



Faith Adventures for Children Together



*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:
<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

Galatians 5:14 – Love your Neighbour

Theme: Love my neighbour but who is my neighbour?

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

This week's theme is "Love my neighbour; but who is my neighbour?"

And you see a theme like that and probably think "oh, it's the Good Samaritan reading." But it's not. To explore the theme we're looking at Paul's letter to the early church in Galatia (which is now part of Turkiye.)

Different translations use different words – in the translation we are suggesting, the letter begins 'Dear Christian friends...' but it's worth noting that you don't have to be a Christian to care about others and God's world. Kindness and compassion aren't exclusive to the followers of Jesus, but if you don't have kindness and compassion then you can't claim to be a follower of Jesus.

The letter reminds us that, although we have been given God's blessing, we are still human and will have human faults – we mustn't let God's blessing go to our heads. We must still make decisions that benefit others rather than be selfish. The people who will suffer most from the effects of climate change aren't always those who have caused or accelerated it. Our neighbours are not only those people who live nearby but include all of humanity.

God has given us free will – but there are still laws which we must obey in order to live in society. Sometimes we have to recognise that, even though something is not illegal, it is still wrong. This



is the freedom that God has given to us – to make our own decisions and Paul reminds us to exercise that freedom with care and compassion.

Be aware that you may have young people in your group who have come from places where freedom is an aspiration rather than a reality. They may still have relatives living under oppressive regimes or facing the stark reality of climate change.

Together

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

In-person game - Ready....aim....throw!

Split your group into pairs; one has a box or bucket of ten balls or bean bags and the other has an empty box or bucket.

Stand your players facing each other, they cannot move from their places (you could use masking tape to mark out where they must stand).



The aim of the game is to get ten balls or bean bags into the empty bucket opposite. If you miss, you can't leave your spot to try again.

When everyone has had a turn, start again and encourage the teams to help each other. Can other teams help reach balls that have rolled away? Can you share bean bags if you have more than ten? Is the game easier if you help each other?

Alternative game – Who am I?

You may already have a version of this game which you could play. If not you can create your own. You will need a headband and some picture cards. The person wearing the headband has to ask yes/ no questions of the rest of the group to try to work out what is on the picture on their headband. Alternatively a sticker on the forehead with something written on it would work just as well. You could limit the amount of questions asked or do this in pairs. Ensure everyone gets a turn.



Experience

For this story we recommend using the Easy English version
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%205%3A13-15&version=EASY>

Where can I find the story online?

For under fives:

Gizmo's Daily Bible Byte - 190 - Galatians 5:13 - Free to Serve
https://youtu.be/AX64FW0WA4E?si=72FoPecT_atgj1zT

For five to eevens:

Galatians 5:13-16 (GNT) - Freedom in Christ
https://youtu.be/DVPWSIJKNt0?si=3IYC-_hKAOxaHm5W
 God's Story – Galatians from Crossroads Kids Club
<https://youtu.be/LrzbssH-cBU?si=uNc8b3kPsD-r4Thg>

Songs to support the story

For under fives:

Jesus Went Out of His Way – John Hardwick
<https://youtu.be/lldKu6IAyY?si=wkH0fkCUv0RQjfnl>
 Through love, serve one another – Spencer Family Music
https://youtu.be/B8IAC_ZYH7s?si=KriBJLd1VMnOQHLN

For over fives:

Love One Another (Action Song) – Kidspring Worship
<https://youtu.be/XbVGRUB1qNk?si=nvTZqFrLjRjYxKp>
 When I needed a Neighbour – Cornerstone Methodist
https://youtu.be/_0XPCUgY2o?si=nbDiu5EEA8DbgE18



Explore

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

A new story to share

In this week's passage, we are asked to consider our neighbour – just like in the story that Jesus told about The Good Samaritan. The following story explores the idea of our global neighbours and how many are impacted by changes to the climate. Older groups might like to compare it to the story in Luke 10: 25-37.

Who is my neighbour?

There was once a child, who was travelling along a dangerous road in search of safety. The child's family had no choice but to risk the terrible journey because their village had been flooded. All they owned was gone and they were exhausted.

It so happened that a group of politicians heard about the village; but they didn't think they had time to get involved, so they carried on with their day.

In the same way some people from neighbouring countries heard about what had happened; but they decided it was too far away and that there was nothing that they could do, so carried on with their day.

Finally, some children heard the news. Even though they lived far away, and had lots of things which kept them busy, they wanted to help. They thought about the things they could change and the choices they could make which would impact their neighbours in need. And they talked to other people about it.....

Alternative option for younger groups

You could use the following pictures to re-tell the story more simply or as discussion starters.



There was once a child....

...whose village had been
flooded....





...people carried on with their day...



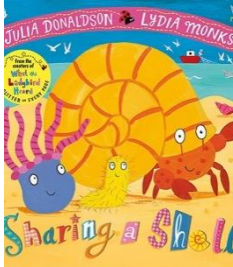
....but some children thought about the choices they could make to help their neighbours!





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.



Sharing a Shell by Julia Donaldson and Lydia Monks
<https://youtu.be/aQ6SvbrEhvl?si=t5najpW6cyYqwqgH>

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

- The passage says “We serve each other because we love each other” – what about the people we don't love?
- What sort of things might people do which cause harm to others without even thinking about it?
- Can our neighbour be someone who lives far away?
- How do we serve one another?
- What does being free mean?
- Would the world be better, if God didn't let us make our own choices?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder, if you were a wild animal, what wild animal you would like to be?
- What do you know about other countries that are affected by climate change?
- Can you think of a time when you've changed your mind about doing something because you saw it might hurt someone else?

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). You could tap the top of the box twice after the word 'box'. 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 sea shell, to introduce the Sharing a Shell story, if using.
- A chain of paper people of different sizes. Fold pieces of A4 paper and make each one into a chain of 3-4 people, but make each piece of paper into different sized people. Cut the chains up and reassemble by joining the hands so there is now a chain of different sized people. Use it to talk about who is my neighbour, different ages and types of people. The sheets of paper could be different colours eg blue, green, yellow.
- A heart. To talk about love and kindness to our neighbour, how can we show love?
- A globe. To talk about our neighbours being all around the world. Have the children got friends or relatives in other countries?
- Something to share eg smarties or raisins. Can we share with neighbours who don't have what they need?
- Packet of vegetable seeds. Can we share things that help our neighbour who might want to grow their own food?



- Photo from the toilet twinning.org website. You may have your own photo if your church has twinned their toilet. How can we link what we do here with neighbours in other countries?
- A cross. To remind us of Jesus and what he said about loving our neighbours.
- 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

Praying together: how can you involve the children actively in prayer?

Prayer Web

You will need a ball of wool



Get the children and adults to sit or stand sit in a circle. Give the ball of wool to one of the adults to begin. Say one of the prayers below, hold the end of the wool, and then throw the ball to someone else. The person across the circle should catch the ball of wool and while holding onto the wool throw the ball of wool to another person in the circle, use the prayers inserting their own answer. Continue until everyone in the circle has prayed the prayer. Make sure that as the ball of wool is passed around each person continues to hold the wool when they pass the wool to someone else. The more that the wool is passed across the circle the more it will start to resemble a spider's web. As time allows, repeat the process again for the other prayers using the same ball of wool. When you have completed the prayers, remind everyone to look and see how all their prayers are joined to one another in the web of prayers you have created.

- God I thank you for (name a person)
- God I pray for the people in (name a community, town, country)
- God please help... (a person or situation)

Spoken prayer - All Over the World

All over the world I have neighbours, sisters and brothers,
 People I know and so many others.
 People with black hair, blonde, grey or brown;
 Some live in the country and some live in town.
 We are all so different, but there's one thing we know,
 You love each one of us as we grow.
 Thank you God that we are all part of your family,
 God's children here on earth.
 Help us to love one another and know your peace
 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.

Peace mala doves

The ethos of the peace mala is:

'A Peace Mala is totally inclusive in its approach. With Peace Mala Accreditation everyone is encouraged to engage in exciting activities which remind us that we are all inter-connected and need each other. It is important for young people to learn that the diversity of the human race should be celebrated and not feared.'

This fits nicely with the theme today 'who is our neighbour and how can we love and accept all'.

You will need:

- Paper plate
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- Wool
- Coloured pencils or felt tips
- Pencil



What you do:

Either draw the body of a bird onto the plate before the session or ask the children to draw the body of a bird onto the middle of the plate (it would be good to have a template for them to draw around). This needs to take up all the middle of the plate, once it's cut out then the bits of plate left either side of the bird will become the wings.

Attach the wings to either side of the bird body, colour the tips of the wings and the tip of the tail in rainbow colours. Draw on some feet, a beak (add a rainbow necklace hanging from the birds beak) and some eyes.

Hole punch the tip of each wing and thread and secure some wool. Hang up.

Gingerbread Friends

You will need:

- 350g plain flour, plus extra for rolling out
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 125g butter



- 175g light soft brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 4 tbsp golden syrup
- Writing icing to decorate (optional)
- A person shaped cutter

What you do:

This bit can be done in advance to save you time during your session or you can buy ready mixed gingerbread that is ready to use.



Sift together the flour, bicarbonate of soda, ginger and cinnamon and pour into the bowl of a food processor. Add the butter and blend until the mix looks like breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar. (You can rub the butter in by hand, if you don't have a food processor.)

Lightly beat the egg and golden syrup together, add to the food processor and pulse until the mixture clumps together.

Tip the dough out, knead briefly until smooth, wrap in cling film and leave to chill in the fridge for 15 minutes.

This part can be done during your session.

Preheat the oven to 180C/160C Fan/Gas 4. Line two baking trays with baking paper.

Roll the dough out to a 0.5cm/¼in thickness on a lightly floured surface. Using cutters, cut out the gingerbread people shapes and place them in pairs on the baking tray, joining their hands together, leaving a gap between the pairs to allow for some spread.

Bake for 12–15 minutes, or until lightly golden-brown. Leave on the tray for 10 minutes and then move to a wire rack to finish cooling. When cooled if you wish decorate with the writing icing and cake decorations.

Alternative: Salt dough, this can either be air dried which can take 36 hours, so maybe make them and leave them till the following week to be taken home or they can be put in an oven at a low heat to set.

In a large bowl, measure out two cups plain flour and one cup table salt and mix well add about ½ a cup water first and then slowly add more water to get the correct consistency. Knead the dough until it is firm and workable. Add a bit more water if the dough is too dry. Divide your dough into several sections to make various colours of dough or you can use coffee or curry powder for more natural colours. Continue kneading until the dough is uniformly coloured.

You can make this a few days before. Store it wrapped in plastic wrap and then in a plastic bag inside the refrigerator. Before using them, make sure they are back to room temperature.

Air dry

Depending on the size of the pieces, it will take 2 to 7 days to dry completely. Turn the pieces from time to time for faster drying.

Oven dry the salt dough pieces.

Instead of air drying the uncoloured salt dough pieces, you can bake them in a conventional oven at 93°C (200°F).

The drying time depends on the thickness and size of the pieces. It can be as short as 30 minutes for small and flat pieces to several hours for bigger, thicker ones. To avoid browning,



check on the pieces from time to time. You can also cover them loosely with aluminium foil to avoid getting brown.

Once they are dried, paint to decorate them.

Low carbon footprint Smoothie

You will need:

- 1 banana
- 1 tbsp porridge oats
- 80g soft fruit (whatever you have – strawberries, blueberries)
- 150ml milk
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

What you do: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-46459714>
<https://myemissions.co/resources/food-carbon-footprint-calculator/>

Choose ingredients which have the lowest carbon fruit print.

Put all the ingredients in a blender and whizz for 1 min until smooth.

Pour the banana oat smoothie into a glass to serve, this recipe makes 2 glasses.

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:

- Loving our neighbour often means understanding that the things we do and the choices we make can affect other people, sometimes those nearby and sometimes those far away. How can we help people understand that taking care of the climate may not seem to affect our country but can be having a really big impact somewhere else. Have a look at some of the activities in these books: <https://urc.org.uk/your-faith/children-young-people/children-youth-work/go-with-greta-and-connect/>
- Jesus told a well known story about loving your neighbour. It's called the story of the Good Samaritan. Can you find a copy of the story and read it or watch it?

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story from **Galatians** with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing lorraine webb@urc.org.uk

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **Luke 12: 32-34**



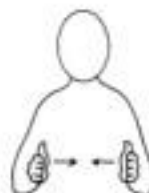
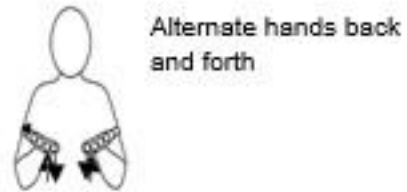
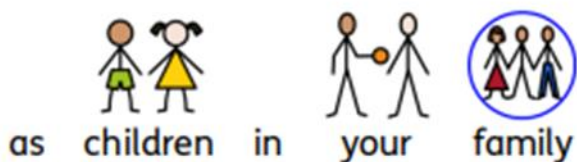
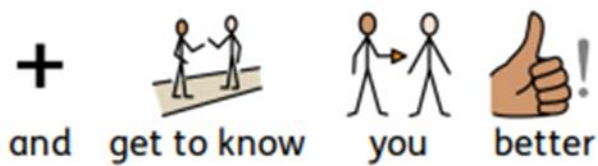
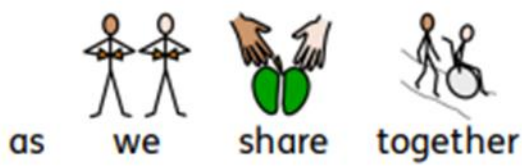




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