



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>

Matthew 19: 16-22

Theme: Jesus as an influencer

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

Matthew

The book of Matthew is the first book of the New Testament. Most people think that it was written by one of Jesus' close friends, Matthew, who gave up being a tax collector to follow Him. Matthew shows his readers that Jesus is a great teacher, healer and leader who is the good news that God has promised everyone.

Last week we looked at how God might influence people. This week we explore how Jesus influenced people through his words and his actions – using the story of the rich young man.

This man came to ask Jesus a question. Why? Did he know Jesus? Had he heard about Jesus? He is not the only person in the Gospels who asked Jesus for advice – though he might be one of the few who asked because he needed help, rather than to try and trip Jesus up.

Jesus gave a straight answer. There was no fudging, no leeway. The man was given the choice to either accept the advice, or ignore it. We have to make decisions about whether or not to heed advice every day. What influences our decision making?

When talking about the commandments, Jesus brings up some issues which may be troubling for members of your group. They may be members of blended families, or children of a marriage that is not happy. They may have parents who have stolen – they may even have stolen things themselves. You will need to consider in advance how you will respond to questions if asked. And remember that the rich young man kept all the commandments – but Jesus told him to go further if he wanted to be perfect – it was this final step that the man was unable to take. Is 'good' enough? Is 'perfect' possible?



This chapter of Matthew has a lot of material that might take your conversations and explorations with your group down a number of different routes. To ensure you keep on track, we recommend that, rather than have the whole chapter available, you print out the specific passage to share with your group.

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 game - Own games

Use this opportunity for those present to influence your planning and see what games they would like to play. (It would be wise to explain that the games chosen do need to be within the resources you have access to.)

Encourage them to lead the game. This could be used as a way of encouraging and developing young leaders. Therefore this may be an opportunity for emerging young leaders to help with your planning session.

It would be interesting to see who the influencers in the game were and how were others influenced.

Alternatively

Replay a game from this theme or a game you didn't play from any of the previous sessions.

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: Jesus the influencer by JoshuaDeeGiles
<https://youtube.com/shorts/E5EDErXrFCs?si=O67ZZHOCAaY125oE>



Questions for discussion

Watch the YouTube video

- I wonder what it was that changed the woman's mind and helped her see Jesus as an influencer?
- I wonder what comes to mind when you hear the word influencer?
- Thinking of the Bible passage and the words in the video. What other ways did Jesus influence others? How does Jesus influence you?

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:

Begin by exploring what it means to give and follow advice whilst also beginning to think about what Jesus would tell us to do.

Gather a couple of scenarios to give to the group to discuss, here are few to help you out:

A friend is telling tales about you – what should you do?

There is a new child in your group, who is a little awkward and quiet, everyone is trying hard to welcome them – what could you do?

A friend is jealous of a new person in the group – what should you do?

Your sister keeps playing with your toys and often breaks them – what should you do?

The group might like to offer some examples of their own to discuss.

Explain that you will give the group one problem at a time, leave some time for them to think about it personally, then open it up for discussion. Collect their responses on a large piece of paper.

Then decide which piece of advice the group should go with and why.

As a further question, you could ask '*What would Jesus do?*' Which piece of advice is most in line with what Jesus would say?

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.

He never said by Martyn Joseph <https://youtu.be/AscKdf6R0ZE?si=uzuglGrIUIKqBlmN>



Talking together: Going deeper

- Do you know of those who speak the right words of influence but don't necessarily live their life that way? How do we feel about that?
- Are you more likely to take advice from somebody you like than someone you don't like?
- Who do you go for advice and why them?

Conversation starters

- Why did the man go to Jesus with his question rather than another leader, especially if he knew of Jesus and could probably guess the answer would be one he wouldn't like?
- What do you think is the most important thing that Jesus has said that are of greatest influence? If there was one thing we'd share that Jesus said what would it be?
- Do we go to people who tell us what we want to hear?

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.

Prayer 'pass it on'

You will need:

- Paper
- Pens

Sit the young people in a circle. Give each person a piece of paper and make a suggestion for a prayer idea. You could use an acronym to give ideas for each prayer.

For example:

SPOON: Sorry, please, others, ourselves, needs

or

ACTS: Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication (request, petition)

Or encourage the young people to come up with different ideas.

Make your first suggestion for prayer and get everyone to write their prayer at the top of their paper. Fold down the paper and pass it on to the next person. Give your next suggestion for prayer and write on the paper and then fold it down again. Continue until you have gone through all your prayers. Encourage everyone to unfold the piece of paper they are holding at the end and read out the prayer. The idea is similar to a game of consequences and the person writing remains anonymous.

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.

Scruples (A game of cards that each have a description of an ethical dilemma, i.e. you see someone drop a £10 note on the floor – do you hand it to the person? You know a friend is lying – do you call them out on it? You see an injured animal – do you stop to help?)



Either make up your own game of scruples or use the board game version, you could just use the question cards. Have some fun exploring the different scenarios set and why each person may make the decision that they do, what influenced their decision, could they be persuaded to change their mind?

Research Advice Organisations

Spend some time reflecting on where people can go when they need advice or guidance. Ask people to share examples of different advice organisations that they are aware of both locally and nationally.

Encourage participants to research some of the organisations listed below and share their findings with the group.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) - <https://capuk.org/>

Citizens Advice - <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

The Mix - <https://www.themix.org.uk/>

Child Line - <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

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. **When has Jesus made a difference in your life?**
 - Research something suggested by JPIT, [Resources \(jpit.uk\)](https://resources.jpit.uk/) Commitment for Life cforl.co.uk
 - Perhaps you could make your own reel on how Jesus is an influencer.
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Thank you for exploring the **Matthew** 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

