

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!**



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

This week's Bible story is:

Shhh.... We're Christians

Daniel 1



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.

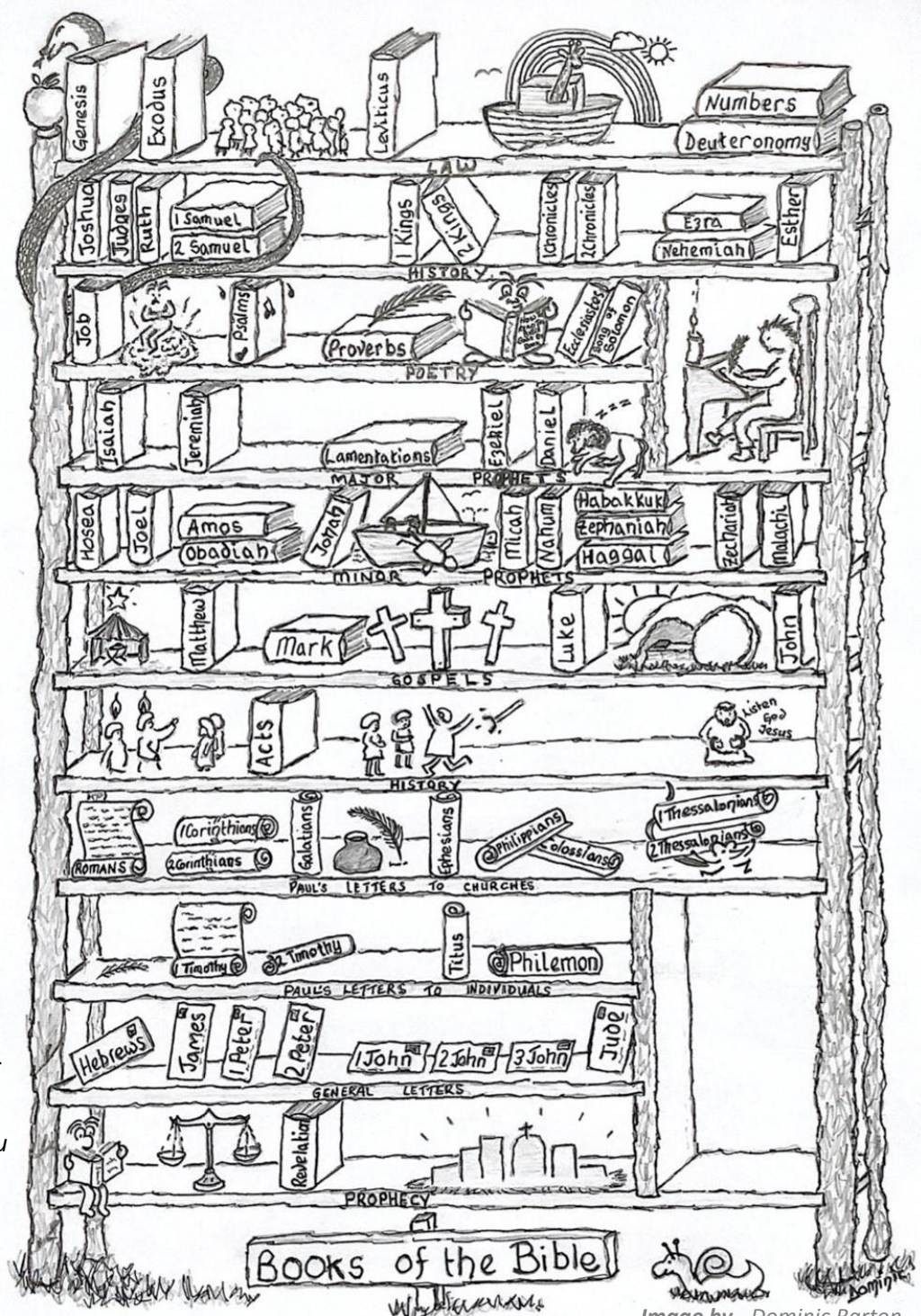
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



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: Daniel

The book of Daniel was written by the prophet Daniel around 536 BC. This story is about Daniel and his friends who have been captured and taken to Babylon to work for the King. Babylon has many gods and Daniel and his friends worship one God. They have to make decisions about how to stay true to their God whilst living in this strange land and also keeping themselves safe.

As we enter the third week of Lent, let's take some time to celebrate our freedom to be a Christian and think and pray for those in the world who are not as free.

Online versions of the story

Watch and Listen

Read along story by Kids on the Move <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOaYkGnmfA>
Daniel's Story by Crossroads Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYOpARvYcyw>
Daniel and his friends obeyed God <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ve5z5hMs4c0>
The Captives Cartoon by SharefaithKids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9E8RQO8Eeo>
Persecuted Teens, Images and quotes from children living in persecuted churches
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqIHA4kW9EA>

Dance and Sing

Stand Together by New Wine Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5d5Wq2x8Q-8>
Stand Strong by Lifetree Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6JeiPXIWa4>
My God is so Big by Lifetree <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDCTNhYqEko>
Put God First by Allstars Kids Club <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2Oe6R6AFeQ>
Beauty for Brokenness by Graham Kendrick <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MO1G-o7Yj-c>

The Story: Daniel 1 (from The International Children's Bible)

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and surrounded it with his army. This happened during the third year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah. The Lord allowed Nebuchadnezzar to capture Jehoiakim king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the things from the Temple of God. He carried them to Babylonia and put them in the temple of his gods.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar gave an order to Ashpenaz, his chief officer. He told Ashpenaz to bring some of the men from Judah into his house. He wanted them to be from important families. And he wanted those who were from the family of the king of Judah. King Nebuchadnezzar wanted only healthy, young, Israelite men. These men were not to have anything wrong with their bodies. They were to be handsome and well educated. They were to be able to learn and understand things. He wanted those who were able to serve in his palace. Ashpenaz was to teach them the language and writings of the Babylonians. The king gave the young men a certain amount of food and wine every day. That was the same kind of food that the king ate. They were to be trained for three years. Then the young men would become servants of the king of Babylon. Among those young men were some from the people of Judah. These were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaal and Azariah.

Then Ashpenaz, the chief officer, gave them Babylonian names. Daniel's new name was Belteshazzar. Hananiah's was Shadrach. Mishaal's was Meshach. And Azariah's new name was Abednego.

Daniel decided not to eat the king's food and wine because that would make him unclean. So he asked Ashpenaz for permission not to make himself unclean in this way.

God made Ashpenaz want to be kind and merciful to Daniel. But Ashpenaz said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my master, the king. He ordered me to give you this food and drink. If you don't eat this food, you will begin to look worse than other young men your age. The king will see this. And he will cut off my head because of you."

Ashpenaz had ordered a guard to watch Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaal and Azariah. Daniel said to the guard, "Please give us this test for ten days: Don't give us anything but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then after ten days compare us with the other young men who eat the king's food. See for yourself who looks healthier. Then you judge for yourself how you want to treat us, your servants."

So the guard agreed to test them for ten days. After ten days they looked very healthy. They looked better than all of the young men who ate the king's food. So the guard took away the king's special food and wine. He gave Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaal and Azariah vegetables instead.

God gave these four men wisdom and the ability to learn. They learned many kinds of things people had written and studied. Daniel could also understand all kinds of visions and dreams.

The end of the three years came. And Ashpenaz brought all of the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked to them. He found that none of the young men were as good as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. So those four young men became the king's servants. Every time the king asked them about something important, they showed much wisdom and understanding. He found they were ten times better than all the fortune-tellers and magicians in his kingdom. So Daniel continued to be the king's servant until the first year Cyrus was king.

Scripture quotations are taken from the International Children's Bible®, copyright © 1986, 1988, 1999, 2015 by Tommy Nelson. Used by permission.

Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

Persecuted Church

This story gives us the opportunity to think about those who still live in places where they have to hide their faith. Some people are hurt or imprisoned simply for being a Christian. Here are some links to support you exploring this further.

JPIT - The Joint Public Issues Team is a partnership between the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, and the United Reformed Church. The purpose of JPIT is to help the Churches to work together for peace and justice through listening, learning, praying, speaking, and acting on public policy issues.

<https://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/issues/religious-persecution/attacks-on-coptic-orthodox-christians-in-egypt/>

<https://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/review-into-christian-persecution/>

Open Doors is a charity that supports Christians living under persecution.

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/>

The World Watch List is Open Doors' annual ranking of the 50 countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution. Explore the country profiles to find information, stories, and prayers for each of the countries, along with ways that you can stand with your persecuted church family in prayer and action. Or try some of their secret church resources.

Noah's Story by Open Doors <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbQ1--hOPF8>



families on faith adventures

at home

Go Deeper

We have only looked at the beginning of Daniel and his friends' time in Babylon. Much more is going to happen to them, with more decisions needing to be made. Perhaps you could read on over the coming week and explore the story together.

Table Top Discussions

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

- *I wonder what you would have done in their situation? How hard is it to live out your faith and beliefs when they are different to those around you?*
- *Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were healthier after eating vegetables. Are we always better off after a time of trial?*
- *Can you think of other stories in the Bible that tell us about people having to stick to their beliefs in difficult situations e.g. Jesus in the desert?*
- *The four friends had each other as support during their captivity. Who do you depend on for support, and who depends on you?*
- *Have there been times when you have hidden your faith or beliefs?*

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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



Toys to represent the friends

A crown for the king



Different play foods or (preferably) real foods to explore, especially vegetables

Pray Together

Praying in Secret

Jesus often slipped away to other places to be alone so that he could pray. Luke 5:16

Read also Mark 1:35, Matthew 14:23

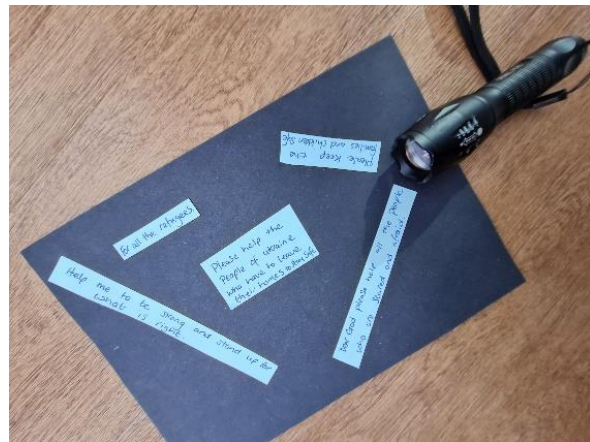
You will need: Strips of Paper
Pens
Torch

What situations in life can feel a little bit dark or scary or worrying?

Have you ever asked God to be with you when you are finding it hard or scary?

Think about people you know who are worried or afraid. Write their names and your prayers on the strips of paper and stick them to a piece of card or stiff paper.

Find somewhere where you can hide yourself away in secret; if possible, somewhere dark. You could make a den using some old sheets or blankets hung over a washing stand or chairs or a large cupboard behind the sofa, under a table or in a small room with the curtains closed. Under the duvet works particularly well.



Take your paper with your prayers and shine a torch on them to highlight them. When you see the paper glow in the dark, ask God to be with them and help them.

Pray Together

Listen and Pray

Make three symbols in the shape of a tear, a heart, and a flame from coloured paper or card.

Listen to the song and hold each of the symbols in turn.

[Beauty for Brokenness \(God of the Poor\) - Graham Kendrick - Worship at Home - YouTube](#)

Sometimes we find words hard when we are trying to pray. This song, and songs like it, help us pray without having to find the words to say. We can listen to the song and God will know the prayers in our hearts.

It might help when thinking about the situation in Ukraine and other areas in the world that need our prayer.



The chorus from *Beauty for Brokenness* by Graham Kendrick goes:

*God of the poor
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame*

Pray Together

Socks and Shoes Prayers

There are many Christians around the world who are not able to read their Bible openly or pray out loud for fear of others hearing them. Write a prayer or a Bible verse onto a thin piece of paper and hide it in your shoe or sock. As you wear your shoe, remember those who must pray and read their Bible in secret and ask God to keep them safe.

Here are some bible verses you could use:



Psalm 16:1 Protect me, God, because I depend on you.

Romans 8:31 If God is for us, no one can stand against us.

Psalm 118:6 The Lord is with me, so I will not be afraid.

Psalm 46:1 God is our protection and source of strength. He is always ready to help us in times of trouble

A prayer

Thank you, God, that we are free to worship you without fear of being in danger.

We pray for those in places where to meet in your name
can mean fear of prison and torture,
and for those in places where people are not allowed
to wear symbols of their religion.

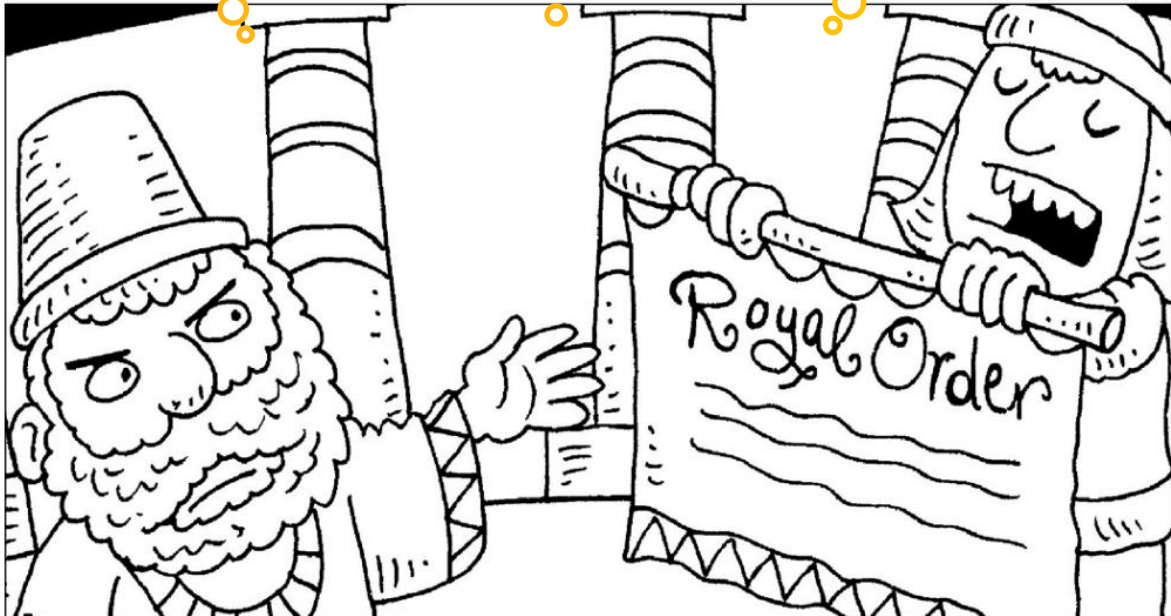
Please God, comfort them,
give them courage to stand up for what they believe in.
May they know your love in all that they have to go through.

Amen

I wonder what happened next in this story?

I wonder whether there are any things you or your family do differently because of what you believe?

I wonder how trusting God changes difficult situations?



I wonder what different feelings the four friends in our story experienced?

I wonder why some governments and leaders feel they need to stop people following God?



To Do Together...



Patchwork

You will need: Various pieces of fabric; coloured card or wrapping paper
Wool or embroidery threads
A large needle
Some card or white fabric



What you do:

Cut out nine squares from different pieces of fabric, card or wrapping paper.

Create a patchwork using the squares and join them by sewing or taping them together.

Cut some rectangles of the materials and sew or tape the rectangles over the matching squares to create a flap.

Under those flaps, place some hidden messages.

As you make this, think about how we sometimes hide the messages about our faith, and how God sometimes places messages for us to find as we stand strong in our faith.





To Do Together...

Melting Hearts

You will need:

A heart shape dish or mould or make one from some plastic packaging

Some flowers or leaves which you have found on the ground

Some string to hang your hearts from



What you do:

Place the flower in the centre of your heart shape and place a piece of string at the top to create a hanger.

Fill it with water, then place it into the freezer and leave to harden.



Tip: if you find it is leaking through, place the heart in a bigger container and then fill the whole container with water. This will mean you have a heart inside another shape and you can then chip off the outer ice to recreate a heart once it is frozen.

Once it is hard, take it out of the mould. You can hang your heart outside and watch as it slowly drips and melts.



Think about the story we have shared. Sometimes it takes a long time to melt the hearts of people who have cold hearts and create hurt and pain through their actions. God stands with us as we challenge injustice and try and keep God's law of love.

If you are doing this activity in groups, you may wish to make the ice hearts in advance of the session.





To Do Together...

Craftivism

You will need: Some craft supplies
(felt, fabric, wool, card, cross stitch, paper,
ribbon, pebble and paint)

What you do:

Craftivism inspires peaceful protest through creation, rather than negativity and violence.

“In a gentle way you can shake the world.”

Think about an issue you want to protest about and create something which you can display which shows your stand against the issue.

There are lots of ideas online which you can do. But maybe you can think of something to make about your own campaign.



Show the love

Create a green heart, this is Craftivism about the environment.



Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

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

Everyday Faith:

In this country we are able to practise our faith without having to hide it away and be frightened of being found out. Even so, we often keep it to ourselves a bit. This week, why not make a show of your faith? Carry your Bible around or keep it in a more noticeable place in your house, wear a cross or other Christian symbol, pray openly (say grace before your meals even if you're in a café or the school dining room, for example), talk about Jesus in your general conversation. It's not about making a show of it or being attention-seeking. It's to celebrate the fact that we can!

Scrapbooking:

Design a badge which shows what your faith means to you. You might even like to make and wear the badge as part of the "Everyday Faith" challenge. Put your designs in your scrapbook.

Take it Further:

There are some links after this week's story to the website of Open Doors. Use these to explore the topic a bit further. Why not write a letter of encouragement to a Christian in a country where they are persecuted for their faith.

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/act/letter/> - they would love to hear from you. Or why not order the <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/products/product/wwl22-childrens-pack> for free to help you keep praying and learning as a family.



The
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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.



The
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