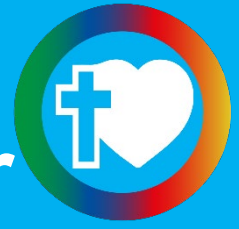




Faith Adventures for Children Together



*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>

Psalm 90: 2 – God is.... God

Theme: Our forever God is our safe place

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

This Psalm is believed to have been written by Moses, now an old man he is looking back over his own lifetime as well as the history of God's people and acknowledging that God was there in everything. Yesterday, today and forever.

Whilst exploring this theme of God being eternal, never ending, there is a risk of children talking about bereavement. Children might want to talk about losing parents and grandparents and there is a need to tread carefully.

The Psalm also explores God being our safe home. We should remember in our discussions that not all homes are safe, but God is a place where we can feel safe for ever – we have a safe home in God. You might want to consider those who have had to leave their homes due to danger e.g asylum seekers – what is a safe home for them? Do they feel safer in the UK?



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

Any game that has a 'home', 'Barley' or 'Safe' spot.

This could include 'Tick' (or 'Tag'), 'Capture The Flag' – if you're unsure of the rules, you can look online.

If you have access to a large (or outdoor) space, you could play rounders/baseball – the only equipment you really need is a ball as the 'batter' can kick the ball if you don't have a bat! (If you're playing indoors, you can use a rolled up newspaper or magazine as a bat – but make sure you use a lightweight foam ball.)



Alternative game – Improvisation – Keep the story going

A fun storytelling game that can be played sat in a circle or acted out.

The aim is to make a never-ending story, to keep it going as long as you can (it usually gets quite silly). Explain the aim and say that the way to keep the story going is to begin your sentence with “Yes! And.....” or “yes, but....”

You as the leader will start the story and pass it on to the next person, and so it begins.

All you need is a story starter, for example: “There once was a hero who went to find an adventure, so he got on a boat.....” The next person continues, “Yes! And.....” and so the story begins.

For a more fast-paced game you can give people permission to just jump in whenever they want and not wait in turn.

Experience

For this story we recommend using the EasyEnglish version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+90%3A+1%2C2%2C14&version=EASY>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Psalm 90:2 - Praise Nation Kids! <https://youtu.be/rtzZK4WeDDg>

Over fives: Who is God? <https://youtu.be/bXFLX2oN9EQ>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: My God Is So Big (introducing Grayson the Elephant) https://youtu.be/dMLE7KW_t7I

Five to eevens: Everlasting God <https://youtu.be/jqkd8EZWzqw>

Explore

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

A new way to explore the text – Create your own group psalm

The idea is to create a psalm together where everybody is able to add a few lines that begin with God is.....

You might like to begin by having an idea sharing activity. Grab some large pieces of paper and encourage the group to write down or draw as many ideas of what God is, ways to describe God. This will become your ideas board. The group could circle their favourites that they would like to include in their psalm.

You might also like to include the modern parable or video from the next section as a stimulus and see which of the ideas held within them resonate with the group.

The next step is for each child to write two lines that begin with God is..... being as descriptive as possible.

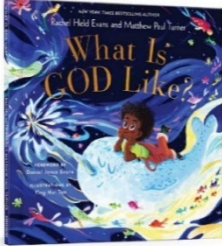
Bring the psalm together by having each contribution on separate papers and then allowing the group to keep moving them around until they are in the order they want.

You now have your finished psalm. What will you do with it now? Everyone take a copy home? Share it with the wider church? Bring it to life with images or movements?



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.



'What is God like' by Rachel Held Evans and Matthew Paul Turner
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEKMCBPsvas&t=21s>

'God Is....' From Images of God for Young Children by Marie Helene Delval, illustrated by Nicola Grievess
<https://youtu.be/JvAz7OxZJ-Q>

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

- How can God be forever?
- I wonder where you've seen God this week, today, where you'll see God next week?
- Can a person be a home? Is God a person?
- Where are the places you call home?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder what's the difference between a house and a home?
- I wonder how old God is?
- I wonder what makes somewhere feel safe for you?
- I wonder what's your favourite thing about God?

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:

- A picture of a smile – knowing God is always with us helps us smile and feel happy.
- A small hoop – ask the children to find the end... there is no end just as there is no ending with God
- A toy house – explore with the children about homes and how they can be a safe place, and God is always a safe place for us
- A teddy – talk to the children about feeling safe and ask them what their favourite comforting toy is
- 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 (e.g. stones, felt, twigs etc)



Express

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

Loop prayers

These prayers remind us that God has no beginning or end and is always with us.

You will need:

- Pipe Cleaners
- Different coloured beads

As a group decide on what you are going to pray for with each coloured bead: you could use different colours to represent different types of prayer (e.g. sorry, thank you, please heal, please bless) or use different colours to pray for different people, places or situations.

Add one of each coloured bead to the pipe cleaner and then join the ends of the pipe cleaner together by twisting one end around the other, making the join as smooth as possible so that the beads can travel all the way around the loop.

Find a comfortable place to sit, then play some quiet music and encourage everyone slowly to move the beads around the loop, going all the way around. As they move each bead, they can say a prayer for that colour, either out loud or in their heads. Remind everyone that God is always with us in all our prayers.



Spoken prayer

Everlasting God,

We are not used to things that last forever.

Even the biggest gobstopper will run out eventually;

But You are always here.

You have always been here,

And You will always be here.

You were here when we were born.

You will be here as we grow up.

When we are alone and lonely; You are here.

When we are scared and afraid; You are here.

When we are happy and excited; You are here.

Thank you for always being here and being our safe home.

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. <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>.

However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.

(Simpler craft) Eternity ring

You will need:

- Pipe cleaners
- Cheerios, Fruit Loops, or alternatively beads



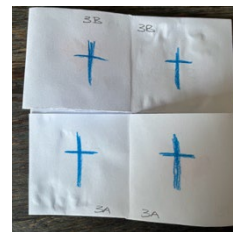
What you do:

Put some cheerios or fruit loops in a bowl and give each child a pipe cleaner. Ask them to thread the cereal onto the pipe cleaner. When they have put enough on, twist the ends of the pipe cleaner together to form a circle. Talk with the children about the fact that a circle doesn't have an ending and goes on and on forever as they move the cereal loops around the ring. Children might want to wear the circle as an edible bracelet!

(More challenging craft) Square flexigon

You will need:

- A square piece of paper
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Glue
- Coloured pencils



What you do:

Fold the paper in half, then fold the edge of the paper to the middle and repeat this on the other side. Turn the paper 90° and repeat this process, this creates a grid of 16 squares.

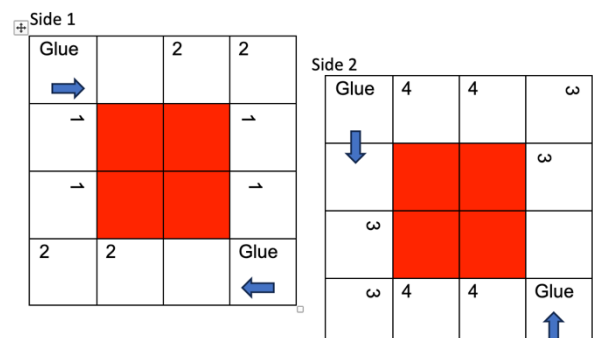
Now mark the paper faintly as shown.

In the square of the same number draw the same picture or colour on both sides of the paper.

Now fold the paper in half and cut out the centre four squares (marked red in the table).

Glue the squares marked 'glue' and fold to the square with no markings next to it. Flip the paper over and do the same again. You now have four squares showing.

To activate the flexigon, fold it backwards and turn 90° anticlockwise, you can repeat over and over again.





How long can you...

Our God is eternal. That means that God has been around forever and will be around forever – no beginning and no end. That's really hard to imagine because we don't really experience anything that lasts forever.

Just for fun, why not experiment with some 'how long can you....' challenges. You'll need a timer that counts in seconds for these. With each one, see if you can find a way to make your score better – maybe in a technique you devise or a surface you use etc.

How long can you.... spin a coin or spin a child's spinning top?

How long can you.... stand on one leg?

How long can you.... balance a spoon on your nose?

How long can you... go without licking your lips if eating a sugary doughnut?

How long can you.... keep a ball in the air using a tennis racket?

Maybe your group could come up with your own challenges.

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:

- Draw a picture of what you think the future might look like, maybe 100 years from now. God will still be God. What do you think God might say to the people of the future?
 - God is like a safe home. Many people may really need a home where they feel safe. Can you find out about any charities or organisations in your neighbourhood or worldwide who support people who need a safe place to call home? Maybe you or your group or your church could do something to help more people care.
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We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **Psalm 90** with us.

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

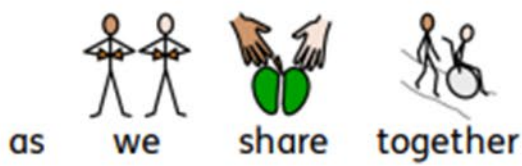
Why not have a look at next week's resource on **Acts 1**



Jesus our friend,



be with us today



as we share together



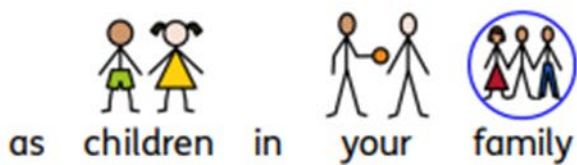
pray together



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



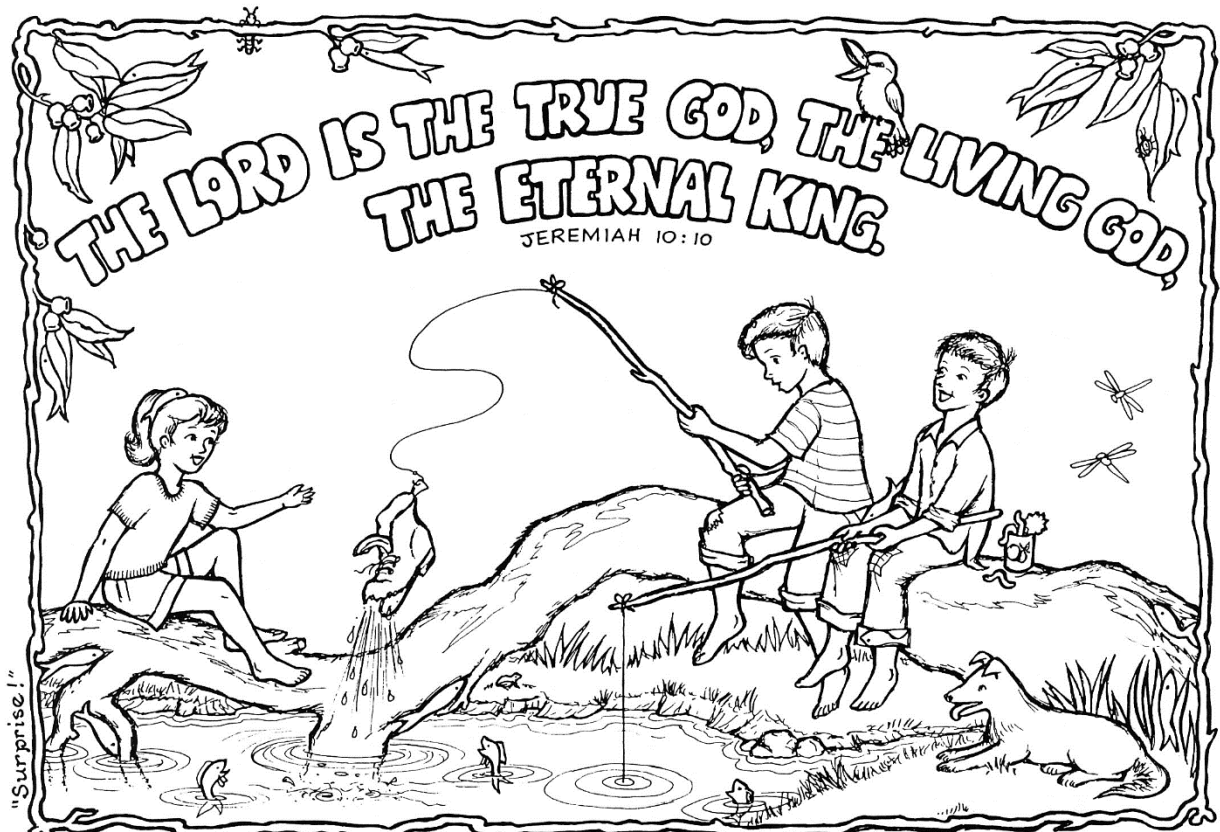
Alternate hands back and forth





Before you colour this picture, can you find 16 fish? Some of them are hidden.

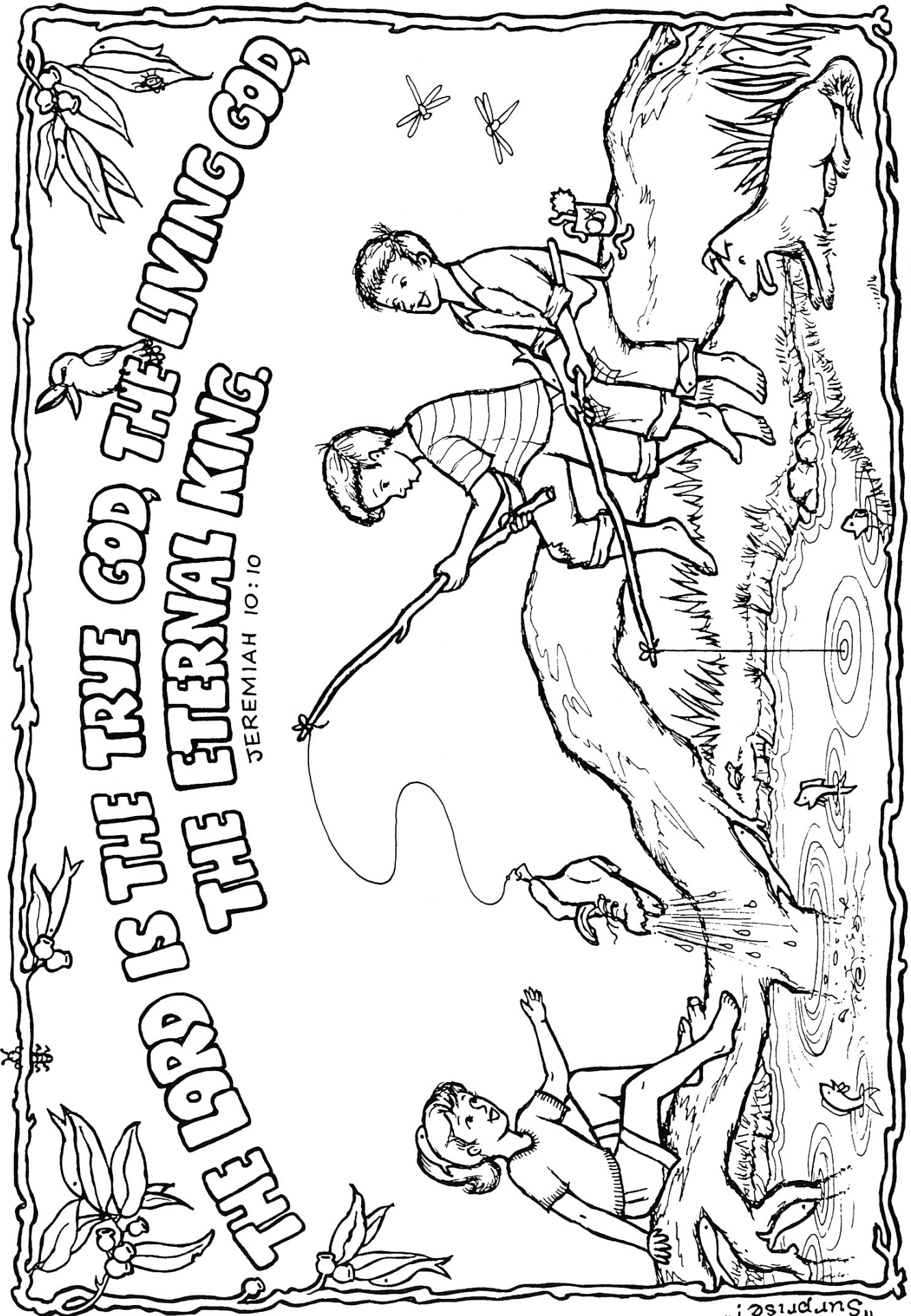
Illustration from Max7.org



Before you colour this picture, can you find 16 fish? Some of them are hidden.



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Before you colour this picture, can you find 16 fish? Some of them are hidden.