



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>

Exodus 12: 14-20 – Passover

Theme: A simple celebration

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

Exodus

The book of Exodus describes the early life of the Israelites, their captivity and subsequent freedom from slavery. The word exodus means exit or to leave. Within this book is the story of Passover and the festival of unleavened bread, which are still celebrated in Judaism today. Passover commemorates the time when the Israelites were told by God to paint their doors with lambs’ blood to allow God’s angel of death to pass over them and for their first born to be spared from death during the final and most devastating plague in Egypt. The festival of unleavened bread, which takes place straight after (and overlapping with) Passover, commemorates the escape from Egypt when the Israelites had no time to wait for bread to rise before fleeing.

The Passover meal today is not a simple meal – it’s five courses – but the festival of unleavened bread is simple. The Israelites had to leave their house quickly and only take what was needed, the priority things. Bread, whether or not it contains yeast, is nutritious, it is a staple basic and fills you up. The emphasis was on taking just enough and moving quickly to follow God’s command. We don’t need fancy foods and clothes and rituals to celebrate God’s faithfulness – they can distract from the central purpose. As we prepare for Easter we can be distracted with fancy chocolate eggs vying to be more and more elaborate and can lose sight of the reason we are celebrating.

Today’s Bible passage focuses quite a bit on yeast – leaven - and this can be interpreted as a symbol for sin as it spreads and grows. If the yeast represents sin, the symbolic act of removing it from the house can represent getting rid of the things that tempt us to sin. It may well, however, raise the question of why yeast is equated with something bad when it is an ingredient of so many quite ordinary things, as the passage does seem to emphasise the importance of getting rid of it.

Trigger warnings – Be aware of those facing food poverty, people who feel excluded or shut out from a group, children who don't celebrate in the same way and may feel they have missed out.

Dietary needs – gluten intolerance/coeliac – be aware of these in any food-based activities.

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.

Passover game – here is a game that some Jewish families play during Passover and the Feast of unleavened bread, You could research to see what other games they might play.

Matzah House

The aim of this game is to find the pieces needed and create a matzah house.

Buy some matzah which often comes in a package with many pieces. Hide them and some red licorice for others to find. You will need enough to ensure everyone gets 5 or 6 pieces of Matzah and a long piece of red licorice. Use them to create a Jewish home (use hazelnut spread to adhere the sides and roof) with the Passover door marked in red licorice. You can also use triangles to represent the pyramids of Egypt. How creative can you be but also be the first to finish?

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: Remembrance – Matt Redman <https://youtu.be/XNgsO53aITs>

What is Passover? – My Life, My Religion: Judaism <https://youtu.be/QF84Wx0dGTg>

Questions for discussion

- How would you link Jewish Passover/unleavened bread with the Christian celebration known as communion?
- What does remembrance mean? Is it the same as remembering?
- The story of Passover is about a rescue. In what way might communion be about a rescue, in your opinion?
- The video talks about preparation – how does that compare to the Christian period of Lent?

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:

Remembering the story

Begin by gathering the group together and explain that today we remember how the Israelites were slaves in Egypt and had to leave quickly once God set them free. Use the Remembered Bible approach to recap the story. Ask the group to tell the story from memory, they can help each other (and be prompted if needed) to retell as much as they know. You might like to then show a video recapping the story,

When they were set free, they were told to pack and run, they didn't have time to let their bread rise and so took their unleavened bread with them. This is simply bread without yeast.

Show some yeast and explain what it does when added to bread dough.

Every year Jews remember this part of the Exodus story by removing all the leaven from their house and only eating unleavened bread and food for seven days before Passover begins. It's called the Festival of Unleavened Bread. It's a time of preparing themselves to remember the Passover story.

What refugee children packed when they left

If you had to leave your home quickly without knowing when you would return (if at all), what would you choose to take with you? You can take one bag.

Here is a clip showing what some refugees chose to take with them in their bags.

<https://youtu.be/E3xAyLI64H8?si=IbDWphiDMIA6OP2E> – video AJ+ What's in a refugees backpack?

<https://medium.com/uprooted/what-s-in-my-bag-758d435f6e62> - What's in my bag article

- Will you view the possessions you own in a different way after watching this video?
- What stood out to you about the things people chose to take?

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: https://youtu.be/k9MNJrNFbBw?si=mrhcNAiSOju_t000 (M&S advert 2005)

Discuss:

- What strategies do the advertisers use to make the viewer really want this food?
- How does the advert try to make you think about M&S food in comparison with food from other shops or home-prepared food?
- What would be a simpler version of each of the foods portrayed?
- Could you make a special meal special without paying a fortune on fancy foods?
- How do these foods compare with, for example, the loaves and fishes Jesus fed the 5000 with?
- What are your impressions of this advert?

Watch: <https://youtu.be/OHWDWV0bXhU?si=mV63VbGBSVLQsH7R> (M&S spoof advert)

Discuss:

- How does this compare with the advert you just watched?
- There are lots of spoofs of this advert – what do you think the creators are trying to say?
- Why not have a go at describing some of your basic foods (e.g. youth group snacks!) in the style of an M&S advert?

Talking together: Going deeper

- What can we do to remember God's faithfulness?
- How does God show faithfulness to you?

Conversation starters

- Is this a celebration or a commemoration or both?
God told them to go quickly – bread wasn't going to be enough for the journey.
- When the Israelites left Egypt they couldn't carry enough food for the journey and had to trust God. When have you had to trust God?

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.

This week's session explores celebrating simply. The following spoken prayer is simplified to create the second prayer, you could use either section alone or both together.

Dear God,
 We are sorry:
 For when we have left people out,
 For when we have not looked after the beautiful world you have given us,
 For when we have not listened to you.

Thankyou:
 For the stories we can share from the Bible,
 For your faithfulness to us,
 For your promise to walk with us in all that we do.

Help us:
 To share your care and concern for others,
 To celebrate and enjoy our times together as a group,
 To speak out about fairness and equality.

Amen

God,
 Sorry! We are not always kind.
 Thank you! You stick with us.
 Please! Show us the right things to do.

Amen

You could give older groups the opportunity to simplify the first prayer themselves. What are the most important lines or words? How simple can you make your prayer, without losing a sense of the prayer's meaning? Do you think the second prayer is long enough? Would you include more detail?

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.

Flat Breads – Which contain yeast?

You will need: a range of different types of flat breads – eg matzah, pita, naan, tortilla.

Cut the breads into small pieces and place on separate plates. Ask participants to guess which of the breads contain yeast. You can do this in three separate rounds based on looks, texture and taste. Ask participants to share their guesses and then reveal the answers.

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 most important part of any celebration for you ?** (e.g. Christmas, Easter, Birthday party etc)
 - Research something suggested by JPIT, [Resources \(jpit.uk\)](https://www.jpit.uk) Commitment for Life [cforl.co.uk](https://www.cforl.co.uk)
 - Challenge – research charities that provide or receive bags for children/young people in care or emergency weekend packs. Here's one to start you off <https://www.bagsofhope.org.uk/> perhaps you or your church could create blessing bags, bags which contain some essentials which could be given to the homeless or charities. <https://www.realmomnutrition.com/blessing-bags/>
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Thank you for exploring the **Exodus** 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