

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: James 1: 5–6

Theme: God provides... wisdom

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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 the third week of exploring the theme “God provides...”

This week we'll be looking at “God provides wisdom”, using a short reading from the Letter of James. James was the leader of the church in Jerusalem and, according to the Gospel of Matthew, was Jesus' brother. The letter was probably written only 20 or 30 years after Jesus' death and was written for Jewish Christians who lived outside Palestine who were suffering persecution and living in poverty.

In the passage James tells the reader (or listener) that wisdom comes “from above”. It enables believers to withstand the difficulties they may be facing and to have peace rather than divisions among themselves.

Wisdom might be described as “understanding what to do with knowledge”. It is often said that knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit, but wisdom is knowing not to include it in a fruit salad!

This passage reminds us that God is with us: that we are never alone and don't have to always rely on our own knowledge and understanding; that God will provide us with wisdom if we pray.

We can trust the wisdom that God gives us – but who else do we trust to give us wise advice?

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 – Tossed like the sea

The idea of this game is to have words on fish shapes that could make a sentence e.g. "God provides wisdom" (three fish shapes); "believe and don't doubt" (four fish shapes). If you have a large group, you could split into teams. Using a folded-over newspaper, ask those gathered to then waft the paper fish to your designated finish line, then re-assemble the sentence. You could raise the level of the game by making it so there are two stripes, one each side of the "wafting area", designated as out – if your fish (word) goes in that section, they lose the word and the sentence doesn't make sense anymore. Be wise and waft carefully.

Quieter game – Banana in a box

This game plays with the ideas of knowing what to do, being wise, and not being swayed by others.

You will need:

two boxes, one with a banana in it

What you do:

Choose two volunteers. Give each one a box.

Explain that in one of these boxes there is a banana.

Each person looks in their box but does not make it clear what is inside.

They both then turn to the group and say, “There is a banana in my box” OR “There is not a banana in my box”.

The group then needs to decide who it believes. Who has the banana in their box?

The group can ask each person questions to help them decide, e.g. “Who has the banana?”, “Does the other person have the banana?”, “Why should we believe that you have the banana?”, “What does your banana look like?”

Once the group has decided (majority vote), the person they suspect of having the banana shows the inside of their box. Did they guess correctly? Your group will want to play this game again and again.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

This link takes you to James 1: 5–6 in the Good News Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James%201%3A%205-6&version=GNT>

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

⁵ But if any of you lack wisdom, you should pray to God, who will give it to you; because God gives generously and graciously to all. ⁶ But when you pray, you must believe and not doubt at all. Whoever doubts is like a wave in the sea that is driven and blown about by the wind.

Good News Translation® (Today's English Version, Second Edition) © 1992 American Bible Society. All rights reserved. For more information about GNT, visit www.bibles.com and www.gnt.bible.

Watch: Ancient Proverbs (True Wisdom), by RedFrost Motivation

<https://youtu.be/-oCVIt6duzY?si=9LhhoEP-NjcDQYJg>

Questions for discussion

- I wonder if you have a favourite wise saying? Perhaps it was one of the ones on the video.
- If you could make up a saying, what would it be?

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.

Wisdom or knowledge

What is Wisdom?

Ask the group to identify quotes on what wisdom is and look up the dictionary definition; then debate – What is wisdom? How is it attained? When is it God given?

Some suggested quotes:

“Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is not putting it in your fruit salad.”

Lao Tzu: “Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom.”

William Shakespeare: “The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.”

Albert Einstein: “Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it.”



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.



Chicken Little

<https://youtu.be/2VU2KcqKg5A?si=y1fJECuDKIXrjaRj>

Chicken Little is a film about a young chicken. Chicken Little thinks the sky is falling in and so tries to warn everyone. But instead creates chaos.

- Where did Chicken Little get the idea that the sky was going to fall in? What does this tell us about how supposed “wise words” get shared?
- What could Chicken Little have done differently?

Group discussion

- Is there a difference between talking to God and praying to God?
- If you pray to God for wisdom what else can you pray for?
- How do you know when a thought has come from God?
- Why did James think the people needed to ask for wisdom?

Personal reflection

- Who is the wisest person you know?
- Who do you think needs to pray for wisdom?

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 prayer

Wise God,

as we hear in James 1:5-6, we remember the wisdom you provide.

Thank you for being in our lives blessing us with wisdom. Even when we think we know what is right, provide us with your wisdom. Thank you for your Son who came to teach us parables and stories expressing your wisdom and knowledge.

Help us to know the difference between knowledge and wisdom. Help us to know how we can be wise with our words and our actions. Help us to see what is right and what is wrong. Help us to know when you are blessing us with your wisdom and power. Help us to see your answers when we have hard questions.

This week God, challenge us to be wise. Show us situations where we need wisdom to help us. Looking not just for knowledge but also to being wise. Show us friends and people in our world who need more wisdom. And show us where in our lives we need to be wise.

Amen.

Responding together

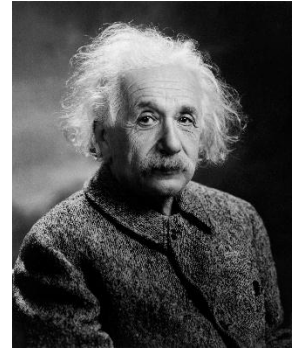
This is an opportunity for a social justice challenge, some research, craftivism, or a craft or STEM activity. You may have a specific activity chosen but free choice is also an option. Here are some suggestions for this week's theme. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

Wise people

Socrates, Mother Teresa, Barack Obama, Aristotle, Nelson Mandela, Albert Einstein, Jesus, Greta Thunberg, Queen Elizabeth II, Steven Bartlett

There are many people from history and those alive today who are considered wise. I wonder how you would order these people from wisest at the top to least wise at the bottom. How would you decide who is wisest? You may not have heard of all these people but a few minutes' Google searching should help with that.

Invite each person to create their own scroll with their own ordered wise list.



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. **What is the wisest decision you have made?**
- Research something suggested by JPIT Resources (jpit.uk) or *Commitment for Life* (cforl.co.uk)
- This week turn to God for wisdom before giving an answer

Thank you for exploring the **James** 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

