



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 family or friends 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:

Come and See with the Angels

Luke 1 verses 26-38



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

From



and





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.

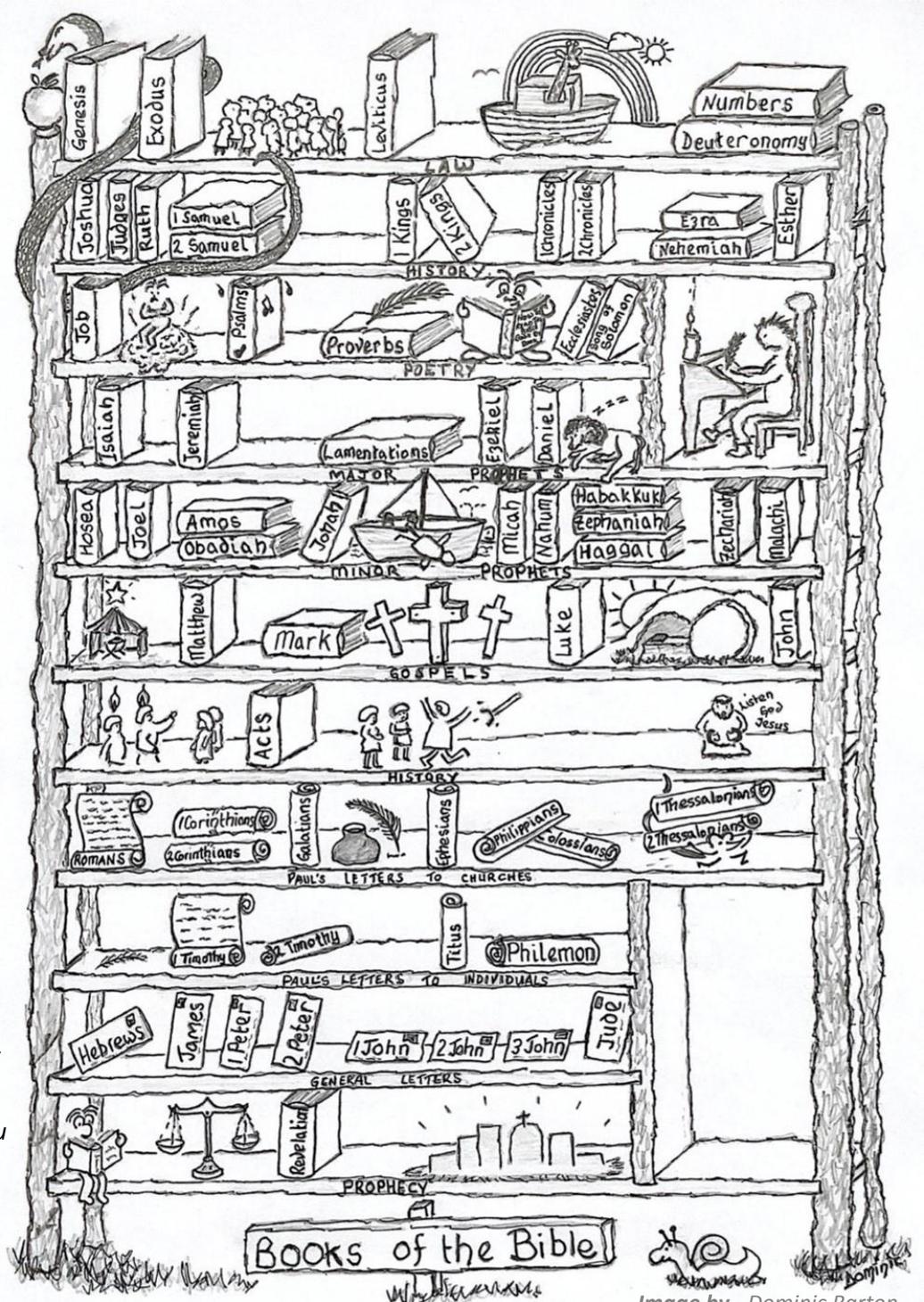
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



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 – Luke

The book of Luke was written by Luke the disciple around 60 AD. Luke was a Gentile and a doctor and he writes his book for all people. He wants to show that Jesus was God's son, who came to the world for everyone, Jew, Gentile, rich, poor, an extraordinary Saviour for the ordinary everyday people. This is why his books tells the stories of everyday people and their part in the Christmas story, such as the shepherds on the hillside and today's story of a young girl called Mary who is going to get a big surprise.

Online versions of the story

Watch and Listen

An unexpected Christmas by St Pauls Auckland (**Well worth a watch**)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TM1XusYVqNY>

He's Here! From the Jesus Storybook Bible read by David Suchet

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2y2FJqsv_8&list=PLvEb8AA7B8J_c3BTNBukBzaA71YyfiJTZ

An Angel visits Mary by Animation bible story for kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GT6V3PDS3s8>

Animation and images by bible world

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alb8szs0mzA&t=6s>

Dance and Sing

No ordinary Baby by Doug Horley

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zPU582wUHU>

I'm an Angel – ooh! By Maynards Groovy Bible tunes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zm_9YSTJwIM

Angel Gabriel's song by John Hardwicks puppets

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_FjANM_k10

An Angel came from heaven Toddler sing along

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4B1I3QK7-4>

Singing with the angels by Vineyard Music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6fUpINc-SI>





The Story – Luke 1 verses 26 - 38 (The International Children's Bible)

During Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Greetings! The Lord has blessed you and is with you."

But Mary was very confused by what the angel said. Mary wondered, "What does this mean?"

The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, because God is pleased with you. Listen! You will become pregnant. You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and people will call him the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of King David, his ancestor. He will rule over the people of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end."

Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen? I am a virgin!"

The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you. The baby will be holy. He will be called the Son of God. Now listen! Elizabeth, your relative, is very old. But she is also pregnant with a son. Everyone thought she could not have a baby, but she has been pregnant for six months. God can do everything!"

Mary said, "I am the servant girl of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!" Then the angel went away.

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

Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story



A New Story to Share Together

There was a lot of buzz and excitement in heaven. The time had come and it was going to start any minute now.

Everyone was involved, everybody had a part to play, all except one that is.

One little angel was feeling sad because they hadn't been given anything to do for the big reveal. Everybody had a job, but them.

You see, God had had a plan, a very special plan, for thousands of years and after much planning and waiting the plan was out to be put into action.



The
United
Reformed
Church

families
on faith adventures

at home



Heaven was getting ready to send Jesus, God's Son, down to earth in human form. Jesus would be born not in a palace but in a stable, not lying in a golden crib but in a food trough, not born a prince but born to a young woman called Mary and her husband Joseph, a humble carpenter. This was God keeping a promise from many hundreds of years, to send God's son to save the whole world. And it was starting NOW!

The littlest angel was stood watching everybody rushing around heaven; some were polishing trumpets, the choir were rehearsing their songs, Gabriel was rehearsing his declarations and Jesus was preparing to leave.

It should have been an exciting and happy day, but the littlest angel felt sad. They wanted to be involved, they wanted to have a part to play. But they had been told they were too small for the choir. In fact, when they had seen God to complain and ask for something to do, God had simply said "Stand over there where you won't be in the way, and hold this." So the littlest angel had spent the whole day stood out of the way, holding a stick. They decided that this was what always happens to the littlest angels, they get given things to hold and told to stay out of the way.

Still they stood, holding the stick. Sometimes they were asked to move to the other side or just step backwards a little, but nothing else. The littlest angel really wanted to be part of the most amazing event to take place since creation.

Still they stood, watching the Angel Gabriel as the hosts of angels waved him off. He would be first to give the message to Mary and Joseph. Then, all at once, heaven seemed empty as the whole host of angels swept out and down to a hillside in Bethlehem.

Still they stood. Only now they were alone. "Ah, there you are!" said God. The little Angel stood straight, still holding the stick but looking very sad. "What's wrong?" God asked. "You look sad but today is a day to be happy and celebrate."

"I just feel left out," answered the little angel, "I just wanted to be part of it all and go with the others, but instead you made me stand here, out of the way and hold this stick."

"Look up," said God. "Look up and see your stick."

The little angel looked up and saw, right there on the very tip of their stick, a bright and glowing light. What could it be?

God came close and whispered, "That is the star! I didn't tell you to hold a stick and stand out of the way. You have been holding the star, a new star. You have held it high for the whole world to see. And they have seen it, little angel. Your star, the star that you have been holding, has been seen by important people. They know it was my signal that Jesus has been born. Without you standing over there and holding it, no one would have known that Jesus has come."

The little angel felt a smile come across their face, they stood taller and held the stick higher than ever. "I didn't realise" said the littlest angel, "I thought I was too little to be involved."

God answered, "You have done everything I asked you to do. You stood over there, you held high the stick with the star on, and now you will lead those who have seen it. You will take them across deserts and lands to the place where they will find my son."

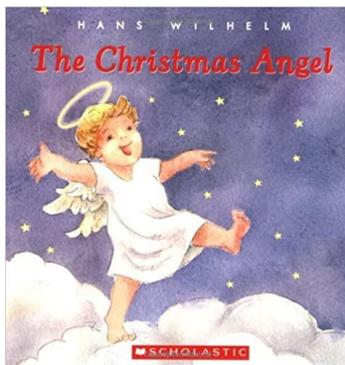
The little angel couldn't contain the happiness and pride that filled their heart.

"Now go, little angel, keep going. Find my son and hold your stick high so others will find him too."

Family Challenge: Sharing the Good News

As you decorate your home for Christmas, consider how you can do it so that it doesn't just remain in your home but shines out messages to those who pass by. Perhaps you could use more of the decorations and lights in the windows. How can you share the messages of love, light and hope with others using your decorations?

Story to share together this Christmas



The Christmas Angel by Hans Wilhelm

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Up6WuhVPL7o>

A little angel is told that they cannot go to sing at Jesus' birth. The angel is too young and their wings are too small. Will the angel miss out? How can the angel see Jesus and sing him a song?

Table Top Discussions

Each day over a mealtime, have a quick conversation. Here are a few questions to get you going.

- *In the story, we see how God is using angels to send messages to people. I wonder what messages God sends today and how?*
- *Do you think you have ever encountered an angel? Or received a message from God? Share your stories with each other.*
- *The Bible tells us that some people will meet angels without ever realising. I wonder who the everyday angels are?*
- *I wonder if you have felt God asking you to do something, that you found hard to do?*
- *How can we be messengers of God's love this Christmas?*



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.



Something with
rainbow colours
for God's promise



Something shiny



Feathers or something
soft and fluffy to relate
to angels' wings



An angel ornament or a
doll dressed as an angel

A baby doll or a Jesus
from a nativity set



A trumpet or party
blower – something to
make a joyful noise





Pray Together



Reflecting God's light



You will need a small mirror.

Hold the mirror in your hand and see how you can catch sunshine or electric light and reflect it into places that are dark. See how far you can make the reflection go. We can be like the mirror and reflect Christ's light into the world. Just as the angels filled the sky with amazing light, ask God to help you be a light to reflect a message of hope and peace to the people you meet.

Here are some ideas for reflecting Christ's light:

Loving and praying for people

Sharing Jesus with our friends and family

Helping other people

Caring for God's Creation

Dear God
Thank you for the angels,
Filling the sky with dazzling glory, singing praises.
Thank you for the messenger angels sharing the good news.
Help us to share your good news with others
and to reflect your light
to the people we meet.
Amen

A host of Angels

You will need: Angel shapes cut out of paper
Glue
String



Using your cut out angels, write on the names of all the people you want to pray for or thank God for this Christmas. Stick the angels on a string, fastening two back-to-back with the string in the middle and make a hanger for your window. Use it as a decoration. It will be a reminder of your prayers each time you see it and also a sign to others of the angels in the Christmas story.



Pray Together



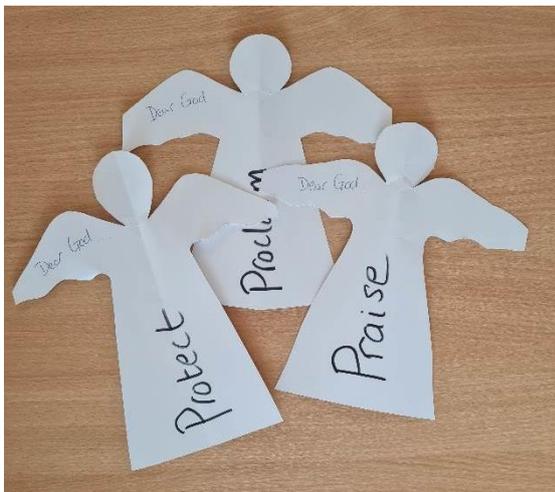
Angel Prayers

The angels in the Christmas story had different jobs to do and, in the Bible, we can find lots of stories about angels with different tasks too. Some were sent to sing God's praises, playing trumpets and lyres and harps; some proclaimed messages from God; some protected others like the angel that told Joseph to travel a different way home after Jesus was born.

Write out the words on angel shaped cards

- Praise
- Protect
- Proclaim (telling others the good news)

Place the angels on the table or floor and think about each word. Get everyone to write on the words, people and places that are in need of God's protection, situations that you want to give thanks for and people who you would like to know the good news of Jesus.



Seeing Angels, Being Angels

God, who sends angels into the world as messengers carrying your love,
give us eyes to see their presence in the times when we are frightened.
Give us ears to hear their message in the times when we are sad.
Give us hearts to spread their glory in the times when we can wait on others, in your name.
Amen.

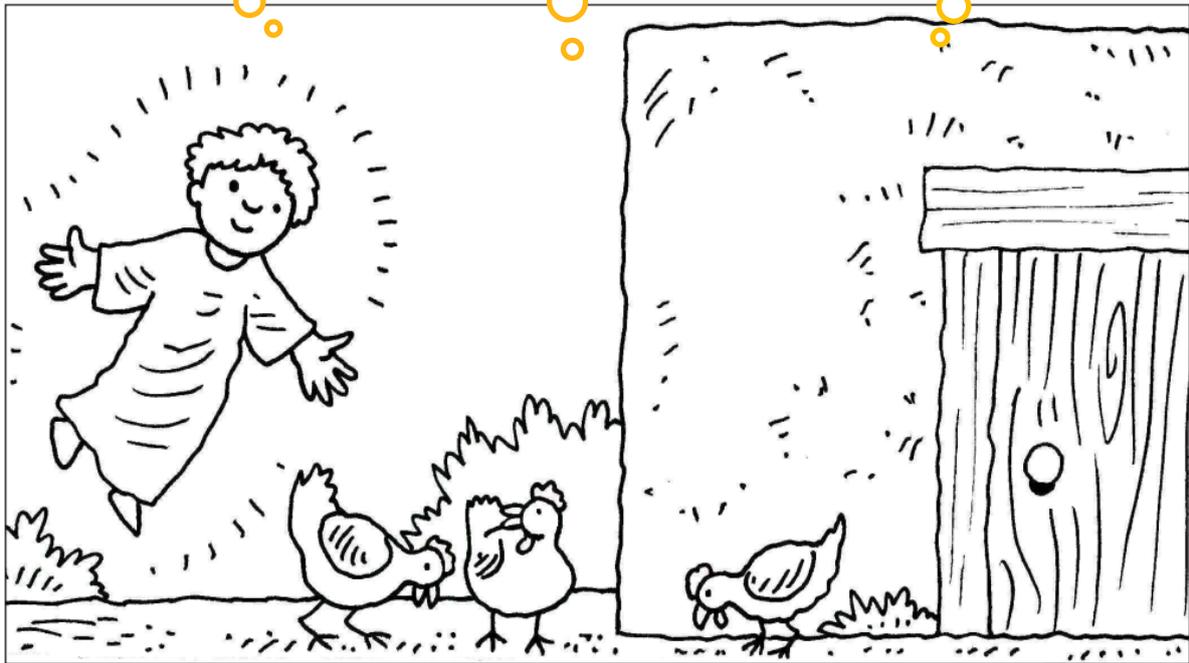
From Roots for Churches



I wonder whether
we ever see
angels today?

I wonder if the angels
were excited about the
news they were
bringing?

I wonder how Mary
and Joseph felt after
the angels had
visited?



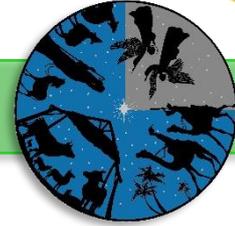
I wonder what you would
do and say and how you
would feel if an angel
suddenly appeared and
started talking to you?

I wonder how you
would recognise an
angel?





To Do Together...



Angel Messengers

You will need: White card
Toilet roll or kitchen roll
String

What you do:

Cut out an angel shape in card and decorate it.

Using double sided Sellotape or glue, attach a toilet roll to the angel shape.

Create a message to share and insert it into the tube.

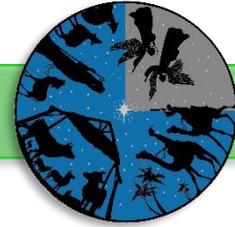
Then thread two long pieces of string into the tube. Now you are ready to pass the message to your partner, each of you holding one end of the two strings. Separating the two strings will send the angel up or across to your partner. They can then send it back to you by separating the string as you bring your strings together again.



Think of the angels at Christmas who shared messages with lots of different people. I wonder if you can think of all the messages they shared and who with.



To Do Together...



Candy Cane Angels

You will need: Candy canes
Angel cookie cutter
Cocktail stick



What you do:

Preheat the oven to 220° Gas mark 6.

Spray the inside of each of the cookie cutters with cooking spray or grease them well.

Place the cookie cutters on a baking tray lined with parchment paper.

Chop up some candy cane and arrange the peppermint candies in a single layer inside each cookie cutter. If you have empty gaps, cut some more into pieces to fill them in. Do not layer the candy cane pieces or it will be too thick.

Place the baking tray in the oven for 6 to 9 minutes.

Keep an eye on it near the end and remove it as soon as the candy cane melts enough to close all the gaps. Don't let it bubble.

Remove it from the oven and let it sit for 2 minutes. Then dip a wooden cocktail stick in cooking oil and push it into the candy to make the hole for the ribbon.

Let it sit for 15 minutes, then gently pull the cookie cutters away from the edge of the shape and push out the angel shape out. Don't wait until they are completely cold or they might crack when you remove them from the cookie cutter.



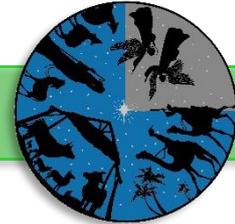
Add a long piece of ribbon through the hole, tie it up and hang it on the tree!

You could use different kinds of hard boiled sweets to create different colour angels. I wonder what messages the different angels share with us?





To Do Together...



Unexpected Angels

You will need: Some old books or catalogues
Drink cans
String
Or just some bits of junk



What you do:

Create some angels out of junk. Use your imagination and see what you can do.

Here are some ideas:

- fold an old book or catalogue into a beautiful angel,
- squeeze a drinks can and decorate it to make a choir of angels with their mouths open wide to sing;
- wind some string or ribbons around your fingers to make angel decorations.
- Or maybe you can come up with a different idea.



The Bible tells me that we sometimes might meet unexpected angels – angels in our everyday lives that we just don't recognise. I wonder where we can see unexpected angels around us this Advent.

The Tin Can Angels

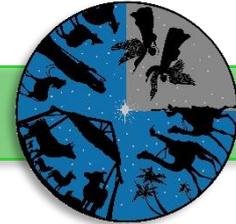


The String and Ribbon Angels





To Do Together...



Catalogue Angels

You will need: An old catalogue about 150 pages long, alternatively you can use an old book (just make sure it is a glued spine not sewn)

What you do:

Remove the cover from the catalogue and, if necessary, enough pages to leave approximately 150 pages for the angel.



Take just the first page and fold the top right corner down onto the spine of the catalogue as shown to the left.

Now fold the same sheet again in the same direction so that the outer edge of the sheet lines up with the spine of the catalogue as shown.



Turn the bottom of the page (that sticks out below the book) up inside the folds of the page.

Now the bottom of the folded page should line up perfectly with the bottom of the catalogue.

Now simply repeat for 20 pages.



Form the Wings

For the next page fold the bottom right corner up to the centre of the catalogue as shown.

Fold the same sheet again so that it lines up with the spine of the catalogue (as you did for the first 20 folds). Do not tuck the top in, this forms the top of your wings. Repeat until you have folded 5 pages like this. You have now formed one angel wing.

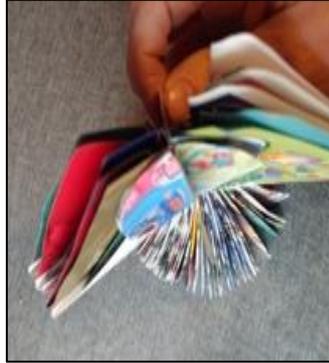


Go back to the folds that you were doing at the start of the catalogue and continue doing those until there are only 25 pages remaining. Now fold 5 pages as angel wings as you did before. Complete the angel by folding the last 20 pages like the first ones.



Form the head

Cut 8 circles out of old junk mail, fold the circles in half and glue them together to create a sphere. Slot the head between the wings and glue in place.





The
United
Reformed
Church

families
on faith adventures

at home



Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

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

At Home:

Be a guardian angel for another member of your family this week. Help them, encourage them, watch over them, pray for them and take care of them.

Outside:

It's the beginning of the time called Advent when we are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the gift of light in the darkness. Go out for a walk after dark and see whether anyone has put any Christmas lights up yet. And look up into the sky and see whether you can see any stars or the moon lighting up the dark winter sky. Remember that Jesus is the light of the world who was promised many many years before he was born.



For Others:

Find a window in your home which is often left in darkness when you're not in that room. Put a light in the window so that it can shine outside – maybe a lamp or a torch or an LED candle (DO NOT use a real candle as it is not safe to leave these burning unattended!) You could even make a stained glass window picture of the angels and put it on the window so the light can shine through.



The
United
Reformed
Church

**families
on faith adventures**

at home



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.

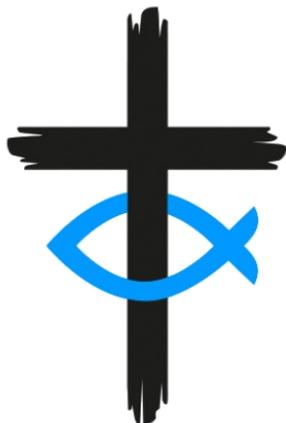
*Email your photos to: lorraine.webb@urc.org.uk
with parental permission for them to be used in publicity and online URC social media.*

*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.



The
**United
Reformed
Church**

