



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/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

John 16: 16-24 – You will be sad for a time

Theme: The hope of Jesus helps us bounce back from sadness

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

John

This passage shows Jesus predicting his coming death and resurrection. He is acknowledging that his disciples are going to feel sadness but reminding them that it will not last as they will see him again. The promise they are given is that their sadness will turn to joy, this promise would give them hope in their coming sadness. It provides us with the opportunity to explore what things make us sad and consider what helps us when we are sad. What helps us to bounce back from sadness? We can explore what joy might mean and look like, as opposed to being happy. Can we have joy even when we are sad?

Be aware that this may bring up some difficult feelings for some. Some may be living in sad situations currently or recently and we can feel pressure to 'cheer up' and 'find your smile'. This session isn't suggesting that you should never experience sadness or grief but that you can have hope within it; that our situation won't necessarily improve straight away but that we can know that joy will come. It is also an opportunity to consider how the Bible tells us that one day all sadness will end. This is when Jesus comes back or we are in heaven.



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 game

You will need a bouncy ball.

This is a word association game. A word is shouted out as a ball is bounced from person to person in any order. Begin with a word related to the theme such as sadness and see how many words can be thought of before hesitation. The only rule is that the next word needs to be the opposite of the one before it. For example, sadness might lead to happiness, which leads to gloom, which leads to light and so on.

If there is a time when the ball gets stuck because someone can't think of a follow-on word, the ball comes back to the start so that the process can start again with a new word.

This can be played sitting down with as few as two people. If you are on your own, you can still play – try bouncing a ball off a wall and seeing how long a string of opposites you can make.

See this week's Faith Adventures : Children Together for alternative 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: The life of Jesus Clip – Grief will turn to joy
<https://youtu.be/ApDx1MrTRnc?si=hLuJwxu1McObdoOM>

Questions for discussion

- I wonder why Jesus spoke in riddles or in figures of speech instead of making his meaning clear?
- Jesus said he came from the father. What do you think he meant?

These two songs fit the theme of this session and could be used at any appropriate point:

Mourning to dancing (Manditora) - <https://youtu.be/b8ArhlyeG-k?si=R80sV0NF8nzkMyBJ>
You've turned my mourning into dancing again - <https://youtu.be/l8dhUEI3bQI?si=Lb-G7ZS1xoD9m5XY>

Explore

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

This week we share the activity from the explore section in Faith Adventures: Children Together.

A new story to share

You will need a big bouncy ball for this activity.

Stand in a circle with enough space to bounce a ball from person to person, when the storyteller says stop the person holding the ball asks the question in the script, they then chose whether to answer it or whether they will bounce the ball onto some one else or there could have a set mantra to say such as... *'The hope of Jesus helps us bounce back from sadness'*

To give some context to the reading in today's session we will look at the crucifixion and resurrection in this section. Although the Bible story belonging to today does indirectly refer to the crucifixion and resurrection, within this session we have focused on the sadness that the disciples are feeling on being told that Jesus is to go. Below is a story you could use or you may chose to tell more of the 'Easter' story if you wish.

Jesus trudged wearily along the path. The wooden cross was heavy and bits of wood were sticking into his back. All he could hear around him were shouts and jeers and many people crying.

STOP – Q – I wonder why Jesus was walking with a heavy wooden cross?

He paused for a moment, his legs giving way under the weight of the cross.

STOP – Q – I wonder how Jesus must have felt?

Jesus was on his way to Golgotha, a place where ppeople were taken to be crucified. The disciples had followed Jesus the whole way, as did his mother Mary. She was silently weeping and Peter was shouting out why, why.

STOP – Q – I wonder what Peter must have been thinking?

Jesus stumbled again, this time a man named simon of Cyrene stopped and helped. He took the cross from Jesus and carried it for him.

STOP – Q – Why would Simon do that?

Finally they all reached Golgotha, The cross was laid on the floor and Jesus was laid on it. The soldiers nailed his hands and feet in place on the cross. The cross was then raised and hammered into the ground. Jesus was crying in pain and misery.

STOP – Q – The soldier's would have been following orders, what would you do if you were one of the soldiers?

Hours went by and then Jesus shouted out – Father forgive them – they do not know what they are doing.

STOP – Q – I wonder what Jesus meant by those words.

Jesus body was taken off the cross and taken to an empty tomb. Mary and friends wrapped his body in cloth and poured smelly oil onto the body and left the tomb. A giant stone was rolled in front to keep it closed. Two soldiers stood outside the tomb and guarded Jesus' body. The friends went away.

STOP – Q – I wonder what they thought would happen?

Three days went by and Mary and another friend headed to the tomb. When they got there the stone in front of the tomb had been rolled back and Jesus was missing. Is this what Jesus meant when he said he would be gone a while? Mary wondered. She turned to walk away when she saw the gardener and she asked him if he knew where Jesus body had been taken? He held out his hands and said 'Mary'. Straight away she knew it was Jesus.

STOP – Q – I wonder why Mary didn't recognise Jesus?

Mary fell to her knees in praise of Jesus and the fact that he had risen and come back to them as he said he would. They had only been sad for a while.

STOP – Q – A question for all.....where do you see yourself in the story? Who do you identify with? Is there anything surprising to you in the story?

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.

Watch this set of clips from the Pixar film *Inside Out* to explore how Sadness is an important part of our lives, a needed emotion that is an important part of Riley's mental health. <https://youtu.be/AcfmHoUiNnw?si=JqtMssU0D7nlWqnB>

- How does sadness play a positive role in our lives?

Talking together: Going deeper

- What words in today's Bible reading stand out to you the most and why?
- We know that the disciples were sad when Jesus died and didn't really trust that he would rise again. Why do you think they found it so hard to believe and were surprised by the resurrection?
- How easy is it to trust that Jesus is alive today?
- How can we best support someone who is feeling sad? What might we say? What might we do?

Conversation starters

- Why is sadness part of life?
- Does sadness last forever? What helps you when you are sad?

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 Jesus,
 Thank you that you are our friend,
 That we can put our hope in you.
 When we feel sad, remind us of the Easter story
 And how you came back to life.
 Help us to bounce back to you when we feel sad.
 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.

Bouncy Ball Rocket

You will need:

- bouncy ball
- skewer
- paper
- pen
- sticky tape
- scissors

What you do:

Make your launcher by pushing the sharp end of the skewer into the bouncy ball, so that the ball stays fastened to the end of the skewer.



Make your rocket by rolling a piece of paper into tube around 5cm in length. (You may find it helpful to use a pen to roll the paper around.) Fasten the edge of the paper together using sticky tape. Ensure that both ends of the tube remain open.

Place the paper rocket over the launcher, so that it rests on the bouncy ball at the bottom.

Hold the top end of the launcher and drop onto a hard flat surface. Watch what happens to the paper rocket.

Exploring springs

Springs are everywhere. We often think of a spring being a coil shape, like you find in a pen or in your mattress or in a slinky toy. But a spring is a term used for anything that is elastically shaped in an object that stores mechanical energy, there are many different types, including things like bows in a bow and arrow set or a rubber band as a tension spring. Check out this link to help you and your group to explore springs and consider how things spring/bounce back. For example it shows a simple challenge to peel an apple in one continuous strip which in itself is a spring. <https://leftbraincraftbrain.com/10-ways-to-play-and-learn-with-springs/>

This is a great opportunity to invite someone into the group who can help you learn and have fun with springs such as a science teacher in your church or a young person with a passion for science



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. **Have you ever been in a situation where you have had to bounce back? What helped you?**
 - Perhaps there is someone you know who is feeling sad. Could you think of a way to help them? It could be spending time together, perhaps going for a walk or doing something you know they like. Whatever you decide, why not reach out to them and let them know you are thinking of them?
 - 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 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