



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

Title: Psalm 81: 1–4

Theme: Any excuse for a party

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

Introduction

Welcome to our session looking at celebrations. To explore the theme, we are using Psalm 81:1-4.

Celebrations are an important part of all our lives today, and that is true of the Jewish faith too. Scripture tells us that the people of Israel were celebrating on the new moon and on the full moon. The new moon signified the first day of the Hebrew month. There were special meetings on these days when the people shared fellowship offerings as part of their worship to God. The full moon is also the middle of the Hebrew month. Many of the special meetings and festivals started at the time of a full moon. These meetings and festivals were times that people gathered together – just like we do on Sundays, and at other times, to celebrate our relationship with God.

The passage refers to “the God of Jacob”. It shows the relationship that God had with Jacob (who would later be re-named “Israel”) and speaks of God’s care, love and protection for the people, and reminds them that they can trust God.

There are special festivals in the Christian calendar when we come together to celebrate God's love and care for us, but we don't need to wait for a special date – we can do it whenever we want, and as often as we want! Maybe you would like to think about agreeing a date with your group for your own church's celebration.

In this session we will explore why, what and how we celebrate – there might be some noise (can you celebrate silently?) so be prepared for that – and make sure the congregation (if you're meeting on a Sunday) are prepared for that, too.

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

Active game – Musical games

Dancing and parties have always gone hand in hand through the ages. What better way to spend your service than smiling, dancing and having fun just as David did in 2 Samuel 6:14?

Musical statues – This old party favourite is a great way to link the overriding “Any excuse for a party” with an easy-to-do game. You simply need music, space and people with “groovy moves”. The last person standing could maybe get a small prize.

Musical chairs – Another classic; however, this one carries the risk of falling over and becoming a little more competitive. But if you have a reasonably soft floor and everyone wants to take part safely then this could be a lot of fun.

Quieter game – Pass the parcel

A nice, calm game with quieter music if desired. Each layer could have a “Celebration” chocolate and/or a piece of a musical instrument that can be put together at the end i.e. an elastic band, some paper, a toilet roll insert to make a primitive twanging guitar/drum sound. Maybe even use the chocolate tin as a drum.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

For this story we recommend using the Living Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm%2081%3A%201-4&version=TLB>

Where can I find the story online?

Under-fives: I am a child of God by Chibooks

<https://youtu.be/R00jk2Qntb0?si=E5xYnYP4KH22JKfA>

Five-to-elevens: Worship by Bible Stories for Kids

<https://youtu.be/11LpFkEvhwo?si=suDB6o0Qxket24Jc>

Songs to support the story

Under-fives: What noise shall we make by Tangy Crayfish

https://youtu.be/EhbcMrZBxWk?si=BZjgNcBs5XaVI2_I

Five-to-elevens: Praise him on the trumpet by WMTV Music (Provide instruments if you have some)

https://youtu.be/d8yxHMmA65g?si=epcD_JQm6fv9PORd

Explore – ways into the theme

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

A new way to explore the theme

Remembered Bible – What is God like?

Read the passage again together – you might like to print it, or write it out on large paper.

Look for sections of the passage which describe what the celebration will be like, and why the Israelites are celebrating.

What is God like?

Can you remember other stories in the Bible which describe what God is like? Make a list together of the reasons God is worth celebrating.

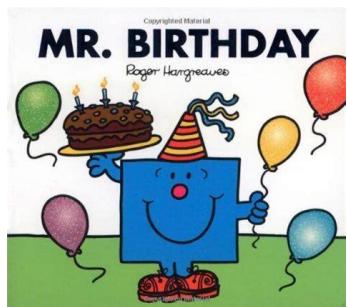
Invitations

You could use the template provided – or design your own invite – to the celebration mentioned in this week's passage. Include information for those invited about what to bring, and what to expect... and why you are having the party!

You might like to look back at the party planner you made last week. What celebrations do you celebrate as a church?

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).



Mr. Birthday (Mr. Men) (2006: Penguin Random House)

<https://youtu.be/LL81QdyFGy0?si=akcEnryrkwhafCF>

Mr. Birthday spends weeks organising parties for everyone else, only to be surprised with a big celebration of his own when his friends reveal it's *his* birthday.

- I wonder how Mr Birthday felt when he realised they'd thrown a party for him.

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

- What's the best bit about a party?
- If you could invite anyone, living or dead, to a party who would it be?
- Why are the Israelites celebrating when the moon is full?
- Are parties less fun when they are scheduled?

Wondering reflect on the theme

- What other characteristics of God do people want to celebrate?
- I wonder if they ever got bored of partying.
- I wonder what other parts of creation, other than the moon, make you feel like celebrating.

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:

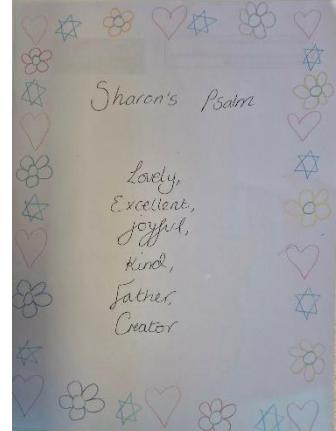
- Party Poppers – when we celebrate, we maybe have party poppers and party hats. How else do we celebrate?
- Musical instruments – try out the different sounds the instruments make. Can you play the instruments quietly? Can you play them loudly?
- Play people – use play people, or random shapes like stones or twigs, to tell the story. Move them around to make pictures from the story as you tell it.
- Party cups and napkins – role play having a party and talk about what kind of food and drink there would be.
- Invitations – In the bible story, everyone is invited to celebrate together – who would you invite? You could do some mark making, using the invitation template provided in the explore section.
- 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 – Psalms

Psalms are beautiful songs and poems dedicated to God. They talk of God's love, God's character and the things people want God to know. Have a go at writing your own psalm. It could be made up of sentences, single words or just pictures. Once created, decorate the edge of the paper as a frame for your psalm.



Spoken prayer

Under-fives (The words in bold could be set to actions)

Dear God **above**,
we **shout** with joy for all your love!
We sing and **clap** and praise your name,
'cause **you** are always good, the same.

Help us **celebrate** each day,
in all we do and all we **say**.
Thank you, God, for **loving** me –
your **joy** is where I love to be.
Amen.

Five-elevens

Caring God, we thank you for your never-ending love.
Every day you remind us how close you are.
Let our voices rise with joy as we sing to you.
Encourage us to notice your goodness in the big and small moments.
Be with us as we learn, play, and grow together.
Remind our hearts that your love is something worth shouting about.
All we do today, help us do it with thankfulness.
Teach us to share your joy with others.
Every step we take, may we celebrate your love.

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 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.

Musical instruments

Sing, accompanied by drums; pluck the sweet lyre and harp. Sound the trumpet!

We might not have access to a lyre or a harp, a trumpet or even a drum – but we can make some instruments for ourselves to help us celebrate God.

You can try making a xylophone by using glass tumblers filled with different volumes of water and then tapping them with chopsticks to make a sound.

You can try making a tambourine by filling an empty bottle with seeds or dried beans and then shaking it to make a sound.

You can try making a trumpet by decorating the cardboard insert from inside a kitchen roll; place the tube over your mouth to make a noise.

You can even try making a lyre by stretching elastic bands over an empty cereal box and plucking them to make a noise.



If you look online you will find many examples of different instruments to make, along with instructions on how to make them. Make a joyful noise for the Lord.

Every day 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:

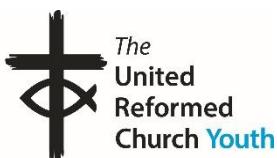
- Talk to someone older or younger than you and ask them I wonder what is the best celebration you have been to?
- Could you take time to see or find out what your school celebrates through the year or your community by looking at community noticeboards and newspapers.

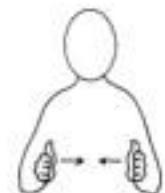
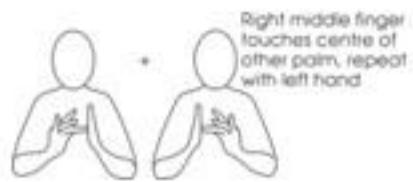
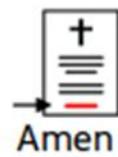
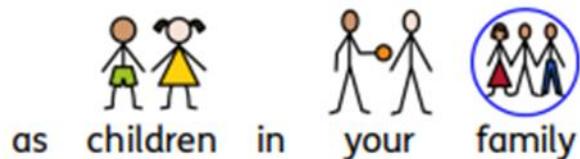
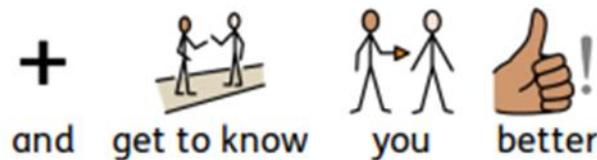
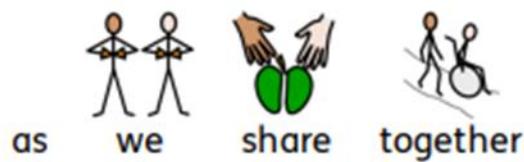
We hope you enjoyed exploring **Psalm 81** with us.

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 **Ruth and Mothering Sunday**








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

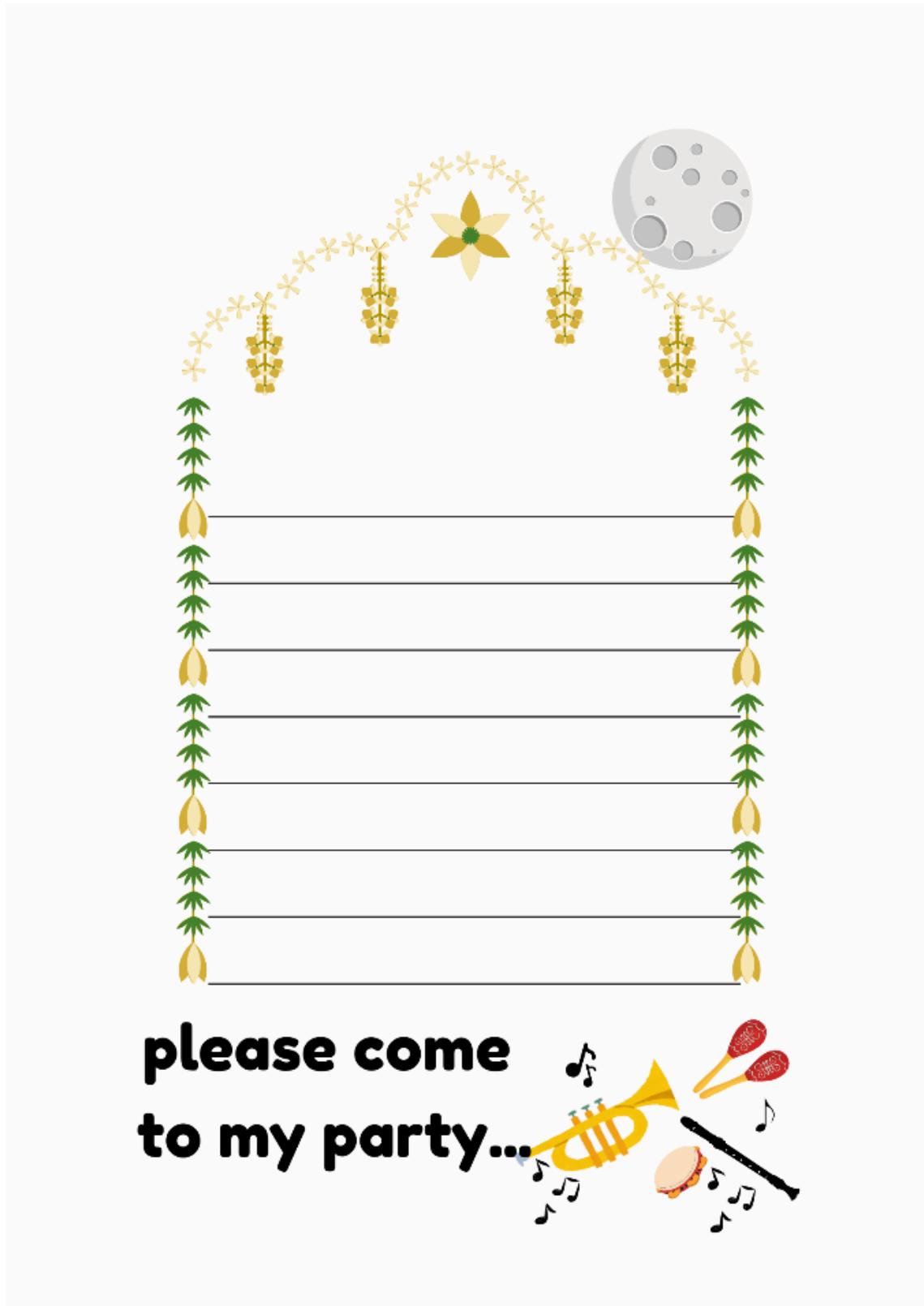




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