

12th June

Memory verse

I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.
John 11:25

Something to read

The return of the *Nimrod*¹

A grubby, slow, Scottish sealer² which had been to the Antarctic and back finally arrived in Britain again on 12th June 1909. She was the *Nimrod* and she had carried a crew of intrepid explorers led by Lieutenant Ernest Shackleton and their supplies via New Zealand to the “Great White South”.³ She had stood by while they battled to reach the South Pole and carried them home again – only partially successful in the attempt we read about in the lesson for 16th January.

Lieutenant Shackleton had already been to the Antarctic on an expedition with Captain Scott in 1901 in an attempt to reach the South Pole. On that expedition they had surveyed the continent using a balloon. Shackleton had become very ill with scurvy.⁴ The polar attempt had been abandoned but he had learned much from his experiences.

The *Nimrod* expedition was Shackleton's own attempt to reach the pole. Exploring the Antarctic is an expensive business and Shackleton had had difficulty raising enough money. The *Nimrod* was a strong ship but she was already forty years old when she set off for Antarctica – a newer ship would have been too expensive. She was also very small for the long journey and could not carry all the coal she needed. From New Zealand to the Antarctic coast she was towed by a steamer to conserve fuel and she was so loaded with supplies that her Plimsoll⁵ line was nearly two feet below water.

The expedition made a base on the coast of Ross Island and Shackleton began his second journey towards the South Pole. This time he was equipped with hardy ponies from Manchuria⁶ and a motor vehicle instead of the dogs he and Scott had tried to use on the previous expedition. The motor vehicle was quite useless – remember this was only 1908 – and the poor ponies found the going impossible. The ponies also suffered from snow blindness, a temporary condition where the cornea of the eye becomes sunburned due to the intensity of light in a white snowy landscape. The team of men struggled on towards their goal, pulling their supplies on sledges themselves. They had almost reached the magnetic South Pole, which is not quite the same as the Geographic South Pole and is constantly shifting due to changes in the earth's magnetic field⁷ but



1 Adapted from Owen, Evan, *What Happened Today* Volume 2 Available on the *Mothers' Companion* Flashdrive. <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com>

2 A ship designed for use in catching seals.

3 Herbert Ponting who accompanied Scott on the more famous later expedition used this evocative description of the Antarctic as the title of his book of his experiences.

4 Disease caused by lack of vitamin C.

5 You may remember Samuel Plimsoll from the lesson for 10th February. If not you can look at that lesson to find out what a Plimsoll line is.

6 These animals are used to cold weather. Ella Maillart (see June 4th lesson) rode one on her travels in China.

7 At the moment the Magnetic South Pole is about 1780 miles from the Geographic South Pole. See the lesson for 16th January for information on Shackleton's attempt to reach the magnetic South Pole.

were still 97 miles from the Geographic Pole when they were forced to turn back. Food supplies were running low and there were fierce blizzards.

In spite of the disappointment the expedition was not a failure. Every member of the expedition returned home safely despite some harrowing experiences and narrow escapes. In fact, Shackleton was to go to make a name for himself as the leader who “never lost a man” in his future adventures. Valuable scientific work had been done and experience had been gained which was to be of immense help in planning future expeditions.

On his return home Shackleton found himself quite a hero. When he reached Charing Cross station in London it was full of people eager to greet him including the president of the Royal Geographic Society and Captain Scott! Later the king granted him a knighthood. Norwegian Roald Amundsen who was later to be the first to reach the South Pole said afterwards: “Sir Ernest Shackleton's name will always be written in the annals of Antarctic exploration in letters of fire.”

An experiment to do

Have you ever wondered why snow is white? After all snow is made of ice and ice is not white but transparent. Here is something to think about: what colour is water? If we froth water up into foam by adding a tiny bit of detergent what colour does the foam appear? Try it and see.

If we mix up water and air we get white foam! If you have a pestle and mortar you can pound up some ice – if you are quick! You will see that you get white ice powder because air can mix with the tiny pieces of ice. If you were to pound up some glass (not recommended!) you would find that has a white appearance also.

Light is scattered and bounces off ice crystals in snow, bubbles in foam or pounded ice or glass. The reflected light includes *all* the colours, which, together, look white.⁸

Make a paper snowflake

Snow does not consist of pounded ice. When ice crystals grow *naturally* they form beautiful six sided shapes. People say that every snowflake is different. It is true that as each ice crystal falls it has a unique path to the ground. The snowflakes float through different clouds of different temperatures and different levels of moisture, which means the ice crystals will grow in a unique way. However, to prove that there have never been two identical snowflakes would be difficult!

To make a realistic cut out snow flake you need to fold your paper so that you end up with a six sided shape. You can do this with an ordinary square of paper or you can cut out a snowflake from a folded circular coffee filter if you have one. Folding a piece of paper into four or eight etc. is easy: to make a six folded shape is tricky. Follow the instructions in the optional resources file.



⁸ For more information and some beautiful pictures see <https://thejohn1010project.com/jewels-of-winter.html>

Make a board game

Race to the South Pole

There is an outline map of Antarctica with a grid for you to enlarge in the optional resources files for today. Draw it out on a big piece of paper; the back of some old wall paper is good. You can use this map to make a roll-the-dice race game using the instructions below.



Use the map above to add some details to your large one. Now plan the next step carefully. You need to make a winding path from the edge of your map to the South Pole. The path must be long enough to contain about 100 squares which need to be wide enough for you to write instructions on them. If you wish you can make your path spiral round from the edge to the Pole – although no explorer would go that way in real life! Make sure your squares are a good size for instructions and number them all from 1 to 100.

Now for the instructions squares. You need some with positive instructions (move forward one extra square, double your score, throw again etc.) and some negative instructions (go back one square, miss a go etc.) You need to think of *good reasons* to write on the squares to go with the instructions e.g. on a square which is in the sea you could have “Pack ice. Miss a go”. Once on land you can have “Wind drops. Double your score” or “Run out of food. Go back to depot at square 5”. To

make the game interesting you need at least 10 of these squares; half positive and half negative. You could colour the background of the instruction squares red for negative and green for positive instructions. Think carefully about the positioning of your instructions. A game that ends before everyone has even had a second turn because somebody lands on square 3 which says “Helicopter arrives. Go to South Pole,” would not be much fun!

When you are happy with your game board you can make it stronger by sticking it all on some cardboard. The brown corrugated kind that deliveries come in would be ideal.

Now you can play your game. You can use counters or pebbles or different coloured pieces of Lego as your markers. Take it in turn to throw the dice and move your marker the correct number of squares, obeying any instructions you land on. If you find when the first game is *over*, that it needs modifying in some way this can always be done by writing new instructions on small pieces of paper and gluing them on top of the old ones. Don't do this in the middle of a game though as it might not be very fair!

[Find out more](#)

Did you know that under the Antarctic ice lie remains from the flood we read about in Genesis? If you have some good Christian reference books you may be able to read more about this.⁹



⁹ Or read the intriguing story here: <https://answersingenesis.org/dinosaurs/types/antarctica-dinosaurs-on-ice>