



The
United
Reformed
Church

families
on faith adventures

@ home

Welcome to Families on Faith Adventures @ Home!

This resource has been put together for you by the United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work team and the synod CYDOs and their equivalents.

We hope you will enjoy sharing a time of faith and fellowship together as a family through these stories, games, activities and prayers. They are designed as a 'pick and mix' of ways to experience God's message through the Bible, exploring what it means to you and express that in words and action. They are not linked to the lectionary but can be used in any order as we explore all the different parts of the Bible.

The Walking the Way challenges are one way of continuing our walk with Jesus throughout the week.

These ideas are designed to be intergenerational - maybe even to be shared with members of the family you can't see now except via the internet.

The resources are based on our non-uniformed children's groups, Friends on Faith Adventures and Pilots, but have been modified to make them suitable for all families at home.

*These activities are planned to be used together as a family and under adult supervision. Please be aware of your family's ages and abilities as some activities may need more adult support than others. **Stay safe and have fun!***

This week's Bible story is:

Sing Out: A Song of WOW

Psalm 104



With many varieties of activities and things to do to help explore the theme. Look out for this 'hands on' symbol.

From



and



Illustration by John Paul Stanley / YoPlace.com

Get to know your Bible

The Bible is like a library made up of 66 books written by many different people over many years.

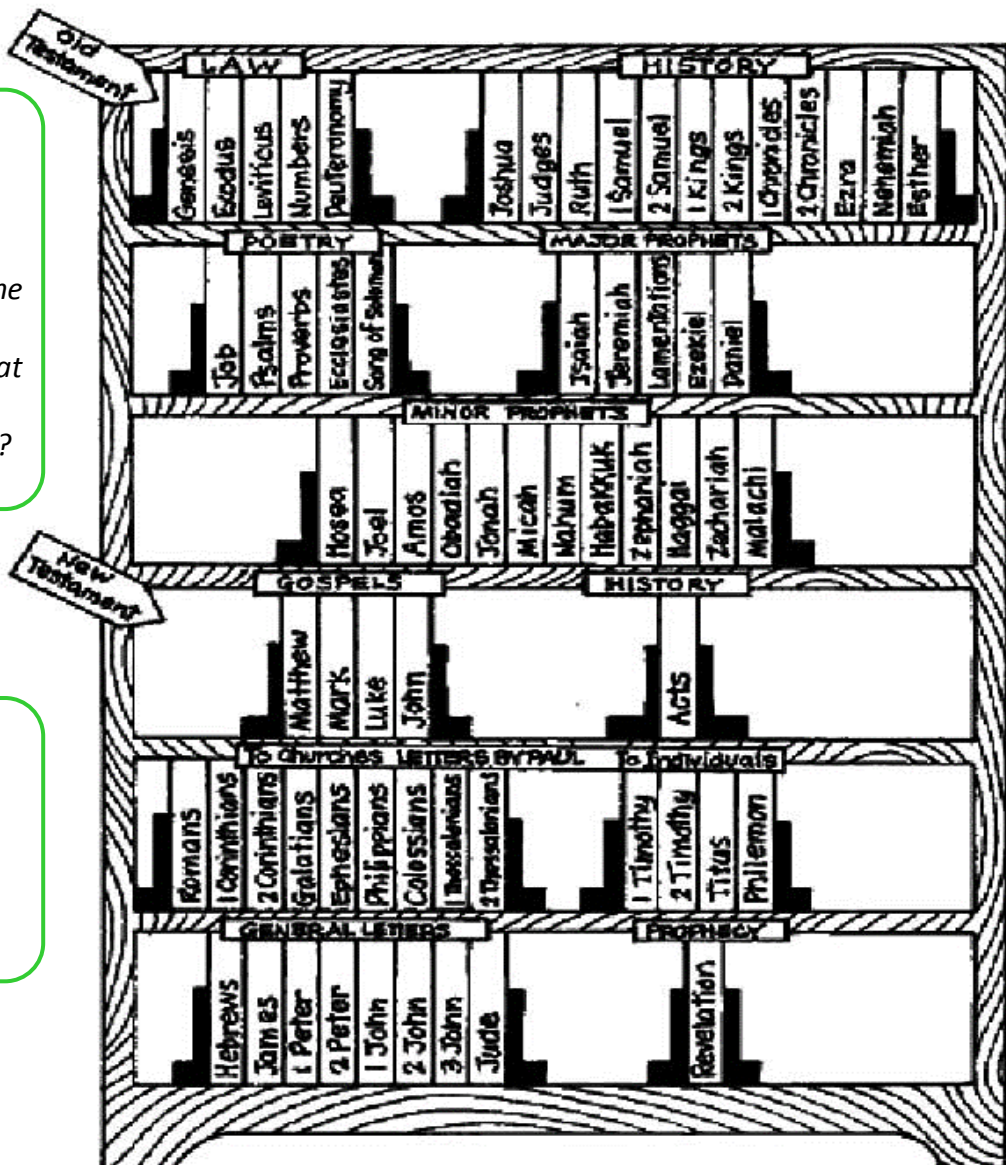
The Old Testament books were written before Jesus was born. They are the holy stories he would have grown up hearing and reading. There are 39 of these.

The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



Can you find and colour the book on the bookshelf that this week's story is from?

If you have a Bible, see if you can find the story in there.



You could print this out once and colour each new book on the bookshelf as you read stories from it.

Bible context – Psalms

The Book of Psalms was written between 1400 and 450 BC. King David wrote over half the 150 Psalms and is believed to have written this one.

It is meant to be a timeless book with psalms that speak into all situations and eras. Psalms are poems that are meant to be put to music.

This psalm follows the pattern of the creation story in Genesis and reminds us of the wonders of our creator God.

Online versions of the story

Watch and listen

*Musical reflection with images of nature sung by Amy Grant https://youtu.be/8lpq5c_EcDU
Creation story by Saddleback kids <https://youtu.be/teu7BCZTqDs>*

Dance and sing

*Oh WOW – what an awesome God – Cheeky Pandas <https://youtu.be/8qLT0vrda4k>
Chris Tomlin – How great is our God <https://youtu.be/KBD18rsVJHk>
Stuart Townend – Creation sings <https://youtu.be/hf8xKiC1dq0>
God made lots of things <https://youtu.be/Uc3cYU3DqkQ>
God made them all <https://youtu.be/QLIdSIE5os>*

Sing Out: A song of WOW!

Have you ever felt so happy that you've skipped or danced or sung along with a song? Can you share together a bit about how you felt and what you thought and what made you feel that way?

The Bible is full of songs and poems that people wrote because they felt so happy about everything that God had done for them. Sometimes the songs and poems are about sad or difficult times but the one we're sharing in today is a song of rejoicing.



Illustration by John Paul Stanley / YoPlace.com

Think about our world and all the amazing things that God created. There are so many things, big and small, that we can't possibly name them all. Take two minutes and write down everything you can think of and draw them on a big piece of paper. Think of animals and birds and insects and fish; think about things that grow, different plants and trees and fungi; think about different types of landscape and the things you find there. How much can you name and draw in two minutes?

When we begin to think of it, the world is an amazing place. Do you think you've thought of everything? What about if you put together all the ideas that all the people doing Friends on Faith Adventures @ Home this week came up with – do you think you'd have thought of everything between you then?

In Bible times, people lived closer to nature and were even more aware of it around them. Our song was written by David who was a shepherd in his young days, so he was out wandering in the fields and on the hills and mountains all day with his sheep, probably with quite a bit of time on his hands while they were feeding peacefully. So he liked to write songs and poems to tell God about how he was feeling. As you read together the song he wrote, look at the picture you drew as a family and see if he mentioned any of the things you drew. If he says anything extra, maybe you could add it to your picture:

Psalm 104 (adapted from *The Message Version*)

Praise the LORD, my soul! O LORD, my God, how great you are!

You make springs flow in the valleys, and rivers run between the hills.
They provide water for the wild animals; there the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
In the trees near by, the birds make their nests and sing.
From the sky you send rain on the hills, and the earth is filled with your blessings.
You make grass grow for the cattle and plants for us to use, so that we can grow our crops
and produce wine to make us happy, olive oil to make us cheerful, and bread to give us
strength.

The cedars of Lebanon get plenty of rain— the LORD's own trees, which he planted.
There the birds build their nests; the storks nest in the fir trees.
The wild goats live in the high mountains, and the rock badgers hide in the cliffs.
You created the moon to mark the months; the sun knows the time to set.
You made the night, and in the darkness all the wild animals come out.
LORD, you have made so many things! How wisely you made them all! The earth is filled
with your creatures.

There is the ocean, large and wide, where countless creatures live, large and small alike.
The ships sail on it, and in it plays Leviathan, that sea monster which you made.
All of them depend on you to give them food when they need it.
You give it to them, and they eat it; you provide food, and they are satisfied. ...
I will sing to the LORD all my life; as long as I live I will sing praises to my God.
May he be pleased with my song, for my gladness comes from him.

Ideas to retell/explore the story

In Psalm 104 we rejoice in God's awesome creation. It says **"you are clothed with splendour and majesty. The Lord wraps himself in light as a garment"**.



Read the psalm and then create a cloak of creation that you can be wrapped up in. God gives us everything we need to live our lives through creation and, as we move through our lives today, we can wonder at the new things God is creating today, for our post lockdown lives.

Later in this the resource you'll see leaf printing to reflect God's creation, so we made our cloak from an old pillow case with some ribbon attached to it and printed creation pictures over it.



Create some music to go with this psalm

If you have instruments, use them. If not, think of the things in our own home which can make music.

Rice poured into bowl – rain

Running water – for rivers

A singing glass – using a wine glass filled with some water and running your finger round the top – sunshine on a cold day

Wobbling card – the sound of thunder

See what sounds you can make that can be part of the music for this psalm. Why not make your own version of this psalm? Here is a fantastic example done for us by Isobel with help from her mum Emma:

<https://youtu.be/Xiv1EGIXk38>



Dinner table Chat Activities

This week would be a good time to talk about favourite memories. What was one of the happiest moments that you remember, what made it so memorable and how did you feel?

Where was the favourite place you have been and why?

What's the most amazing thing you have seen?

Have you ever seen something rare? Or have you ever seen anything breathtakingly beautiful? What was it and how did you feel/what did you think when you saw it?

How do you think God feels when looking at creation?

What's in the box?



What treasures can you find to put in the box for your little ones to explore?

Perhaps older children could help find the things.



Use a box or a bag to hold the treasures and encourage any little ones to explore what's in the box/bag each week to go with the Bible story.

This week's Bible story is:

Sing Out: A Song of WOW

Psalm 104



Something with
rainbow colours
for God's promise

Simple musical
instruments



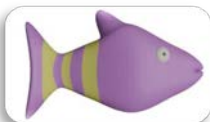
Playdough



Green and blue fabric
or a globe



Toy
animals,
birds and
fish



Leaves and
flowers
(non-toxic)



Toy boat

Pray Together

Prayer safari

*Lord, you have made many things.
With your wisdom you made them all.
The earth is full of your riches...
Psalm 104:24*

Go for a walk and make it your prayer safari. Look around you: where can you see things that help you think about amazing things that God has created? Look for the big and the small things - look up and down and all around you. Sometimes there are things so small we may not even notice them, but they are all part of God's Creation.

As you walk, ask God to open your eyes so you learn to see more of God in creation around you and praise God for all the things that you notice as you walk. As you look around you, focus on things which inspire or speak to you of God, whether you live in the countryside, town or city.



See what one of our team spotted on their urban prayer safari here:

<https://youtu.be/KTLWdvRhFdI>

Song of praise

A prayer to sing together. Join together singing the prayer and take it in turns to add the things that God has made (don't forget to include yourselves!)

Sing to the tune of Old MacDonald

*God, he loves us very much,
Look at what he's made.
God, he loves us very much,
Look at what he's made.*

*With a ... here and a ... there
Giving thanks for all we have.
Thank you, God, you're great!*

Pray Together

Taking care of God's world

The Psalm tells us that the earth is full of God's riches - but we do not always treat the earth with care and respect. Do you think we always act as if the earth is God's, or sometimes more as if it's ours to do with as we want?



Cut out a circle of blue paper. Take off your shoes and, using green paint, make a footprint on the circle. Alternatively, you could draw around your feet on the circle and colour them in. Place your world in front of you and take some time to be quiet. Praise God for all that he provides for us and has created. Ask God to help you care for the earth and pray for your footsteps to tread lightly on the world.



A prayer to say together:

We praise you, Lord God, for the beautiful world you made for us to live in.

Please help us to look after your world for you.

Help us to love and care for those around us, both near and far.

Help us to use things wisely

and think about things we can reuse or recycle.

Thank you, Lord God, for the beautiful world you made for us to live in.

Amen

A big thank you to everyone who filled in the survey

Thirteen families gave us feedback that they are using this resource and we are really grateful. It's given us the opportunity to keep going until Christmas when we will review the value of the resource and whether it is something that should continue into 2021. You can still contribute to the survey anonymously if you wish, using this link -

<https://forms.gle/K35JMyQL1LbPJADT8>

or the QR code:



Or you could email us at lorraine.webb@urc.org.uk

families on faith adventures

at home

I wonder whether God is particularly pleased with any one part of creation?

I wonder which is your favourite part of Psalm 104 and why?

I wonder if God created anything we don't know about yet?



I wonder if we get our creativeness from God?

I wonder whether we have any part to play in providing for God's creation?



TO DO TOGETHER...

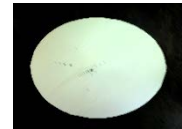
Creation Crowns

You will need:

An old cardboard pizza base or large circle of card
Double sided sticky tape
Leaves, grasses and flowers found on a walk (These were all blown off in the wind - be careful not to pick wildflowers or to spoil your neighbour's plants!)

What you do:

Cut a star shape in the middle of the circle of card.
Place the double-sided tape on the card where you want the flowers and leaves to stick.
Take the backing off and stick your leaves and flowers down.



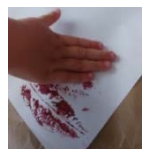
Leaf printing

You will need:

Paper
Paint
Leaves with prominent veins

What you do:

Paint the leaf on the veined side.
Place your leaf paint-side down on the paper, press firmly and then peel upwards leaving a print on the paper.
You can then reposition it and print again, adding more paint as required.



We made some lovely images to go with Psalm 104, and then printed on our cloak to remember the Psalm and the wonder of Creation.





TO DO TOGETHER...

Psalm 104 wind chimes.

You will need: Pringles tubs
String
CD or large circle of thick card
Images for Psalm 104



What you do:

Remove the ends of the tubs and cut the tubes to different lengths.

Cover with coloured paper and decorate using images from Psalm 104.

Make a hole in each side of the top of the tubes and thread a long piece of string through each. Make sure the strings are the same length at each side.



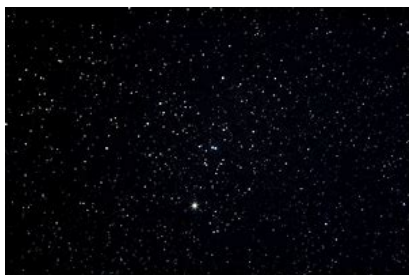
Mark the CD or circle of thick card in five places, evenly spaced around the edge. Attach your strings to the CD or circle of card with tape so that all the tubes hang down evenly.

Take one of the tube bottoms and carefully pierce it in the centre. Thread a piece of string through it and secure in place so that it hangs straight.

Attach this to the centre of the CD or thick card so that it hangs down between the tubes. Attach a small loop of string on top of your wind chimes so that you can hang them somewhere to catch the breeze – maybe in a tree or in an open window somewhere. Hang your wind chime and hear it make beautiful music to the Psalm.



Star gazing



One way of appreciating the wonder of God's creation is to go out at night and look up at the stars. Sometimes it is hard to see the stars in the town or the city because of light pollution so you may need to take a trip out to somewhere with a bit more natural light. But look up at the sky – you might even take a picnic blanket and lie down so you can look straight up. The longer you look, the more you will see. And each night the sky will look a little bit different as the positions of the stars mark the changing seasons, just as it says in the Psalm.



TO DO TOGETHER...

Sun, Moon and Stars Mobile

You will need:

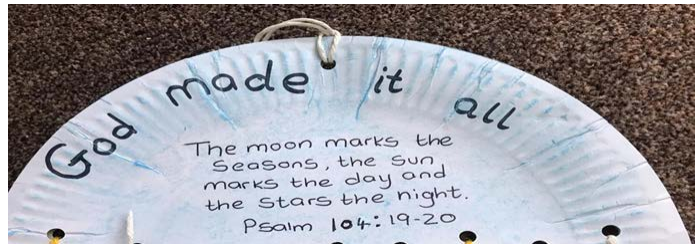


- Some card
(recycled cereal box or packaging is good)
- A paper plate
or a circle of card the size of a tea plate
- String and wool
- Scissors, glue
- Tin foil
- Colouring materials

What you do:

Draw some shapes on the card - you will need stars, circles for full moon and sun and some quarter moon shapes - and cut them out.

Cut the paper plate or circle of card into half as shown in the picture and write the words from the Bible on it. Colour the semi-circle to look like sky. You could glue the other semi-circle behind it to make it stronger.



Colour the shapes or decorate them. You could cover the moon with tin foil. You could also cover your star and sun with wool to give texture or add sparkly gems or shiny paper or anything you choose.

Make holes at the top of each of the separate pieces. Tie a piece of string or wool to each one, making sure they are all different lengths. Make a line of holes evenly spaced along the flat side of your semicircle, enough to hang each of the shapes from it. Tie your sun, moons and stars to the holes in the semicircle. Add a loop at the top and hang it up.





The
United
Reformed
Church

families
on faith adventures

at home

Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

Our Walking the Way Challenge
this time is...

This week's walking the way is a little different.

When we are walking the way, we are thinking about our faith throughout the week and trying to do the things that bring us closer to God.

We have thought a lot, recently, about keeping our eyes open and noticing God in the world around us.

We have thought about doing things for our families and other people as part of our everyday life.

We have thought about praying at all times to say thank you, sorry and please to God and trusting God.

This week, remembering your home and the outdoors and other people, think carefully about what you can do, individually or as a family, to keep God's world clean and healthy and beautiful and fed. Can you reuse, recycle, repurpose things instead of just throwing them away?

Can you reduce your use of electricity by turning lights off or using the TV or computer less or walk/cycle instead of using the car at all this week?

Can you try not to use more water than you need to or take more food than you need? Each little thing you do can make a difference.

And remember to thank God for all the good things that you have.



The
United
Reformed
Church

**families
on faith adventures**

at home

Adventurers Go!

You've shared together, now share with us!

Why not send photos of your crafts, your treasure boxes, your Walking the Way challenges - or dress up to make a tableau of the Big Story and take a photo to send in.

Email your photos to: lorraine.webb@urc.org.uk
with parental permission for them to be used in publicity and online URC social media.

Alternatively, share them on our Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/URCchildren.and.youth/>

Remember you can find more resources on our website:
<https://urc.org.uk/resources-for-children-and-youth>

And if you've enjoyed these activities, why not see whether your local church runs Pilots or Friends on Faith Adventures (FOFA) when things get back to normal again.

Created for you by Nicola Grieves (Eastern Synod), Judy Harris (National Synod of Wales), Hannah Middleton (Northern Synod), Philip Ray (Wessex Synod, North), Lorraine Webb (Programme Officer for CYW), and Ruth White (Wessex Synod, South) on behalf of the CYDO+ and Children's and Youth Work team and Pilots.



The
United
Reformed
Church