



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: Mark 3: 31 – 35

Theme: Family of God

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

Families are really special! They're the people who love us, care for us, and help us grow. In Jesus' time, families were very close – often everyone lived near each other, and cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents were all part of daily life. Family meant everything.

One day, while Jesus was teaching, someone told him that his mother and brothers were waiting outside. But Jesus said something surprising! He looked at the people sitting around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does what God wants is my brother, sister, and mother." (Mark 3:34–35)

Jesus wasn't saying that his own family didn't matter – he loved them very much. What he wanted everyone to understand was that God's love makes an even bigger family! Everyone who follows God and loves him becomes part of his family too. That means we belong not just to the family we live with, but also to a special, spiritual family made up of all God's people.

So, when we love and care for others the way God asks us to, we're showing that we're part of God's big family – a family full of love, kindness, and belonging.

Cultural context: In Jesus' time, *family* meant an extended household – not just parents and children, but a whole network of close relatives. Jesus' teaching was radical because he showed that following God creates a new kind of family that goes beyond blood ties.

Avoid misunderstanding: Be careful not to suggest that Jesus was rejecting or disowning His earthly family. Instead, highlight that he was *including more people* – inviting everyone who loves and follows God to belong.

Language use: Most Bible versions include gender-specific language like “brother” and “sister”. This reflects how families were spoken about in that culture. You can make it inclusive for children by adding phrases like “part of God’s big family” or “everyone who follows Jesus”.

Key focus: God’s family is a place where everyone belongs and is loved, no matter who they are or where they come from.

Here is a family film night based on the Lilo and Stitch family (Ohana means family). It can be shared with your families for a fun evening together or you could use it to host a family film night.

<https://bit.ly/familyfilmnigh>

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 – Join the families

You will need:

- Lego or coloured buttons or blocks

The aim of this game is to gather together all the ‘members’ of your family. Hide around the space sets of coloured items, with Lego or buttons or blocks or similar. Give each person/team a coloured item to start, ensuring each person/team has a different colour. Set a minute timer and challenge them to hunt for the rest of their family. First person/team to gather their family wins. It is important to ensure there are the same number of members per family to start with.

Quieter game – Go Family

You will need:

- a deck of playing cards

What you do: It's basically a game of Go Fish that we have renamed. It's a lot of fun and the aim is to be the first to get four-of-a-kind matches (a family of four in cards, either numbers or suits). It can be played with either two players or up to six.

Shuffle and deal the cards out to each player. If there are two or three players, each person should get seven cards. If there are four or more players, each person should get five cards. Remove all the jokers from the deck before you shuffle and deal the cards.

Spread the rest of the cards out face-down in the middle of the table. This creates the “family pool” Make sure all of the cards stay face down so that no one can peek. If you don't have a lot of room at the table, just stack the cards face down in the middle. When someone has to “Go Family”, they can just pick up the top card from the deck.

Start your turn by asking one player if they have a specific card. Take a look at the cards in your hand and choose to ask about cards you already have multiples of so you can make matches quicker. For example, if you have two jacks in your hand, you only need two more to make a match. The main thing to remember is that you can only ask one person at a time, and you can only ask about one rank of card (number or suit) at a time. You can only ask for a specific card if you have one or more of them in your hand already. For example, you can't ask for threes if you don't have a three in your hand. Keep in mind that once you ask about a specific card, the other players will know that you have that card in your hand. You can all strategise and try to keep track of who has what to give you the advantage in the game.

Build the families. If you have what someone asks for, you give it to them. If someone asks you if you have any queens and you do, then you have to give all of your queens to that person. You can't keep any back in your hand, and you can't lie.

Take another turn if you get the cards you asked for. If you keep getting the cards you need to make matches, you could possibly take several turns in a row before having to “Go Family” and pass the turn to the next player. You can ask the same person about a different card or ask a new person. Remember that you’re trying to make matches from the cards you have in your own hand.

Tell the player to “Go Family” if you don’t have the cards they’re asking for. If the person asked you for all of your queens and you don’t have any, tell them to “Go Family”. They have to take a card from the centre and the turn then passes to the next player.

Lay down four-of-a-kind matches to get cards out of your hand. You can’t hold matches in your hand. As soon as you get one, you have to lay it down in front of you so that everyone can see it. The person who gets rid of all their cards first wins the game.

Your group will want to play this game again and again.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

For this story we recommend using the Good News Translation <https://bit.ly/MaRk3>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: A simple animated retelling of the story from CartoonBible

<https://youtu.be/9Ph12VBUxaA?si=J7sC4OQR5HS0epTR>

Five to elevens: A short retelling by Alice Springs Baptist Church (from 2.27 if you want only the short verses) <https://youtu.be/pV747DTvdLU?si=6N4dmolwHvTI9yuc>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: God’s Family by Kids on the Move

<https://youtu.be/HBwOFlkZkWVg?si=zRPXQNdievII2ksC>

Five to elevens: Father God I wonder by Haebel Abraham

https://youtu.be/nPT8tzdC_sw?si=-UjYpsHaKxsQ2O8h

Extra: Big Family of God (Makaton Version) by Nick and Becky Drake

Worship for Everyone, Count Everyone In

<https://youtu.be/wq7pj6OB8nU?si=uiNnn327vxFPhLlg>

Explore – ways into the theme

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

A new way to explore the theme – Fantasy families

Can you name any families that you know of? (You may need to encourage the children to think of families on the telly, families at church, animal families, etc)

There are many different types of families, and one such family is our family at church. We are all one family because we are all loved by the same God.

If you could create your own fantasy family made up of anyone real or imaginary, dead or alive, who would you include in it?

Allow some time for the group to come up with different members for their fantasy family.

Provide paper and pens to allow people to create that family. Very young children will need some support with this – you could use playdough with them.

Once everyone has had time to think and create a fantasy family, spend a short amount of time discussing everyone's choices.

Finish by reminding everyone that there are many different types of families. As well as the one we live within we have a spiritual family too because we are all loved by the same God.

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).



One Family by George Shannon Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 13 July 2015

A simple book that reminds us that we are all many but are all one family. How can one be many?

<https://youtu.be/CHhCyQ7Hf6Y?si=wvY-KuRT1-UtClFB>

- What does it mean to be part of the spiritual family of God?

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

- I wonder if Jesus heard the words said outside the house (refer to Bible passage)?
- Who wouldn't you want in your family?
- What question would you ask anyone who is dead or alive, real or fake?

Wondering reflect on the theme

- The Bible passage says we are family if we are doing what God wants – I wonder what it is God wants us to do.
- I wonder how many people there are in God's family.
- I wonder why Jesus didn't mention fathers.

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:

- Russian dolls – all are one in Christ

- Laminate playdough mat – Use the mat which can be found at this link [I am part of God's Big Family Play Dough Mat](#) to create your own playdough family. I wonder who you will add to your spiritual family
- Dress up hats – we can be a son/daughter, brother/sister, cousin, niece/nephew all at the same time – we are connected
- Lego/building blocks – we can be grouped into colours, sizes of brick, connect with each other – but all are Lego/building blocks, as we are all God's.
- 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 – Family of God

What you need:

- paper
- ink pads or paint
- wipe cloths
- felt tips



Take it in turns to create a little thumb print person on each other's piece of paper. Once you have captured a thumb print for each person, decorate each one. They can look like the person or just decorated brightly. As each person is created thank God that that person is part of your spiritual family.

Spoken prayer

God of light, (*point to the light or the sun out the window*)

God of family, (*point to the sky to indicate God*)

we thank you that we are all part of a bigger family, (*point to each other*)

a spiritual family, (*spin on the spot*)

a family of God. (*raise hands up to God*)

Help us to love one another as you have loved us. (*make a heart with your fingers or hands, make the heart against your chest and then raise it to the sky, to God*)

Amen. (*jump up and punch the air*)

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.

Hand prints (whole church activity)

What you need:

- coloured paper or card
- scissors
- pencils
- pens, felt tips or colouring pencils
- decorations such as stickers, glitter or sequins
- blu tack or tape for display



What you do:

Give each young person a piece of paper or card and ask them to draw around their hand. Once done, they can cut out the hand shape carefully. Invite them to decorate their hand with colours and patterns that express who they are. Ask them to write their name on the hand and, if they wish, add a short promise, prayer or message of hope.

When everyone has finished, bring the group together to arrange the decorated hands in the shape of a cross on a wall or large piece of card. Secure the hands in place once the group is happy with the shape.

Take a moment to look at the finished cross together. Each hand represents an individual person, but together they form one picture of faith, promise and family.

You can also encourage the whole church to take part in this activity.

Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

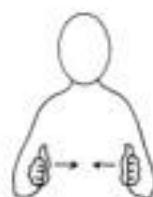
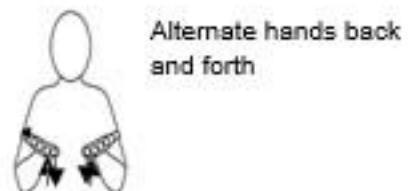
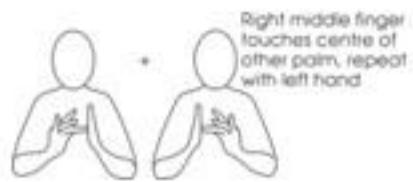
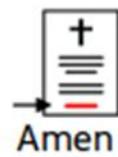
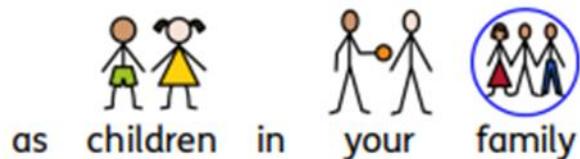
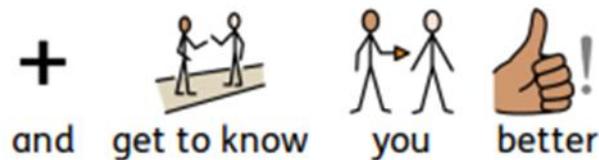
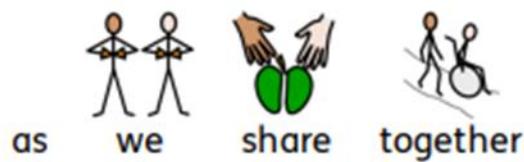
What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- Talk to someone older or younger than you and ask them to tell you something they love about being part of the spiritual family in their church.

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **God's family** 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 **Intergenerational sharing**






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









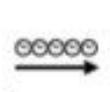
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil







For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory






For ever and ever. Amen



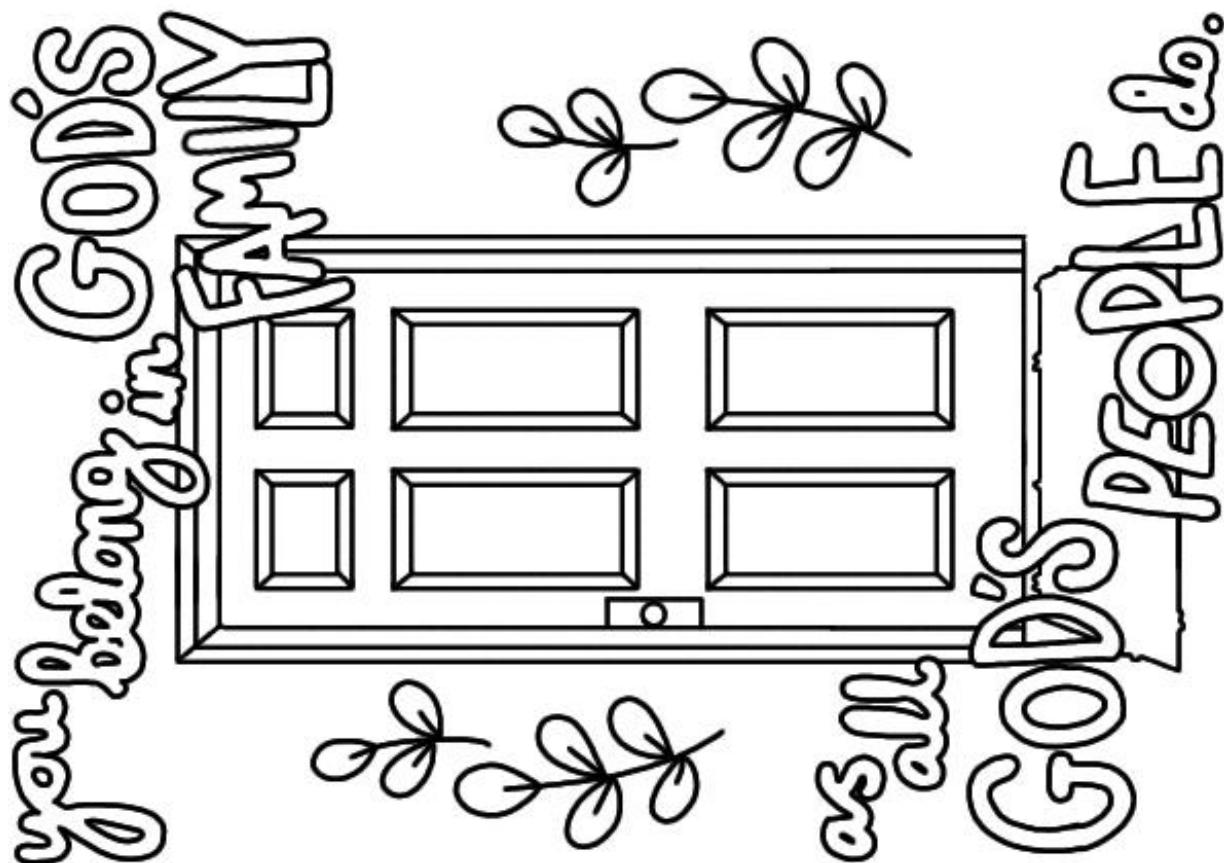


Illustration by Samara Andrews

