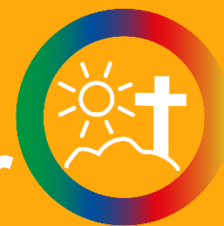




# Faith Adventures for Children Together



*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 65

Theme: All creation sings for joy at God's care

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

#### Matthew

Harvest is celebrated at different times in the year depending on what the 'staple crop' is in that area. In the UK, our staple crop is wheat which is normally harvested in September – so we celebrate harvest in the early autumn.

The "Farming" year in the UK is very similar to our academic year. This is different from our calendar year (January to December). This might be because children were used to help with the harvest – so school couldn't start until they were no longer needed! Ancient Israel also had two calendars – one for religious festivals which started in the Spring (the barley harvest) and the other starting in the autumn when the other crops were gathered in.

The world of the ancient Israeli was more limited than the world we know today – North and South were not particularly important to them; they didn't know about arctic regions, but East and West was where the threats and enemies came from. This is why Jesus mentioned forgiving sins from East to West.

Today we are looking at how we respond to God's creation of, and involvement in, our world. The Psalmist wants us to respond with joy. What does joy look like? What brings us joy when we think about the world God created?



It may be that members of your group focus on the negative aspects of the natural world, issues like drought, floods and earthquakes – and humanities role in creating these – or not responding to them effectively. Do not discourage this – children need space to voice their concerns and their questions - but try not to let it dominate if it is getting too distracting.

Remember that it is not our job to provide answers to every question but, rather, to be alongside our group members as they try and find out the answers for themselves.

## 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

This game is a variation on Port and Starboard. There are a series of actions for the participants to remember and when the leader calls out one of the words, the group all need to do the appropriate action. Anyone doing the wrong action or who is last to do the correct one is out.

*Slug – lie down on the floor*

*Kangaroo – jump up and down*

*Mountain – hold hands above head to form a point*

*Seas – make hand travel across in front of the body, palm down, in a wave-like motion*

*East – run to one side of the room*

*West – run to the other side of the room*

*Elephant – wave a trunk*

*Spider – scream*

*Shark – hand on top of head like a shark's fin*

*Jellyfish – wriggle entire body*

*Hedgehog – sit on the floor and curl up in a ball*

*All of creation – shout "praise the lord!"*

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## Online game

The above game can be played as an online version –with just a few variations

*Slug – hold one arm across the body with the fist tilted up and index and little finger lifted to make a slug's body and head*

*Kangaroo – put hands in front of body like a kangaroo and bounce up and down*

*East – point with left hand across body to the right*

*West – point with right hand across body to the left*

*Hedgehog – curl one fist into a ball and hold the other hand behind it with fingers spread like spikes*

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## Experience

For this story we recommend using the Easy-to-Read version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+65%3A+5-13&version=ERV>

### Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Psalm 65 read by David Suchet <https://youtu.be/VfRD2Cq-IPM> NIV version. Useful for playing whilst children create art pieces or as a silent mediation

Over fives: A introduction to the book of Psalms cartoon by Crossroads Kids

<https://youtu.be/QwQ5FCJKWz4>

### Songs to support the story

Under fives: You crown the year by Hillsong <https://youtu.be/TmGGXg6VdKM>

Five to elevens: Praise him all creation by Kids in worship <https://youtu.be/NBH6S9ZO2bE>

Extra: You shall go out with joy [https://youtu.be/2TsXO\\_i0VuU](https://youtu.be/2TsXO_i0VuU)

## Explore

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

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

If possible, begin by showing this story : Song of Gladness by Michael Morpurgo <https://youtu.be/V1Pig-Y38Ac>. It tells the story of how all creation, all the creatures and nature decided to sing out praise to God in their different ways. Michael joins in with their song of hope and praise too.

Psalm 65 is a poem telling how all of creation sings out in praise to God the creator. One of the creative activities in this session is to make a new creature using junk modelling and give it a voice to create a creature orchestra. This could fit well with this section of exploring the Psalm together.

Creation poem of praise:

We have given an example , you can use this with your group, making all the sounds and noises OR you could use it as an example and encourage your group to write their own.

Encourage the children to think about all creatures around the world in different habitats, as well as parts of nature itself eg storms, seas, trees and so on.

The children could work together to create their lists that they then use to create their own poem before bringing it to life with sounds, pictures, and movements.

A world map might be useful to inspire and encourage the group to think wider than our own country.

Have some noisy creative fun together.



## Let all creation sing praise to God

All creatures of the world, come sing.  
Shout out your praise to God our King.  
Come together and as one, rejoice.  
Make joyful sounds and creative noise.

Kangaroo and rabbit, come bounce and thump.  
Frog and spider, come ribbit and jump.  
Blackbird, robin, and sparrow come tweet.  
Polar bear and elephant, come stamp your feet.  
Eagle and seagull, come squark and screech.  
Come, hissing snake and squelching leech.

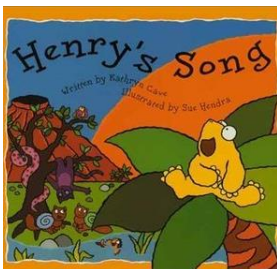
Hippo, come yawn and giraffe, come dance.  
Woodpecker, come tap and zebra, come prance.  
Oceans come roar and wind come howl.  
Mouse come squeak and bears come growl.  
Trees come rustle and steams come babble.  
Monkeys come scream and geese come gabble.

All creatures of the world, come sing.  
Shout out your praise to God our King.  
Come together and as one, rejoice.  
Make joyful sounds and creative noise.

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## 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.



'Henry's Song' by Kathryn Cave and Sue Hendra  
<https://youtu.be/VW4s7vcYcxM>

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

- If God cares for the world, what's our job?
- This passage talks about a good harvest and good conditions for growing, but what about those countries where that's not the case?

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

- I wonder what your song is and what in God's creation makes you sing?
- I wonder what God feels when we are celebrating creation and sing with joy?



## 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:

- Compass or World Map – To represent people from all around the world, from East to West
- Bottle of water & bowl – To remind us that God created the streams and the rain. Listen to the sounds of the water being shaken or poured into the bowl. Feel the water in the bowl
- A sponge – Pass the sponge around and encourage participants to feel and squeeze the sponge to remind us of the soft ground. Pour some water on the sponge and watch how it soaks up the water like the soil
- Small plant or flower – To remind us that God makes plants grow. What is your favourite flower?
- Fruit or vegetables – To remind us of the harvest and crops. Give thanks for all the varieties of food that God has given us to eat
- Toy musical instrument – To remind us that everything is singing and shouting for joy. Sing and shout together!
- Toy animals – think about what sound each animal would make to praise God
- 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?



### Sensory walk

Psalm 65 has lots of sensory images in it.

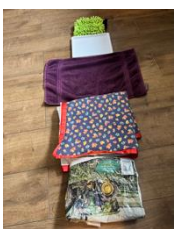
Lay out a pathway in your room, with different fabrics or textures.

You could make a small path on a table to walk on with fingers if you have a small group with limited space, you could set up trays on the floor with different surfaces to walk on, or you can take it outside and create a path for children to walk.



You can use sand, carpet, water, silk fabric, fur, sandpaper, soil - whatever you have at hand.

As the children walk on the path, encourage them to pray for hard times when walking on a rough texture, for happy times when walking on soft fabric, for people affected by drought and flood when walking in the water, for nature and the crops that grow when walking on the carpet or soil.



Once the children reach the end of the path, invite them to say:

"Everything is singing and shouting for joy to God."



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## Spoken prayer

**Big and Small praise prayer** *Encourage the group to act out the different things described in this prayer)*

For mountains and oceans, a sky full of stars and a bright golden sunrise

Praise God for big things

For insects, flowers and tiny drops of dew

Praise God small things

For crashing waves, stormy nights and heavy rain

Praise God for loud things

For a breath of wind, a gentle whisper

Praise God for quiet things

For elephants, and solid oak trees

Praise God for strong things

For snowflakes and cobwebs - a tiny baby

Praise God for fragile things

For hummingbirds' wings, hares and cheetahs

Praise God for fast things

For the growing trees and slugs and snails

Praise God for slow things

For planets and other countries

Praise God for far away things

For my own heartbeat and the person sitting next to me

Praise God for close-by things

Thank you that you are big and strong but you show your love in gentleness.

Thank you that though you are loud as thunder, you speak to us in the silence.

Thank you that though you could be faster than the speed of light

You choose to walk at our pace and to hold our hand. Amen

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## 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.



## Puppet creatures

God created so many different creatures, including us, and we can be creative too. This is an opportunity to create a creature of our own design – what might it look like? Use the resources provided to design a creature who can then make a joyful noise to praise God together.

*You will need:*

Socks  
Pipe cleaners  
Cotton wool balls or pompoms  
Felt shapes  
Wool  
Small oval of red card/felt– to form the mouth  
Glue

*What you do:*

Create a puppet creature using a sock. For smaller children, you may want to glue your oval of red card/felt into place where the mouth is naturally formed before you begin this activity. The older children will be able to do this themselves. Now let the creative juices flow! Add limbs, eyes, hair, wings and anything else using the materials you available to create a unique new creature. Once all the creatures are completed, get them all together to let them make a joyful noise to God. I wonder what sound each creature might make. Remember we'd love to see images of your creature puppets and hear their wonderful songs on our Facebook page!

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## Waterchestra

Encourage participants to experiment with water and different materials to make sounds. Have fun trying out some of the suggestions below or try creating your own instruments. See if you can create a tune together as a group. (Remember to supervise children when using glass materials.)

### Glass Xylophone

Materials: glasses or jars of same size, water, wooden spoon, food colouring (optional)

- Line the glasses in a row. Add a different amount of water to each of the glasses, increasing the amount as you move along the row.
- Optional – add a few drops of different coloured food colouring to each glass.
- Use the wooden spoon to tap the glasses and listen to the different notes that are created.

### Bottle Flutes

Materials: plastic or glass bottles, water

- Fill the bottles with different amounts of water.
- Blow gently across the top of the bottle.
- Listen to the different sounds and pitches made.

### Musical Wine Glasses

Materials: wine glasses, water

- Fill the wine glasses with different amounts of water.
- Wet your finger and rub it gently around the rim of the wine glasses until it begins to vibrate and “sing.” Listen to the different sounds made by the glasses.





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## 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 the food you eat for one day this week. Where does it come from? How far has it travelled and how might have been involved in getting it from the farm to your plate? Remember to thank God for your food before you eat it.
  - Watch a Family Film Night film *The Lorax* – download the activity leaflet from <https://www.urcscotland.org.uk/childrens-ministry> - resources for friends and churches – family film night. Discuss some of the questions on the leaflet with friends or family.
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We hope you enjoyed exploring **Psalm 65** 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 **The Parable of the Fig Tree**.

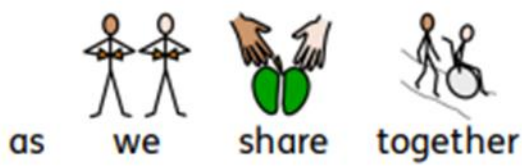




Jesus our friend,



be with us today



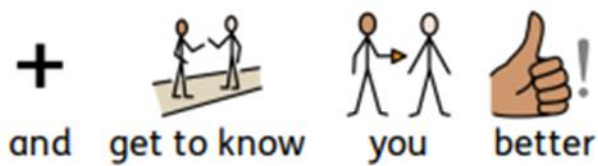
as we share together



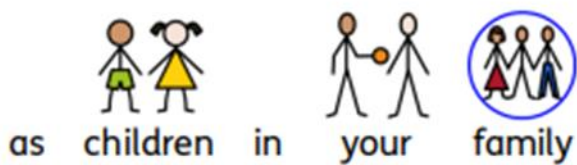
pray together



play together



and get to know you better



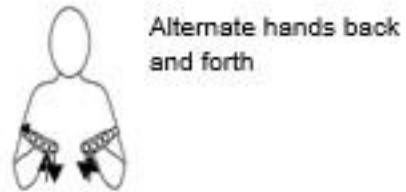
as children in your family



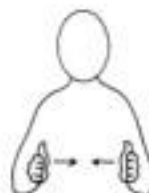
Amen



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



Alternate hands back and forth





Mandy Groce

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