

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.

*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:

Tense Times
Genesis 25 verses 20-34
Genesis 27 verses 30-45



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.

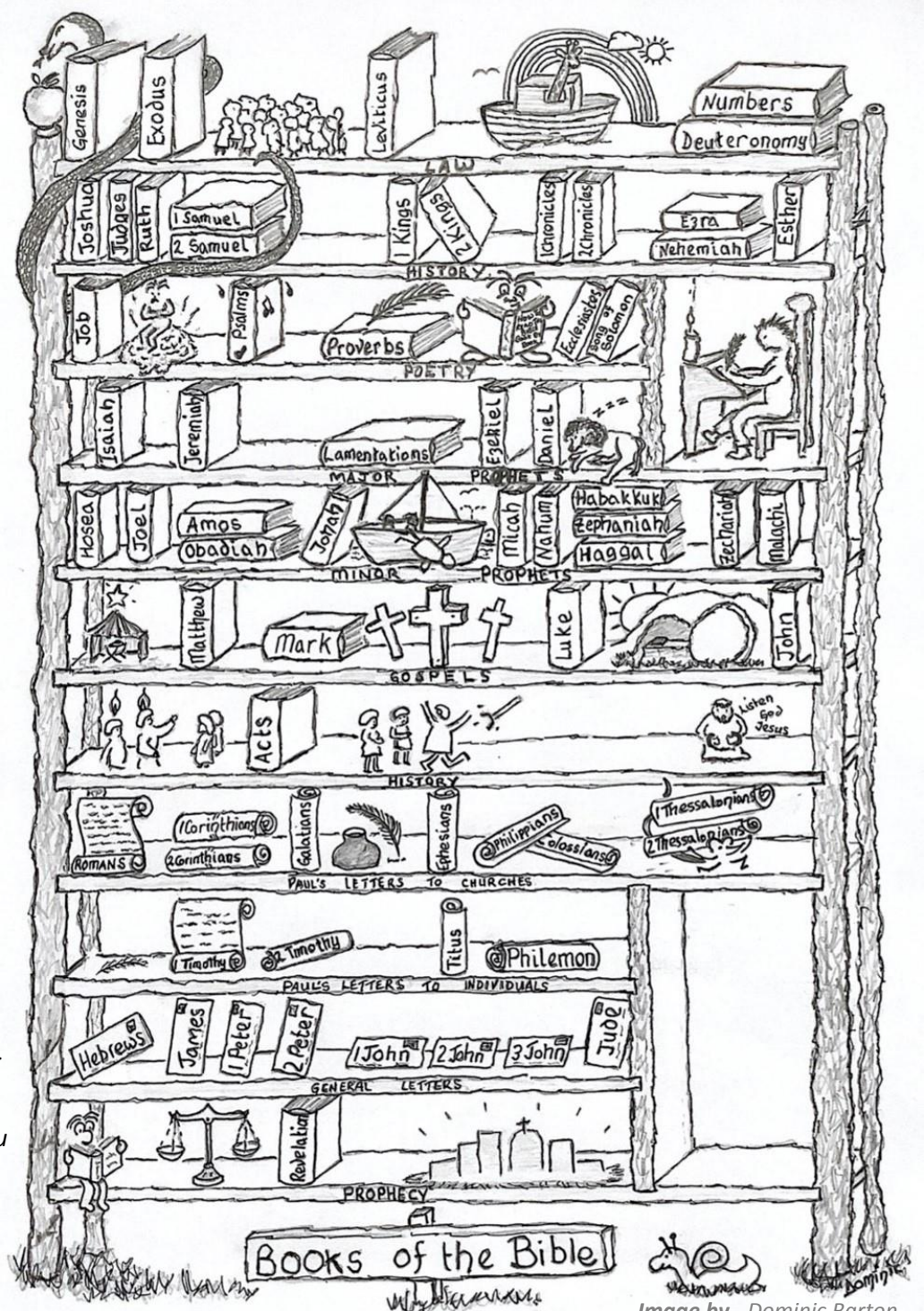
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



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: Genesis

The book of Genesis was written around 1430 BC; Moses is believed to be the author. It is the first book in the Bible and covers a span of 2,000 years. The book tells the stories of how the world was made and the stories of the first people. Genesis is a book of two halves. The first half (chapters 1 – 12) tells the stories of all that happened before Abraham, including Creation, the flood, and the Tower of Babel. The second half (chapters 13 – 50) tells the stories of the people who would become the start of the nation of Israel, including Abraham, Jacob, and his son Joseph.

In this story we meet twin brothers, Jacob and Esau and explore tensions between them as family.

Online versions of the story

Watch and Listen

The whole story in a nutshell by Crossroads Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGs1WfRKIoM>

A narrated cartoon by Teaching Kids about Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5q3FV79kp4>

The story retold by children from Woodside church

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_eH3zeqTIM

Jacob and Esau Full short film by Superbook

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

Jacob and Esau by LifeKids (most suitable for older children)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pfZsmyjC64&t=9s>

Dance and Sing

Big Family of God by Nick and Becky Drake

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEvJzOxm6zs>

The Blessing sung by children around the world

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiWZXLsdE9w>

We are Family by Newspring worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhVJaoHjYcQ>

I am special, loved, accepted, and forgiven by Elevation Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O72j8Cc1XG8>

Love one another by Elevation music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9wZliHn2IQ>

The Story: Genesis 25 verses 20-34 and Genesis 27 verses 30-45
(from *The International Children's Bible*)

When Isaac was 40 years old, he married Rebekah. Rebekah was from Northwest Mesopotamia. She was Bethuel's daughter and the sister of Laban the Aramean. Isaac's wife could not have children. So Isaac prayed to the Lord for her. The Lord heard Isaac's prayer, and Rebekah became pregnant.

While she was pregnant, the babies struggled inside her. She asked, "Why is this happening to me?" Then she went to get an answer from the Lord.

The Lord said to her,

"Two nations are in your body.

Two groups of people will be taken from you.

One group will be stronger than the other.

The older will serve the younger."

And when the time came, Rebekah gave birth to twins. The first baby was born red. His skin was like a hairy robe. So he was named Esau. When the second baby was born, he was holding on to Esau's heel. So that baby was named Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when they were born.

When the boys grew up, Esau became a skilled hunter. He loved to be out in the fields. But Jacob was a quiet man. He stayed among the tents. Isaac loved Esau. Esau hunted the wild animals that Isaac enjoyed eating. But Rebekah loved Jacob.

One day Jacob was boiling a pot of vegetable soup. Esau came in from hunting in the fields. He was weak from hunger. So Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red soup. I am weak with hunger." (That is why people call him Edom.)

But Jacob said, "You must sell me your rights as the firstborn son."

Esau said, "I am almost dead from hunger. If I die, all of my father's wealth will not help me."

But Jacob said, "First, promise me that you will give it to me." So Esau made a promise to Jacob. In this way he sold his part of their father's wealth to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and vegetable soup. Esau ate and drank and then left. So Esau showed how little he cared about his rights as the firstborn son.

Isaac finished blessing Jacob. Then, just as Jacob left his father Isaac, Esau came in from hunting. Esau also prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. He said, "Father, rise and eat the food that your son killed for you. Then bless me."

Isaac asked, "Who are you?"

He answered, "I am your son—your firstborn son—Esau."

Then Isaac trembled greatly. He said, "Then who was it that hunted the animals and brought me food before you came? I ate it, and I blessed him. And it is too late now to take back my blessing."

When Esau heard the words of his father, he let out a loud and bitter cry. He said to his father, "Bless me—me, too, my father!"

But Isaac said, "Your brother came and tricked me. He has taken your blessing."

Esau said, "Jacob is the right name for him. He has tricked me these two times. He took away my share of everything you own. And now he has taken away my blessing." Then Esau asked, "Haven't you saved a blessing for me?"

Isaac answered, "I gave Jacob the power to be master over you. And all his brothers will be his servants. And I kept him strong with grain and wine. There is nothing left to give you, my son."

But Esau continued, "Do you have only one blessing, Father? Bless me, too, Father!" Then Esau began to cry out loud.

Isaac said to him,

*"You will live far away from the best land,
far from the rain.*

*You will live by using your sword
and be a slave to your brother.*

*But when you struggle,
you will break free from him."*

After that Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing from Isaac. Esau thought to himself, "My father will soon die, and I will be sad for him. After that I will kill Jacob."

Rebekah heard about Esau's plan to kill Jacob. So she sent for Jacob. She said to him, "Listen, your brother Esau is comforting himself by planning to kill you. So, son, do what I say. My brother Laban is living in Haran. Go to him at once! Stay with him for a while, until your brother is not so angry. In time, your brother will not be angry. He will forget what you did to him. Then I will send a servant to bring you back. I don't want to lose both of my sons on the same day."

Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

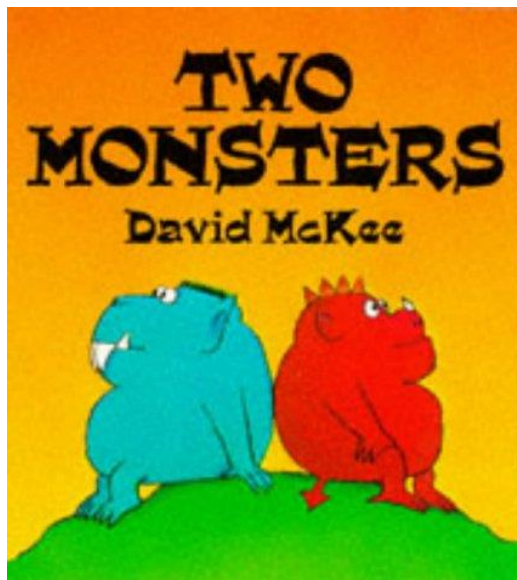
Modern Parables – books that explore the same theme



***We are Family* by Patricia Hegarty**

Exploring different types of families and how we are as a family. Celebrate families by reading this book.

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



***Two Monsters* by David McKee**
read by *Handsworth Storytime*

Two monsters fall out and things get explosive. Will they be able to reconcile their differences?

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

Science Experiments

Exploring tension/strain and explosive relationships and discussing where the tension is in this story.

Experiment 1: Watermelon Head

You will need: A watermelon or a smaller melon
A pile of elastic bands (we asked our post lady for a pile)
Safety glasses or something to protect your face

What to do:

Place the watermelon on a table, preferably outside (a table is better than the floor to keep your eyes out of line of fire).

Begin to stretch elastic bands and place them around the middle of the watermelon one at a time.

It can take some time to get going, try to keep your bands in the same place each time.

The tension and excitement will increase as cracks begin to appear in the watermelon and you can hear it breaking from the strain of the elastic bands.

Eventually it will explode: best to stand well back, it can be messy.

Discuss what you saw, felt, heard. Talk about relationships and how they can be tense at times. Perhaps you remember times when people or situations have 'exploded' under the strain of relationships. *I wonder what the elastic bands represent if related to our relationships? What are the things that add pressure and strain in a relationship?*

Experiment 2: 2 ingredients = 1 explosion

You will need: A zip lock sandwich bag
Two tablespoons of baking soda
½ cup of vinegar
½ cup of warm water
Tissue
Safety glasses or something to protect your face

What to do:

Practise opening the bag only half way and closing it by sliding fingers across to ensure it is completely sealed, then you are ready.

Add ½ cup of warm water and ½ cup of vinegar in the sandwich bag.

Lay a tissue flat on the table and add 2-3 tablespoons of baking soda in the centre.

Wrap up the baking soda inside the tissue by folding the tissue into a little square with the baking soda in the middle.



families on faith adventures

at home

Open the bag and insert the baking soda packet carefully. Hold the packet above the liquid while you zip the bag all the way closed.

Once the bag is sealed, drop the baking soda packet in the liquid and shake the bag a few times.

Gently place the bag on the ground and watch the bag fill up with gas.

Step back and watch the bag get bigger and bigger until it pops!

*Discuss what you saw and heard. Talk about relationships and how they can be tense at times. Perhaps you can think of people where, when they are together, it sometimes gets tricky. **The vinegar and bicarb were the ingredients that reacted to each other. What are the things that get a reaction out of you in relationships with others?***

Table Top Discussions

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

- What does it mean to be a favourite? I wonder how easy it is 'not have favourites' in a family?*
- What does birthright mean nowadays? We are celebrating the Queen's jubilee, a role she took on as her birthright. Are there things that we see as our birthright in our families?*
- What does it mean to know someone and accept them, especially in a family?*
- Families are all different, some are blended families. Share your family's story with each other.*
- Who do you relate to in today's story? One of the brothers? The mum? Or the dad? I wonder what this story is saying to you today about yourself, God, and others?*

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.



Toys to represent a family

Something fancy or special to wear



A happy face and a sad face, maybe on opposite sides of a paper plate or spoon



Something with rainbow colours for God's promise



A mixture of different textures and colours to explore – fabric, paper, card, foil, sandpaper etc.

Pray Together

(Please be aware that smells can evoke many reactions and can trigger a variety of emotions.)

Smelly Prayers



If one part of the body does not work too well, others often work to help; if your eyes cannot see too well, smell, touch and hearing often become stronger. In our prayers today we are thinking about the sense of smell. I wonder what smells you like? Smells are closely linked to memory too. I wonder what smells help you remember different people, places or events? You may want to have some with you as you pray.

Think about your family: What familiar smells do you associate with different members of your family and what do they make you think. Which smells make you feel safe? Maybe the smell of someone's perfume or makeup, their favourite drink, something connected with their work or their hobbies. And what about pets? Do they have a special smell? How do those smells make you feel?



Thank you, God, for each member of the family



Think about those who love you: What familiar smells remind you of the people who love you or whose company you enjoy? Maybe there are smells that remind you of times you visited them – the smell of fresh cut grass or flowers, the smell of baking, the special soap they really like. Think of grandparents, godparents, aunts and uncles, special friends. What are the smells that remind you that you are loved?



Thank you, God, for those who love us

SNIFF

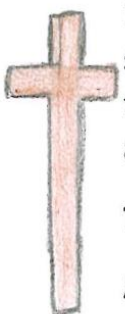


Think about some of the special places you have been: Which places hold special memories for you? Maybe the salty smell from the sea, with the crashing waves and gritty sand. Maybe the smell of the trees in the forest with the damp autumn leaves gathering around the roots.

Thank you, God, for trips to nice places



Think about the places you like to meet with God: Maybe your local church – does it have a special smell all of its own? Maybe the polish, the hymnbooks, the flowers, all mingle their smells together there. Or maybe you have another place you meet with God – in your home, your garden, the park, a school: the places where you stop in the busyness and make time to talk and listen to God.



Thank you, God, for the chance to stop, talk, and be with you.



And thank you for making me just as I am, with senses that help me explore your creation and remember the important things in life. Amen.

Pray Together

Elastic Prayers

You will need a piece of elastic or an elastic band.

Using the elastic band or pieces of elastic, think about situations in your home, school community and the world where there are tensions. For each thing you think of, stretch the elastic tighter. Hold the tension in the elastic and say a prayer, asking God to help you be a peace maker. As you say amen, slowly release the tension on the elastic as you give your prayers to God.



A prayer

God of peace,

*We see many tensions and divisions in your world,
divisions of gender, and age, of race and religion;*

Divisions of countries and borders;

Tensions in homes and families and friendships.

*May we learn to be peacemakers
in our own hearts, in our families, in our communities,*

and in your world.

Amen.

Knotted Up!

You will need a piece of string or thick wool.

Jacob had taken away from Esau his birthright and there was lots of tension between the brothers and their family. Think about whether there is someone that you struggle to get along with. There might be someone in your family that you have fallen out with or perhaps a friend or someone at school.

For each person or situation that comes to mind, tie a knot in your piece of string. When we fall out with people, we feel all knotted up inside, just like the tangled knot you have created. Knots can be hard to untie, just like saying sorry can sometimes be hard, and it is difficult to forgive others who have upset you. Talk to God about the knots you have in your pieces of string. Close your eyes and feel the knot with your fingers as you ask God to help you to forgive.



I wonder if you have any brothers and sisters and how you get on together?

I wonder how you would describe yourself?

I wonder why Rebekah wanted to trick Isaac?



I wonder what you feel blessed with?

I wonder what God thought about the trickery that went on in this story?



To Do Together...

Drum



You will need:

- A strong plastic tub or tin can*
- 2 pieces of different fabric*
- String*
- A small pencil or piece of wood*

What you do:

Cut the bottom off the tub or can.

From each piece of fabric, draw a circle which is larger than the tub or can.

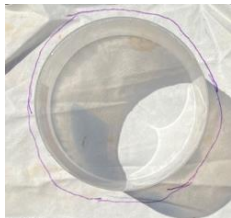
Mark the fabric in 8 places, space them out equally around the circle and make a small hole, that you can thread string through.

Place the circles of fabric at either end of the tub or can and thread them together with string, zigzagging between the upper and lower pieces of fabric and getting it as tight as you can.

Tighten the fabric by putting a small pencil or piece of wood into the string and twisting. This will increase the tension on the fabric and give your drum a good tone.

Too much tension can distort the shape of the drum, just like too much tension can distort our relationships with others.

The different fabric creates a different sound and feel to the drum. Test it out and see if you can feel the difference as you tighten and loosen the string. Think about our story, how Isaac had to feel things, because his eyesight was failing. Sometime things feel different from the way they sound. How did you think your drum would sound with the different fabrics?



To Do Together...

Identikit's Pictures

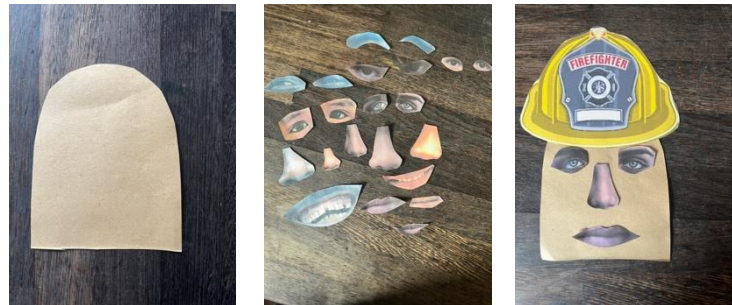
You will need: Images from magazines or clip art images
Small shapes of card



What you do:

Cut out a bit of paper in an arch shape to create your face on.
Cut out an assortment of eyes, noses and mouths from magazines or other pictures.
Alternatively, you might choose to do a full person and cut out a head, body, legs and a hat.
Create your image by putting the different bits of the face or body together. Keep changing them round until you get the picture you want.

Jacob and Esau are twins, but they look very different. I wonder what makes you different from others? I wonder whether you can judge people by how they look?





To Do Together...



Disguises

You will need: A pair of glasses
Tape
Wool, or fabric

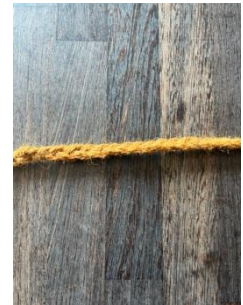
What you do:

Plait some wool and cut to size, then attach to the glasses to create eyebrows. Alternatively, you could cut out eyebrows from fabric.

Gather some long pieces of wool, or cut out a shape from fabric, to create a moustache or beard. Make sure it will fit on the face of the person in disguise.

Attach the beard to the sides of the glasses with tape.

Jacob disguised himself in the story. When things are tense, we sometimes try to hide who we really are or how we really feel. I wonder why Jacob disguised himself?



Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

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

Everyday Faith:

Physical exercise is known to relieve tension. Each day go for a five minute walk; it could be round the block or round your house, or you may already have somewhere to walk to like school. On your walk, talk to God about some of the tension in situations you are facing and tell God how it makes you feel. At the end of the walk, ask God to help you feel relaxed.

Scrapbooking:

In the story Rebekah made some hearty soup. Perhaps you could make some soup to enjoy with your family, take a picture of you all enjoying it (or draw it) and stick it in your scrapbook. Alternatively, you could stick a recipe for soup in your scrapbook.

Take it Further:

The choices we make can sometimes create tension, even well-meaning decisions. Why not play a game of 'what would you do' together as a family, this can be played in two's or even on your own. Think of different scenarios that require a decision to be made, give everyone a chance to say what they would do and then chat about the consequences of that action, good and not so good. Here are some to get you started:

What would you do if you found some money on the pavement?

What would you do if you saw someone hurt?

What would you do if you wanted something that someone else was going to be given?

Consider finding other family building games you could play together.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/home/team-building-activities-teens-families-couples.cfm>



**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), Sharon Lloyd (Programme Assistant for CYW), 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.

