

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: Genesis 4: 1–9

Theme: Two brothers, one problem

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning? Please use this section as a reference and information guide for leaders only – we don't expect it to be read out to the children.

Welcome to Week two of “Untold Stories of the Bible”. This series of sessions is looking at some of the stories that we often shy away from when exploring Scripture with children and young people, or ignore because they seem insignificant and have nothing to teach us.

Great care has been taken in choosing the translations we use, although they are, of course, only suggestions.

The story of Cain and Abel is all about emotions – and that can make it seem difficult to approach. It suggests that God has favourites. However, we know that there is nothing we can do to make God love us more – or less.

We are looking at how emotions affect the way we are and the way we act; how we deal with those difficult emotions, such as jealousy and anger; and what we can learn in this story. Be

mindful of those who don't have siblings (some people may be aware their parents have tried to have other children but that it hasn't worked out).

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 – parachute games

You will need:

- a parachute or large fabric sheet
- a variety of balls of different sizes

The idea of the game is to keep the balls on the parachute or large piece of fabric for as long as possible without the balls falling off the edge.



This is because, in the Bible reading, Cain is struggling to keep his emotions under control, which causes him to have a negative reaction and do something wrong.

Talk about how the balls in the game are symbols for your emotions and how you are trying to control them and manage them.

The balls are different sizes, to see whether bigger emotions are easier to control than smaller emotions.

Quieter game – Pairs

This game simply plays with the idea of things coming in pairs, just like the brothers Cain and Abel.

You will need:

- cut up cards or pictures cut into two halves

Spread the pictures out, face down. The children must turn over two cards at a time and try to find the pair. Once a pair is found it is removed from the game.

This could be played as a race: who can find the most pairs?

Or it can be played in a smaller group with the cards laid out in a grid shape. Children then take it in turns to turn two over. If they match, they remain overturned; if they do not, they are turned back over and play continues. More of a memory game.

If you have older children, you could change the game into pairs of opposites, such as love and hate.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

This link takes you to Genesis 4: 1–15 Contemporary English version (CEV):

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%204%3A%201-%209&version=CEV>

Cain Murders Abel

4 Adam and Eve had a son. Then Eve said, "I'll name him Cain because I got him with the help of the Lord." ² Later she had another son and named him Abel.

Abel became a sheep farmer, but Cain farmed the land. ³ One day, Cain gave part of his harvest to the Lord, ⁴ and Abel also gave an offering to the Lord. He killed the first-born lamb from one of his sheep and gave the Lord the best parts of it. The Lord was pleased with Abel and his offering, ⁵ but not with Cain and his offering. This made Cain so angry that he could not hide his feelings.

⁶ The Lord said to Cain:

What's wrong with you? Why do you look so angry? ⁷ If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling. But you did the wrong thing, and now sin is waiting to attack you like a lion. Sin wants to destroy you, but don't let it!

⁸ Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go for a walk." And when they were out in a field, Cain attacked and killed him.

⁹ Afterwards the Lord asked Cain, "Where is Abel?"

"How should I know?" he answered. "Am I supposed to look after my brother?"

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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

Watch: Why did God accept Abel's offering but rejected Cain's offering?

<https://youtu.be/TnGa6F5Xeog?si=mGUwylyB28iktQXq>

Questions for discussion

- How does this story make you feel?
- I wonder how you would describe your heart?
- What would you offer the Lord?

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.

Feelings of...

This Bible story can help us to think about how sometimes our feelings are so big and so unhelpful that they can harm ourselves and others around us. Feelings like jealousy are normal, but if we do not deal with them well, they can turn into feelings like hate.

We will begin by playing a game that will cause the group to experience feelings of unfairness or jealousy. Don't tell the group this before the game; just explain that we are going to start with a game.



You will need:

- two decks of playing cards
- pile of sweet/chocolate bars

If you have a large group, you will need two less than the number in your group e.g. group of 12 = 10 sweets. If you have a small group allow for two each for all but one child e.g. group of four = six sweets.

What you do:

Gather the group into a circle or around a table. Place the sweet pile in the centre (the children will begin to make comments about what sweets they can see and whether they can see their favourites). Keep one pack of cards for yourself and deal out the cards from the second pack until every card has been dealt. Now you are ready to play.

Explain that the children need to look at the cards in their hand. You are going to show your deck of cards one card at a time, picking up pace as the game goes on. If a child has the same card as you, they get to choose a sweet from the centre and bring it back, placing it in front of them. Explain that eventually the sweets in the middle will have gone but the game continues. Once all sweets are gone from the centre, children can steal a sweet or swap a sweet from in front of another player.

The game continues until all your cards have been shown.

As the game continues, children might become vocal about seeing their favourite sweet going to someone else or being "stolen". They might begin to feel the game is unfair when

they have no cards left and others do. Once the game is complete there may be children without any sweets or who are left with sweets they do not want.

Ask the children how they feel now the game is over. How did they feel during the game?

You could explain that the game is unfair but that perhaps they can figure out among themselves how everyone can now have a sweet. Have a bag of extra sweets to ensure that everyone is finally happy/ It is only a game after all.

Discussion time

You could use some of the wondering questions at this point to chat about the brothers in the story and how the feelings of jealousy turned to hate.

Finally, explain that negative feelings of anger and jealousy, for example, are normal feelings. We do need to find ways of dealing with them in healthy ways that don't harm us or others.

Ask the group to come up with different sentence scenarios showing negative feelings. For example, your best friend has begun to play with someone else at playtimes and you are feeling jealous and left out. What do you do?

Collect the scenarios and have a brief conversation about each one, coming up with examples of how you could deal or manage the feelings in positive ways.

With older children, you might begin to recognise the difference between long-term strategies that are good for lots of situations, and short-term strategies that are good for an individual situation.

Be aware that one solution might not always be a good fit for all the group.

If you wanted to turn the activity into one about opposites, you could come up with two different answers for each scenario – one that is unfavourable and one that's positive.

Remember to encourage the group to include solutions that bring God into it as well as the other strategies we may have. E.g. stop and pray and ask God for help or direction, or go and talk to another Christian about the situation.

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.



Thor: the dark world by topmarvelclips

<https://youtu.be/Br91eXskxVQ?si=s-6D2kFnR0l1KnOn>

Thor and his brother Loki have a very volatile relationship, they fight, argue and end up hurting each other a little like in the Cain and Abel Bible story.

- When have you felt hurt by another.
- What do you do when faced with conflict?

Group discussion

- Why wasn't God happy with Cain's offering?
- Was God being fair?
- Why did God ask where Abel was when God would have known where he was?
- I wonder how God felt when he knew that Cain had killed Abel
- If you were God, how might you have dealt with the situation?

Personal reflection

- What other choice could Cain have made?
- I wonder how the story could have ended if Cain hadn't killed Abel
- How can you look after yourself when you feel angry?
- I wonder if we should be hiding our feelings?

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

We are complicated people, with complicated feelings and emotions.

Help us to remember that we are not handling them on our own;

we can give them to you and ask you to help us with our feelings.

(Take some time to give to God the feelings and emotions that feel too big for you.)

God, thank you for being with me in every emotion.

Help me to not let these feelings harm me or others.

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.

How to create Kintsugi Bowls

Choose a bowl that appeals to you. Consider the potential uses for your bowl.

Now place it in a pillowcase and break it (using a hammer). You don't want to smash it to smithereens; you want to end up with large broken pieces.

Consider how things in life get damaged, such as relationships.

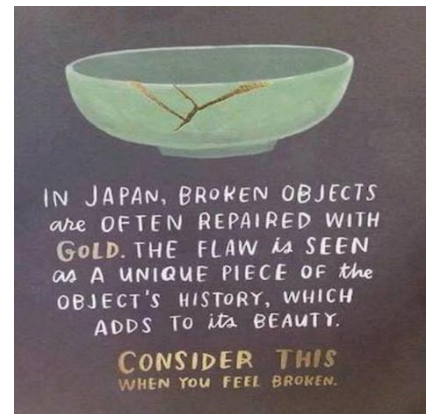
They can seem useless, unfixable, never to be the same again.

Now take some time to glue the pieces of the bowl together again.

Consider what it takes to mend relationships or damage that we cause.

Add some gold paint to the cracks in the mended bowl.

This reminds us that although something was damaged, it is now repaired. It will never be the same again or how it used to be but it is beautiful in a new way.



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 and insights together. **I wonder if you've ever been in a situation where you have been hurt by another, or perhaps when you hurt another person.**
- Research something suggested by JPIT Resources (jpit.uk) or *Commitment for Life* (cforl.co.uk).
- Create a digital emotions journey. Use emojis or write a sentence to sum up the emotions of each day.

Thank you for exploring the **Genesis** 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

