



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:

Handbook for Life
The Book of James



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 richardgunther.org via freebibleimages.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.

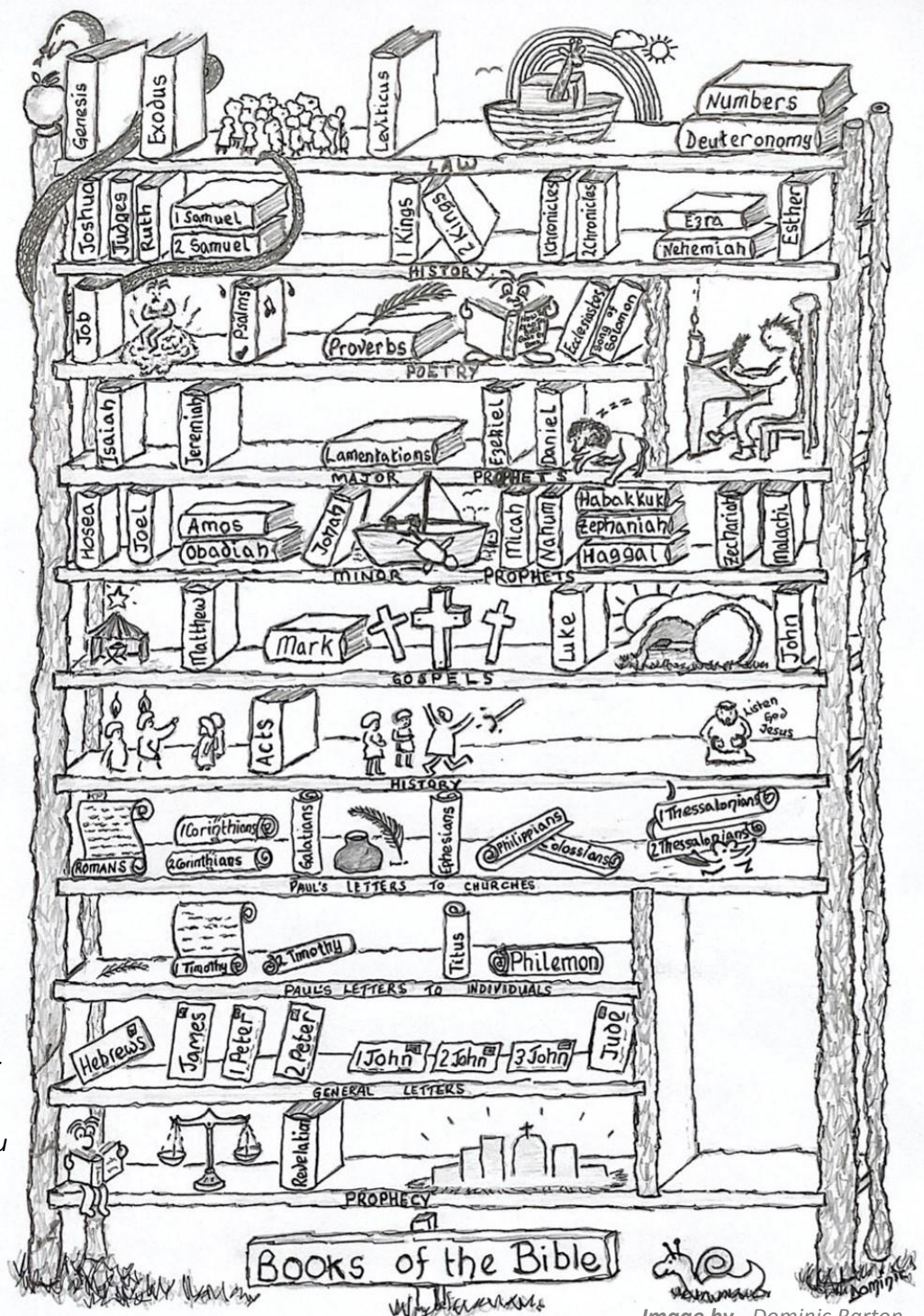
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



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 – James

James was written around 44 AD by the younger half-brother of Jesus. James wasn't believed to be a disciple; in fact, some say he didn't recognise Jesus as the Son of God until after Jesus' resurrection. However, there is no doubt that growing up with Jesus for around thirty years left an impression on James who later wrote about the character of a Christian. James went on to become a leader in the churches of Jerusalem and he believed in the power of prayer. He would kneel when he prayed and was said to have rough hard skin on his knees as a result - his nickname was Camel Knees. His book is sometimes called the Proverbs of the New Testament as it is a selection of thoughts and wisdom giving practical advice to help us to live a good Christian life, especially during troubled times.

The book was written for the people of God who are scattered all across the lands.

The Story – James (The International Children's Bible)

There are many pieces of advice on how to live in the book of James, here are just a few:

You will have many kinds of troubles. But when these things happen, you should be very happy. You know that these things are testing your faith. And this will give you patience.

1 v 2-3

If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. God is generous. He enjoys giving to all people, so God will give you wisdom.

1 v 5

When a person is tempted and still continues strong, he should be happy. After he has proved his faith, God will reward him with life forever. God promised this to all people who love him.

1 v 12

Every good action and every perfect gift is from God. These good gifts come down from the Creator of the sun, moon, and stars. God does not change like their shifting shadows. God decided to give us life through the word of truth. He wanted us to be the most important of all the things he made.

1 v 17 – 18

My dear brothers, always be willing to listen and slow to speak. Do not become angry easily.

1 v 19

One law rules over all other laws. This royal law is found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbour as you love yourself." If you obey this law, then you are doing right.

2 v 8

A person's body that does not have a spirit is dead. It is the same with faith. Faith that does nothing is dead!

2 v 26

Is there anyone among you who is truly wise and understanding? Then he should show his wisdom by living right. He should do good things without being proud. 3 v 13

So give yourselves to God. Stand against the devil, and the devil will run away from you. Come near to God, and God will come near to you. 4 v 7-8

You, too, must be patient. Do not give up hope. The Lord is coming soon 5 v 8

If one of you is having troubles, he should pray. If one of you is happy, he should sing praises. If one of you is sick, he should call the church's elders. The elders should pour oil on him in the name of the Lord and pray for him. 5 v 13-14

Scriptures quoted from the International Children's Bible®, copyright© 1986, 1988, 1999, 2015 by Tommy Nelson. Used by permission.

Online versions of the story

Watch and Listen

James 1 v 22 with Jovis Bon Hovis <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCKsRz3IBc4>

Understanding James by Bible Project (suitable for older children)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qn-hLHWwRYY>

Words are powerful by Douglas https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7zMPp0Dh_I

Dance and Sing

The power of the tongue by VBS <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxQSWoI4jeo>

Draw near to God by Vintage Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jm411vO3Y0U>

Wise Up by elementary Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XL2z8PVq6qw>

Never gonna give up by Doug Horley https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfZ_7KSO-pE

Taste and See by Bethel Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJdFKYZRxcM>

Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

James Sandwich (not Jam)

The book of James has been described (by one of our team) as a sandwich. It starts and finishes with the reminder that God is with us and we should pray to God (this is the bread) then it talks about lots of different parts of life (these are the different fillings). Why not design a lockdown sandwich that tells your story and reminds you of some of the messages in the Book of James.

Here's one that we made:

Two pieces of bread – We drew a heart on the bread to remind us that God is with us at the beginning and will still be with us at the end of this lockdown

A soft spread on the bread – We used margarine, this reminded us of the normal times, that hold everything together

A favourite yummy filling – We used salami, this reminded us of the soft, enjoyable parts of life at the moment, the things we look forward to each day/week

A hard/crunchy filling – We used hard cheese, this reminded us of the hard times, the stinky situations we are in

A vegetable filling – We used green leaves, this reminded us about the new opportunities, new hopes that we see each week

So this was our James sandwich. Not all the parts are always pleasant on their own but, put together, it made for a rather nice lunch.

Have a go at designing your own lockdown James sandwich. I wonder what you will use for each layer?



James' Story

Can you imagine what it must have been like being the brother of Jesus? In most families there is an element of comparison that is made between brothers and sisters but who could compare with Jesus who did nothing wrong. Perhaps this week, if you have siblings, spend the week celebrating the differences between you. Notice the amazing things about your brother or sister and make a point of telling them.

A Helpful Speech

In 1999 Baz Luhrmann performed a speech to music called *Everybody is Free (To wear sunscreen)*. It was a popular musical piece that also inspired those who listened to it. Here is a version of it <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCuEEf4mGsk>

We have taken the book of James and used it to produce our own version, you can listen to it here – Enjoy!! https://youtu.be/Okn-YhiA_3E

Perhaps you could write and record your own

Table Top Discussions

Each day over a mealtime, have a quick conversation about rules for living. Here are a few questions to get you going.

- What is the best life advice you have ever been given?
- If you were going to offer one piece of life advice, what would it be?
- Which piece of advice from the book of James do you like the most?
- What do you think Jesus would have said was the best life advice?
- What advice do you think your town/church/family needs to hear right now?



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:

Handbook for Life
The Book of James



A clock or watch
(unbreakable)

A mirror



Some letters in an envelope



A smiley face



A toy
boat

Heart shaped toy or
cushion or piece of
material

Something
with rainbow
colours for
God's promise



**As with all small things,
please be aware of the
risk of these being put
into mouths, eyes, noses
and ears. Please
supervise small children!**

Pray Together

Ripple Boat Prayers

You will need: Clean used plastic or foil containers (make sure they do not have holes in)
Paper, thick is best.
You can colour or use coloured paper, you could repurpose a used envelope.
Drinking straw, pencil or craft/ lollipop stick.
Some Blu-tac, playdough, plasticine.
If you do not have these, mix a small amount of flour and water to make a dough.

What you do:

Decide where you are going to sail your boat as this will affect how big you can make your boat. If you have a bath great but if you are going to use a dish of water small is best.

Select a container to make your boat. Make your sail out of paper and place two holes in the sail to push your straw through. If you are using a lollipop/craft stick for your mast glue it to the back of your sail.

Using your preferred choice of tac make a good ball, flatten and place in the middle of your container and then push your mast into it. James described how our words and actions are like a rudder that guide the direction we go in. If you can add a bit to make a rudder, think about how a faith in Jesus can be the rudder of our lives and can guide us in the right direction instead of us just bobbing along whichever way the wind blows us.

Fill a container with water and watch your boat float on the water. Then make a ripple with your hands.

Watch your boat sail and think about the things that cause ripples for you. Home schooling, missing your friends, not being able to meet your grandparents etc. When times are tough, God sails with us. Even if the boat seems small and the water and waves big, God is with us, through it all. Talk to God about the things that worry you and thank God for sending Jesus to be our guide, steering us through. Ask God to help us make wise choices and to trust Him in all we think and say and do.

Amen



Pray Together

A Special Place

Come near to God, and God will come near to you.

James 4:8

Is there a special place where you can meet with God where you can sit and talk to God? God wants to spend time with you. Find your favourite spot to sit, get comfy with a cosy blanket or your favourite cuddly toy. You could light a candle or a soft lamp and just sit quietly with God.

To help you to sit quietly try twisting two pipe cleaners together reminding you that God is always close by you.

Here is some music that you can listen to as you sit and rest with God:

[Scripture Lullabies - I will never leave you - YouTube](#)

[Hidden In My Heart Volume I - "The Peace of God" by Scripture Lullabies - YouTube](#)



Pray Together

The Power of Prayer James 5:13

At the end of James he tells us: if you are having trouble, pray. We can bring all our prayers to God and James gives us lots of ideas for prayer.

13 If you are having trouble, you should pray. And if you are feeling good, you should sing praises. If you are sick, ask the church leaders to come and pray for you. Ask them to put olive oil on you in the name of the Lord.

Create your own prayer reminders to help you pray. Find a jar or container and some wooden lolly sticks or pieces of card. Write words on the sticks or card to help you to pray just as James tells us.

Here are a few ideas

Heal...

Bless...

Forgive...

Sorry...

Help...

Praise...

Thank you...



Fill your jar or container with lots of sticks - you can write the same word lots of times. Place the jar in the middle of your meal table and pray together at the beginning or the end of a meal. Take it in turns to pull out a stick and say a prayer using the word on your stick.

As an alternative, you could put your prayer sticks beside your bed and pray in the morning when you wake or before you go to sleep.

Remember the words from James: if you are having trouble talk to God, if you are feeling good sing praises to God.

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I wonder whether you made any New Year's Resolutions and, if you did, which ones will you keep?

I wonder how you stay patient during the tough times?

I wonder if you can remember a time that something someone has said without thinking has caused a problem?



I wonder which is your favourite part of James' letter?

I wonder what you would write in a letter to the older or younger "you", or to someone else, as helpful advice for life?



TO DO TOGETHER...



Bookends

You will need: 2 clean used milk bottles
Water, sand or rice

What you do:

Fill your milk bottle with water, sand or rice.

Write words from the book of James as a word cloud to remind you of our handbook for life.



“Think before you speak; Faith carries you; wisdom; Pray; Believe, don’t doubt; To be happy, be faithful; Every good gift comes from God; God doesn’t change; Be quick to listen and sloooooooooooooow to speak; Get rid of bad habits; God’s words are in your heart; Pay attention; You have the power; Take care of each other; Anger doesn’t help; Listen; the poor can be rich in faith; Love your neighbour; Read the Bible; See a need – do a deed; Faith and actions; Be right with God; Who is wise? Prove it, live it, show it; Wisdom; Be peacemakers; Come near to God; Be real; laugh; cry; God will lift you up; Don’t criticize or judge others; Be humble, not proud; Its ok, to not be ok; Be patient; Keep hoping; God is near; Sing praises; Pray; We are not alone”



Alternative - you could write and colour the words all in different shapes and colours or cut the letters out of magazines and newspapers and put them as a collage in a clip frame or other picture frame. Put it on your wall as a daily reminder of our handbook for life.

OR why not get together as a family and record a spoken word cloud with some music like this: https://youtu.be/Okn-YhiA_3E



TO DO TOGETHER...

Growing peace

You will need: Cress seed
Kitchen towel

What you do:

Place your kitchen roll on a tray and dampen it. Carefully cut a corner off the seed packet to act as a spout. Write the word PEACE in seeds on your damp kitchen towel. Place it on a warm sunny window-sill and leave to seeds to grow. This will take about a week. Make sure the kitchen towel is kept damp but do not water it too much or the seeds will move out of place.
(alternatively use wildflower seed and write out your word in the garden)



Peace badge

You will need: Crisp packets
Permanent marker pen
Safety pin

What you do:

On an empty and clean crisp packet, write a word or draw an image which reminds you of our handbook for life.

This next bit will need a grown up. Place the crisp packet, writing side down, under a warm grill. Watch it carefully and, as it shrinks with the heat, flatten it out so that you can still see the writing on it. Occasionally turn it over too.

Once it has shrunk down, wait until it cools and then attach a safety pin to the back using strong tape (I used electrical tape). Or you could attach it to a keyring.

Now wear your badge to remind you of our handbook for life.



Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

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

At Home:

Look at the advice and the words we have been thinking about this week from James' letter, choose one that is particularly helpful to you, and see if you can apply it to everything you think, say and do this week.

Outside:

This is a challenge you can interpret in any way you choose. Make some messages of peace and leave them for other people to find while you are outside for your exercise this week. It might be that you plant seeds, wear a badge, yarn bomb with things you have sewed, put up a poster, tie ribbons on trees or lampposts, paint rocks, chalk messages..... spread a message of peace and hope to cheer people as they pass.

For Others:

Going into another lockdown means that some people are feeling more isolated than ever. Some people have been separate from others for almost a whole year. Go out of your way to make contact with those you can think of who are alone.



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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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