



The
United
Reformed
Church

families on faith adventures

@ home

Welcome to Families on Faith Adventures @ Home!

This resource has been put together for you by the United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work team and the synod CYDOs and their equivalents.

We hope you will enjoy sharing a time of faith and fellowship together as a family through these stories, games, activities and prayers. They are designed as a 'pick and mix' of ways to experience God's message through the Bible, exploring what it means to you and express that in words and action. They are not linked to the lectionary but can be used in any order as we explore all the different parts of the Bible.

The Walking the Way challenges are one way of continuing our walk with Jesus throughout the week.

These ideas are designed to be intergenerational - maybe even to be shared with members of the family you can't see now except via the internet.

The resources are based on our non-uniformed children's groups, Friends on Faith Adventures and Pilots, but have been modified to make them suitable for all families at home.

*These activities are planned to be used together as a family and under adult supervision. Please be aware of your family's ages and abilities as some activities may need more adult support than others. **Stay safe and have fun!***

This week's Bible story is:

Promises of Hope

Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:2-3 & 6, Micah 5:12 & 4-5



With many varieties of activities and things to do to help explore the theme. Look out for this 'hands on' symbol.



and



Illustration by Good New Productions Int. and College Press Publishing via freebibleimages.com

Get to know your Bible

The Bible is like a library made up of 66 books written by many different people over many years.

The Old Testament books were written before Jesus was born. They are the holy stories he would have grown up hearing and reading. There are 39 of these.

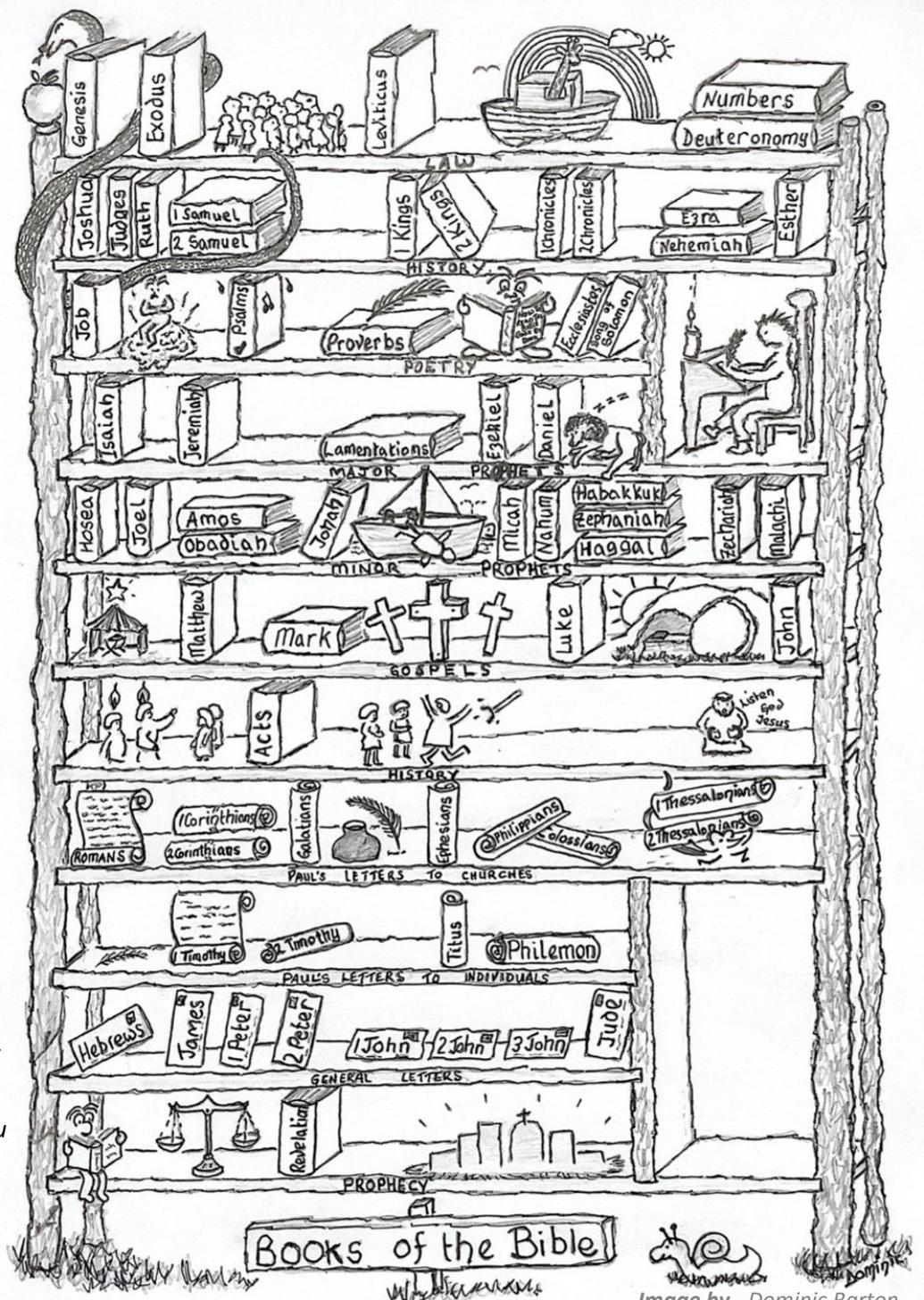
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



Can you find and colour the book on the bookshelf that this week's story is from?

If you have a Bible, see if you can find the story in there.

You could print this out once and colour each new book on the bookshelf as you read stories from it.



Bible context – Prophecy

Many hundreds of years before Jesus was born, God had given the world promises and glimpses of it happening. He used people called prophets, who listen to God's voice and speak into the now about things to come; they often share warnings or promises. Scholars would know these promises and would keep watch for the signs of it coming true. We often light the first candle of Advent on this week. It's called the Hope candle and it tells us of the prophets that spoke God's hope into the darkness.

The Story – The prophets (The International Children's Bible)

Isaiah 9 v 2, 6 – 7

'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; They live in a place that is very dark. But a light will shine on them. A child will be born to us. God will give a son to us. He will be responsible for leading the people. His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace. Power and peace will be in his kingdom.'

John 7 v 14

'the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be pregnant. She will have a son, and she will name him Immanuel (which means God with us).'

Micah 5 v 2

'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are important among the rulers of Judah. A ruler will come from you. He will be like a shepherd for my people, the Israelites.'

Scriptures quoted from the International Children's Bible®, copyright© 1986, 1988, 1999, 2015 by Tommy Nelson. Used by permission.

Online versions of the story

Watch and Listen

Someone is coming by Plungepool Media (suitable for older children)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woRD3aSclK8>

Advent Story 1 by Shift Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPpzVr-1Wso>

Cartoon promise of the Saviour by Saddleback

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEpSXxL4Nn4>

Prophets by Crossroads kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sumaXbjP2Kq>

Waiting for Jesus Reflection by Dublin Diocese

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AySe5pZnwiq>

The advent prophesies by Millmead Baptist

Dance and Sing

Feel in like Christmas by OBB <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2rDPdjLG4I>

Hope by Kids worship https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_t5xitQjlc

Noel by Lauren Daigle <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGq7KdN19rs>

Born is the king by Hillsong worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qf6OoAZbAQg>

A silly song for Fun by Rend for Co <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0MH2uPsrls>

Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

Hope in the Darkness

God has not stopped speaking about his good news in dark times.

But what is God saying now? Take a large piece of paper and explore it together.

Step 1: What are our dark times? Write or draw words, add examples from newspapers. Fill the page with examples of the dark situations at the moment, the situations that look hopeless.

Step 2: What would God's word of good news or light be to us in this darkness? Who are the prophets now? Over the top of the 'dark situations' write or draw hope filled messages. It could be Bible verses, or simple phrases and words. What is God's hope messages to these situations?

Sit back and look at what you have created. Thank God that he is not silent, God speaks hope into our world. How can we be the hope bringers to these situations?



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Play a game - Go Fetch!

A simple run around game with a message. Everyone has to run around the house collecting different items as follows:

Something green, something orange, something old, a dinner plate, something new, something beginning with E, something white, something small.

Now arrange them in the order you collected them and find the hidden message. All the items that when put in the right order spell G-O-O-D-N-E-W-S

Shadow Puppets

Prophesies are a glimpse of what is to come. A little like a shadow is the shape of something but the actual thing.

Have some fun with shadow puppets. Either try simple hand shadow puppets or make some figures to use behind a cloth or screen to tell a story.

A bedtime story to watch together

Snuggle up in bed and watch this lovely retelling of the Littlest Watchman. An Advent Story.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTeJvTCv6H4>

Table Top Discussions

For hundreds of years before Jesus was born, Prophets told that he would come, they even said what signs to look for. So, the Christmas story reminds us that God keeps His promises. But what other promises are there in the Bible? Take some time to get the Bible out at the meal table and spend the week finding as many different promises from God. Some Bibles have a list in the cover of Bibles promises? Or here are a few to look up:

e.g.

I will be with you always

Your name is written on my hands

I am your God; you are my children

I will never leave you

Ask me and I shall give it to you

Matthew 28 v 20

Isaiah 49 v 16

Isaiah 43 v 1

Joshua 1 v 9

Matthew 7 v 7

What's in the box?



What treasures can you find to put in the box for your little ones to explore?

Perhaps older children could help find the things.



Use a box or a bag to hold the treasures and encourage any little ones to explore what's in the box/bag each week to go with the Bible story.

This week's Bible story is:

Promises of Hope

Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:2-3 & 6, Micah 5:12 & 4-5



A blanket or dark cloth

Something
with rainbow
colours for
God's promise



A torch



Writing/drawing materials
and paper

A watch or clock
- unbreakable



Light
toys



An LED
candle

Glow in the
dark stars



**As with all small things,
please be aware of the
risk of these being put
into mouths, eyes, noses
and ears. Please
supervise small children!**

Pray Together



Prayers for Prophets

The first candle on the advent wreath reminds us of the prophets pointing the way to Bethlehem. Telling us to **stop**, to get ready to watch - something incredible is going to happen in Bethlehem.

Light a candle on your advent wreath or light a single candle. This candle is the light of the prophets and a light of Hope. Enjoy the light, look at the candle, watch as it flickers and lights up the room. Sit quietly as you look at the flame and talk to God about your hopes. Ask God to help you share the message of hope.



A prayer to say together

As we light this Advent candle,
may its flame be a symbol of hope;
its warmth be a symbol of God's love for each one of us;
and may it inspire us to speak out
words that challenge, inspire
and draw others to your kingdom.
We pray in the name of Jesus,
who is the Light of the World.
Amen



Alternative

You could make a wreath with your handprints and stick on paper candles for each week of advent.



Pray Together

Road Signs Prayer



Create road signs on card. Lay them out on the table and walk your fingers around them, or on a road mat and drive a car along them. The prophets read the signs of the times and shared them with people as they journeyed through life.



At this time of Advent, in amongst all the business of the season, let us pause and make time to listen to God, just as the prophets did.



The prophets had to be very patient and wait, during this time they faced dangers of cold and floods. Think about the times when things are sometimes tough for you and thank God for being with you through the tough times, even when you forget God!



Many times they walked a bumpy road of grumbles from people. Take this time to say sorry to God for when you get grumbly too.



The prophets listened to God and kept focussed on their job, working hard along the way. Sticking to the right path, God led them his way. Ask God to give you sticking power to keep on doing good work and walking the way that Jesus showed us.



The prophets brought hope for everyone! Take some time to think of the people you'd like to pray for today. Ask God to bless and help them.



In the business of all we do, the many twists, turns and distractions in our lives, help us to make room to stop, pause and be thankful that the prophets did all God asked of them. Thank God for their message of hope, arriving safely in this world in the form of a very special baby, God's only child – Jesus.



Dear God - even when things are tricky and tough, help us to be more like the prophets filled with hope and willing to follow your way. Amen

Pray Together

Magnifying Glass Prayer



Have you got a magnifying glass?



If not, maybe you could make one out of cardboard and some clear plastic – it doesn't need to be effective, it just needs to remind us that we're looking closely. Or maybe you are lucky enough to have a microscope, or a camera with a zoom lens. Even a magnifying mirror will let you look at things more closely.

God calls us sometimes to see the hidden things, the tiny things, the things that others overlook.



Spend some time looking carefully at the world around you and thank God for the little things, the tiny hints of God's presence. Remember that God's love was brought closer and more visible when Jesus came to live among us, and the Bible writers shared his story.

Have you got some binoculars or a telescope?



Maybe you could make some out of cardboard tubes fastened together.

The prophets looked at the world they lived in but also looked forward at things to come. Their message of hope and joy was not just for their time but for our time too and even into the future. Think and talk together about the times ahead and your hopes and dreams for the future. Remember that everything is safe in God's hands.

Everybody has a window. Close the curtains tight or shut the blind..... and then open them up and gaze out at the world you live in. God's prophets were called to see the big picture – God's big picture – the picture you are part of too. You are part of God's big picture – God's picture of hope and joy, love and peace.

I wonder how you think the prophets knew what to write so long before Jesus was born?

I wonder what this prophet might be going to write on his scroll?

I wonder what God might be telling you?



I wonder whether you would have found it difficult to believe what the prophets said before it actually happened?

I wonder who in modern society might be described as a prophet?



TO DO TOGETHER...

Triptych



You will need:

Cardboard box

Cellophane from sweet wrappers or tissue

Image template

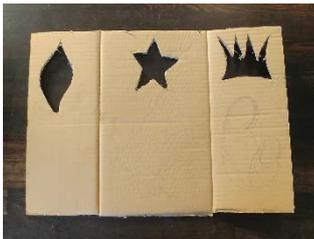
What you do:

Cut a section of a box which will give you a three-sided piece.

Cut out a flame and star and a crown, one on each side.

Draw a candle shape below the flame, a scroll shape below the star and an image of Mary and a baby below the crown. These do not need to be exact, more rough images, to reflect the fact that a prophesy is looking to something which is to come, so will not be a clear picture.

Cover the back of the cut-out pieces with either cellophane from sweets or tissue paper to create a stained-glass effect.





TO DO TOGETHER...

Scroll

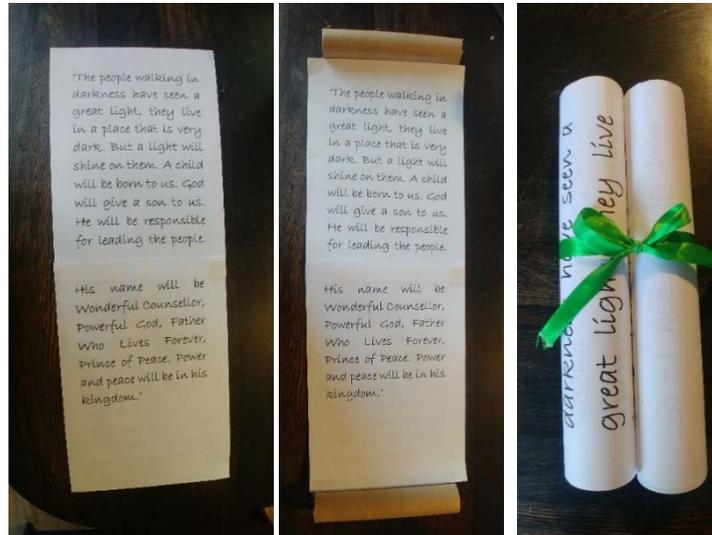
You will need: Two Kitchen roll cores or foil core (this will need to be cut in half)
A4 paper
A piece of ribbon

What you do:

Write on the paper or use stamps to create a scroll: you can use these verses:

Isaiah 9 v 2, 6 – 7

'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light, they live in a place that is very dark. But a light will shine on them. A child will be born to us. God will give a son to us. He will be responsible for leading the people. His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace. Power and peace will be in his kingdom.'



Attach the ends of the paper firmly to the kitchen paper/foil cores.
Roll it up and tie it with some ribbon.

You could use cold damp teabags to give the paper an ancient effect
Keep the scroll to remind you of God's promise.



TO DO TOGETHER...

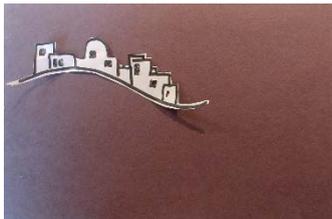
Chalk Pictures

You will need: Chalk
Black paper or card

What you do:

On the black paper or card, create a series of images in chalk which remind us of the prophesy of Jesus' birth (e.g. an image of Bethlehem; the baby in the stable; a candle image.)

Once they have been created, gently rub them to make them fade.



Alternative:

Place a template on the black paper and chalk around it to create a silhouette.



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Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

**Our Walking the Way Challenge
this time is...**

At Home:

See whether you can say your prayers this week by candlelight in a darkened room. Think about the difference that the light makes. Listen to what God might be saying to you.

Outside:

This is a perfect excuse to wrap up warm, go outside after dark, and look up at the stars in the sky. It's amazing to think that they are shining their lights long ago in the past – it takes years for that light to reach us. And the light we see is just the reflection of the sun's light. Think about how God's light might be reflected into the dark corners of our world today. God wants us to have hope for the future and joy in the dark times.

For Others:

Invite a friend to watch the Families on Faith Adventures Christingle on our YouTube channel at the same time as you do on Christmas Eve – maybe even give them a candle and some cocktail sticks to use to make their Christingle with you and arrange to do a video link together while you watch.



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Adventurers Go!

You've shared together, now share with us!

Why not send photos of your crafts, your treasure boxes, your Walking the Way challenges - or dress up to make a tableau of the Big Story and take a photo to send in.

Email your photos to: lorraine.webb@urc.org.uk
with parental permission for them to be used in publicity and online URC social media.

Alternatively, share them on our Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/URCchildren.and.youth/>

Remember you can find more resources on our website:
<https://urc.org.uk/resources-for-children-and-youth>

And if you've enjoyed these activities, why not see whether your local church runs Pilots or Friends on Faith Adventures (FOFA) when things get back to normal again.

Created for you by Nicola Grieves (Eastern Synod), Judy Harris (National Synod of Wales), Hannah Middleton (Northern Synod), Philip Ray (Wessex Synod, North), Lorraine Webb (Programme Officer for CYW), and Ruth White (Wessex Synod, South) on behalf of the CYDO+ and Children's and Youth Work team and Pilots.

