



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 16: 1-3 : Remembrance Day

Theme: Safe people/safe spaces in difficult and scary times

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

We are continuing on our November theme of ‘Saints’ – this week fitting it in with the calendar entry of ‘Remembrance Sunday’. It can be a difficult topic to address with children and young people and you can expect lots of questions along the lines of “If God keeps everyone safe, why do so many people die in wars/conflict?” There are no easy answers – we are suggesting that it is approached from the idea that you can feel safe because of the presence of God even when you are not physically safe.

There are many potential triggers in this week’s theme – children who are being bullied or who live in angry homes, who have lost family or friends due to violence or war. We are encouraging members of your group to think about where they feel safe, with whom they feel safe, and to whom they can turn (as well as God) when they feel unsafe. Help them to explore the idea that a safe space is not necessarily a place where you will be physically safe, it’s a space you can be open and honest, express your feelings, be listened to and given pastoral support. Is that your group?

We might wonder what is our role in creating places of safety for those in dangerous or scary situations now? To link with Remembrance Sunday, we can wonder how members of the Armed Forces can feel ‘safe’ when they’re in the middle of a conflict or war and whether those who go to help others in dangerous or difficult situations are ‘saints’.



We have suggested two different translations of the passage we are using. Read them both and decide which would be most useful for your group. Remember, if there is a different translation that you think will work better, use that!

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 - Forty

This game is a version of forty-forty. If you have plenty of space with hiding places or an outdoor area, one place is to be designated as the 'safe' place and should be a base everyone can get to. The 'catcher' stand in one place with closed eyes, and counts to 40 or 100 while everyone else hides. Then everyone tries to get back to base, the safe place, without being caught (or seen by) the 'catcher'. If they get there they shout 'I'm safe' and they are safe. If they are seen or caught, they are out.

If you do not have an outdoor area or lots of space, you could adapt the rules by choosing a couple of people (more if you have a large group) to be the safe place. They cannot be tagged. Everyone else runs round trying to avoid being tagged by the 'catcher'. To be safe they can hold hands with one of the safe place people. You may want to have a rule about



how long they can spend at the safe place. For an extra challenge those tagged could stand with their arms out like in stuck in the mud and be saved by other people running by.

Alternative game - Take the flag to safety

Divide the group into two, creating a base space for each team where they have a flag (either a real flag or something to represent it) which they have captured from their opponents. Each team's aim is to retrieve the flag from the opposing team and bring it safely back to base, while keeping the flag in their base. You may want to create some rules around this game and set a time limit of play.

Experience

For this story we recommend using the Good News Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+16%3A1-3&version=GNT> or THE VOICE paraphrase <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+16%3A1-3&version=VOICE> or both, depending on your group. It may be interesting to compare the two with older children.

Where can I find the story online?

We couldn't find any videos of the passage, but thought these videos related to Remembrance Sunday might be useful to your group:

An explanation of Remembrance day and shelters in air raids by CBeebies

<https://youtu.be/kni91fHqi50?si=mrrzOf1KZDjP9cev>

A video thanking children who made a difference in WW1 by Royal British Legion

<https://youtu.be/3JUeo2nFFvk?si=rrCU06EEeYZ6cymb>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: Wonderful Lord by Doug Horley <https://youtu.be/je66ti1DQRk?si=B-JGW8KAthKOd7FZ>

Five to elevens: Hiding Place by Ken Blunt

<https://youtu.be/9FZD36D6I3Y?si=I0uSMMxH8cuMvEqB>

Explore

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

A new way to explore the passage

Build a den together using cushions and blankets. Ask the children what they think it needs to make the den comfortable and safe. Get everyone involved in putting it together. Ask what else they might need, perhaps candles, torches, maybe some snacks. Get everyone to sit comfortable and then take time to talk together.

Who can come into their den?

What makes the den feel safe?

What about people who have no place to feel safe?

Read the words from the Psalm

Protect me, O God; I trust in you for safety. I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; all the good things I have come from you." From the Good News Translation



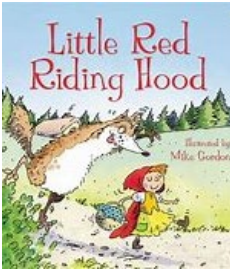
How can we share God's love as a safe space for others?

Pause for some quiet time in the den, perhaps play some quiet reflective music.

Take time to remember people who left their safe place for the sake of others.

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.



Little Red Riding Hood. We are talking about the modern 'fairytale' version of the story, not the original gruesome Grimm story! Little Red Riding Hood goes to visit her Grandmother. It's interesting that red is often the colour associated with danger. To get there she has to walk through a place of danger, the wood, before she gets to the refuge of her Grandmother's house. Later in the story, we find out that her Grandmother's house is not the safe space she imagines it to be...

There are many versions of the story on YouTube (such as <https://youtu.be/RT-EwqgHqCk?si=vwkoHNOHiYa4r5Kr>) . Choose the one that you think is most suitable for your group.

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

- What or who is your safe space? What makes it safe?
- Who are the people you could talk to who help you feel safe?
- I wonder how you could help someone else feel safe?
- How can we share God's love as a safe space for others?
- A saint is someone who loves God and loves others – how do you think people might have shown that quality during the wars?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- When you play goodies and baddies games, who do you like to be and why?
- Who are the people you could talk to who help you feel safe?

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.

Have some cushions and blankets to create a comfortable den together ready to open the box.

This week's box could include:

- Hearts of different shapes and sizes - expressing God's love for everyone - talk about family and friends and the people they love and who love them
- Cuddly toys - How do they make you feel? Encourage children to talk about feeling safe. What is their favourite comfort toy?
- Poppies (various types knitted felt, crafted etc) - talk about where they see poppies especially at this time of year
- Things that represent comfort and safety eg tissues, plasters, hot water bottle with cosy cover
- Candles for light and warmth - have battery tea lights/candles to place around your den.
- 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 with Poppies

Cut out some hearts and a black circle for the centre. Take each heart and place them together to form a poppy. Stick the hearts to paper or a lollipop stick. Place the black circle in the centre.



Look at your poppy. Poppies are bright and cheerful flowers. Say thank you to God for the people you love and ask God to keep them safe.

Look at the red petals, red can remind us of danger or anger. Ask God to be close to people who face danger today, or who are angry and cross, and bring them peace.

Place your hand over the whole poppy. Poppies are fragile and need to be cared for gently. Ask God to care for people who are hurting or sad; ask God to be close to them and bring them peace. Say thank you to God for all the people that care for us and keep us safe.

Place your finger in the centre and ask God to be close to you and give you peace.

As an alternative you can do this prayer activity with an already made poppy.

Spoken prayer

Dear Jesus

Sometimes life feels uncomfortable or even scary.

We have good times and we have difficult times too.

Thank you for the good times.

And thank you, that even in the difficult times, you send people that can help us feel safe.

Thank you that you are always with us, our safe place.

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.



Make safe prayer box

Gather as much recycling pieces as possible and encourage your group to reuse and recycle the items to make a safe box to hide your worries in.

This will be a decorated box to take home and a place where you could write or draw your worries/prayers and place them inside your box, to help us think about placing them in God's hands in prayer.

Be careful that we are not suggesting it is about bottling things up but giving it to God and perhaps saving it for a time when you can share it with your safe person too. Remind the children that you, as their leader, are someone who they can go to with their worries or concerns and you can find them help.

POPPY SEED BREAD OR POPPY JAM TART

The poppy has become a symbol of Remembrance Day because after the First World War, poppies grew all over the disturbed ground where people had been fighting. There are lots of activities and crafts involving making a poppy, but this is something just a little different, using poppy seeds.

You will need:

- A pack of bread mix
- Poppy seeds

What you do:

Follow the instructions on the packet to make your bread.

Split the dough between the children in the group so that each can make one roll. If you have a big group, you may need more than one pack of bread mix!

When the rolls have been made, put them in a circle on a baking sheet so that they rise together to form a wreath. Sprinkle them with poppy seeds before putting them in the oven to bake.



ALTERNATIVELY

You will need:

- Pre-rolled pastry (shortcrust is best)
- Jam
- Circular pastry cutters
- A greased cupcake tin
- Poppy seeds

What you do:

Cut circles of pastry using the cutters and place them firmly in the indentations on your cupcake tray. Put a spoonful of jam in the centre of each circle of pastry and spread it out a little. Then cut a much smaller circle of pastry and coat it in poppy seeds. Place it in the centre of your jam tart. Bake in the oven, following the instructions on the pastry packet.



ALTERNATIVELY

If you do not have access to an oven, why not use digestive biscuits and decorate them with red fondant icing, then make a centre with some black fondant icing, poppy seeds, or maybe a blob of liquorice or a chocolate button?

As you snack on your biscuits, bread or jam tarts together (maybe in your 'safe space' den), talk about why we might choose to remember the wars and the people affected or involved in them and why safe spaces and safe people are important to us. Talk about how our relationship with God helps us want to be 'safe' people and a safe place for others.

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 out more about some of the ways in which people create a safe space for children who are experiencing troubling times. <https://www.unicef.org.au/stories/where-do-children-play-in-a-war-zone> or Childline <https://www.childline.org.uk/> The Childline website has a game you might like where you can 'build your happy place' <https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/games/build-your-happy-place/>
 - This Remembrance Day, if you know someone older than you who has lived through a war, whether as a member of the armed forces or as a child or adult affected by it in some way, talk to them about their experiences and what helped them feel safer when things were scary or dangerous.
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We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of Psalm 16 with us.

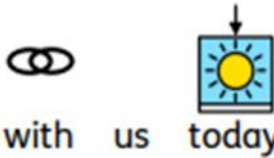
Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **the story of Ruth**

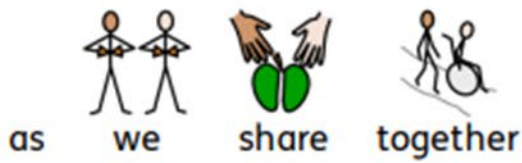




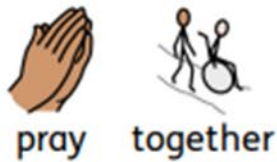
Jesus our friend,



be with us today



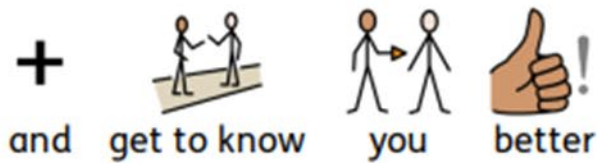
as we share together



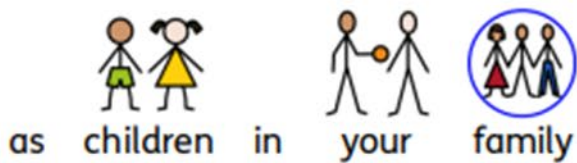
pray together



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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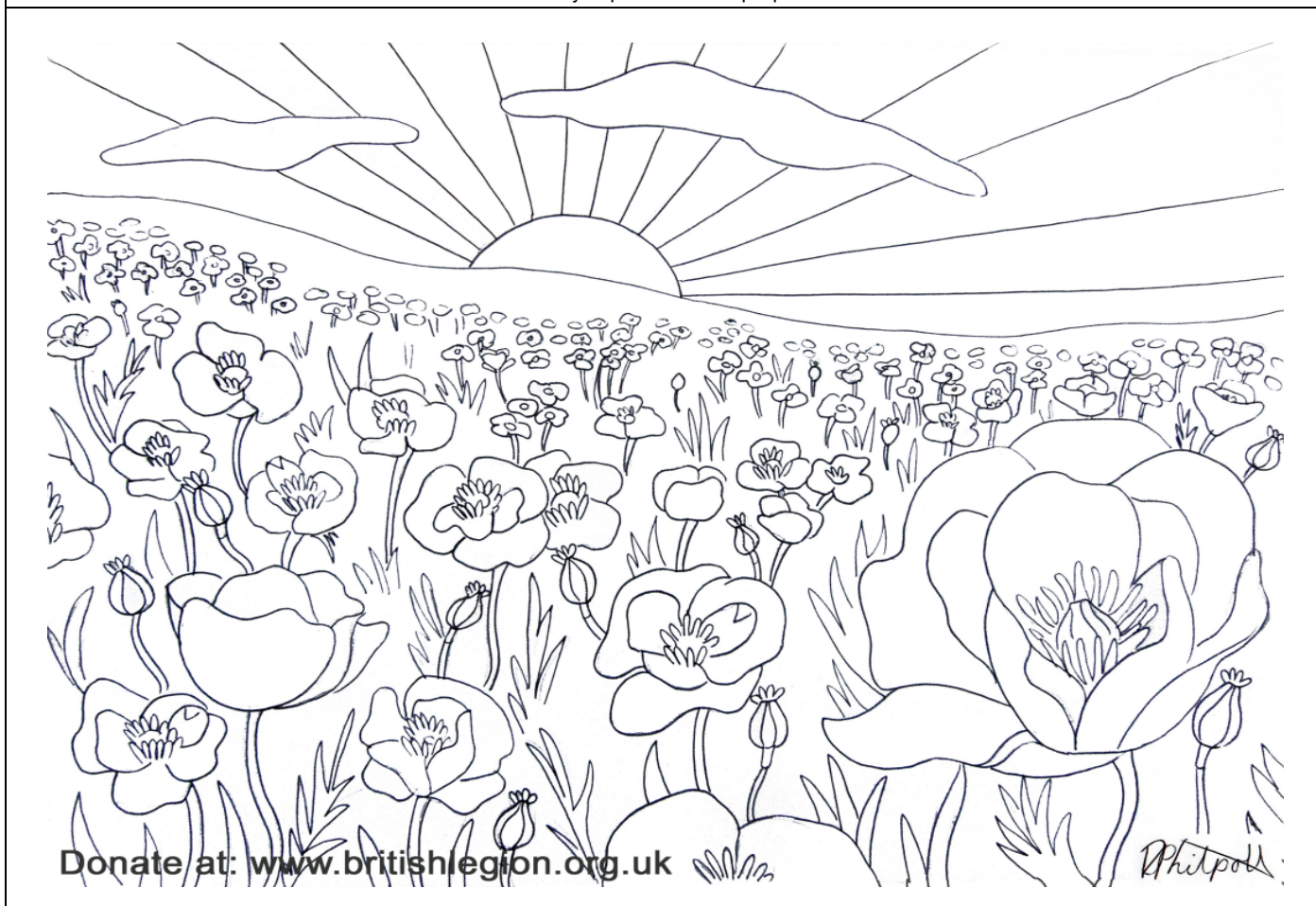




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