



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>

Proverbs 24: 30-34

Theme: Balance equals healthy growth

Contents:

- [Introduction](#) 1
- [Together](#) 2
- [Experience](#) 3
- [Explore](#) 3
- [Express](#) 5
- [Handouts](#) 8

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

Proverbs

It is believed that Wise Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs, although there were other contributors. It is often called the book of Wisdom and it is still quoted as wise words for today. Amazing to think that wisdom has been passed down to us from 950 years before Jesus was born. In this passage the writer paints a picture of a garden that has been neglected by its owner. It could be used as a metaphor for faith, it is God who grows the seed of faith but we still need to do our part. Nurturing our faith, supported by others who help our faith to grow and develop. We have also used this passage to consider how we ensure there is balance in our lives. Time to rest is good but also time to get busy and do what needs to be done.

Be careful that this isn't about saying you are not allowed to rest. It's more about ensuring that the things you are caring for and nurturing are always cared for; even if someone else helps with that. Take care that the session isn't a guilt trip, there is a lot of burnout amongst Christians.

Be aware that many children will be very busy with extracurricular programmes etc and this isn't always their choice. How do we enable children to consider how they get some balance back in their lives? The aim of the session is about getting a good balance, where can God help all areas to grow well.



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 - Cabbage or drop relay

Simple fun game based on the old crackerjack game of cabbage or drop, playing with the ideas of carrying too much.

You will need: lots of toys and familiar items of different weights. A box of cabbages or similar booby prize. Some items to create an obstacle course.

What you do:

Put your group into two or more teams.

One person from each team is nominated to be the one who will hold all the items.

The rest of the team take it in turns to run the obstacle course returning with one item from the pile that is given to the 'holder' to hold.

If the holder drops an item, it is returned to the take pile and the holder is given a cabbage in its place.



At the end of the race, the group with the most items wins (take away a point for each cabbage).

Alternative game

If you already have buckaroo or a similar balancing game play this. If not, then you could play a version of human buckaroo. Divide the group into teams of at least two and ensure each team have access to a range of items (each team needs to have the same items) Be creative with the items (thinking about whether there are things which could be hung from their ears and mouth).



One person is the donkey and will need to be able to crawl along the floor on hands and knees. The rest of the team are packers. You need to see how many things you can place and that will stay on the donkeys back as the donkey crawls a pre decided distance. The team whose donkey successfully carries the most items the full distance without any falling off (no one is to hold the items in place) wins.

Experience

For this story we recommend using the Easy to read version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+24%3A30-34&version=ERV>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: An introduction to Proverbs by Crossroad Kids

<https://youtu.be/cs69466qVHs?si=xQ-I9qLIqk32toYH>

Over fives: The seed of laziness short film by CGmeet up -

<https://youtu.be/B7utigxF3uk?si=FX3u3qgqQ0G9yvfW>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: Grow, Grow, Grow by Jana Alayra

<https://youtu.be/HqmwCWUil8A?si=e-yr9xr87UdeeULU>

Five to elevens: Grow by Milestone Kids

<https://youtu.be/r2-H1JAV5X8?si=jn7t002e8kkRpz3Y>

Explore

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

A new way to explore the passage

My Perfect Day

Imagine your perfect day. Think about what would happen during this perfect day.

- What would you do?
- Where would you go?
- Who would be there with you?
- What might happen there?



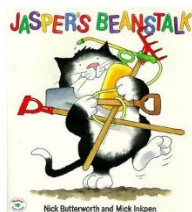
Draw a picture of your perfect day. Or write about what would happen in your perfect day.

Create a visual timetable of this perfect day using images/words placed at different points throughout the day. (Participants could complete this individually or together in small groups.) Cut out a range of example words/images on pieces of paper that can be placed on the timetable (E.g. Sports, Reading, Film, Food, Bible, Prayer). Provide additional blank pieces of paper for participants to add their own ideas.

Morning	
Midday	
Afternoon	
Evening	
Night	

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.



In this story, Jasper is the opposite to the vineyard owner in this week’s passage. He struggles to sit back and wait for his bean to grow and is perhaps a little too active when looking after his plant!

Jasper’s Beanstalk by Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen - Read by Children’s Storyteller

<https://youtu.be/23INhyreb8M?si=xWSuHIW44ezuxrKa>

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

- What do you think God is saying to you in this story?
- If you were the person walking past/ the gardener/ the garden how would you feel?
- In what ways could you be called lazy?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder what the weeds are in your life?
- I wonder where God is in this story?
- I wonder what jobs you put off doing?

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:

- Small world figures – Use small world figures, or a selection of natural objects (such as stones or leaves) to re-tell the story.
- Plastic gardening tools – Use the garden tools together to play imaginatively and think about how the person in the story could have looked after the plants in their care.
- Sand and small objects to hide – Take turns to hide objects in the sand and look for them together. Imagine what it would be like to grow underground like a seed.
- Water bottle – Think about what plants need to grow. What things do we need to grow? Think about how we look after ourselves and other people.
- Empty box or plastic bottle – Think about rubbish that is left by your schools, homes or church. Why does it stop our community looking nice? Can you make something else with the rubbish?
- 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?

Guided prayer

- Before the time of prayer, arrange clean recyclable materials around the base of the vine.
- Sit your group around the vine, allowing time for group members to find a comfortable position.
- Help your group to focus on their breathing - counting to three as you breathe in together and counting to three as you breathe out.
- Once the group are comfortable with the pattern, ask them to think of one way in which they would like God's help to grow, as they breathe in.
- Then ask them to think of one worry they would like to share with God as they breathe out.
- At the end of the guided section of prayer, you could ask the group to work as a team to sort and clear the recycling from around the vine. Can they work together to tidy the vine in silence? Can they communicate, helping each other without speaking?



Remember that the paper vine can be used as the basis for creative prayers throughout the 'Growing' series. Different elements can be added each week to build your prayer vine.

Spoken prayer

God

Let me find you in every part of my life.

Help me when I'm busy, and show me how to stop and rest.

Be with me when I am sad, and when I am happy.

Be close to me when I am poorly and go with me when I am well.



Help me when my faith is strong and when it is small and fragile.

Help me to find the balance in my life and see you in it,

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.

Symmetrical butterflies

You will need:

- Paper
- Paint

What you do:

Fold your piece of paper in half and open it up. On one half paint a butterfly, intricate designs and plenty of paint.



When the design is finished fold the page in half again, smoothing the paper, when you open it up there should be an image of the butterfly left.

The butterfly is the same each side, this is called symmetry, this is what happens when we get a balance in life with God in all areas, the scales are equal – the same – symmetrical. Like the butterfly. That is what we need to strive for in life.

Balancing

Gather a range of balancing toys and equipment and items to weigh. Have fun guessing how much things might weigh before finding out their actual weight. If you are using digital scales see how near to the whole number you can get.....you could use pasta, lego, bricks or other small items. This could spark a discussion about getting the right balance and what that means in terms of your relationship with God.



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:

- Intentionally talk, pray to God as you do different activities in your week, for instance when getting dressed for school talk to God about your friends, as you get ready to go and do a sport, talk to God about being well and healthy, when you eat dinner, talk to God about whether everyone has all they need and so on.
- Talk to someone older or younger than you and ask them to tell you what their ideal day would be.



We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **healthy growth** with us.

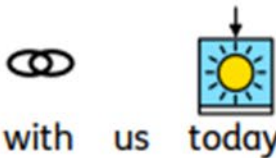
Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing **lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk**

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

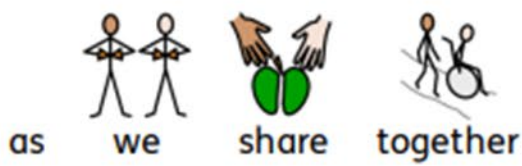




Jesus our friend,



be with us today



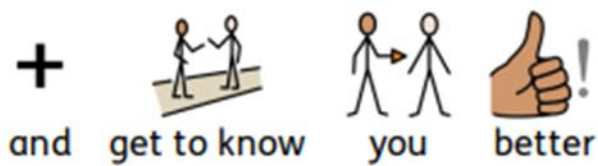
as we share together



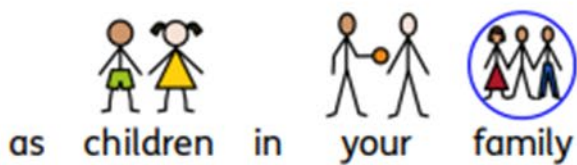
pray together



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



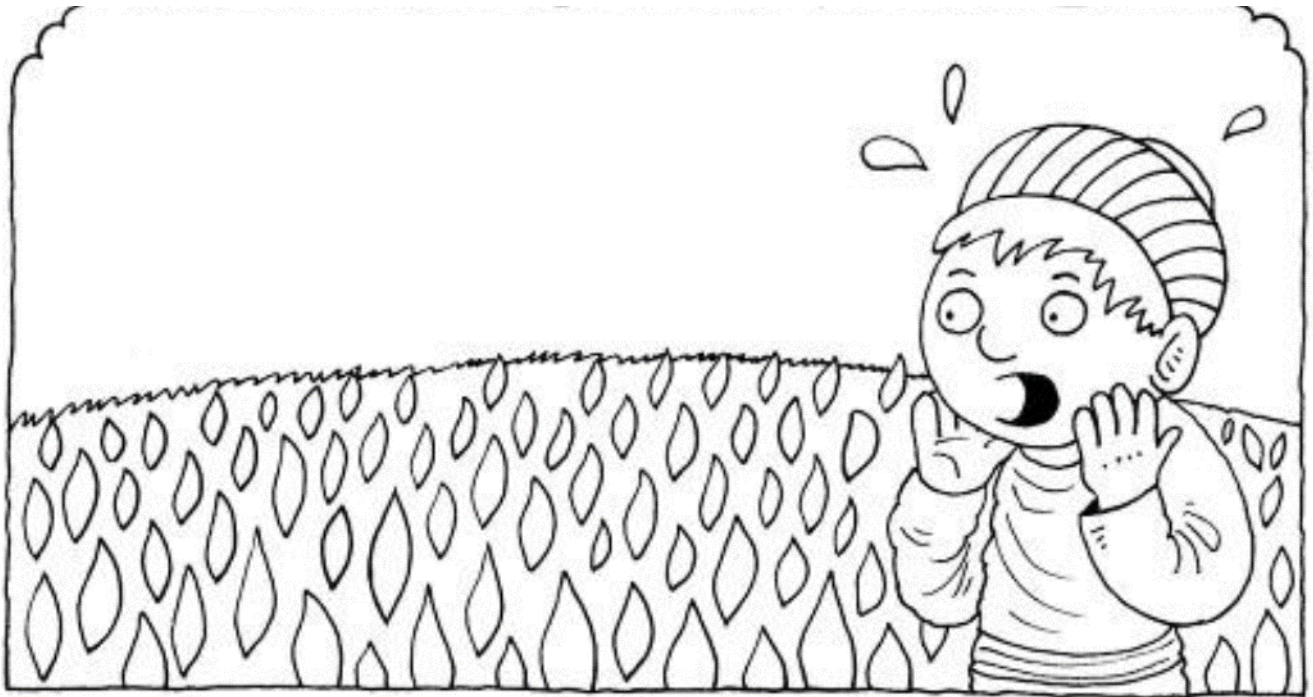


Illustration by lambsongs.co.nz via freebibleimages.com Gill Kemp and Richard Gunther

