



Faith Adventures for Children Together



Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

*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: www.bit.ly/FACT-how-to-sheet

Title: Genesis 4: 1 – 9

Theme: Two brothers, one problem

Contents:

Introduction	1
Together	2
Experience	3
Explore	4
Express	7
Handouts	12

Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning? Please use this section as a reference and information guide for leaders only – we don't expect it to be read out to the children.

Welcome to Week two of "Untold Stories of the Bible". This series of sessions is looking at some of the stories that we often shy away from when exploring Scripture with children and young people, or ignore because they seem insignificant and have nothing to teach us.

Great care has been taken in choosing the translations we use, although they are, of course, only suggestions.

The story of Cain and Abel is all about emotions – and that can make it seem difficult to approach. It suggests that God has favourites. However, we know that there is nothing we can do to make God love us more – or less.

We are looking at how emotions affect the way we are and the way we act; how we deal with those difficult emotions, such as jealousy and anger; and what we can learn in this story. Be mindful of children who don't have siblings (some older children may be aware their parents have tried to have other children but that it hasn't worked out).

Together – prayer and games

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

Active game – parachute games

You will need:

- a parachute or large fabric sheet
- a variety of balls of different sizes

The idea of the game is to keep the balls on the parachute or large piece of fabric for as long as possible without the balls falling off the edge.



This is because, in the Bible reading, Cain is struggling to keep his emotions under control, which causes him to have a negative reaction and do something wrong.

Talk about how the balls in the game are symbols for your emotions and how you are trying to control them and manage them.

The balls are different sizes, to see whether bigger emotions are easier to control than smaller emotions.

Quieter game – Pairs

This game simply plays with the idea of things coming in pairs, just like the brothers Cain and Abel.

You will need:

- cut up cards or pictures cut into two halves

Spread the pictures out, face down. The children must turn over two cards at a time and try to find the pair. Once a pair is found it is removed from the game.

This could be played as a race: who can find the most pairs?

Or it can be played in a smaller group with the cards laid out in a grid shape. Children then take it in turns to turn two over. If they match, they remain overturned; if they do not, they are turned back over and play continues. More of a memory game.

If you have older children, you could change the game into pairs of opposites, such as love and hate.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

When planning the session, the team of writers read many different Bible versions to find the one that is most suitable for the age range. We also look at vocabulary and how God/Jesus is described. We are aware that a lot of churches stick with one Bible version. We appreciate it can be difficult to have many different Bible versions and that access to them online isn't always easy. Therefore, we have provided the passage in the recommended version for your convenience.

For this story we recommend using the Contemporary English Version (CEV):

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204%3A%201-%209&version=CEV>

Cain murders Abel

4 Adam and Eve had a son. Then Eve said, "I'll name him Cain because I got him with the help of the Lord." ² Later she had another son and named him Abel.

Abel became a sheep farmer, but Cain farmed the land. ³ One day, Cain gave part of his harvest to the Lord, ⁴ and Abel also gave an offering to the Lord. He killed the first-born lamb from one of his sheep and gave the Lord the best parts of it. The Lord was pleased with Abel and his offering, ⁵ but not with Cain and his offering. This made Cain so angry that he could not hide his feelings.

⁶ The Lord said to Cain:

What's wrong with you? Why do you look so angry? ⁷ If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling. But you did the wrong thing, and now sin is waiting to attack you like a lion. Sin wants to destroy you, but don't let it!

⁸ Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go for a walk." And when they were out in a field, Cain attacked and killed him.

⁹ Afterwards the Lord asked Cain, "Where is Abel?"

"How should I know?" he answered. "Am I supposed to look after my brother?"

Copyright © 1995 [American Bible Society](http://www.bibles.com). For more information about CEV, visit www.bibles.com and www.cev.bible.

You may wish to research different versions of this reading in your Bibles or on www.biblegateway.com

Where can I find the story online?

Under-fives: Cain and Abel, by Saddleback Kids

<https://youtu.be/fXPvdV4cpiY?si=bSwNWIAZjg4NQWVa>

Five-to-elevens: Cain and Abel, by Saddleback Kids

<https://youtu.be/fXPvdV4cpiY?si=bSwNWIAZjg4NQWVa>

Songs to support the story

Under-fives: Build up by Fischy Music - Schoolvision 2018 - Scotland by Michael Purves

https://youtu.be/ircv32so3bY?si=7iaMIZm4wB_n5diZ

Five-to-elevens: Purify my heart by Living vine fellowship

<https://youtu.be/lxo5Eqxk3j0?si=3AcuiN6PMtG5vmOc>

Explore – ways into the theme

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

A new way to explore the theme

I feel...

This Bible story can help us to think about how sometimes our feelings are so big and so unhelpful that they can harm ourselves and others around us. Feelings like jealousy are normal, but if we do not deal with them well, they can turn into feelings like hate.

We will begin by playing a game that will cause the group to experience feelings of unfairness or jealousy. Don't tell the group this before the game; just explain that we are going to start with a game.

You will need:

- two decks of playing cards
- pile of sweet/chocolate bars

If you have a large group, you will need two less than the number in your group e.g. group of 12 = 10 sweets. If you have a small group allow for two each for all but one child e.g. group of four = six sweets.



What you do:

Gather the group into a circle or around a table. Place the sweet pile in the centre (the children will begin to make comments about what sweets they can see and whether they can see their favourites). Keep one pack of cards for yourself and deal out the cards from the second pack until every card has been dealt. Now you are ready to play.

Explain that the children need to look at the cards in their hand. You are going to show your deck of cards one card at a time, picking up pace as the game goes on. If a child has the same card as you, they get to choose a sweet from the centre and bring it back, placing it in front of them. Explain that eventually the sweets in the middle will have gone but the game continues. Once all sweets are gone from the centre, children can steal a sweet or swap a sweet from in front of another player.

The game continues until all your cards have been shown.

As the game continues, children might become vocal about seeing their favourite sweet going to someone else or being “stolen”. They might begin to feel the game is unfair when they have no cards left and others do. Once the game is complete there may be children without any sweets or who are left with sweets they do not want.

Ask the children how they feel now the game is over. How did they feel during the game?

You could explain that the game is unfair but that perhaps they can figure out among themselves how everyone can now have a sweet. Have a bag of extra sweets to ensure that everyone is finally happy/ It is only a game after all.

Discussion time

You could use some of the wondering questions at this point to chat about the brothers in the story and how the feelings of jealousy turned to hate.

Finally, explain that negative feelings of anger and jealousy, for example, are normal feelings. We do need to find ways of dealing with them in healthy ways that don't harm us or others.

Ask the group to come up with different sentence scenarios showing negative feelings. For example, your best friend has begun to play with someone else at playtimes and you are feeling jealous and left out. What do you do?

Collect the scenarios and have a brief conversation about each one, coming up with examples of how you could deal or manage the feelings in positive ways.

With older children, you might begin to recognise the difference between long-term strategies that are good for lots of situations, and short-term strategies that are good for an individual situation.

Be aware that one solution might not always be a good fit for all the group.

If you wanted to turn the activity into one about opposites, you could come up with two different answers for each scenario – one that is unfavourable and one that's positive.

Remember to encourage the group to include solutions that bring God into it as well as the other strategies we may have. E.g. stop and pray and ask God for help or direction, or go and talk to another Christian about the situation.

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. If you are to use the modern parable, consider buying a copy or borrowing it from the library so children see the actual book and can explore the illustrations more (and support the author).



The New Small Person by Lauren Child (2014: Puffin)
You can find a re-telling of this story by Portland Public Library

Elmore Green finds it really annoying having a younger sibling, and wishes he would go back to where he came from!

- What do you think might be the best thing about having a brother or sister? What might be the worst thing about it?
- Have you ever been jealous of your brother or sister – or a friend at school?
- Why do you think the brothers in our Bible story didn't get along?

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

- Why wasn't God happy with Cain's offering?
- Was God being fair?
- Why did God ask where Abel was when God would have known where he was?
- I wonder how God felt when he knew that Cain had killed Abel
- If you were God, what might you have done?

Wondering: ways to reflect on the theme

- Have you ever felt jealous about someone else? How did it make you feel and how did it affect your actions?
- I wonder if someone has ever been jealous of you
- I wonder who you can talk to when your emotions get too big
- I wonder what you can do when your feelings get too big

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). 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:

- Play people or natural objects – re-tell the story from today's Bible reading, moving the pieces around to help you.
- A wrapped gift – think about presents you have been given. Talk about your favourite presents and presents that you didn't like.

- Heart-shaped objects – talk about how the people in today's story felt; what made them happy and what made them sad.
- Farm animals or farm set – one of the brothers was a farmer and the other a shepherd, how do you think they looked after their animals and crops?
- Russian dolls or stacking cups – explore the way in which the toys can hide inside each other, just like how we can sometimes hide our feelings inside.
- 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 (e.g. stones, felt, twigs etc.)

Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Prayerful activity

Forgiving

When we hurt another or are hurt by others, we need to try to practise forgiveness. We can try to forgive ourselves and others and we can accept forgiveness from another. These prayers all focus on the idea of forgiveness. You could choose one that works for your group or you could set up a few prayer stations and allow ten minutes to move around them.

Paper prayers: Write or draw “sorry” prayers on paper. Pray a sorry prayer and screw it up and throw it into the bin, or if you have a shredder use that.

Melting ice: Invite each person to hold an ice cube and to pray a “sorry” prayer to God, then drop the ice into some room temperature water. Watch the ice melt, realising that you are forgiven.

Fizzy tablets: Place a Vit C effervescent tablet in some water. imagine the tablet as your “sorry”. Watch it fizz and disappear as you are forgiven.

Wipe away: Write or draw a “sorry” prayer to God. Wipe it away as a visual representation of being forgiven.



Spoken prayer

This prayer asks God to help us with our big feelings. It provides space for the children to add their own feelings to the prayer.

Dear God,
you made us to think and feel.
Sometimes our feelings feel too big;
help us with our big feelings.
Sometimes we feel angry;
help us with our anger.
Sometimes we feel... *invite the children to offer examples e.g. jealous.*

Group then replies: Help us with our... *whatever feeling they came up with.*

Thank you that we are not alone in our big feelings but that you are with us.
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.

Therapeutic play

You will need:

- one cup flour
- ¼ cup salt
- two teaspoons Cream of Tartar
- one cup water
- two tablespoons oil
- colour/flavour/glitter



Mix the dry ingredients in a small saucepan.

Add the liquids and stir over a low heat.

Keep mixing until the dough comes away from the sides of the pan.

Knead with more flour when cool.

Give each group member a piece of the dough and encourage them to make something from it. When they are happy with their creations, they can squash/squeeze/press the dough back into one piece. If you have time, start again and make something new.

Talk with the group about how it felt to destroy their model. Does it feel relaxing to shape the dough? Does squashing the dough harder help get rid of frustration?

If you don't have time to make playdough, you could buy it instead

Some children may need to know in advance that they will be squashing what they make, rather than leaving models in one piece

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:

- Talk to someone older or younger than you and ask them to tell you about a time when they were hurt by another and how they worked through it.

- Create a digital emotions journey. Use emojis or write a sentence to sum up the emotions of each day.

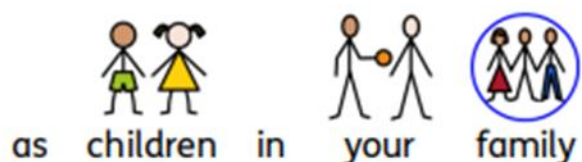
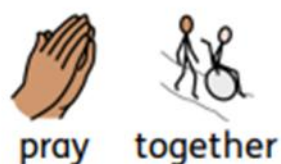
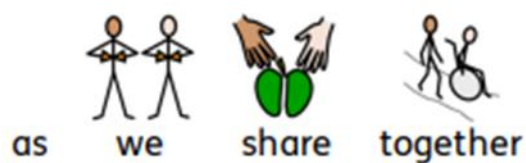
We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **Cain and Abel** with us.

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

Please join the Faith Adventures Facebook Group **bit.ly/FACT_FB**

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





The Lord's Prayer









Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.








Thy kingdom come, thy will be done






on earth as it is in heaven.






Give us this day our daily bread






and forgive us our sins






As we forgive those who sin against us






Lead us not into temptation





but deliver us from evil







For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory






For ever and ever . Amen

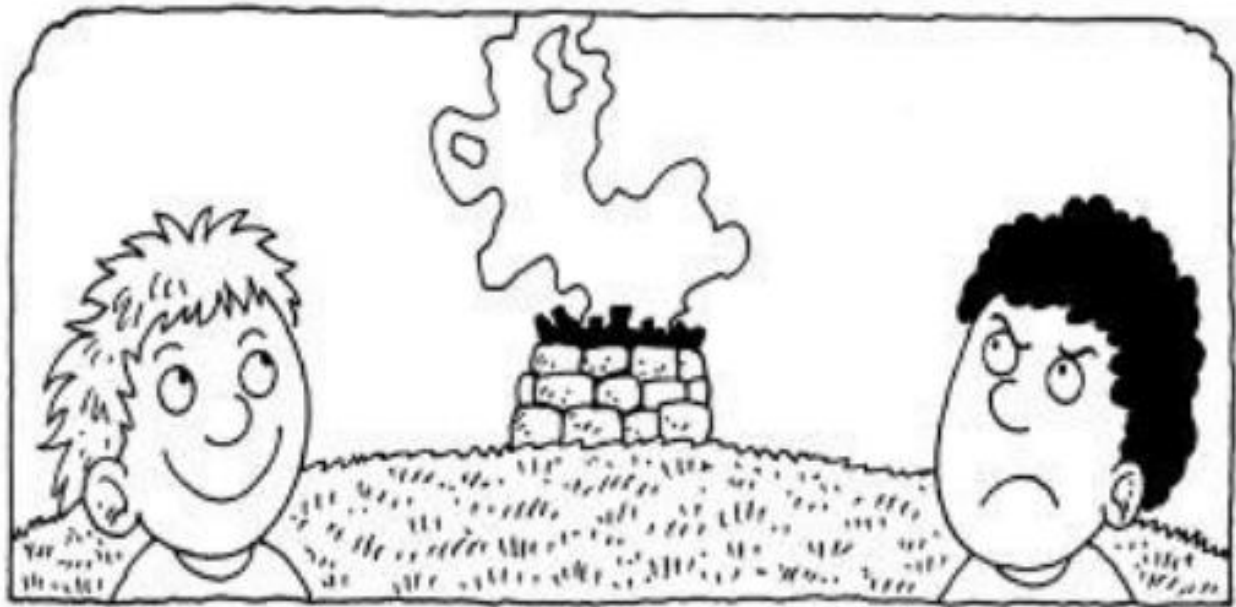


Illustration by lambsongs.co.nz via freebibleimages.com

