

Faith Adventures Youth Resource



Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

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: www.bit.ly/How-To-FAYR

Title: Exodus 18: 17–24

Theme: Whose wisdom do you listen to and why?

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

Welcome to the final session on the theme 'Wise Words'. In this session we will be exploring wise words we hear from others, looking at the story of Moses and Jethro in Exodus 18.

We will explore who it is we listen to – and why. How do we discern if someone is wise, and worth paying attention to? We can get advice from many places nowadays – social media is full of people offering their take on situations and making suggestions for how we should live our lives. Is it always good advice?

Advice is not an order – we have the agency to decide whether or not to follow advice we have been given. Sometimes different people can give us different advice – what might make us choose to follow someone's advice?

Moses chose to follow Jethro's advice – possibly because Jethro had experience of the situation Moses was facing. Does this mean his advice was worth more? Moses also knew that Jethro knew him well and was concerned about him – does a personal connection make us more, or less, likely to listen to someone?

Together – prayer and games

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

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.

Alternatively, you may join with the widgit prayer found in Faith Adventures: Children Together or else the Lord's Prayer found at the end of this session.

Active game – Jethro says

This game is similar to the game 'Simon says' in that one person gives instructions and the rest of the group has to copy them. In this game, rather than Simon, it'll be 'Jethro says'. The instructions need to start with Jethro says – but while they are giving instructions a small group of others shout out words to try to distract them with the aim that they make mistakes. If you have a small group, the leaders could be the distracting ones, or one person could take on that role moving round the group.

Quieter game – Build a Lego castle

Two people will be giving instructions as to how to build a house. One person will be giving good instructions while the other will be giving "not-so-good instructions"; however, the person building the house will not know which one is giving good instructions. They must decide which instruction sounds wise and follow those instructions.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

This link takes you to Exodus 18: 17 – 24 Contemporary English version

<https://bit.ly/ExoduS18>

You may wish to research different versions of this reading on www.biblegateway.com
Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-read, The Message, NIRV

¹³ The next morning Moses sat down at the place where he decided legal cases for the people, and everyone crowded around him until evening. ¹⁴ Jethro saw how much Moses had

to do for the people, and he asked, “Why are you the only judge? Why do you let these people crowd around you from morning till evening?”

¹⁵ Moses answered, “Because they come here to find out what God wants them to do. ¹⁶ They bring their complaints to me, and I make decisions on the basis of God's laws.”

¹⁷ Jethro replied:

That isn't the best way to do it. ¹⁸ You and the people who come to you will soon be worn out. The job is too much for one person; you can't do it alone. ¹⁹ God will help you if you follow my advice. You should be the one to speak to God for the people, ²⁰ and you should teach them God's laws and show them what they must do to live right.

²¹ You will need to appoint some competent leaders who respect God and are trustworthy and honest. Then put them over groups of 10, 50, 100, and 1,000. ²² These judges can handle the ordinary cases and bring the more difficult ones to you. Having them to share the load will make your work easier. ²³ This is the way God wants it done. You won't be under nearly as much stress, and everyone else will return home feeling satisfied.

²⁴ Moses followed Jethro's advice.

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Watch: Jethro's wise council by Matthew the Christian
<https://youtu.be/OMjW3sPNGqM?si=Fqph45ytZD-hj3MX>

“Share the load” this video shows the pressure that Moses was under and how this was recognised by people who loved and cared for him.

Questions for discussion:

- Can you remember a time when you were given bad advice and what the outcome was? Can you think of a time when you gave good advice and what the outcome was?

Listen: Songs Of Wisdom - His grace will carry you | Official Lyric Video
<https://youtu.be/kaqd4-5mhcc?si=O4i-N2PlitAENtKC>

This isn't a song about wise words; these are wise words about God's love for you. A beautiful, reflective song with lyrics that encourage, lift and inspire.

Explore

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

A new way to explore the theme

This is a new way to explore the Bible passage and the theme for this week.

Alternatively, 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.

Have some fun together joining in with some short 'minute to win it' games as you explore who we listen to and why.

Explain that the passage tells us about Moses, who takes the advice offered to him by his father-in-law, Jethro. Jethro watched Moses and could see how he could do things better. That is exactly what we will see in this activity. Those present will be able to offer advice while someone is attempting the challenges, but whose advice will they follow and why?

Explain that you have provided six activities and the challenge is that the children must do each activity, working as a group. They will only have around a minute to complete each challenge but can try more than once. This will allow time for each person to give advice on how they think the challenge could be won. During each activity just one person will attempt to do it with the others giving them advice. Remind the players that it's just for fun.

Here are six 'minute to win it' challenges but you may know of others, make sure that there is variety in the challenges to allow everyone to work to their strengths.

Sticky Marbles/ping pong – a game of skill and patience

What you'll need: Marbles/ping pong balls, double-sided tape.

Players are given several marbles/ping pong balls and a strip of double-sided tape is put at the end of a table. The child must roll the marbles/ping pong balls so that they stop and stick on the tape.

Trembling Towers – a game for a steady hand

What you'll need: Paper plates, plastic cups.

Players alternate stacking paper plates and plastic cups to create the tallest tower possible within a minute. If the tower collapses, they have to start again!

Keep It Up – a game for those with good breath control

What you'll need: Feathers/balloon.

Players must keep a feather/balloon in the air by blowing on it. The goal is to move the feather/balloon from one end of the room to the other without letting it touch the ground.

No Hands – a game for those with good fine motor skills

What you'll need: Wrapped sweets or a present, oven gloves.

Players must unwrap a sweet or present while wearing a pair of oven gloves. It's harder than it looks.

Post It Face – a game in two halves for someone with good balance

What you'll need: Post-It notes.

Players must stick as many Post-It notes to their face as possible within one minute. Part two is to shake their head to shake them all off in a minute

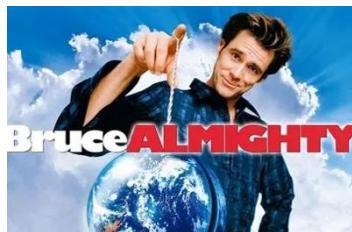
Count me in – a game for someone good with numbers

What you'll need: M&Ms and bowls marked with numbers.

Line up the bowls marked with different numbers (not in numerical order), with an empty bowl at the end. You need at least 15 bowls. The child must put the right amount of M&Ms in each bowl (using a spoon) and then in the final bowl put the amount of all the bowls added up.

After the games have a chat about how it went. Who found their challenge easy/hard? Did it help having others giving them advice? What made them listen to certain people? Was it easier to do a task or to offer advice when observing a task? Use the wondering questions to explore the passage and theme further.

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.



Bruce Almighty:

https://youtu.be/j_gE4XmEfqA?si=0E6dniWDMZO87Pdd

“People want me to do everything for them. But what they don't realize is THEY have the power. You want to see a miracle, son? Be the miracle.” This is the clip where God gives Bruce some good advice.

- I wonder how we can be the miracle. What advice is God giving to us today?

Group discussion

- What wisdom would you say to the leaders of today?
- What's the difference between advice and instruction?
- Is it easy to listen to someone who starts by saying, “This is the word of God”?

Personal reflection

- I wonder if there were times where you wish you had someone to give you advice.
- I wonder if you had a time when you were given good advice that didn't work.
- I wonder if Moses listened to Jethro because his words came from God or because he is speaking from experience.

Express – prayer and creative activities

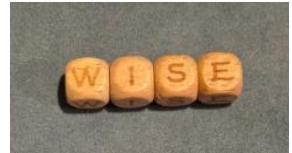
Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Praying together

Prayers 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.

Words

Using magnetic letters, Scrabble letters or pen and paper write an acrostic prayer. Use the words 'wise words' written vertically in the margin, then write words or your chosen phrase, using the letters to begin each line.



Spoken prayer

Loving and wise God,
 thank you for the people who speak wisdom into our lives –
 friends who encourage us,
 leaders who guide us,
 and family who want the best for us.
 Thank you for the example of Moses,
 who listened when Jethro gave him wise advice.

Help us become people who can tell the difference
 between voices that lead us closer to you
 and voices that pull us away.
 Give us the courage to pause, to think,
 and to test what we hear against your truth.
 When we face choices or pressure,
 help us choose the path that brings life, justice, and hope.

And here's our challenge, God:
 teach us not just to *hear* wisdom,
 but to *follow* it –
 even when it's hard,
 even when it's unpopular,
 even when foolish voices are louder.

Make us wise, steady, and brave.
 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. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

Biscuit advice

You will need:

- digestive biscuits
- icing sugar and writing icing

What you do:

Make up some icing to spread on the digestive. Decorate your biscuit using writing icing with either a heart or a word and give to someone who gives good advice.



Cookie making tips

Everyone has a particular way of making cookies, a special tweak or secret ingredient. Find out from those in the group, the leaders and others in the church what their top tip is. Perhaps the tips could be collated and put in the church notices or on the church notice board.



Judge or magistrate

Take some time to research what the difference is between a judge and a magistrate. I wonder which role you would prefer to take on.



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 and insights together. **If you could share only one piece of advice with another what would it be?**
- Research something suggested by JPIT Resources (jpit.uk), or *Commitment for Life* (cforl.co.uk)
- Be intentional this week in trying to listen to the wise words around you. Try to be aware of fake news and bad advice. If you are unsure, ask God to guide you.

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

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk or by sharing it on www.bit.ly/FACT_Fb



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

+ and forgive us our sins As we forgive those who sin against us

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory

For ever and ever. Amen

