



# 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>

## Galatians 4:4 God's plan comes together

Theme: It's Christmas! – Jesus is born – Halleluia!

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

This session is full of ways to celebrate and explore the birth of Jesus. You might use it at Christmas or perhaps some other time during Advent. With this in mind we offer a mix of celebration as well as focusing on exploring the story.

The passage we have chosen (especially in the version we have recommended) reminds us that a special baby is born. Heaven has come to earth. Jesus is human as well as divine (God). Let's celebrate and wonder again at this miracle.

## 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 game – Create the nativity**

You will need a selection of different bits and pieces, napkins, foil, papers, toilet rolls, feathers, sweets and chocolates, Christmas crackers and so on.



Split the group into smaller teams or play as individuals. You have three minutes to create your own nativity. Don't forget the baby. Showcase each nativity giving it a score out of 10, perhaps there is somewhere it could go in the Church or in your building.

**Alternative game – See this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together for suitable games for this theme.**

## Experience

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

**Watch:** The Bible Project: The Birth of Jesus

[https://youtu.be/\\_OLezoUvOEQ?si=I1KnLjlaGyRQ-8UF](https://youtu.be/_OLezoUvOEQ?si=I1KnLjlaGyRQ-8UF)

### **Questions for discussion**

- What links does this video make between the past events in the Bible and the events of the nativity?
- Are any parts of this account unfamiliar to you?
- Does this account match the usual retellings of the nativity story? What differences can you spot? Why do you think we view it differently sometimes?
- What do you think it means when it says "Jesus is here to bring salvation by turning our world order upside down"? You might want to think about what salvation might mean and what world order might mean in this context. What do you understand by it? Do you agree?

## Explore

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

### **A new way to explore the theme**

*You will need:*

- A nativity
- Christmas crackers
- Small Christmas tree
- Tinsel
- Star
- Gift



- Something to represent Christmas food (e.g. box of mince pies, Christmas cake)
- A Father Christmas
- Any other Christmas items you may have

Place the nativity on the table, remembering how Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birth.

Go through the other Christmas items you have with you. Have an open discussion about each one (briefly) and how they relate to Christmas. Place them in front of the nativity as you go. By the time you have finished discussing the items the nativity should be hidden.

As you finish, look at the scene you have created and think about how it might relate to the way Christmas is celebrated these days. How important is the nativity at Christmas – does it matter? What can we do to change this scene? Do we need to get rid of things or is there a way we can live with them and Jesus together?

God wants us to have fun and celebrate but we musn't lose sight of the real reason for Christmas, that God came to earth in the form of Jesus to be our friend and our saviour. How can we keep that aspect of Christmas central to our celebrations?

### 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.

The story of Jesus: teen edition – The birth of a king by Zondervan  
[https://youtu.be/hn5V-hNDH\\_4?si=KvC\\_LnRgKFUXqLMV](https://youtu.be/hn5V-hNDH_4?si=KvC_LnRgKFUXqLMV)

- What sort of emotions did this video provoke in you?
- How would you retell the story?

### Talking together: Going deeper

- Why did Jesus have to be born through a human woman – why not just appear?
- Why is there nothing in the Bible about Jesus as a child apart from him in the temple? What difference would it make to us today if we'd heard more about his childhood in the Bible?

### Conversation starters

- I wonder what it was like for Jesus growing up and starting to realise who he really was – I wonder how old he was when he knew he was God's son?
- I wonder why Jesus was born into a Jewish family?

## Express

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

### Praying together

**Prayer** 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.

#### Candle 4 – Jesus is born

Dear God,  
This candle we light  
is for Jesus, Your precious Son,  
tiny and fragile, born among us.  
Help us to show the love  
that Jesus shines into the world.  
As we come to the place of your birth  
in wonder and in joy  
may our hearts be filled with Love.  
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.

#### Crackers

*You will need:*

- Toilet roll tubes
- A4 sized pieces of coloured wrapping paper or tissue paper
- Sweets to go inside the cracker
- Paper to write verse on or have it pre-printed
- Curly wrapping ribbon



*What you do:*

Write or print out the verse from Galatians on a piece of paper. Along with the verse put a sweet into the toilet roll tube.

Cut zig zags out on both short ends of the A4 piece of wrapping paper or tissue paper. Roll the filled toilet roll tube in the tissue paper with the zig zags at each end.

Tie each end next to the tube with some curly wrapping ribbon.

You could also decorate the outside with some sticky stars or other decorations if you are using plain tissue paper.

### Baby/food bank

We read in the Bible that the Wise Men (or Magi, or Kings!) brought gifts for the newly born baby. They brought gold, frankincense and myrrh. I wonder if those are gifts that Mary and Joseph wanted? We give gifts to babies, too.

Sometimes, parents don't have enough money to buy things that their baby needs – let alone gifts.

Spend some time planning ways in which you/ your church could help those families. Consider having a collection/ fund raising event and buying some really useful gifts for babies that you can donate to your local food bank – they don't just accept food! Or perhaps there is a baby bank near you, you could donate to?

Maybe you could ask your local foodbank/ baby bank what they would like to be able to offer – they might suggest things like nappies, talcum powder and baby shampoo.

Share the list with other people in your church so that, if they want, they can make donations, too. <https://littlevillagehq.org/uk-baby-banks/>

### 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. **When did you first hear the Christmas story?**
  - Research something suggested by JPIT, [Resources \(jpit.uk\)](https://resources.jpit.uk) Commitment for Life [cforl.co.uk](https://cforl.co.uk)
  - The Christmas story has been shared millions of times, the greatest most important news shared. Some of our news is shared through the royal mail. Think of a way to thank the person who delivers your mail this Christmas.
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Thank you for exploring the **Galatians** passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing [children.youth@urc.org.uk](mailto:children.youth@urc.org.uk) or by sharing it on [https://bit.ly/FACT\\_FB](https://bit.ly/FACT_FB)