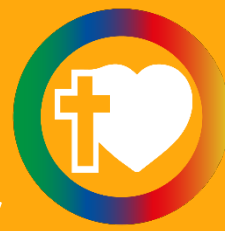




Faith Adventures for Children Together



*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>

Acts 1: 6-11 – God is.... Jesus

Theme: Jesus is with us, even when we can’t see him

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

It is believed that Acts was written by Luke – as a sequel to his gospel. In this first chapter, Luke tells of Jesus leaving the disciples and ascending to heaven. This is an opportunity to make a further link with the Trinity (looked at in week 4 of this month) in that Jesus leaves earth to ascend to heaven to be with God the Father, but promises to send the Holy Spirit to be with his disciples.

You will need to be sensitive to the emotions of children who have loved ones who are not around – perhaps as a result of a recent bereavement, family break up, a parent/carer working away from home, or serving a prison sentence and the uncertainty that can cause. The disciples were left similarly confused and upset when the person they loved, trusted and relied on left them – although Jesus promised to return, but wouldn’t tell them when.

We also need to be aware of the feelings of children/young people for whom the return of someone into their lives might not be a positive experience or something to celebrate.

If necessary, remind the children in your group that it is ok to be scared and uncertain about what is going to happen in the future.



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 – Hide and Seek

Play a game of hide and seek with the children, in whatever way you want. Even if you don't know how to play it, the children will! Rules tend to vary in different parts of the country, so check what the children are used to.

Alternative game – What's the time, Jesus?

All the children except one form a line at one end of the hall or playing area, one child is chosen to play 'Jesus' and they stand at the far end and turn their back to the others to begin.

The players call out, "What's the time Jesus?" and 'Jesus' turns and answers with a time (e.g. 3 o'clock). 'Jesus' turns back round and the children advance again, chanting "What's the time Jesus?" 'Jesus' continued to respond until the players come very close and then 'Jesus' can respond "It's ascension time!" and turn and chase the players back to the starting line, aiming to catch one of them, who will then become 'Jesus' for the next round of the game.



Experience

For this story we recommend using The Message version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1%3A+7-11&version=MSG>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Cartoon by saddleback Kids https://youtu.be/UcFw8pLBSIo?si=Q8QzCk9y1Zc-hPZ_

Over fives: Superbook https://youtu.be/TRn_ywiXv9A?si=mpYXVf5wZuwuJQ0s

Songs to support the story

Under fives: The Ascension Song – Sally Kee

<https://youtu.be/IF8CI41Hzz0?si=tsp3MSoKTLBZ4nJI>

Five to eevens: Every move I make – CJ and friends

https://youtu.be/MPvnZILn6EY?si=q_jaNWWiO48VHowR

Explore

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

A new way to explore the story – Jesus' timeline

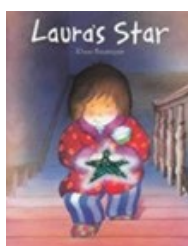
For this you will need some pictures illustrating part of Jesus' story (see extra resource) and some blank pieces of paper and pens. You will need to hang a washing line (rope) across the hall or between two chairs, and to have some pegs to hand.

Look at the pictures together and see if you can remember the stories that they show. Can you sort them into order and peg them on the washing line? (Remember that there are no wrong or silly answers – encourage the children to work together to come up with an agreed response). If anyone can remember any other Jesus stories, they could draw them on a spare piece of paper and add them to the timeline.

Once you have all agreed an order, add a blank piece of paper at the beginning of the timeline and a blank piece at the end. Talk with the children about what these pieces of paper might represent in the story of Jesus – where was Jesus before he was born? Where is Jesus now? Again, allow the children to explore this together rather than guiding them towards a 'correct' answer

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.



Laura's Star by Klaus Baumgart

<https://youtu.be/60T5VPMbQxs?si=-W5mjrmDDhEbjJHb>



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

- I wonder why God chose that time and place for Jesus to be born?
- If Jesus were born today, how would his story be different?
- I wonder if God had a party for Jesus when he got home?
- What does this story mean for us today? Does it matter?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder why Jesus went back up on a cloud?
- I wonder how long it took Jesus to get to heaven?
- I wonder if Jesus celebrates his birthday?
- I wonder what your favourite Jesus story is?

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:

- Heart – talk to the children about loving people that we do not see all the time, we still are loved and love Jesus even though we do not see him
- An image of a cloud – Encourage the children to wonder about clouds, Jesus went back up to be with God on a cloud, are there clouds in the sky today?
- Clock – Talk to the children about Jesus didn't tell anyone that it was time for him to be with God again, what time does the clock say now?
- A candle which is lit and blown out – talk to the children about Jesus still being all around us as the smoke stays with us even after the candle is blown out
- 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?

Creative Transforming Cloud Prayers



Candle prayers

Light a candle – children could do this using a taper or long match under adult supervision, or an adult could light the candle. Remember that Jesus is the light of the world. Think of what you might want to say to Jesus.

Invite each child to blow or snuff the candle out, or invite everyone to blow at once so that the candle goes out. See how the flame disappears but there is still smoke rising from the wick. The smoke is like our prayers going up to heaven. We may not be able to see Jesus, but Jesus hears our prayers just as if he were in the room next to us.



Spoken prayer

Dear Jesus

You came to earth as a baby (*mime rocking a baby*)

You grew up as a child like me (*starting with hand low to ground, raise it until it's as high as you are tall*)

You lived with your disciples as your friends (*shake hands with each other*)

You healed and fed and told people about God (*draw a cross on upper arm with the thumb nail for 'healed', mime eating for 'fed' and put hands to each side of mouth as though shouting for "told people about God"*)

We can't see you like the disciples could (*cover eyes*)

But we know you listen to our prayers (*cup ear with hand*) and love us always (*hug self*)

Help us to love you too. 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> .

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.

Yo-yo

Jesus came down to earth from heaven. Forty days after the resurrection, he returned to heaven, but promised that one day he will return. While you're thinking about this, it might be fun to make a yo-yo. It would be good to have some shop-bought yoyos to play with first to get the idea of how they work.

You will need:

Two matching lids from milk bottles or from Pringles cans

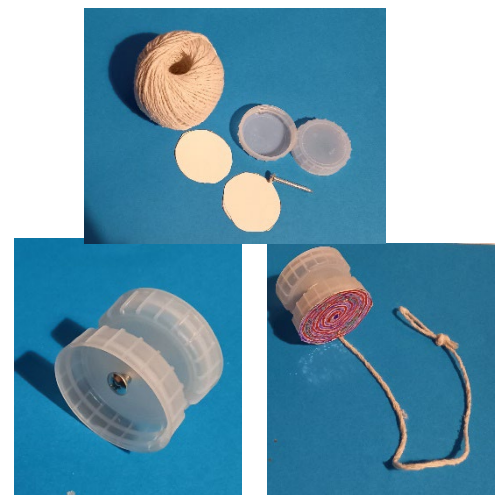
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- Strong glue
- String
- Cardboard
- Colouring pens
- Either a Lego wheel or a screw (and screwdriver)

What you do:

Draw round your two lids onto cardboard, cut out the discs and decorate them with colouring pens.

If using Pringle can lids, glue the Lego wheel into the exact centre of the top of the first lid and then glue the second lid onto the wheel so that the two circles are back to back with the wheel central between them. Put two identical blobs of glue near the outside edge of one lid, on opposite sides of the circle. Put two identical blobs of glue on near the outside edge of the other lid so that they exactly line up with the first. Glue your decorated circles onto the lip of each lid.

Now cut a piece of string about the length of your body from shoulder to knee. Tie one end of it tightly round the wheel between the two lids. Tie a small loop in the other end so that you





can hold it. Wind the string round and round the wheel until the yoyo is in your hand when you slip your finger through the loop.

If you are using milk bottle lids, carefully screw a short screw through the exact centre of each of the lids. On the first lid you just make a hole and remove the screw. On the second lid you fasten the screw all the way, going from the open side of the lid to the top so that the screw head is right inside the lid. Then continue to screw the other lid onto the end of the screw so that the pointed end of the screw is inside the lid. Put two blobs of glue in each lid so that they line up, one blob each side of the circle. Glue your decorated circles onto the lip of each lid so that they cover the screw. Now continue as above, tying the string around the screw in the middle.

Microwave Meringues

You will need:

- 300g icing sugar
- 1 lightly beaten egg white
- whipped cream (optional to serve)



What you do:

Sift 300g of icing sugar over one lightly beaten egg white. Stir until the mixture is a thick, pliable icing and roll into balls. Line a plate with kitchen paper.

Put three balls at a time on the plate and microwave them on high for 1½ mins – and watch, in amazement, as the mixture grows into meringues.

When they are cool, sandwich together with whipped cream if you wish.

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:

- Find one of your favourite Jesus stories and share it with someone else – you might want to read it to them from a book or show them a video or just tell the story somehow. You could even get together with some friends and put on a play!
- Jesus came to earth so we would know God a little bit better. He couldn't stay on earth for ever so he went back to heaven, but we can still talk to him and know that he is with us. Find time to talk to Jesus during the day, whatever you are doing. You can ask Jesus for help, say sorry if you mess up, say thank you for good things you see or experience, or even just say "Hi Jesus, I'm glad you're here."

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story from **Acts** with us.

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

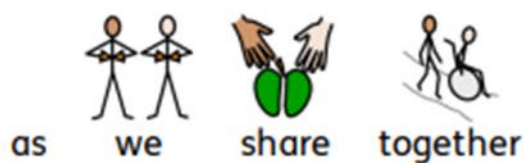
Why not have a look at next week's resource on **Joel 2**



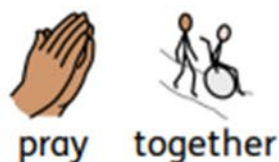
Jesus our friend,



be with us today



as we share together



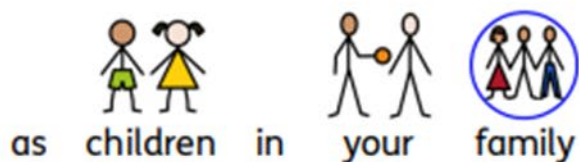
pray together



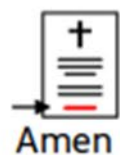
play together



and get to know you better



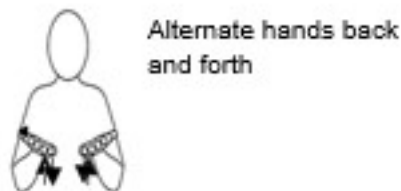
as children in your family



Amen



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



Alternate hands back and forth





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