

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:

Keep Your Eyes on Jesus
Matthew 14 verses 22-34



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.

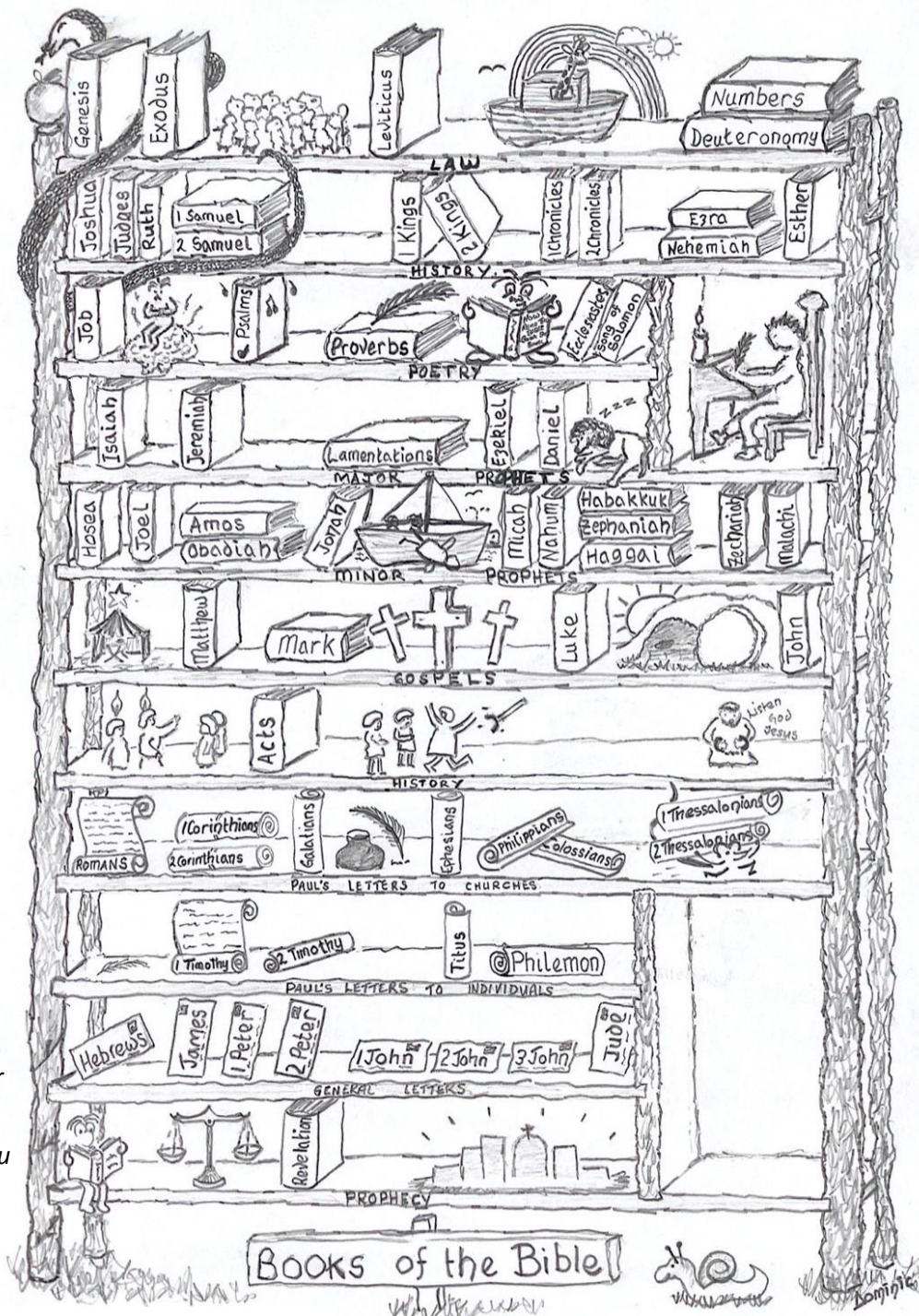
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



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.



Bible context – Matthew

The book of Matthew was written by the disciple Matthew, who was a tax collector before meeting Jesus. It is believed to be written with the Jewish people in mind, showing how many of the Old Testament prophecies are being fulfilled in Jesus. In this story Matthew shows us one of Jesus' many miracles and reminds us that Jesus was the son of God.

The story encourages us to consider: Where is our focus? What are we concentrating on during these difficult stormy times?

The Story – Matthew 14 v 22 -33 (Adapted from The Message Bible)

As soon as the meal was finished, he insisted that the disciples get in the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he dismissed the people. With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night. Meanwhile, the boat was far out to sea when the wind came up against them and they were battered by the waves. At about four o'clock in the morning, Jesus came toward them walking on the water. They were scared out of their wits. "A ghost!" they said, crying out in terror. But Jesus was quick to comfort them. "Courage, it's me. Don't be afraid."

Peter, suddenly bold, said, "Master, if it's really you, call me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come ahead."

Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus. But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve and started to sink. He cried, "Master, save me!"

Jesus didn't hesitate. He reached down and grabbed his hand. Then he said, "Faint-heart, what got into you? Why did you doubt?"

The two of them climbed into the boat, and the wind died down. The disciples in the boat, having watched the whole thing, worshiped Jesus, saying, "This is it! You are God's Son for sure!"

Online versions of the story

Watch and listen

Cartoon by Saddleback Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVy9HGr3Qiq>

Toddle Tales story and song time https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6C_qzNqCKU

Animation by Crossroads kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HG6I4fkB6wE>

Told by children at PursueGod Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCIZIMtTpu8>

Dance and sing

Fixing my eyes on you <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POKPmF4Bm2k>

Out God is a great big God <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaXPXWBcE3I>

He will hold me fast by Keith and Kristyn Getty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=936BapRFHaQ>

Never let go of me by VBS https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJqIPk_NkZY

Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

Thinking about focus

Choose some games that require concentration and focus e.g. throwing a ball into a bucket (where are you aiming?) or stacking up cubes. As you play together, talk about the importance of keeping your eyes on the part you need to focus on not the other distractions around. A dancer learning to twirl around is taught to find a spot and keep their eyes on it; as their body turns, the head is the last part of the body to turn, keeping the dancer in balance and on point. The same can be found in tightrope walkers fixing their eyes on a point up ahead, footballers keeping their eye on the ball, and sailors keeping their eye on the horizon. What other examples can you think of?

Mediation – Keeping eyes on Jesus

Find a quiet space, indoors or outside. Have comfy pillows and sheets to lie on. Gentle music playing in the background can help. One person **slowly and gently** reads the script, whilst others take part in the mediation. Allow pauses in between each paragraph.

Introduction – We are going to use a mindfulness meditation.

It's going to help us to think about what we focus on.

In the Bible we hear a story of Jesus walking on water. Read the passage Matthew 14 v 22 - 33

You might like to think about this story more as we relax.

Lie down comfortably and close your eyes. You can use pillows or blankets to make yourself as comfortable as you can be.



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Listen to my voice and relax. Sometimes we get a giggle during relaxation, this is ok but try not to disturb the people around you as we are all concentrating.

Take a few deep, breaths as you begin to relax. Breath in long and deep to the count of 5, (1,2,3,4,5) hold it for 3 (1,2,3) then release it slowly to the count of 6 (1,2,3,4,5,6)

Breath a few times till we are all relaxed.

Bring all your attention to your body, notice how it feels. Feel your whole body from the top of your head to your feet, feel it on the floor. Tense your whole body, tense and squeeze it tightly. Hold this tension for two deep breaths.

Then release all tension and relax (repeat this if they are still not totally relaxed)

Place yourself in our story. Picture yourself as one of Jesus' disciples on the beach. You have just had a lovely supper of cooked fish. Your tummy feels warm and full with the delicious meal. You can still smell the fish that you ate.

Now Jesus is telling you all to get into the boat and sail across to the other side of the large lake. You climb into the boat, and off you go. You can feel the gentle rocking and hear the water lapping at the side of the boat. You look back to the beach and you can see the crowds leaving, as you drift further out on the lake. You see Jesus walking up the hill, he alone.

You turn your head away. you can't yet see the other side of the lake. You can see the water ahead; the waves seem to be getting higher. You look around the boat at the faces of your friends. Some are sleeping, some are sitting quietly, others are smiling as they remember the day they have just had together.

You notice that it beginning to get dark now, it's very late at night. The wind is picking up. You can feel the breeze on your face and your hands begin to feel colder. The wind and waves are getting stronger, the boat is being tossed around, you can feel the spray of water on your face. The boat is struggling now.

You look back towards the beach, wondering if you should turn back. But what is this you see? Suddenly, you see a figure coming towards you, your heart is beating faster, through the mist and waves you can see it clearer now. It looks like a person, walking towards you on the water. All of you on the boat begin to panic.

A voice comes from the shape, you strain your ears trying to hear it clearer. It is the voice of Jesus, he is calling, shouting out to you in the boat. Can you hear him? The voice says, "It is me - don't be afraid". You let out a sigh of relief; it is Jesus, walking on the water towards you.

Now your heart beats with excitement. You want to get out of the boat, you want it to be with Jesus, standing on the waves. You hear Jesus calling you by name; can you hear him saying your name? He is calling you to him.

You take a deep breath and step out of the boat onto the water, your eyes on Jesus, as you stand on the water next to him. You can feel the waves under your feet. But now you look down and you notice the waves; how is this possible? You begin to worry. You start to sink.

Quickly, you can feel yourself slipping under the cold water. You reach up towards the surface and a hand grabs hold of yours, scooping you up. You are safe. Jesus has hold of you and together you get back in the boat.

You take a breath - you are back in the boat, and Jesus is with you.

How do you respond to this? Lie still and calm for a while, feel the floor beneath your body again.

Know that in the storms in your life, Jesus is with you; during the times you feel you are sinking, He is reaching out to grab hold of you and keep you safe.

Stay as long as you want, talk to Jesus and feel him with you

Amen

Here is a guided meditation on the passage suitable for older young people and adults.

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/imaginative-contemplation-jesus-walks-on-water/>

Dinner Table Chat Activities

During your mealtimes this week have conversations about what you are focussing on at the moment. Is it the problem or the solution?

- *We all have storms in our lives. What is it you fear right now?*
- *How are you currently dealing with this fear?*
- *How can Jesus help you in this situation? Spend a few minutes imagining yourself facing this fear with Jesus beside you, saying "Do not be afraid. Take courage. I am with you."*
- *Are there any practical steps you can take in your faith to help you with this fear and to keep your eyes on Jesus?*
- *How do we fix our eyes on Jesus e.g. finding space to be quiet and read our bible, pray, reflect on words of Jesus.*

Bath Time Fun

During bath time this week, have fun exploring what floats and what doesn't in the bath. Encourage the children to choose things to take into the bath to test. What makes some things float and others sink? Once something is floating can you make it sink by splashing the water around it like a storm? Choose a small doll and try to design something that can help them to float. If you only have a shower, then why not fill a bowl with water and enjoy some water play?

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:

Keep Your Eyes on Jesus
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A tray of rice, preferably a mix of plain rice and blue coloured rice. You can do this by adding food colouring and ½ tsp of vinegar to a cup of rice in a Ziploc bag, mixing well and then allowing to dry.



A glove
(it can be fun to use a washing up glove inflated!)

Something with rainbow colours for God's promise



Small figure



Binoculars (real children's binoculars or two toilet roll tubes fastened together)



Small toy boat



Wooden Spoon with faces on each side – happy and worried. Or circles of card to hide in the rice with faces drawn on and some teaspoons to stir the rice with.

Pray Together

Floating Eggs

You will need: 2 glasses
1 egg
Three tablespoons of salt



Fill the first glass with water and place the egg carefully in the glass - it will sink to the bottom. Fill the second glass with water and mix the three tablespoons of salt into it until it is all dissolved and the water is clear. Carefully place an egg into the glass and watch as it floats.

Peter stepped out of the boat but, when he stopped looking at Jesus, he started to sink. When you add the egg to the first glass, think about the things that are difficult and challenge you. Add the egg to the second glass and ask God to help you. Think about how Jesus reached out and held Peter. That is how each of us are held, even in the really difficult times. We may not be able to see God, but God is always there to support us.

Walking on Water

Draw round your feet and cut them out. You can use card or paper and whatever colour you choose. Try to use scrap paper or cardboard if you can.



On a separate piece of paper or card draw, colour or paint some waves and make a watery picture.

Stick your feet cut outs onto the paper and you have made a mat that you can stand on.

Place the mat somewhere quiet, take off your shoes and socks and step onto your footprints. Imagine, like Peter, you are stepping onto the water. Close your eyes and think about how it might have felt. How did the water feel? Was it cold?

Spend some time quietly thinking about keeping your eyes looking towards Jesus. Let go of the things that might make you feel like you are sinking and say thank you to God for all the things that you are thankful for.

Pray Together

Glitter Jar

You will need: Clear glue
Food colouring
Glitter or table confetti
Screw top jar or bottle



Fill your bottle a third full of clear glue or you could use glitter glue. Put in small amount of blue food colouring or any colour you choose. Add a tablespoon of glitter or table confetti and fill the jar with warm water to help it mix with the glue. Put the top on the jar and screw the lid tightly, then shake well to mix all the ingredients. Your glitter jar is now ready to use.



Find a space to sit comfortably and place your jar where you can see it. Shake the jar and sit and watch as the glitter falls. Listen to some calm music and spend some time just sitting quietly with God.

Here is some music you might like to listen to.

When you are sleeping by Nick and Becky Drake

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGUMr6bSLxU>

I wonder what thoughts and feelings the other disciples had at each stage of this story?

I wonder whether you can think of a time when you needed to trust someone else in order to do something?

I wonder what is your favourite bit of this story?



I wonder why Peter stopped looking at Jesus?

I wonder what stops you looking to Jesus?



TO DO TOGETHER...

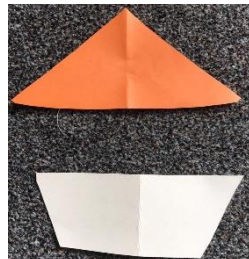
Jesus Walks on the Water

You will need: Paper plate or circle of firm card
Some straws
Colouring pens
Glue
Scissors
Scraps of paper



What you do:

- Draw a wave pattern in the centre of your plate and cut along the line.
- Colour sea on the lower half and sky on the upper half. Leaving a gap in the middle, attach the two halves of the plate together, gluing or taping only at each edge.
- Using scraps of paper, make a boat shape and a sail. Fold the boat shape in half to help it stand out.
- Then attach a drinking straw to the back of the boat as a mast (you could use a pipe cleaner or a piece of rolled paper instead). Fold sail in half and stick it around the straw.



- Stick the boat to your picture: tuck it under the waves in the middle, allowing it to stick out a little to give it some shape.
- Cut some circles, draw faces on them and place them in the boat, peeping out – the disciples can now watch Jesus walk on the water.
- Using the template (in this pack) or drawing your own Jesus, stick him to a straw. You can insert the straw between the two halves of the plate so that Jesus stands up above the water but the straw is hidden by the waves. Now watch him walk towards your boat and in front of it as he walks on the water. If you wanted, you could make a Peter figure too.



TO DO TOGETHER...

Water Painting

You will need: Kitchen foil
Blue green and white paint

What you do:

Cut off a long roll of kitchen foil and paint wavy lines to create a watery look.

Leave it to dry and then walk on water, keep your eye on the horizon, don't sink.



Go for a Sensory Walk

You will need: 4 boxes:
Large if you want to walk in them
Small to do a finger sensory walk

We used water, pebbles, cereal, but you can find anything you want to put in them.

A box of cornflour

What you do:

Create three boxes by putting various textures in them. This works best if they are a bit difficult to walk in and to get across them you must move fast. If you have difficulty moving quickly or very sensitive feet, choose gentler textures. This should be fun, not torture!



One box you can create is a cornflour paste mix. You need 1 ½ cups of cornflour to 1 cup of water to get the mix right, increasing the quantities proportionally depending on the size of your box. This is amazing stuff: stand too long and you sink, jump on it and it is solid. It is messy so make sure that you protect your surfaces well or do it outside.



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Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

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

At Home:

Sometimes things distract us from looking to Jesus. Find/make/draw something that can help you remember that Jesus is with you at all times and place it somewhere you will see every day. Maybe by your bed so it is the first thing you see every morning and the last thing you see every night. Maybe by the television, or the toy box, or the kettle, or the computer so you see it throughout the day.

Outside:

The rainy weather is here and it's a lovely time to go on a rainy walk and remember that God is with you in the stormy time as well as in the sunshine. Of find a patch of water – either a real stream or a large puddle – and have a game of Pooh Sticks, thinking of how God holds us up like the water holds and moves the sticks or leaves.

For Others:

Jesus reached out to save Peter. Is there a way that you can reach out to others who are in need by offering a helping hand. Perhaps you could find out more about charities such as the RNLI (lifeboats) or Action for Children.



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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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Templates



Template of Jesus for 'Jesus Walks on the Water' craft activity.