

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>

Acts 4: 32-37

Theme: God blesses us when we share with others.

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

Acts: There's a bit of a shift in this week's material. Whilst we're still looking at the theme of 'home', we are moving away from looking at home as a physical space, and looking at the way people behave and respond to each other that might make us think of a place or situation as 'homey'.

In the passage in Acts 4, Luke tells us about how the early Christians cared for one another. We hear how those who had more than they needed shared it with those who didn't have enough. People sold houses and lands to raise money for their friends and neighbours ensuring that everybody's needs were met. We learn that God blesses those who are generous with what they have.

There is, of course, a balance to be made between sharing what you have and giving everything away. Whilst Jesus tells the rich young man that he must give away everything he owns (Mark 10:17-22) the early Christians were a bit more pragmatic. They raised money, or shared what they had, to make sure that everyone had what they needed – and that is not the same as making sure everyone had what they wanted.

The passage also shows us just how welcoming, and widespread; this early community of Christians was – we learn that Joseph was from Cyprus and was a Levite (Levites had special roles in the Temple). What communities are your group part of (family, school, town, church, etc.)? Are those communities like the early church described in the passage from Acts?

What might your group think about the inequality of wealth in our own society? We know that the UK has 171 billionaires (to help explain the difference between a million and a billion: 1 million seconds is about 12 days, 1 billion seconds is about 32 years) and yet 12 million people, including 3.6 million children, live in 'absolute poverty' in the UK (March 2024 [300,000 more UK children fell into absolute poverty at height of cost of living crisis | Poverty | The Guardian](#))

How can you be generous if you don't have anything? We can encourage those in our group to think about sharing time that they have, or knowledge or wisdom that they have. Sharing a smile or a joke with someone is also a generous act.

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 :

Hold on Loosely. Really Really Loosely. (Acts 4:32-37) – Matt Whitman (15:39)

https://youtu.be/z2SfZosVtvQ?si=vB3KN_EAeJC7yNi4

or

Family Devotion – Adam Bode (2:22)

<https://youtu.be/V-k0BTzELOo?si=sy6jkMDfVO5Od8kk>

Or

Sing through the Bible – They Shared Everything They Had (3:28)

<https://youtu.be/-7ccmFVVYYk?si=8YNFSgx4QsZP1afA>

- How important is your stuff to you? What's most important and what would you find particularly difficult to share?
- Why do you think that the early church felt confident to share amongst each other?

- Do you think living like this is practical in today's world? Is it desirable? What are your reasons for your viewpoint?

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:

To explore the idea further, let's look at how the world's resources are shared. Look at the three maps attached at the end of this document. These maps depict the unequal distribution/access to water, food and shelter around the world. What do you notice about these maps? Are there any similarities and differences? Why do you think distribution/access is unequal around the world. What can/should be done about it, if anything? What is it like where you live?

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.

Vilia's story

Vilia lives with her husband and seven children in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. During Haiti's biggest earthquake for more than a hundred years their house was destroyed and they were left homeless. Imagine that. No house. No possessions. Just the clothes on their backs. Christian Aid's partner KORAL reached out to help. They built Vilia and her family a new home – safe, stable and strong enough to stand up to natural disasters like earthquakes. In fact, it was so strong that when Hurricane Matthew struck in 2016, her house was the only thing left standing in the area.

When her neighbours started arriving in wet clothes, she gave them dry ones. She and her family slept on chairs so more people could fit in. In the morning, she cooked for all 54 of her guests like it was the last Bed & Breakfast at the end of the world.

A simple act of generosity and hospitality that saved lives.

Listen to her story here:

<https://youtu.be/WH1AjYwJwHA?si=kHY2XBUzB0kWKHW>

Conversation starters

- What would you have done if you were Vilia?
- What acts of hospitality and generosity have you seen recently? When have you been hospitable and generous?

Talking together: Going deeper – thinking of Vilias story and the Bible reading,

- What do you see in the world that isn't shared fairly?
- What does it mean to give everything away?
- How does God bless us when we share?
- What are the positives and negatives of sharing what you have?

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.

Sharing Gods love

This activity will help you to pray for those we want to share Gods love with.

You will need:

- some strips of kitchen paper
- water soluble pens
- a small glass with about an inch of water in it

On the strips of paper, about two inches from the bottom, draw a heart and above the heart write the initials or draw the face of someone you want to know God's love. Put the end of the strip in the water and pray that God will help you to show that person that you love them and God loves them.

Watch as the water slowly climbs up the paper and the ink in the heart spreads out to cover and absorb the initials. This is a symbol of how you want your love and God's love to reach out to that person. You could play some reflective music while you watch the hearts dissolve into the water.



A great song for this creative prayer is Graham Kendrick's, A little bit of love.

<https://youtu.be/auwgDr2BA7E>

Spoken prayer

Generous God

I don't need the latest game console, but I want it

I don't need the latest mobile phone, but I want it

Help me to see the difference between things that I need and things that I want.

I don't need to share what I have with others, but I want to.



With your love in my heart fill me with your spirit of generosity
So that I will help make my community, and your world,
a fairer place for everybody. **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.

<https://www.itsnicethat.com/news/maisie-benson-holly-kielty-think-food-bank-stickers-illustration-271020>

Food stickers

Foodbanks are a common sight now in our churches, supermarkets and community buildings. They shouldn't be needed in the world's 6th largest economy – but they are.

They provide a way for people who have enough to share with people who don't have enough. Sometimes, though, when we get to the checkout and pay for our food we see the baskets for foodbank donations and realise that, although we meant to get something for the foodbank, we forgot.

A group of young people in Exeter realised this whilst on work experience in Sainsbury's Supermarket. And they had an idea: [Sainsbury's Labels Signposting 'Foodbank-Friendly' Items To Be Rolled Out Across UK | HuffPost UK Life \(huffingtonpost.co.uk\)](#)

A group of Liverpool and Everton supporters on Merseyside got together to form 'Fans Supporting Foodbanks'. They encourage football fans who are coming to watch a match at Anfield or Goodison Park to bring one item to donate to the foodbank which is then distributed to people in need across the city. The scheme has developed across the UK and many local football clubs, in all the leagues, now have 'fans supporting foodbanks' schemes. [Fans Supporting Foodbanks - Wikipedia](#)

Is there something you could do to ensure that donations to foodbanks are maintained or increased?

Why not have a go at creating your own food stickers? A local supermarket might be happy for them to be stuck on certain foods in their shop?

What you need:
white labels
felt tips and nice biro

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:

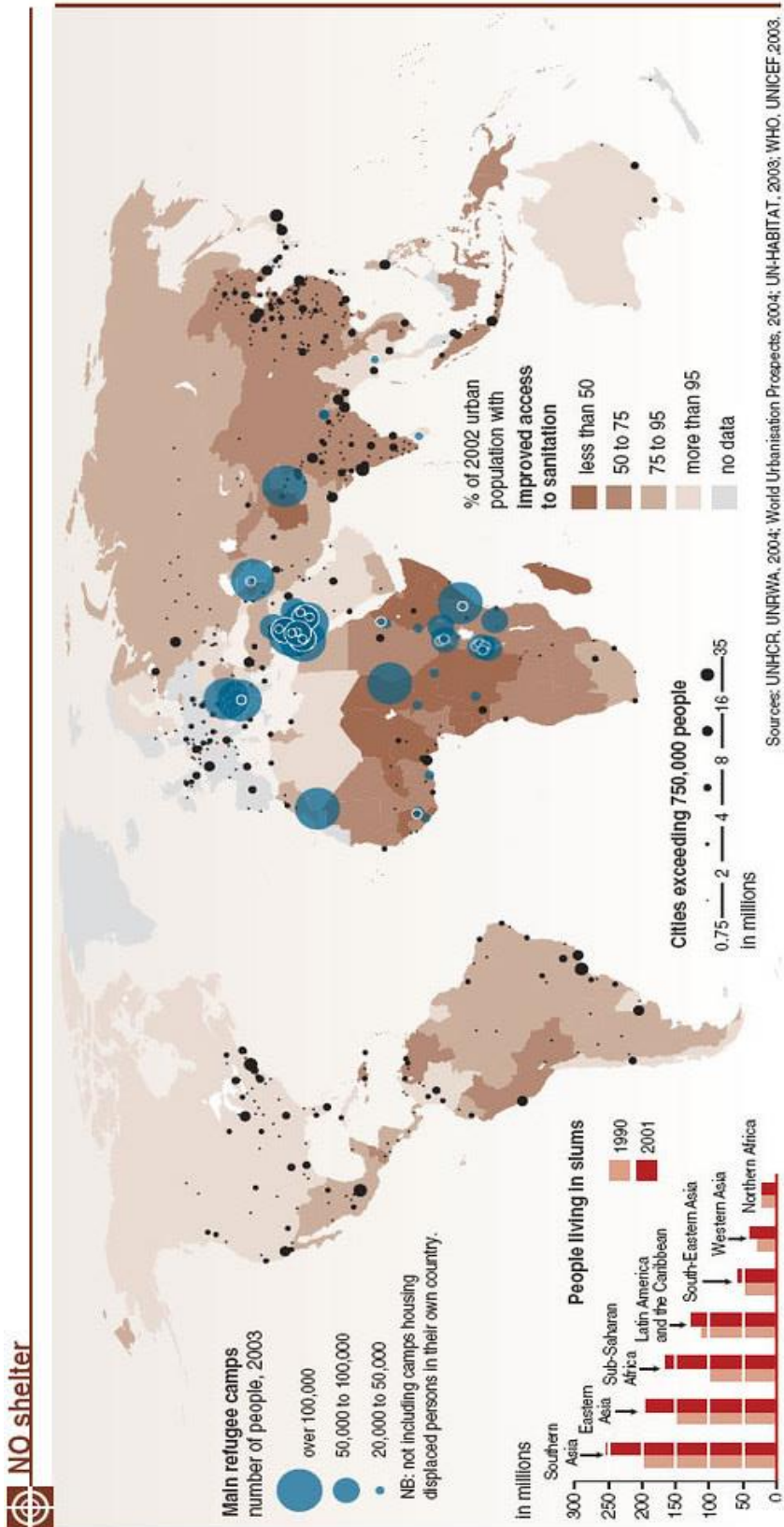
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- Use one of the “conversation starter” questions or the question below to talk with someone of a different generation or from a different setting and share your questions, thoughts, insights together. **What is the greatest act of generosity you have been shown?**
 - Research something suggested by JPIT, [Resources \(jpit.uk\)](https://jpit.uk) Commitment For Life cforl.co.uk
 - Sort through what you own, it might be books, an unwanted piece of clothing or some tins from the cupboard. Find somewhere local to donate these things to.
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Thank you for exploring the **Acts** 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

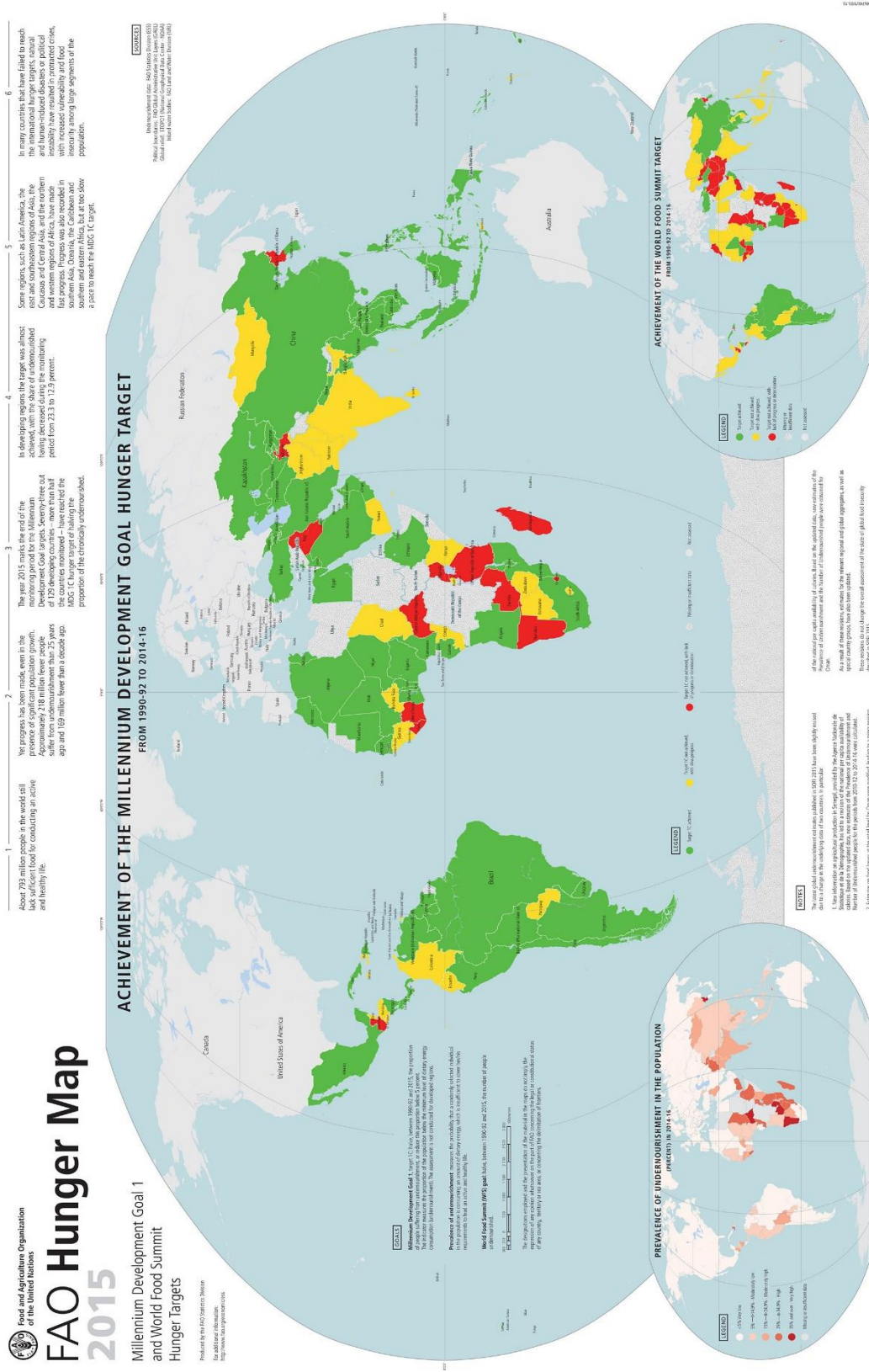


Access to shelter



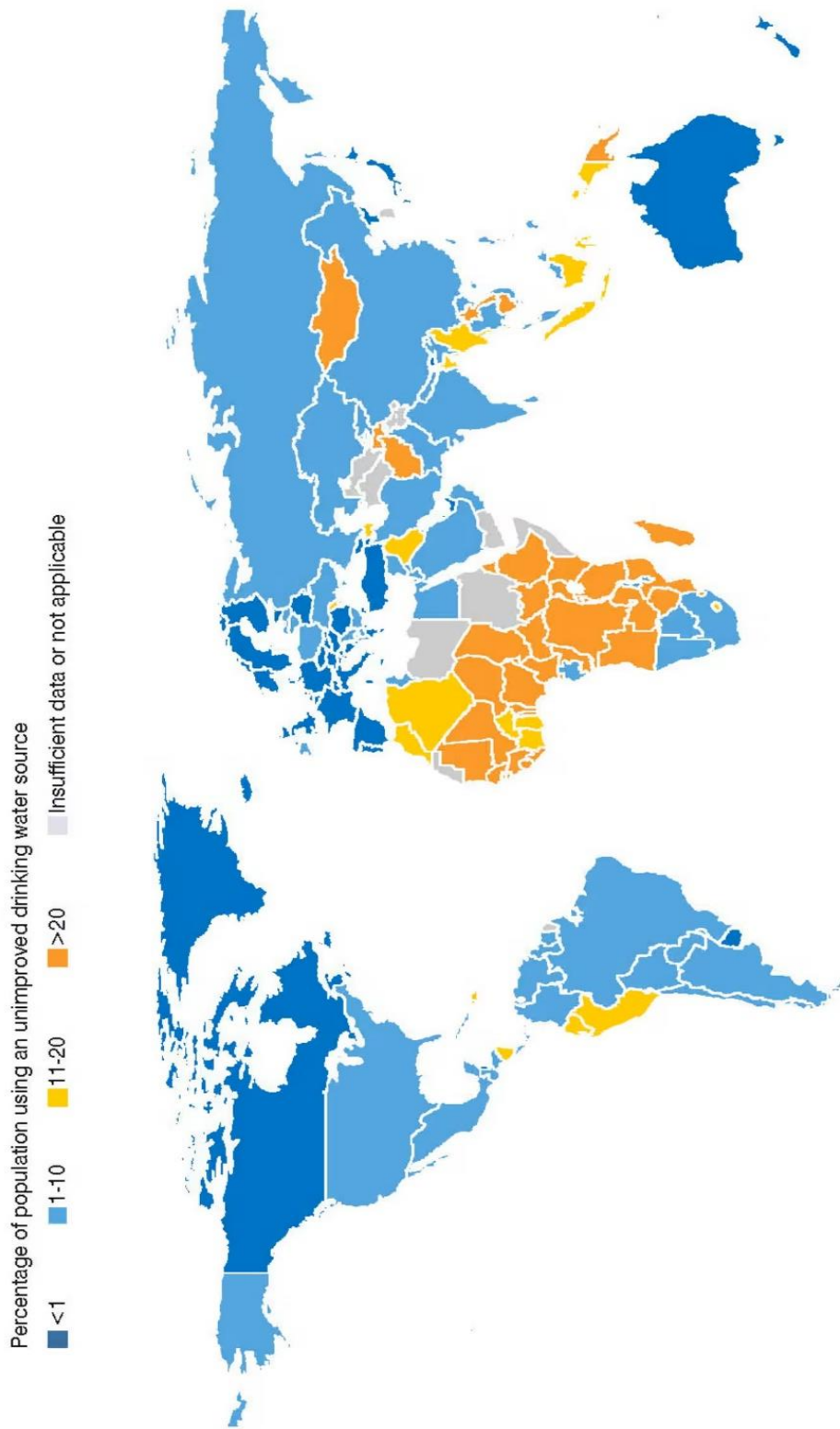
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Access to food



- Food and agricultural organisation - <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Access to water



Relief web – <https://reliefweb.int/map/world/world-access-safe-drinking-water>