



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>

Proverbs 27:1

Theme: Live for today with the anticipation of God's surprises

Contents:

Introduction	1
Together	1
Experience	2
Explore	3
Express	5
Handouts	8

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

This is the first in a series under the theme of surprises. We start in Proverbs, which is a book of wisdom for daily life written primarily by wise Solomon. It is a book that tells no stories but gives guiding words for a better life. It has two main threads: living a humble life and learning from those who have gone before us.

The words we find in Proverbs 27:1 reminds us that it's good to have a plan for the future but live in a way that anticipates and expects God to surprise us. It's a chance to think how exciting tomorrow might be with God in charge.

However, for some children, especially those who are neurodivergent, the concept of surprise can be a challenging one and may make them anxious. Be aware of this and do not over-emphasise the sense of uncertainty for these children. It may be of value to introduce the concept of "plan A" and "plan B" – that when things change unexpectedly we can form a new plan, and that God knows the plans made for us and they are not plans designed to make us anxious because God has promised to be trustworthy. Focus on positive surprises children may have experienced in the past where it made them anxious for a time but the outcome was good. What strategies do they use to cope with the unexpected?



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

Grandma's footsteps/what time is it?

This game is a lot of fun as you play with the theme of waiting for the surprise.

Ask the group to line up at one end of the room.

The leader stands at the other end of the room with their back turned.

The group all ask together – What time is it?

The leader shouts out a time e.g 3 o'clock.

The group all take three steps closer, counting out loud.

Then they ask again, this continues until the leader shouts NOW!

The group run away and try not to be caught by the leader.

Game then continues.



Alternative game

Make them laugh

The aim of this game is to do something surprising or unexpected to try and make another player laugh.

One player is selected and must close their eyes and count to 20.

During this time all other players must prepare their own pose or action that they think will cause the player to laugh.

At the end of the countdown the player opens their eyes. They must not laugh.

Repeat the countdown and try different poses/actions until the player laughs.

The player then selects the individual who caused them to laugh. This individual becomes “counter” and the game repeats.

Increase the difficulty by not allowing the player to smile.

Experience

For this story we recommend using the Contemporary English version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=proverbs+27%3A1&version=CEV>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: What is Surprise? Smile and Learn

<https://youtu.be/6OkG0PK7S08?si=hDUckOp7tIBQrO31>

Over fives: The Book of Proverbs by Trueway Kids

<https://youtu.be/kRqqdXzPIQs?si=dN1-nacLWOPUdODM>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: Open your eyes to God's surprise by Boz the bear

https://youtu.be/9dL9YFCDIPI?si=G8025_jllpjT_IJr

Five to elevens: God is a surprise by Written by Harry H. Pritchett Jr and St James Westminster

https://youtu.be/y5a4kvg91UE?si=XHz3EAmcExT_xRv4



Explore

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

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

This week's passage helps us to think about God's plans and how sometimes God can surprise us.

Starter Activity: The Remembered Bible. Ask what stories in the Bible the group can think of that show God surprising someone (e.g Moses and the burning bush, Mary and Gabriel, Jesus risen again). As they respond, capture the answers on a large piece of paper or small pieces of paper that are then put on a washing line in Biblical order. Resist the urge to discuss any, keep the activity fast paced.

Discuss how surprises can be good and bad. A surprise can make you happy and excited and a bad surprise might leave you feeling nervous or anxious.

Game: Play a run around game to encourage the children to consider whether each example they gave was a good surprise or a bad surprise. Shout out their bible story examples and the group run to either side of the room to show whether they think it's a good or bad surprise. Keep a good pace, but encourage the group to explain their response each time.

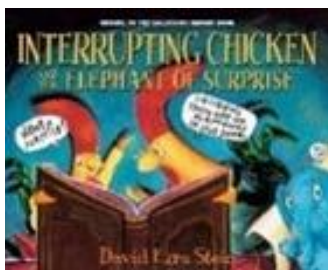
Begin to unpack, how it might look if God surprised us tomorrow. I wonder how we might react. Ask if anyone has had a time when God has surprised them.

This would be a good time to introduce the other 3 stories that we will be looking at in this series, some of the children might like to look them up as preparation.

Emphasise that it is good to make plans but we should also be ready for God to surprise us.

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.



'The Interrupting Chicken and the Elephant of Surprise' by David Ezra Stein

https://youtu.be/Shq8G3QY9R0?si=VSH4-QVlaeqQeQL_

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

- How do we handle surprises? Do we like them?
- Can you think of any surprising stories in the Bible?
- Has God ever surprised you? How has God surprised you this week?



Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder how God could surprise us tomorrow?
- I wonder how we're going to make the most of today?

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 Jack in the box or pop-up toys - talk about the excitement we have while waiting for a surprise
- A small pass-the-parcel - talk about unwrapping the layers and the surprise you get in each layer – in our story today we have learn about surprises
- A calendar – talk about all the surprises we may get today
- A lift the flap book – talk about what might be under the flap and how exciting is it to be surprised when it is revealed
- A scarf – Play peepo and build the anticipation up and then be talk about how we can enjoy being surprised this very moment
- 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

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

Timed prayers

You will need:

A timer, alternatively use this digital countdown timer.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywT3v0pTtuU>

Set a timer for 10 seconds at a time.

For each 10 seconds pray for a different topic. Announce each topic and what you are expecting everyone to be thinking about before you set and reset the timer.

Suggested topics:

Thank you
Sorry
Please

OR

God
Others
Ourselves





Spoken prayer

Dear Jesus

Help me to take time to be with you.
Help me to know that you are close by.

Thank you that you want to be my friend
Help me to be ready for your surprises today,
and to know you only ever want good for us. 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. <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>.

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.



Jumping Toy

Remember the story suggested that we should look for the surprises in today. Encourage the children to wonder what they may be.

You will need:

Paper
Things to decorate with e.g. googly eyes, stickers, etc.
Two paper cups
A small elastic band
Glue, or double sided tape and a stapler

What you do:

Draw an image (this could be a flower, or a person or an animal) to stick on the front of your cup.
Take one of the paper cups and cut two slits on each side, making flaps that can fold backwards.
Put your elastic around one of the flaps and secure the flap in place with a stapler.
Twist the elastic band to make an X and attach it to the other flap.
Secure it in place with a stapler also. The elastic band should be tight. If it is too big, try tying a knot on one side of the elastic band to make it smaller.
Glue or use double sided tape to tape your image to the cup with the elastic band.
Place your other paper cup upside down on a flat surface and put your frog on top of it.
Holding the sides of the cup with the elastic band, push down onto the upside-down cup, then let go – your creation will jump up!





Reflexes - Reaction Time Test

You will need – 30cm ruler, table

1 – Participants work in pairs for this activity. Person A will sit at a table with their hand over the edge of the table with their hand open. Person B will hold a 30cm ruler with the 0cm end level with the top of the hand.

2 – At a random time, person B will release the ruler, and person A must grab the ruler as quickly as possible. (Person 1 should not give any sound or gestures to indicate when they will drop the ruler.) Record the cm mark where person A catches the ruler.

3 – Repeat this three times, to see if person A can improve their reaction time. Then switch roles and repeat.

4 – Try repeating the activity with different stimulus to indicate when the ruler is dropped.

- Sound – Person A closes eyes. Person B says “now” when ruler is released.
- Touch – Person A closes eyes. Person B taps shoulder when ruler is released.



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:

- Make a list or draw pictures of all the surprise stories that you can find in the Bible. What do they tell us about God?
- Talk to others about the best surprise that ever happened to them. Could you plan a nice but small surprise for someone else?

We hope you enjoyed exploring this **proverb** with us.

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

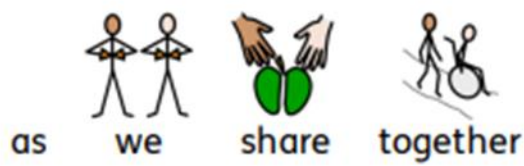
Why not have a look at next week's resource on **Noah**



Jesus our friend,



be with us today



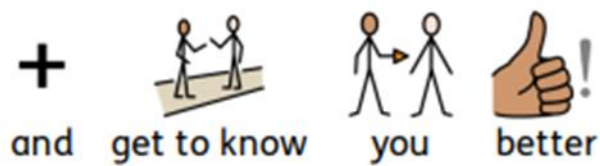
as we share together



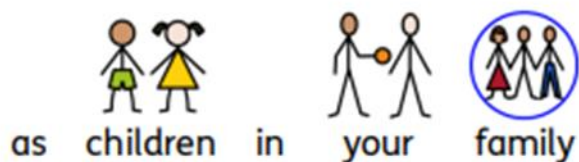
pray together



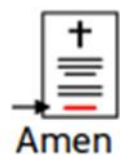
play together



and get to know you better



as children in your family



Amen



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



Alternate hands back and forth



