

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: Romans 12 v 4–5

Theme: What does it mean to belong?

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

Welcome to our final session exploring traditions in the Church. This week we will be looking at 'Membership'.

Membership can look different in different denominations – Roman Catholics and Anglicans see membership as meaning they are part of the whole denomination, while in the United Reformed Church you become members of a local church. Of course, this doesn't mean you can't visit or worship at another church but, if you were to intend to do so regularly, you might be expected to become a member there instead.

The concept of membership in the URC has been a hot topic of discussion for URC Youth, which continues to challenge the wider Church to think about what membership might look like in the future.

If you are under 11 (or a parent of an u11 child, or a children's worker) you are a member of URC Children – even if you're not a member of a United Reformed Church – and the same is true of 11-25-year-olds who are members of URC Youth.

The passage we are using to explore the theme today, from the letter to the Romans, reminds us that we are all members of the Body of Christ – whatever our age or ability. The very first statement of the URC's 'Towards A Charter For Children In The Church' says that we must remember that 'Children are equal partners with adults in the life of the church' – but what does that actually mean?

There are some groups of which we are members because we have no choice, and some to which we choose to belong. Membership comes with both benefits and cost. Does church membership outweigh the cost? Where do we fit? And where do we belong? Let's explore...

Be aware of any children who might have lived experience of feeling that they don't belong (e.g. cared for, or adopted) and those who may have body-image issues and those differently abled.

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 widgeit prayer found in Faith Adventures: Children Together, or else the Lord's Prayer found at the end of this session.

Active game – Clumps: 'We also belong to each other.'

What you do. Invite your group to mill around the space. At random times, call out a number (which is less than the overall number of the participants) and players must get into groups of that number by linking arms with each other.

For the final 'shout out', match the number to the number of players so that you all end up with one big group – 'We also belong to each other.'

Quieter game – Match made

This game links to the idea of things matching – finding that which is the same as you. Putting things together that are meant to be together.

You will need any card games that are about matching symbols, such as Dobble, Snap, or the memory game of Pairs.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

This link takes you to Romans 12: 4-5 in the New International version.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012%3A4-5&version=NIV>

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

⁴Just as there are many parts to our bodies, so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of it, and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we each have different work to do. ⁵So we belong to each other, and each need all the others.

Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by [Biblica, Inc.](http://www.biblica.com)® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Listen: We are family (Sister Sledge), by Rhino

<https://youtu.be/rcrvVuaQtgw?si=WamxFrib9h54Evi0>

Questions for discussion

- What does it mean to be a church family? What does this song say to the church?

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.

Lead the young people in a Bible study, looking at these passages. You could split up to do this, with each group having a different passage.

Luke 1:26-38 (Mary)

Mark 1:14-19 (The first disciples)

Ruth 1:1-17 (Ruth)

Acts 9:1-19 and/or Philippians 3:1-14 (Saul who became the apostle Paul)

Invite the young people to read the passages and consider in each of them the following questions:

- Who gave up what?

- What did it cost them?
- Did they make a good choice?
- What would YOU have done?

Now draw up two lists:

- A list of things that you think would make someone want to belong to your church
- A list of things that you think would make people NOT want to belong

Discuss ways to overcome the negatives and advertise the positives.

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.



Antz by DreamWorks - ending scene

Can be found in the YouTube channel 'Movie Scenes' @MovieScenes-m0s

The ending of *Antz* shows that big changes can happen when everyone works together for the same goal. Every ant has a different job, but they all belong to the colony, and their teamwork makes it strong.

Even though each ant is unique, they become important when they join in and help. This reminds us that being a member of a group isn't just about being a name on a list – it's about taking part, helping others, and working together as one.

- I wonder what role we have within the body

Group discussion

- What does it mean to be a member of the URC as opposed to being a member of the body of Christ?
- Should membership have a cost? What might this look like in the church? Are you more committed if you have paid to be there?

Personal reflection

- What do you choose to be a member of?
- Do you feel a full part of the church? What might the church need to do for you?

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.

Spoken prayers

Dear God,

Thank you that you have made each of us unique, with our own gifts, strengths, and personalities.

Thank you that we don't have to be the same to belong.

Help us to see the value in ourselves,
and to recognise the gifts you've placed in others.

Teach us what it means to be one body –
to support each other, encourage each other,
and work together instead of comparing or competing.

Give us courage to use our gifts,
even when we feel unsure or overlooked.

And help us to build a community
where everyone is welcomed, needed, and loved.

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.

Further thinking

Speak to your leadership team at church to find out what membership means in the URC, both nationally and in your local church.

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. **Where do you belong and why?**
- Research something suggested by JPIT Resources (jpit.uk) or *Commitment for Life* (cforl.co.uk)
- Invite someone to go with you to a group you attend e.g. church, club

Thank you for exploring the **Romans** 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

