



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 100

Theme: God as our influencer

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

Psalms

Our theme for this month is 'influencers' and Psalm 100 allows us to explore the theme from the both the point of view of the influencer and the influenced.

The psalmist (we don't know who wrote it) invites us to give thanks and praise to God – particularly when we enter the gates of God's temple: "Thank him as you go through the gates into his temple. Praise him as you stand in his temple yards." (The temple was a series of connected buildings on four sides – with a courtyard in the middle. Only priests and other temple officials were allowed to go into the temple building itself – which is why the psalmist invited us to 'stand in the temple yards' (courtyard).

Being an influencer is now a full-time job for some people. For others it is something that comes about because of who they are or what they do (sports and entertainment stars, in particular). We must always remember that we, too, may have influence on others – our family and friends. But we are not always influenced by people, we may be influenced by the books we read, the television and YouTube programmes we watch and many companies spend a great deal of money on advertising in order to influence us to buy their products.

Influence can be good or bad. We can choose whether or not to be influenced. If we don't have an element of choice, then we are not being influenced, we are being forced or directed.



The **P**salms want to influence us to praise God, to turn to God when making decisions and when needing guidance – the greatest influencer of all. We are given free will so that we can choose whether to be influenced by God or not. How does God's influence affect your life?

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 - Influencers

Have two leaders or children (depending on the size of your group) to be the influencers and give them a subject. They should say in a few words, why their choice is the best and then loudly encourage the rest of the group to join them.

Ask the rest of the group to choose which one they like the best within 10 seconds and run to stand next to the influencer.

You could give them a chance to change their mind, depending on how well the influencers are at getting them to change position.



Here are some suggestions to get you going.

Road blocks or Minecraft
Jelly babies or chocolate
Beach or woods
Running or cycling
Inside or outside

Alternative game

You will need:

- Square dice with colours
- Coloured squares to match the dice



What you do:

Place lines of coloured squares on the floor, each line consisting of six squares. One person is to roll the die, the person stood at the line of the colour on the die moves forward one, keep playing until someone gets to the end. Talk about what influenced the play, was it the die or the roller or something else?

Experience

For this story we recommend using the Easy English Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20100&version=EASY>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Watoto children's lesson – Psalm 100 by Doreen Nkwenge

<https://youtu.be/QQIP4nGK-1I?si=YZ9IToOUaoFqJUFk>

Over fives: Psalm 100 for kids by life's goodness

<https://youtu.be/vnyMR5xY9tg?si=nOK33lyLRFUZSu3n>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: Make a joyful noise unto the Lord (Psalm 100) by Apple Crisol

<https://youtu.be/lvviEkh4T98?si=dkxYZMoRw7uqqnO7>

Five to elevens: Make a joyful noise – psalm 100 by The Rizers

https://youtu.be/5JFyrS_MRFI?si=Oi4RiYAdfnDx5m_s

Explore

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

A new way to explore the passage

Start by reading or watching the modern parable together.

Then read the psalm and talk about how just like in the 'Thank you letters' book the psalm is a letter too, a letter to us describing how the writer is feeling about God. The girl in the book goes further than just thanking people for her birthday gifts but writes letters to her friends and people in the town describing how she feels about them and the goodness in



them. She then received many letters back telling her how much she was loved and appreciated.

Imagine you have just read the psalm as a letter to you describing God, what would you put in a thank you letter addressed to God? What might you want God to know? Perhaps you have questions for God, perhaps you have wonderful things you want to say. The letter could be decorated with pictures. These letters are not to share with the group but are a letter between God and the writer. To symbolise giving it to God perhaps they could be put in an envelope, sealed and then placed somewhere which signifies prayer. You may have a prayer area, room or table in your building. You could create one with a cross and leave the letters there. Consider holding onto them after the session and giving them back to the children at some point as a reminder of their feelings towards God.

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.



The thank you letter by Jane Cabrera

https://youtu.be/c_m_7XSNXBg?si=QsgMfVMzel7U1WfG

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

- I wonder who influences us and why?
- What is the difference between good and bad influences?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder what influence God has on us?
- I wonder who we influence?
- What did the writer of Psalm 100 want to influence us to do?

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:

- Adverts – talk about the advert and how it makes us want to get the item.
- Smiley face – talk about how when we smile at people it makes them smile too.
- People – all people can influence us and sometimes we want to listen to what they have to say.
- Hearts – God loves us and wants us to share that with others.
- Magnets – magnets attract things, God attracts us too.
- Thank you, cards – let's all say thank you to God for being our best influencer.
- A tactile cross of wood or fabric (A cross shape reminds us of Jesus. Jesus/God loves us and it's always in the box because Jesus/God always 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 (eg stones, felt, twigs etc)

Express

Praying together: how can you involve the children actively in prayer?

Jenga prayers

We need good influences (and influencers) in our lives to help us stay strong and make the right decisions.

You will need:

Jenga blocks, sticky labels, pens

What you do:

Write the names of some 'good' influencers on sticky labels and attach them to a Jenga block. This might include God, Jesus, teachers, parents, the Bible but might also include items such as love, air, justice, etc.



Assemble a Jenga tower.

Participants are encouraged to remove a block and, if it has a label, to pray for that influencer or influence.

Continue until so many 'good influences' have been removed that the tower collapses.

Spoken prayer

Loving and caring God

'Thank you' (thumbs up) that you are always a good influence on us.

'Thank you' (thumbs up) that you show us the right way to do things.

'Thank you' (thumbs up) that you have given us other people who are good influences on our lives.

Remind us that we need to say 'thank you' (thumbs up) to those who help us be the best person we can be. 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.



Shouting praise poster

You will need:

- A large piece of paper
- Some images or paper to draw profiles on
- Strips of paper
- Colouring pencils or pens



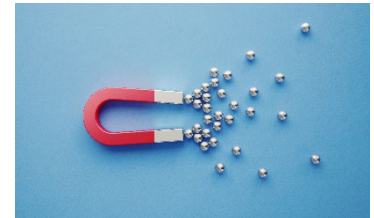
What you do:

Get the children to draw a profile image of self or cut out a profile image from a magazine. Talk about how we can shout praise to God and write the phrases on the strips of paper. Decorate a large piece of paper and then stick the profile and the paper with the shouts of praise onto the paper.

Magnetism

You will need:

- A magnet
- A plastic bottle
- A marker pen
- Some objects like buttons, paperclips, coins, marbles



What you do:

Draw a maze onto the bottle with a marker pen. Drop the coin or ball bearing inside the bottle and use a magnet to guide it through the maze. Try doing the same with your other objects. Which ones work, and why? Try some different maze patterns too. Does this work with all coins?

What things don't get influenced by the magnet and which things are influenced by, attracted to the magnet?

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:

- Make an intentional effort to talk to God before each big decision. Be open to the answer.
 - Talk to someone older or younger than you and ask them how God has influenced their life.
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We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **Psalm 100** with us.

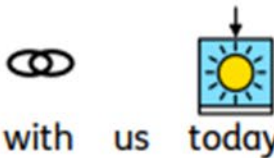
Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing
lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk

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

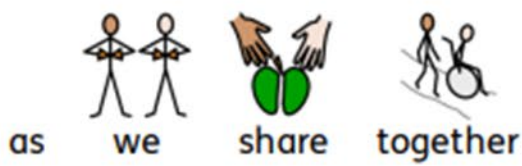




Jesus our friend,



be with us today



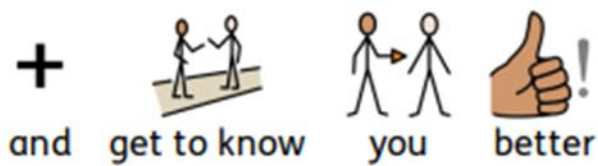
as we share together



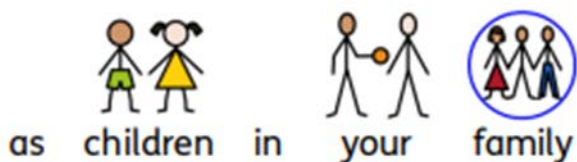
pray together



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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