



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: www.bit.ly/FACT-how-to-sheet

Psalm 148: 1-14 - Praise

Theme: Praise God in heaven (Our Father, who art in heaven)

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

In this session we'll be exploring what it means to 'praise'. We'll wonder if there is a difference between praising God and praising a friend (or being praised ourselves) for doing something well.

We are aware that the writer of our reading this week (part of Psalm 148) uses male pronouns to refer to God. This is how the psalmist saw their relationship with God – as a father figure – and this links back to The Lord's Prayer in which Jesus encourages his followers to think of God as 'Our Father, and to praise him; Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name (use whichever version of The Lord's Prayer your group is familiar with.)

The psalmist also goes to great length to let us know that it is not just us humans that should be praising God – it is everything in creation; and that includes everything in heaven, too! That's a lot of praising.

Whenever identifying God with a parent there is always a risk that there are members of your group for whom experience of a parent has not been positive. Be aware of any issues that might be raised and be prepared to offer support individually if necessary.



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

Active game - Chicken and the hen house alternative

This is an adaptation of the game Chicken in a hen house, using some of the imagery in the Psalm.

You might want to play the original first.

Everyone gets into pairs and names themselves A and B.

The group moves around the room and when you shout out one of the instructions, the A and B partners must find each other and perform the actions. The last pair to get into the position is out. Keep going until you have a winning pair.

The actions are:

Chicken in a Hen House – A goes onto all fours on the ground, while B sits on their back and pretends to be a chicken. Chicken noises are a must, maybe lay an egg or two.

Row Boat – The pair sit on the floor, one in front of the other and sing 'row, row, row your boat...' as loud as they possibly can, whilst pretending to row back and forth.



Lover's Leap – One person has to leap into the other's arms.

Bunk Beds – One person lies on their back on the ground. They must lift up the other person above them, top to tail (so they hold their partner's ankles and their partner holds their ankles, like bunk beds! Doing a plank)

Once they have played this, play it again using some of the imagery from the Psalm as follows:

Praising sea creatures: A sits on the floor pretending to be an octopus and B swims around them like a fish.

Praising weather: Both crouch down and then leap up shouting 'bang', like thunder.

Praising animals: A chooses a wild animal to be and B chooses a smaller tame animal to be each time.

Praising old and young: A shouts 'Praise the Lord', B shouts 'Hallelujah' (actions can be incorporated).

Alternative game – What's in a noise?

We may use different noises to praise God, singing, clapping, cheering, words, instruments. Play a listening game, you may be able to create your own sounds, even ones which link to church (tamborine, organ, wine being poured for communion, money in collection plate, Bible being opened, bells) or play this game with 20 everyday sounds.

Guess the sound by Mister teach -

<https://youtu.be/n1m4h79JZso?si=j9fADyaurPhMcV27>

Experience

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

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

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20148%3A%201-14&version=ICB>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Psalm 148 as a song with images by Songs of Scripture

<https://youtu.be/LpUOD8f7SR4?si=feZeKEfjMisIZgy1>

Five to elevens: Psalm 148 told with creation video by Lunchboxkids

https://youtu.be/rMGqVaQH3_k?si=QCwYgSo21rpUdsWf

Songs to support the story

Under fives: Everyone Praise the Lord by Toddler Praise

<https://youtu.be/Y8KEhRS23T8?si=hYW7O2Kkmb8NE8yh>

Five to elevens: Let everything that has breath praise the Lord

<https://youtu.be/jDR-ejNxY3A?si=XcAVcgPRq7wTAADs>



Explore

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

A new story to share

Explain that today we are exploring Prayer, particularly Praise.

Ask what do you think we mean by the word Praise? Take some suggestions, allowing the group to just wonder together.

When Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, he started by saying 'Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed is your name.' Jesus was showing us that we should begin by recognising who we are praying to. We are praying to Creator God, God who made the whole world, including us. Many prayers are simply telling God how great we think God is. This is what it means to praise God.

The Bible is full of prayers and songs of praise to God. Psalm 148 is just one of them.

If you haven't already done so, share the Psalm with the group.

What do we see in this Psalm?

We see how all of creation praises God.

The Bible tells us that God is with us continuously – so therefore we praise continuously, with our whole lives.

How do we praise God every day?

Activity. (to encourage the group to think of ways we praise)

This is an adaptation on the game, I went to the shop and I bought.

Children sit in a group and the leader starts by saying I praise God by..... Add in an example such as helping others, singing, smiling at the sun....

Then the next person says I praise God by repeating your idea and adding their own. This continues round the group with each person adding their own ideas, until it reaches the leader who started it.

You might want to give children time to chat about ideas before playing the game so that they are ready.

You can repeat the game by adding in who you are. For example play an animal round, I am a tiger and I praise God by, next person is a different animal and so on. Or try a part of creation I'm a tree and I praise God by..... And so on.

Little ones could have slips of paper to help them choose what they are in the game.

It is important that you keep these games fast paced so that children keep energised.

Actions can also add energy to the game.

Once you have played the game and explored different ways to praise, you might want to show the bible video or read the Psalm again before moving on to using the questions and getting creative.

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.



This I know by Clay Anderson

Join a family on an unforgettable road trip and experience the wonder of God's world.

<https://youtu.be/9HdOH0qoCow?si=c-jbYKIFx97rj6gu>

- I wonder how you would sing praises to God everyday?

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

- How do you praise God everyday in your life?
- Why do we praise God? What's it for?
- How do we praise God when we don't feel like it?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder if praising God is the same as prayer?
- I wonder what kind of praise is pleasing to God?
- I wonder who else do we praise?

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 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)
- A ribbon streamer – Talk about how we praise God, encourage the children to shout 'Praise God' together
- People – place the people around and shout 'Praise God' together
- Animals – place the animals out and shout 'Praise God' together
- A rain stick musical instrument (this could be a homemade shaker) – listen to the rain noise from the rain stick and shout 'Praise God' together
- An image of mountains – place the image out and look at how big the mountains are, and shout 'Praise God' together.

Express

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

Prayers – St Patricks breastplate

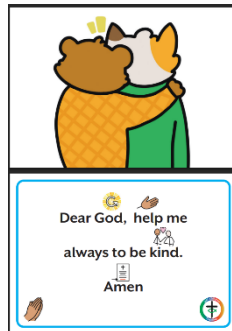
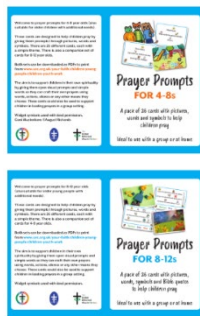
Consider combining the two prayer slots together. Start by listening to St Patricks breastplate sung by Rend Collective, offer the celtic crosses found on the handout pages to colour in while listening, if right for your group. Finish with the spoken prayer joining with the actions.



https://youtu.be/kzi4OQcX_y4?si=-uOI3WK2RxIIrpEu

Spoken prayer

Church House have produced two sets of prayer prompt cards, one set for 4 to 8 years and another for 8 to 12 years. These bright and engaging cards help nurture a life of prayer. You can request a pack by emailing children.youth@urc.org.uk or find them as digital downloads on the URC website: bit.ly/Child-prayer-cards



Recite the Lord's Prayer together using your chosen version or else use this Makaton version

Christ be with me (*hug yourself*)

Christ be beside me (*stretch your arms out to the sides*)

Christ be before me (*reach your arms forward*)

Christ be behind me (*stretch your arms back*)

Christ be within me (*place hands on your heart*)

Christ be beneath me (*touch the floor*)

Christ be above me (*reach hands to the sky*)

Christ be to comfort me (*wrap arms around like a big hug*)

Christ be to strengthen me (*flex your muscles!*)

Christ be to guide me (*pretend to steer a wheel*)

Christ in quiet (*put a finger to your lips*)

Christ in danger (*put fists up like a brave superhero*)

Christ in the hearts of all who love me (*make a heart shape with your hands*)

Christ in the mouth of friend and stranger (*cup hands around your mouth like calling out*)

Leader (close prayer):

Thank you, Jesus, for being with us wherever we go!

Help us feel Your love, Your strength, and Your peace every day.

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.

Patchwork praise

You will need:

- Squares of paper or fabric
- Some items to decorate - felt scraps of fabric, pictures from magazines, tissue, sweet wrappers etc

What you do:



We are creating a patchwork collage around the phrase 'All heaven and earth praises God'.

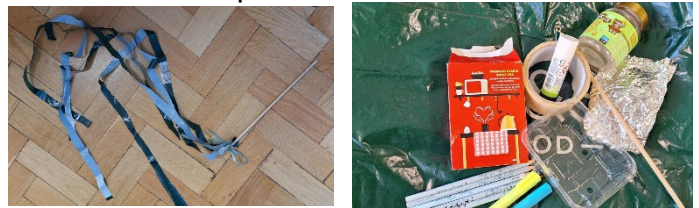
Give each child a square of fabric or paper and ask them to create an image of how all heaven and earth praises God. This could be part of the Psalm, or a drawing of someone praising God, some words of praise or a simple image.

Once they have been completed, put them together as a patchwork to display the ways we praise God in our prayers and worship. Maybe this could be displayed in your church.

Stem activity – recycled praise

Create some praise aids. There is no right or wrong thing to create to enable someone to praise God, however we can recycle items to make some. Offer a range of resources. Plastic bags/ scissors/ sellotape/ sticks/ recycled pots/ cloth/ glue/ card/ seeds/ dried beans/ bells/ small cardboard boxes/ shiny wrappers or foil/ balloons/ pens.

Allow creativity but here are some ideas:
Streamers using sticks and plastic bags/
music instrument using seeds or beans in
a pot/ a cross to focus on/ something tactile
to hold/ a collage picture of Christ.



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 you might not already know about Jesus.
- Could you find a way to praise God each day? Perhaps you could try something different each day. Sing a song/ use an instrument/ sit quietly for 20 seconds/ dance/ praise God using spoken words/ draw a picture/ write a prayer.



We hope you enjoyed exploring the **Psalm** 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 **Exodus 16**



The
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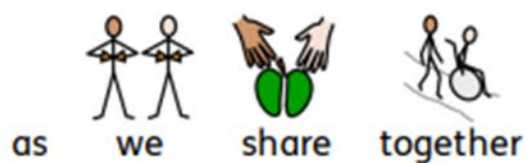
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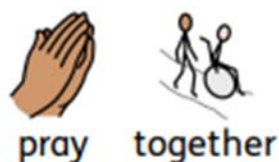
Jesus our friend,



be with us today



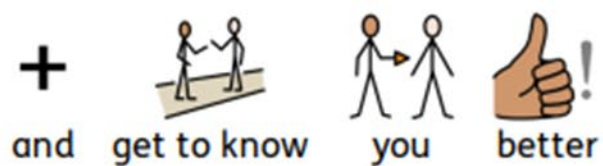
as we share together



pray together



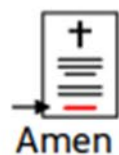
play together



and get to know you better



as children in your family



Amen



Alternate hands back and forth







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