

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:

It's The Small Things

Luke 13: 18 - 19



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

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.

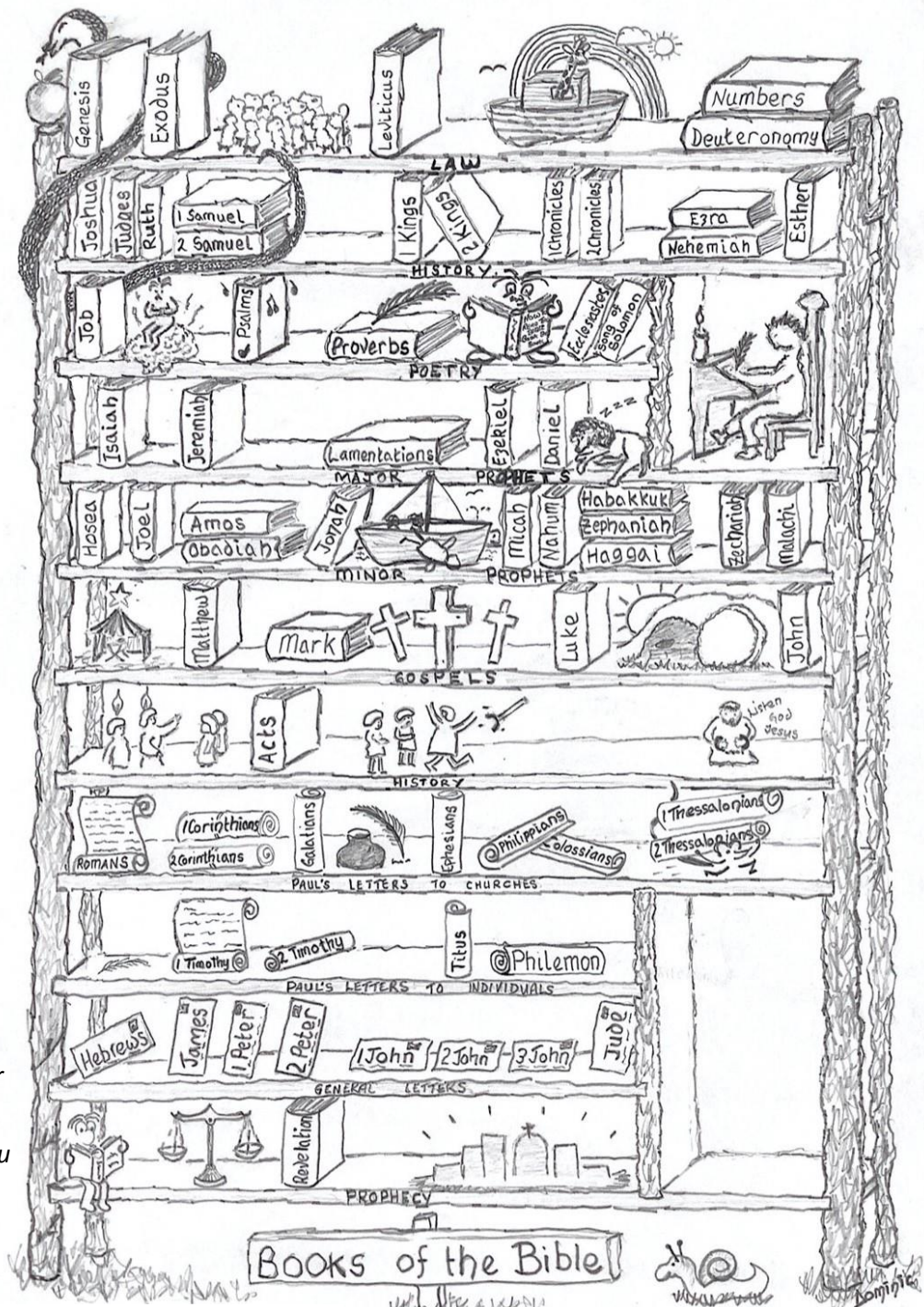


Image by - Dominic Barton

Bible context – Luke

The book of Luke was written around 60 AC by Luke, the doctor who became a disciple of Jesus. Luke wanted to show Jesus being with people and remind us that Jesus came as the saviour for Gentiles as well as Jews.

Jesus often used stories, called parables, to encourage people to think about God and Faith. The parable of the Mustard Seed is one of the shortest Jesus told, only a few sentences long in 2 verses. Perhaps Jesus was showing us that all we need is a tiny bit of faith and God will make it grow and grow.

Luke 13 v 18 - 19 (The International Children's Bible)

Then Jesus said, "What is God's kingdom like? What can I compare it with? God's kingdom is like the seed of the mustard plant. A man plants this seed in his garden. The seed grows and becomes a tree. The wild birds build nests on its branches."

International Children's Bible® Copyright© 1986, 1988, 1999, 2015 by Tommy Nelson™, a division of Thomas Nelson.

Online versions of the story

Watch and listen

A short explanation by children for children (PursueGodKids)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VF8IWZUJL4>

Grace Place Kids Puppets <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnnxF-dq6SM>

Faith through the eyes of children <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsXdYwe0TJE>

Short story by SJR Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AknfwLHjPAM>

Dance and sing

I live by faith Kidsonthemove <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQSk6cqN6-I>

Faith as small Doug Horley <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27XDzLYStOA>

Every move I make <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPvnZILn6EY>

Unshakeable Faith Powerpack <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EM7BBFJ1I-U>

Ideas to retell/explore the story

Holy habits – encourage small habits and grow

Use 2 body outlines to explore the small things we do to grow healthily (Healthy Habits) and then the small things we can do to grow spiritually (Holy Habits). Choose one or two small things to start doing / do more to grow your faith. Encourage each other to do them, together if possible.



Modern Parables on the Theme

You might have these books at home or in your local library. They are like modern parables, simple stories that can help children to think around the theme.

The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7nZT98WR58>

The Flower man by Mark Ludy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cE8cZC6DoqA>

The Smartest Giant in Town by Julia Donaldson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfiPrA8E3qE>

The Enormous Turnip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGw5yTOPTSQ>

Write Your Own Parable

After exploring Jesus' parable and some modern ones, why not have a go at making up your own story/parable: A short simple story to help people think about how important the little things are.



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Dinner table Chat Activities

Table quotes (Good for older children)

Here is a small selection of quotes about the small things. Choose one each mealtime and discuss it. What does it mean? What do you notice? Do you agree with it? Can you think of any others?

“Small things done with great love will change the world.”

Mother Teresa

“The way we do small things determines the way we do EVERYTHING.”

Robin Sharma

“If you do enough small things right, big things can happen”

John Wooden

“Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.” Robert Breault

“You need to let the little things that would ordinarily bore you suddenly thrill you.”

Andy Warhol

“It's always the little things that make the big things happen.”

Jeffrey Fry

“I believe that no matter what situation in life you find yourself, there is room for you to take control of little things, which ultimately adds up to big things.”

Lisa J. Shultz, (*Lighter Living: Declutter. Organize. Simplify.*)

“Do something great today.

Be kind to one person.

Be loving to another soul.

Say thank you.

Little things are not tiny matters.”

Hrishikesh Agnihotri

“I live to enjoy life by the littlest things, feeling the grass between my toes, breathing fresh air, watching the wind sway the trees, enjoying the company of loved ones, a deep conversation, getting lost in a good book, going for a walk in nature, watching my kids grow up. Just the feeling itself of being alive, the absolute amazing fact that we are here right now, breathing, thinking, doing.”

Marigold Wellington

“Many little steps joined one after the other is what makes success possible. Keep doing little stuff every day. Don't give up!”

Israelmore Ayivor

“Never underestimate the power of a simple smile, a kind word or the acknowledgement of another. Little gestures can move mountains.”

David Cuschieri

“While getting lost in all those little things that seem so important, don't forget the little things that matter...”

Virginia Alison

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:

It's The Small Things

Luke 13: 18 - 19



Child's
magnifying
glass if you
have one



Small things



Something with
rainbow colours
for God's promise



Toy tree or twigs

Sealed container
holding edible
seeds such as
sunflower seeds



Toy bird



Green fabric or leaves

Pray Together

Plant a Prayer

Plant a spring bulb or some seeds. Decorate a lollypop stick asking God to help you grow. Think about how you can grow with God and share the good news of Jesus with others.

Your bulb will need you to water it and look after it through the winter. Each time you water your bulb ask God to help you nurture and grow your faith.



Lord,
help us to grow into the people you want us to be.
As we read our Bibles and learn about you,
help us to grow.
As we pray and worship you,
help us to grow.
As we try to live the way you want us to,
help us to grow.
When we find following you difficult,
help us to grow.
And as we tell other people about you,
help us to grow.
Amen.

(Prayer adapted from ROOTS for Churches)

Take Time to Pray

Taking a moment throughout the day to talk to God helps us to grow in our faith.

Cut out pictures from a magazine or draw your own pictures of things that help you to think about times when you can pray. For example:

- When you get up and when you go to bed
- When you eat
- When you are happy
- When you are sad
- When you want to say thank you



Place the pictures on a circle of card or a paper plate. Make a pointer like a clock hand from some stiff card and, using a paper fastener, attach it to the centre of your circle like a clock. You can use this to remind you to pray at different times of the day. As a family you could make a clock together and put it up on the wall, setting the pointer to a time for everyone to pray together.

Pray Together

Made, Loved and Kept

Julian of Norwich was a lady who lived in a very small room attached to a church in Norwich a very long time ago in 1373. She had a vision from God where God was holding something very small like a hazelnut. In that vision she understood that no matter how small, God made it, God loved it and God kept it.

Find a conker or hazelnut or acorn - something very small that grows into something very big! If you cannot find anything, you could use a marble or a small pebble instead.

Find somewhere you are comfortable and can be quiet. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, be still. Rest your hands open on your lap holding the hazelnut, acorn, or conker.

Imagine the small thing in your hand representing you or someone else you want to pray about. Give thanks to God for 'making it, for loving it, and for keeping it'. Repeat the words 'made, loved, kept' quietly or silently in your head. Giving thanks to God for making it all, for loving it all, and for keeping it all.

If you like, carry your hazelnut/acorn/conker in your pocket or place it where you will see it throughout the day as a reminder.



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I wonder whether you can write your own parable about something small making a big difference?

I wonder what small thing you've done that's made a difference to someone else without you knowing?

I wonder how long it takes a seed to grow into a tree?

I wonder how you manage to nurture and keep your faith growing bit by bit, especially while churches and church groups are unable to open fully?

I wonder what helps you remember to talk to God and walk the Jesus way?





TO DO TOGETHER...

Exploding Ice-Lolly Sticks

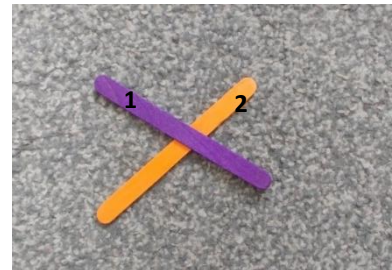
You will need: Lots of lolly sticks
(available from Poundland)

What you do:

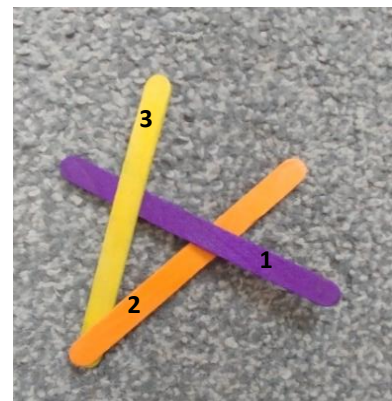
(This works best on a carpet)

Cross two sticks into an "X" shape.

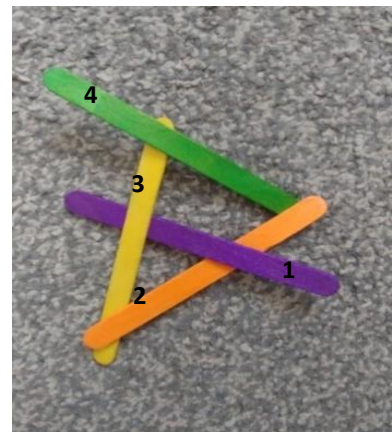
The stick on top will be stick 1 and the stick on the bottom will be stick 2 (see picture).



Add stick 3 by tucking one end under the end of stick 2. The new stick should go over stick 1.



Add another stick by tucking its end under stick 2 and letting the rest lay over stick 3. Continue adding sticks one at a time to each side in this way to create a chain.



You may need to hold the sticks in place as you join them to stop the explosion happening before you are ready!
A few extra pairs of hands are always helpful at this point!

As soon as you think you have made the chain of lolly sticks long enough, let go and step back quickly. You can see our version on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/EhaikwyJ5fA>



TO DO TOGETHER...

Bug Houses



You will need: Bamboo canes, sticks, leaves, pinecones.
A container to put them into, preferably wooden.

What you do:

Fill your container with the materials you have gathered and place it outside in a space where your bugs can find a home.
It does not need to be as pretty as this one – bugs are happy to have somewhere to live safely and are less worried about what it looks like!

Growing Trees

You will need: Brown and green paper*
Scissors
Sellotape

*Or create your own tree design on white paper, by drawing bark and leaf shapes on white paper.

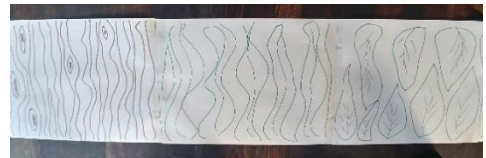


What you do:

Join the sheets of paper together with Sellotape to make one long sheet of paper.

Roll it up into a fairly tight tube and secure the side with tape.

Cut slits down into one end of the roll. If you are really clever, you could try to put the scissors down inside, avoiding the first layer, to give you a tree trunk, but this is very tricky and it won't matter if you can't. It'll just make even more branches, and trees often have branches in different places.



As you hold the trunk steady and pull on the inner paper, your tree will grow and grow and produce branches/leaves. I wonder whether you'll get a bird nesting there 😊

TO DO TOGETHER...

Planting Fruit and Tree Seeds

You will need: Any kind of seeds from your food
A jar or dish Water
Cocktail sticks Kitchen roll/towel
(Flowerpot and potting soil eventually)

What to do:

This example is with an avocado stone which is easy and big, so good for pictures and demonstrating.

With most seeds, particularly stone/bulbs, you need to look carefully to work out the top and bottom. Generally, the top will be slightly more pointed and the bottom will be flatter and may have a crusty end – the potential for sprouting roots!

With larger stone seeds, rest it with the bottom in water and the top dry. You can see we stuck cocktail sticks into the side of the avocado stone so when placed over the jar the bottom could be in water but not sitting touching the bottom. We need to make it easy for any shoots to freely sprout.

Once a root has sprouted you can remove from the water and plant up in some potting soil. Make sure it is not a big pot – new plants like to start in a small confined space.

Eventually a green shoot will break through the top and grow. Keep the soil moist and enjoy seeing your new plant grow into a magnificent tree.

The tree pictured here is an avocado tree which was started in water a year ago. It is now about a metre tall!

Here are some other easy approaches:

Tomatoes – take a circular slice of a tomato (with seeds) and plant in a small pot of potting soil. Keep moist, and carefully prick out and separate the young shoots when there are two baby leaves (gently ease out and plant in separate pots, try and avoid touching the stems).

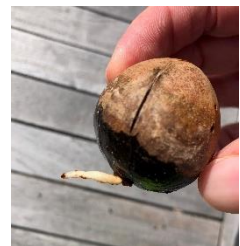
Root Vegetables (Carrots/Leeks) – cut the top off (the end where the leaves would have been originally) and place the cut surface in a dish of water, leaving the top out of the water. Watch as leaves start to grow.

Tree seeds (acorns, conkers, etc) – great time of year for collecting some and planting up. Remove the outer casing (the spiky part of the conker, or the cup of the acorn). Rest in water and wait for the shoots to sprout, or plant the seed straight into moist soil and keep moist.

Very Small Fruit Seeds/Pips – place in between two sheets of moist kitchen roll/towel.

More ideas and approaches can be found on the Blossom channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BlossomTV/search?query=planting+seeds>





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Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

**Our Walking the Way Challenge
this time is...**

At Home:

Try to make sure that you are doing little things through the week that keep your faith alive and growing: Praying, learning, sharing, caring, listening, rejoicing or reading God's word. Can you make one small change to your routine that helps you?

Outside:

Can you find a place where you could plant an acorn, or even plant a tree, and let it grow? Remember to check it's OK to do so. If you can't do that, maybe you could help to weed an area which is getting a bit overgrown. God has chosen us to care for nature and keep it safe.

For Others:

Little things can make a big difference and sometimes even have a ripple effect. Try to share a smile or a laugh or a game – I wonder where that happiness might spread to. Or collect your little coins – 1p and 5p pieces (20p pieces are small too!) – and see if you can raise some money for a charity.



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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.



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