35. Human Top Trumps

INTRODUCTION

Look at sets of Top Trump cards [e.g. http://www.toptrumps.com]. Ask the children to identify different categories. For example, with animal Top Trumps there may be scores for speed, strength, weight etc. Ask them to consider an animal with a top score (e.g. a cheetah has the top score for speed) and to say whether they think this means it is the best animal. Why? Why not?

Set them a challenge of making a set of *human being* Top Trump cards. Mention the sorts of questions they might need to make decisions about, such as: What might each card look like? What categories could we have to describe each person? e.g. height? age? weight? … What about if we had a category for what type of person the card describes? e.g. 'qualities' score – whether the person was kind or angry or patient or selfish or thoughtful… What might these be?

ACTIVITY

Ask the children to make a list of the types of 'qualities' that could be included for a set of 'Human Top Trumps'.

Ask them for their ideas on such questions as:

- If we allocated points to each of these qualities to make our cards what score would you give to each 'quality'?
- Which would have the highest/lowest score? Why?

Before they make the cards and allocate points tell the story of Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount (the 'Beatitudes' – Luke 6:17-23 and Matthew 5:1-11), reading from the NRSV or NIVUK or using a version for children (available online).

Point out the qualities of people that Jesus said would be rewarded when the world was a better place: those with spiritual needs, those who are sad, the humble, the peacemakers and so on. In Luke's version, the poor will come first in the kingdom, the hungry will be satisfied, those who are sad will laugh and those who have been excluded and insulted because they follow Jesus will leap for joy.

Ask the children what they think of these 'qualities': are some of them surprising? Why do they think Jesus said these people would be blessed / happy in what he called 'the kingdom of heaven'? Was Jesus talking about what a kinder society would look like, or only

what could happen in 'heaven'?

Provide the children with materials and ask them to get together in small teams to make a set of Human Top Trump cards. Encourage them to:

- Select a range of 'qualities' to include in your set of cards;
- Work out which score your team will give to each 'quality' (add other categories as appropriate e.g. height).

Then play the game.

CONCLUSIONS

Ask the children for their reflections on such questions as:

- How did it feel when one quality 'beat' another? Was this ok?
- Is it OK to describe some qualities as better than others and worth more (points)? Is it always so?
- In everyday life do we think / consider people are 'better' if they show certain of these qualities?