

# 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>

## John 1: 1-5, 14, 16-18 – In the beginning

**Theme:** Grace is the word – God in Jesus brought us grace which changes everything

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

This passage, although being one that is familiar to many people, is still confusing. It is the sort of passage that we sometimes get in the Bible that we brush over and hope nobody asks us to explain – because we find it difficult!

‘The Word’ can mean many different things – and it all depends on context. We talk about Ministers of Word and Sacraments, we talk of the scriptures as being ‘the word of God’ and, in this passage, we seem to have John describing Jesus, the Son of God, as ‘The Word’.

It’s confusing. It confuses us – so it’s probably going to confuse your group, too. It’s important to allow your group to say they don’t understand and to admit that we are confused, too. It is an opportunity for us to not have all the answers and invite the group to go on a journey of discovery together.

If, at the end of the session, everyone is still a bit confused – that’s fine, too!

Is this an Advent/Christmas reading? It is often used as such but, in truth, it’s a session you can keep for any time of the year. There are echoes of the creation stories when God talked things into existing (God SAID let there be light...)

We are focussing on the concept of Grace. Grace is something that is given without it necessarily being deserved. It is a gift that is given to everyone. The birth of Jesus, of God coming and living alongside us, amongst us, one of us is a gift of Grace.



It redefines our relationship with God, and Jesus allows us to understand God differently. We can realise that we no longer need to earn God's love – God has, and will, always love us. Grace, indeed.

## 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 alternative games

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

The FACT games this issue are all about times when you should be 'out' but can be saved in some way: the runaround game Stuck in the Mud and also a game of snakes and ladders where the opponant decides whether or not to make you go down a snake and whether to allow you to go up a ladder.

While you might enjoy either of these games in your older group, you could also take on the challenge of inventing your own game or adapting another where the rules can be changed to show grace to someone who is not doing well.

## 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:** Let Your Light Shine – Skit Guys <https://youtu.be/n4RkIxZVfAA>

- I wonder what Christmas decoration you could leave out to remind you of Christmas all year round?

# Explore

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

## A new way to explore the theme

Use a big printout of the passage – you may want a few copies depending on the size of your group. Lay the passage on a table top so that everyone can see it. Make sure there is space in the margins for drawing and between the lines for annotation.

As you wonder about the passage, talk about the connections you can make. What are the bits that you like the best? The bits you maybe don't understand? Are there any bits we could miss out altogether and still have enough of the story?

Write, draw or colour on the sheet to identify the things which stand out to you most.

Maybe highlight words you like in yellow. What do you like about them?

Does anything surprise you? Draw a surprised emoji by it. Why is it surprising?

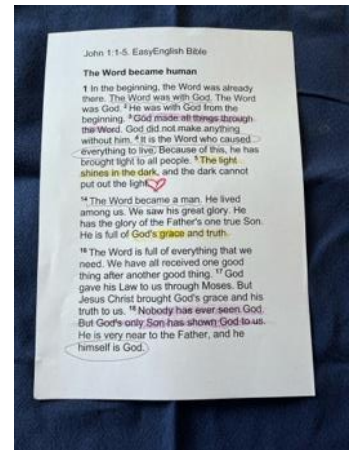
Circle anything you do not understand. How could you find out more? Do any of your group have a different understanding than you?

Underline things you think are important or mark them with an exclamation mark.

Highlight in pink in any part that you may want to remember.

If you have any other thoughts which come to mind when reading or hearing this passage, draw them in the margin or write/design words to remind you. Share your thoughts with each other or just quietly with God.

Draw heart shapes next to words which you want to keep in your heart.



## 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.

<https://youtu.be/nT-Jcgasftl?si=wyTjndmS8b5HqBz> What is the grace of God - 412teens

- Do you feel able to briefly describe what God's grace is? What would you say it is?
- Do you think you have felt God's grace? When might you have felt that?

## Talking together: Going deeper

- What do you think is meant when John says "The word"? Why do you think he chose to write this passage the way he did?

- If Jesus was there at the very beginning of creation, why wasn't he sent sooner?
- I wonder how easy it is to show someone grace? I wonder how you might do that? I wonder why you might do that?
- I wonder if grace means God never gets angry?
- Does grace mean we can keep doing what we've always done and it doesn't matter?
- What is the difference between the relationship between God and humans in the Old Testament and between God and humans in the New Testament? How did Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection change things?

### Conversation starters

- If you were to choose one word to describe God/Jesus, what word would it be?
- What do you think grace means?
- What difference does knowing Jesus make to you?

## 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.

### Grace Prayer

*You will need:*

- Small slips of different coloured paper to write on
- Pens or other writing materials
- Glue
- A large sheet of cardboard or paper



On separate pieces of coloured paper, write or draw times/ things that you may have done or attitudes you might display which might displease God and which you want to say sorry for. Examples might be "I lied about breaking mum's vase" or "ingratitude", "arrogance" etc.

When ready, glue the pieces of paper, with the writing side down, on the board to create the word Grace (see illustration). Place the bits of paper upside down to keep each person's words private.

As you do so the following song could be played in the background.

<https://youtu.be/3MZgXXUW08Q?si=npP8Gfue4n0s0a60> – Amazing grace (My chains are gone) by Chris Tomlin.

Then pray the following:

God of grace,  
 We know we do things we shouldn't, things which upset you.  
 Yet you show us such grace, even when it isn't deserved.



Help us to start each day anew,  
remembering that, although your grace is freely given to us,  
we are called to live in a way that pleases you.  
Amen

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## 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.

### Acts of kindness

Imagine walking down a busy high street. There are cars parked all along it with parking meters. You notice that someone's parking meter has just run out and they are in danger of getting a parking fine. You have no idea why they have not returned to their car yet. Perhaps the friend they were meeting turned up late? Maybe they have just lost track of time? Perhaps they got lost?

What do you do? You can ignore it – you don't know whose car it is so it doesn't affect you. Or, maybe, in a random act of kindness, you can put some money in the meter just to give them a few more minutes to get back. That is Grace.

Now imagine the car is yours – you're stressed out because what you were doing has taken longer than you thought and you know that the meter is running out. You are flustered and worried and really can't afford a parking ticket. You hurry back to your car fearing the worst – only to find that some stranger has dropped some money into the meter. How would you feel?

After all, Jesus said "Do to others what you would want them to do to you."

Watch this video and then discuss:

What other random acts of kindness you can you think of and what other random acts of kindness you could do?

Life vest – Kindness boomerang -

[https://youtu.be/nwAYpLVyeFU?si=7wcGI0dWcFf\\_EL0G](https://youtu.be/nwAYpLVyeFU?si=7wcGI0dWcFf_EL0G)

You can get some other ideas by visiting [www.randomactsofkindness.org](http://www.randomactsofkindness.org)

### 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:

- 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. **What difference does the message of Christmas make to you?**
- Research something suggested by JPIT, [Resources \(jpit.uk\)](http://Resources(jpit.uk)) Commitment for Life [cforl.co.uk](http://cforl.co.uk)

- As you pack away the Christmas decorations, think about how you will keep remembering and sharing the Good News of Christmas? Is there something you could do this week to keep that message alive?
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Thank you for exploring the **John** 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)

