United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work How to use FAYR



Faith Adventures Youth Resource

How and why to use this resource

Faith Adventures: this youth resource is intergenerational in nature and designed to foster God-connection in church, home and beyond – it is linked to the parallel Faith Adventure: Children Together resource

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

Contents:

<u>Values and purpose</u> .	1
Introduction	2
Together	3
Experience	3
Explore	3
Express	4
Handouts	5

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, playful and sustainable 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. We aim to be environmentally aware in activities and use of resources.
- 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.

• Enable curiosity and provide challenge – the hope is that all that are involved in the session, leaders and participants, feel challenged and have a space to learn, wonder and grow together.

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.
- It links to Faith Adventures: Children Together for 0-12s.

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. Many of the activities in Faith Adventures: Children Together are still appropriate for the 11-14 age range (e.g. some of the games).

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 weeks will be standalone. They do not link to the lectionary, however the Bible index https://bit.ly/BibleIndex which lists all the sessions does include a column detailing where the sessions link to lectionary readings. 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.

Together – Prayer and games

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: Youth resource will include at least two games. These games are linked to the theme so are a good way of introducing the theme from the start. In a longer session, you might wish to supplement the games with one of your group's favourites.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

The Youth Resource will include a version of the Bible passage and suggest that young people compare other 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.

In this section of the Youth Resource you will find video links which take the topic a little deeper and which have music videos suited to this age range. The Children Together resource also suggests videos, some of which young people may enjoy.

Explore – Ways into the theme

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

A new way to explore the theme

In this section there will be further development of the theme 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?

children.youth@urc.org.uk www.urc.org.uk 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 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.

Group discussion and personal reflection

The group discussion 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).

Personal reflection questions might be mulled over whilst doing an activity, or in a quiet prayerful space. Young people may appreciate sharing their reflections but also may prefer to keep their thoughts private.

Express – Prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

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.

You will find a creative prayer activity. You will also find a spoken prayer appropriate for young people, you can find a more simplified version of this prayer in the Children's together resource. 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.

You could use the URC prayer prompt cards to which encourage individuals to lead prayers. You can find these cards on the website bit.ly/Child-prayer-cards as a download. If you would like to order physical packs email children.youth@urc.org.uk

A widget version of the Lord's prayer is offered in this section too.

Creative response

You may decide to use the creative activity found in the Youth Resource or you may decide to provide some creative resources— 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 – however a challenge is suggested in the resource along with a question which could be shared with others.

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 public group for Faith Adventures 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 URC Children and youth 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 **Sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk**

Don't forget our other resources which are available on the website: Our annual themed resource books, Go with Greta/#Connect 2, and our annual holiday club materials. These resources all include materials for the 11 to 14 age range.

Faith Adventures Facebook: https://bit.ly/FACT_FB

URC Children and youth Facebook: https://bit.ly/URCcyFACEBOOK













