



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>

Exodus 12: 14-20

Theme: A simple celebration

Contents:

Introduction	1
Together	2
Experience	3
Explore	4
Express	6
Handouts	10

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

Exodus

The book of Exodus describes the early life of the Israelites, their captivity and subsequent freedom from slavery. The word exodus means exit or to leave. Within this book is the story of Passover and the festival of unleavened bread, which are still celebrated in Judaism today. Passover commemorates the time when the Israelites were told by God to paint their doors with lambs' blood to allow God's angel of death to pass over them and for their first born to be spared from death during the final and most devastating plague in Egypt. The festival of unleavened bread, which takes place straight after (and overlapping with) Passover, commemorates the escape from Egypt when the Israelites had no time to wait for bread to rise before fleeing.

The Passover meal today is not a simple meal – it's five courses – but the festival of unleavened bread is simple. The Israelites had to leave their house quickly and only take what was needed, the priority things. Bread, whether or not it contains yeast, is nutritious, it is a staple basic and fills you up. The emphasis was on taking just enough and moving quickly to follow God's command. We don't need fancy foods and clothes and rituals to celebrate God's faithfulness – they can distract from the central purpose. As we prepare for Easter we can be distracted with fancy chocolate eggs vying to be more and more elaborate and can lose sight of the reason we are celebrating.

Today's Bible passage focuses quite a bit on yeast – leaven – and this can be interpreted as a symbol for sin as it spreads and grows. If the yeast represents sin, the symbolic act of removing it from the house can represent getting rid of the things that tempt us to sin. It may well, however,



raise the question of why yeast is equated with something bad when it is an ingredient of so many quite ordinary things, as the passage does seem to emphasise the importance of getting rid of it.

Trigger warnings – Be aware of those facing food poverty, people who feel excluded or shut out from a group, children who don't celebrate in the same way and may feel they have missed out.

Dietary needs – gluten intolerance/coeliac – be aware of these in any food-based activities.

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

This game is simple, active, and helps children grasp the meaning of obedience and remembrance in a fun, hands-on way. It has two rounds.

You will need:

- Small paper balls (representing "yeast")



- A bucket/box/bin (labelled "bin")
- Bread cut-outs (or pictures of different types of bread) marked as either "leavened" or "unleavened" (if using pictures you may choose not to label the different breads as 'leavened' or 'unleavened' and let the group try and work out which category the bread belongs to)
- A table
- Kitchen timer/stopwatch

What you do:

Scatter the paper balls ("yeast") around the room. Mix the bread cut-outs around the yeast — some marked as "leavened" (with big, puffy drawings) and some as "unleavened" (flat). Place the bucket labelled "bin" at one end of the room and the table at the other.

Round 1: Clearing the Yeast

Introduction: "In the story, God told the Israelites to clean all the yeast out of their homes. Yeast is what makes bread puffy. We're going to help them by clearing out all the yeast here!"

Decide on a time limit. Children race to collect the "yeast" (paper balls) and throw it into the bin. Once the time is up explain how the Israelites obeyed God's command to remove yeast.

Round 2: Picking the Right Bread

Introduction: "God told the Israelites to eat unleavened bread for seven days. Let's find the right bread to celebrate!"

Set a time limit. Children must sort the bread cut-outs into two piles: leavened – placed on the table and unleavened – placed near (but not IN the bin – we don't want to encourage throwing away good food.) At the end, check their piles and celebrate their efforts.

Alternative game – Guess Who

Play "Guess Who" – one person chooses one of the people on screen and writes their name on a piece of paper but does not tell anyone who it is. The others ask 'yes/no' questions such as 'is the person wearing glasses?', and if the answer is no, all the people with glasses turn their cameras off while, if the answer is yes, all the people without glasses turn their cameras off. The aim is to try to be the first person to guess the name written on the paper.

Experience

For this story we recommend using the Easy to Read Version
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2012%3A14-20&version=ERV>

Where can I find the story online?

Story linking Passover and the Last Supper – could be used to link this session with the session on the Last Supper <https://youtu.be/GUXp4I6D3NA>



Under fives: The Passover Shaboom! Special

<https://youtu.be/BUv0BTdUNPo?si=GcxWkd9R-qJwwCVt> (until 2:16)

For older children: What is Passover? - BBC Bitesize

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zn22382>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: God Is Good - Nick & Becky Drake (Worship For Everyone)

<https://youtu.be/2HLcNep22EU>

May the God of Hope by Doug Horley

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQAtIWOLHYc&t=89s>

Explore

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

A new way to explore the story

Remembering the story

Begin by gathering the group together and explain that today we remember how the Israelites were slaves in Egypt and had to leave quickly once God set them free. Use the Remembered Bible approach to recap the story. Ask the group to tell the story from memory, they can help each other (and be prompted if needed) to retell as much as they know. You might like to then show a video recapping the story,

When they were set free, they were told to pack and run, they didn't have time to let their bread rise and so took their unleavened bread with them. This is simply bread without yeast.

Show some yeast and explain what it does when added to bread dough.

Every year Jews remember this part of the Exodus story by removing all the leaven from their house and only eating unleavened bread and food for the seven days after Passover begins. It's called the Festival of unleavened bread. It's a time of preparing themselves as they remember the Passover and Exodus story.

Linking it to Lent

ASK – does this remind you of anything that Christians do? Does anything sound familiar to you?

It's very similar to Lent as a time of preparing for Easter. Some Christians live and eat more simply during Lent as a way of preparing themselves for Easter. Some give things up. Pancake Day is a time of using up everything that might go off over Lent for example eggs and milk.

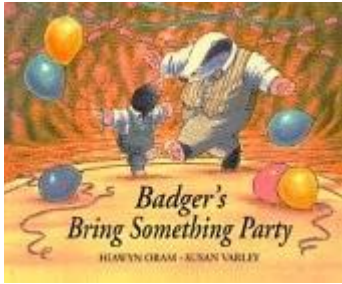
Pancakes

You could make and enjoy some pancakes together. How about making some with different ingredients, instead of sugar use salt or pepper etc. Have some fun trying them and working out what the wrong flavour is. This is a reminder that Lent is a time when we look at our own lives and see if there's anything wrong that we want to remove (sin).



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.



'Badger's Bring Something Party' by Hiawyn Oram and Susan Varley

https://youtu.be/AOs0j2FRlro?si=WaZrz1r5_Ahh8SY5

(Watch From 0.30 till 9.37)

- I wonder what interesting things you would bring to the bring something party?
- I wonder what the others thought of Mole only bringing himself?
- I wonder if we ever need to bring anything more than ourselves?
- How does this story fit with what we are talking about today?

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

- What kind of foods might you find yeast in? What does it do?
- Is there something you want to celebrate that you've achieved this year? Is there anything that you would have liked to have celebrated that hasn't been?
- What food do you eat that brings memories of other people or events?
- If you had to leave your house quickly, what would you take?
- What can we do to remember God's faithfulness?
- How does God show faithfulness to you?
- Does it surprise you that the feast of unleavened bread has such simple food?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder what you've celebrated this year?
- What food do you eat that brings memories of other people or events?
- I wonder what your favourite food is to take on a trip?

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:

- Yeast – yeast is in lots of foods, like bread, pizza and biscuits. It smells bad.
- Party Popper – this story is about remembering something and celebrating it with a kind of party.
- Luxury easter egg and a basic easter egg – it doesn't matter how these eggs are packaged the story is the same and they are just the same inside.
- Basic food (pasta, rice, bread milk) – these foods are all simple foods but they fill us up and we can make lots of things from them.
- Baby Memory book or photo album – the story today is about remembering something that God did for God's people.
- 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?

Clearing away our sin Prayers

In this prayer activity, the group will be symbolically removing 'sins' so that the words that are left are a prayer to God.

You will need: pieces of paper with words written on, one word per piece of paper, and a bin. For example: God, greed, anger, loves, hate, me, envy, jealousy, bullying, for, stealing, gossiping, who, fighting, laziness, I, punching, am, unfairness, teasing.

Instructions: Lay the words out on the floor (making sure that the 'base prayer' words are in order) and invite the children, one at a time, to remove a 'sin' word, screw it up and put it in the bin. The group can say sorry to God for the times they have committed the sin (if they have!).

When all the sin words have been removed, put the remaining words together and say the prayer out loud together.

Note: You might like to ask members of the group to write the 'sin' words and you can then mix them in with the other words before laying all the pieces of paper out.

Spoken prayer

This week's session explores celebrating simply. With the following spoken prayers, the second prayer simplifies the first. You could use either section alone or both together. For younger groups, you might prefer to only use the simplified prayer.

Dear God,

We are sorry:

For when we have left people out,
For when we have not looked after the beautiful world you have given us,
For when we have not listened to you.

Thankyou:

For the stories we can share from the Bible,
For your faithfulness to us,
For your promise to walk with us in all that we do.

Help us:

To share your care and concern for others,
To celebrate and enjoy our times together as a group,
To speak out about fairness and equality.

Amen

God,

Sorry! We are not always kind.
Thank you! You stick with us.
Please! Show us the right things to do.

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.

Newspaper Party Items

You will need: newspapers, scissors, glue, pencils/pens, string.

Use old newspapers to create items for a party or celebration. Here are some different ideas to try:

Paper streamers – Cut long thin strips of paper. Roll each strip around a pencil to create curls. Gather several curled strips and tie/glue together at one end to form a streamer.

Paper chains – Cut strips of paper. Take one strip and glue each end together to form a loop. Take another strip and thread it through the centre of the first loop. Glue the ends of this second strip together to form another loop. Continue adding links, threading each new strip through the previous loop and glueing ends together.

Paper hats – Fold paper sheets into origami hats. Try this example found online.
<https://www.origami-fun.com/origami-hat.html>

Chocolate Taste Testing

You will need: variety of different chocolate bars from different price ranges (basic, middle, high-end), plates, pens, paper, blindfolds.

The aim of this activity is to test participants ability to differentiate between different chocolates based solely on taste.

1 – Break chocolate bars into pieces and place each chocolate type on a separate numbered plate.

2 – Participants taste each chocolate and write down their guesses of each chocolates price range. (Basic, middle, high-end.) You could also blindfold participants to make this more difficult.

3 – Reveal the correct brands and price ranges for each chocolate. Compare the results of participants guesses and discuss any surprising findings.



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:

- For one meal this week, see whether your family could eat something really simple. While you eat it, think about the things that God has done for you.
 - The Israelites didn't bake with yeast because they were hurrying to follow God's instructions to leave Egypt quickly. Sometimes people have to leave their homes quickly because they are not safe there – people seeking refuge from violence in this country or overseas or people whose homes are damaged by natural disaster. See if you can find out about a charity that supports them.
-

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of the **feast of unleavened bread** with us.

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

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **the Last Supper**

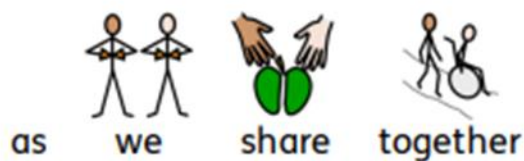




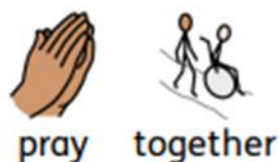
Jesus our friend,



be with us today



as we share together



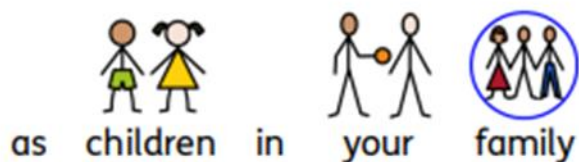
pray together



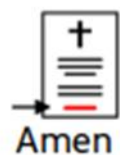
play together



and get to know you better



as children in your family



Amen

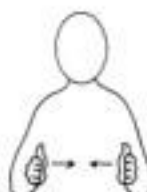
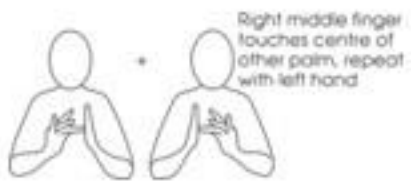




Illustration by lambsongs.co.nz via freebibleimages.com





Illustration by lambsongs.co.nz via freebibleimages.com

