



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 24: 3-4

Theme: How do we make our lives a home for God?

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

Proverbs is a book of short sayings from Solomon and other wise people of that time. They are not prophecies or promises from God, they are the understanding of the writers of what being human is all about, the relationships between humans and the relationship between humans and God. Some may seem strange and some even funny, but many are definitely wise. Many also use figurative language, as is the case here.

This is a very short passage – just two verses – but there is a great deal to potentially unpack when exploring the scripture with your group.

Continuing our theme of 'Home', this week we will be exploring how we can make ourselves a home for God – what that might mean and what it might look like.

There are a couple of 'trigger warnings' you might need to consider with your team before engaging with your group:

1. How might you approach the theme of 'home' with those who have had to leave what they considered 'home' (asylum seekers/refugees/Domestic Violence refuges)?
2. Even young children can be self-conscious of their bodies and might feel (or be made to feel) that their body is not a suitable home for God. How might you help overcome such feelings in a positive and encouraging way?



Is the traditional definition of 'home' – relating to a building – applicable here? Does everyone in your group have the same understanding of what 'home' is? Home can be about community and relationships rather than just walls and a roof. Home can be somewhere we feel safe and welcome, it doesn't need to be perfect – and God understands that.

The two verses which comprise this session's scripture passage are full of metaphors. These can be difficult, for younger children especially, to understand. A 'priceless treasure' that fills a 'room' might not be something physical – it could be the treasure of love in the room of a heart. How might members of your group enable God to live in them, and through them? What other 'priceless treasures' can they offer to God to make God feel welcome?

Allow, and encourage, members of your group to be as imaginative and creative as they want to be as they explore this passage and what it means to them to have God, not just around them, but in them.

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 - Smarties Game

This is a fun game that helps to think about finding things of value to us.

You will need:

- Paper straws
- Plates
- Smarties, M&Ms, Skittles or similar

Spread the sweets out onto a large plate. As a group, decide on a value for each colour sweet from 1-10. Divide your group into two teams and place a small plate for each team on either side of the large plate. Each person will need a straw.

Set a timer for two minutes and then one person from each team runs to the plate and picks up a sweet from it using only the straw and their breath to pick it up. They need to take a deep breath in while holding the straw on top of the sweet and then, continuing to hold their breath, transfer the sweet to their team plate. Then the next player in each team does the same. When the time is up, add up the score for the treasure of sweets that each team has managed to transfer from the large plate to their team plate. Play as many times as you like and then enjoy the sweets together!



Alternative game - Scurryfunging

Scurryfunge -A hasty tidying of the house between the time you see the neighbour coming and the time they knock on the door.

Just as we prepare our homes for a visitor, we can prepare our lives for God coming to stay. Some things might need a bit of a tidy up!

You will need:

Before the children arrive, empty some drawers or cupboards onto the floor of the room. Either in one big pile or into several small piles depending on the size of your group. If you have some older ones, you could include all the chairs they are going to use in the session.

What you do:

Say to the children as they enter the room, "Oh no, look at the mess! We had better Scurryfunge to get the room ready".

Set a timer and get the children to tidy up everything as quickly as they can – can they do it in x minutes?

Alternatively: they could be divided into teams and the fastest to tidy up is the winner.



Experience

For this story we recommend using the Contemporary English Version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+24%3A3-4&version=CEV>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Being a wise Kid based on Proverbs by PursueGod Kids

https://youtu.be/R7cD_MLJ-ss?si=7aPhwC3aCrbKZbQJ

Over fives: An introduction to Proverbs and wisdom by Crossroad Kids

<https://youtu.be/cs69466qVHs?si=DD-1R-TFAQ86fQQN>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: Heaven in my heart by Hillsong_Kids

<https://youtu.be/7BmfH2DnOzY?si=zObFvM23GVddIT-g>

Five to elevens: King of me by Rend Co Kids

<https://youtu.be/7Yt3vPANmVU?si=Kpx5LKcCUt8UJInF>

Explore

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

A new way to explore the passage

Explain to the group that this passage is about God making his home in our lives. Provide various materials for the group to have a go at making a model of themselves. It could be a Lego creation or perhaps clay or junk modelling.

Explain that their creation needs to have a hollow centre with access to the inside. This could be a slit or a lid.

Give the group as long as possible to make their creations, so that they can be happy with the final product. You could use some of the wondering questions as you make.

Once the models have been completed, the group could take some time to show their self-creations to each other.

Now, explore the concept of God living in our lives, making a home in us.

You could provide some paper with God written on it, and some sticky jewels to decorate it. Then these could be placed inside each creation as a reminder.

This could be taken further if time allows, exploring some of the ideas in the passage about building your life with wisdom.

- Where does the wisdom come from?
- What do you need to be wise about?
- What understanding might you need?

The children could be invited to write or draw examples of wisdom and place these in their creations too.



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.

'What we'll build' by Oliver Jeffers

Read by Mrs Hole https://youtu.be/DE_tb6cyTuE?si=gY7uZzkLW_1bd4qP



(We are using the same modern parable as last week. Sometimes repetition is good and this is one such time)

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

- This passage is in the Bible but doesn't mention God – where do you think God comes into this?
- What in our lives would make God welcome in our home? What would make God feel unwelcome?
- What is good sense? Do you need to know lots of things to have good sense?
- When we have people come to the house, we do things a bit differently. I wonder how having God in our lives leads us to do things differently?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder what God would like best about living with you?
- I wonder how we welcome God?
- I wonder what precious riches you have to share with God?
- I wonder if you think you are wise or if you think you have good sense?

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:

- Play people – Use play people, or natural objects such as pebbles or sticks, to help re-tell and explore the story together.
- Play tea set – Think about how we make people feel welcome when they visit us or visit our church.
- *You could also use a cup or mug that you might use for refreshments as part of a church service.*
- Building blocks – Explore building different things with the blocks such as; a tall wall to keep people out, a cosy and welcoming house or a shelter to keep out the rain.
- Cleaning cloths – Use the cloths to explore the theme of getting ready. Are there things that need cleaning and tidying? What jobs do they help with at home?
- An empty gift bag or box - Think about what valuable gift or treasure you would put in the box.
- 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?

Buried Treasure prayer

You will need:

- A sand tray filled with sand
- Some shells or small stones
- Permanent markers

This prayer activity helps us to remember to say thank you to God for the treasure of things and people we have around us and to ask God to help us for the things we need to be welcoming and loving.

Everyone can draw onto the shells or stones things they could say thank you to God for: people, animals, food, nature etc. Next write words for the things that they might need like peace, joy, smiles, kindness, hope, friendship, love. When complete, hide the shells or stones in the sand tray.

Take it in turns to dig into the sand with your hand and pull out a stone or shell. Thank God for what is on the shell or ask God to bless them with the word that is on the shell.

At the end, place the shells or stones back in the tray and thank God for all the treasures you have prayed for.

As an alternative you could do this activity with straws. Draw or write the ideas onto slips of paper and then roll them tightly and slide them into the top of the straw. Place the straws in a jar or standing up in a sand tray. Take it in turns to pull out a straw and reveal the picture or word inside, praying in the same way as in the sand tray activity.



Spoken prayer

Hello God,

We want to welcome you.

Make our homes and our lives your home too.

You are so wise: teach us how to be wise like you.

You know everything: teach us what we need to know.

Fill us with your precious treasure: kindness, gentleness, love and peace.

Help us to use your gifts well. 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.

This home is open to God door hanger

The Bible passage today speaks of the treasures we have in our home and this craft helps to reflect on what makes our home and ourselves welcoming to God and to others.

You will need:

- Coloured card
- Glue
- Felt pens
- Ribbon/string

Cut out a rectangle of card and shape the top to make a house shape. Using different coloured card, create a front door and fascia for the roof. In the centre of the roof, add a small rectangle to be the chimney. This doubles as a place to make a hole to add the ribbon or string to form a hanger.

Add the verse:

This home
is open
to God,
sunshine
and friends!

As an alternative to using this verse, children might choose to come up with their own words to add to their house. Decorate the house and make the door into a welcome sign.



Ice melting

You will need: A tray of ice cubes with beads, or small jewels, frozen in them (enough for every child)

What you do:

Give everyone an ice cube. The challenge is to see how fast they can melt the ice cube in their hands or by any other means without smashing it, to find the precious thing hidden inside. Set a timer and see how quickly the treasure is released.





The proverb reminds us that the rooms of our home can be filled with precious treasure. What are our precious treasures? Does something have to be valuable to be precious? Does a precious treasure have to be an actual thing we own or are some things even more precious than those? What do you think God sees as a precious treasure?

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:

- How can you make your home a welcoming place for God? It's more than just putting a welcome mat by the door! Maybe it's to do with the way you speak to each other and forgive each other and share what God has given you. Whether you are doing this alone or with your family, can you show by the things you say and the things you do, that God is in the household?
 - When you look at yourself in the mirror this week, ask God to fill you with wisdom and good sense.
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We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **Proverbs 24** 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 **John**

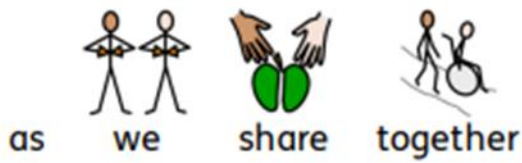




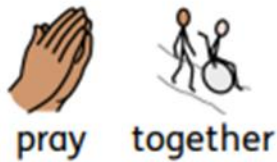
Jesus our friend,



be with us today



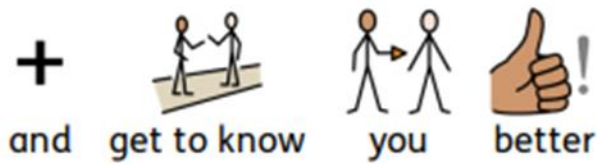
as we share together



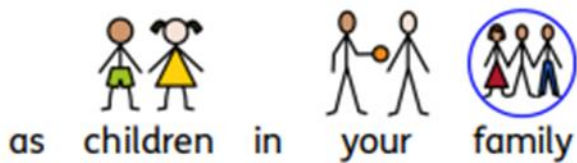
pray together



play together



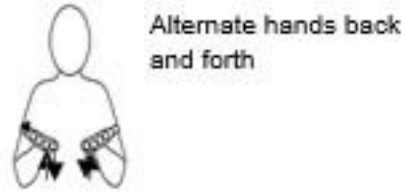
and get to know you better



as children in your family



Amen



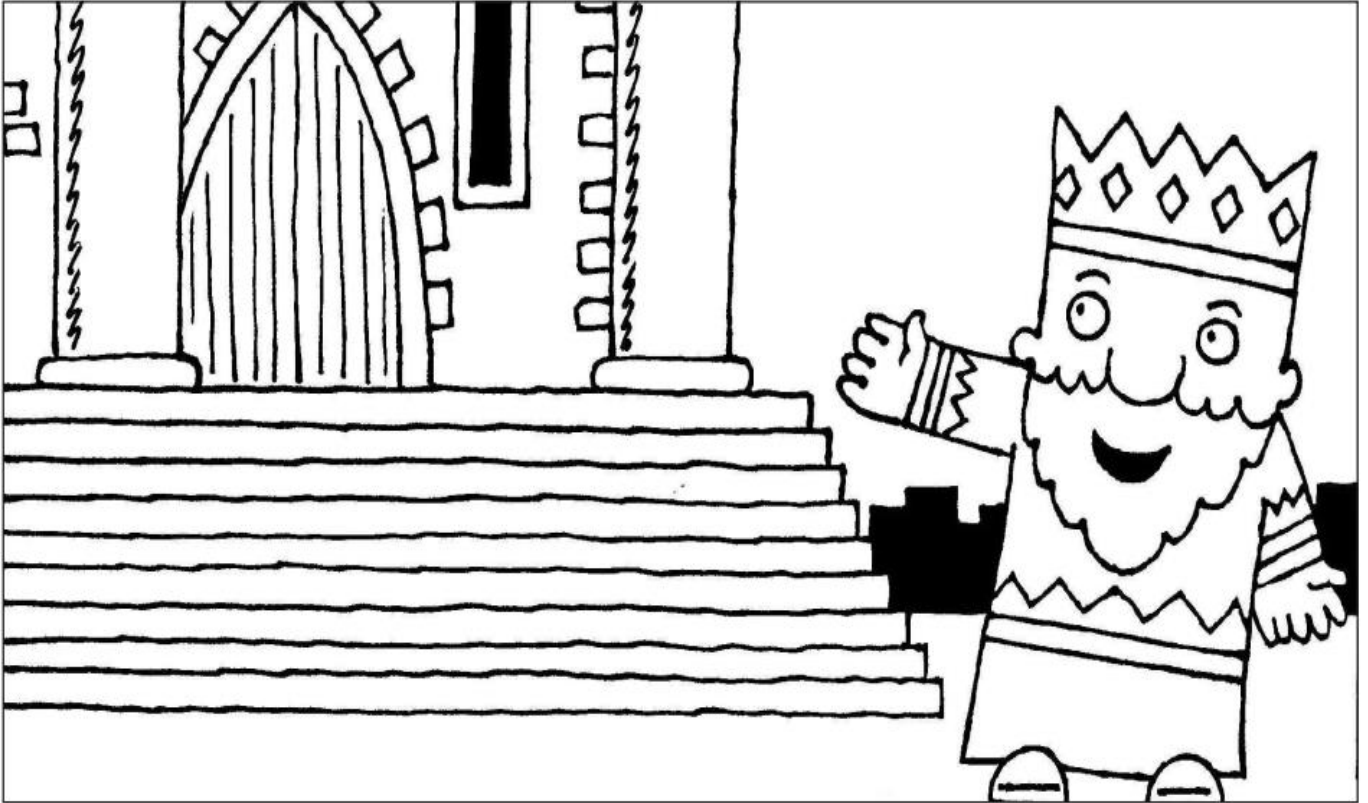


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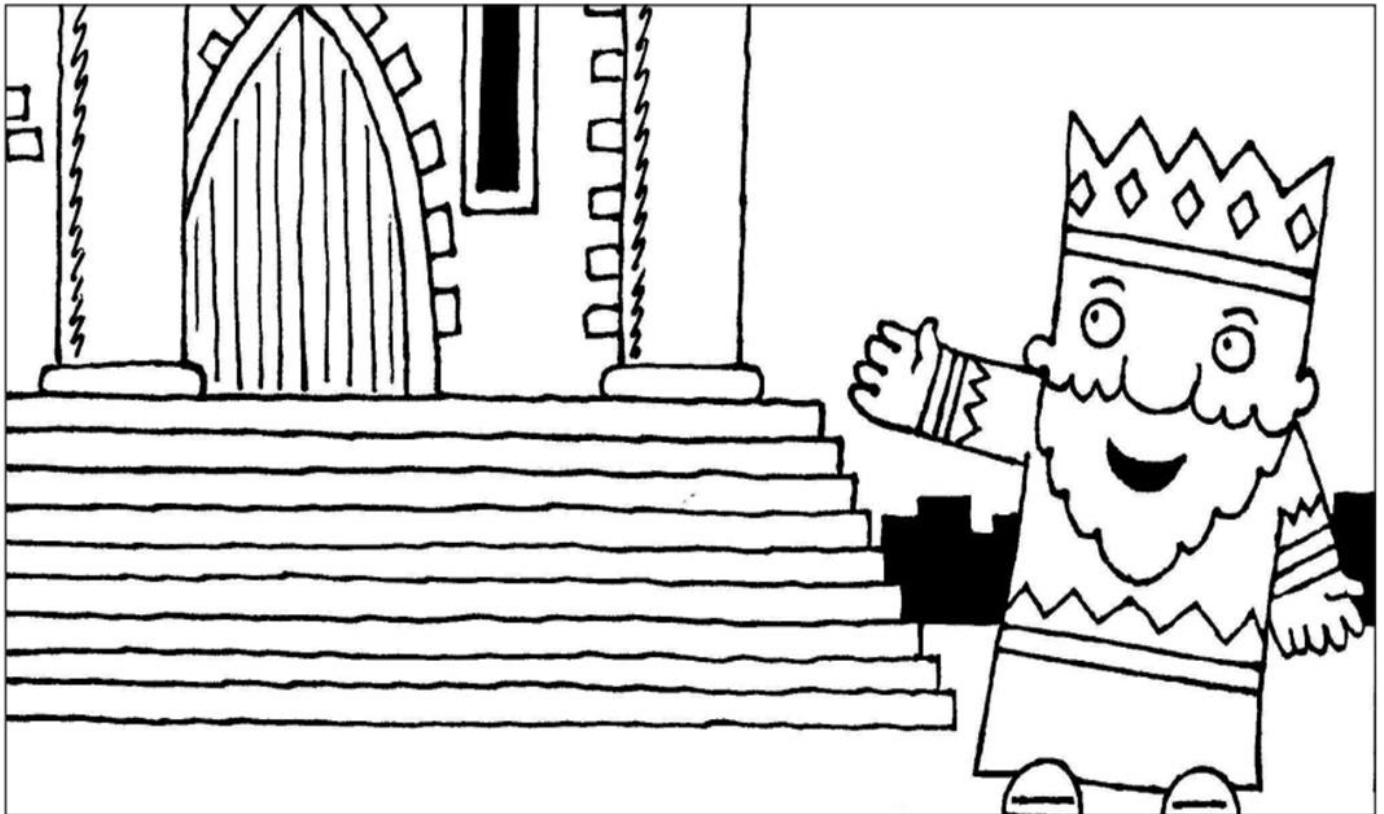




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