



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>

Matthew 7:24-27 – Wise and foolish builders

Theme: Build everything you do on the good foundation of God's teachings

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

Matthew: We are concluding our exploration of the theme of 'homes' this week with one of Jesus' parables: the wise and foolish builders.

You might find it helpful to remind your group what a parable is – it is a made up story with a teaching point. Jesus used parables to help those who listened to him understand what he was saying. He would use stories that were relevant to his audience, that is why so many parables were about farming (e.g. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seeds – Matthew 13.24-30) and fishing (e.g. Heaven is like a net – Matthew 13.47-50). Jesus very rarely explained what the parables meant – he trusted those who listened to him to work it out for themselves.

Today's parable would have meant a lot to the people listening who had built their own houses or inherited the houses from their parents (which, in the time of Jesus, would have been most people).

To put the parable in context, immediately before telling the parable, Jesus is warning people about what will happen to those who do not listen to him and what he is saying – and he uses the parable of the wise and foolish builders to reinforce his point.

Be aware that you may have people in your group whose houses are not built to a good standard, or are built on a flood plain. And you may have people who do not have a house or know people in that situation.

You might wish to explore with your group the idea that, whilst houses built on rock are more stable than those built on sand, it does not mean that they are immune to disaster – they can still get flooded and can still be damaged by earthquakes and strong winds.

Does your group think that Jesus was trying to frighten his audience? If so, why might that be?

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 online game

See this week's Faith Adventures : Children Together for suitable games for this theme. An additional challenge would be a game of Flour Tower:

Flour Tower

You will need:

- bowl
- plate
- flour
- cutlery knife
- sweet or chocolate

Pack the bowl full of flour and then place the plate on top and flip over. Carefully remove the bowl so that you are left with a tower of flour on the plate (like a sandcastle.) Place the chocolate or sweet on top of the flour. Players take turns to pick up the knife and cut away a section of the flour, gently pushing it away from the tower on which the sweet rests. Keep passing the knife and take turns cutting away flour until the sweet falls into the flour. The person who caused the sweet to fall is the loser and must retrieve the sweet from the flour using their mouth (no hands allowed).

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 : Foolish and wise builder: Gospel pictures
https://youtu.be/Mt5PBQINfBc?si=s8_R96Jh5pgp80j_

Questions for discussion

- What might have motivated the foolish builder to cover up his mistakes?
- Can you think of a time when you may have acted like the foolish builder? Wise builder?
- Has there ever been a time when someone didn't want to listen to your advice? What happened? Does this happen with God too, I wonder?

Listen: Cody Carnes – Christ is my firm foundation
https://youtu.be/x9ndiD0_qNk?si=OgqGku3c07NJ-_z4

Questions for discussion

- I wonder what these lyrics mean to you, especially when thinking about the foundations of your life? *I've still got joy in chaos, I've got peace that makes no sense*
- When have your foundations been shaken? What helped you through it?

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: **Firm foundations**

You will need:

- Building blocks (like Jenga or Duplo)
- Masking tape
- Pens
- Bibles

What you do:

Jesus told us that this parable was about building our lives on his words, the words of God. This is what gives us a firm foundation.

Take a block and cover one side in masking tape. Consider what are the words that Jesus gave us that we build our lives on. Write them onto the bricks and begin to build a structure as you go, with the words facing outwards so that you can all read them.

Once built, sit back and reflect: what surprises you about your friends' answers? Is there anything missing? Use the session wondering questions to continue discussion.

Which of these 'Jesus words' would you think are the most important and why?

You could add words which you live your life by that are not necessarily 'Jesus words'. How do they compare?

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.

Cannes Lion Award-Winning "Three Little Pigs advert" by The Guardian

<https://youtu.be/vDGrfhJH1P4?si=UH48gP-hMI3ArLSy>

This advert takes the well-known story of The Three Little Pigs and looks at it from the perspective of the wolf. It highlights how a message can be shared through a story, and that several perspectives can be seen. Jesus told lots of stories in the form of parables to convey a message to the people.

In the traditional Three Little Pigs story, the buildings are destroyed. Why was the outcome different in the advert?

Find out how deep foundations have to be when building a new house. What does that help us to think of when we are building firm foundations in life and in God?

Talking together: Going deeper

- I wonder which of Jesus' teachings you find the hardest/easiest/most important?
- What does this parable say to us about how we build our faith?
- What was Jesus telling us to build our lives on?
- How is Jesus' teaching like a firm foundation?
- I wonder which of Jesus' teachings you find the hardest/easiest/most important?
- Do you think the foolish people are given another go?
- What sort of things in life are like the weather in this story, trying to knock us down?

Conversation starters

- What is important in building a house?
- What are the most important foundations for our lives? What helps us get through difficult times? What helps us live well?
- What have you learned from Jesus' teachings or Jesus' example that helps you in life?

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.

Prayer

Using the structure of the prayer in FACT (see below), you could write your own prayer. Use a verse from the Bible as the foundation (Psalms is a good place to look but you may have favourite verses) and build up, making your lines slightly shorter each time.

Amen.

I ask you,

With confidence,

Listen to my worries,

Help me as I make choices,

Remind me of all your promises,

You are with me and will not leave me,

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart (Psalm 9:1)

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.

Gingerbread house

You will need:

- Rectangle shaped biscuits (eg Malted Milk)
- Icing pens, butter cream or melted chocolate
- Sweets for extra decoration

Use the pens to decorate each wall of the house.

Decorate biscuits for the roof.

Stick them together using butter icing or melted chocolate.

You do not need to limit yourselves to a basic house as in the illustration – use your imaginations and see how creative a structure you can make. What is important when it comes to building something that will stand?



Ethical and wise building – research

Watch the following videos of houses being damaged/destroyed by flood or wind:

https://youtu.be/vAb6PvNkqaY?si=_i8IISXiVV2HXEZy (1'44")

<https://youtu.be/X5wNzuNQVAQ?si=yfPzPPC61v1VS8yd> (1'57")

These 'extreme weather' phenomena both happened in the UK. In other parts of the world extreme weather events can be far more damaging and deadly.

In England, around 5.2 million properties are at risk from flooding according to the Environment Agency which warns that, if current planning outcomes continue, this number could double in the next 50 years. The House of Commons environment committee and the Royal Institute of British Architects have both raised concerns over the Government's current planning framework.

Encourage your group to discuss why housebuilders are prepared to take risks when building in areas that are liable to flood and explore and research what could be done to minimise risks.

With extreme weather events creating such problems for some homeowners/renters, is eco-housing able to make a significant impact on the environment? Or are they the preserve of rich people?

<https://www.homebuilding.co.uk/ideas/inspiring-eco-homes>

What could your group do to encourage the Government/house builders to consider the impact of potential environmental factors on the people who live in the houses they build?

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. **If you could choose any two rules for living a well-grounded life, what would they be?**
 - Watch this video and think about what it might mean for you
https://youtu.be/INwh_3F9IMk?si=41GnC84w2g01yKXL
 - Research something suggested by JPIT, [Resources \(jpit.uk\)](https://www.jpit.uk) Commitment For Life [cforl.co.uk](https://www.cforl.co.uk)
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Thank you for exploring the **Matthew** 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