

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:

Coming Home

Hosea 14



From



and



Illustration by
ArabsforChrist.org 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.

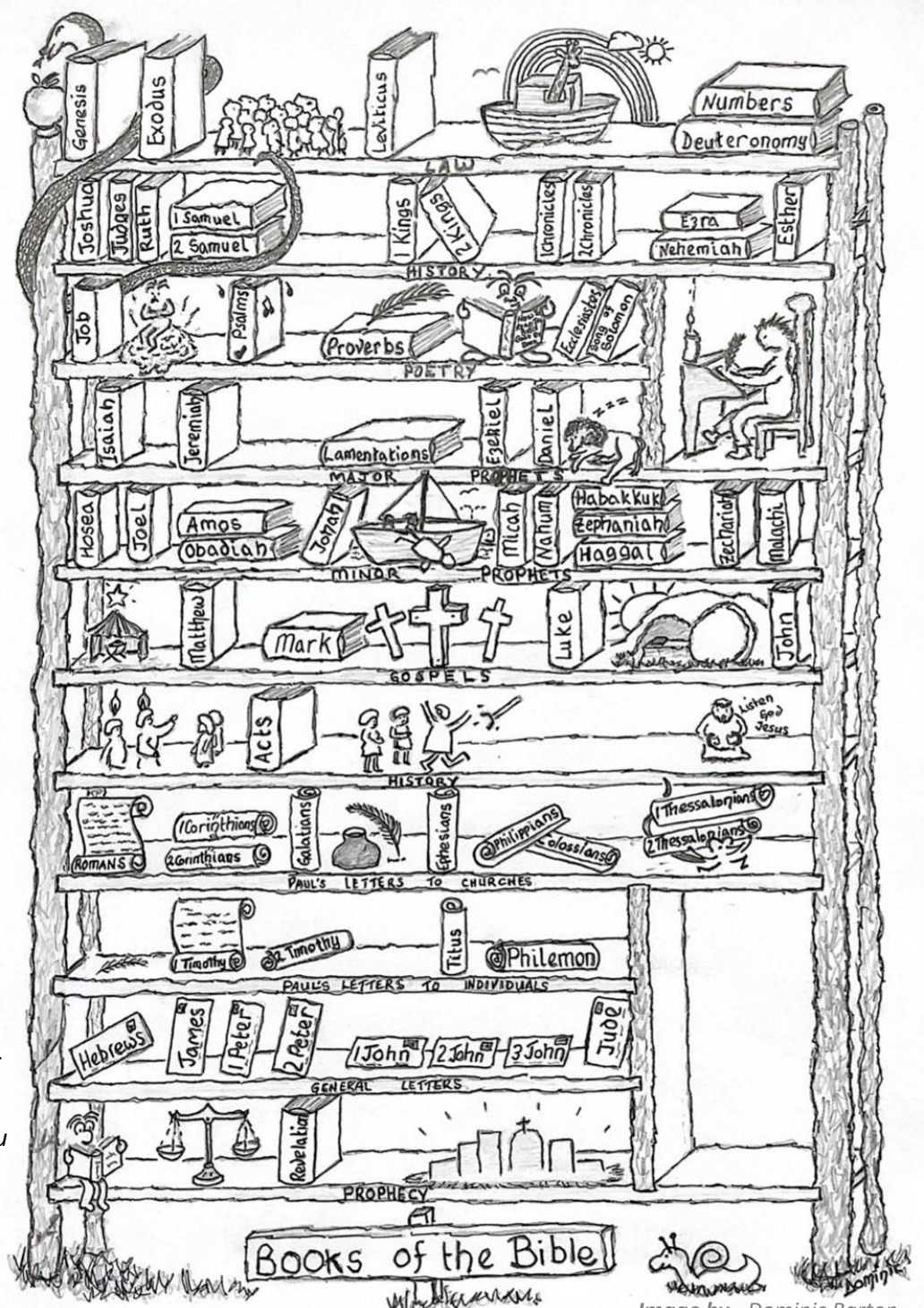
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



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: Hosea

The book of Hosea is found in the Old Testament. The prophet Hosea wrote it around 750 – 710 BC. God used Hosea to warn the people of Israel that they should ask God for forgiveness and put God first again. Hosea was not listened to and the prophecies came true.

This week's reading is the final part of the prophesy that looks at the good that can come out of asking for forgiveness. Hosea is showing Israel how good things can be if they say sorry and put God first.

Online versions of the story

Watch and Listen

What's that word: Repentance by Crossroads Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1SiHft-SCY>

Hosea the prophet by the gospel project for kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WWX07mliHw>

Cartoon about repentance by Junior Soldiers <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6anToptS-do>

Dance and Sing

God loves me by Doug Horley <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEn10ocsWYA>

You forgive me by Group Publishing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LO-2fm7IKcU>

Bless me by Maverick City Music x Kirk Franklin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nn2w6G5bJdk>

Follow me by Preschool worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyHla0hmPfg>

The Story: Hosea 14 'Israel Returns to God'
(from *The International Children's Bible*)

Israel, return to the Lord your God.

Your sins have caused your ruin.

² Come back to the Lord

and say these words to him:

"Take away all our sin

and kindly receive us.

Then we will give you the praise we promised you.

³ Assyria cannot save us.

We will not trust in our horses.

We will not say again, 'Our gods,'

to the things our hands have made.

You show mercy to us, who are like orphans."

⁴ The Lord says,

"I will forgive them for leaving me.

I will love them freely.

I am not angry with them anymore.

⁵ I will be like the dew to Israel.

It will blossom like a lily.

Like the cedar trees in Lebanon,

its roots will be firm.

⁶ The people will be like spreading branches.

They will be like the beautiful olive trees.

They will be like the sweet-smelling cedars in Lebanon.

⁷ The people of Israel will again live under my protection.

They will grow like the grain.

They will bloom like a vine.

They will be as famous as the wine of Lebanon.

⁸ Israel, have nothing to do with idols.

I, the Lord, am the one who answers your prayers.

I am the one who watches over you.

I am like a green pine tree.

Your blessings come from me."

⁹ A wise person will know these things.

An understanding person will take them to heart.

The Lord's ways are right.

Good people live by following them,

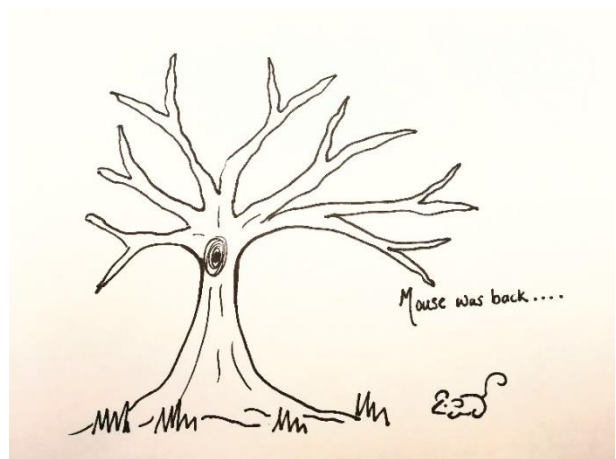
but those who turn against God die because of them.

*Scripture quotations are taken from the International Children's Bible®,
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Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

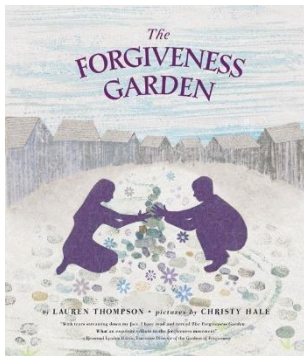
Here is a new story to help you think about the Bible passage in a different way. God's protection is described in the Bible story as a beautiful tree, full of flowers and fruit, offering protection and unexpected blessings. The character in this story is also returning home, to the tree where she lives. You may wish to read this story using the power point on YouTube <https://youtu.be/JrPfQ46d5nM>

Coming Home





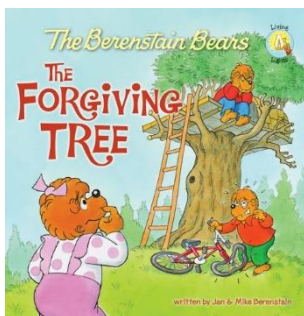
Modern Parables – books that explore the same theme



'The Forgiveness Garden' by Lauren Thompson

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

Suitable for older children, this is the story of 2 villages either side of a stream who hate each other, names and stones are thrown. Until one girl decides to build something different, a garden in between their villages where they can meet and talk and find ways to forgive and love each other.



'The Forgiving tree (Berenstain Bear Story)'

by Jan and Mike Berenstain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0cH9yIEQys>

Brother gets a brand new bike for his birthday, but he is angry when his cousin takes it without asking and crashes it. How will they learn to say sorry and forgive? They might find their answer in the forgiving tree.

Table Top Discussions

Sit together as a family, and use these questions to help you to explore this week's story and theme.

- *Have you ever had a warning from someone, to tell you that you were wrong and needed to put it right? Share your stories together.*
- *How easy is it to say sorry? What makes it tough?*
- *What feelings are connected to saying sorry and being forgiven?*
- *I wonder if there is anything you think is too big to say sorry for?*
- *How did Jesus' life and words teach us about saying sorry and forgiving 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.



A heart



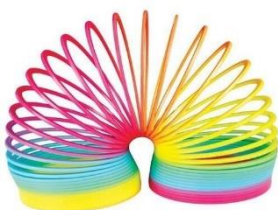
Tools/ seeds for the garden



Fruit



A dolls house



Something with rainbow colours for God's promise

Pray Together

Which Tree Are You?

Which tree do you feel like today? Look at the pictures of trees below and pick which tree you feel most like today. Perhaps it is the tree with falling leaves, the dead tree, or the tree full of blossom? Chat with God about why you chose that tree. If you wish to, share the reason with your family.



Pray Together

Fragrance Prayers

*'I will forgive them for leaving me.
I will love them freely.
I am not angry with them anymore.
I will be like the dew to Israel. It will blossom like a lily.
Like the cedar trees in Lebanon, its roots will be firm.
They will be like the sweet-smelling cedars in Lebanon'*

What fragrances make you feel happy; perhaps a smell that brings happy memory or a perfume that reminds you of a special person? Fresh baked bread, a bunch of flowers, perfume, scented candles, a bar of soap, Christmas spice?



Now think of a smell that you do not like; perhaps a reminder of something that happened or a food that you really didn't like.



Put some vinegar in a small bowl or cup or use one of the things your really don't like to smell. Smell the vinegar and think of the sour, hurtful and difficult situations in the world, or closer to home in your home or school or with your friends. Ask God to be in these situations and ask God to help heal where there are broken relationships.

Now find something sweet smelling like soap, hand cream or a scented candle.

Smell this sweet smell it, helps to take away the out the sourness we have just smelled. Ask God to help you to show God's love to others in the difficult situations.

Dear God

May your fragrance fill this place

Amen

Pray Together

Restoring Leaves Prayers

You will need: Dried leaves
Hand cream



Hold the dried leaves in your hand feel how brittle and fragile they are. That is like us sometimes when we are cross or say or do angry things.

Think about the things you might have done that you want to say sorry for, things you regret saying or doing. Using some hand cream, gently rub the cream into the leaf. See how it soaks into the leaf and softens the leaf.

As you do this, talk to God about what you want to say sorry for. Ask God to soften your heart and make you like new.

Dear God,
We are sorry for the things we do wrong:
a word spoken out of turn;
something we didn't say;
Something we did say;
Something we should or shouldn't have done;
May we find forgiveness,
May we find ourselves restored and renewed with you.
Soften our hearts and help us to know your love.
Amen.

*I wonder how you let
people know you
missed them if they've
been away?*

*I wonder how it
feels when you've
said sorry, and you
have a fresh start?*

*I wonder who
misses you when
you are not there?*

The people will



*be
like
spreading
branches*

*I wonder how you
feel when you are
away from home?*

*I wonder if we know
what it means to
come back to God?*

*Illustration by
nicepng.com*



To Do Together...



Trees

You will need: A variety of coloured shapes
A plain cloth



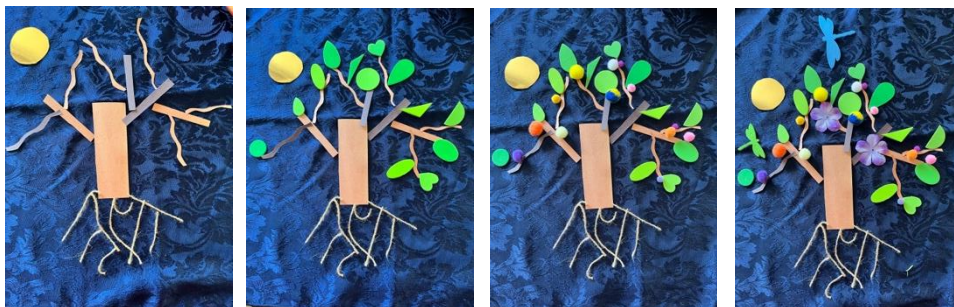
What you do:

Create some trees, using the shapes to reflect a tree throughout the seasons. Think about the story in Hosea and how things are changed when we are sorry and are forgiven.

How do the trees change as the story unfolds?

Remember to include the roots, the fruits, and the time when the leaves fall and the tree is bare.

Think about how our relationship with God and our growing faith is like a tree, gradually growing deeper roots and stronger branches, sprouting buds, and bursting into leaf, with blossoms and fruits appearing as God makes us stronger and uses us to make his world a better place.





To Do Together...



Nature Art

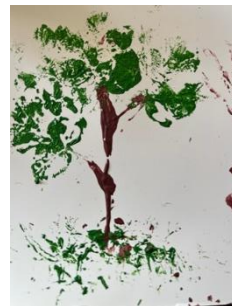
You will need:

- Leaves, twigs, flowers, and seeds
- Paper
- Paint

What you do:

Be creative with things from nature. We can make amazing images from the things we find in nature. Maybe create a picture by painting with twigs and leaves, using a fingerprint to create some figures, or simply print, using things you find.

Celebrate the beauty of nature as you do it and thank God for the wonders of creation.





To Do Together...

Rainbow Paper

You will need: A bowl filled with water
Clear nail polish
Small rectangles of black construction paper
or black card
Paper kitchen roll

What you do:

Do this experiment in a well-ventilated room. It does get smelly.

Fill a plastic bowl with water (you may want to use something you can throw away afterwards).

You need to do this next bit quickly, so maybe have someone helping you.

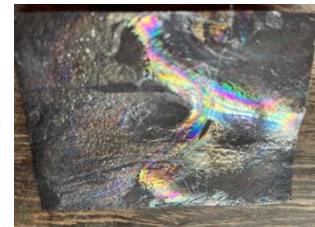
Drop some clear nail polish into the water and quickly dip the black paper onto the surface of the water and lift it out again.

(The nail polish dries quickly on the surface of the water, which creates a film that won't stick to the paper. So to do this activity successfully, it needs to be done quickly. Be sure to dip the paper into the water within 10-15 seconds after the drop of nail polish goes in. If the nail polish does create a dry film on top, simply scoop it off and try again a bit quicker!)

Place the paper on some kitchen roll to dry.

When it is dry, see the colours catch the light and transform the paper into some beautiful rainbow paper. Every sheet turns out different.

Being forgiven changes us and makes us blossom, just as Hosea tells us.



Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

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

Everyday Faith:

When we say sorry for the things we do wrong, then God is able to forgive us and this allows us to blossom for God. This week, as you focus on this theme, fill a jar with stones. Drop one into the jar each time you have said sorry for something. At the end of the week count out the stones and see how often God has been working to help you blossom.

Scrapbooking:

Take a bark rubbing from a tree near you. Press a piece of paper firmly against the tree, rub a wax crayon over the paper and the image of the tree's bark should appear on your paper. Try this with several different trees and then glue them into your scrapbook.

Take it Further:

Have a think about any other stories or times in the Bible when we are taught about saying sorry, being forgiven and coming back to Jesus. Watch this YouTube story together, of one such story. <https://ministry-to-children.com/prodigal-son-for-kids/> What can we learn from these stories and the one in Hosea about how to blossom for God. I wonder if you could write your own coming home story?



The
United
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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: lorrainewebb@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

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