



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>

Revelation 7: 9 & 15 All Saints Day

Theme: What is a saint and why would I want to be one?

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

Welcome to November! The theme we will be exploring this month is 'saints' – the first session will invite your group to think about saints and, in particular, 'All Saints Day'.

All Saints Day is an opportunity to remember all saints and martyrs (the famous, not so famous, known and unknown). It is always November 1st.

But what is a saint? Can anyone be a saint? The Roman Catholic Church has a strict process that must be followed before someone can be called a saint (canonisation:

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/255846/what-is-the-process-for-canonization-a-guide-for-all-saints-day>). But 'saint' can also refer to ordinary people who believe in Jesus. The early Christians living in Jerusalem were referred to by Paul in his letters as 'saints' – because they continued to believe even though they were persecuted.

We all strive to be like Jesus – but that is a very high bar. Maybe we can try and be more saint-like to begin with.

In the Roman Catholic Church, when a young person is confirmed, they choose a "saint's name" – normally a saint that they feel they identify with in some way. In this way, saints may be described as celebrities or influencers – but influencers in faith.



The most recent saints were canonised in 2022 with one of them, Titus Brandsma, dying as recently as 1942.

Being canonised is a recognition from the Roman Catholic Church that you are an ordinary person who has done extraordinary things. In the United Reformed Church we acknowledge saints, but don't canonise people. We have other ways of recognising when someone is doing good things – and that includes children and young people who can be awarded the Lundie Memorial Award (<https://urc.org.uk/your-church/family-friendly-church/lundie-memorial-awards/>).

If you would like to see some extra resources to help you explore the topic of All Saints Day you can look at the resources produced by the United Reformed Church at <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Families-on-Faith-Adventures-week-79-All-Saints-.pdf>

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 – Halo toss

Evenly place some figures/ soft toys on a table to represent saints. Each person is to start with three halos (hoops) and, standing on the starting line, attempt to toss their halos and get them to land on the saints. You could award three points if a hoop lands on a saint but not fully over it and five if the hoop sits firmly on the table with the saint in the middle.

Alternative game – Saintry Bingo

This a fun take on a bingo game, using the saints as the theme. The 'caller' calls the sentence along with the number, the children mark off the number as it is called out, the first one to mark off a line of numbers either horizontally or vertically shouts, 'I'm a saint'. Give each child a grid to write their own numbers in before you begin, ensuring they write them out of order. Included is a list of the saints the numbers refer to.

Is there a doctor in the den with number 10	(Saint Luke – saint of doctors)
Worn out shoes number two	(Saint Christopher – saint of travellers)
Jesus did come dine with number nine	(Saint Martha – saint of cooks)
Nailed to some sticks number six	(Saint Andrew – saint of Scotland)
Ate from the tree number three	(Saint Adam – saint of gardeners)
Burnt at the stake number eight	(Saint Joan of Arc – saint of France)
For matters of the law number four	(Saint Ives – saint of lawyers)
Guarding gates of heaven number seven	(Saint Peter – saint of popes)
Whatever the weather rain or sun number one	(Saint Medard – saint of weather)
Give him your tithe number five	(Saint Matthew – saint of bankers)
The man himself number 12	(Jesus – overseer of saints)
Encourages good self-esteem number 16	(Saint Catherine Labouré – saint of confidence)
Leavened and unleavened number 11	(Saint Honoré – saint of bread)
Known for her looks which she did preen number 14	(Saint Rosé of Lima – saint of beauty)
Walking and swimming made him so lean number 13	(Saint John the Baptist – saint of baptism)
Sainted as a teen number 15	(Saint Maria Goretti – saint of youth)

Experience

For this story we recommend using the Children's International Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+7%3A+9%2C+15&version=ICB>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: The Saints are cheering us on – Brother Francis

https://youtu.be/GaO9sbEZmLg?si=nXo_Hq1A6_VOAMle

Over fives: What is All Saints Day? – Twinkl <https://youtu.be/PTr67B65nOk?si=DS0tiqbDey7tGP36>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: Come follow me - https://youtu.be/KhA0mj84Tuw?si=HfQ4W3T_ucxH8DiF

Heaven is a wonderful place – Wesleys Wuppets

https://youtu.be/u_u1rGs7sLA?si=2WoaanfQKrHEZ_J9

Five to elevens: When the saints go marching in – Spiritual Eldercare:

<https://youtu.be/vipoxy3P1ec?si=PYrzPPjtp6aXG2N5> (with lyrics on screen)



When the saints go marching in - Cedarmonk Kids: <https://youtu.be/JVSPMRw-7I?si=1g5Aq7GwoWgm9Fgs>

Explore

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

A new way to explore the passage – a reflective story

Gather the group around a table or on a space on the floor, using simple resources to explore the Bible passage and modern saints today.

You will need:

- A block to represent God's throne
- Some strips of white cloth or card
- Some simple paper branches cut out
- Strips of coloured cloth or card
- Some cut out musical notes

Begin by explaining that this passage was written by a man named John. He was one of Jesus' disciples. God gave John a vision, a glimpse into what heaven is like, a picture to share with others. This is some of what he saw:

God showed John a picture of heaven, John saw a large throne.

Place a block in front of you.

Around the throne were people in white robes too many to be counted.

Place strips of white cloth all around the throne block.

He saw that the people were holding branches in their hands and they were singing.

Place small green paper branches around the white strips of cloth, you could also place musical notes.

I wonder who these people were? *Leave space for the group to answer.*

The passage tells us that these were the saints: The people who had loved God and loved others. I wonder who was there? Noah? Abraham? Ruth?

The Bible tells us that we are all saints in God's family and when we die, we go to be with God and the saints from history.

So, perhaps when we are together in church as God's family, it's a glimpse of what heaven is like.

Place a picture of a church by the side of the throne and place coloured cloths to represent God's people, you could add some musical notes too.

Who are the saints around us today? *Encourage the children to name Christians who they know. You could add their names to the coloured cloths.*

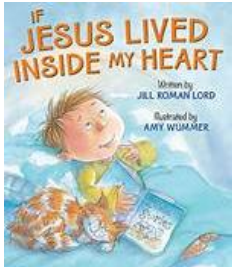
So we have a picture in two parts: John's picture of the saints in heaven and our picture of the saints on the earth. Loving God and loving each other as Jesus told us to.

Now use the questions and activities in this resource to explore further.



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 Jesus lived inside my heart' by Jill Roman Lord

<https://youtu.be/NFu6yMeLtns?si=EuqoPXJfwuVvsNT6>

A simple storybook about how our lives can show that Jesus is in our hearts and lives.

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

- What do you think makes a saint?
- What is a patron saint?
- What saints have you heard of? Do you know anything of their story?
- Does being saintly mean you never do anything wrong?
- Does being saintly mean you never do anything fun?
- The passage talks about all God's people in heaven being saints. What do you think heaven might be like?
- The Bible says everyone who loves Jesus is a saint-in-the-making. How does it feel to think you are a saint too?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder, if you could name someone a saint, who would it be and why?
- I wonder what makes someone a saint?

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:

- Something to represent halos, such as tied tinsel – talk about what a saint is
- White cloth or clothing and palm leaves – wear the white and wave the leaves acting out being a large crowd praising Jesus
- Pictures of saints and some items that are associated with them, Luke: doctor: doctor toys, Adam: gardeners: garden tools, Matthew: banker: play money
- A mirror (Look, what can you see? Yes, it's you! I can see your eyes, your hair.... We are all special to God. God made you and God loves you)
- 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!)
- Flags from other countries – talk about how God wants us all to live him in heaven one day, no matter where we were born
- 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?

Praying for people and places around the world

Sometimes when we have something to say to someone – to ask them for something or to say sorry for something – it's good to know a friend has got our back and is rooting for us. The saints do that for us, when we are talking to God. Although people in the United Reformed Church do not tend to pray to or through saints, they know that all God's saints, alive now or in heaven, are supporting them when they pray. And as saints-in-the-making, we can pray for others too.

You will need:

- World map
- Strips of gold paper or cloth



Lay out a world map on a table or floor. Place a pile of gold paper strips or pieces of gold or yellow cloth alongside. Play some quiet music and invite the group to reflect on anything they would like to pray for. They may want to pray for specific people who need God's love, comfort or help; they may want to pray for a group of people such as refugees or homeless people or people who are sick; they may want to pray for a particular place they have links with or have heard about at school or on the news; or simply for people who are special to them. As they pray, they can choose to pick up one of the paper/cloth strips and place it over the map, whether over the place they are praying for or just at random. Encourage them to pray silently or out loud as they place their strips onto the map. When the whole map is covered – and the whole world is covered with our prayers – the group could join together in shouting AMEN.

Spoken prayer A simplified version of the prayer of St Francis of Assisi

Jesus, help me bring your peace and love to everyone.
 Let the things I do and say bring joy and hope when people feel sad.
 Let the things I do and say build bridges between people who have fallen out or are angry.
 Help me love others just like you love me.
 Help me be a saint-in-the-making as I follow you. Amen



Original wording: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love,

Where there is injury, pardon

Where there is doubt, faith,

Where there is despair, hope,

Where there is darkness, light,

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, not so much to be understood as to understand, not so much to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we awake to eternal life.

St. Francis Of Assisi

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.

The pictures we have of saints are often paintings or stained glass windows that were created a long time ago. A lot of the saints were depicted as white Europeans – when we know that many were from different countries and would have looked different.

So why don't we create our own stained glass windows?

Stained Glass 1: *You will need:*

- Sheets of plain paper
- OHP Inkjet transparencies or laminating film
- Permanent marker pens (including a thick black pen) or glass paint
- Blotack/clear sticky tape

What you do:

Sketch out your design onto a piece of paper.

Place the transparency over your design and trace the design using the black pen (on the 'dimpled' side of the OHP transparency sheet) – these lines will be the 'lead' in your window. Colour in the designs in as many colours as you wish (but remember to put a black line between different colours).

Use blotack/clear sticky tape to attach your finished designs to a clear window.

You can find templates online by typing 'Stained Glass window template' into a search engine.

Stained Glass 2: *You will need:*

- Sheets of plain paper
- Tissue paper (or cellophane sweet wrappers) in different colours



- Scissors (younger children might need help with cutting out)
- PVA glue

What you do:

Sketch (or print) your design onto a piece of blank paper.

Carefully cut out your tissue paper (or cellophane) to fit the various shapes in your design. Use glue to stick them in place. Make sure that the glue is dry before displaying the finished 'window'.

For younger children it might be easier not to use a 'picture' for their window. If you think it is more suitable, you could use the method shown in

https://youtu.be/kHax38AtEul?si=NIYaK-_RIFpLH4dt

Stained glass biscuits

Many churches display pictures of saints in the form of stained glass windows. Before the time when people were able to read, they could learn about God's people by using the windows like a picture story book. The windows would help them remember well-loved stories. While it might be difficult to illustrate these stained glass windows with pictures of saints, perhaps making and eating them will help us remember that the saints are people who have loved God and loved others and are now living with God.



You will need:

- 150g/5½oz butter, softened
- 100g/3½oz muscovado sugar
- 1 large egg
- 250g/9oz plain flour, plus extra for flouring
- 1 tsp baking powder
- pinch salt
- 1 tbsp mixed spice
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 pack coloured boiled sweets and sandwich bags
- Selection of cutters, large and smaller
- Rolling pin, bowls, wooden spoons, hand whisk
- Parchment paper and tray

What you do:

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4 and line a baking tray with parchment paper.
2. Using an electric hand whisk, whisk together the butter and sugar in a large bowl. Once light and creamy, add the egg and mix thoroughly.
3. Sift in the flour, baking powder, salt, and mixed spice and then add the vanilla extract and mix with a wooden spoon until you reach a biscuit dough consistency.



4. Turn the dough onto a floured work surface and roll out to about 1cm/½in thick. Cut out biscuit shapes and place onto the lined baking trays.
5. Place boiled sweets in a sandwich bag and break them up by bashing them gently
6. Using a smaller cutter or a small knife cut out the centre of each biscuit. Place boiled sweets into the hole and place in the preheated oven to cook for 15 minutes, or until golden-brown and crisp with the sweets melted.
7. Once the melted sweets have hardened, transfer to a wire rack to cool.

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:

- Go for a walk around your local area. Can you spot the names of any saints? Maybe on churches or on road names there may be some. Can you find out more about them?
 - The saints in heaven are described as worshipping God day and night. Perhaps every morning and every evening this week you could say a prayer or sing a song to share how special God or Jesus is to you.
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We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **All Saints** with us.

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

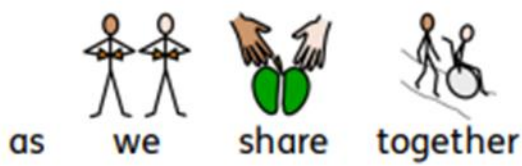
Why not have a look at next week's resource on **Remembrance**



Jesus our friend,



be with us today



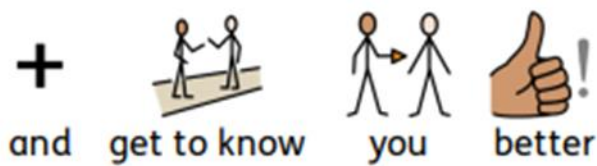
as we share together



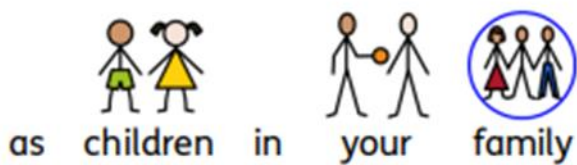
pray together



play together



and get to know you better



as children in your family



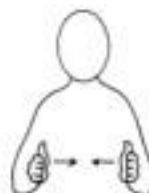
Amen



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



Alternate hands back and forth



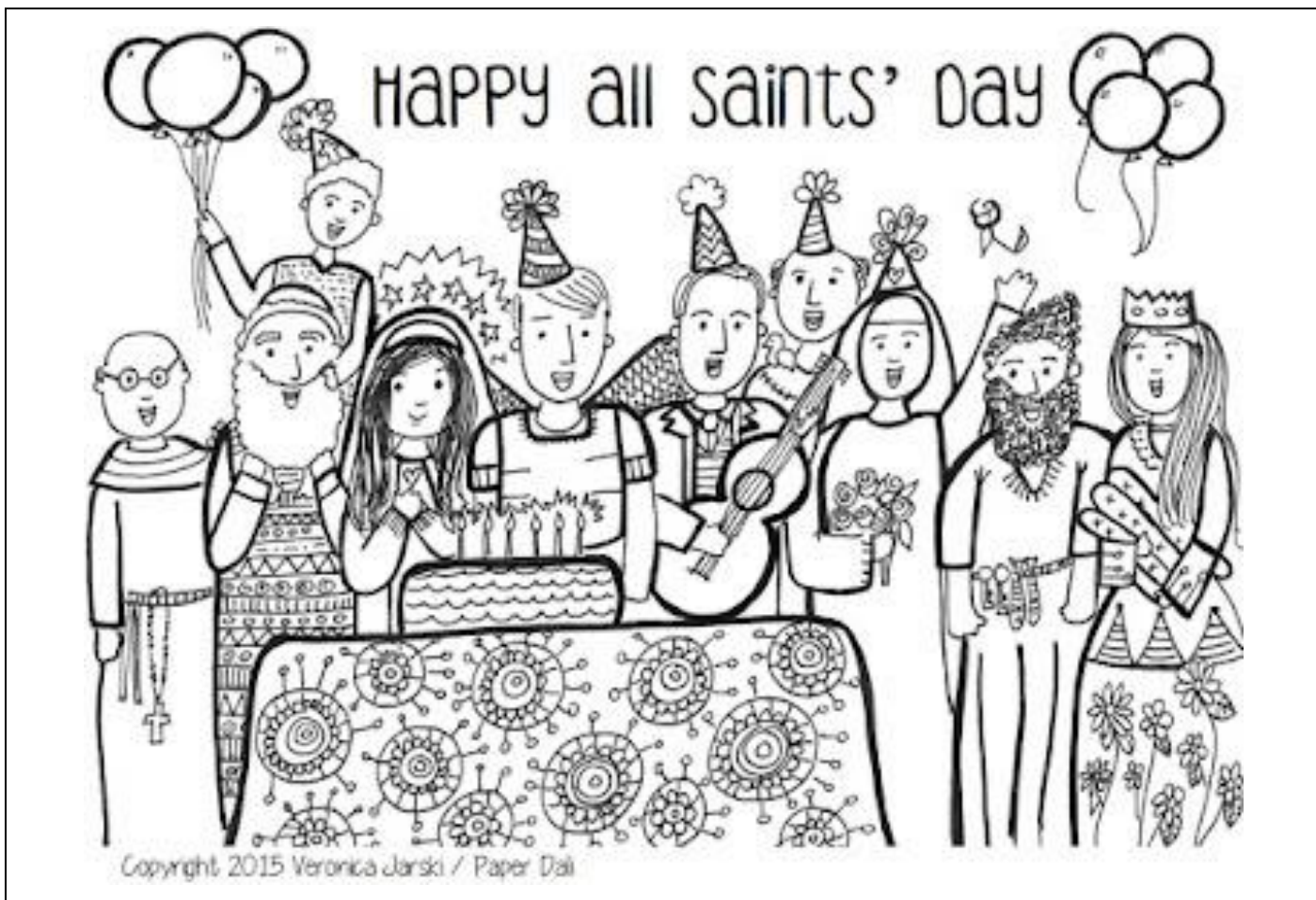


Illustration by Veronica Jarski @ Paperdali.blogspot.com

