



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>

Genesis 6-11-7.10 – Noah's surprising challenge

Theme: God sometimes asks us to do surprising things

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

The book of Genesis describes the creation of the world as well as the exploits of some of the first characters of the Bible. People such as Moses, who is thought to have written the book of Genesis – although not all scholars agree. Opinion varies as to the nature of this book – whether it recounts fact or story – and all views should be respected. The important thing for this session is to focus on the theme, which is that God sometimes asks us to do surprising things but always has a plan, even if we don't understand it.

The story of Noah is one with lots of surprises in, including a God who asks Noah to build an ark and then plans to flood the rest of the human race. Today's session is about exploring this and other surprises held within the story. The story does bring up a lot of questions – don't fall into the trap of thinking you have to answer them all – it is ok, indeed valuable, to wonder alone and with others and explore the story afresh for yourself.

In wondering about the story and the God we meet in this story, it is important to recognise that God doesn't change but there is a change in the way the Old Testament God and the New Testament God interacted with the people. It is important to remember and to highlight to the group that this is a pre-Jesus God, that Jesus coming changed the way our relationship with God works.



Together

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

If used in a mixed-age group, 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 young people could 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.

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: Noah's Ark animation by Revelation TV
<https://youtu.be/tmTKQ6oqgIA?si=0YEMEXK0FljsMwq6>

Evan Almighty https://youtu.be/CKKV_IAPVso?si=9fOyYrGvc4bySRJ_ and
https://youtu.be/8AEcqhuvpWE?si=_YEQCedCRsKQpdIG

Questions for discussion

- Does anything surprise you about the building of the Ark?
- Why do you think the instructions for building the Ark were so detailed?

Explore

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

A new way to explore the theme - Hot Air Balloon Debate

In this activity, the group imagine that they are in a hot air balloon which is rapidly falling because it is too heavy. The only way to survive is to reduce the weight, by throwing people out of the balloon. Each participant should choose to be a different character (eg historic figure, celebrity) and they must each give a short speech in character (30 seconds) explaining why they should stay in the balloon. The group votes to decide who should be thrown out of the balloon. (You could also use objects instead of people.) Alternatively, you



will find an activity in Faith Adventures: Children Together which you may find more suitable.

Discuss why God might have chosen Noah and his family as the people to save from the flood. Why might God have chosen to save two of some creatures and more of others?

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.

Talking together: Going deeper

- What questions does the story of Noah leave you with, and does that matter?
- What sort of things might God ask of us today? How ready are we to say yes to them?
- How has God surprised you in the past?
- God's rainbow was a promise that God would not destroy the world in a flood again. Do you think natural disasters are caused by God?

Conversation starters

- What is God's response to violence and corruption in the world today?
- How important is it to you that species do not become extinct? Is this more important for some than others? For example, do you feel differently about giant pandas than you do about slugs?

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.

Spoken Prayer

Sometimes we know that things need to change before they can be better

You ask us to be the change that we want to see

Reach out, surprising God, reach out to us so that we can make a difference to your creation

Pick us to be on your team

Remind us that you are with us at all times

Increase our faith in you so that we can share your love with others

Surprise us with your constant love and support

Every day.

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.

Research – Seed Banks

Spend a bit of time researching "Seed bank" initiatives. These projects have been described by scientists as a "Noah's Ark for plants." Search for information about the "Svalbard Seed Vault" in the arctic or the "Millenium Seed Bank" at Kew Gardens. Here are some suggested links to start of this research:

- Millenium Seed Bank <https://www.kew.org/read-and-watch/millennium-seed-bank-behind-the-scenes>
- The Svalbard Seed Vault - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7NwXMo6wr8&t=1s>
- Exploring the arctics global seed vault - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B95Pem9XW7k>

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. **If you could only save ten creatures on the Ark, what would you choose and why?**
- Research something suggested by JPIT [Resources \(jpit.uk\)](http://jpit.uk) or Commitment For Life cforl.co.uk
- Plan a pleasant surprise for someone this week – something small but unexpected

Thank you for exploring the **Genesis** 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