



# 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: Psalm 96: 7–9

**Theme:** Personal offerings – within times together

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

As a noun, 'offering' means a thing offered, especially as a gift or contribution.

What do you think of when you hear the word 'offering'? Maybe money, time, effort... the list is long and very personal.

Offering is about all of the above, our personal offering such as gifts, time, money, advice, love.

However, offering also involves a sacrifice of some description. To just give things away because it is the right thing to do, or because others do, isn't the correct way to offer. There needs to be more attached to it. Maybe you give something that means a lot to you, or holds a particular value, or maybe it is the last of something you have. This is where your offering holds so much more than just giving; it is cheerfully giving it away with generosity.

In the Bible we are called to offer ourselves back to God. In Romans 12:1, Paul speaks of being a living sacrifice. This means to do what we can for Jesus by being good believers.

This then lends itself to another question. Where do we diminish offering in life? Do we continue forever, stop, have a break, pause?

Another question may be why we do offerings. Who decides who to give the money to? Does it always have to be money? Can children and young people have a say with what happens to offerings? Maybe start a project using skills, time and effort as an offering.

We haven't forgotten that today is also Father's Day. Do search our resources for sessions on Father's Day. Please be aware that although this session doesn't focus on Father's Day, it is still an emotive day for some and so some may need extra support.

## 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 – Kingdom tag

Together we can build a kingdom!

Choose one player to be the tagger. The other children avoid trying to be caught by the tagger. When tagged, that person links together by holding hands or linking arms with the person in front and they set off to tag the other players. The game continues until all children are a part of the chain.

You can adjust the game by:

Making it a walking rather than running game.

When the chain reaches four it splits in two, so there are more players tagging.

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### Quieter game – Money ping-pong

Often, in church, we are invited to make offerings of money via a collection. But where does this money go? What does it do? What should it be used for?

This game invites participants to try and choose the destination for the offertory collection.

*You will need:*

- table tennis balls
- empty jam jars (or similar)
- a long table

*What you do:*

Label the jam jars with some ideas of what the offertory collections could be used for (e.g. the church roof, biscuits, new hymn books, mission, church charity, etc.) and place them at one end of the table.

Participants stand at the other end of the table and take it in turns to bounce table tennis balls into the jars (the balls must bounce at least once).

Did participants aim for a particular jar? If so, why?

Alternative.

Label the jam jars with different types of offering (e.g. time, skills, money, prayer).

## Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

For this story we recommend using the Good News Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm%2096%3A%207-9&version=GNT>

**Where can I find the story online?**

Under-fives: The widow's offering, by Saddleback Kids

[https://youtu.be/dJo6WDxBCRc?si=89jTY\\_WWZK63Aiel](https://youtu.be/dJo6WDxBCRc?si=89jTY_WWZK63Aiel)

Five-to-elevens: What is an offering?, by Building God's World Kids  
<https://youtu.be/94Oy0fBZXcg?si=3iY54gmcn5i6Nehg>

### Songs to support the story

Under-fives: Dear Jesus, here's my offering, by Arnie's Shack  
<https://youtu.be/wjQxRR0SQyg?si=EmKbkjiZBPmbv8Tq>

Five-to-elevens: I will offer up my life (Matt Redman), by Integrity Worship  
<https://youtu.be/kQkzHwz2eLE?si=IpUq0-AW0s12yNYb>

## Explore – ways into the theme

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

### A new way to explore the theme

Introductory Game – 'Would you rather?' run around game.

Using the list of ideas below (feel free to add your own) play a game of 'Would you rather?', with children running from one side of the room to the other to choose their option A or B each time. Try to keep the game quick and snappy; resist the urge to have a full discussion after each one.

Would you rather:

A – More pocket money and less free time, or B – more free time and less pocket money?

A – do all the chores at home but never have homework again, or B – never have to do chores again but have homework every day?

A – live in a fantasy world, or B – live in a gaming world like Minecraft?

A – Have 11 dogs, or B – have 11 cats?

A – Live by the seaside, or B – live in the mountains?

A – Live in Jesus' time, or B – live in the future?

A – Live as a rich person, or B – always have just enough?

A – Give to the poor, or B – help the poor to earn a living?

Explain that, in Psalm 96: 7-9, we hear how God's people are encouraged and invited to come into God's house and bring with them a thanksgiving offering. The passage is talking about a grain offering, but today we are going to think about the tradition of giving in our church services.

Ask the group: What do you see people giving here at church?

Why do you think we give this and what happens to it next? How is it used?

What can you bring to God as a thanksgiving offering?

You could get practical, using monopoly money.

Create a church budget, with piles of monopoly money to represent the church's annual budget.

Then explain what the church spends its money on building, ministries, giving to charity, bills etc.

Invite the children to choose how much money they would put on each element. Encourage a conversation about what the church already does with the offerings of your members (money and time) and whether the children 'agree'. Their thoughts could be shared at the next AGM to increase the voice of the children in decision making.

You could invite the church treasurer to the session to join in this task, and the children could then ask them questions about the church's finances.

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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).



*The magic paintbrush* by Julia Donaldson Published by Macmillan Children's Books, 2017

This is a video of the story being introduced and performed by Julia Donaldson. You only need to watch from 0:59 – 10:38

<https://youtu.be/WxdUFsFZCeg?si=ppyfXCSMNRhj4Q2j>

With her magic paintbrush, Shen can paint steaming pots full of fish and oysters to feed the hungry people in her village, but when the evil emperor hears of her gift, he commands Shen to paint gold for him instead. She is determined to keep her promise to paint only for the poor.

- I wonder what gifts we have that we can give as an offering

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

- Does God need offerings?
- What's the difference between a gift and an offering?
- I wonder what sorts of things were brought to the Temple as offerings
- The Bible says God loves a cheerful giver. What do you think that means?

## Wondering: ways to reflect on the theme

- I wonder what hurts the most to give away
- I wonder what different types of offering there are. (Is there a difference between a thanksgiving offering and a sacrificial offering?)
- If we make an offering, are we expecting something back?
- If I have no money, what is it I can give?

### 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 Gift – an offering is like a gift to God. These gifts can make a big difference to God's world.
- Play money – sometimes money can be used as an offering to God. I wonder what it could be used for.
- People – sometimes people can offer their talents to God. I wonder what we could give.
- Clock – sometimes we can offer time to God. I wonder what we can do to give our time to God.
- Praying hands – sometimes we do not have time, or money or talents to give, but we can always pray, as our gift to God.
- 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 (e.g. stones, felt, twigs etc)
- 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!)

## Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

### Prayerful activity – Offering plate prayers



Have some coloured pieces of paper or card. Write your prayers on them and add them to the offering plate as it is passed around the group or in church.

Alternatively, pass an offering bag or plate around the group. Each person in the group can either say the name of a place, person or subject they want to pray for, or simply hold the bag/plate and say a silent prayer to themselves.

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### Spoken prayer

#### Whole body prayer

Holy one (reach arms up)

Help me (hand on heart)

To serve you (hands out front)

To give of my gifts (arms hugging self)

To love your world (arms outstretched) 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.

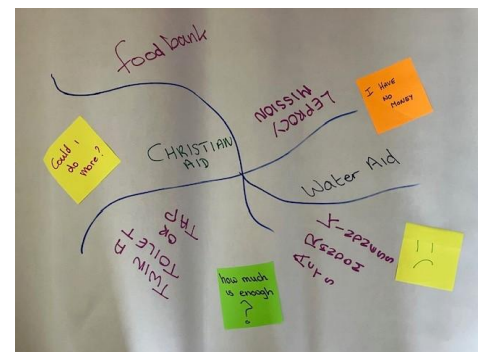
However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.

**Mood board** around an initial project the group/ church could get behind – about offering their time/money.

This response is designed to enable the group as a whole to consider how it could give to the church or a mission project.

*You will need:*

- two large sheets of paper or back of wallpaper
- magazines
- scissors
- glue
- felt pens
- optional sticky notes in different colours



Ask the group what the session has made them think or feel today. Draw or write this onto sticky notes or use felt tips or pens to write directly onto the large piece of paper. Cut out and stick pictures on too.

Now ask the group to consider how they as a group could give. Ask for ideas to be added to the paper. N.B. This will be very contextual. A group may be able to plan to give water to a local park run as runners pass through, or the group may like to support a charity for something that affects someone in the group. The church may have a charity they support, or they might like to twin a toilet etc. Another option would be for the group to bring in their favourite food item and add it to the food bank collection.

Once you have collated ideas, come to a group decision on what the 'giving' will be.

Use the second piece of paper to create a poster or newsletter article so that the whole church can be invited to join in with the giving.

## 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 what they feel is the hardest thing to give away.

- Find something that belongs to you that you could give away. (Check with your parents first.) It could be something for the charity shop, a friend or a neighbour.

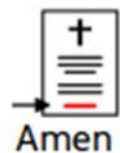
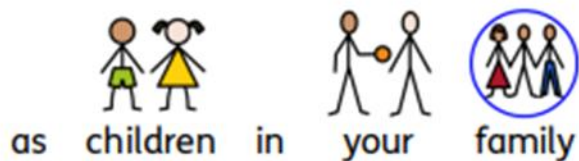
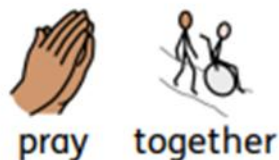
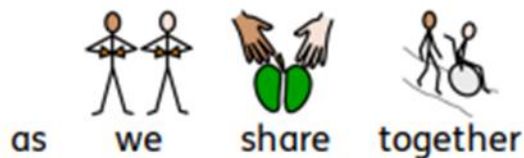
We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **offerings** with us.

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 **Membership**



  
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

