

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: Ecclesiastes 3: 1, 4-6

Theme: Emotional – connected to your emotions

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

Welcome to the first week of a new theme! Over the next few weeks, we will be using the usual mix of Bible passages, activities, crafts and question suggestions to look at 'Feelings and Emotions'.

'Emotional literacy' might be a phrase you've heard of. It effectively means:

- 1. The ability to express our emotions and feelings using speech and other forms of communication.
- 2. The ability to recognize and name our own emotions as they happen.
- 3. The ability to understand, manage, and express emotions appropriately.
- 4. The ability to recognize the feelings expressed by others and choose an appropriate response.

In this first week we'll be looking at a famous passage from the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes.



Ecclesiastes is often believed to have been written by King Solomon – the name comes from the Greek word for 'Teacher'. The passage we are looking at, Chapter 3 v1, 4-6, talks about there being a time for everything – and then offers a list of what can be seen as 'opposites'. Some of these opposites could potentially be triggers for members of your group and you will need to be aware of this when looking at the passage - particularly phrases like "There is a time to weep and a time to laugh", "a time to hug people and a time to turn away from people." We can't ignore such phrases but need to be thinking how they might be within the lived experience of individuals with whom we are with.

We must also be aware that different people can respond with different emotions to the same event – what makes one person happy might make another person feel sad. Whilst challenging, this can also offer an opportunity to discuss what being 'happy' and 'sad' means.

Just because the passage suggests there is a 'time' for something does not necessarily mean that it is to be welcomed or that we condone it. We have deliberately left out some of the verses, not because they are too challenging, but because they do not fit with the theme of 'feelings.

Along with this material, we have also explored this passage in Ecclesiastes in both FOFA @ Home and in an earlier FACT resource. You can find these by visiting Faith Adventures for Children Together and Youth Resource - United Reformed Church and using the index of Bible readings.

These 4 sessions stir up emotions, it's important to be mindful of this and to ensure that the session ends on a positive note.

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 widget prayer found in the Faith Adventures: Children together or else the Lord's prayer found at the end of this session.

Active game - Emotion Beans

This is a fun, active way to help those present to explore and express different emotions through movement and body language.

Players spread out in the room/hall/outdoor space.



Start jogging, walking, skipping, or tiptoeing around when no emotion is being called. To make this a more fast paced game you could call out the different beans one after the other, getting faster and faster.

The leader calls out an Emotion Bean, and players stop moving and act out what that emotion feels and looks like in their bodies and faces. As an extra challenge you could call two emotions together.

Action suggestions:

Happy Bean - Big smile, jump for joy, clap hands.

Sad Bean - Droop shoulders, slow walk, pretend to wipe a tear.

Excited Bean - Bounce on the spot, wave hands, wide eyes.

Angry Bean - Stomp feet, clench fists, frown.

Shy Bean - Hide face, turn away, small body posture.

Brave Bean - Stand tall, hands on hips like a superhero.

Tired Bean - Yawn, stretch arms, slow heavy walk.

Scared Bean - Shake a little, cover face, huddle.

Silly Bean - Pull a funny face, wiggle body, spin in a circle.

Proud Bean - Chest out, smile confidently, thumbs up.

Calm Bean - Slow deep breath, relaxed shoulders, peaceful smile.

Quiet game - Play-Doh Charades

You will need:

- a tub of Play-Doh (or similar) for each team
- a table for each team
- emotions cards (cards with one word emotions written on them e.g. happy, sad, angry, confused, worried, frustrated)

This game can be played with any number – if you have lots in your group it can be a team game, or an individual game if your numbers are small.

Players come to the front and are shown a card. They must then go back to their team and, using only Play-Doh, help their team members to guess the emotion. When guessed correctly, someone else from the team goes and gets the next emotion from the leader.

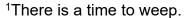
Alternative: If you don't have access to Play-Doh, players can try and express the emotions for their teammates to guess using just facial expressions or by drawing them.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

This link takes you to the EasyEnglish version of the Bible.

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes%203%3A%201%2C%204-**6&version=EASY**



There is a time to laugh.

There is a time to be sad.

There is a time to dance.

⁵ There is a time to throw stones away.

There is a time to pick them up and use them.

There is a time to hug people.

There is a time to turn away from people.

⁶ There is a time to look for things that you have lost.

There is a time to accept that you have lost them.

There is a time to keep things.

There is a time to throw things away.

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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: The book of Ecclesiastes by The Bible project

https://youtu.be/lrsQ1tc-2wk?si=w1tql0zC6ybZUgKJ

This longer video offers an overview of the whole book of Ecclesiastes.

An opportunity for reflection

- What are your initial thoughts about the aim of the book of Ecclesiastes?
- Did you get an impression of what sort of emotions might be within the book?

A song made it into the music charts based on this Bible verse, listen to it here. Turn, turn, turn by The Byrd's - https://youtu.be/xVOJIa2vYx8?si=w8gvjX90X6xy_esb

Explore – ways into the theme

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.

Gather images and words about emotions. Give the young people a range of both for the emotions.

Can you group them in opposite piles?

Have a discussion about this image from of Eeyore Winnie the pooh. Are there times when we can be both happy and sad, or anxious but confident.

Could we rank the emotions? How would we rank them? And why?









Do we need to know if someone is feeling an emotion or are there other ways we can recognize the emotion in them? Is there a difference between empathy and sympathy?

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.

Inside Out Disney Pixar (2015)

Get To Know Your Emotions by Animations

https://youtu.be/nEUzQ7yL9A0?si=li67JQJzI4bSsUbt

Riley experiences lots of emotions and struggles to manage them sometimes. Meet the Emotions (Joy, Sadness, Anger, Disgust, Fear). In the reading today we are told there is a time for all our emotions, just like Riley.

I wonder what emotions we have felt today already?

Group discussion

- Is there ever a time to hide your emotions?
- I wonder when it's good to turn away from others? Can you turn back?
- How do you tell how other people are feeling?

Personal reflection

- The Bible passage says we are meant to be happy, if so then why do we have emotions like anger, anxiety and fear?
- If you ranked the emotions which would you say is the most important and the least important.
- I wonder if you need to understand someone's emotion to support them?

Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

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.



God wants us to talk to him and share whatever we are feeling. Sometimes we feel like shouting because we are cross and angry, sometimes we whisper because it is difficult to say something out loud, but God hears us whenever we speak. Here is a simple idea for talking to God when we are not sure what to say.

Take a coin and decide on a prayer for heads and a prayer for tails.

For example Heads - Dear God, please help... Tails - Dear God, I am sorry... Heads - Dear God, please bless... Tails - Dear God, thank you, Amen

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.

Mood quilt

Our Bible passage allows us to understand there are times when we may experience different feelings and act in different ways – sometimes even more than one in the same day. This activity is also referred to in week 2 when discussing anxiety.

What you need:

- collage materials
- small card squares
- magazines with pictures in

What you do:

Use these items to decorate a square, either the emotion felt today or else give everyone a different emotion to represent in their square. Once all the squares are completed attach it together to create a quilt. Stand back and reflect on the quilt, what do you notice?

Bible variations

When planning this session many different Bible versions of the same Bible passage were looked at. www.biblegateway.co.uk shows lots of different versions. Use this website or similar or if you have access to different printed versions use those. Explore the different versions and the words used. They range quite widely with different types of emotions.

- What differences can you see?
- How do the different words change the meaning behind the verse?

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. I wonder if there is an emotion you find hard to understand?
- Research something suggested by JPIT, Resources (jpit.uk) Commitment for Life cforl.co.uk
- Watch this ted talk about managing your emotions. What can you identify with? Did you find anything particularly helpful? https://youtu.be/Uew5BbvmLks?si=hU8w8qPe1LIWoOoe

Thank you for exploring the **Ecclesiastes** 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

















