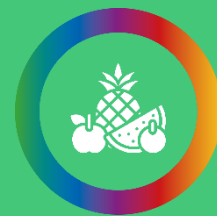




Faith Adventures for Children Together



Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

*Committed to URC Children Together:
enabling everyone to grow more like Jesus
together in the home, church and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link: www.bit.ly/FACT-how-to-sheet

Title: Psalm 89: 1,2,8

Theme: Full of faithfulness

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

Welcome to another week exploring the theme “Fruits of the Spirit”.

This week we will be focusing on “faithfulness”. In many ways, this is an umbrella fruit – each of the other fruits of the Spirit we have explored are encompassed in this one.

We will be sharing what faithfulness means, how God shows faithfulness to us, and how we can show faithfulness to God and those around us.

We will explore whether faithfulness and “being full of faith” are the same thing and thinking about the cost of faithfulness – staying true to what you believe and who you are even when times are tough or difficult.

Be aware of those in your group who may have faced difficult family relationships due to a parent being unfaithful.

Together – prayer and games

How do I help my group to come together and get started with the theme?

Gathering prayer

Jesus, our friend,

(use alternate index fingers to point and tap the middle of opposite palms)

Be with us today

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move up and down twice)

As we share together,

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move one forward and one back and alternate twice)

Pray together,

(hands together, palm against palm, as though praying)

Play together,

(hands to each side, palms up, make two small circles outwards)

And get to know you better

(point up with one hand)

As children together in your family.

(one hand out, palm down in front of you, move it sideways and up in three 'steps' as though to indicate children of three different heights)

AMEN.

(two thumbs up, and bring fists slowly together to meet in front of you)

OR

Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.

Help us to grow closer to you in all we do.

**Help us to speak and to listen, to learn and to grow together,
adventuring together with you wherever we may go.**

Amen

Active game – Fruits of the Spirit parachute game

Give each team or child one fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness or self-control.

Stand in a circle around the parachute. If you do not have one, use a sheet. Lift it up and down slowly so children can run underneath safely.

The leader calls out a fruit, e.g. "Love, switch!" Everyone with that fruit runs under the parachute and swaps places.

Quieter game – Spy

You will need:

- two complete decks of cards (or more if you have more than one small group)
- “Spy Team Design Instructions Sheet” for each participant
- “Special Spy Instructions” for each participant (place each in a separate envelope)
- two rooms, or one with a small partitioned-off area for placement of the original design. The space where the design is *not* set up should be large enough for the participants to freely move around

What you do:

Prior to conducting the activity, copy enough “Team Design” and “Special Spy Instructions” sheets for each participant. On the “Special Spy Instructions” sheets, mark (by hand) an X on the line next to “You are not a SPY” (or use a highlighter pen). It is important that you mark the same on every sheet (which will mean there really is no spy in the group).

Prior to conducting the activity, construct an “original design” in the partitioned room using one deck of cards. Use as many of the cards as possible. When beginning the activity, create small groups of six to ten participants. If you have more than one group, make sure you have enough decks of cards for each small group to have their own.

Have each group form a circle. Give a deck of cards to each group – do not hand them to a particular person; instead, place the deck in the centre of the circle. Pass out a copy of the Team Design Instructions Sheet and an envelope containing the Special Spy Instructions to each participant. Go over the Team Instructions Sheet with the members.

Tell them that the group will decide whether or not to use all of the cards in their deck and that there may be one or more spies in the group. After going over these instructions, have the participants open their envelopes. Remind them that they must keep this information secret until the end of the activity.

Begin the activity – you should give the groups 15 minutes to complete the design. If you have more than one small group, remind the groups that they are not competing against the other teams; rather, their goal is to function as their own team to complete the task.

Team Design Instructions Sheet

On the table in the next room is a design made of playing cards. The task of your team is to construct a duplicate of the design in the shortest amount of time. You will have a maximum of 15 minutes to complete the task. The duplicate must be “correct”; the shape must be the same as the model, and all cards need to be in the correct position. Any team member (one at a time only) may go to view the original design. They may look at the original as long as they wish and may return as often as they wish. When you believe that your replica is correct, notify the facilitator. Your design will then be checked. If it is incorrect, you will be told that there is at least one mistake, and you will continue with the activity.

Special Spy Instructions (FOR YOUR EYES ONLY)

In real life, all team members do not always work for the same goals. Sometimes people do things to reach personal rather than team goals. They may work against team goals because of group frictions, lack of trust, inability to get along with a supervisor, etc. There may be such a person in this group.

We will call that person a “spy”. It is possible that more than one spy may be in the group. If you are a spy, you are to do everything in your power to hinder the efforts of your team, without letting anyone know you are a spy.

If a team member thinks that another member is a spy, they can accuse that person of spying. The rest of the team will vote, and if there is unanimous agreement, the spy can be excluded from any further deliberations of the group.

You ARE a spy _____

You are NOT a spy _____

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

For this story we recommend using the Contemporary English version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2089%3A1%2C2%2C8&version=CEV>

Where can I find the story online?

Under-fives: Preschool Music Camp Day 5: Faithfulness, by East Swamp Kids

https://youtu.be/UB_xbGnJUNc?si=oKbEO96ZhDxQ1B23

Five-to-elevens: God's Story: Fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness, by Crossroads Kids' Club

<https://youtu.be/1xA60ikqv7s?si=HJm5qnnqK9mWLyD>

Songs to support the story

Under-fives: The fruit of the spirit is not a coconut, by Uncle Charlie

https://youtu.be/pB2WmMcBNks?si=6392Qdy9wHK_MlMr

Five-to-elevens: I could sing of your love forever, by Shout Praises Kids

<https://youtu.be/7C9qUf1DRNk?si=PPWdA0AQi-kqOC-Q>

Explore – ways into the theme

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new way to explore the theme

You could play the game “Spy” first.

Think about who the players could rely on and whether it was easy to trust people in the game.

Bring a closed box with a treat inside it. Tell the group: “There is a treat inside this box.”

But then add some uncertainty:

Shake the box, pull a doubtful face, suggest it could contain something unpleasant.

Ask for volunteers to trust you enough to put their hand inside.

After revealing the treat, ask:

- Why were some people hesitant?
- What helped you decide whether to trust me?
- Did past experiences with me affect your decision?
- Would consistency over time make trusting easier?

Trust and faith are connected. We often decide whether to trust someone based on previous evidence of their faithfulness. If someone has been reliable, loving, and truthful before, it becomes easier to trust them again.

Faithfulness means – being reliable, keeping promises, being consistent over time.

God is always faithful to us; God consistently keeps promises, shows love, forgives, remains dependable.

Even when people fail God, God remains faithful.

Modern parables

Jesus used stories to help people understand the things of God, even though they weren't necessarily overtly Christian stories. Lots of children's books can be used in a similar way as a conversation starter on the week's theme. Examples are shared here but you may think of others too. If you are to use the modern parable, consider buying a copy or borrowing it from the library so children see the actual book and can explore the illustrations more (and support the author).



You can find many retellings of this story on YouTube by searching Bat's Big Game.

Bat's Big Game by illustrator Eugenia Nobati, retold By Margaret Read McDonald and read by Miss Vitolo (2008: Albert Whitman & Company Publication) ISBN - 10 0807505870

This book tells of a bat who keeps swapping between being an animal and a bird in the big football game, depending on which team seems to be winning. It emphasises faithfulness by showing the opposite.

- Do you think Bat was faithful to his team in the big game?
- Would you like someone on your team who behaved like Bat?
- What could Bat have done differently and why is that important?

Talking together: How might we talk about the Bible story together?

- What does it mean God is faithful?
- Who do you trust?
- I wonder if being faithful matters
- How does God show faithfulness to you?

Wondering: ways to reflect on the theme

- I wonder what faithfulness looks like
- Is trust in you automatically earned?
- I wonder who you have faith in
- I wonder if there is anything you could do that would make God lose faith in you?

What's in the box? (for under-fives)

Use the special box or bag and sing, "What's in the box/bag? What's in the box/bag? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box/bag" (to the tune of The Farmer's in the Dell). Pull out the things one by one and then let the children play with them, talking about the theme or the story in simple terms.

This week's box could include:

- A teddy bear – your teddy is there when you need a cuddle. God is faithful because he stays with us and loves us.
- A picture of someone holding a child's hand – we trust grown-ups to help keep us safe.
- A sun picture or toy – the sun comes up every day. We can count on it. God's love is faithful too.
- A snack promise – I said it was snack time, and I kept my promise. Faithfulness means doing what you said you would do.
- A tactile cross of wood or fabric (a cross shape reminds us of Jesus. Jesus/God loves us and it's always in the box because Jesus/God always loves us!)
- A set of play people to act out the story or random shapes/bits you can move around to make pictures from the story as you tell it (eg stones, felt, twigs etc)

Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Prayerful activity – Stones

What you need:

a stone for each person

What you do:

Hold the stone in your hand and close your eyes.

Close your fingers slowly around the stone. Silently thank God that God loves you and holds you tight.

Squeeze the stone in your hand.

Silently thank God that God never changes and is always strong.

Pass the stone from hand to hand. Silently thank God that God is with you wherever you are and whatever you are doing.

Raise the stone above your head. Silently thank God that God is faithful when things are going well.

Hold the stone down low. Silently thank God that God is faithful when things are tough.

Now place your stone with everyone else's stones to make a pile. This is called a cairn. Silently ask God to help you grow in faithfulness together, with the help of the Holy Spirit.



Spoken prayer

Under-fives

Faithful God,
Thank you for loving us every day.
You are always faithful and strong.
Help us to trust you and sing your praise.

Amen.

Five-to-elevens

Dear God, you are strong and true, There is no one else like you. Day by day Your love will stay, you are faithful all the way.

When we're happy, when we're sad, When the day is good or bad, You are with us, near and bright, Guiding us with love and light.

Thank you for your caring heart, For being close, not far apart. Help us trust you every day, As we learn and work and play.

Amen.

Responding together

Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond.

With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage them to use what they've got to hand in their response.

However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.

Stick people

What you need:

- a selection of small sticks
- scraps of fabric
- glue
- googly eyes
- bits of wool or pipe cleaners

What you do:

Decorate the stick using fabric for clothing, wool or pipe cleaners for hair, and adding googly eyes to make a little friend as a reminder that faithful people **STICK** to what they believe in and **STICK** together when times are hard.



Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- Talk to someone older or younger than you and ask them to say how they show faithfulness to God.
- Make time in your week to thank God for their faithfulness in you.

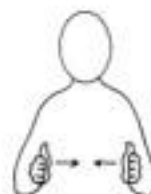
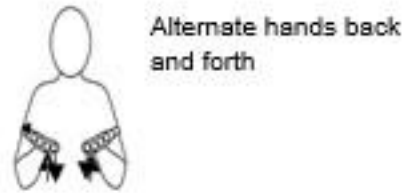
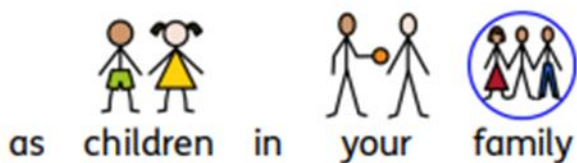
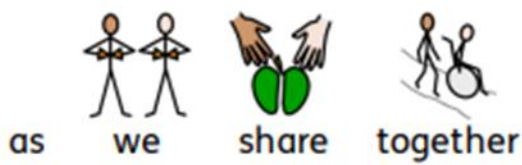
We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **faithfulness** with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing **sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk**

Please join the Faith Adventures Facebook Group **bit.ly/FACT_FB**

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **Joy**






The Lord's Prayer

 Our  Father,  who art  in  heaven,  hallowed be  thy  name.

 Thy  kingdom  come,  thy  will  be done



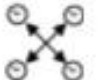

 on  earth  as it is  in  heaven.

 Give  us  this day  our  daily  bread

 and  forgive  us  our  sins  As  we  forgive  those  who  sin  against  us

 Lead  us  not  into  temptation  but  deliver  us  from  evil

 For  thine  is the  kingdom,  the  power  and  the  glory

 For ever  and  ever  . Amen



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