



# Faith Adventures for Children Together



Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

*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](http://www.bit.ly/FACT-how-to-sheet)

## Title: Ezekiel 36: 25–26

**Theme:** What is baptism?

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

The Book of Ezekiel is estimated to have been written between 593 and 565 B.C., during the Babylonian captivity of the Jews.

Ezekiel ministered to his generation who were both sinful and without hope. Using his prophetic ministry, he attempted to bring them to immediate repentance (saying sorry) and to confidence in the distant future (hope). He taught that: God works through human messengers; even in defeat and despair, God's people need to recognise God's sovereignty; God's Word never fails; God is present and can be worshipped anywhere; people must obey God if they expect to receive blessings; and God's kingdom will come.

The passage we are looking at ties in beautifully with the overriding theme of baptism. Here we see the promise of a new beginning, being clean and a starting over. How many times do we want a second chance at things? The theme of baptism also recognises the importance of promises, not just by the "cleansed" baptised but by the wider Church family, friends, family and Jesus.

The subject of baptism reaches far and wide and could often veer off in different directions. For instance, why do we baptise? Why do people choose to be baptised? Does every church baptise?

These are questions you may want to explore further. Maybe it is something you are considering individually. Either way, baptism is a wonderful subject to learn about, talk about and investigate.

Be aware of those who are not baptised and those whose church do not do baptisms.

## Together – prayer and games

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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### Active game – Water

Below is a list of games using water. Use whichever ones suit your group and context.

**Water pistol game.** Give each person a loaded water pistol. Everyone then tries to hit the others with water as they run around – no re-fills.

**Pass the bucket over your head.** Have everyone sat in a line, behind each other. Give the person sat at the front a full bucket/vessel of water. They must pass it over their head to the person behind them, all the way to the back. The last person then brings the bucket to the front. The game continues until everyone is back in their place or there is no water left in the bucket.

**Paper hole.** This could be a timed challenge or a race against another team(s). Hold a piece of paper in front or to the side of you. Another person then uses a water pistol to shoot water at the paper until it creates a hole.

**Catch the water balloon.** A group game. Add water to one or two balloons. Everyone stands in a circle and tosses the water balloon at each other. The players need to catch the balloon without bursting it and thus getting wet. The game ends when the balloons have burst or time is called.

**Relay race flowerpot.** An outside game.

*You will need:*

- four buckets
- water
- flowerpots

Split your group into two teams. The idea of the game is to transfer as much water from bucket A into bucket B using the flowerpots. Hopefully the teams will work out quite quickly that it will take more than one person to transport the water, as the leaky holes will need to be plugged. The game ends after the set time limit. The winners are the team with most water in Bucket B.

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### **Quieter game – Drip, drop, don't stop**

This is a simple game that your group will get hooked on playing. It's simply a game using water.

You will need a glass of water on a table and a bottle of water.

One by one the children must add some water to the glass. The object of the game is NOT to be the one who causes the water to overflow.

A steady hand is needed and the group will find themselves adding literally a drop as time goes on.

You will be surprised at how much water you can put in a glass before it overflows.

Here's a video of the game being played

[https://youtu.be/wDXNckFvx2U?si=Pn71D\\_WVMxqdCLN1](https://youtu.be/wDXNckFvx2U?si=Pn71D_WVMxqdCLN1)

## Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

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

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezekiel%2036%3A%2025%20-%2026&version=ICB>

### Where can I find the story online?

Under-fives: Baptism Promises written by Carol A. Wehrheim, illustrated by Roz Fulcher. You can find a video of this book on the Opequon Church channel on YouTube

<https://youtu.be/hOZMX8K8s1U?si=mh5TCA3m0FYp7-u>

Five-to-elevens: Baptism: God's Story, by Crossroads Kids' Club

<https://youtu.be/-BQ-H8v3hP4?si=AFIjxQW8mpsrhfBT>

### Songs to support the story

Under-fives: I am a promise I am a possibility written by Bill and Gloria Gaither

<https://youtu.be/H24OTmz8w3o?si=Ml2Jaw0JnZZsvSFN>

Five-to-elevens: All tings new, by Big Daddy Weave

[https://youtu.be/4\\_2aX\\_i4qpM?si=h7CVPI\\_lhAFZe4lf](https://youtu.be/4_2aX_i4qpM?si=h7CVPI_lhAFZe4lf)

## Explore – ways into the theme

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

### A new way to explore the theme

To explore the theme, use props to re-enact a baptism. You can do an infant baptism as well as a full immersion. Try to keep it brief and fun, but get the children fully involved, especially using the promises.

- Ask the group what they noticed about each baptism - What were the similarities and differences?
- How was water used in each one. What did the water symbolise?
- Why do you think everyone made promises and how did the promises differ?
- What would they say baptism is about, now they have explored one?

*Part of the Service is about making promises.*

You will need strips of paper or large speech bubbles with the separate promises written on them. Also strips of paper with people's names on. (See below for a child friendly version)

Ask the group to work together to place the promise with the correct person who makes that promise in the baptism. Then use the questions below to chat about them.

- Which is the most important promise? (You could ask the group to order them by moving the papers around.)
- Are there any promises missing? Which one would you add?

Person	promise
Baby	No promise made (have a blank card, which can be used to ask more about this)
Baptised	I promise to love God and live my life for God.
Church	We promise to welcome you and your family and to share with them the gift of God's love, shown in Christ.
Parents of Baby	We promise to teach them the love of God and bring them up in the life and worship of the church.
Godparents	We promise to pray for you and your family and to support them as we are able and surround them with love.
God	I promise to always be with you, even to the end of time and to give you my spirit.

There are further questions in this session to use if needed.

If you would prefer to show a Godly Play story about baptism we recommend you use one from the Godly Play foundation YouTube site.

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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. If you are to use the modern parable, consider buying a copy or borrowing it from the library so children see the actual book and can explore the illustrations more (and support the author).



#### Finding Nemo

In the film *Finding Nemo*, Nemo's dad travels around the oceans looking for his child Nemo. There are many obstacles and dangers as well as some unforgettable characters but, regardless, Dad never forgets his promise to find Nemo. You can see a heartwarming clip on YouTube called "The Reunion clip" by SuperJambon.

Just like the promises made when people are baptised, people make promises all the time, but the key is sticking to them and making sure the promises are ones you can keep.

- How hard do you find it to keep a promise?

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

- What is an idol and what idols do people worship?
- The passage isn't talking about dirt or mud, so what does it mean to you to be clean and have dirt washed away by God?
- What does it mean to have God's spirit within you?
- Why is God only sprinkling the Israelites with water. Does it matter if you are sprinkled with water or fully immersed?

### **Wondering: Ways to reflect on the theme**

- Have you been baptised? Do you remember it?
- Have you seen a baptism? What do you remember?
- How can you keep the promises you make as a church?
- What could your church do to help you in your Christian journey?
- Why do we wear white gowns sometimes in baptism?

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### **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). 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 doll and some water – act out a baptism using the doll, explaining what is happening.
- A washcloth – wipe the doll's face. When we are baptised, it is like we are being washed clean by God.
- The action of a pinkie promise – talk to the children about what a promise is and that God will always keep a promise.
- A scallop shell – talk about how some churches use a shell in a Baptism. This is a special shell which represents our journey with 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 – prayer and creative activities**

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

### **Prayerful activity - Wiping Away Prayers**

*You will need:*

- a tray with some sand (if you do not have sand, you could use flour)

Feel the sand with your fingers. Write or draw in the sand or flour something you'd like to tell God you are sorry for. God wants to forgive you. Baptism is like being washed. Saying sorry is like starting again with God. We can talk to God and he will take away the things we want to say sorry for.



When you have spoken to God, smooth the sand over so the picture or word disappears. Imagine God taking it away.

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### Spoken prayer

Heavenly Father, you give us a new and clean heart

**Response:** I promise to try my best

Your Spirit helps us avoid our idols

**Response:** I promise to try my best

You help us to make the right choices and decisions

**Response:** I promise to try my best

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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.

With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage the children 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.

### Promise Cake

*You will need:*

- some pre-cooked cup cakes
- icing
- edible decorations

*What you do:*

Decorate the cupcake in any way you wish, to make it extra special.

The Bible mentions cakes in different contexts. Cakes in the Bible, specifically in the Old Testament, represent the covenant/promises between God and people. We love to have cake as part of special occasions, so let's share our cupcakes with someone we know who has been baptised to remind them of the special promises that were made at their baptism.



## 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:

- What promise do you want to make to God?
- When you wash each day, remember the promise you want to make to God and speak it out loud

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **baptism** with us.

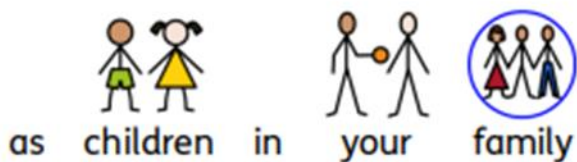
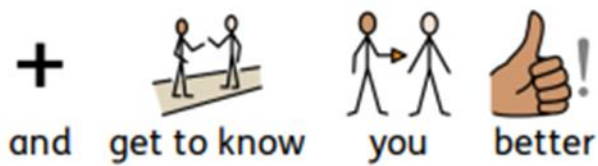
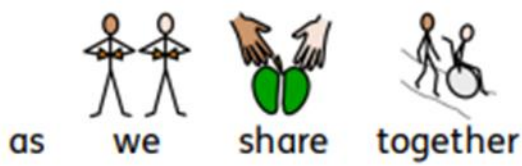
Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing

**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 **Psalms**






  
 The Lord's Prayer

 Our
  Father,
  who art
  in
  heaven,
  hallowed
  be
  thy
  name.

 Thy
  kingdom
  come,
  thy
  will
  be
  done





 on
  earth
  as it is
  in
  heaven.

 Give
  us
  this day
  our
  daily
  bread

 and
  forgive
  us
  our
  sins
  As
  we
  forgive
  those
  who
  sin
  against
  us

 Lead
  us
  not
  into
  temptation
  but
  deliver
  us
  from
  evil

 For
  thine
  is the
  kingdom,
  the
  power
  and
  the
  glory

 For ever
  and
  ever
  Amen

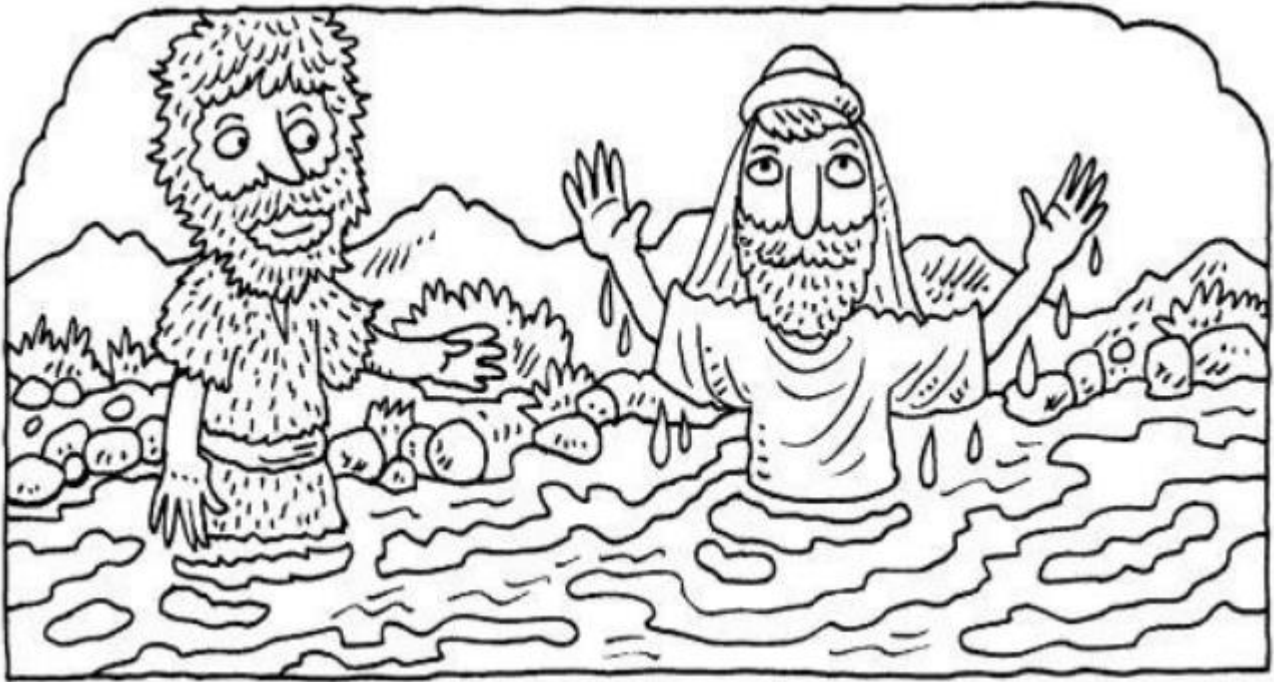


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