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: James 5: 7–8

Theme: Advent in the style of… Brick church
Patiently journeying

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning? Please use this section as a reference and information guide for leaders only – we don't expect it to be read out to the children.

This week's session in our Advent series is based on Brick Church-style worship. This uses Construction Bricks e.g. Lego, Duplo. You could use wooden blocks like Jenga or wooden coloured blocks. You might want to add stickers and pens to the resources to aid creativity.

The passage we are using is James 5: 7-8. The Letter of James was written to Jewish Christians spread throughout the Mediterranean region at a time of persecution. Even today, the letter reminds us to live out our faith daily. James 5: 7-8, talks to us about being patient. During this Advent season, we are journeying towards Christmas. This passage reminds us that we are also journeying towards Christ's return; in our waiting we are to be patient. As a farmer waits for their crops to grow, they don't just sit back, there is still work to do – watering, weeding, thinning the crop etc. – just as for us as Christians there is work to do as we patiently wait for God's Kingdom to come. We are to work faithfully, patiently and with our hearts full of hope as we journey onward.

The only identifiable trigger, we think, is that some children are told they are impatient or have no patience, in a negative way. Hopefully this session will help them explore some of their feelings around that. We pray that this session enables your group to understand more around the journeying of Advent and reflect upon the fact that Jesus' coming is "near".

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 – Slow, relay, build

This game, although active, deliberately slows down the journeying of the team. The teams might feel frustrated as they watch their team players, or by the fact that they are unable to start the build until all the parts are gathered in.

You will need:

- enough Lego (or substitute) sets for the number of teams

This is a team race. Place the sets of Lego at one end of the room and line the teams up at the other end.

One player at a time must travel across the room, collect one piece of Lego, and bring it back to their team. There's a catch! Players can only move by placing the heel of one foot directly in front of the toes of the other with every step, making their journey much slower.

Once all the Lego pieces have been collected, the team can begin building. The finished model can either be pre-arranged by the leader, with the teams challenged to recreate it, or participants can have a free-build challenge, depending on the resources available.

Quieter game – Pictionary Build

You will need:

- Lego or alternative
- suggested ideas to build that link with the theme e.g. star, donkey, crib, angel, sheep, farmer, clock
- timer

The teams take it in turn to build the suggested item in 60 seconds. The time is a suggestion; you may need longer for younger children. Select a time that would work for the capabilities of your group. The other teams guess what the item is. The guessing team scores a point if they guess correctly – you could limit the number of guesses with an older group.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

When planning the session, the team of writers read many different Bible versions to find the one that is most suitable for the age range. We also look at vocabulary and how God/Jesus is described. We are aware that a lot of churches stick with one Bible version. We appreciate it can be difficult to have many different Bible versions and that access to them online isn't always easy. Therefore, we have provided the passage in the recommended version for your convenience.

For this story we recommend using the Good News version
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James%205%3A7-8&version=GNT

7 Be patient, then, my friends, until the Lord comes. See how patient farmers are as they wait
for their land to produce precious crops. They wait patiently for the autumn and spring rains.
8 You also must be patient. Keep your hopes high, for the day of the Lord's coming is near.

Good News Translation® (Today's English Version, Second Edition) © 1992 American Bible Society. All rights reserved. For more information about GNT, visit www.bibles.com and www.gnt.bible.

Where can I find the story online?
Under-fives: Lego Bible – The Christmas Story, by Go Chatter Studios
https://youtu.be/U3u3HFYYKa8?si=kS6lIKrdO6EtEbO-

Five-to-elevens: Lego Bible – The Christmas Story, by Go Chatter Studios
https://youtu.be/U3u3HFYYKa8?si=kS6lIKrdO6EtEbO-

Songs to support the story
Under-fives: The Gift of Waiting, by Life Builder
https://youtu.be/cscNqDe5uDQ?si=NjKZPFTWk2GMwQcV
Five-to-elevens: For I'm building a people of power, by Chet Valley Hymns and songs
https://youtu.be/QBzYSONApJU?si=1drkD3fu-OCHoye1

Explore – ways into the theme

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

A new way to explore the theme

Build the answers



Explore the wondering questions by building your answers with Lego bricks. Each answer should have two parts: one representing a practical or everyday response, and one representing a spiritual response.

Encourage participants to be creative and use the bricks to show their ideas. Provide stickers, felt-tip pens and other materials to help them add detail and meaning to their builds.

- What are you waiting patiently for?
- What does it look like to wait for Jesus?
- When is it OK to be impatient?
- What does it feel like to lose hope?
- How can we keep our hopes high?
- What is it worth waiting patiently for?
- I wonder if you ever think about the Second Coming?
- What will it look like when the Lord comes again?

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).

Luke & the Little Seed by Giuliano Ferri. (2015: minedition) ISBN 10: 9888240943

This book is about a little mouse, Luke, and his struggles to wait patiently for his birthday. As time passes, Luke realises how patience can be the greatest gift.

- I wonder what you would consider to be the greatest gift ever

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

- What are you waiting patiently for?
- What does it look like to wait for Jesus?
- Have you ever planted something? How does it feel waiting for it to grow?
- How might we be faithful and patient?

Wondering: ways to reflect on the theme

- I wonder how long "near" is?
- When is it OK to be impatient?
- How much longer will we have to wait for Jesus to come again?
- Why don't the farmers in the reading wait for summer and winter?

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:

- Bricks – each day we build our lives around how Jesus wants us to live.
- Clock – we are in Advent, waiting; we must wait. Can we be patient?
- Advent Calendar – we are waiting for Christmas.
- Play Farm – the Bible talks today about the farmer having to wait for the crops to grow.
- Heart – we are to share the love of Jesus while we wait.
- Party blower and/or streamers – the Bible says our hearts should be full of hope while we wait.
- 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 (e.g. stones, felt, twigs etc.).

Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Prayerful activity – Prayer Bricks

Using building bricks or blocks, write the words "Bless", "Sorry", "Thank you" and "Help" on the bricks, or write on stickers you can put on the bricks. This works with Jenga bricks too.

Put the bricks in a bag and shake them up. Take it in turns to take out a brick. Pray a prayer for each of the different bricks that you take out:

Dear God, please bless…
Dear God, I am sorry for…
Dear God, thank you for…
Dear God, please help…
Amen.



As you pray each prayer, add your brick to those already used to make a prayer wall. You may just want bricks and stickers for people to write their own prayers. This activity still works using paper bricks and pens to write. Once people have written/drawn on their brick, create a wall with them.

Spoken prayer

With each response in bold get louder.

Creator God, as we wait for Jesus to come into the world we ask you to continue building us up brick by brick,
Build us up Lord, brick by brick.
Build us up with hope for the future of your world, Lord.
Build us up with hope for peace and hope for love.
Build us up with bricks of hope.
Build us up, God, with patience for our friends.
Build us up with patience for Jesus.
Build us up with bricks of patience.
Build us up, God, with love for the world.
Build us up with love for humanity.
Build us up with bricks of love.
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.

Edible Lego bricks (Be aware of allergies)

You will need:

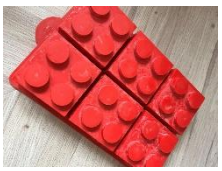
- cake rectangles with the icing cut off (such as angel cakes)
- icing (different colours)

- smarties
- blunt knife

What you do:

Ensure everyone has two cake rectangles to start. Take one of the rectangles and smother with icing. Use smarties to decorate the top to look like the top of a piece of Lego.

With the second rectangle, cut into smaller bricks and use the icing to "cement" them together to make an edible wall.



If you have a Lego cake mould, then use this to create cakes and decorate once cooked. Here is a basic cake recipe:
https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/spongecake_1284

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 tell you something they are looking forward to about Christmas.
- Play a game with someone using bricks, Lego, Duplo and see who can build (whatever you choose) the quickest.

We hope you enjoyed exploring **Advent in the style of… Brick Church** 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 **Adventures in the Bible**

The United Reformed Church Children

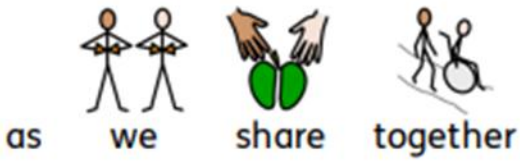
The United Reformed Church Youth

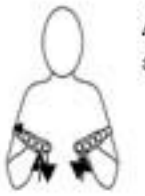

Jesus our friend,


Right middle finger touches centre of other palm, repeat with left hand


be with us today




as we share together

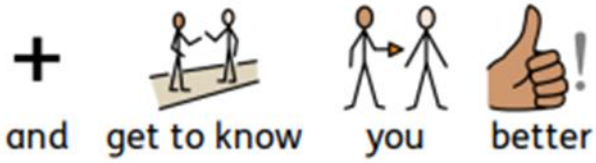

Alternate hands back and forth


pray together

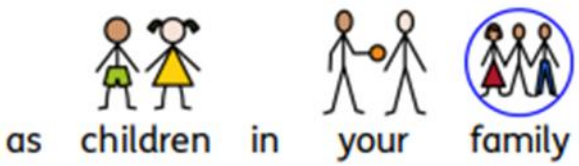



play together



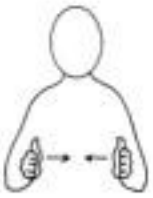

and get to know you better




as children in your family




Amen




The Lord's Prayer


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


Thy kingdom come, thy will be done

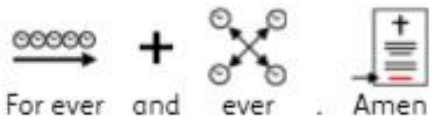

on earth as it is in heaven.


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

