

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:

Live Well

Jeremiah 29: 1-7,10-14



Illustration by Richard Gunther (www.richardgunther.org) via freebibleimages.com



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

From

and

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.

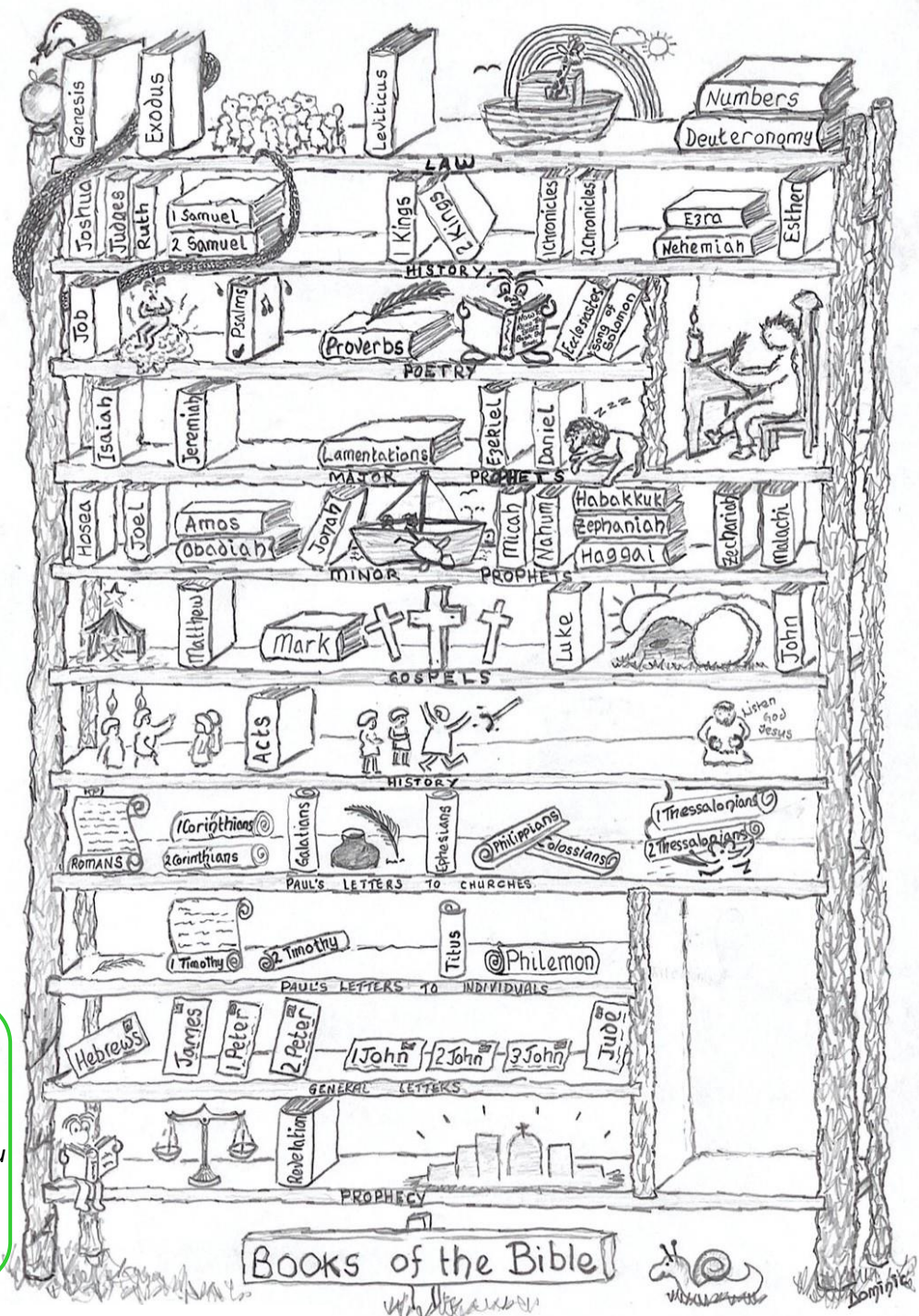
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



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 – Jeremiah

The book of Jeremiah was written around 585 BC by the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah was the son of a priest and was a boy when God chose him to be a prophet. He was about 20 years old when he began to prophesy and went on prophesying for around 40 years.

Times were difficult. The people of Judah were in exile in Babylon and Jeremiah gave God's words of hope and encouragement to the people.

The book has no stories in it at all, it is purely prophecies, often in the form of letters.

The Story – Jeremiah 29 v 1 - 7 and 10 - 14 (The International Children's Bible)

Jeremiah the prophet sent a letter to the people taken as captives to Babylon. He sent it to the elders who were among the captives, the priests, and the prophets. And he sent it to all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem to Babylon. (This letter was sent after all these people were taken away: Jehoiachin and the queen mother; the officers and leaders of Judah and Jerusalem; and the craftsmen and metalworkers.) Zedekiah king of Judah had sent Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah to King Nebuchadnezzar. So Jeremiah gave the letter to them to take to Babylon. This is what the letter said:

This is what the Lord of heaven's armies, the God of Israel, says to all those people he sent away from Jerusalem as captives to Babylon: "Build houses and settle in the land. Plant gardens and eat the food you grow. Get married and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons. Let your daughters be married so they may also have sons and daughters. Have many children and grow in number in Babylon. Don't become fewer in number. Also do good things for the city where I sent you as captives. Pray to the Lord for the city where you are living. If there is peace in that city, you will have peace also."

This is what the Lord says: "Babylon will be powerful for 70 years. After that time I will come to you who are living in Babylon. I will keep my promise to bring you back to Jerusalem. I say this because I know what I have planned for you," says the Lord. "I have good plans for you. I don't plan to hurt you. I plan to give you hope and a good future. Then you will call my name. You will come to me and pray to me. And I will listen to you. You will search for me. And when you search for me with all your heart, you will find me! I will let you find me," says the Lord. "And I will bring you back from your captivity. I forced you to leave this place. But I will gather you from all the nations. I will gather you from the places I have sent you as captives," says the Lord. "And I will bring you back to this place."

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

God speaks through Jeremiah by Little Seeds Children's ministry

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2bxnVX8UU4>

How a young boy called Jeremiah became a prophet by Cornerstone Kids

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

Road maps, Gods plan by Children's ministry deals

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2De1AliJg30>

Gods' way is the best by Mad for Jesus Scientists

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeTu_t8IFoY

Dance and sing

God's Plan by Kids Bop <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5K5GdpYYYY>

Jeremiah 29 v 11 by Extreme for Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdpnKEQGeSc>

The Lord's Plans by VBS Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dmgac55sINM>

God has a plan by make some noise kids https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBum_vntNlg

God's good plan by Lifekids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFYcJC6Fj8A>

Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

If God wrote the same letter to us today –

My children

You have had a tough year. Everything has changed. It has not been the year any of you wanted. Some of you have lost friends and family. You have missed each other as you stayed in your homes. You have missed out on so many things and celebrations. You have not been able to meet in my house or sing my praises out loud.

I know it has been difficult for you. I have seen your tears and worries, I have sat with you in the night when you couldn't sleep. Some of you do not believe that things have changed or will get better.

I have not changed. I am the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Do not waste any day that I give to you, make the most of every opportunity. Do not look backwards but look forwards. Make plans for your tomorrows, dream big dreams, and go for them. Plant seeds for flowers you want to see grow and grow food you want to eat. Spend time with your friends and family, invest in your relationships. Stand up for the things that you care about, make a difference in the world. Put things right where they are wrong. Learn something new, hone your talents and skills. Eat well, exercise and look after yourself. Be brave. Don't be sad or disappointed.

There is going to be a tomorrow, so live today in a way that makes tomorrow even better.

Remember, I have been with you, I am still with you and I always will be.

I am your God and I love you. Live well.

Challenge. What do you think God is saying to us? Perhaps you could have a go at writing a letter from God to your family or others. You might want to create a story map first to plan what you want to say: consider who you are writing it to, the situation they are in at the moment, and what you feel God would say to offer hope.

Living Well

Make a list as a family, exploring what it means to live well in your current situation. For example, try something new each day, eat healthily, get a little exercise every day, speak to someone you haven't seen for a while, write a letter, send a card, do a good deed each day. Read your Bible more, play worship songs, talk to God. Break a bad habit and take up a new good habit. Encourage each other, say one nice thing to each person at home each day.

Once your list is complete turn it into a TO DO list and get on with it.

Boycott your Bed for Action for children

This passage from the Bible can remind us that God told the people to make the most of the place they found themselves in. This week we are encouraged to boycott our beds and sleep in an unusual place whilst raising money to help vulnerable children and their families.

Find out more here <https://boycotyourbed.actionforchildren.org.uk/>

Further ideas

Check out the James episode of FOFA@H for more ideas on this theme

https://urc.org.uk/images/Children-and-youth/Resources/Families_on_Faith_Adventures_-_Week_42_-_Handbook_for_Life_.pdf

Table Top Discussions

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

- What does it mean to live well? How do we live well with COVID 19 around and restrictions in place?
- This time of year, many of us are experiencing new beginnings and endings. Share your stories looking back and share your hopes looking forward.
- Why do you think God told the people to make their homes and build lives for themselves in the place that was not home?
- Jeremiah was a prophet. Who are the prophets of today and how do they use their voice?
- What has been the hardest part of the past 15 months? What difference will it make to how you choose to live from this day on?



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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:

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Illustration by Richard Gunther (www.richardgunther.org) via freebibleimages.com



Small People



Something healthy to eat e.g. piece of fruit



Something with rainbow colours for God's promise

A letter with a picture of a heart, in an envelope



Building bricks



A beaker with water or milk in



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

Seeds



Pray Together

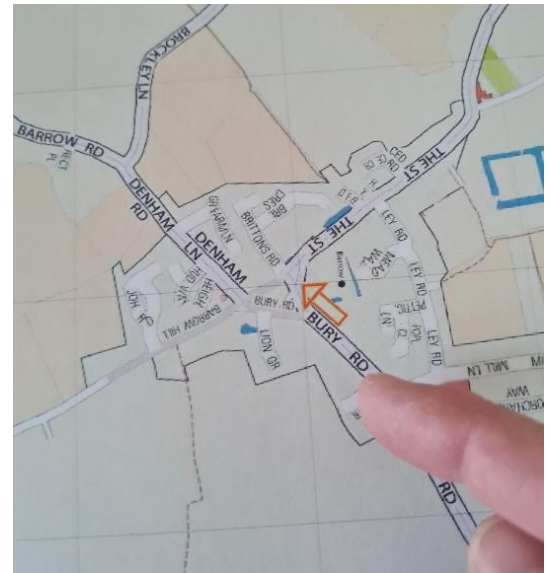
Walking and talking prayers

Pray to the Lord for the city where you are living. If there is peace in that city, you will have peace also. Jerimiah 29:7

Go for a walk in your local area and pray for the things and the people you see.

Here are some ideas: say thank you to God for the shops and the people who work in them; pray a blessing for all the people that you meet; say thank you for your school, the person who helps you cross the road safely, the person who delivers your mail, your community centre. There will be lots of things that you notice.

If you are not able to go out and pray, find a map of your local area and let your fingers do the prayer walk. You can talk to God about the streets where people live and work.



Listening God

Then you will call my name. You will come to me and pray to me. And I will listen to you. Jerimiah 29:12

Prayer is like a two way conversation. God wants us to talk but also to listen.

Sometimes is not always easy to find words to say but God always hears our prayer, even when we do not speak.

Sitting quietly round a lit candle or a battery candle, take it in turns to sign a prayer silently to say thank you that you have a voice and can talk to God.



Thank you (Tips of the fingers placed on the lips and then brought forward)

God (Finger raised and pointing into the air.)

for my voice (Two fingers placed on the mouth and then spiral outwards and upwards.)

Pray Together

Pray silently trying to hear God's voice deep inside. Focus on the candle to help you be still.

A prayer to say together

*Loving God,
you are always ready to listen to us.
You are never too busy.
You are never too tired.
You are always there to welcome us,
and want to hear our voice.
Thank you for loving us.
Amen.*

(Adapted from an idea in Roots)



Garden prayers

In the Bible story, God encouraged the people to plant gardens. Here is an idea for a garden of prayers.

You will need:

- A jar or pot of soil or sand
- Paper straws, pipe cleaners or pencils
- Coloured paper or white paper and colouring pencils
- Glue or sticky tac



Cut out some flower shapes from the coloured paper or colour and cut out some flower shapes. Be creative and design your own different flower shapes. Write your prayers onto the flowers. Think about the things in your life that you would like to grow; think about the people you would like to know about God's love growing in their lives.

When you have written your prayers, stick each flower head to a straw or pencil and plant it into the pot. Gather all your prayers together to create a garden. Place this on the table or somewhere where you will see it often. As you sit at the table or pass by, continue to pray for the things that you have planted.

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I wonder what you hope
to be or do when you
grow up or when you
are older?

I wonder what it feels
like to be forced to live
somewhere different to
your home?

I wonder what you like
about your life and
what you sometimes
wish was different?



Illustration by Karla Dornacher via www.valuedbygod.com/coloring-pages

I wonder what you
can do to live well
today?

I wonder if you have ever
found this prophesy by
Jeremiah difficult to believe?



TO DO TOGETHER...

Tell, Explain, Do

You will need: *Ingredients for a healthy(ish) recipe of your choice*

What you do: *Skye said she wanted to make Scotch Pancakes and a fruit salad.*

She planned her ingredients and looked them out - Self raising flour, caster sugar, baking powder, milk and an egg. She measured them out and mixed them together, and she asked an adult in the family to cook them for her.

She then planned her fruit salad and made it up with a little help to cut some of the things.

Make a plan and put it into action – God has plans for us all as we heard in Jeremiah.

Why don't you tell someone what you are wanting to do, plan it out and then do it.

PS. *here is the recipe for Scotch Pancakes (Drop Scones)*

Ingredients

175g/6oz self-raising flour
1 tsp baking powder
40g/1½oz caster sugar
1 egg
200ml/7fl oz milk
sunflower oil, for greasing

Method

Place the flour, baking powder, sugar in a mixing bowl. Make a well in the centre and then add the egg and half of the milk. Beat well with a whisk until you have a smooth, thick batter. Beat in enough of the milk to make a batter the consistency of thick pouring cream – you may not need all the milk.

Heat a large non-stick frying pan and grease with a little oil. Drop the mixture in dessertspoonfuls onto the hot pan, spacing the mixture well apart to allow for them to spread. When bubbles appear on the surface, turn the scones over with a palette knife or spatula and cook on the other side for a further 30 seconds to 1 minute, or until they are lightly golden brown.

Lift the pancakes on to a wire rack and cover with a clean tea towel to keep them soft. Continue cooking the batter in the same way.





TO DO TOGETHER...

A Treasure Map

You will need: a piece of paper, a pen, a piece of treasure.

What you do:

Think about your treasure hunt.

Draw a plan of it and then ask someone to go and find the treasure using your map.

God wants us to create a treasure map of our lives, dream big, reach for the stars and enjoy the small things around us as we live life to the full.

You can see Skye following her treasure map here:

<https://youtu.be/Owovn1yAqvc>



Upcycling

You will need: stickers, felt pens, an old school book

What you do: Remove the used papers and create a brand-new book to write some to do lists, or your plans.

On the cover of the book, place stickers all over it and maybe even write your name over the stickers.

You could draw images on the cover, to make it unique to you, or even cover it with another piece of paper which reflects what your dreams are, a map for travel, a piece of music manuscript for being musical. You could do a collage of lots of images from magazines etc which match your hopes and dreams.

In Jeremiah, God wants us to look to the future but also to see what we have now and make the best of it. Don't just throw things away because they are not perfect, but put some time and effort in and look for the potential in them, just as God does with us.





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Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

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

At Home:

Write a to-do list for each day of the week which includes things that can help you live well. You might include things like getting exercise, doing things as a family, praying, drinking plenty of water, doing something kind etc. Each day, tick off the things you have managed to do. Can you manage five good things every day?

Outside:

Have a game of hide and seek outdoors. Remember as you play that God doesn't hide so that we can't find him, but rather because then we can choose to go looking. When you find who you are looking for in the game, celebrate with a funky dance or a high five and remember that God celebrates with us every time we find him.

For Others:

Jeremiah wrote this letter to encourage the people of God who were going through hard times. We have sometimes challenged you to make and send a card, but this time why not plan and write a cheerful letter instead. Share some of your news and say something to encourage 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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