places smooth ...