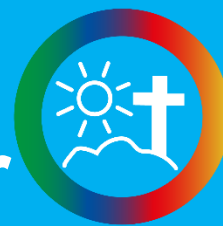




# Faith Adventures for Children Together



*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>

## Genesis 2: 4-15 Creation

Theme: Whatever your thoughts about creation, we have a job to do

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

#### Genesis 2: 4-15

Welcome to a month of looking at what it means to have custody of this planet on which we live.

Our first focus is on the creation story – but not the one that we’re most used to! Your group will probably be familiar with the ‘7 days’ creation story, this version (which comes in the next chapter of Genesis) is ‘creation life’. It may raise some questions with your group – which to believe, which is true? And this is an opportunity to explore with your group the many different beliefs that are shared by Christians (and others!) about how the world was created. The breadth of theology within the United Reformed Church means that views might vary between who believe that the creation story is absolute fact and those who see it as a made-up story – and everything in between. It is important to remember that everybody has the right to their own view and understanding. It is useful to encourage ‘faithful scepticism’ in children as this will lead to them exploring the story and reaching their own understanding.

You might explore if our understanding of time is the same as God’s – does God work in 24 hour blocks, too?

Different faiths, and different cultures, may have their own versions of the creation story – you can learn about some of them here: [Collections :: Origin Stories from Around the World | Smithsonian Learning Lab \(si.edu\)](https://www.si.edu/collections/origin-stories-from-around-the-world)

The focus for this week is our stewardship of the earth and its resources as mentioned in Genesis 2:15. God has given us the responsibility for the earth – what does that mean in practice? What might it mean for the earth (and everything on it) if we don’t take that responsibility seriously?



There might be questions about climate change, drought, the difference between 'being alive' and 'living life to the full' and recognition of how important plants and water are to our own existence.

Encourage your group to explore the answers to these, and any other questions, as you share your activities. Please be aware, however, that some children may be excessively affected by anxiety over the environmental crisis and you may need to tread carefully to support them.

## 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**

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### In-person game

As the reading talks about the four rivers running out of Eden, this is a good opportunity to play Runaround. You need to mark the four corners of the room as north, south, east and west and you will need a dice to roll (preferably a big one so everyone can see the numbers on it).

The leader says "Let's create a garden" and the children start to run around randomly in the space (not too crazily – no collisions or falls please). When the leader calls out "run to the river", the children all choose a corner and run to stand in that corner. The leader can then



call out “runaround” and children can choose whether to stay where they are or to run to a different corner. Then the leader rolls the dice. If a 1 is rolled, the children in the north corner are out. A 2 eliminates the children in the east, 3 south and 4 west. If a 5 is rolled, north and south are out, and if a 6 is rolled, east and west are out. Keep playing until only one child remains.

### Online game

This game can also be played face-to-face. If playing online, each person takes it in turn to mime an action which helps take care of God's world. Everyone then tries to guess what they are miming. The first person to get it right gets one point.

If playing face-to-face, it can be played as a team game with the leader holding a list of things to mime and runners from each team being given one action at a time to act out to their team. As soon as someone guesses, they run to the leader to get the next action on the list, racing to be the first team to finish.

Adapt the difficulty according to the age and ability of the children – simple things might be watering the plants or picking up litter or recycling, harder things might be recycling paper or not using single-use plastics!

## Experience

For this story we recommend using the Children's International Bible <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+2%3A4-15&version=ICB> or the Living Bible <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+2%3A4-15&version=TLB>

### Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: from Ancient Path Kids- <https://youtu.be/A5DuNe6WhKU>

Over fives: HI BIBLE - <https://youtu.be/RIVlqXfFLDw>

And a short one which is a memory verse song: <https://youtu.be/tPXxamMUyqQ>

### Songs to support the story

Under fives: Think of a world without any flowers. <https://youtu.be/jqemiyTUKCA>

Jointly written and composed by Doreen Newport a piano teacher and accompanist and the children of Emmanuel Congregational Church (now URC) Cambridge.

Over fives: Building the kingdom by Leo Roberts <https://on.soundcloud.com/ifg7n>

## Explore

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

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

*To tell this story you will need a basket with various pieces of fabric (especially including blue, brown, green fabric), playdough or plasticine and pipe cleaners for modelling, a few*



*kitchen roll inners, tissue paper, aluminium foil, jewels, seeds, twigs, flowers or artificial flower heads, play animals, lego, small world play people*

Let's create a garden (ask the children what we need to have in a garden)

We begin with some soil or earth (encourage the children to suggest how you might represent the earth )

Then plants and trees can grow in the earth (give children opportunity to contribute to the garden by selecting and adding things to represent the plants and trees and flowers).

What a beautiful garden to live in (spread your hands over the garden and give a thumbs up).

We need someone to look after it. A gardener. God created humans to nurture and care for the garden (choose two play figures or model some to add to the garden).

But gardens need water for the plants to grow and flourish ( encourage the children to consider what sort of water is needed and to create a pool or a river using the materials in the basket).

In the garden we can have precious things and beautiful fruit, nuts and seeds (give children opportunity to contribute to the garden by selecting and adding some small beads and seeds into the garden to represent the fruits).

It is a beautiful place, isn't it? What a beautiful garden we have created! (spread your hands over the garden and give a thumbs up)

But what will happen if we don't have WATER? (take away the rivers/ponds and talk about what will happen with no water)

What will happen if we don't have TREES AND PLANTS? (take the plants away and talk about what happens if we have no plants)

What will happen if we don't have SOIL? (take away the soil and talk about what will happen if we have no soil for things to grow)

What will happen if we just don't care? (swipe away the garden into a pile and talk about how it feels to see our beautiful creation spoiled. How can we restore it and make it flourish? How might God feel?)

Rebuild the garden once more, encouraging the children place each element in position carefully, restoring it to the beautiful garden once more.

Look at God's big, beautiful garden. Let's take good care of it together (spread your hands over the garden and give a thumbs up).



## 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.



'Sofia's Dream' by Land Wilson, [https://youtu.be/H\\_TWm6HWTBM](https://youtu.be/H_TWm6HWTBM)

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

- There are different creation stories in different faiths and people have different ideas even within Christianity. Why do you think they are all different? What do you think is the most important message of all creation stories?
- I wonder what we can do to make a difference?
- What sort of challenge could we set for our group, our church, our grownups, ourselves to care and protect God's world? (Children's eco-questionnaire link)
- I wonder why God created man before creating the garden?

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

- I wonder what you do to help take care of God's world?
- I wonder what's your favourite part of creation?

### 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:

- Soil or brown fabric – talk about the earth and all the things that come from it
- Plants or play plants – talk about why plants are good for us and the earth
- Some water in a watering can or silver foil to represent a river – talk about the preciousness of water and we can save water
- A heart – talk about how we should love and care for creation
- A smiley face – God is pleased with the beautiful creation
- A sad face – It makes God sad when we don't care for it
- 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?

## Conker prayers

Collect conkers, still in their spikey shells. Invite everyone to carefully pick one shell up and hold it while thinking of something 'spikey' or not nice they would like to pray to God about. This could be anything, for example, someone who is poorly, a difficult situation with friends or family or something that you want to say sorry for. This can be done quietly so that everyone can share with God things they might not want to share with everyone else.



Carefully break open the shells and hold the conkers for a minute, reflecting on how something so lovely comes from something spikey, and it is all part of God's creation. The conker protected by the spikey shell can become something beautiful, an image of how God protects us and can transform people and situations.

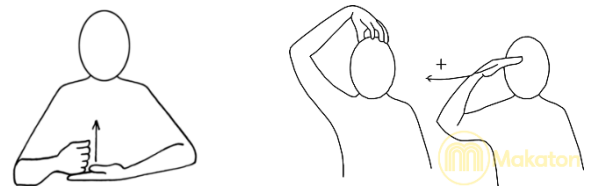
## Spoken prayer

Adapted from the Words of Building the Kingdom from the song section. You might like to play the song at the beginning or end of your prayer time.

Dear God

***Please help us to build your kingdom here on earth.***

***Help us to care for the beautiful earth you have given us.***



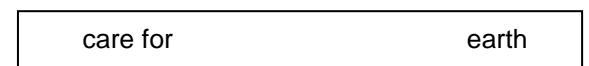
The oceans are rising, and islands will drown. Help us to do what we can to keep the levels down, by making little changes that will use less fossil fuel.



***Please help us to build your kingdom here on earth.***

***Help us to care for the beautiful earth you have given us.***

You designed the planet as a home for everyone. It hasn't been looked after, there are bad things we have done. Help us to do our best to change things.



***Please help us to build your kingdom here on earth.***

***Help us to care for the beautiful earth you have given 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. <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.

## Our beautiful world

Children almost always love an opportunity to engage with the natural environment. If you can do this activity outdoors, do. Otherwise you will need to bring the outdoors inside, bringing a collection of autumn leaves of different shapes and colours and green leaves from evergreens, acorns and conkers and beech nuts and the cases from these, pine cones, feathers etc.



According to the age and interests of the children you could do one or more of the following:

Put the items into a tuff tray on the floor or a smaller, deep sided tray on a table and encourage the children to explore the touch, smell, sight and sound as they run their fingers through it.

Use the items to create blow-away art – make a pattern or picture with them on the ground outside so that the wind can just blow it away when it is finished.

Use the items to create a collage pattern or picture by gluing them onto a piece of scrap card. Paint the items and use them to print onto a background, or place them on a background and spray paint over the top to create a relief picture when you remove them. You could laminate this to create a place mat.

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## Planting and Growing

You will need

- A plant pot
- Bulb or seeds
- Potting compost
- Bamboo stick
- Strong card

Fill the plant pot with compost, make a hole in the middle and plant your bulb, covering it over with compost. Think about what the bulb needs to make it grow. Flowers, plants, and trees can't grow without light, water and air. God had to create the dry ground before the water and sunlight could help the plants to grow. Write on some strong card your growing instructions e.g. water once a week, leave in a warm place, place on a windowsill etc. Stick the card to a bamboo stick and place in the pot to remind you how to take care of your bulb for it to flourish and grow.



## 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:

- One important thing in the Bible story is water. Try to be sensible in your use of water this week and also see what you can find out about the work of WaterAid.
- Another important thing in the Bible story is growing things. Go on a walk with a plant identification book and see how many different types of flower and tree you can find in your local environment. How can you thank God for such variety?

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of the **Creation** 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 **Psalm 65**?



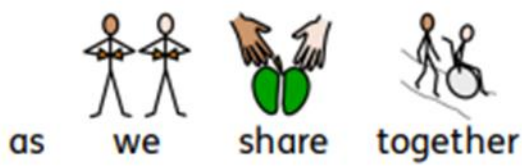




Jesus our friend,



be with us today



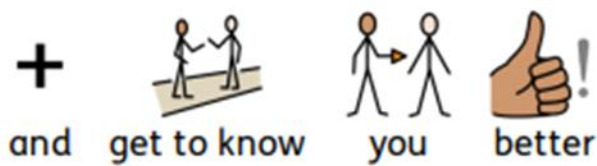
as we share together



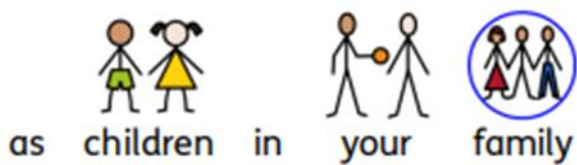
pray together



play together



and get to know you better



as children in your family



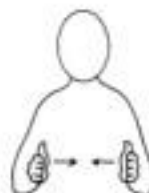
Amen



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



Alternate hands back and forth



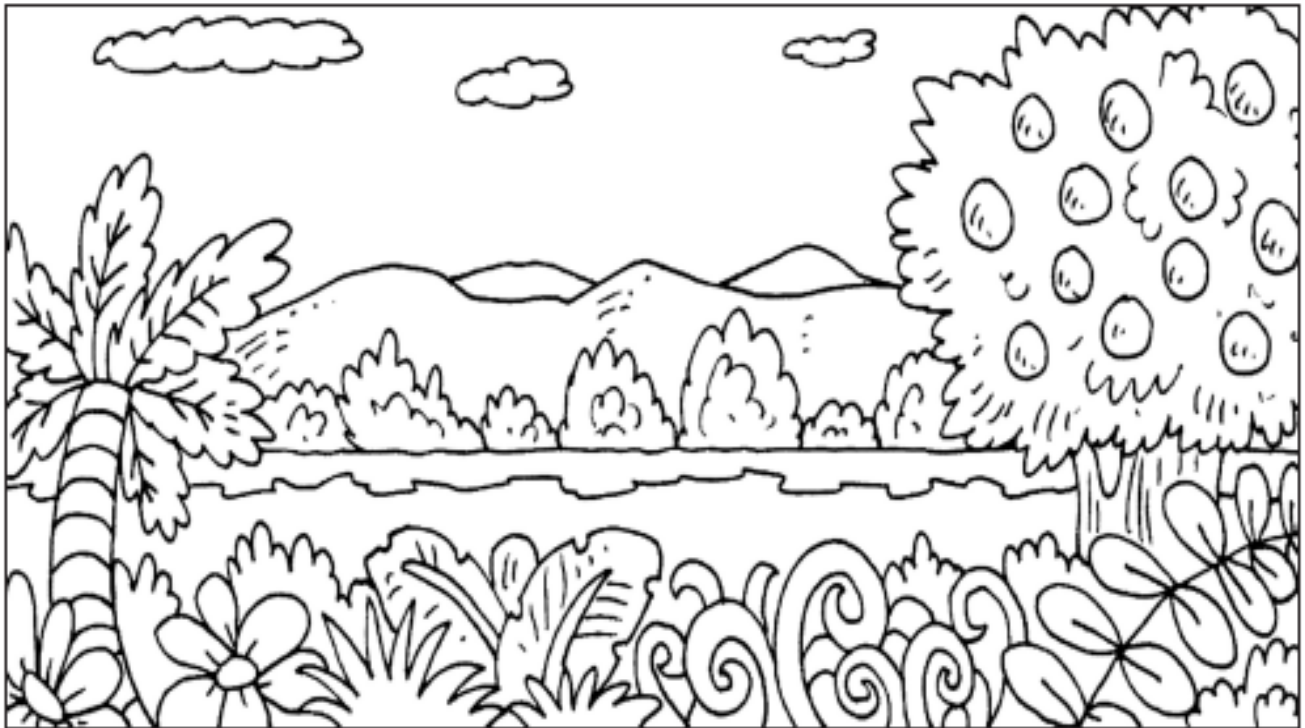


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