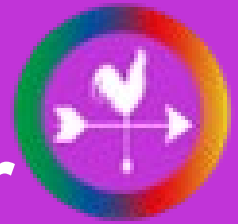




Faith Adventures for Children Together



*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 8: 1-11 – Wrongdoings

Theme: When we are forgiven by God, we are changed – but remember that others are forgiven by God too

Contents:

Introduction	1
Together	1
Experience	2
Explore	3
Express	5
Handouts	8

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

John 8: 1-11

We continue our look at the theme of 'change' with this passage from the Good News according to John (Ch8 vv1-11).

We are focussing on forgiveness and how forgiving someone, and being forgiven by someone, changes everyone involved - just as the act that requires forgiveness changed those involved.

It is worth remembering that being forgiven doesn't mean that the original act didn't happen, forgiving doesn't mean you are getting a free pass to continue doing what you were doing, it is about accepting that something happened but agreeing to move on – on the understanding that change will happen as a result ("You can go now, but don't sin again.")

If someone has hurt you in some way, forgiving them doesn't mean you have to be friends with them – it means that you will not be nasty or spiteful back.

There are a number of potential triggers while exploring this story with children.

- They might be feeling guilty about something they have done
- They may be feeling angry or hurt about something that has been done to them
- They may have seen/heard something that they consider wrong but are powerless to do anything about – including family relationships.

It is important that we acknowledge feelings of hurt, guilt and anger and remind ourselves that Jesus says he won't judge us and will forgive us – and we should always try and be like Jesus.

If, as a result of conversations with children, you hear or learn about something that gives you cause for concern for the safety and welfare of a child, make sure that you speak to your church Safeguarding Officer (or Synod Safeguarding Officer).



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 – Whodunnit

Nobody is perfect except Jesus. This game is intended to help children understand that everyone does wrong things at some time or another.

Depending on the age of the group and their confidence with each other, you may get all the children to do the writing part of this game or it may be wiser for it to be just the leaders. Give each person a piece of paper and they should write on it something naughty they did at some time in their lives (remind leaders that they will be owning up to these things so to be judicious in what they write!). The pieces of paper should be folded up and put in a container. A leader should then pull one piece of paper out of the hat and read what it says. The children then have to try and guess which person in the group wrote that confession.

Online game - True confessions

Each member of the group (or just the leaders – see above) states two “confessions” – one should be something they have done and one should be made up. The rest of the group have to vote and agree on which they think is the true confession. You can adapt it so that they can question the person.



Experience

For this story we recommend using the Easy to Read version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+8%3A+1-11&version=ERV>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Bible Kids: <https://youtu.be/cHcLWuApkug>

Over fives: iBelieveBible https://youtu.be/i3Esj_1EPu4

Songs to support the story

Under fives: Forgive one another – Bible Talk for Kids https://youtu.be/oBrqvjY6_KU

Over fives: You forgive me by Lifetree Kids <https://youtu.be/LO-2fm7IKcU>

Older: Forgiveness by Matthew West <https://youtu.be/h1Lu5udXEZI>

Explore

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

A way to explore the story

Don't hold a grudge

Use this game illustration to explore the idea of holding a grudge, and how it effects the grudge holder.

You will need A4 sheets of paper with a 'wrongdoing' written on each. Make some 'wrongdoings' bigger than others, e.g. told a lie, called me a name, didn't play with me, hit me and so on. Fold them in half so they cannot be read.

Have some activities in the room that they enjoy doing, e.g. colouring, getting a snack, games etc.

Put the group into pairs, one member of the pair being A and the other being B.

Explain to the group that A has done or said something that upset B and it's written on this piece of paper. Hand out the folded papers to B and tell them not to open it until the end.

B must hold the piece of paper on A's back all the time and never let it go.

Now A and B can have 10 mins to go and do whatever they would like in the room. But remember B must continue to hold the paper against the back of A and not let it slip.

Allow 10 mins or so for the group to go and do some activities.

When the time is up, explain that B can now read the paper.

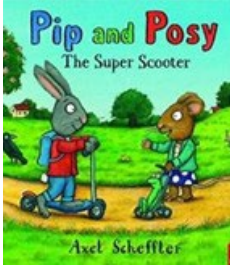
Ask the following questions to encourage a conversation about holding grudges and forgiveness.

- Did you all enjoy your activities or snack? Who found it easier? Why couldn't B always go and do what they wanted? (because they were too busy holding the paper against the back of A)
- Who was most affected by the task, A or B?
- What could this activity show us about holding grudges against people?
- What else are you left wondering about?



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.



'Pip and Posy – The Super Scooter' by Axel Scheffler

Read by Barnes Children's Literature Festival <https://youtu.be/74PzrHtaeSg>

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

- The passage mentioned Jesus writing in the sand twice. I wonder what he might have written?
- What does forgiving mean? When is it hard to forgive?
- I wonder how we can make it easier for other people to change or to say sorry?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder how easy it is to change?
- I wonder if you've ever been able to forgive someone and not hold a grudge? What is that like?

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:

- Sand/ flour/ salt on a tray or box – use the sand box to show some finger writing and wipe it out and begin again. (in the story Jesus wrote in the sand twice, talk to the children about what he wrote)
- Rubber – the woman had done something wrong, but it was rubbed out so she could have a fresh start
- Something with stains on or that is damaged and repaired – we all make mistakes but how can we change and be better just like the stain can be made different (see the creative response)
- A Spinner (to enable choices) – we all can change and we can choose how we respond to Jesus' question
- 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?

Sand tray prayers

When we are forgiven by God, we are changed. Jesus in the story was showing everyone that they could be forgiving. When Jesus taught us to pray, he said, "Forgive others as I have forgiven you."

It is not always easy to say sorry and it can be hard to forgive others for what they have done to you, but we can ask God to help us.

Spread some sand into a tray and smooth the surface. Draw a line in the sand across the centre of the tray. Above the line write 'sorry' and talk to God about the things you want to say sorry for. Then, on the other side of the line, write 'forgive' and ask God to help you forgive others.

There may be a particular person who you would like to pray for, someone you have hurt or someone who has hurt you. Write their initial in the sand.

Take some time to be quiet with God as you look at the sand. When you are ready, slowly smooth out the sand, knowing God's forgiveness and love.

Dear God

**Thank you for seeing me as I can be.
Please help me to forgive others
and to know that I am forgiven.
Help me to grow into the person you
know I can become.**

Amen



As you do this activity it might be helpful to play some gentle music.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9DU26kNvmM> Be still and Know by Scripture Lullabies

Spoken prayer

The Makaton sign for sorry is to form a fist and make a small circling movement with it over the centre of your chest. The group could do this when they say "I am sorry". If the group find it difficult to anticipate when the "I am sorry" line comes, they could repeat that line after the person leading the prayer. Remember it is always better if a child is willing to read the main part of the spoken prayer instead of an adult always taking the lead.

For sad silences
And unkind words
For broken promises
And mean names.

I am sorry

For shouting out
And angry whispers
For things thrown
And mess left.

I am sorry



Forgiven and changed
I'm ready to start again
With you.
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.

Re-creation images

When we are forgiven, we are changed and our lives become more beautiful. This does not always mean that our wrongdoings no longer leave a scar – they may have affected us and others – but we are changed and God will encourage us not to make the same mistakes again. This craft is a good starting point for a discussion about this.



You will need:

Some different pieces of paper with stains or rips or holes in (coffee cup marks, spills etc)
Colouring pens / gel pens / crayons and collage materials

What you do:

Give each child a damaged piece of paper and ask them to create it into something new. This might involve decorating around the hole to make it beautiful, or creating the cup stain into a new image.

Encourage them to get as creative as possible, using pens or other collage materials.

You could even frame your new artwork to be displayed as a reminder.

Can you really totally get rid of a wrong?

This activity gives children the chance to explore and play with the idea of sin being removed as part of ours and God's forgiveness, whilst also providing opportunities to discuss the scars or consequences of sin left on ourselves and others.

Set up two tables. One with the lots of different things such as paper, an egg, old CDs, plastic, banana, soft balls anything you think might be a good surface to write on.

Encourage everyone to choose one item and write a word or collection of words on their chosen item that are an example of things we do or say that are wrong. You might want to talk through the examples first. You could provide a collection of various writing implements such as a sharpie, a pencil, paint, gel pens etc.

Lead into the next part by asking who thinks they could easily remove the written words completely. Ask them what they might need to do this.

On the second table is a collection of cleaning products, e.g. tippex, spray bleach, wet wipes, tissues, a bowl of soapy water, scrubbers, lemon juice, and so on (with younger children, remember to supervise the activity and ensure substances are not put in mouths or near eyes or noses or on skin). Encourage them to be as inventive as possible.

Give the children a set amount of time to see how well they can now try to get the items clean again.



After the set time (probably around 10 mins), stop the group and ask them to show how they got on. Have a go at checking whether the words have completely vanished, for example if someone used paper, rubbing a pencil over might show where the words were. Or holding the item under a bright light or up to the window might show a faint mark left.

Discuss how difficult it was to totally remove the words and what might have made the difference. You could lead into some of the wondering questions or follow where the conversation naturally flows.

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:

- We may not know what Jesus wrote in the sand, but we do know that he took time before responding to the people who were trying to trick him. This week, try to take time to think before you speak or before you judge other people. Try to see things from their viewpoint. Maybe count to ten or doodle with your finger on a flat surface for a moment while you think of a way to respond that is wise and kind and forgiving.
 - The start of a new school year is a good time for change and for 'new year resolutions'. Perhaps there is something you'd like to do differently this year: maybe to be a bit more kind to someone in your class, to say sorry when you've done something wrong, to be a more willing helper, even something like saving your pocket money instead of spending it straight away. Ask God to help you as you try to change.
-

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story from **John's Gospel** with us.

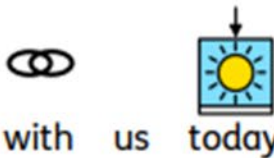
Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **The Conversion of Saul**

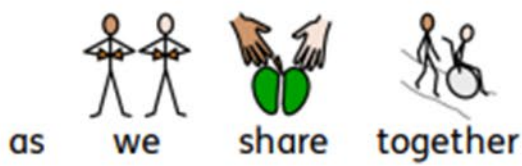




Jesus our friend,



be with us today



as we share together



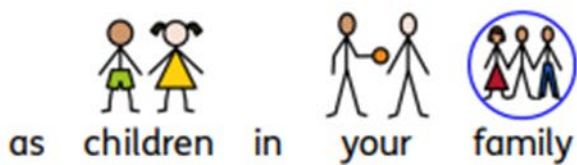
pray together



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

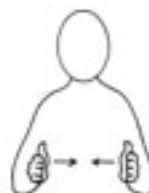




Illustration by lambsongs.co.nz via freebibleimages.org

