



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>

3 John 1: 5-12

Theme: The Church community as an influence in the world

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

3 John is a pastoral letter, sent to encourage a church community. Most people believe that the same person wrote the previous two letters, and also wrote John’s gospel. It is written from someone who is a church leader, directly to Gaius rather than the whole church, celebrating his reputation for offering hospitality. The letter continues to discuss two individuals who have had very different types of influence on church communities: one good, the other bad.

This week’s session will explore how churches can be an influence on the communities in which they are based. There will be an opportunity to consider the influence that churches can have, reflect on the influence your individual church has and explore the importance of churches looking outwards.

Whilst considering church influence, it will be important to allow space to consider positive and negative influences. However, it will be vital that the space offers a chance for the children and young people to raise issues that they are already aware of, rather than providing lots of negative examples which may be new to them. Some members of the group may also need extra time to discuss the issues and ask additional questions. Ensuring there is a balance within the discussion, of positive and negative influences, will be helpful. Discussions could include local church influence, as well as national and global examples.



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 and alternative game

See this week's Faith Adventures : Children Together for suitable games for this theme or

Play Wink murder in it's original form but then play again but this time devise some positive reactions when winked at instead, such as being rewarded with something.

How to play wink murder: Everyone sits in a circle, a detective is chosen and sent outside whilst you choose a murderer. Bring the detective back in, they stand in the middle of the circle and try to guess who the murderer is (three guesses). The murderer takes people out one by one, by winking at them.

Experience

Research different versions of this reading on <https://www.biblegateway.com/>

Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-read, The Message, NIRV

Listen to: Love God, Love people by Danny Gokey

https://youtu.be/t-29WLQ3trA?si=PEw9y620w4KQ8_0-

Watch: 3 John 1:11 devotional by Songe W

<https://youtu.be/YCeqTN-Usqw?si=0lZFTSFZTzRUbApq>

Questions for discussion

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

- Songe W discusses what it means to imitate Jesus, how does what he say link with the idea that Church community can have an influence?
- How would you say you imitate Jesus?
- What similarities do the song and devotional have in terms of the theme church community influence?

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:

Split into pairs and ensure each pair has access to a copy of the Bible verses printed onto a piece of paper.

Read through the verses one a time stopping to highlight the positive effects the church can have on the community.

Then do some research on how your own church has an impact on and in the community and compare it to the Bible verses.

Explore whether the notes you have made on your church mirror any of the positive effects from the Bible verse.

Can you identify any gaps? What could the church/ you/ your group to help fill that gap? How can they influence the church?

Did you know that the URC have a scheme called 'Children and youth friendly church'? Is this something your church could get involved with? If your church has already been accredited as a CYFC is there more than can be done?

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.



Dolly Parton and her influence on pre-school reading.

<https://youtu.be/JG2tAE7Rh98?si=YZmmOZq9zTSUvCAy>

Questions

Dolly Parton is most famous for being a singer and songwriter. She talks about her faith and motivation in the video.

- Which parts of our life should our faith influence?
- Can the church be an influence on issues that aren't directly faith based?
- Are people more influenced by what we say or by what we do?

Talking together: Going deeper

- The Bible passage highlights some positive and negative effects that the church can have on the community, what are they?
- What was John hoping would come from his letter?
- If Jesus was going to visit your church tomorrow what would he find?

Conversation starters

- I wonder what have you done to help influence the community around you?
- I wonder what reputation you have? And what reputation your Church or group have?

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.

Jesus, it would have been easy for you and your disciples to be a clique, a close circle of friends sharing everything, all the gossip, and looking out for each other. But the Bible's full of stories about you teaching and healing and caring for the crowd. And when you'd trained them up, you sent your disciples out in ones and twos to do the same.

We're sorry that we sometimes want only to be with people who are like us.

We love it when we're in the in crowd and feel excluded when we're an outsider.

Help us see that your in-crowd includes everybody,

and that you want us to be your disciples too, sharing your love with others through the things we think and say and do.

Help us get off our backsides and actually make a difference, because that's what you ask us to do and we want to follow your example.

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.

Letter to the church

Following on from the explore section, perhaps the group could write their own letter to the church as a whole or to the leadership explaining how they would like the church to be involved in the children and youth friendly church scheme or/ and their hopes for how the church can have a positive impact in the community.

Fruitfulness on the frontline

Discover fruitfulness on the frontline. This following video describes what it is like to be a Christian person of influence in the world

<https://youtu.be/SyMMfyy3FDE?si=dNOnYH8WWBtVVaYu>

For more information you could look at the following website, it gives more information about the fruitfulness on the frontline project and offers suggestions of how you can get involved.

Fruitfulness on the frontline LICC (where you are now, you can make an impact)
<https://licc.org.uk/ourresources/fruitfulness/>

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. **I wonder who in the church has had the most influence on you and why?**
 - Research something suggested by JPIT, [Resources \(jpit.uk\)](https://www.jpit.uk) Commitment for Life [cforl.co.uk](https://www.cforl.co.uk)
 - See if you can find a copy of the book 'The visit' By Adrian Plass, it describes one church's surprise when Jesus comes to visit to see how they are at work in the community.



Young people may be more likely to engage with this challenge if it were sent in the days after a meeting via an email or if your group has one (with appropriate permissions) in a WhatsApp group chat.

Thank you for exploring the **3 John 1** 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