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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: www.bit.ly/FACT-how-to-sheet

Title: Isaiah 2:1-5

Theme: Where do we find our hope?

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

Over the next four sessions we'll be exploring Advent - in particular the themes represented by the four Advent candles which many churches light at the beginning of services during this season: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

Advent is a time of preparation and patience as we get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. The birth of Our Saviour gives us hope that things can get better; not just for us but for everyone –hope is the first candle we light, and hope is the focus of our first Advent session.

Prophets weren't always known for speaking messages of hope. Very often their messages were about the bad things that would happen if the people they were addressing did not change their ways.

Isaiah (his name means 'Yahweh saves') was prophesying to the people, and rulers, of the Kingdom of Judah, which included the cities of Jerusalem and Hebron. Isaiah is best known for his prophecies about the coming of the Messiah - although there were some 700 years between his prophecies and the birth of Jesus!



The passage we look at today talks of peace. Peace between countries, a time where there is no need for countries to have armies because they are at peace. If you have children or young people in your group who have experienced war, be aware that this might be a trigger for them. There may also be some general anxiety amongst your group about the potential for war in the future. It is worth spending some planning time agreeing how you will deal with these issues should they arise.

We have also included some resources which could be used by whoever is leading the service in your church. This is not a full order of service but, rather, some ideas about specific resources they could use for particular groups (for example: a toddler service, or an outdoor service). Please feel free to share these ideas with your worship leaders and encourage them to look at all the FACT/FAYR resources for inspiration throughout the year.

Together – prayer and games

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



Based on the game Captain's Coming, the instructions are adapted to link with this week's bible passage. Your group walk or jog around the space until they hear an instruction, when they do, they must stop immediately and complete the action. With older groups, you can eliminate the last person to complete the task each time, until you have a winner!

Climb the mountain (Climb the rigging) – jog on the spot, using hands to make a climbing motion

Clean the house (Scrub the decks) – drop to hands and knees, mime scrubbing the floor

Come to the light! (Port/Starboard) – run to the side of the room that the leader points at

Cut the vines (Bombs overhead) – hug knees/tuck themselves into a tight ball

Walk the paths in 2s/3s/4s (Lifeboats) – gather in groups the same as the number called by the leader

Quiet game - What is it?

You will need:

- simple shapes or objects on flashcards (e.g a house, a boat or a flower)
- plain paper
- pens or pencils

What you do:

Split your group into pairs – one person sits on the floor or at a table with the pen and paper, the other stands behind them.

Show one of the pictures to all the participants who are standing. At an agreed signal, all must draw the picture on their seated partner's back – in silence.

The seated partner interprets what they feel by drawing on the paper in front of them.

The first seated player to shout out the correct object gets a point for their team. Everyone stops drawing and gets a fresh piece of paper for the next picture. The team with the most points once all pictures have been drawn are the winners.

The partners can swap after each picture, so each gets a turn at drawing and interpreting.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

For this story we recommend using the Easy English version of the Bible: Isaiah 2:1-5 EASY - Words that cause us to hope in God - Bible Gateway

Where can I find the story online?

This video takes us to the story of the shepherds discovering that Jesus has been born, everyone was hoping for a special King.



Under fives: Jesus is God's plan by Saddleback kids https://youtu.be/_7qV6Ds-fbk?si=JIHm39AfWbhAUPX8

Five to elevens: Isaiah by God's story

https://youtu.be/e-hZA0f0RH8?si=Ou_fMaCjOpTyR-Rf

Songs to support the story

Under fives: Climb up sun shine mountain by Twin sisters https://youtu.be/LhcsvPV-zOQ?si=tdN3Pv-Of3aiyLjr

Five to elevens: Go tell it on the mountain by Lifetree kids https://youtu.be/UVX6to3OZsM?si=uTCseFRZ0MXO7rDQ

Explore – ways into the theme

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

A new way to explore the theme

Begin by talking about Isaiah who gives us words that fill us with hope in God. In the story we hear about things of violence being changed into things which are of more use to us every day.

In Advent we move each week from the dark to the light as we prepare for Jesus' birth. This week we begin thinking about the journey we are starting on, and we begin with the message of Hope.

Together let's build something to represent hope to us.

You will need lots of old household items.

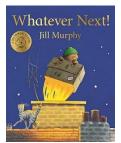
Discuss what hope might mean and what it might look like. Decide on how you can repurpose these items into something which shows hope. It may be that you want to make the word HOPE using the things, or as a seedling bursting through the ground, maybe even a heart with the word hope in the centre.

Display it in church during Advent.

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. If you are to use the modern parable consider buying a copy or borrowing it from the library so children see the actual book and can explore the illustrations more (and support the author).





Whatever next! By Jill Murphy, published in 2019 by Macmillan Children's books.

https://youtu.be/j9k9ibMymXs?si=1VCPQ52lhnydYAqR Leonie's Story Time – Whatever Next by Jill Murphy

This book links with the sense of hope, excitement and anticipation which we find in today's Bible passage.

- If you could go anywhere, where would you go?
- What kind of picnic would you pack if you were travelling to the moon?

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

- I wonder how this made people feel when they heard the message in the Bible story?
- I wonder when the last days are?
- How does God decide who's right?
- How far would you travel to go to worship God?
- I wonder if the Wise ones hadn't paid attention to any previous signs or prophesy?

Wondering: reflect on the theme

- I wonder how hope feels?
- I wonder what you hope for?
- I wonder who you argue with?

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). 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:

- Advent wreath show the children an Advent wreath and explain that we are at the beginning of Advent and that this is week one, maybe light the candle, or show them the lit candle in church.
- A part of a nativity scene (Build or add to it each week to create it) each week build a
 part of the nativity scene. This week add the first part, maybe the wise ones.
- Gardening gloves in the bible story we hear about how God wants us to look after the world. These gloves are used for gardening, looking after creation is one way we can care for the world.
- Table knife (bent) the story tells us that weapons should be changed into something different; this knife could be used to break up the hard earth in a garden.
- Heart this heart represents Gods hope for the world, at Christmas time God sent a baby to bring hope to the world. The baby was called Jesus.
- 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 – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Prayerful activity - Advent candle

During this advent theme we would like you to use one candle with your group. On the candle with a sharpie or with wax pens (if you have them) separate the candle horizontally into four equal sections. Write the words from the top HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE, one word in each of the four sections. During each session of this theme, bearing in mind health and safety hazards, burn one section of the candle as you have your prayer time.





The children could decorate a candle of hope this week, as a reminder to 'live in the light that the Lord gives us'.

You will need:

- white candle
- permanent markers like sharpie pens or similar

What you do:

Encourage those gathered to decorate their candle in ways that remind them of the theme of hope and/or in a way that reminds them to walk in the light of the Lord.

Spoken prayer

The prayer can be read aloud; group members can join in the words in bold. Younger groups may prefer to listen to the whole prayer.

Dear God,
There are too many weapons
And too much fighting,
We pray for peace.

There is too much hunger And not enough sharing, **We pray for justice.**

There is too much frustration But when we're ready to give up; **Please give us hope.**

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.

Hope in cress seeds

You will need:

- Cress seeds
- Paper towel
- Low sided container from soft fruit or takeaway box
- Water

What you do:

Fold the paper towel so that it fits fairly flat at the bottom of your chosen container. Use your fingers or paintbrushes with the water to dampen the tissue. Then sprinkle the cress seeds onto the paper so that the seeds spell out the word HOPE. For younger children you could use plastic or wooden letters to spell the word or write the world in biro and then sprinkle seeds around/over the letters so the unplanted part would read HOPE. Keep damp – but do not over water, also be careful when watering as the seeds move easily.

Discussion prompts:

- How we hope that the seeds grow, how can we help in that?
- That we hope we can see and read the word when the seeds have grown.
- That we hope the cress tastes good when harvested.

Hope banner:

You will need:

- large white area to paint on, this could be the reverse of a roll of wallpaper or a sheet
- paint
- protective sheeting

What you do:

Place the protective sheet on the area you intend to use, outside would be preferable. On top of the protective sheet place your white background, ensuring there is enough protective sheet around it.

Paint the word HOPE onto the white background. Then encourage those gathered to either flick, spray, shake paint over the word hope, with the joyful abandon that HOPE gives us.





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:

- Talk to someone older or younger than you and ask them to tell you what they think it means to walk in the light.
- This week can you act positively in times where you find that difficult? This could bring hope to you and to the lives of others.

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

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

Please join the Faith Adventures Facebook Group bit.ly/FACT FB

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



