



Faith Adventures Youth Resource

How and why to use this 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.

FAYR– A Bible-based 11-14s group resource

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Values

It will be:

- **Bible-based** - every issue is based on a passage from the Bible, encouraging young people to experience the story, explore it in new ways which relate to their daily life experience, and express their own response
- **Creative and playful** – the essence of childhood is creativity and playfulness and these are the best ways for our scriptures to come to life for children, young people and adults alike.
- **Inclusive and accessible** – God's love is for all and this resource aims to be accessible to all, regardless of age, gender, 'churched-ness', wealth, education, physical or cognitive needs, locality etc .
- **Fostering God-connection** – This resource is designed to encourage and enable young people and adults to talk and listen to God and develop their own personal relationship with Jesus.
- **URC distinct** – there are lots of resources out there, but this resource is written primarily with young people associated with the URC in mind. There is a focus on social justice and

walking the way, a focus on the Bible, inclusivity and an encouragement to develop a personal understanding which may differ from that of others but is still accepted and respected.

Purpose

This resource gives URC churches a free flexible weekly outline to use in services, groups, wider settings etc. with all ages, particularly the 11 to 14 age range, whether independently or in a mixed age setting – and encouraging them to resource faith at home.

- It will resource churches, families/households and young people.
- It will support the Children and Youth Friendly Church scheme focus on the spirituality of young people.
- It will enable children and young people to play their part in the mission of God.

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

It is good to know a little bit about the passage and where it fits into the Bible before you begin. Read the passage, maybe in a couple of different versions, (you can see different versions by using www.biblegateway.com), and read this short introduction to help you think about the context of the passage and what the passage means to you. This section may also help you think about how to tackle any tricky subjects that may arise.

Then think about the young people you are working with and their needs. What from our resources would work best for them? Do you need to adapt any?

You will probably not want to use everything in this resource – it will depend on your setting, the length of your session, the age and interests of the young people in the group. However we do recommend having a routine to start your session and then doing something from each section: experience, explore and express.

This resource is designed so that the session can be led by a youth group leader, it can be used in conjunction with Faith Adventures: Children Together to broaden the age range this covers, or used independently by young people. It is advisable to use the two resources in tandem as many of the activities in Faith Adventures: Children Together are still appropriate for the 11-14 age range (e.g. some of the games).

Together

Let's start our time with God and each other well

Starting a session with a prayer grounds the session in God.

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 the opening prayer in the Youth Resource or encourage young people to open the session with a prayer of their own.

Games are useful for helping the group work off some steam, to relax and bond together as a group. The Faith Adventures: Children Together resource will include at least two games which may be suitable for 11-14s too. These games are linked to the theme so are a good way of introducing the theme from the start. If the writing team feel there is a more age appropriate game which is unsuitable for children, that game will be described in the Youth

Resource. In a longer session, you might wish to supplement the games with one of your group's favourites.

What are Experience, explore and express?

Our faith adventure takes us around the Bible, exploring different passages each week and generally gathered loosely around a theme for the month, although most issues will be stand-alone. They do not link to the lectionary. Faith is not about learning; it's about growing in relationship with God through Jesus and with others of all ages on the path together, guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Our role is to create an environment where young people can experience God's word, explore what it means for them as an individual and as part of God's family the church, and express their own response.

Experience

While the Children Together resource will recommend a Bible version to use, the Youth Resource may recommend a different version or may suggest that young people compare different versions to see how they differ. Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-Read, The Message, NIRV, and Contemporary English version. With other versions it may be necessary to support young people with unusual vocabulary and also to make them aware of the use (or otherwise!) of inclusive language. This means using words like "people" instead of "men" and not always presenting God as male.

The Children Together resource suggests some video versions of the story and some songs that go with it. Depending on the group, young people may enjoy some of these, however in this section of the Youth Resource you will find video links which take the topic a little deeper or which have music better suited to this age range.

Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new way to explore the theme Each week the Children Together resource will make suggestions of ways of exploring the theme. Aspects of this may be appropriate for the young people. However in this section there will be further development of that theme which may be designed to take young people deeper, to encourage them to research and investigate ideas, to look at the context for that reading in modern society etc.

What are modern parables ?

Parables are stories that Jesus told which paint a picture of the message he wanted to share by putting it in a context that people could understand. They did not always explicitly mention God. Many of today's stories for children and young people do that too, even if they're not explicitly Christian. In this section there may be TV 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. Young people 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.

Talking together: Going deeper and conversation starters

The talking together questions give an opportunity to have a focused chat around the theme. They encourage interaction within the group, adults and young people together. Some of the suggested discussion themes in the Children Together resource are also suitable for an older age range, but this section of the Youth Resource will include suggestions that take the thinking a little further and challenge the young people more. They may have slightly more controversial themes. Again it is recommended that you allow the young people to express their thoughts and ideas without judgement or feeling that there is a right or wrong answer. Questioning and even doubt are often important stepping stones to faith development and young people, in wrestling with these questions, are well able to explore and form their own sense of what they believe. Adults may also find themselves prompted to wrestle with the questions too, and learn from the young people (and the children using Children Together).

Express

How do we respond to what we've discussed and express our faith personally?

Praying together

In the 11 to 14 age range, young people may be accustomed to leading prayer themselves or may need some resources to support them. For many, the creative prayer in the Children Together resource will be suitable for this age range too, though if not then there may be an alternative suggested here. The Children Together spoken prayer will probably not be appropriate for this age range so an alternative will be given here and one of the young people might be encouraged to read it. Remember that silent prayer is also an alternative, and it is not appropriate to put young people into a situation where they feel pressured to pray out loud – always make opting out an equally comfortable option to opting in, where young people do not feel judged for their decision.

Creative response

Again many of the options presented in Children Together may be appropriate for this age range, maybe with a little modification or less adult support. Creative resources can be made available – e.g. paint, writing materials, collage materials – with possibly some extra such as materials for knitting/crochet, even pyrography or similar etc. to enable individuals to respond in a method of their choice.

Often this section in the Youth Resource will encourage some social action, some research, etc. aimed at leading young people into taking a more independent approach to their own exploration and expression of their faith within the theme.

Walking the Way

It is preferable, instead of setting a challenge at this point, for young people to decide on their own challenges to undertake during the week to carry their faith and their thoughts on the theme into their everyday lives - although obviously some of the challenges in the Children Together resource might be appropriate too.

Faith at home ?

Unlike the Children Together resource, the Youth Resource does not have a postcard home as this is not really appropriate for young people. Often they will respond better to a Whatsapp message sent during the week (please be aware that the lower age limit for Whatsapp is 13 and this contact should only be done by a Whatsapp group to which parents also have access, for safeguarding purposes). The resource – or our facebook group (see below) - may recommend some further viewing, a podcast or song to listen to, a reminder of the reading etc. and hopefully the young people's curiosity will have been stimulated sufficiently for them to want to take things further, to engage in some social action prompted by the theme, or share their thoughts with their family or friends.

There are also Bible reading/study or daily devotional apps you can point young people to for them to use independently as they choose.

Sharing and networking: We would like to encourage you to support one another, and us, by building a sense of community. We have a Facebook page for Faith Adventures for Children Together where you can share pictures of things your group has made and done or different crafts, modern day parables, resources, prayers etc, you have found, or just chat about things in general or ask questions or share news.

We will also post additional ideas, videos etc on the Facebook page to support you in your work, so please do follow the page to get notifications when anything new appears.

Your feedback will also help us develop the resource to be best suited to the needs of those who use it. Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing **lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk**

Don't forget our other resources which are available on the website: Families on Faith Adventures @ Home, our annual themed resource books, Go with Greta/#Connect 2, and our annual holiday club materials. The latter three resources all include materials for the 11 to 14 age range.

FACEBOOK : https://bit.ly/FACT_URC

