



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 139 – Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Theme: God made us and knows us and loves us through and through

Contents:

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

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

Psalm 139. We have looked at this Psalm before (February 2024, week 2) when we looked at ‘God made me and knows me’ where lots of the discussion covered layers of our identity. This time, through this much loved psalm, we are focussing on verses 1-6 and 14 and the focus is that God has made us, knows us and loves us through and through.

N.B. This passage looks at how God is watching and loving. God is not watching for all the things we do or get wrong; this isn’t about being judged, but watched over, helped and deeply loved.

There are some things to consider for your group, children (and adults) who have a physical or intellectual disability or difference, who have body image issues, who have genetic uncertainty or inherited features, who have poor mental health, who are unable to live with their birth parents, who may not identify with the gender they were born with or the assumptions people make about their gender or sexuality or identity. No matter what your feelings about their situation, any sense of ‘not being comfortable in their own skin’ will make this a challenging psalm and a challenging session. Almost all children and young people, and most adults too, will have something about them that they wish was different, but each one of us is loved by God.

Allow children through this session to be the unique, loved individuals that they are, ensuring the safety and well-being of all present. Let them explore how this psalm impacts each of them allowing the knowledge of being loved through and through, to the core of their being.



Warning about risk of spiritual abuse – God is not watching to catch you out or punish you and it is important that you do not let this be the message children or young people take away from this session. It certainly should not be used as a means of controlling behaviour.

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 – Do you know me?

The Psalmist says that God knows everything about us – because God made us and watches over us with love. Nobody knows more about us than God. How well do other people know us? These games might help us to find out!

Game 1: Two Truths and a Lie (leaders can take part, too)

Resources needed: none

Sitting in a circle, participants take it in turns to share three facts about themselves. Two of the facts are true – but one is a lie. The other participants must decide which ones they



think are true and which is the lie. The lies can be big (e.g. I have a pet elephant) or small (e.g. I am left-handed).

You can make it a competition if you want to by awarding points for guessing the correct lie, or concealing it.

Game 2: What's changed?

Resources needed: none

Sitting in a circle, one participant is chosen to be the 'spotter'. They leave the room (accompanied by a leader) and, while they are gone, the rest of the group make a subtle change – it could be swapping seats with someone, or giving a jumper to somebody else to wear.

The 'spotter' comes back into the room and has to see if they can work out what has changed.

Game 3: Who am I?

Resources needed: none

A leader turns their back to the group. One by one, members of the group come up to stand a few feet behind the leader and say "hello".

The leader must try and guess who it was who spoke.

Experience

For this story we recommend using the EasyEnglish Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20139%3A%201-6%2C%2014&version=EASY>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Psalm 139:7 by listener kids - https://youtu.be/Y__2z4DnCo4

Five to elevens: Psalm 139 by kidswise

https://youtu.be/AsB24oSbpyM?list=PLvEb8AA7B8J-aX_c6kl8WpgzvJzc0phpr

Songs to support the story

Under fives: Everywhere I go – by Kids spring

https://youtu.be/f_tS-g6z7I0

Five to elevens: Let's praise the Lord the Lord by Lifekids

Taking it in turns to stand up and sit down for the praise and hallelujahs

<https://youtu.be/-udkH0s8I7s>

Explore

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

A new way to explore the passage



Exploring the Psalm using the whoosh storytelling method to enter into the psalm and act it out rather than just listen.

Read a section of the bible passage and point to a couple of children to come into the circle to act it out. When they have completed that you say *whoosh* and the children return to the circle. Moving around the circle get the next couple of children into the circle to act out the next part of the psalm that you read. Say *whoosh* and the children return to the circle. Go around the circle encouraging everyone to take part. Be aware that some might not want to and let them know that that is OK. As part of the action, you can get some of the children to be sound effects too.

If you are a small group, you might want get everyone to take part at the same time or encourage the leaders to be part of the circle too.

Gather your group into a circle and explain what is going to happen. Then read the psalm slowly:

Lord, you look deep inside me, and you know all about me. You know when I sit down, and you know when I get up.

Whoosh

Even when you are far away, you understand what I am thinking about. You see me when I go out, and you see me when I stay at home.

Whoosh

You know everything that I do! Yes Lord, before I open my mouth to speak, you know what I will say.

Whoosh

You are all around me, in front of me and behind me. You put your hand on me to help me.

Whoosh

You know so much about me, it is wonderful. I cannot understand it. My thoughts cannot reach as high as that!

Whoosh

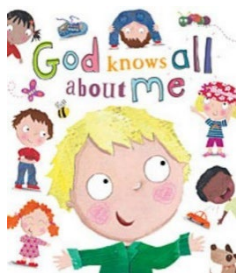
I thank you for the wonderful way that you have made me. Everything that you do is wonderful I know it is true.

Whoosh

Easy English Bible Psalm 139: 1-6, 14

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.



'God knows all about me' by Thomas Nelson Publishers

<https://youtu.be/nfv8ucV5zYg?si=BU2FCwa7IHsROu3>

This is a very young book (board book) but is a good stimulus for conversation and may cause some laughter.

You could get the group to come up with new verses.

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

- I wonder if God ever blinks or sleeps?
- I wonder what we look like to God?
- I wonder who you know best, and why you know them so well?
- What is your favourite part of this psalm and why?
- What sort of things do you find hard to understand? What things do you understand that other people don't? Does it matter if there are things that are too hard to understand?
- How does it make you feel to know that God is with you all the time?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder if you have ever felt God with you?
- I wonder what makes God smile or laugh when God looks at you?

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:

- Mirror – talk about God caring for us, look in the mirror and say God cares for me.
- Magnifying glass – look through a magnifying glass, we can see so much more. God sees every part of us.
- A voice recording – God knows our voice even from far away.
- Heart – God loves all of us, in every way.
- A wiggly person – let's all praise our wonderful God who loves us.
- 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 Thumb prayer using Psalm 139

A creative prayer using thumbs.

Dear God

You know me through and through!

You care about each thing I do.

(Right thumb up! Point to thumb with left hand forefinger)



You are with me when I sleep at night and play each day.
 You hear the things I think and say.
(Put left hand to your eye, then your ear during the lines. Thumb 'lies down', then gets up and wiggles.)

You keep me safe wherever I go.
 There's nothing about me you don't know.
(Wrap left hand gently round thumb and move round in big circle together)

You put me together inside my mum.
 You knew me before I came out of her tum.
(Bend thumb over into palm of hand and stroke gently with left forefinger, wrap the thumb with your fingers)

You made just as I am God, I don't know how.
 I just say 'Wow, God!' Amen
(Slowly unwrap thumb and finish with thumb up again!)

(Adapted from an Idea from BRF)

Spoken prayer

God, who made me from my very beginning,

You know me and love me (Point up with forefinger (you), point to forehead with thumb 'know' and hug self 'love')

Whether I'm sitting or standing or lying down,

You know me and love me (Point up with forefinger (you), point to forehead with thumb 'know' and hug self 'love')

Whether I'm in or out and about,

You know me and love me (Point up with forefinger (you), point to forehead with thumb 'know' and hug self 'love')

Whether I'm busy doing things or resting,

You know me and love me (Point up with forefinger (you), point to forehead with thumb 'know' and hug self 'love')

Whether I'm at my very best or my very worst, or somewhere in between,

You know me and love me (Point up with forefinger (you), point to forehead with thumb 'know' and hug self 'love')

Thank you, God, for loving 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.

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.

Fingerprint psalm



You will need:

- Paints
- Black pen
- Paper
- Copy of Psalm 139: 1-6, 14

What you do:

Read Psalm 139 and decide which images from it, could be created into a visual version of the psalm.

Create your images using fingerprint people, to recreate Psalm 139.

Our image used the phrases:

1. You know when I sit down, and you know when I get up.
2. You see me when I go out, and you see me when I stay at home.
3. You know everything that I do! Before I open my mouth to speak, you know what I will say.
4. You are all around me, in front of me and behind me.

Dancing person

Being known and loved by God who cares about us more than we can ever imagine, that's something to make us feel like dancing! We can't create anything as amazing as God has, but we can make something to remind us that being with God can fill us with joy.

You will need:

- one 'base' strip of thin card
- four more strips of thin card
- glue

What you do:

Take two of the strips of card and make them into two tube shapes by overlapping the ends and gluing in place.

Fold each end of one of the other strips of card to make 'feet' which you glue to the base so that the strip of card makes an arch. This will be your dancing person's legs.

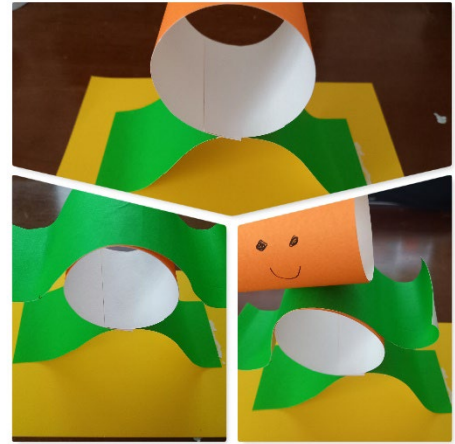
Glue one of the tubes on the top of the arch with the hole towards you to form the stomach.



Take the other strip of card. Use the blade of a pair of scissors to rub along the middle of the strip of card to make it bend slightly, then do the same in the opposite direction at each end of the strip to make the ends bend slightly upwards. Another way to do this might be to roll the sections of the card gently. You should end up with a wavy piece of card. Stick this on top of the tube so that the tube is central and the two ends of the card stick out like arms, upturned at the ends where the hands would be.

Draw a face on the final cube and fasten it centrally on top of the arms.

Pick up the base strip and wobble it to see your person dance. Maybe you could even film your person dancing in different places – all the places God might be with you!



Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

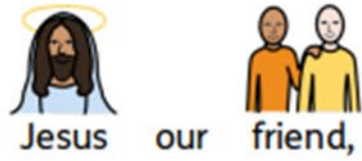
What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- Keep a journal and write or draw each time you feel God near you this week.
 - How well do you know God? Can you think of five words you might use to describe God?
-

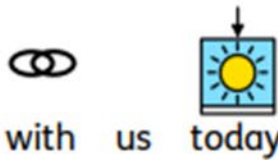
We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **Psalm 139** with us.

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

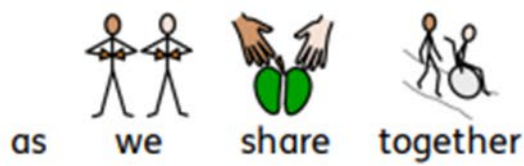
Why not have a look at next week's resource on **Matthew 10:30**



Jesus our friend,



be with us today



as we share together



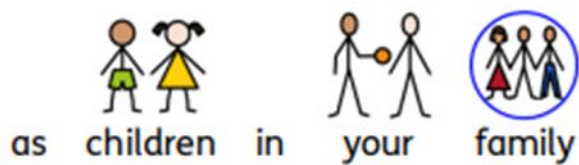
pray together



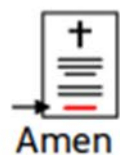
play together



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



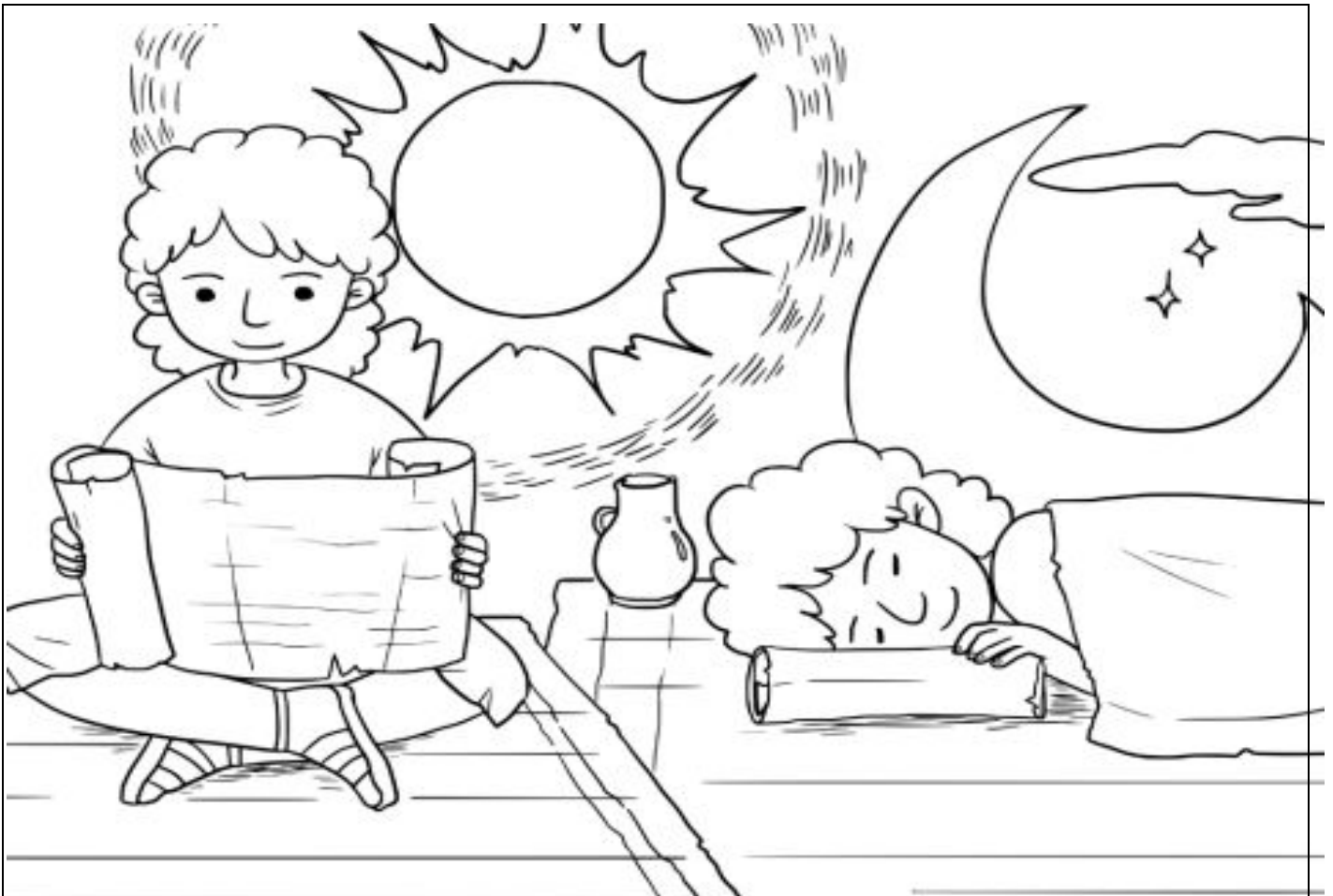


Illustration by commontoall.com via freebibleimages.com

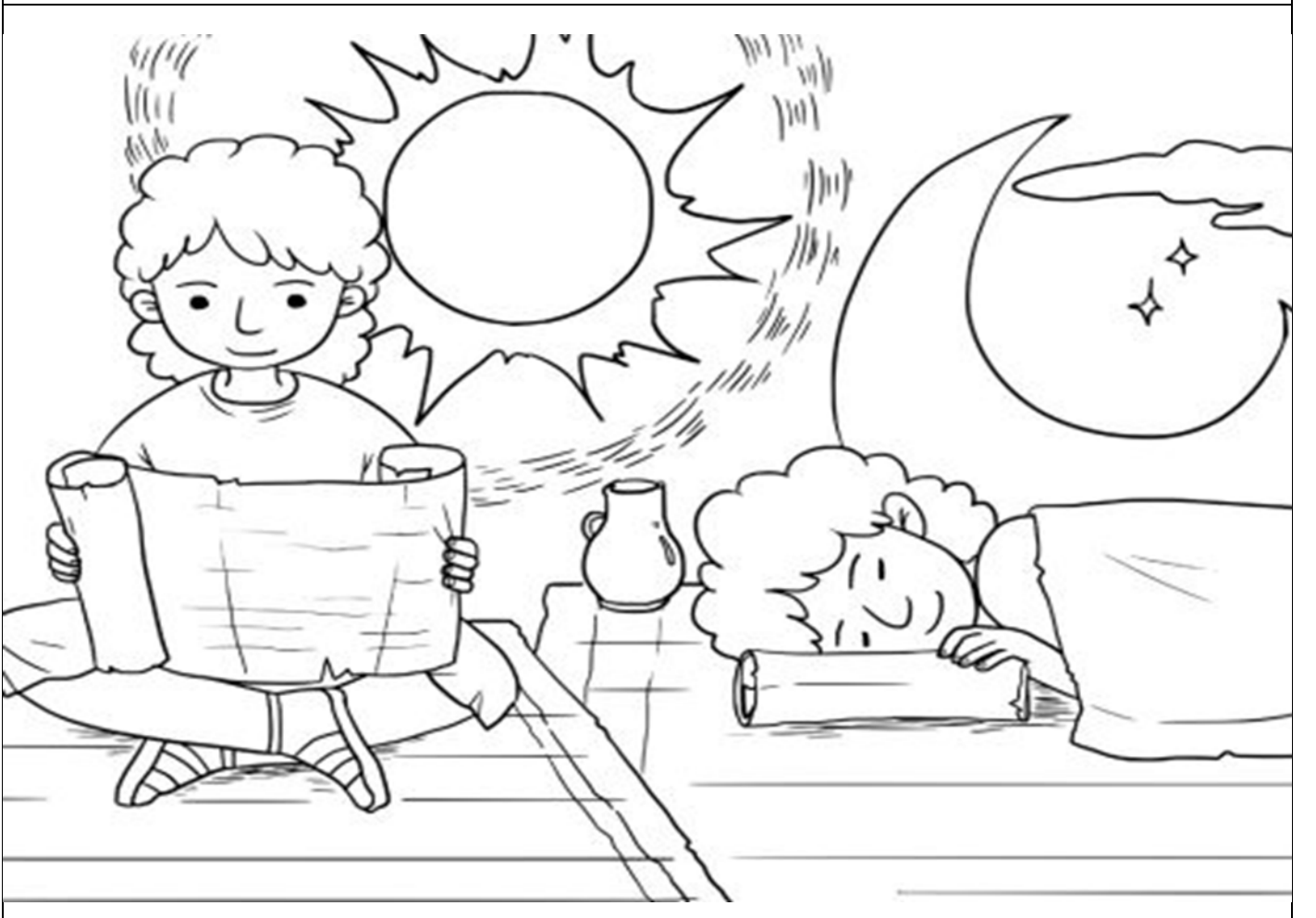




Illustration by commontoall.com via freebibleimages.com

