

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:

Forever Love

Psalm 23



Illustration by www.lambsongs.co.nz via freebibleimages.com



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.

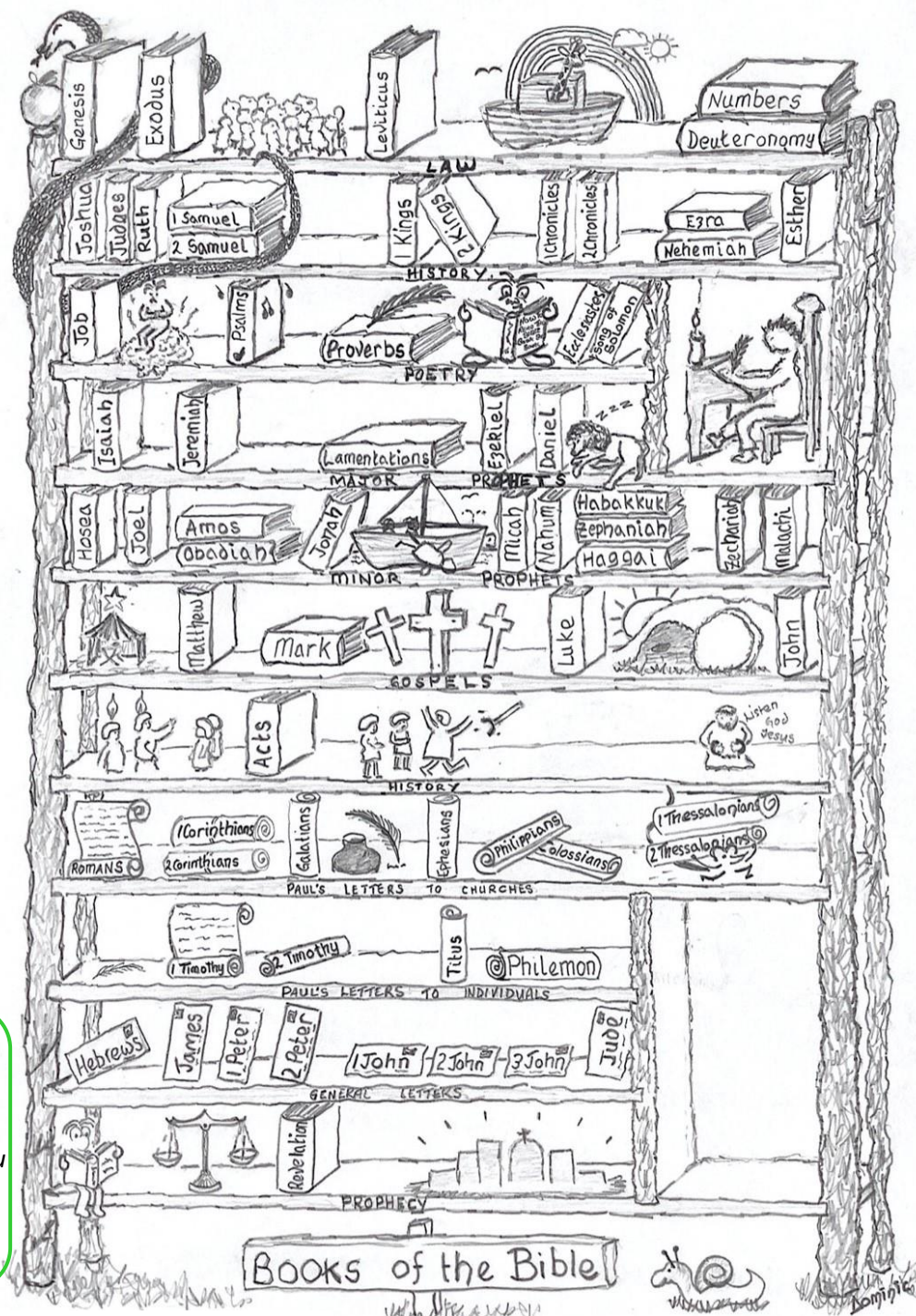
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



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 – Forever Love

The book of Psalms was written by various writers over many years, from around 1400 to 450 BC. Over half of them were written by David, the shepherd boy who became king.

Psalms were poems, written to be read out loud to music.

Psalms are one of the most well-known Psalms. It is often used at weddings and funerals and was written by David.

The Story – Psalm 23 (The International Children's Bible)

The Lord is my shepherd.

I have everything I need.

He gives me rest in green pastures.

He leads me to calm water.

He gives me new strength.

For the good of his name,

he leads me on paths that are right.

Even if I walk through a very dark valley,

I will not be afraid because you are with me.

Your rod and your shepherd's staff comfort me.

You prepare a meal for me in front of my enemies.

You pour oil of blessing on my head.

You give me more than I can hold.

Surely your goodness and love will be with me all my life.

And I will live in the house of the Lord forever

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

Psalm 23 from the Jesus Storybook Bible read by Sally Lloyd-Jones

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6fM4_8VU-8

Douglas the puppets talks about the good shepherd

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pu7LOZwAJ0o>

Psalm 23 and being a sheep by Delight in Light (Animated Poem)

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

Psalm 23 read and interpreted by children from Immanuel Presbyterian Church

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMyYuYMck98>

Sometimes I get scared (Psalm23) by Rhythms for life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=er6Lnbe3mu0>

Dance and sing

Psalm 23 by Arts Delivery <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cp478Gxs-0>

The Lord's my Shepherd by Stuart Townend
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eIQQayhpak>

You never let go by Beth and Matt Redman
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62H_ICNRKi8

He's got the whole world in his hands by Lifetree Kids
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-T1CLIMjiTw>

A song written by our friend Leo Roberts
<https://soundcloud.com/leoroberts/god-is-with-me-v2>

Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

Action story

Here is a version of the psalm with actions (in red) – have some fun retelling it!

God (point up to the sky) is my shepherd (cross hands across your chest).

I have everything I need. (bring both hands out in front of you and open arms wide)

He gives me rest (bring hands by face as if sleeping) in green pastures. (wave hands and fingers like grass)

He leads me to calm water. (move arms and hands like a rippling stream)

He gives me new strength. (strong arms position)

For the good of his name, (thumbs up and raise your hands higher)

he leads me on paths that are right. (lead your left hand with your right hand)

Even if I walk (walk on spot) through a very dark valley, (walk on spot and cover eyes)

I will not be afraid (stop walking and stand still and upright) because you are with me. (one hand pointing up to God)

Your rod and your shepherd's staff comfort me. (bring hand down to side as if holding a staff)

You prepare a meal for me in front of my enemies. (bring both hands out in front of you and open arms wide)

You pour oil of blessing on my head. (bring both hands on top of your head and trickle your fingers down your face)

You give me more than I can hold. (bring both hands out in front together)

Surely your goodness and love will be with me all my life. (bring both hands across your chest for love)

And I will live in the house of the Lord forever. (keep hands across chest and lower to your knees)

Tell and make

As a family, create a picture or mosaic of the scene in Psalm 23. Include the valley and dark places as well as the green pastures and waters.

It can be as large and creative as you would like it to be.

Then create small sheep for each member of the family.

Each day you can move your sheep to where you feel you are, as a reminder that God is there with you.

Get creative with food and photography. We used a mirror on the ground for the water and made a paper boat. We then used food for the trees and grass. Here is one that we created.



Alternatively, simply draw one or create a collage.

Challenge - Write your own psalm

What psalm would you write? A song of anger or worry or perhaps one of celebration? A reminder that no matter what you are feeling, God is with you with a constant forever love.

Modern Parables – A modern story exploring the same themes.

Found, by Sally Lloyd Jones - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3doyzCUbBo>

Table Top Discussions

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

- David related God to being like a shepherd. This is something that was very familiar to him as he was also a shepherd, he knew what it meant to look after and love your sheep. How would you describe God, from your own experiences?
- Jesus also described himself as the good shepherd. What other metaphors or ways of describing God do you remember from the Bible?
- What does it look like, to have God's goodness and mercy follow you all the days of your life?
- What are the dark valleys at the moment, the scary places?
- Where do you feel closest to God?

You might also want to look at a previous issue of FOFA@H entitled "You Are Not Lost", which tells the story of the Good Shepherd [https://urc.org.uk/images/Children-and-youth/Resources/Families_on_Faith_Adventures - Week 3 - You Are Not Lost.pdf](https://urc.org.uk/images/Children-and-youth/Resources/Families_on_Faith_Adventures_-_Week_3_-_You_Are_Not_Lost.pdf)

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:

Forever love

Psalm 23



Illustration by www.lambsongs.co.nz via freebibleimages.com



A toy as shepherd



Green fabric and blue, watery



Toy sheep



Something with rainbow colours for God's promise



Sheep pen – make with bricks or toy fences



Please supervise small children! Watch out for chain or string getting caught around fingers, wrists or neck etc.



Child's own comfort blanket /toy



Stick (or walking stick)

Pray Together – Psalm 23

Colour walk

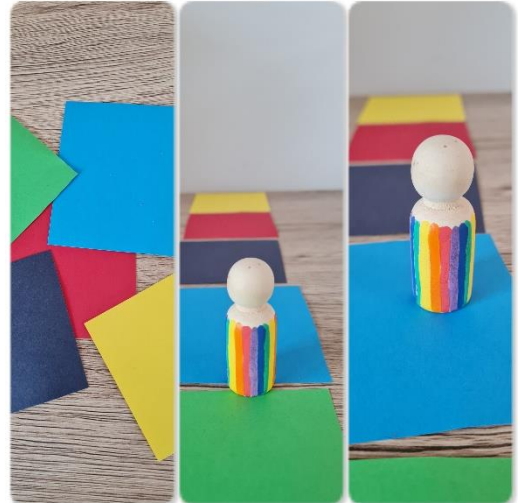
You will need some coloured paper or white paper colour and colours.

A small figure eg Playmobile, wooden peg doll or any small figure.

Cut out squares of different colours that help you to think about the different parts of the psalm.

Here some ideas to get you started:

- Black for the dark valley
- Yellow for the great feast
- Green for the pastures
- Blue for the stream
- Red for things that are difficult



Lay the squares to make a path. Read the psalm slowly and pause at each colour. Stop reading and place your figure on the colour. Talk quietly to God about the different situations. Remember that God is with you in the challenges, the sadness, the worries and in the happiness. God guides us through all the different situations with never ending love.

Rest in green pastures - reflection

Sometimes we find it difficult to find the right words to say when we want to talk to God. But God knows us inside and out and sometimes we will just want to sit and be still with God.

Pray Together

Here is a song written about psalm 23.

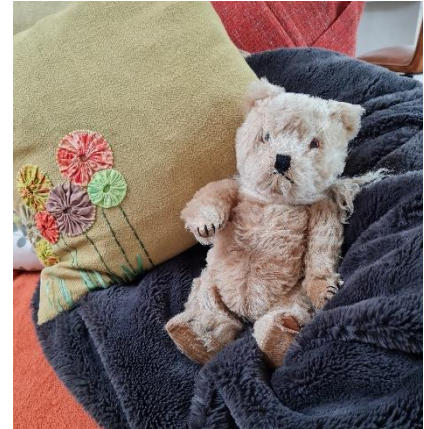
<https://soundcloud.com/leoroberts/god-is-with-me-v2>

Find a comfy place to sit, maybe with your favourite toy or a blanket or cushion that helps you to feel relaxed. Listen to the words of the song and, if you feel comfortable, close your eyes and just rest with God.

Psalm 23 tells us that God gives us a safe place to just be.

*The Lord is my shepherd.
I have everything I need.*

*He gives me rest in green pastures.
He leads me to calm water.*



Make and pray

Using the idea from the story section 'tell and make'.

Create your own scene for the psalm and make your own sheep or use toy sheep.

Each day, as in the 'tell and make', place your sheep where you feel you are in the psalm. Make this something that you do together at a special time of the day; perhaps just before you go to bed or as you sit to eat a meal together. Talk to God about where you feel you are. When everyone has placed their sheep, join in a prayer together.



*Dear God,
fill us up with your love.
When we are worried or
when we are happy,
when we are with others or alone,
when we feel tired and sad and
when we feel full of joy.
Guide us and help us to follow you.
Amen.*

(updated from Roots)

families on faith adventures

at home

I wonder if you've ever cared for an animal and what you needed to do to keep them safe and healthy?

I wonder who cares for you like a shepherd and how that makes you feel?

I wonder which is your favourite bit of this psalm?

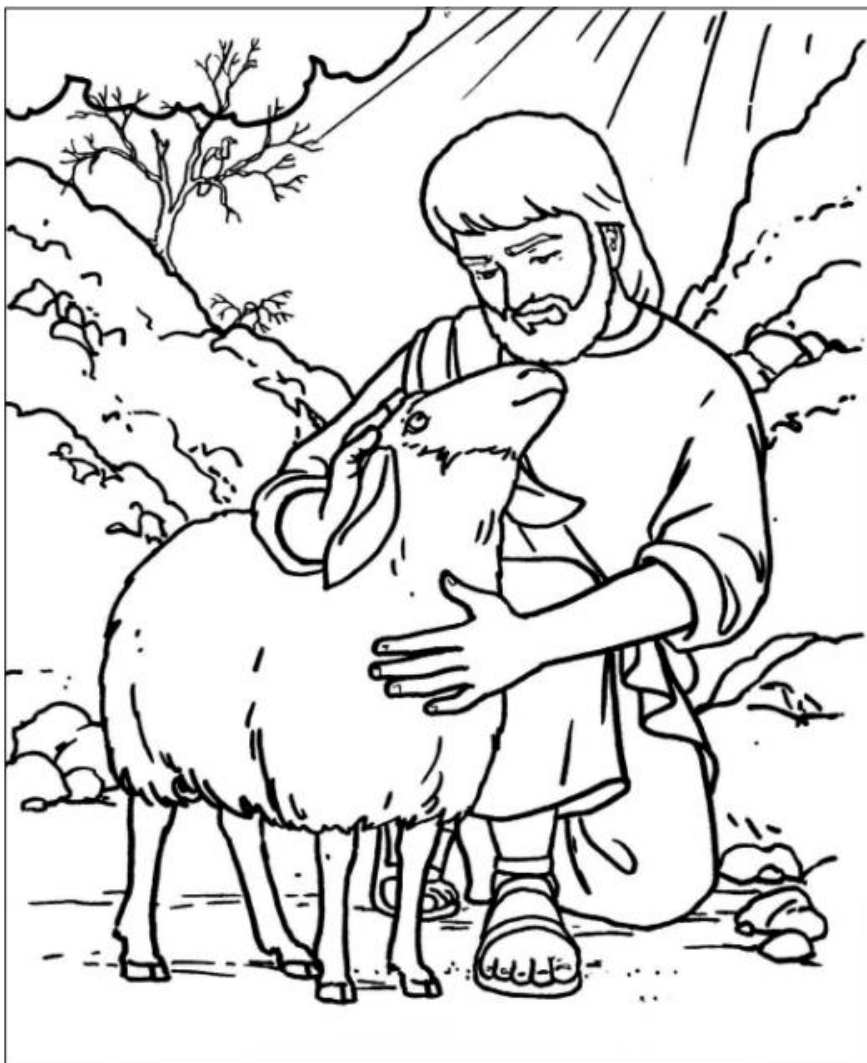


Illustration by Nancy Cunningham / Rachael Coate / Basic Training Bible Ministries via www.freebibleimages.com

I wonder when you feel closest to God?

I wonder when you've heard this psalm before, either as a poem or as a song?



TO DO TOGETHER...

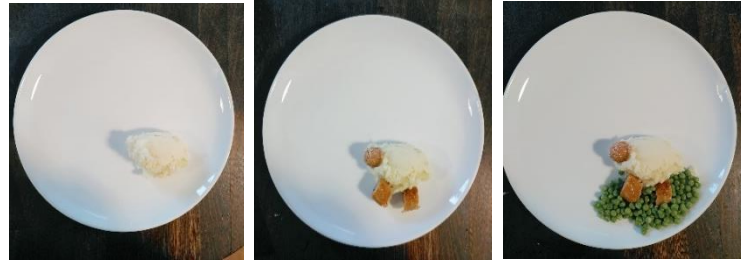
Fluffy mash sheep

You will need:

- A potato
- A sausage (vegetarian is fine)
- Some peas or green beans

What you do:

Ask a grown up to help you peel a potato and boil it, cook a sausage, and put some peas or beans in a pot and boil them. Mash your potato and place it on the plate to look like the body of a sheep. Cut up the sausage and arrange it to make the legs and head of the sheep. Place the peas or beans around the sheep to make it look like the green fields in Psalm 23. Think of the psalm as you eat your fluffy sheep and how God provides a safe place for us and gives us good things to eat.



Green Pastures night light

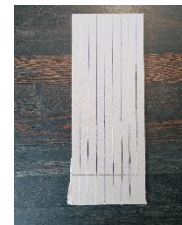
You will need:

- Cardboard
- White, green and black tissue paper
- Glue
- A small piece of wool

What you do: Cut an octagon shape out of card and then draw a smaller octagon inside it to create a border. Then draw a circle in the centre of the shape and cut this circle out.

Cut eight strips of card all the same length. Measure from one end the same distance as the width of the border on your octagon and put a fold across each strip of cardboard.

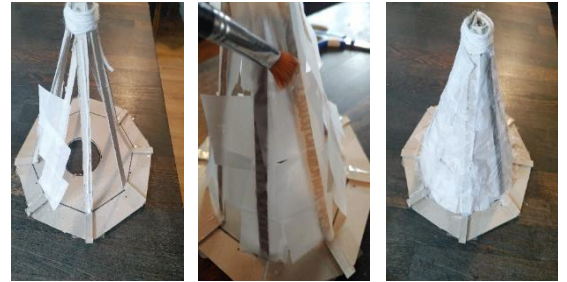
Glue the folded end of each strip around the border of the octagon shape, one strip at each point with the folded edge level with the inner octagon border. Tie at the top with a piece of wool to create a tepee shape.





TO DO TOGETHER...

Using a paint brush, brush some glue over a small piece of white tissue paper and glue it to the tepee shape. Keep adding more and more pieces of white tissue paper until it is all covered, brushing the glue over it carefully as you go. Don't worry if it rips as you can always patch it with another piece of tissue.



Crunch up some green tissue to create grass around the bottom of the tepee shape and glue it in place, and then glue some dots on the side of the tepee which will be the heads of the sheep. Once all the glue is dry, carefully draw the sheep bodies in. Place your night light shade over the top of a battery-operated candle. You have created a night light which will comfort you in the dark, just like the psalm describes God's love.



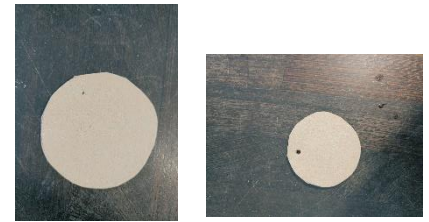


TO DO TOGETHER...

Sheep Keyring

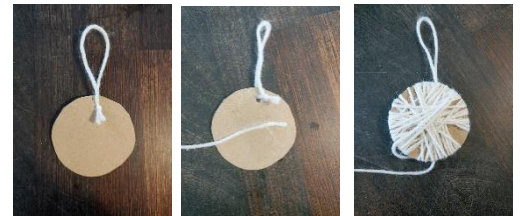
You will need:

- A circle of card
- Wool
- A small piece of black felt
- Double sided tape
- The ring of an old keyring
- Googly eyes, or white felt



What you do: Make a small hole in the top of your circle and thread a small piece of wool through it, to create a loop. Tie this firmly in place.

Tape one end of the wool to the centre of the circle and then wind the wool round and round the circle to cover it completely.



Secure the end with double sided tape or tuck it through and tie it.

Cut out a sheep's head shape from black felt and stick to the woollen circle. Stick the googly eyes onto the black face or stick 2 small circles of white felt on and draw a black circle in the centre of each with black felt tip or marker pen.



Attach the woollen loop to the old keyring.

As you think of Psalm 23, keep this with you always as a reminder that God is with us through every part of life, even when it is hard.



Walking the Way

Living the life of Jesus today

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

At Home:

I wonder whether you have a pet. If not, you may have a toy animal or could make a pet out of a stone. This week, take extra special care of your pet (real or imaginary) and think about everything it needs. The way you take extra special care of something can help you understand how God takes extra special care of you every single minute of every single day.

Outside:

No matter where you are, in the countryside or in the city or near the beach, there's usually somewhere where you can find running water – even if it's from a tap or a watering can or maybe even a rain cloud! Take some time to think about God's gift of water, maybe even to think about those countries where it's difficult to get clean water or enough water to help crops to grow. How can you be careful in your use of water and treat it as a precious gift from God?

For Others:

Who needs taking care of in your local area? Do some detective work. Maybe you are just the person that God's sending to help make things better in some way. What could you do to help? You may not be able to put things right, but you will be able to make a difference – talk to the people in your family or your church or your school if you need some ideas.



The
United
Reformed
Church

**families
on faith adventures**

at home

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.

