

# 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>

## Luke 4: 16-24 - Jesus reads the holy book

Theme: The Bible is for sharing and for passing on to others

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

The synagogue is where Jews gather for worship – it is their equivalent to a Christian's 'church'. The original Hebrew name for the synagogue is Beit Knesset (House of Gathering) – the word 'Synagogue' is the Greek translation of this phrase.

To read aloud in the Synagogue is an honour – particularly for Jesus as he came from Nazareth which, although now the largest Christian city in Israel was, in Jesus' time, a small town that was most well known for being the stables for the Roman army so people from Nazareth were not always respected. This suggested that the Elders at the Synagogue knew about Jesus and his teachings and ministry.

Although the passage says that Jesus was handed the 'Book of Isaiah', it would not have been a book as we understand it, but a scroll.

You may notice that the scroll was 'handed to him'. In the Synagogue there are normally three people involved in reading – one who takes the scroll from the Aron Kadesh (where the scrolls are kept) and taken to the reader who stands in the Bimah (similar to a lectern – but a platform in the centre of the worship space). There is also someone who will correct the reader's pronunciation or translate the ancient Hebrew into the local language. After the reading the scroll is returned to the



Aron Kadash and locked away again before a sermon is given (Jesus' short speech would be considered a sermon.)

In this way the scripture is opened, shared, closed and passed on. In our churches, we usually leave the Bible open after the reading – to show that the Word of God is always available to us.

Be aware that there might be some trigger points, particularly in the Isaiah portion of the reading, for those in your group who may be, for example, sight impaired – or know someone who is.

## 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**

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### In-person game - Pass the parcel

Print and wrap Bible verses with treats into a parcel. Everyone sits down and pass the parcel around the circle. When the music stops, the player holding the parcel reads the verse and gets a treat. Repeat until there are no more layers and the bible reading has been read together.



### Alternative game - Passing the scroll

This is a simple relay race and will work with as few as two children. Teams start from one end of the hall and the leaders stand at the other end of the hall. Each team needs a rolled up piece of plain paper as a scroll. In turn the children run to a leader carrying the scroll, the leader tells them a word to write on the scroll (or gives them the word written on a strip of paper which they then glue onto the scroll) and then the child rolls the scroll up and runs with it to the next person in the team. The winning team is the team who first complete the sentence on their scroll. For just two children, you could have a simple sentence such as 'God's word is for sharing' and they could run back and forth between leaders to get the next word. For more children you will want to choose a sentence that is a bit longer such as 'He has chosen me to tell good news to the poor.' Or "While you heard me reading these words just now, they were coming true!"

## Experience

For this story we recommend using the Easy-to-read version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke%204%3A16-24&version=ERV>

### Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Saddleback Kids <https://youtu.be/aRCcRXsgXVY?si=fMgq07O1dMNw191X>

Over fives: Douglas Brown, Revised Common Lectionary readings

<https://youtu.be/046ZEKD20HA?si=h0ArLvU8PShmKWol>

### Songs to support the story

Under fives: Jesus, Saviour of the World – Champion Kids

[https://youtu.be/vm9QK5JDGpM?si=\\_snsZ9P1MWJdEas8](https://youtu.be/vm9QK5JDGpM?si=_snsZ9P1MWJdEas8)

Five to elevens: Waymaker – Shout Praises Kids

[https://youtu.be/K9a0j9rOUI8?si=cV\\_FmKmpg5EOcTc6](https://youtu.be/K9a0j9rOUI8?si=cV_FmKmpg5EOcTc6)

## Explore

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

### A new way to explore the passage – A Bible Study

*Let's explore together by looking at the bible reading and wondering what it is saying to us today.*

*Begin by reading the passage, and then slowly go over the passage again and wonder about some of the things said in it.*

*Maybe even write some words or do some drawing to illustrate it as you go.*

*You could do this on a large sheet all together or on smaller sheets individually.*

*You could simply discuss and wonder as you read, like this:*

### Jesus Goes to His Hometown

16 Jesus travelled to Nazareth, the town where he grew up. On the Sabbath day he went to the synagogue as he always did. He stood up to read.



*I wonder how Jesus felt when he stood up to read? How would you feel? Do you ever get asked to read in church or in school? What is it like? Is it different reading the Bible to reading other books?*

17 The book of Isaiah the prophet was given to him. He opened the book and found the place where this is written:

18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me. He has chosen me to tell good news to the poor. He sent me to tell prisoners that they are free and to tell the blind that they can see again. He sent me to free those who have been treated badly 19 and to announce that the time has come for the Lord to show his kindness.”

*I wonder if Jesus was told what to read or if he chose it himself?*

*This passage from Isaiah says a lot of confusing things: I wonder why the poor need good news and not food? I wonder why prisoners should be set free if they have done bad things? I wonder why it only mentions blind people being healed and not anyone who needed healing?*

*Do you know any stories about Jesus or God doing any of the things mentioned in this passage?*

20 Jesus closed the book, gave it back to the helper, and sat down. As everyone in the synagogue watched him closely, 21 he began to speak to them. He said, “While you heard me reading these words just now, they were coming true!”

*I wonder what you would have thought if you had been there and Jesus had said this? Do you think it makes a difference that the people probably knew him since he was a child? Does the fact they've always known you ever make it easier or harder for you to say things to your friends and family about God?*

22 Everyone there said good things about Jesus. They were amazed to hear him speak such wonderful words. They said, “How is this possible? Isn't he Joseph's son?”

*Why do you think they were surprised? Do you think they had ever suspected anything special about Jesus?*

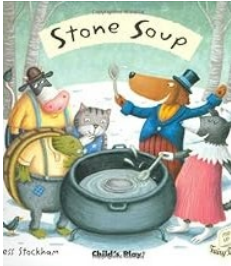
23 Jesus said to them, “I know you will tell me the old saying: ‘Doctor, heal yourself.’ You want to say, ‘We heard about the things you did in Capernaum. Do those same things here in your own hometown!’” 24 Then he said, “The truth is, a prophet is not accepted in his own hometown.

*What do you think it means “A prophet is not accepted in his own hometown”? What is a prophet? Have you ever tried to talk to people in church about your faith? How good are they at listening to what you say? Would you rather speak out or keep quiet?*



## 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.



**Stone Soup** a folk story Illustrated by Jess Stockham

<https://youtu.be/0n9qDdX8Hk8?si=xOAH3XadVPSP2-sa>

*I wonder what part of the story you liked the best?*

*I wonder if this story helps you think about God in any way?*

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

- Have you ever been asked to read the bible in church or in school? What does it feel like?
- Why do you think Jesus said that the words he was reading were coming true?
- What does it feel like not to be believed?
- Why do you think the people in the synagogue didn't believe what Jesus said?
- How would you feel if someone said to you that the Bible was written about them?

### Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder what your favourite book is and how you found it?
- I wonder what is the most special thing someone ever shared with you?
- I wonder if you've ever told the truth and not been believed?

### 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 scroll – In Jesus' time they used scrolls instead of books to read
- A bible or a big book – When we read, we need to open the book. Then to say we have finished reading we close the book and sometimes even say 'the end'. It is fun to share our books
- An image of a family – Who are the people in our family?
- A newspaper – a newspaper is full of all kinds of news
- A Lego or toy house – Jesus lived in the area of this story. He was near his home. Where is your home? Is it nearby or far away?
- 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

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

## Butterfly Prayers

As we reflect on opening and closing the Bible and spreading the message, we can include a creative prayer which involves opening and closing and spreading to create something beautiful.

You will need a very large piece of paper folded in half like a book and then opened out again, and some paints of different colours.

Each person who wishes to can contribute a sentence or a few words as a prayer. They may wish to think of people they would like God to bless, things which are concerning them, thank you's for people who help them, thank you's for the world, sorry for things that aren't right etc. After each contribution, the child tips a blob of paint onto one side of the paper as everyone says AMEN together. Once everyone has had chance to contribute and drop a blob of paint, fold the paper so that the paint is on the inside and press down firmly. Open the paper up again to see a beautiful butterfly pattern – our prayers have spread out like God's love and created something (hopefully) beautiful.

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## Spoken prayer

*During this prayer, everyone can use their hands like a book, folded closed whenever the word "closed" is said and opened out whenever the word "open" is said.*

Dear Jesus

Thank you for opening up your story for us today.

When we close our hearts to the people who need our help,

Remind us to open them, just as you did.

When we close our ears to hearing your message,

Help us to be open and recognise when you're speaking to us.

When our mouths are closed because we're shy or nervous about sharing your story,

Help us to open them and shout out loud and brave that we are your friends.

When our bibles are closed and we forget about you

Remind us to open them up and read your story again.

Amen.

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## 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.

## Make a scroll

*You will need:*

Paper and pen





Two pencils or pieces of dowel  
Used wet teabags  
Ribbon

*What you do:*

Take your sheet of paper and use the used teabags to age the paper by rubbing the teabags over it. Allow the paper to dry properly. Use a pen or felt tip to write or draw on the scroll 'The time has come for the Lord to show his kindness'. For children not yet ready to write, they can draw a picture of a clock or you









The time has come for the the Lord to show his kindness.

could print the words out so that children can stick them in. (See below). Then tape the top and bottom of the page to a pencil or dowel and roll up like a scroll. Fasten by tying a ribbon around the middle of your scroll.

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## Communication

How could you tell today's Bible story to someone who couldn't speak or read English? As individuals or as teams, come up with a way to communicate the story. Maybe you could create a comic strip or an animation, maybe you could act it out or photograph tableaux, maybe you could use puppets or do a dance or create a piece of art.

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## 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:

- Have you ever been asked or offered to read the Bible in church, in your group, in a school assembly? Perhaps you could find a passage you like and practise reading it. Then why not offer to read it out loud?
  - Can you make a plan to read a bit of the Bible every day this week? You will want to find a version that is easy to understand – maybe even a book of Bible stories – or watch some of the videos again that you've had in your FACT postcards
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We hope you enjoyed exploring the story from **Luke** with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing [lorraine webb@urc.org.uk](mailto:lorraine webb@urc.org.uk)

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **2 Timothy 3**





