



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>

Deuteronomy 6: 4-9

Theme: Keep God's word with you, every day and every where

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

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Welcome to 2025 – and your first theme for the new year is a big one: The Bible.

As usual, across the four weeks of the theme we will be exploring an Old Testament reading, a Psalm, a Gospel passage and an Epistle (letter).

This week's focus will be keeping God's word with you, every day and everywhere and we shall be exploring this using Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

This passage is the first section of the Shema – a prayer which is recited twice daily by observant Jews as part of their morning and evening prayers. It is usually said with the hands covering the eyes. The second section of the Shema specifies what will happen if God's commands are heeded – and what will happen if they are not!

Orthodox Jews may be seen wearing a kippah (skull caps), a tallit (prayer shawl), and tefillin (phylacteries). The tefillin consist of two black leather boxes and straps to hold them on. One is worn on the biceps, and its strap, which is tied with a special knot, is wound by the wearer seven times around the forearm and hand—on the left arm for right-handed people and on the right for those who are left-handed. The second box is worn on the forehead at the hairline, with its straps



going around the back of the head, connected at the top of the neck with a special knot, and hanging in front on each side. Within the boxes are scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah. Tefillin are worn to help Jews keep the commandment in verse 8.

The reasoning behind these articles is to enable the wearer to have God's commands close to their heart, their minds and their hands (Matthew 22:37-38).

A mezuzah is a piece of parchment inscribed with specific Hebrew verses from the Torah, which Jews fix to the doorposts of their homes (verse 9) although the word is also used to include the decorative covering for the scroll. They are always deliberately fixed at a slight angle – to remind those who see them that only God is perfect. You can find out more about mezuzahs [athttps://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z2tpjty/revision/1](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z2tpjty/revision/1)

These religious devices enable worshippers to remember God's commands without writing directly on property – graffiti is not recommended! – or tattooing (which is proscribed in Leviticus 19:28). If members of your group do wish to follow the passage literally, please ensure they use washable pens.

The passage invites believers to talk about God, and what God expects from us, and what God will do for us. This can result in some wonderful intergenerational conversations, and these should be encouraged. We find "God's commands" in the Bible and **this passage, particularly exploring it at the beginning of a new year, is an opportunity to give members of your group their own Bible (see the list below for suggested/recommended translations). Perhaps older members of the church could sponsor, or donate, suitable Bibles for your group.**

Having a Bible close to hand can remind us of what we should be doing and may be a source of comfort as well as information. Be aware, though, that the passage doesn't insist that we read scripture – but that we should discuss it with our friends and family, so it doesn't matter if members of your group can't read well, or don't read English well - it is the conversations that are important.

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 What book am I?

The leader writes the titles of well-known children's books on post it notes and, without showing them to the players, sticks one post it note on each person's forehead (If it doesn't stick very well, the person may have to use a finger to hold it in place!). They each then have the chance, in turn, to ask a yes/no question of one of the others in the group. The winner is the first person to guess what their book is.

Alternative game I went to the Library

This is a memory game. Sit in a circle. The first person says "I went to the library and I read....." and says the name of a book, for example "I went to the library and I read Where's Spot." The second person then repeats "I went to the library and I read Where's Spot and...." and adds their own choice of book to the list, for example "I went to the library and I read Where's Spot and The Jolly Postman." The game continues until somebody is unable to remember all the books said so far.

Experience

For this story we recommend using the Children's International Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%206%3A%204-9&version=ICB>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: The Shema (Deuteronomy 6) for children by Growing in God's love

https://youtu.be/YxWEsU_O3ss?si=dQVo9ioU-888-mYJ

Over fives: Love the Lord you God explanation with images by Hope Discovery Kids

https://youtu.be/J46OJ1AIYEE?si=ebiYPLLiTA_3Aeeo

Songs to support the story



Under fives: Read your Bible, pray every day by Mega Harvest Kids
<https://youtu.be/ABfqZ2aQ8Xw?si=RQ64TAALWuIMktAw>

Five to elevens: God is love by Nick and Becky Drake
<https://youtu.be/Sc1wHXmXKsk?si=HRGQiJHMMV4erh6e>

Love the Lord your God by CJ and Friends <https://youtu.be/vdMlxCdIY-c?si=IfMv5iAvYcYXsWHD>

Explore

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

A new way to explore the passage

This passage is a reminder of how important the Bible is to us as Christians and it's a great opportunity to begin the month's theme by exploring what the Bible is together. These video links could be a good starter activity:

What's the Bible by Animation Crossroads Kids
<https://youtu.be/dv8dHsxjLd8?si=HRzgcpvwch7TxlyG>

Books of the Bible song by Kidspring
<https://youtu.be/Af1qK3xnYPc?si=sOA6AhIm0UOFv5tf>

Begin by asking what the group already know about the Bible and perhaps do this by passing a bible round as a talking tool, capture their thoughts and comments on a big sheet of paper.

Now let's explore it more together using any or all of the following activities; keep the pace fast and just have fun:

Bible Line relay race

You will need: pieces of paper or Duplo bricks with the books of the Bible on (one per sheet /brick), washing line and pegs. One set per team.

In two or more teams, the children race to collect the books one at a time whilst their team tries to put them all in the correct order, either pegging them on a line or stacking the Duplo bricks to build a Bible Tower.

It is a race. When the teams have finished, simply read out the order of books from a Bible so the teams can see what they got correct.

Take the opportunity to wonder and share together what you might know about the books. Highlight the Old and New Testament.

How many books?

You will need: as many soft back books as possible, old ones that you don't mind dropping.



Put the children into group/pairs. The task is to stack as many books as possible in 40 – 60 seconds on one person. Begin by saying stacking the books on their hands and then have fun choosing different body parts each time. For example, how many books can you stack on your head, on your back, on your foot, on your tummy and so on.

Once you have had fun, explain that you can beat everybody, you can balance 66 books on your head etc. simply by using a Bible. Explain that the Bible is one book made of 66 books, Different types of books, just like in a library, romance, adventure, instruction books and so on – all in one book.

Bible Ship Game

Similar to the game Ship (climb the rigging etc.) but exploring what the Bible is to us. No equipment needed for this physical game.

Explain that you will shout out words (they are all things that the Bible is in our lives) and the group need to do the actions – go through the moves and words first before playing. I wonder if the group can come up with any others?

Keep it fast and have fun.

Bible – stand with hands in book shape as if reading

Light – stand with arms up flashing your hands like a torch or lighthouse

Library – shout 66

Map left – all run to the left

Map right – all run to the right

Old – pretend to be old like Abraham

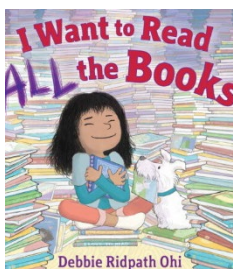
New – jump and shout Jesus

Guide – get into pairs one leading the other

Love letter – put hands over heart and say Aaaah!

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.



'I want to read all the books' by Debbie Ridpath Ohi



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

- Why should you keep the Bible, or verses of the Bible, close at hand?
- What parts of the Bible might be important to remember and why?
- You might not want to write verses on your forehead, but how could you best remember them and think about them during the day?
- Should we treat the Bible as a special book in any way? And what do we mean by that?
- Why might some people want to write/underline/draw in their Bibles and why might some people not want to do that? What do you think?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- What is your favourite book to read or listen to?
- I wonder what's your favourite Bible story/Bible verse?
- I wonder who talks with you about the Bible?
- I wonder where you (will) keep your Bible?

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 variety of different children's bibles – flick through them, look at the pictures together and talk about the stories
- A bookmark – this can help us to find our favourite passages
- A heart – remember God's word is in our hearts, minds and soul
- Pictures of Bible stories or a Godly Play set – the Bible is made of lots of different books, it is God's Library
- Some mark making materials such as chalk or wax crayons and paper – we can write or draw our favourite story from the bible to help us keep it close and remember it
- The passage said that people should write it on the doorframe
- 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?

Creative Prayer

Invite the children to create their own prayer with actions, using the words from the reading.

For example, they might choose to say, "God, help me remember you are my God. Help me love you with my heart, with my soul, with my strength" and point to head and heart and then show their muscles. Or to say, "God be with me wherever I go" while walking round the room.



Spoken prayer

Dear God,
Please
be in my head,
help me to understand the world around me;
be in my eyes,
help me to see you in everything I see;
be in my mouth,
and in all the words I speak;
be in my heart,
and in my thinking.
Please be with me always
in my comings and goings
my standing up and sitting down
and in everything I do.
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.

Making Activity - Graffiti Wall Art

You will need:

- Paper
- Assorted pens, wax crayons and paint
- Collage materials
- Glue

What you do:

Choose some words from the Bible passage to create a graffiti wall. This can be a joint project or each person can create their own image. Encourage the use of different art materials and collage to create their design and get them to focus on the words from the passage and express this in whatever way they like. If you have any available, you could use brick patterned paper, or remnants of wallpaper work well. If you are creating a joint project you can add to the wall over the next few weeks.



Calendar

One good way to get to know God and Jesus better is by reading your Bible regularly, though sometimes we need a little reminder. As the new year begins, let's make a calendar that we can use to remind us.

You will need:

- Templates (attached below) or a calendar sticker
- Drawing/colouring materials or magazines and a glue stick

What you do:

- Decide whether you are going to make a single page calendar and stick the dates on or whether you are going to make a four-page calendar using our template. If you are making a four-page calendar, you will need to print the pages out on card. For a single page calendar, maybe glue a piece of paper onto a piece of scrap card to make it a little firmer.
- Decorate the picture space in whatever way you choose that makes a good reminder to read your Bible. One choice might be to choose a verse from the Bible (some examples below) and cut letters from a magazine to stick on and write the verse. Another choice might be to illustrate a favourite Bible passage by drawing or collaging. If you are making a single page calendar, make sure you leave room to stick the calendar part on.



Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

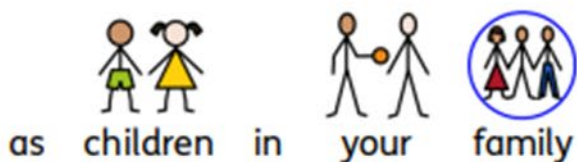
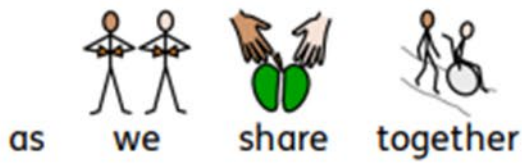
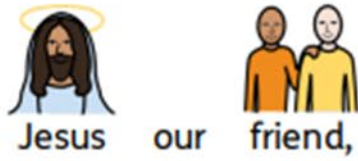
What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- Ask some of your friends and family to show you their Bibles, if they have them. How many different Bibles can you find? Where do people keep them?
- Have you ever tried using a Bible app on your phone? Scripture Union produce an app called Guardians of Ancora you might like to try.

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **Deuteronomy** 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 **Psalm 119**



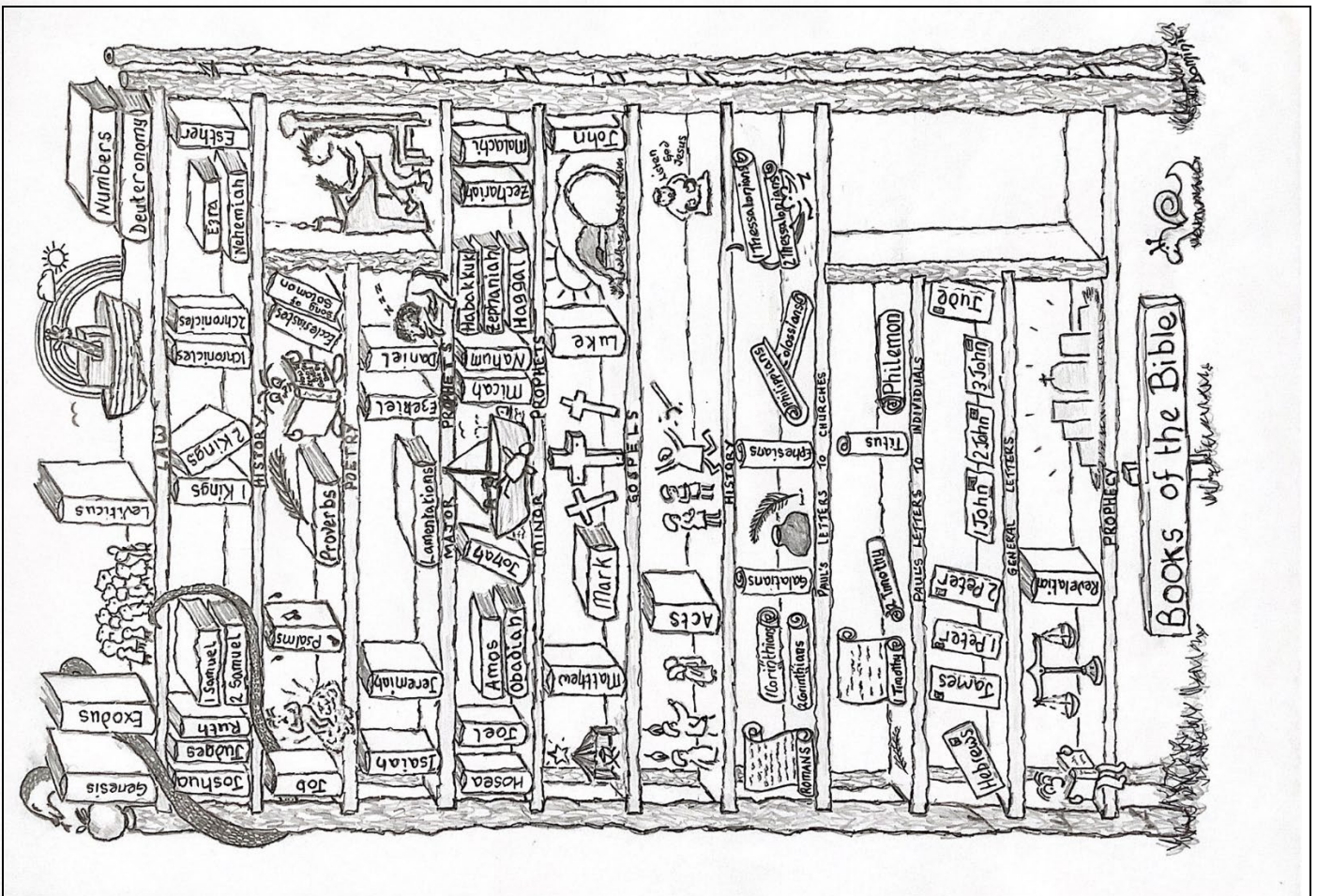


Illustration by Dominic Barton

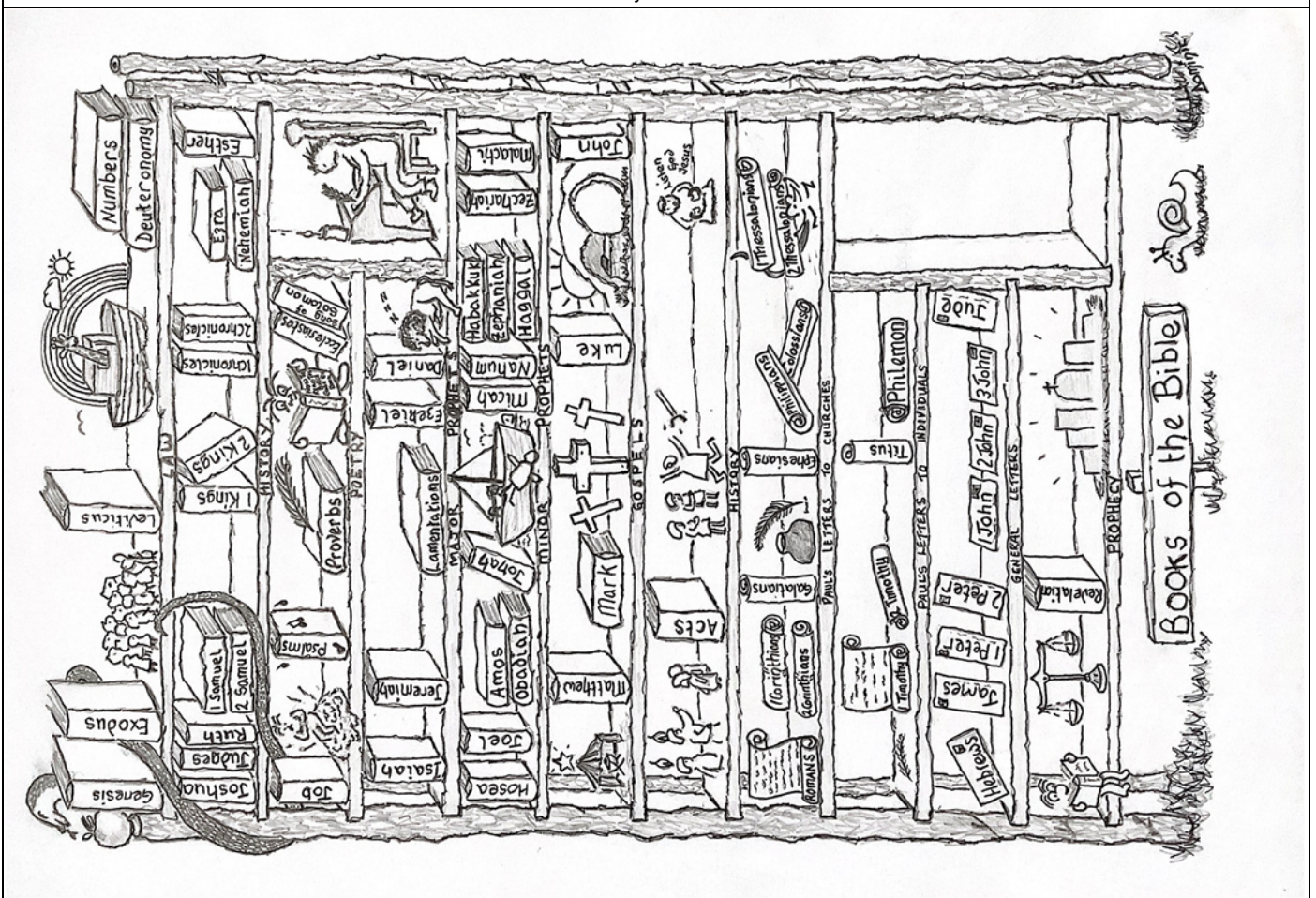




Illustration by Dominic Barton

