



# 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>

## Genesis 16:1-16 The story of Hagar

Theme: The story of the woman who named God.

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

This week we are looking at the story of Hagar – an often forgotten woman in the Bible (not to be confused with Hagar the Horrible – a comic strip Viking!).

In the translation we have suggested you use, Hagar is described as Sarai's 'maid'. Other translations refer to her as Sarai's servant or slave. You might find it useful to look at alternative translations to get a more rounded understanding of Hagar's position in Abram and Sarai's household. Nowadays we would not use the term 'slave' but, rather say that she was 'enslaved'. Slavery is something that is done to another person – it doesn't describe them.

There is a lot in this passage – Sarai treats Hagar as a possession and gifts her body to Abram in order that Abram might have a better chance of having a child. There is no consent from Hagar. Once she becomes pregnant with Abram's child, Hagar begins to treat Sarai differently – and not in a good way. Hagar runs away from Sarai, who is mistreating her, into the desert.

Be aware of various potential triggers in this story – domestic abuse, bullying, but also issues potentially arising around step-parents and infidelity. These will all need to be dealt with sensitively.

In the desert, God uses an angel to talk to Sarai – God tells her to return to Sarai and put up with her abuse. This is not suggesting that children, or parents, should 'suffer in silence'. Affirm this point to your group and refer to your church's safeguarding policy.



God tells Sarai to name her child 'Ishmael' – translated as 'God hears' – and Hagar realises that God has seen her, and she has seen God.

If you used last week's session you might like to draw parallels between the two stories – God's angels, places being given names because there was an encounter with God. You might also like to explore God giving children names – and make the link with the angel telling Mary to call her baby 'Jesus' (Luke 1.26-38).

## 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 – Articulate

The Bible is full of names (people and places) that have a meaning. This game invites participants to describe something – without using the name itself.

For example: DUCK. You might use words like 'bird', 'pond', 'feather', 'bill', it's up to you to decide if you would allow 'quack' and 'Donald'!



Prepare a list of words so that there are enough for everyone in your group – including leaders – to have a go. Here are some ideas:

Lorry, church, football, burger, fish, heart, park

### Alternative game – Parachute name game.

Call out a letter that your name begins with, and those children swap places under the chute before it falls and run to an empty space. If you do not have a parachute a sheet will work.

You could make it harder and call out any letter in the name; try a sounds like version of the game (if your name sounds like sleeve... Steve and Eve would swap), or you could call out how many letters are in your name.

## Experience

For this story we recommend using The Message

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+16&version=MSG>

### Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Hagar by Bedtime stories

<https://youtu.be/34pXFlgrRzI?si=GdihXDO7DBD3UGnR>

Over fives: Story of Hagar by Deborah Bishop

[https://youtu.be/0hC3Pk4kW\\_8?si=vtDEb5FMUDHELruj](https://youtu.be/0hC3Pk4kW_8?si=vtDEb5FMUDHELruj)

### Songs to support the story

Under fives: Everywhere I go by Preschool worship

[https://youtu.be/f\\_tS-g6z7I0?si=rihaQg03CKlnschq](https://youtu.be/f_tS-g6z7I0?si=rihaQg03CKlnschq)

Five to eevens: I have a maker by Doug Horley

<https://youtu.be/warce72GcZI?si=ZzLEAKAVR0iqk0cC>

## Explore

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

### A new way to explore the passage

Begin by reading the story.

The boy who thought he was invisible!

Every day James would walk to school with his dad, James heard his Dad say hello as they met other people walking to school and saw him smile at the people passing. But James whispered to himself - 'they don't see me'. When he arrived at school the other children would smile at each other and say hello but James thought - they don't see me. In class the teacher would ask a question and hands all around James would go up in the air. But James thought - the teacher does not see me. Everywhere he went James felt invisible. He noticed how others all around him could be seen and were noticed, how they smiled and spoke, but James thought - they don't see me.

One day James went to the park, sad, because he thought he was invisible. He climbed the tree in the corner of the park and hid himself in the high branches covered with leaves. He



sat and thought about how small he felt, how useless he felt, how he was afraid of getting things wrong and how no one ever heard him or noticed him.

The leaves on the tree began to rustle in the breeze and the tree swayed gently, James noticed how warm the sun was and how bright it was in the sky. Then all of a sudden it was as if the leaves and the sun and the sky were speaking. The voice said 'I see you James, I always see you, you are important to me and I love you'. James wondered where the voice was coming from but he felt a warm happy glow inside, he was seen and he was loved. He remembered the voice saying I always see you and that made him happy. Perhaps he was not invisible after all.

The next day on the way to school James smiled as he walked along and people said 'good morning James'. As he walked into school, he smiled, and the other children said 'hello James'. They can see me, he thought. When the teacher asked a question in class James put up his hand and answered the question and the teacher said 'well done James'.

'I am not invisible' he cried. 'You can see me'.

Start to explore the story by asking some wondering questions.

I wonder why James thought he was invisible?

I wonder whose voice it was that James could hear?

I wonder have you ever felt invisible?

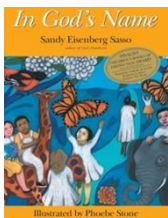
Provide some small world play items and colouring pens and paper so that the children can explore where they might feel invisible.

Talk about how Hagar felt isolated and ran away into the desert. See if anyone can remember what name Hagar gave to God. She felt heard and seen by God and was able to go back and be with Sarai and Abram.

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## 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.



In God's Name by Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

<https://youtu.be/urE3JK1A3Dg?si=ETDkBP0JkvE5U-ic>

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

- What name would you give God and what name would God give you?
- When have you been seen but wanted to be invisible? When have you been invisible but wanted to be seen?

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

- I wonder if you know what your name means? What would you call yourself if you could choose a different name?
- I wonder how Sarai felt when Hagar got pregnant?



- I wonder whether Hagar felt God before God visited her as an angel?

### 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:

- Name badge – Hagar felt seen by God so she gave God a name “the God who sees me!”
- Magnifying glass/binoculars – God sees us all, I wonder what we can see.
- Invisible ink writing and a light – see the message appear, talk about how God saw Hagar.
- A piece of camouflage fabric or piece of fabric which blends into a background – talk about a time when we are not seen.
- A heart – pass the heart around and each share our names, God knows our names, what name do we give to God.
- 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?

### Creative prayer – Name Blessings

Have a tray of sand and some pebbles or stones (you could use shredded paper if you do not have access to sand).

Each child writes their name on a pebble and hides it in the sand.

Go around in turn allowing each child to find a pebble from the sand and say “God sees and blesses (name)”. Encourage the children to take their pebble home and continue to pray for the person named on it.



### Spoken prayer

When I'm at school with lots of others

God sees me there and says,

**Hi, I'm glad you're with me.**

When I'm with my friends and family,

God see me there and says,

**Hi, I'm glad you're with me.**



When I'm out playing,  
God sees me there and says,  
**Hi, I'm glad you're with me.**

When I'm on my own, thinking things through,  
God sees me there and says,  
**Hi, I'm glad you're with me.**

In all the ordinary times and the special times, everywhere I go  
God, I'm glad you are with me— so I say to you  
**Hi, I'm glad you're with me.**  
**Amen**

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### Responding together

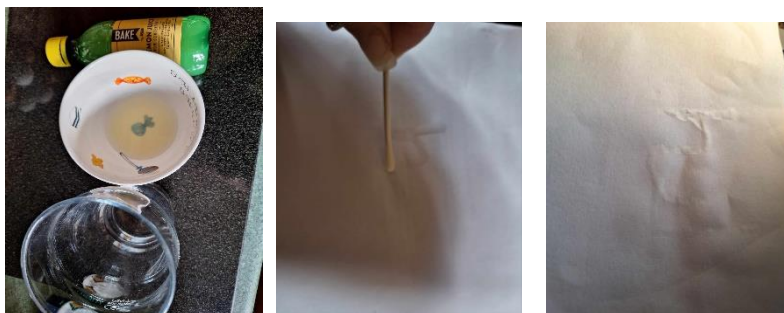
Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond. <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

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.

### Invisible messages

Hagar felt unseen by Abram and Sarai but God saw her and she saw God. They had a secret conversation when she ran away. The conversation was very precious to her and the words God used helped encourage her. Make your own secret message using lemon juice and a cotton bud, dip it in and then write or draw on paper. Once it is dry (this can take a while) hold it under a bulb for the message to be revealed. You may want to write yourself a message that you can look to remind yourself you are seen or you may want to pass it onto a friend.





## Sign language names

Have some fun and learn a new skill with a little sign language of our names.

Introduce the idea that the Bible is full of different names for God, this video is a simple explanation.

Mysteries of Gods names by Crossroad kids

<https://youtu.be/0pFUWuT6O9w?si=Qk8Vcy9qmn81qdKY>

Check out this video collection to see how to sign many of the names of God. They are very simple, you could learn a few to share with your group or perhaps act them out and see if the children can recognise which name it is <https://christianbsl.com/?s=names+of+god>

Explain that many users of British Sign Language have a sign name.

You could use these 2 simple videos to learn how to say What is your name? and answer My name is...

How to say what is your name in BSL/Makaton

<https://youtu.be/Q6XZee1bwfM?si=GGFFzeA11n-GjdXJ>

How to say my name is in BSL/Makaton

<https://youtu.be/uo2dRI76fgE?si=8AHS9wpxVjiQqC9i>

Often the signer would simply fingerspell their name, or even just the first letter – this video can help you do the same.

Fingerspell the alphabet in BSL/Makaton <https://youtu.be/-OO4VfT-OzI?si=esfdAaSFIVbgt7z>

Make up own sign name. Often users of BSL would give themselves a sign name, its usually something about their name meaning or a characteristic of themselves. For example Ruth's sign name is the sign for Friend, because Ruth means Friend.

OR Julie has large curly hair and her sign name is the sign for curly hair.

Have a go at inventing your own sign names.

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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:

- If you don't already know, spend some time researching what your name means. Perhaps everyone in your family could join in with this?
  - Challenge yourself to list the names God is known by. I wonder how many you can find? Google and the Bible should be able to help.
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We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **Hagar** 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 23**.



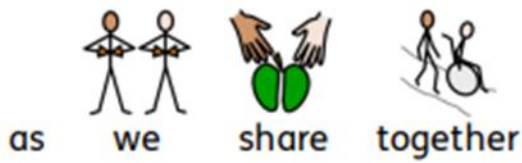




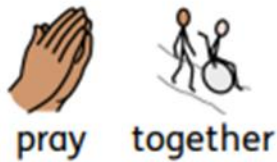
Jesus our friend,



be with us today



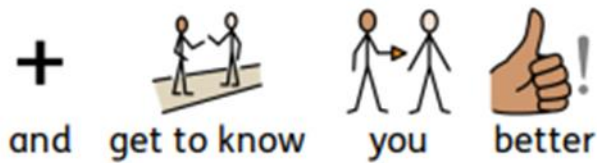
as we share together



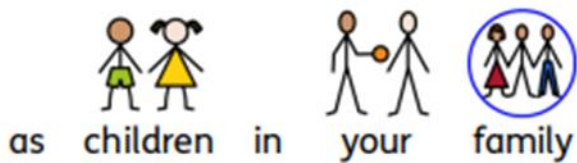
pray together



play together



and get to know you better



as children in your family



Amen

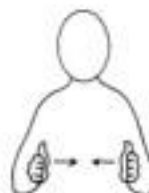
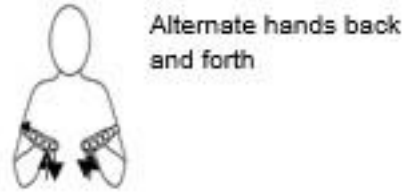




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