



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 14: 1-2 – In my Father's house

Theme: How do we make our lives a home for God ?

Theme: There's a place for everyone in God's home

Contents:

Introduction	1
Together	2
Experience	2
Explore	2
Express	5

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

John: Our theme for this month is 'home', and in today's passage Jesus gives us a tantalising glimpse of what God's home in Heaven might look like.

Of course, we don't get too much information and are left to draw our own conclusions. In this metaphorical (imagined) vision of heaven, various translations offer us the idea that God's house has many rooms, mansions (can a mansion fit inside a house?) or, in our recommended translation, dwelling places.

There may be those in your group who don't have stable living accommodation so you will need to be aware of their feelings and understandings of what 'house' and 'home' might mean as you explore this passage.

Is a dwelling place different from a house? We sometimes say "let me dwell on that" – meaning to think about something. Is a dwelling place somewhere to be, to live, to stay? All three?

The passage suggests that there *is* room for everyone – is that the same as '*a* room for everyone'? Different people have different needs, will the dwelling places that Jesus says he will prepare for us in his Father's house be tailor-made to fit our individual needs? Will they be the height of luxury with jacuzzis, a big television and a comfy couch? Or will they just have the basics of a bed and a chair? Will we have to share – and with whom would we be happy to share? Let your imaginations run wild as you explore this passage together.

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 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: House of the Lord – Phil Wickham

<https://youtu.be/lqfV0zeEvT8?si=eSAh-0p020HhJJ6x>

Questions for discussion

Watch the YouTube video and listen to the lyrics of the song.

- What do the lyrics tell you about God's house?
- What does the lyric '*There's joy in the house of the Lord today*' mean to you? How would you define joy?

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:

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is an ancient method of praying with a Bible passage. Each person will need a printed copy of the Bible passage.

You are going to spend time listening deeply and intently to what God might have to say to you through the passage—almost like having a deep conversation with a friend. You begin by reading the passage from John 14:1-2 several times slowly, leaving room for the Holy Spirit to call your attention to a word, phrase, or line that God wants you to hear. Individuals can each do this quietly for themselves or one person could read it and the others could listen, preferably having a different person read it each time. Then you take time to think about the word or words that your attention is drawn to, holding them in your mind and considering what God is saying to you.

You can respond to those words, by drawing or writing as a prayer. Then sit and reflect on your response and what God is saying to you, stilling yourself and listening for God's response. (You probably will not actually hear a voice but an image or words may pop into your minds which could be a response).

Although Lectio Divina always begins with reading, often progressing naturally through the phases, it is ok to repeat a phase of the process again. You might read the passage and have an immediate reaction, then you might pause and think about the words more and find your mind drifting so you might go back and re-read it a few times. After a while, you might move into reflecting, but it is ok if you don't - the main thing is to dwell on the words.

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.

This is a clip from a series called 'The Good Place'.

<https://youtu.be/NbWhYpjQnsc?si=DI12OUaSyOwZL3iT>

In this scene, we see Eleanor arrive in 'The Good Place' after dying and she is given the tour of her house. The idea is that everyone in the good place is given a house that is perfect for them, designed with them in mind. Only there has been a mix up and Eleanor's house isn't exactly what she would choose.

- If God was preparing a place for you in heaven that was perfect for you, what would it be like?
- What do you think Jesus meant when he said, 'I go to prepare a place for you?'

Talking together: Going deeper

- We can't know for sure what heaven is like but what do you think it might be like?
- If you were planning a sleepover for a special friend, how might you 'prepare a place' for them in your home?
- Can you believe in Jesus without believing in God? (And vice versa)
- Do you think it is more important to focus on what God's kingdom in heaven might be like or to do what you can towards establishing God's kingdom on earth here and now? What might that kingdom look like?

Conversation starters

- I wonder what you would desperately want in your room and why?
- What would be your one essential item to take with you?
- What one luxury item, book, piece of music, food item would you take with 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.

Dear God

In your house there are many rooms:

A room to be still and to listen;
Help us to listen for you and hear your voice.

A room to dance and sing and rejoice;
Help us to dance with joy and sing your praise.

A room to remember the needs of others;
We pray for all those who don't have a roof over their heads.

A room for conversation and kindness, to welcome visitors and to make friendships;
Open the rooms of our hearts so that we may be people of welcome and friendship.

A room where troubles and fears and tears can be shared;
Please help us *Pause here for silent prayer.*

A room that is big enough for everyone;
to bring their dreams and to share their gifts.

In your house there are many rooms. **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.

Made with you in mind

See FACT for an activity which involves planning and making a gift with a specific person in mind. It could be a friend or member of your family (you may be using this resource around Fathers' Day, for example), it could be a member of the church congregation that you know might really appreciate an unexpected gift, it could be a homeless person or a new mum in the premature baby ward or refugee who has just moved into your area.

Build a house together

See FACT for an activity which involves designing your own place in heaven and making a model of it in a small box, then the members of the group all putting their boxes into one big box. If the big box is big enough, why not encourage the whole church to add their 'rooms' to the box or even think of people on the margins who might not feel the church has a place for them – there's a special place in God's heart and home for these people (Do you know the story of Jesus that tells us so?) so maybe you could design a room for them to go in your heavenly mansion.

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 do you believe happens when you die?**
- Research something suggested by JPIT, [Resources \(jpit.uk\)](https://jpit.uk) Commitment For Life cforl.co.uk
- Find out more about homelessness and the charities that support people who find themselves without a dwelling place.

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 or by sharing it on https://bit.ly/FACT_FB

