



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>

Matthew 7: 24-27 – Wise and foolish builders

Theme: Build everything you do on the good foundation of God's teachings

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

We are concluding our exploration of the theme of 'homes' this week with one of Jesus' parables: the wise and foolish builders.

You might find it helpful to remind your group what a parable is – it is a made up story with a teaching point. Jesus used parables to help those who listened to him understand what he was saying. He would use stories that were relevant to his audience, that is why so many parables were about farming (e.g. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seeds – Matthew 13:24-30) and fishing (e.g. Heaven is like a net – Matthew 13:47-50). Jesus very rarely explained what the parables meant – he trusted those who listened to him to work it out for themselves.

Today's parable would have meant a lot to the people listening who had built their own houses or inherited the houses from their parents (which, in the time of Jesus, would have been most people).

To put the parable in context, immediately before telling the parable, Jesus is warning people about what will happen to those who do not listen to him and what he is saying – and he uses the parable of the wise and foolish builders to reinforce his point.

Be aware that you may have people in your group whose houses are not built to a good standard or are built on a flood plain. And you may have people who do not have a house or know people in that situation.



You might wish to explore with your group the idea that, whilst houses built on rock are more stable than those built on sand, it does not mean that they are immune to disaster – they can still get flooded and can still be damaged by earthquakes and strong winds.

Does your group think that Jesus was trying to frighten his audience? If so, why might that be?

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 – House of cards

Challenge your group to build the tallest house of cards possible using a pack of playing cards. How tall can you build before the house collapses?

Why not add in some additional rules to help make the game more challenging? There are some suggestions below:

- If an ACE is drawn, then players can only use one hand and must work together with another player to add the cards to the house.



- If JACK is drawn, then the player must close their eyes. Other players must give verbal instructions to help the player stack the cards.

Alternative game – Unstable Games

Set some challenges for participants to complete well known games on unstable surfaces.

- Jiggly Jenga – Play a game of Jenga with the tower stacked on an unstable surface such as a bowl of Jelly.
- Shaky Sticks – Play Pickup Sticks on a cushion.
- Trembling Trays – Hold a tray of cups whilst standing on a balance board.

Experience

For this story we recommend using the Contemporary English Version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew+7%3A24-27&version=CEV>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Foolish and wise builder – Max7

https://youtu.be/CXWHLB1f6_U?si=JEKOR_Q93w9S9MhM

Over fives: Foolish and wise builder – ratpack productions

<https://youtu.be/kjoqMrFXx-k?si=NZNDci1Rug40Ad3R>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: The wise man built his house – through the waters

<https://youtu.be/Eu5bBDRpzPM?si=PqryniY5AlpEXCqU>

Five to elevens: Oh Halleluia – Jana Alayra

<https://youtu.be/Br-0-QJptCs?si=2qGZdj2HI64CEft3>

Explore

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

A new way to explore the passage – The story of the two builders.

Tell this story using a reflective storytelling style to enable the group to explore the story further. The children are encouraged to use the materials to show the story as you tell it, (there are suggestions in red in case you need to prompt your group)

You will need:

- An area to tell the story such as a tabletop or a rug space on the floor
- Building materials such as Jenga blocks or Duplo
- Two people blocks to represent the builders
- Blue material for water
- A piece of yellow felt and piece of grey felt



The story

This is a story that Jesus told, it's a parable. That's a story about the things around us to help us think about God, heaven and God's kingdom.

As I tell the story, please use the materials provided to bring the story to life.

Create the story as I speak, don't wait for pauses.

Jesus said there once were two builders. **Place the two builders in the centre.**

What are their names? What shall we call them?

Both were going to build a house.

One chose to build their house on the sand. **Place the yellow felt down.**

The other chose to build on the rock. **Place the grey felt next to the yellow.**

They built their houses, tall and strong. **Build both houses.**

When they were ready, they went into their homes. **Put the people in their homes.**

Jesus said that soon the storms came: the wind blew, the rain fell and the waters began to rise up. **Add the blue cloths and papers to create a storm.**

The house on the rock had firm foundations and remained safe and strong,

But the house on the sand had weak foundations and came crashing down. **Knock the house down.**

One of these builders was wise and the other was foolish.

Jesus said to the people listening, be like the wise builder. Build your life on my words. Build your life on the things I have said to you.

At the end of the story, you can use the wondering questions to explore the story with your group.

Response:

Now invite every child to take one of the blocks and write on it (either actually or using stickers to write on) the Jesus words that we need to build our life on. We can then build them together into a tower.

ALTERNATIVELY you could use this activity from the Youth Resource:

Firm foundations

You will need:

- Building blocks (like Jenga or Duplo)



- Masking tape
- Pens
- Bibles

What you do:

Jesus told us that this parable was about building our lives on his words, the words of God. This is what gives us a firm foundation.

Take a block and cover one side in masking tape. Consider what are the words that Jesus gave us that we build our lives on. Write them onto the bricks and begin to build a structure as you go, with the words facing outwards so that you can all read them.

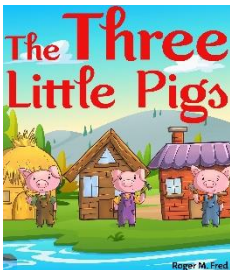
Once built, sit back and reflect: what surprises you about your friends' answers? Is there anything missing? Use the session wondering questions to continue the discussion.

Which of these Jesus words would you think are the most important and why?

You could add words which you live your life by, that were not necessarily Jesus words.

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.



Three little pigs by Roger M Fred
<https://fb.watch/qWvTvgkwxI/>

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

- I wonder which of Jesus's teachings you find the hardest/easiest/most important?
- What does this parable say to us about how we build our faith?
- What was Jesus telling us to build our lives on?
- How is Jesus's teaching like a firm foundation?
- I wonder which of Jesus's teachings you find the hardest/easiest/most important?
- Do you think the foolish people are given another go?
- What sort of things in life are like the weather in this story, trying to knock us down?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder if you've ever watched a house being built? What do the builders need to do first?
- I wonder if you've ever seen a crack in the wall of a house or other building? What do you think causes it?
- Would you rather live in a tall thin house or a small flat house?
- Can you tell me about a time when you thought about something Jesus said and it helped you?



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:

- Some hay, twigs and small bricks to build houses with
- Two little play figures to reenact the story
- Sand and water and stones – play to see what happens to the sand and the rock when water is placed on it
- Playdough and Lego – build a house on the playdough and see how stable it is when you move the playdough around
- 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?

A pebble pocket prayer

You will need:

- a smooth pebble
- paint or paint pens

Decorate your pebble or rock with the words “God is my ROCK” or something similar to remind you that you can trust in God to hold you firm even in the shakiest of times.

Hold the pebble in your hand and take some time to sit, quietly reflecting on the words that God is our rock, with us in the stormy times as well as the good times.

You could play some reflective music as you paint and during the quiet time.

Here is a suggestion of some quiet reflective music from Scripture Lullabies ‘I will never leave you’ <https://youtu.be/JWxbYzAUYP>

If your pebble is small enough, you could carry it in your pocket as a reminder each time you touch it or feel it through the lining of your pocket. If it is a bit bigger, why not keep it beside your bed or on your desk to remind you that God is there. Tell God all the things that are worrying you and be confident that you have firm foundations.





Spoken prayer

The following prayer reads from the bottom, to the top. The first line is a verse from the Bible, remembering God's faithfulness as a good foundation for prayer.

Amen.

I ask you,

With confidence,

Listen to my worries,

Help me as I make choices,

Remind me of all your promises,

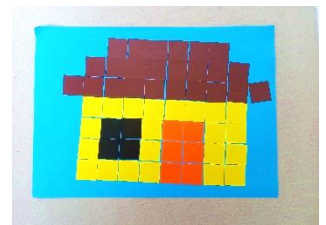
You are with me and will not leave me,

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart (Psalm 9:1)

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>

However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.



Build your own Minecraft-style house

You will need:

A sheet of A4 paper

Square stickers or squares of paper of various colours

Glue

What you do:

On the sheet of A4 paper, design your own house using squares of paper or square stickers. The squares need to be close together – no gaps. If you don't do it carefully, the house will end up remarkably wonky. You can only use complete squares, you cannot cut them to shape. Perhaps you could write underneath it something like "I'll build my house on God's word".

While you're making the house, it's a good time to talk through some of the wondering questions and continue your conversation together.



Biscuit Houses

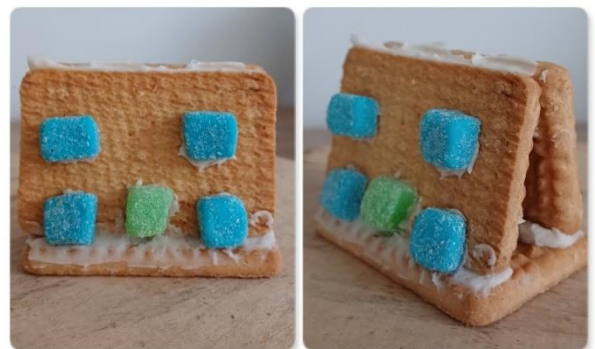
The parable that Jesus told talked about our firm foundations built on our faith in Jesus. Have fun making biscuit houses and talking about how they need to have a good firm base. Encourage the children if their house will not stand up and remind them that it helps to think about the story!

You will need:

- Rectangle shaped biscuits (eg Malted Milk)
- Thick water-paste icing, butter cream or melted chocolate
- Sweets to make windows and door

For a simple house use three biscuits – one for the base and then two to make a sloping roof. Use the paste icing or butter cream or chocolate to 'glue' the pieces together. Decorate with sweets to make windows and a door.

If you are feeling more ambitious, you could make a more complex building.



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:

- This week's passage is about basing the way you live your life on the firm foundation of Jesus's teaching. Choose something that you have learned from Jesus and write it somewhere where you can see it every day. Maybe you could even learn something by heart.
- Visit a building site or watch a video about a house or building being built. See how the builders make it strong so that it will withstand the weather and be a safe place for people to live.

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of wise and foolish builders with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing lorraine webb@urc.org.uk

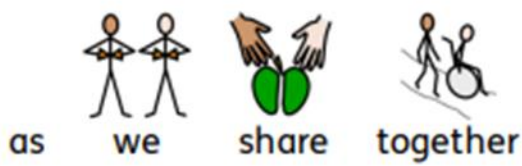
Why not have a look at next month's bumper summer resource on **Stories (for July and August)**



Jesus our friend,



be with us today



as we share together



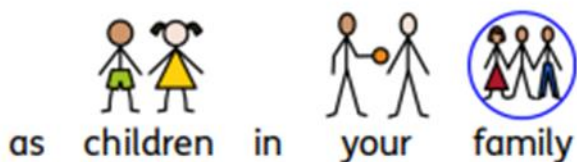
pray together



play together



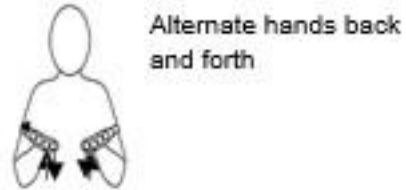
and get to know you better



as children in your family



Amen



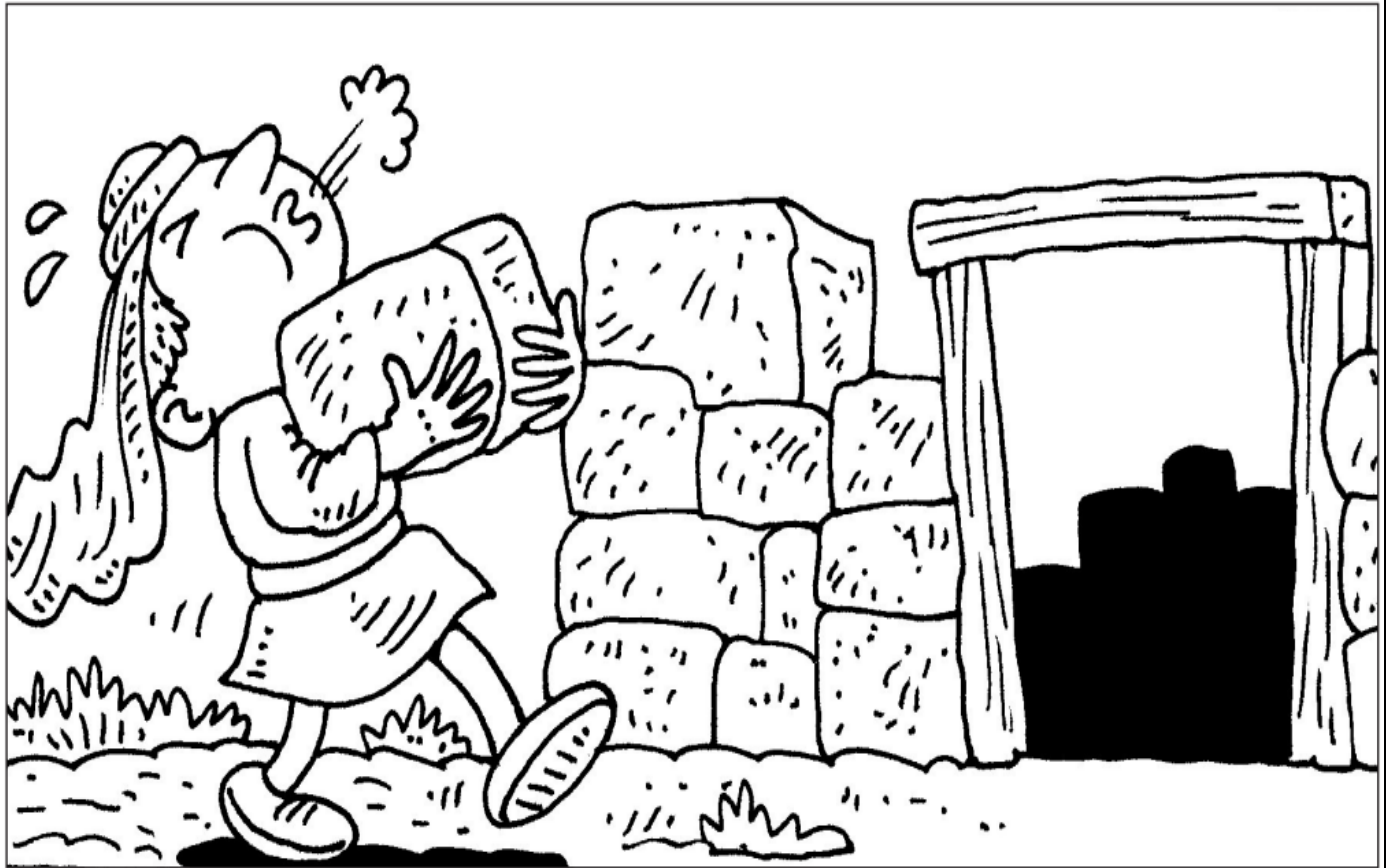


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