



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>

John 16: 16-24 – Easter hope

Theme: The hope of Jesus helps us bounce back from sadness

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

This passage shows Jesus predicting his coming death and resurrection. He is acknowledging that his disciples are going to feel sadness but reminding them that it will not last as they will see him again. The promise they are given is that their sadness will turn to joy, this promise would give them hope in their coming sadness. It provides us with the opportunity to explore what things make us sad and consider what helps us when we are sad. What helps us to bounce back from sadness? We can explore what joy might mean and look like, as opposed to being happy. Can we have joy even when we are sad?

Be aware that this may bring up some difficult feelings for some children. Some may be living in sad situations currently or recently and we can feel pressure to ‘cheer up’ and ‘find your smile’. This session isn’t suggesting that you grow out of sadness or grief but that you have hope within it; that our situation won’t necessarily improve but that we can know a joyful time will come. It is also an opportunity to consider how the Bible tells us that one day all sadness will end. This is when Jesus comes back or we are in heaven.



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 - Opposite games

You will need a bouncy ball.

Stand or sit in a circle and explain that we are going to take it in turns to bounce the ball to each other, across the circle. As we bounce the ball, we shout out a word. Begin with a word related to the theme such as sadness and encourage the group to see how long we can keep bouncing and shouting out follow-on words. The only rule is that the next word needs to be the opposite of the one before it. For example, sadness, might lead to happiness, which leads to gloom which leads to light and so on. If there is a time when the ball gets stuck because someone can't think of a follow-on word, the ball comes back to you so that can begin the process again with another starting word.



Alternative game - Bouncing Relay

Participants split into teams and stand in lines at one end of the playing area.

The first participant in each team must race to the opposite end of the playing area and back to their starting position. They then tag the next team member, who completes the race and play continues until the whole team has finished.

Challenge the teams to complete one of the suggested “bouncing” activities below whilst racing.

- Space hopper – sit on hopper and bounce from one end to the other.
- Basketball – dribble the ball whilst moving from one end to the other.
- Tennis racket and ball – bounce the ball against the floor and racket whilst moving from one end to the other.

Repeat the race with different challenges added.

Experience

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

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16%3A16-24&version=ICB>

Where can I find the story online?

Under Fives: St Bart's Kids eBook - John 16:16-24 Joy (that Completes)

<https://youtu.be/i-U7SBEJ8rU?si=nVxEjr9922qTqeYq>

The Easter Story for younger children: The story of the resurrection

<https://youtu.be/bK7XFq8NCHI>

Five to elevens: Gizmo's Daily Bible Byte John 16:24 – In Jesus' Name!

https://youtu.be/itSNTkhJvI0?si=pCltPNWdaWaJG3_A

The Easter story for older children: God's Story: Jesus is Alive

<https://youtu.be/VtYDbPfZB-8>

Songs to support the story

Under Fives: Jesus Is Alive (Freeze Dance) | Preschool Worship Song

<https://youtu.be/ciXWG9viEuw>

Smile (turn your frown upside down) A great song from Spring Harvest Little Kids Praise (available on Spotify/amazon music etc)

Five to elevens: Jesus hope of the nations

<https://youtu.be/pppyU0H7gWA>

May the God of Hope Lyric Video with actions - Doug Horley/Duggie Dug Dug Official Video

<https://youtu.be/yXZYzXNjEY>



Explore

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

A new story to share

You will need a big bouncy ball for this activity.

You will all need to stand in a circle.

The ball is to be bounced from person to person, when the storyteller says stop and asks the person holding the ball a question.

If the person would prefer not to answer, they can bounce the ball onto someone else or you could have a set mantra to say such as... *'The hope of Jesus helps us bounce back from sadness'*

To give some context to the reading in today's session we will look at the crucifixion and resurrection in this section.

Although the Bible story belonging to today does indirectly refer to the crucifixion and resurrection, within this session we have focused on the sadness that the disciples are feeling on being told that Jesus is to go. Below is a story you could use or you may choose to tell more of the 'Easter' story if you wish.

Jesus trudged wearily along the path. The wooden cross was heavy and bits of wood were sticking into his back. All he could hear around him were shouts and jeers and many people crying.

STOP – Q – I wonder why Jesus was walking with a heavy wooden cross?

He paused for a moment, his legs giving way under the weight of the cross.

STOP – Q – I wonder how Jesus must have felt?

Jesus was on his way to Golgotha, a place where people were taken to be crucified. The disciples had followed Jesus the whole way, as did his mother Mary. She was silently weeping and Peter was shouting out why, why.

STOP - Q – I wonder what Peter must have been thinking?

Jesus stumbled again, this time a man named Simon of Cyrene stopped and helped. He took the cross from Jesus and carried it for him.

STOP – Q – Why would Simon do that?

Finally they all reached Golgotha. The cross was laid on the floor and Jesus was laid on it. The soldiers nailed his hands and feet in place on the cross. The cross was then raised and hammered into the ground. Jesus was crying in pain and misery.

STOP – Q – The soldier's would have been following orders, what would you do if you were one of the soldiers?

Hours went by and then Jesus shouted out – Father forgive them – they do not know what they are doing.

STOP – Q – I wonder what Jesus meant by those words?

Jesus' body was taken off the cross and taken to an empty tomb. Mary and friends wrapped his body in cloth and poured smelly oil onto the body and left the tomb. A giant stone was rolled in front to keep it closed. Two soldiers stood outside the tomb and guarded Jesus body. The friends went away.

STOP – Q – I wonder what they thought would happen?

Three days went by then Mary and another friend headed to the tomb. When they got there, the stone in front of the tomb had been rolled back and Jesus was missing. Is this what Jesus meant when he said he would be gone a while? Mary wondered. She turned to walk away when she saw the gardener and she asked him if he knew where Jesus' body had been taken? He held out his hands and said Mary. Straight away she knew it was Jesus.

STOP – Q – I wonder why Mary didn't recognise Jesus?

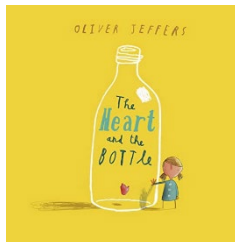


Mary fell to her knees in praise of Jesus and the fact that he had risen and come back to them as he said he would. They had only been sad for a while.

STOP – Q – A question for all.....where do you see yourself in the story? Who do you identify with? Is there anything surprising to you in the story?

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.



'Heart in a bottle' by Oliver Jeffers

https://youtu.be/8FSuy-J_Pzk?si=cAbQiydy6VkdMH1E

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

- Why do you think the disciples forgot Jesus' promise that they wouldn't always be sad after his death? Why didn't they expect him to rise again?
- What does sadness look like and feel like?
- Does sadness last forever? What helps you when you are sad?
- Is it OK to be sad sometimes? Can you have joy and yet still be sad or are they opposites?
- What are good things to say to people when they are sad and what really doesn't help?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder where you find hope?
- The disciples knew that their sadness wouldn't last for ever because he promised. I wonder what promises God gives you that help you each day?
- I wonder what is special to you about Easter?

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:

- Emojis – Some pictures of emojis showing different happy and sad faces. Talk about how we feel different emotions. What things make them feel sad? What things make them feel happy?
- Bouncy ball or tennis ball – Drop the ball on the floor and watch how it bounces back up. Think about how God can help us bounce back when we are feeling sad and low.
- A blindfold – Use the blindfold or get children to put their hands over their eyes so they cannot see. Talk about how Jesus said his followers would not see him for some time, and then they would see him again.
- Party blowers/party hats – Talk about the things that we want to celebrate and rejoice. What makes us joyful?
- 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

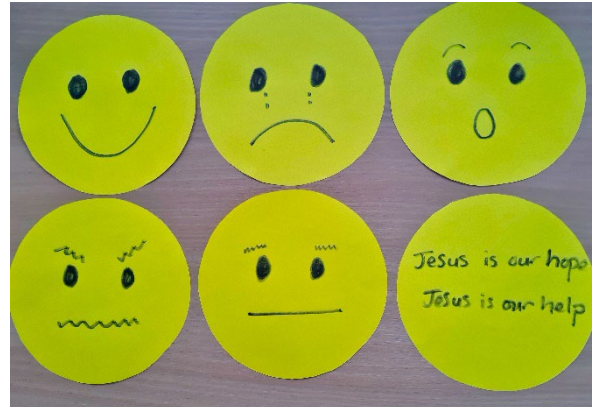
Praying together: how can you involve the children actively in prayer?

Creative prayer

Praying with emoticons.

Create on cards some emoticons for Happy, Sad, Cross, Confused and Scared. These are just ideas and you may want to create others. On the back of each emoticon write or add a label saying Jesus is our Hope, Jesus is our help.

Lay the emoticons with the face upward and, taking each one in turn, invite the children to think about that emotion and encourage them to talk to God about it and how it makes them feel. After a time of quiet for the children to think and pray, say the line of the prayer below and as the prayer is said turn the face over to reveal the words and then say together **Jesus is our hope, Jesus is our help.**



God, when we are happy (*smiley face*):
Jesus is our hope, Jesus is our help

God, when we are sad (*sad face*):
Jesus is our hope, Jesus is our help

God, when we are cross (*cross face*):
Jesus is our hope, Jesus is our help.

God, when we are confused (*confused face*):
Jesus is our hope, Jesus is our help.

God, when we are scared (*scared face*):
Jesus is our hope, Jesus is our help.

Thank you, God, that Jesus is our hope, Jesus is our help.
Amen.

Spoken prayer

Dear Jesus
Thank you that you are our friend,
That we can put our hope in you.
When we feel sad remind us of the Easter story
And how you came back to life.
Help us to bounce back to you when we feel sad.
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.

Springy splatter painting

You will need:

- Roasting tin or large tray,
- Elastic bands,
- Paint,
- Paintbrushes,
- Paper



Stretch a number of elastic bands around the width of the roasting tin, spread out evenly (5 or 6 work well). Place a sheet of paper in the base of the tin or tray. Using a paintbrush dab some paint onto the elastic bands. Flick the elastic band with your finger and the paint will fly off and splatter onto the paper. Repeat this with a variety of colours and you will create a unique splatter painting.

Exploring springs

Springs are everywhere. We often think of a spring being a coil shape, like you find in a pen or in your mattress or in a slinky toy. But a spring is a term used for anything that is an elastic shaped into an object that stores mechanical energy and there are many different types, including things like bows in a bow and arrow set or a rubber band as a tension spring.

Check out this link to help you and your group to explore springs and consider how things spring/bounce back. For example, it shows a simple challenge to peel an apple in one continuous strip which in itself is a spring. <https://leftbraincraftbrain.com/10-ways-to-play-and-learn-with-springs/>

This is a great opportunity to invite someone into the group who can help you learn and have fun with springs such as a science teacher in your church or a young person with a passion for science.

Bouncy Joy Garden

You will need

- Pipe cleaners about 5 or 6 per person
- Heart shapes in different colours or flower stickers
- Paper cup or small compostable flowerpot
- Glue
- Plasticine or play doh



Wind the pipe cleaners around your finger to make them like springs, these will form the bouncy stems for hearts or flowers. Stick the shapes to the end of each pipe cleaners. Roll up a ball of plasticine or play doh and press it into the bottom of the paper cup or flowerpot. This will act as a weight for the cup and provide a secure base to stand the flowers in. Arrange the flowers in the cup pressing them firmly into the base.



Gently shake the pot or brush the flowers with your hand and watch them bounce.

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:

- Easter can be a lovely time, with Easter eggs and other good things to indulge in, but we need to remember that it is also a time to think about Jesus dying and living again. At your Easter meal, perhaps you could set a place for Jesus. What would it be like to have Jesus with you when you eat?
 - Easter is about hope. Could you bring some hope to others by making a donation to a food bank? Even just a single tin of beans could make a difference when people need a little help to have enough food to eat.
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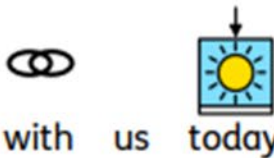
We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **John 16: 16-24** with us.

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

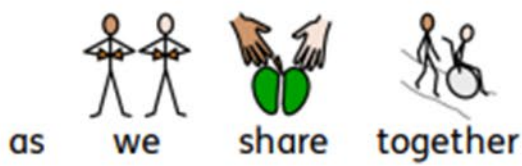
Why not have a look at next month's resource on **Courage**



Jesus our friend,



be with us today



as we share together



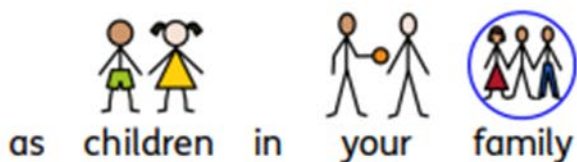
pray together



play together



and get to know you better



as children in your family



Amen



Right middle finger touches centre of other palm, repeat with left hand



Alternate hands back and forth





Your sadness will turn to joy.



Illustration by lambsongs.co.nz via freebibleimages.com

Your sadness will turn to joy.

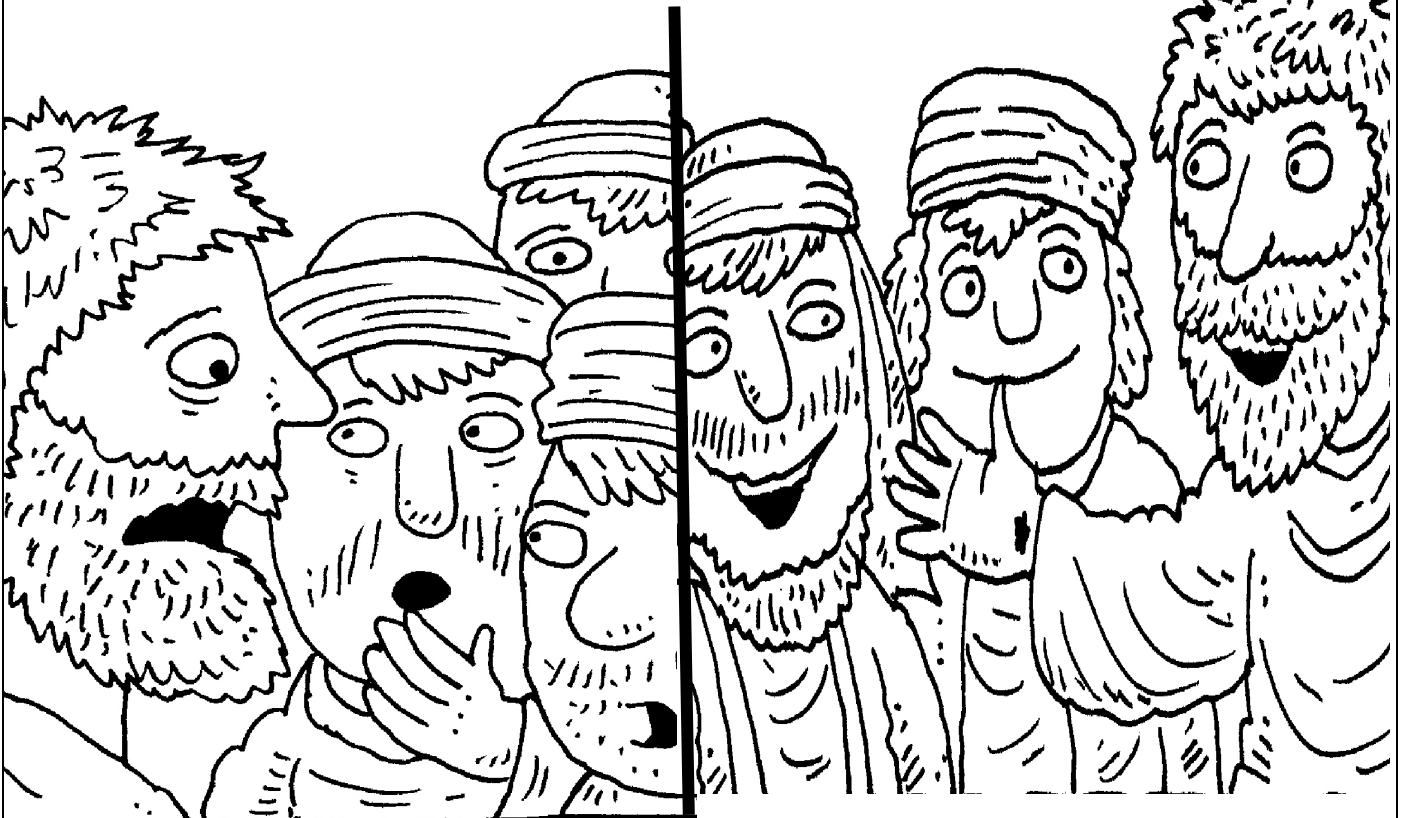




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Your sadness will turn to joy.

