

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.

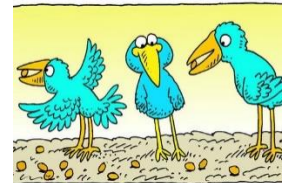
These ideas are designed to be intergenerational - maybe even to be shared with members of the family you can't see now except via the internet.

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:

Wherever You Are
Mark 4 verses 1-9



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.

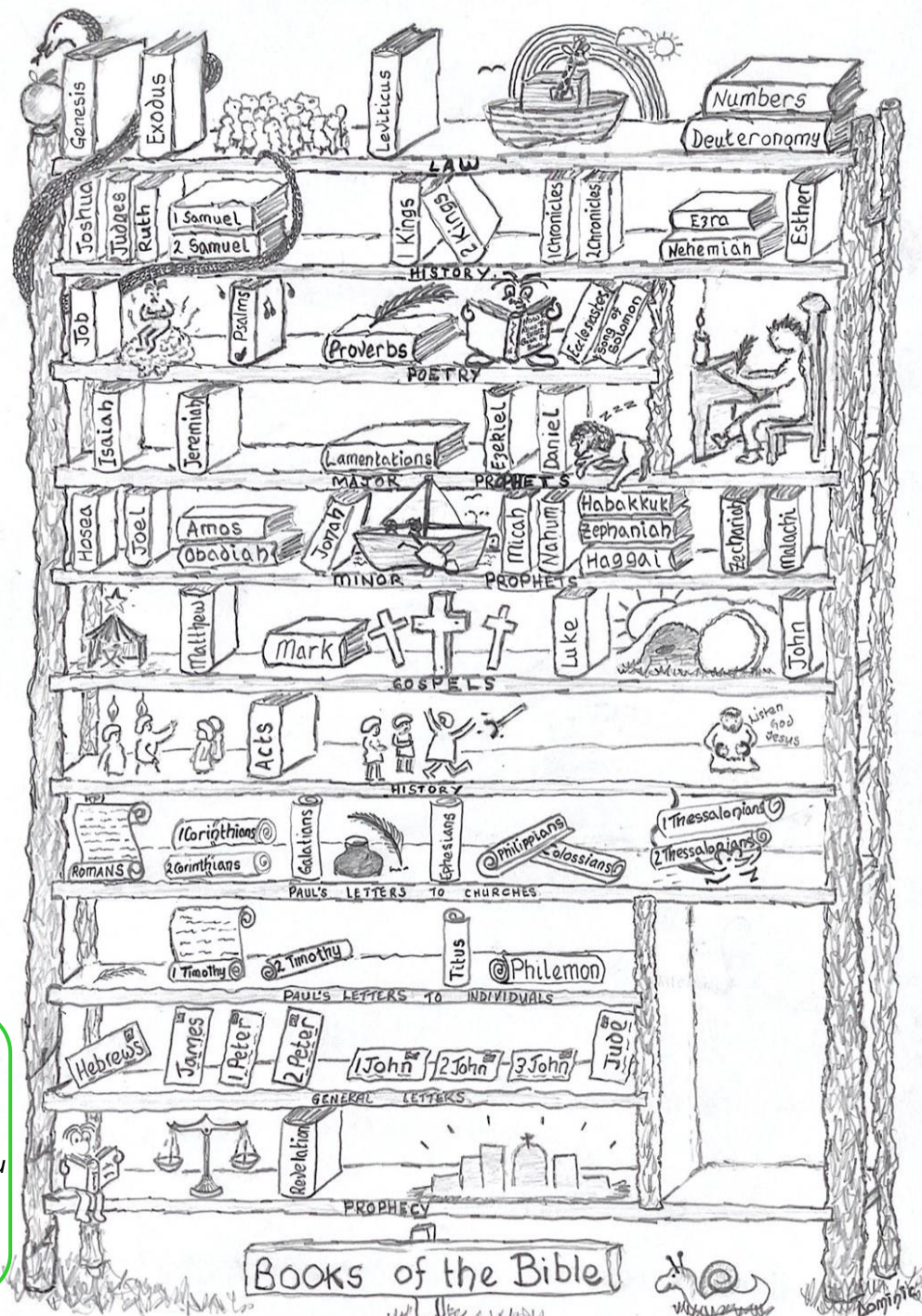
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



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 – Mark

The book of Mark was written around 50 AD by Mark (John Mark) who was a friend of the disciple Peter and later travelled with Paul. The book is full of miracles and Mark wants his readers to see how powerful, kind, and merciful God is.

This tells of a story that Jesus told, a parable. Jesus used parables to show people things about God and God's kingdom in words they might understand.

The Story – Mark 4: 1-9 *(The International Children's Bible)*

Another time Jesus began teaching by the lake. A great crowd gathered around him. So he got into a boat and went out on the lake. All the people stayed on the shore close to the water. Jesus used many stories to teach them. He said, "Listen! A farmer went out to plant his seed. While the farmer was planting, some seed fell by the road. The birds came and ate all that seed. Some seed fell on rocky ground where there wasn't much dirt. The seed grew very fast there because the ground was not deep. But when the sun rose, the plants withered. The plants died because they did not have deep roots. Some other seed fell among thorny weeds. The weeds grew and choked the good plants. So those plants did not make grain. Some other seed fell on good ground. In the good ground, the seed began to grow. It grew and made a crop of grain. Some plants made 30 times more grain, some 60 times more grain, and some 100 times more grain."

Then Jesus said, "Let those with ears use them and listen!"

Online versions of the story

Watch and listen

A retelling for all ages by Nicola Grievess

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnyBV6m44hY&list=PLkmtYy-o_QvQzSJRvAfPLTTbcx-aeqRk&index=9

Animation by Max7 suitable for older children

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9lOhGPrRvY>

Cartoon by Saddleback Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSS8huDbriM>

Animation by KidsChurch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6LwEW8jX9A>

Drawn animation from Cartoonworks https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5_1q5DIAjs

Dance and sing

The BIBLE that's the book for me by Listener Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahHWtvOmt2E>

Read your Bible, pray every day for Toddlers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqFNwBsAi2o>

Grow Grow Grow by Jana Alyra <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqFNwBsAi2o>

Grow by Dan Warlow <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KBN05iLhE>

My whole self by LifeKids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRN5FTB87h0>

Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

Modern retelling of the story –

Once a child had a very special message that was so important, he wanted all the town to hear it. He thought about writing it on a big banner and flying it across the town in a plane, only problem was he didn't have a plane. He thought about speaking to every person in the town and passing the message on by mouth, but this would take far too long and he only had one day to do it. Besides, he wasn't allowed to speak to strangers. What could he do?

He decided he would get his friends to help. The group of children spent some time writing the message on paper, photocopied it hundreds of times, then made each one into a paper plane. That afternoon the children rode their bikes through the town, up and down each road in turn and they flew their paper planes into the area, scattering them across the town.



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at home

It was a wonderful idea and was lots of fun too. Surely their important message was now being read and understood by everyone who lived in the town?

However, not all the messages were read and understood.

Some planes fell into the road and the gutters. The road sweeper and litter pickers soon swept them up and they were put into the bin.

Some planes fell into the puddles, rivers and ponds. The water soaked into the paper and the ink began to run fast as the paper disintegrated.

Some planes fell into mail boxes and onto doorsteps where they could be found and read, but they got lost in the pile. Thought to be junk mail, they were tossed away and ignored.

Some paper planes landed at people's feet, or even into their laps as they sat in their gardens. Some flew straight into people's bags, hoods, onto their car bonnets and into their open windows. All the paper planes that landed any place where someone saw it and picked it up, these were the messages that were read and understood.

Game - The farm

This is a good game to play outdoors (the bigger the space the better). It works well with larger groups but could be fun for as few as 4 people.

You will need a bag of coloured sweets, e.g. Skittles or Chewitts.

Scatter the sweets far and wide and randomly.

Next, everyone chooses which animal they will be and what colour sweet is their food. For example, a Cow for the green sweets, a Cockerel for the red and so on.

One person is the farmer, each type of animal has their own farmer who needs to collect all their herd's sweets.

The animals run off to find their food (sweets). When they find it, they stand over it and make their animal noise loudly. This tells the farmer to come running to collect the sweets.

This continues till all the food is collected or the time runs out.

It's loud and lots of fun, especially when some sweets all fall together in the same spot meaning lots of animals are standing in one spot all making their noises.

Excellent game for outside, social distancing fun.

Table Top Discussions

Each day over a mealtime, have a quick conversation. Here are a few questions to get you going:

Jesus told parables to help us understand about God and ourselves. What is this story saying to you today?

What are the things that stop us growing in our faith? What are the things that help us to grow in our faith?

Everything and every person in a parable are there for a reason, they all represent something or someone else e.g. the Sower might be God but what is the seed? What/who do all the elements of this story represent?

A child who heard this story once said that they lived near a farm and seed was expensive and special. The child didn't understand why the farmer would throw it about so randomly. Was the farmer reckless or generous?

What is the message you think God wants people to hear at the moment? How can we pass on this message?

What's in the box?



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

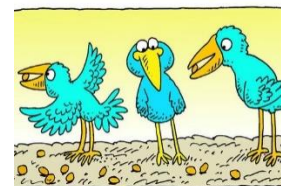
Perhaps older children could help find the things.



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:

Wherever You Are
Mark 4 verses 1-9



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Some gently prickly leaves e.g. holly



A tray of soil



Some stones

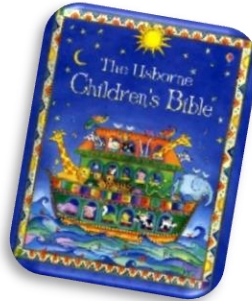


Something with
rainbow colours for
God's promise



Heart shapes to
represent God's love

A children's
Bible



A toy bird



Please supervise small children! Watch out for prickles hurting fingers or seeds being swallowed etc



Something to scatter e.g.
confetti, rice, seeds, lentils

Pray Together

Parable of the Sower prayers

You will need: A large seed (conker, sunflower seed or acorn) or a picture of a seed.



Find a seed to hold.

Hold the seed in the palm of your hand. Say the prayer and follow the actions, pausing as you do each action to take time to pray for different groups of people.

Hold your hand out flat and cup your other hand over it – pray for people who feel alone or are in danger.

Make your hand into a clenched fist – pray for those who are in rocky places; struggling at home or at school.

Make a claw with your other hand and hold it over the seed – pray for those who have had their joy stolen away, and feel sad or frightened.

Cup your hands together, as if holding something precious – pray for yourselves, that you would know God's love flourishing in your hearts.

Amen.

(Adapted from Roots)

Dandelion seed prayers

You will need: A dandelion seed head or any other plant seed head that you can find. As an alternative you could use bubbles to represent the seeds.

Hold the seed head in front of you and blow the seeds. Each time the seeds fly away, think of the people you want to pray for, people you want to know the good news of Jesus and the love that God has for them. As you watch the seeds, say their names and ask God to bless them.

If you are using bubbles, blow the bubbles and, as they float and pop, say the names of the people that you are praying for.



Pray Together

Prayer Tiddly winks

You will need: Counters/seeds, a pen and some masking tape.

The seed in the story fell into different places.

Create a grid on the floor using paper strips or masking tape. Make a cross to form a grid and name each of the four areas created: Bless, thank you, please, sorry.

Create a line to be your starting point. Take it in turn to flick your counters as you would in a game of tiddlywinks. See which square the counter lands in and then say a prayer. Continue to keep playing the game and praying as your counter lands in different squares

Here are some ideas:

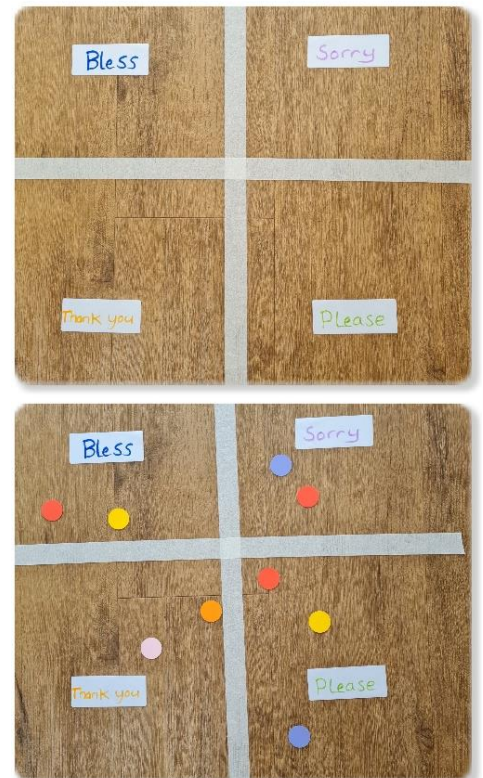
Dear God

Please bless...

Please help

I am sorry...

Thank you for...



I wonder why the farmer is so generous with the seed he is sowing?

I wonder if you can think of times when things feel a bit stony or thorny?

I wonder which is your favourite story that Jesus told?



Illustration by lambsongs.co.nz via freebibleimages.org

I wonder why Jesus used stories to help spread his message?

I wonder what we can do to help us be like good soil for Jesus' message?



TO DO TOGETHER...

Parable of the Sower Messy Play

Scatter Pictures

You will need: Sand or salt

Stencil shapes

What you do:

Put your sand or salt in a bag.

Place your stencil on the ground.

Create a small hole in the bottom of the bag using scissors, and sprinkle the sand or salt from a height, see how the sand fills the stencil and sprinkles around it too. Take the stencil away and look at the image you have created. Think about the parable of the sower and how the seed fell in different places, but it was all part of a bigger picture God was making.

Alternatively: you could create your own images and see how they turn out.





TO DO TOGETHER...

Beans in a bag

You will need:

Broad bean seeds

A plastic food storage bag

Some kitchen towel or paper tissue.

What you do:

Place the kitchen towel into the bag. Carefully place the seed in the middle of it. Sellotape the bag onto the window and pour a small amount of water into the bag, so that the paper soaks it up. Wait patiently and within a week you will see something happening.

Over the next few weeks, you will begin to have a bean growing in the bag.

Look at the roots and the shoots and remember how the seeds in the parable fell and what they needed to grow. What do you need to help you grow in faith?



Growth Charts

You will need: Some A4 paper

Colouring pens

Or use the templates provided.

What you do:

Create a measuring chart with the words from 2 Peter 3:18 "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (see the template provided).

Make some labels with characteristics of a Christian like these -

Reading the bible, Courageous, Loving, Listening, Loved by God, Caring Strong, Helpful, Forgiving, Gentle, Self-Controlled, Patient, Talking to God, Obedient, Champion, Prayerful, Kind.

Choose a label and stand with your back against the chart and measure yourself, marking your height with a label.

As we have thought about the growth of the seeds in the parable, what things help us to grow in faith and what can sometime stop us from growing?





The
United
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Church

**families
on faith adventures**

at home

Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

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

At Home:

God's generous message is that we are loved and cherished and chosen as part of God's family. How often do we tell our family that we love them? Write some sneaky love letters/messages and put them in places where members of your family will find them. Try to make them proper messages, not just cheesy ones! (Though you may choose to hide one in the fridge!)

Outside:

God is everywhere you go. Whenever you're out and about, keep an eye out for things growing where you really wouldn't expect them to grow – peeping through the concrete on the path, tucked into a tiny gap in a brick wall, sprouting from a chimney or a gutter.

For Others:

Why not try, this week, to spread your smile or your cheery hello generously among the people you see around you or pass in the street? Some will be like the stony ground where they just don't notice, some will be distracted like the birds eating the seed on the pavement, some may even be in such a bad place that they don't appreciate it like the seed amongst the weeds, though it may cheer them up without them even realising it. But in many cases, it will be like falling on good soil – it will brighten people's day and they will smile back and spread that kindness to others.



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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/>

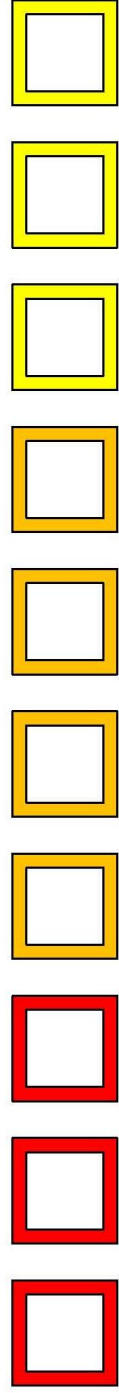
Remember you can find more resources on our website:
<https://urc.org.uk/resources-for-children-and-youth>

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.

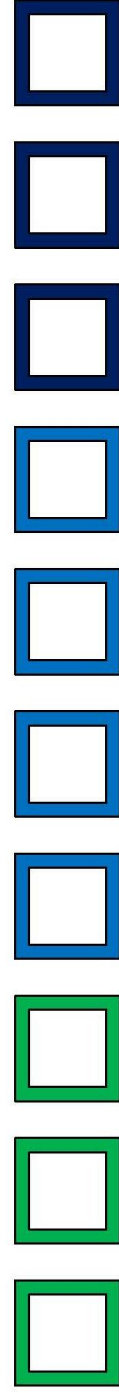
Created for you by Nicola Grieves (Eastern Synod), Judy Harris (National Synod of Wales), Hannah Middleton (Northern Synod), Philip Ray (Wessex Synod, North), Lorraine Webb (Programme Officer for CYW), and Ruth White (Wessex Synod, South) on behalf of the CYDO+ and Children's and Youth Work team and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



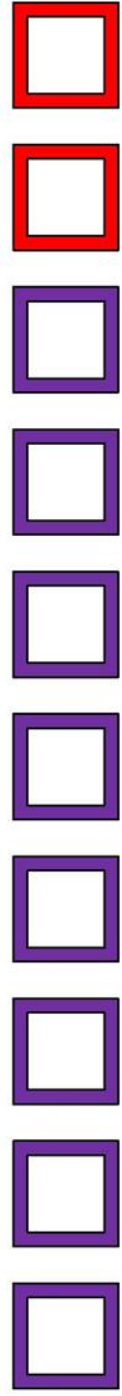
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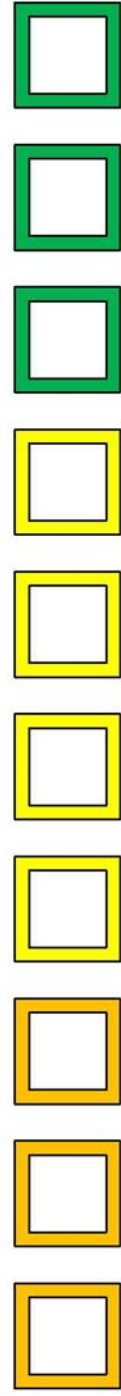
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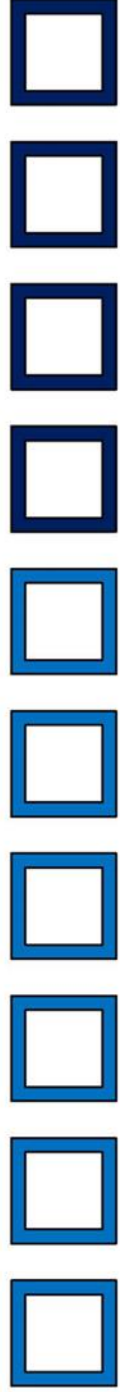
knowledge of



our Lord and



Saviour Jesus



Christ.

