



# 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>

## John 11:1-44 – Raising of Lazarus

Theme: Jesus cares for his friends, we care for our friends.

### Contents:

<a href="#">Introduction</a>	1
<a href="#">Together</a>	2
<a href="#">Experience</a>	3
<a href="#">Explore</a>	3
<a href="#">Express</a>	5
<a href="#">Handouts</a>	10

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

This week's story is from John's gospel. Jesus finds out that a good friend – Lazarus – is very ill, and then later that he has died. Jesus is friends with Lazarus but also with his sisters, Mary and Martha. We know that Jesus had visited their house before, an earlier story gives more detail of how important their friendship was. (God's story: Mary and Martha by Crossroad kids <https://youtu.be/AQGKLA4AfXs?si=y6BNUrJWsvz1108B>)

This is not just a story about Jesus performing a miraculous sign, but a story of friendship which shows us an emotional Jesus as he shares his friends' time of deep sadness. He wasn't just offering sympathy; he was grieving too. Many of the people that Jesus helped were strangers but he knew this whole family well.

This may be a difficult story to share with your group if any of them have friends or family members who are very ill – or have died. It may be necessary to offer space during the session or a time to listen to a group member who wants to talk about what they are going through. This website may prove helpful. <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/supporting-bereaved-children-and-young-people>

Children and adults may find it difficult to accept that Jesus raised his friend from death but that when our loved ones die it feels like a forever goodbye. You may wish to concentrate on the idea that Jesus was showing that he (God) has power over death but that this is not so that we can live forever on earth (because our bodies get older) but so that we know we can trust him when he says we will live forever with him in heaven, where there are no more goodbyes.



# 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**

---

## Two possible games on the theme

**Emotion Charades** This is similar to charades but instead of acting out the words of the title of a film or book, you act the emotions of the whole story in chronological order. The rest of the group need to follow the emotional clues to guess the story. We suggest using two teams to play.

Give each team a well known and simple fairy tale, for example Cinderella. The teams then have a few moments to plan out the emotions of the story, chunking the story into scenes. For example, Cinderella is an orphan (SAD), she gets a new mum and sisters (looks to three different people HAPPY) but they are cruel to her (reacting to being shouted at SAD/SCARED), there is going to be a ball (open up letter EXCITEMENT) but Cinderella can't go (SAD) fairy Godmother appears (you shall go to the ball YAY!) dances at the ball (HAPPY DANCE) has to run (SHOCK and PANIC) prince comes to find her happy ending (HAPPY).

The teams then take it in turns performing just the emotional clues to see if the other team can guess which fairy tale it is. If anyone is struggling to guess the film, then maybe give them three choices it could be, one right answer, two wrong answers.

The trick is to keep it simple and chunk the story.



**Mummified** Create the best looking mummy by wrapping someone in toilet paper. This could be played outside or online if you have someone to help wrap you up!

You will need two rolls of toilet paper per team (three if you have an adult as your volunteer). Arrange everyone into teams. Each team selects a volunteer from their group. The goal of the game is to wrap the person up in toilet paper and create the best looking toilet paper mummy. The teams have only 10 minutes to wrap the person up using only toilet paper. After 10 minutes, tell everyone to stop. Have the mummies model their awesome wrapped-up selves and ask the team members to present/"sell" their mummies on why it is the best. The judge will have to decide who has the best-looking mummy and is ultimately the winner.

After the decision is made the mummies can try and burst out of their wrappings.

The toilet paper can be saved for future craft activities, put in recycling, or collected in a basket and put in the church's washroom facilities.

## Experience

For this story we recommend using the International Children's Bible  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+11&version=ICB>

### Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead by Saddleback kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dca8SSxXCmM>

Over fives: Lego Lazarus by Tigard URC <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkasUmwoRMA>

Raising of Lazarus cartoon by Crossroads Kids Club

<https://youtu.be/1FT04jjh3Q8?si=JfOU2lqN1loZsLTZ>

### Songs to support the story

Under fives: My best friend by Hillsong Kids [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K\\_G2UwHpvMo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_G2UwHpvMo)

Over fives: He calls me friend by CityAlight <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PpiezP6xRM>

## Explore

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

### A way to explore the story

#### Emotion Charades

Following on from the game you played at the beginning of the session, we are going to use the same idea to explore the story. There are a number of characters that play an important part in this story: Jesus, Mary, Martha, people of Jerusalem and, of course, Lazarus. But can the members of your group recognise the characters based only on the emotions they show?

Split the group into smaller teams, each with a copy of the story, and give each team (or let them choose) a character from the story. Allow some preparation time then ask each team in turn to act out 'their' character's emotions as the story progresses – with no other words or actions. Can the rest of the group guess which character is being portrayed?

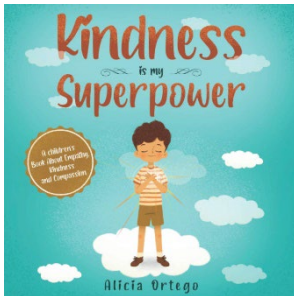


This may lead to a discussion about different emotions and how we might feel at different times. It could also lead to deeper questions: Nobody asked Lazarus if he \*wanted\* to be brought back to life, did they?

---

## 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.



**“Kindness is my superpower, about kindness, empathy and compassion.”** by Alicia Ortego

[https://youtu.be/6P-Y\\_M9q7RM?si=y0z6497AxFelvnXj](https://youtu.be/6P-Y_M9q7RM?si=y0z6497AxFelvnXj)

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

Why did Jesus cry? How would others have felt seeing Jesus cry with them? Is it ok for anyone to cry? Do you feel you can cry at sad times?

How can you tell someone is your friend? What sort of friend are you? How do your friends show their friendship to you?

## Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities.

I wonder how we come alongside our friends and share in their emotions?

I wonder what old friends know about me that new friends need to know?

## 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:

- Emotion faces – There are lots of emotions in the story, explore each emotion
- Tissues – Jesus was sad and cried for his friends
- Friendship bracelet – Being a friend connects us to each other
- Bandages – In the story we remember about Lazarus, and the fact he was wrapped in bandages
- 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 prayers:

Tears

You will need:

A small jar or similar

Some gems, beads, buttons or glass nuggets that would fit in the jar

Small pieces of paper shaped like tears

Pens



Encourage everyone to draw or write things that make themselves or people they know sad.

Play some gentle music while everyone puts their tear drops into the jar.

When our friends are sad, we feel sad too, and want to share their sadness with Jesus.

Have a moment of quiet or play some gentle music as everyone drops little gems, buttons, or beads into the jar to represent tears, tears shared because of the sad things that have been written or drawn.

The leader can then drop some symbolic tears into the jar too, and say that when we are sad, Jesus is sad for us too.

**God of love, you care when we are sad.**

**Wipe our tears and comfort us, we pray. Amen**

### Spoken prayer

Invite the children to create the facial expression to match the emotion. The prayer starts with a statement and finishes with a six word response (response in bold type). If you wish you could add these actions to the statements.

**Jesus** (trace a J on hand) **my friend** (clasp a finger from each hand together) **is with me** (point to self)

Thank you that...

When I feel happy... **Jesus my friend is with me.**

When I feel sad... **Jesus my friend is with me.**

When I feel excited... **Jesus my friend is with me.**

When I feel scared... **Jesus my friend is with me.**

When I feel like crying... **Jesus my friend is with me.**

When I feel like laughing... **Jesus my friend is with me.**

When I feel calm... **Jesus my friend is with me.**

When I feel cross... **Jesus my friend is with me.**

Always and everywhere, however I feel.... **Jesus my friend is with me.**

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. [See here for more suggestions.](#)

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.

### **Card Making**

#### **You will need:**

A4 Card

Things to decorate the card – colouring pens or crayons, cut out pictures from magazines or stickers, collage materials, scissors, glue, etc

#### **What you do:**

Think of someone you care about, and what kind of card you want to make for them. Take the time to think about that person and what they might like to see on the card. Would it be a card to show you how special they are to you or to tell them what makes them a special friend? It might be a get well soon card, or maybe it is a good luck card.

As friends, we get close to others and share in their joys and sorrows, and feeling their pain, sorrow, or happiness with them.



### ***Soaking and blending experiments***

*It may be useful to do these experiments at the beginning of the session as some may take some time to develop (for flower blending you may want to prepare this early in the morning or the night before).*

#### **Blending experiments**

##### **Flower blending**

Place some water in a vase or bottle, add some food colouring into the water, place a white flower into the vase (if you cut the stem into a diagonal it drinks the water faster). Watch how the flowers gradually change colour.



##### **Paper blending**

Fill a tall glass with about 2cm of water.

Cut up a sheet of kitchen towel into 2cm wide strips. Using a felt pen, make a large dot (approx. 1cm diameter) about 3cm from the bottom of one of the strips.

Place the strip of paper into the glass so that the end with the ink dot is in the water, but make sure that the ink dot itself is above the water line. You can fold the top of the strip over the edge of the glass and use a peg to hold it if necessary.



## Skittles Blending

Arrange the Skittles in a circle on the outer curve of the plate. Carefully pour warm water into the middle of the plate so that the sweets are half submerged and watch what happens.

I wonder what other blending and soaking things you can try?

---

## 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:

- What sort of friend does Jesus want you to be? Make a WWJD – 'What Would Jesus Do' badge/ bracelet, wear it to remind you that when your friends need you, you can be there for them just like Jesus was for his friends.
- <https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/24345/teaching-kids-2/> This website explores what it means to have good friendships.

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story from John 11 with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing [lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk](mailto:lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk)

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



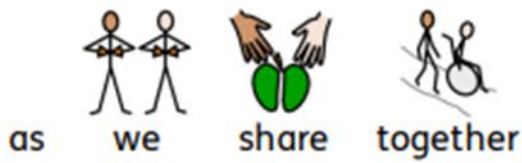




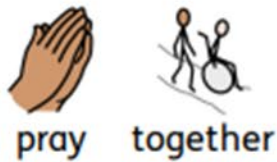
Jesus our friend,



be with us today



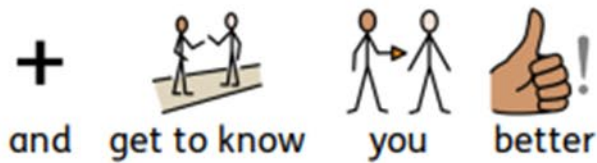
as we share together



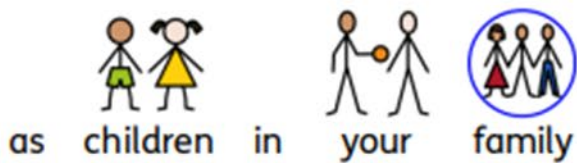
pray together



play together



and get to know you better



as children in your family



Amen

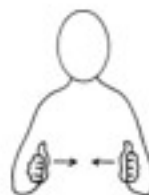






Illustration from [lambsongs.co.nz](http://lambsongs.co.nz) via [freebibleimages.com](http://freebibleimages.com)

