



‘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: Isaiah 66:13

Theme: Mother God

Contents:

<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Together</u>	2
<u>Experience</u>	3
<u>Explore</u>	4
<u>Express</u>	7
<u>Handouts</u>	13

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

This session, part of our look at festivals, coincides with Mothering Sunday. Originally, Mothering Sunday was a day where servants were allowed the day off from their duties to return to their 'mother church' – the church where they were baptised – and worship with their families but we are using the opportunity to look at who nurtures and cares for us, and particularly the idea of God fulfilling the role of mother as well as father.

We often focus on the power and might of God but the short passage we have chosen reminds us that God nurtures and comforts us, too.

It is not just people that comfort us – we can often find comfort in places and things (weighted blankets, favourite foods, cuddly toys, etc.)

It is worth remembering that in your group you might have children/young people whose experience of 'mother' is not nurturing and comforting, or whose mother is no longer with them. You will need to think in advance how to respond to this issue.

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 – Dressing Up games

You could choose a dressing up game from the list below. Alternatively, your group may have a favourite dressing up game to play. Each of the games requires team members to care for, and support, each other.

Over and under

Split your group into two teams; provide each team with a bag – or basket – of dressing up clothes. The teams must line up behind their bag of clothes. At an agreed signal, the first person in the line selects an item of clothing – it must be passed alternately, over-heads and under-legs. When it reaches the last person in the line, they must put it on and run to the front of the line. The teams must repeat the process until each team member is wearing an

item of clothing. The winning team is the team which completes the challenge in the fastest time.

Who cares?

Split your group into teams and provide each team with a selection of dressing up clothes and a chair. Whoever sits in the chair is the mannequin; the rest of the team must decide how to 'dress' them. Have a list of people who might perform comforter roles, such as: mother, teacher, nurse, father, grandma. As you call out the name of a comforter, the group must select items from the dressing up clothes to dress their mannequin. Group members can swap to take turns as the mannequin after each completed round.

After each round, you could ask your mannequins to freeze and allow the rest of the group members to wander round and look at the other teams' interpretations – like artworks in a gallery!

Arms up!

Ask your group to stand in a line. The first player in the line is given a jumper to put on. The next person in line must instruct the first player to put their arms up, take off the jumper and wear it themselves. This continues along the line until the last person is wearing the jumper. How fast can you complete the task? Are there ways to improve your team time?

How many jumpers?

Place a large pile of jumpers in the centre of the room, then split your group into teams. Each team must nominate a team member. The nominated team members must put on as many jumpers as they can in the agreed time; other team members can help select jumpers and dress the nominated player *BUT* only one jumper can be selected at a time. The winning team is the team whose nominated player is wearing the most jumpers at the end of the allowed time.

Quieter game – Finish my Sentence...

Sit your group in a circle and choose someone to stand in the centre of the circle. They must think of a question to ask the group by starting a sentence and leaving the ending blank. Each person in the circle repeats the sentence, adding their choice of answer.

If the person in the centre wanted to ask about favourite foods in the group, they might begin by stating:

"My favourite food is..."

Each member of the circle will then repeat the sentence, adding their own favourite food to the end of the sentence.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

For this story we recommend using the New Living Translation

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2066%3A13&version=NLT>

Where can I find the story online?

Under-fives: Isaiah 66:13, explained by DouglasTalks

<https://youtube.com/shorts/exxRNcEK5M4?si=PvxAxHevrbusCVv>

Five-to-elevens: A Mother's Love (Isaiah 66:13), song and images by Little Light Puppets

<https://youtu.be/73LZe3AvmQ0?si=gjsObU2tiDvSdqro>**Songs to support the story**

Under-fives: "God's big hug" by Jesus Jammers

https://youtu.be/ppnzK3ecoa0?si=_T1fG3GUoNISvPTK

Five-to-elevens: God's Family by Kidsonthemove

<https://youtu.be/HBwOFkZkWVg?si=tGUxVtda3HCm3WyB>

Explore – ways into the theme

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

A new way to explore the theme

We often speak of "father God", but today we are looking at "mother God".

As we explore today's story, you can use the images from the book

Mother God by Kim Pecinovsky (2022: Augsburg Fortress Publishers)https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/21639241.Teresa_Kim_Pecinovsky<https://youtu.be/Tx9n5t12HOA?si=eBAmo9PRQ-5MsMSK> (by Munchkin Storytime)

Alternatively, you can use the images we have created to explore what God the mother is to us.

Lay out the images in a circle, placing the last image in the centre, in a reflective story telling way. If you want, you can use this adapted script of the book.

You know God the Father, but God is also your mother.



You are made in her image, the image of the one who is making all things new.



God is like a mother having a baby.
 She takes deep breaths and smiles with joy, and everyone celebrates the new little life.



All day and all night, God watches over her child.
 She holds the baby close, feeds it when it is hungry, and rocks it gently to sleep.



When the baby falls down, God opens her arms wide.
The little one learns to walk because God is right there.



God is like Sophia – Wisdom – who teaches what is good and true.
She builds, creates, imagines, and plays, and she invites us to learn with joy.



At the very beginning of the world, God's Spirit hovered over the world.
She made the earth soft like a bed and the sky wide like a warm blanket.



God is like a mother hen who gathers her chicks under her wings.
She plays with them in tall grass and near quiet streams.



God is like a mother bear – strong and gentle.
She protects her cubs and keeps them safe in her care.



God is like a clever leopard – quiet, brave, and strong.
She teaches her little ones to climb and swim, and they follow her wherever she goes.



God is like a baker with a big bowl of flour.
She makes warm, yummy bread and feeds the whole neighbourhood
until no one is hungry.



God is like a seamstress sewing colourful threads together.
She makes clothes for rainy days, snowy days, and sunny days,
caring for us in every kind of weather.



God is like a grandmother – with soft grey hair.
She tells old stories while rocking in her chair.



God is the one who sees you.
When you cry, God sits with you.
She stays awake through the long night and holds your hand until morning.



God sings sweet lullabies and wraps you up in gentle moonlight.



God is our loving Mother.
You are made in Her image too.
She calls you beloved.
She is making all things new.

I wonder which of these ways of seeing God you like best.

I wonder which one helps you feel God's love the most.

I wonder which picture of God your mind keeps thinking about.

What do these images say about comfort?

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).

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

- Is there a difference between being comforted and being comfortable?
- Are there only certain times when you need to feel comforted?
- What does God's comfort look like?
- Can you just be comforted by God?

Wondering reflection on the theme

- I wonder what age you have to stop using a comfort blanket.
- I wonder if you feel comforted at church.
- I wonder when God has comforted 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). 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 selection of Comfort Blankets – feel the different textures and materials; look at the colours and patterns. Which blanket do you find the most comforting and comfortable?
- Teddy Bear – ask the group whether they have a favourite teddy bear or cuddly toy. Can they describe their toys to the rest of the group?
- 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.
- 'That's not my...' story book – our favourite things can be really familiar; we can tell straight away that they are ours! How do we recognise our favourite people?
- Hen and chicks (small world toys or pictures) – in the Bible, God is compared to a hen who looks after her chicks. Use the toys (or pictures) to explore how the mother hen might look after her little ones.
- 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 – Comfort prayer

You will need a blanket for everyone.

Invite everyone to wrap themselves up in their blanket and get comfortable: "Close your eyes and let us pray."

God,

We feel this blanket around us, warm, secure, held,
and it reminds us that you wrap us in your arms and offer your
comfort to us.

As a mother comforts her child, you hold us, you are near.

(In the silence, under your blanket, tell God your prayers)

God thank you for being near to us.

Thank you for hearing our prayers.

Keep us close to you and help us to share your love and comfort with others.

Amen.



Spoken prayer

Under-fives:

Dear God, thank you that you love us and comfort us when we're sad or scared. Help us to feel safe in your arms. Amen.

Five-to-elevens:

Dear God, thank you that you love us so much and care for us like a kind and gentle mum. When we feel sad, lonely, worried, or scared, thank you that you come close and hold us in your love. Thank you that you listen when we cry and smile with us when we are happy. Please help us to trust you, to run to you when things feel hard, and to remember that we are never alone because you are always with us. 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.

Hug in a mug

You will need:

- plain/all-purpose flour
- sugar – caster, granulated or brown sugar
- baking powder
- fine salt
- milk
- sunflower or vegetable oil
- any relevant additional ingredients

What you do:

Measure the dry ingredients – the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt – directly into a microwave safe mug.

Stir to mix well.

Add the oil and milk and stir to mix.

Cook in the microwave on high for 1 minute. Leave to sit for a further minute before eating.

Comfort hug

You will need:

- strips of felt or fabric
- Velcro self-adhesive dots or strips
- fabric glue
- a button and a loop
- a mug
- hot chocolate
- flavoured essence (mint or orange)
- squirty cream
- small marshmallows
- a bar of chocolate grated



What you do:

Depending on the shape of the mug you may need to make a template from paper and then use that to help cut your felt to the right shape.

Decorate your strip of felt with hearts, a smiley face or something else you choose.

Wrap it around your mug and join it together by sticking the Velcro dots/strips to the end and wrapping it around the mug. Making sure the join is by the handle. Alternatively, you could sew a button and a loop of felt on to it, to join the ends together.

While that is drying, make your hot chocolate. Make it luxurious, using hot milk and chocolate, or a spoonful of Nutella spread. You could even add flavours to the hot chocolate if you have some.

Pour it into your cup and top with marshmallows, squirty cream and some grated chocolate. Yum!

Add your decoration (if dry enough) to the cup.

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:

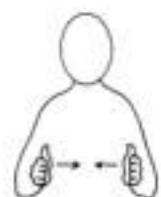
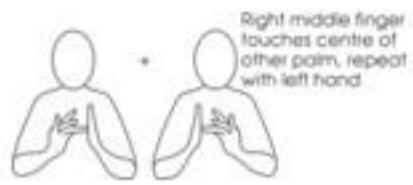
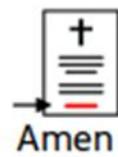
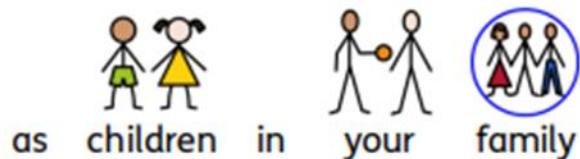
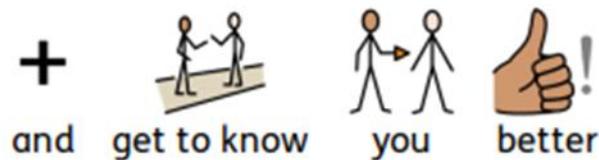
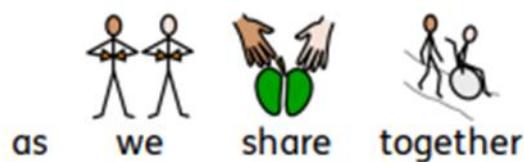
- Talk to someone older or younger than you and ask them to tell you how they get comfort from knowing God.
- While at school could you keep an eye on people who may need comfort? For instance, could you comfort someone who uses the friendship bench at school this week?

We hope you enjoyed exploring the idea of **Mother God** 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 **Numbers**






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





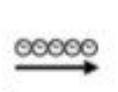

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil







For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory






For ever and ever. Amen



Illustration by lambsons.co.nz via freebibleimages.com



