



Faith Adventures Youth Resource

Embedded in Faith Adventures: Children Together, this youth resource is intergenerational in nature and designed to foster God-connection in church, home 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/Faith-Adventures-How-To-FAYR.pdf>

Psalm 33: 4-5, 20-22

Theme: Our hope in a living God

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know before we begin?

Psalms

It is suggested that Psalm 33 is a song used at the time of gathering. When God's people brought the fruits of the earth to say thank you to God. However, there are verses in the passage that remind us to worship God in times of plenty and times of struggle. The Psalm reminds us that our hope is found in a caring God not in our situations. The Psalm ends with a reminder to wait for God and rejoice in God and who God is as well as a reminder to keep praying.

The passage offers an opportunity to celebrate that we can have joy and hope going forward, that God is not dead and our hope is in a living God.

Be aware and sensitive that this Psalm isn't suggesting that all is right with the world but about having that HOPE and PEACE amidst all that's going on in the world.

Together

Let's start our time with God and each other well

If used in a mixed-age group, then young people can support younger ones in using the gathering prayer in Faith Adventures: Children Together. If used in a youth group, you could use this opening prayer or encourage young people to open the session with a prayer of their own.

All mighty God,

Be with us as we learn more about you through stories and people in the Bible.

Help us to walk in your way and follow your path.

Be with us as we make decisions that affect our lives, and the lives of those around us.

Amen

In-person and online game

See this week's Faith Adventures : Children Together for suitable games for this theme.

Shield of protection:

As in FACT but they might enjoy the element of a water fight, using water pistols as their weapons.

Experience

Research different versions of this reading on <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-read, The Message, NIRV

Jesus hope of the nations by Brian Doerksen
https://youtu.be/37NYEI07sEI?si=O2V_qO6nJiFd9L27

Look at the lyrics as you listen to this song (included at the end of this resource) and highlight the words which stand out for you. Think about why those words or phrases particularly help you.

Explore

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

A new way to explore the theme

You may wish to use the explore section from this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together to guide your exploration of the theme this week.

Alternatively:

Our hope is in a living God. There are lots of emotions to be found in the Easter story. Recap or re-enact the Easter story with your group and ask them to identify where they hear about hopeful situations. You could do this by splitting the young people into groups and asking them to re-enact a certain part of the Easter story. Then pause for discussion after each group has acted out that part of the story, discuss where/why they can feel hope. You may wish to give permission to enter thoughts from someone else's point of view, so that we can gain deeper discussions without putting them on the spot. If you prefer you can use the story written for you in FACT.

NEXT: Take the discussion further. Hope no matter what. Where feels hope (less) now? What have you seen or heard that does not feel hope filled?

Modern parables

This section includes references to TV programmes, films, books, TED talks, TikTok etc aimed at this age group that will have been widely seen, or where a clip is available to use as a stimulus for discussion. You may also enjoy the picture book recommended for Faith Adventures: Children Together and explore the relevance of the story to the theme of the session in more depth – young people and adults are often well tuned in to the deeper meanings in materials aimed at younger people and the authors are often very aware of the adults reading the books to or with younger ones.

Watch: A new day will come Lord of the rings (Two Towers).
<https://youtu.be/k6C8SX0mWP0?si=K3haNmOFsIX8jrP9>

In this clip we see Frodo and his best friend Sam who have been on their quest for a long time and things are getting difficult. Darkness wants to overcome them, they are in the middle of a battle between good and evil. Frodo is struggling and his best friend reminds him that you always have a choice, to turn round and give up or carry on in the hope that things can be different, things can get better.

Questions for discussion

- Who are the people that encourage you to continue when you want to give up?
- Where do you find your strength and hope in difficult situations?

Talking together: Going deeper

- Where do you feel life is hopeless?
- Where do you need God's hope in your life?
- What does hope feel like? What does joy feel like?

Conversation starters

- I wonder what song brings you joy and hope?
- I wonder how our faith can help us stay hopeful when things feel hard?
- I wonder when we face struggles, whether personal or global, how can faith help us find peace amidst chaos?

Express

How do we respond to what we've discussed and express our faith personally?

Praying together

Respond to the theme by writing or saying a short prayer. Alternatively use the creative prayer from Faith Adventures: Children Together for this session, or use the prayer activity below.

Alternatively light a candle and play some music while you listen and talk to God together.

As this prayer is said could you create your own actions/ movements to reflect the words in red, take a few moments to think before you pray.

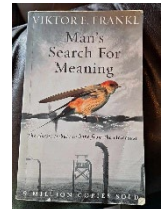
Your word **God** is **true**.
 All you do is right.
 You **God love** what is right and fair.
 Your **love** fills the **earth**.
 So our **hope** is in you.
 You **God** are, our shield to **protect** us.
God, show your **love** to us
 as we put our **hope** in you. Amen

Responding together

This is an opportunity for a social justice challenge, some research, craftivism, or a craft or STEM activity. You may have a specific activity chosen but free choice is also an option. Here are some suggestions for this week's theme. See Faith Adventures: Children Together for a craft and a STEM activity which may also be appropriate. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

Hope in a hopeless situation

Viktor Frankl – a survivor of the concentration camps believed that hope is powerful, that it is a tool that can help people endure pain and survive. He said that people should not lose hope. Frankl believed that people can choose their attitude and hope in any situation.



Encourage the group to look for what appear to be hopeless situations - this could be items on social media, in newspapers, first hand stories or online stories. Look to see where the hope could be found in that story, are there any stories of hope that stand out? Is there a Bible verse that could be found that would help encourage that person who feels they are in a hopeless situation? Use www.biblegateway.co.uk to help in your search.

Challenge

Discipleship doesn't stop when you walk out of the church door – it is a part of everyday life. Take a challenge with you and try to make it part of your week.

You may think of your own suggestion of what you as an individual or a group might do in the coming week in response to what you have explored today? If not here are some suggestions:

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- Use one of the “conversation starter” questions or the question below to talk with someone of a different generation or from a different setting and share your questions, thoughts, insights together. **Where do you put your hope?**
 - Research something suggested by JPIT, [Resources \(jpit.uk\)](http://Resources.jpit.uk) Commitment for Life cfori.co.uk
 - If you can get a copy of Viktor Frankl's book – ‘Man's search for meaning’ it's well worth a read and is only about 100 pages long. Walk around your local area seeing where you can see hope developing in situations and places. Look out for things on notice boards, good news stories and signs of places which are thriving. Thank God each time you see something that has glimpses of hope.
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Jesus, hope of the nations

Jesus, comfort for all who mourn
 You are the source of heaven's hope on earth
 Jesus, light in the darkness
 Jesus, truth in each circumstance
 You are the source of heaven's light on earth

In history, You lived and died,
 You broke the chains, You rose to life

You are the hope, living in us
 You are the Rock, in whom we trust
 You are the light, shining for all the world to see
 You rose from the dead, conquering fear
 Our Prince of Peace, drawing us near
 Jesus our hope, living for all who will receive
 Lord we believe

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Thank you for exploring the **Psalm** passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing children.youth@urc.org.uk or by sharing it on https://bit.ly/FACT_FB