



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 1: 6-11 – God is.... Jesus

Theme: Jesus is with us, even when we can't see him

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

It is believed that Acts was written by Luke – as a sequel to his gospel. In this first chapter, Luke tells of Jesus leaving the disciples and ascending to heaven. This is an opportunity to make a further link with the Trinity (looked at in week 4 of this month) in that Jesus leaves earth to ascend to heaven to be with God the Father, but promises to send the Holy Spirit to be with his disciples.

You will need to be sensitive to the emotions of anyone who has loved ones who are not around – perhaps as a result of a recent bereavement, family break up, a parent/carer working away from home, or serving a prison sentence and the uncertainty that can cause. The disciples were left similarly confused and upset when the person they loved, trusted and relied on left them. Although Jesus promised to return, he wouldn't tell them when.

We also need to be aware of the feelings of those people for whom the return of someone into their lives might not be a positive experience or something to celebrate. Remember that it is ok to be scared and uncertain about what is going to happen in the future. Jesus says that only God knows the future but we can trust that God will give us strength and courage to cope with things as they happen and that we can talk to Jesus at any time about how we are feeling.

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

See this week's Faith Adventures : Children Together for suitable games for this theme. These may be a bit young for this age group, especially if you have no large area for a wide game.

Alternative game – what's changed?

An alternative game would be for one person to be chosen to leave the room for a minute. While they are gone, the remaining people change one thing in the room – for example, an easy option might be to change where someone is sitting or for one person to be wearing silly glasses – a more challenging option might be for two people to swap hoodies or for something new to be pinned to the notice board. When the person returns to the room, they need to guess what has changed. If needed, the group could give them clues.

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 Ascension- Phil Wickham:

https://youtu.be/23u5t5__WPc?si=kQaA8xvTFJKb31WM

Questions for discussion

Watch the YouTube video and listen to the lyrics of the song.

- This song talks about us being part of the Ascension and going up God's holy mountain. What do you think this means?
- What do you think it would be like to meet Jesus face-to-face?
- What hints in the song are there of events in the life of Jesus?
- Where do you see God/Jesus in this song?

Watch: What is the Ascension of Jesus? Why is it important?

https://youtu.be/hVDyGkkyPL0?si=rkgU3a_1AQ9-Lnh7

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:

The Faith Adventures: Children Together activity involves sorting pictures of the life of Jesus into order. This can be adapted for an older age group. Instead of printed pictures, have sheets of plain paper and writing/drawing materials. As a group, how much of the story of Jesus's life can you remember? Record each event you remember on a separate piece of paper, giving it a heading and then either writing or drawing a little more detail if you can. Then try to sort the events into order. This will be easier for events at the beginning and end of the timeline, harder for the middle, and it doesn't matter whether or not the middle ones are in exact order. If it concerns members of the group to have the 'correct' answer, you could check with a Bible by looking at the chapter headings in the Gospels – but the important thing is to see how much you can remember together.

When the group has agreed on an order, add two blank pieces of paper, one at the beginning of the timeline and one at the end. As a group, discuss where Jesus might have been before the first event in the timeline and where Jesus might be after the last event in the timeline. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers.

Jesus said that he would return one day. Use a third blank piece of paper to explore what the group think that might look like. Round off by remembering that Jesus said that God alone knows the answers to some of our questions – we might wonder, but we don't need to worry about uncertainty as these things are in safe hands.

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.

Yuri Gagarin, a Russian astronaut, was the first man in space. These two short videos show him entering the space rocket 'Vostok 1' and some footage of his flight:

<https://youtu.be/JGMvpP2gGy8?si=81oidTTWiVb8Y-xz>
<https://youtu.be/y4elyuzWgEI?si=Dg0ZVbVYgpJhwGuf>



- Imagine what it must have been like to have witnessed that event.
- I wonder what he would have been feeling?
- I wonder how it felt to be watching from the ground?
- I wonder what his friends and family were feeling as the rocket took off?

This short BBC news report tells the story of Gagarin's mission – and also of a 5 year old girl who was one of the first people to see him after he safely returned to earth:

<https://youtu.be/KANuFleIQ5k?si=6qBh5BHnPlok3B-h>

I wonder how I would react if I saw Jesus returning to the earth?

Talking together: Going deeper

- If Jesus were born today, how would his story be different?
- If we don't know the time and the place that Jesus will return, where and when do we think would be a good time and place and do you think you'd recognise Jesus?
- I wonder if Jesus wants to come back? Did Jesus choose to go back to heaven or was he called back to heaven?
- When Jesus comes back again, will he come back as a baby?
- If Jesus is God, and Jesus said "only God knows....", does that mean Jesus knows it as well?
- Who were the two men in white robes?

Conversation starters

- Do you think time in heaven is the same as time on earth?
- Did Jesus leave before the job was done?

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.

Spoken Prayer

God of certainty,

There is so much I don't know,

So much I worry about or hope for:

Exams, relationships, friends and family, school, jobs.

I worry about, and hope for, things in the future.

I don't know what will happen, I am so uncertain.

But I am certain that you are with me now

And that you will be with me always.

Help me to feel your certain presence in my doubts and uncertainty.

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.

Faith Adventures: Children Together also has the instructions for making a yoyo, which young people may enjoy as it's quite challenging.

Mug Cakes

You will need:

- 4 tbsp self-raising flour
- 4 tbsp caster sugar
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 medium egg
- 3 tbsp milk
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil or sunflower oil
- a few drops of vanilla essence or other essence (orange works well)
- 2 tbsp chocolate chips (optional)



What you do:

Add 4 tbsp self-raising flour, 4 tbsp caster sugar and 2 tbsp cocoa powder to the largest mug you have (to stop it overflowing in the microwave) and mix.

Add 1 medium egg and mix in as much as you can, but don't worry if there's still dry mix left.

Add the 3 tbsp milk, 3 tbsp vegetable or sunflower oil and a few drops of vanilla essence and mix until smooth, before adding 2 tbsp chocolate chips, (if using) and mix again.

Centre your mug in the middle of the microwave oven and cook on High for 1½ -2 mins, or until it has stopped rising and is firm to the touch. (Be careful, it'll be hot!)

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. **If you could meet someone from the past, who would it be and why?**
- Research something suggested by JPIT, [Resources \(jpit.uk\)](https://resources.jpit.uk) Commitment For Life cforl.co.uk
- Watch this clip from the movie Risen (2016) with someone and discuss what you'd say to others if you'd been with the disciples at this time.
<https://youtu.be/HJACLNbjlMM?si=pvB2Wr1m9drviLXY>

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