



# 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>

## Isaiah 58:5-8 Fasting

**Theme:** Stand out for God

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

#### Isaiah

The book of Isaiah which can be found in the Old Testament is considered a prophetic book, verses are often cited in reference to Jesus' birth and him being the saviour of the world. The book does focus on sinful ways but also includes the message of forgiveness and hope.

This month we will be focusing on food and fasting. It is important to bear in mind that fasting does not always mean giving up food. In fact this should be discouraged in children and young people who are still growing. Instead, this session focuses on letting go of what we no longer need and instead shifting our focus back onto God and the needs of others. Almost like a spiritual detox. When we do this we are letting God's light in and giving it an opportunity to shine through us, and be seen by others.

Talking about food, fasting and denying ourselves may be a trigger for some – especially those who have challenges or/and a food related diagnosis.

It is worth understanding what sackcloth and ashes means, this website gives a very concise explanation. <https://www.gotquestions.org/sackcloth-and-ashes.html>



# 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**

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## In-person game - The Chocolate Game with a twist!

This is a version of the Chocolate game with a knife and fork but with a twist. To reflect the bible passage the aim is more about us giving things away and helping others rather than storing things up for ourselves. In this game, instead of eating the chocolate you win, you choose to give it away to someone else.

*You will need:*

- bar of chocolate
- plate
- knife and fork
- some dressing-up items (at least a hat, scarf and gloves)
- dice

Put the bar of chocolate on the plate with the knives and forks nearby and sit the children around it in a circle. Throw the pile of dressing up clothes into the circle. Give one child the dice.



Children take it in turns to roll the dice on the floor in front of them, passing it around the circle to their left. If a child rolls a six, they leap into the centre of the circle, put on the hat gloves and scarf/ dressing up clothes, and start to cut the bar of chocolate - but only using the knife and fork. That child keeps going until another child rolls a six, at which point they must co-operate and hand over the dressing up clothes so that the next child gets a turn. The important part of this game is that at the end of their turn rather than eating or keeping the chocolate they must give it away to someone in the circle.

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### Alternative game - Elephant trunk

One of the verses in the Bible reading refers to weak bent grass blades. This game is inspired from that verse. The aim of this game is to knock over those bottles with the word *selfish* on.

*You will need:*

- Long sock or one leg of a pair of tights
- Tennis ball
- Collection of bottles filled with an inch or so of water, some with the word *selfish* and some with *selfless* written on them

This is a fun game to play but does require some space. Each person takes turns to have a go, or you could play in two or more teams.

Put a tennis ball into the toe of the long sock/tights and space the bottles out into a line.

Once the bottles have been spaced out the player puts the open end of the sock/tights over their head (not over the face)/ holds the leg of the sock/tights (elephant's trunk) and bends at the waist. They then attempt to knock down the *selfish* bottles with the end of the trunk while leaving the *selfless* bottles standing.

## Experience

For this story we recommend using the Children's International Bible  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah%2058%3A%205-8&version=EASY>

### Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Gods Story – The Prophets

<https://youtu.be/sumaXbjP2Kg>

Five to elevens: The right kind of fast

<https://youtu.be/YOUoTD11RvQ>

### Songs to support the story

Under fives: Shine from the inside out (with actions)

<https://youtu.be/Btbzli8sR1o>

Five to elevens: New Wine Kids Lyric Video: Star

[https://youtu.be/fBVNHu\\_16Ag](https://youtu.be/fBVNHu_16Ag)

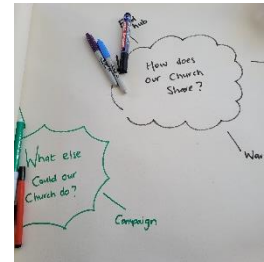
# Explore

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

## A new way to explore the story

This week's passage discusses what fasting shouldn't be like but is also very clear about what God does want instead – people who follow God's way and care for others, people who are good at sharing. Sit together as a group, sharing food or snacks together (food such as tear and share bread, or a plate of snacks in the middle of the gathering, will encourage the group to consider whether the snack has been shared with everyone). On large pieces of paper, or a roll of paper, encourage the group to think about two questions:

- **How does our church share?** Are there ways that the church is using its building, time or money to help share with others – making sure they have enough? Are there groups that happen in the church building which support church members to share food together or share skills? Are there groups that help members of the community share food or time together - such as a community meal or a warm space?
- **What more could we do?** Is there more that the church could be doing? Are there activities that the group think would really help the community? For older groups, you could use the JPIT steps *How to Change the World*. They will help with recognising problems and concerns, as well as thinking through what could be done to resolve them.

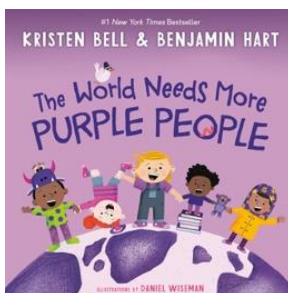


**Youth Resources – Joint Public Issues Team**

After answering the questions as a group, think about who you will share the information with. Is there a church leader or volunteer who would be able to help you to think about what to do next?

## 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.



**'The World Needs More Purple People'** by Kristen Bell and Benjamin Hart

<https://youtu.be/LviYLYVRScw?si=Wqo8dGrDaroL4Mnm>

- I wonder what big questions you are going to ask?
- I wonder what purple work you can do?
- I wonder what good ideas you will share today?



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

- What does it mean to stand out for God?
- Why do you think people might fast?
- Have you ever given up something for Lent or to save money? What does it feel like to go without? Does how you feel change as time goes on?
- I wonder what sack cloth and ashes mean?
- Do you think there is a tradition of fasting in your church?

### Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder if you'd find it easier to go without food or to do good things for others
- I wonder if you've ever given something up during Lent
- I wonder what kind things people in the church have done for you and what you have done for them

### 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:

- Bits of rubbish (such as empty boxes and bottles) and other items such as teddy bears and books. Filter the rubbish out and throw it away
- Some items to wash and bowls of water to wash them in
- Wipe clean boards to draw on and wipe clean
- Pop up toys that show how we 'stand/ pop up' for Jesus
- 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

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

### Creative Prayer - Ashes

*You will need:*

- Ashes (made from burning strips of paper in a bowl and then mixing them with a little oil) or charcoal

*What you do:* Talk about what it means to say sorry and why we might want to do that, especially to people we love. Encourage the children to think of things they might want to say sorry to God for and give a little time of quiet for them to do this privately. Encourage them to dip their finger in the ash mixture or using the charcoal make a cross on the palm of their hand.

When everyone has done this say the short prayer to end.



## Prayer

Thank you Lord that you love us and hear us when we pray.  
We are sorry for things we have done that have hurt you and others.

Help us to stand out for you.

Amen




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## Spoken prayer

Dear God

Please hear us and help us.

Work through us so that we can share

Your goodness and love in the world.

Thank you Lord for loving us.

Help us to love one another.

Show us the joy and new life that Jesus brings

And help us to stand out for you and shine your light.

Amen

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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 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.

## Stand up for Jesus

*You will need:*

- Card (A cereal packet works well)
- Split pins
- String
- Template for body parts-

<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Time-Travellers-Jumping-Jack-template.pdf>

*What you do:*

Using the template, cut out the shapes from the strong card.

As a guide use the template to mark where the split pins will be placed by putting a small dot. When creating holes by piercing the cardboard with a sharp pencil, it is a good idea to place a ball of blue tack so that the point of the pencil goes into this as it pierces the template.

Using the paper fasteners/split pins, fasten each limb to the torso, making sure the feet point in the right direction, then spread the two pieces of metal to secure it at the back. Make sure the limbs can move freely – you may need to make the holes a bit bigger.





Knot a string through the small holes marked on the template on each arm joining them loosely together and then do the same with the legs. Then knot a third piece of string joining the arms and the leg down the middle, let the end of the string hang down below the puppet to give you something to pull on. Make a small hole in the head of your puppet and tie a loop of string in place that you can use to hold the puppet or that you could loop over a door handle. Now decorate your puppet.

Pull on the string to let your puppet sit down and then let your puppet stand up. Talk together about how it represents us standing up for God.

## Start Sharing - Herman cake

*You will need:*

(Starter Ingredients)

- 460g plain white flour
- 500ml warm milk
- 230g sugar
- 90ml warm water
- 2 tbsp easy bake yeast



*What you do:*

This is called a Herman cake - is it a special cake to make and share with others over and over again. You are starting it in your group.

Mix all the ingredients together in a large bowl, cover loosely with a clean tea towel (it will need the wild yeasts in the air to stay alive), and place in a warm place. It looks like goop when it is starting to grow.

You need to look after your cake over the next 10 days. It may be that you organise for some children to look after it, stirring love into the starter mix. Maybe they can pass it on to each other, meeting together on day 10 to make it together.

*Day one*

Make sure Herman is in a large bowl, loosely covered with a clean cloth and in a warm place.

*Day two and three*

Give Herman a good stir with a wooden spoon.

*Day four*

Herman needs feeding. You will need to add in:

- 120g plain flour
- 225g caster sugar
- 225ml milk

Stir Herman well and cover again with his cloth.

*Day five, six, seven and eight*

Each day give Herman a good stir with a wooden spoon.

*Day nine*

Herman needs to be fed again so repeat the ingredients from day four and give him a good stir. Divide the mixture into four portions, save one portion for making the cake on Day 10, give three portions away to friends.



*Day 10 - Now you need to make your cake.*

### You will need to add:

- 225g caster sugar
- 240g plain flour
- 2 eggs
- 150ml cooking oil
- 2 heaped tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 cooking apples, peeled, cored and chopped

Then you can add any of the following:

- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tsp mixed spice
- 40g chopped nuts
- 150g raisins or sultanas
- 60g cherries, or anything else that takes your fancy (e.g. chocolate chips)

Mix everything together well, pour into a large, greased cake tin that measures 26cm x 26cm. Sprinkle 80g melted butter and 3 tbsp soft brown sugar over the top of the cake and place in a preheated oven at 180°C, gas mark 4 for 35-45 mins until it feels springy to the touch. Leave to cool in the tin for ten minutes and then turn out onto a wire rack. Taste the love in every bite.

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### 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:

- I wonder if you could make something edible at home using only what's in the cupboards? (Seek permission first)
  - Take a few moments to think of things you may want to let go of, it may be joining in with gossip or might be something like lying to someone. Write each thing on pieces of paper. Place a bin a small distance from you, screw up each piece of paper and throw it into the bin. If you only have one of two bits of paper then take them back out the bin, set the bin farther away and keep repeating. We need to be working at letting go of these things.
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We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **Isaiah** with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing [lorraine webb@urc.org.uk](mailto:lorraine webb@urc.org.uk)

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **the last supper**



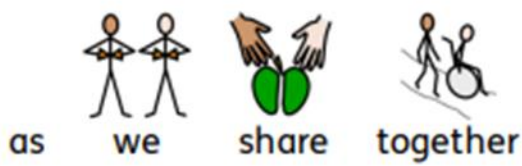




Jesus our friend,



be with us today



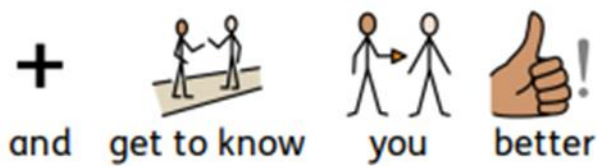
as we share together



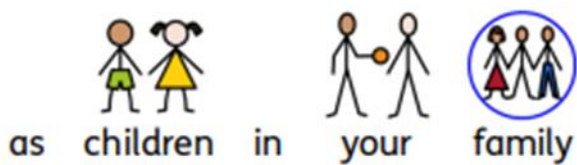
pray together



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





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