

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:

God knows all about me
Psalm 139



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.

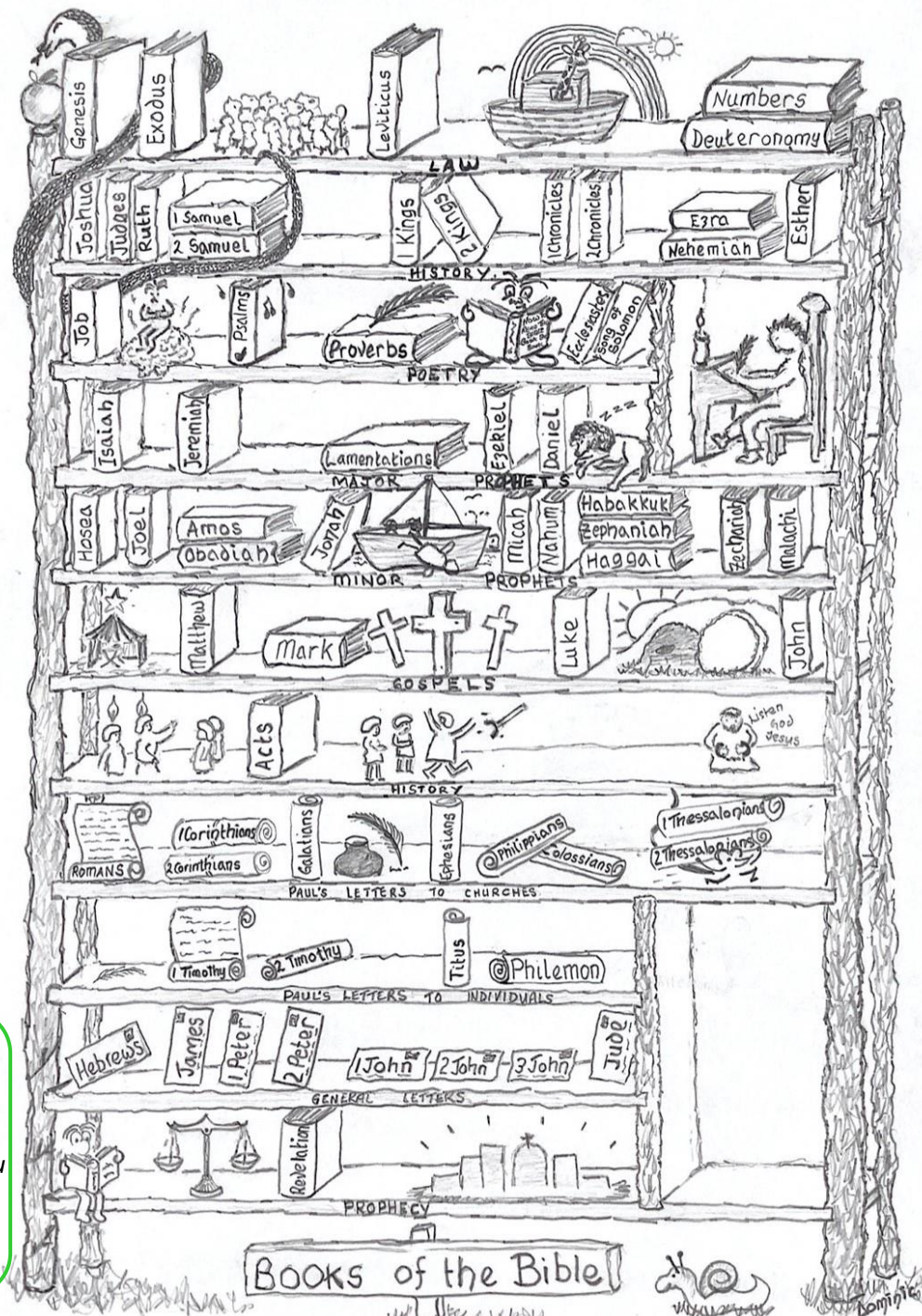
The New Testament tells us the stories of Jesus and his followers. There are 27 books in the New Testament.



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



Bible context

The Book of Psalms was written between 1400 and 450 BC. King David wrote over half the 150 Psalms.

It is meant to be a timeless book with Psalms that speak into all situations and eras. Psalms are poems that are meant to be put to music.

Although we don't know who wrote all of the psalms, we know that this is one of the ones written by David, the shepherd boy who went on to become king.

This, along with Psalm 23, is probably one of the best known and best loved psalms and is often used at weddings, baptisms and funerals. It talks about how God knows us through and through, even from before we are born, and is with us wherever we go and whatever we do.

The Story - Psalm 139 (The International Children's Bible)

God Knows Everything

Lord, you have examined me.

You know all about me.

You know when I sit down and when I get up.

You know my thoughts before I think them.

You know where I go and where I lie down.

You know well everything I do.

Lord, even before I say a word,
you already know what I am going to say.

You are all around me—in front and in back.

You have put your hand on me.

Your knowledge is amazing to me.

It is more than I can understand.

Where can I go to get away from your Spirit?

Where can I run from you?

If I go up to the skies, you are there.

If I lie down where the dead are, you are
there.

If I rise with the sun in the east,
and settle in the west beyond the sea,
even there you would guide me.

With your right hand you would hold me.

I could say, "The darkness will hide me.
The light around me will turn into night."

But even the darkness is not dark to you.

The night is as light as the day.

Darkness and light are the same to you.

You made my whole being.

You formed me in my mother's body.

I praise you because you made me in an
amazing and wonderful way.

What you have done is wonderful.

I know this very well.

You saw my bones being formed
as I took shape in my mother's body.

When I was put together there,
you saw my body as it was formed.

All the days planned for me
were written in your book
before I was one day old.

God, your thoughts are precious to me.

They are so many!

If I could count them,
they would be more than all the grains of
sand.

When I wake up,

I am still with you.

God, I wish you would kill the wicked!

Get away from me, you murderers!

These men say evil things about you.
Your enemies use your name thoughtlessly.

Lord, I hate those who hate you.

I hate those who rise up against you.

I feel only hate for them.

They are my enemies.

God, examine me and know my heart.

Test me and know my thoughts.

See if there is any bad thing in me.

Lead me in the way you set long ago.

Online versions of the story

Watch and listen

Lego Psalm 139 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7eQ7D-A00Bw>

An amusing look at Psalm 139:14 Gateway Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zbYaXCiKko>

Handcrafted By God | God loves you just the way you are Douglas Talks

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_ggHejm9Sg

Eastern Synod psalm 139 for all ages with actions <https://youtu.be/N87hvU1s3JU>

Dance and sing

PSALM 139:14 LYRIC & DANCE VIDEO | Kids on the Move

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7603oH33Ghs>

Doug Horely With Gods power working in us A song with energetic actions!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ra6ZRSfsHPg>

Song Gods Masterpiece Sadleback Kids Picking up on the theme of the psalm

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

Fearfully and wonderfully made song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qh8IOvvyKy4>

Hidden In My Heart Volume II - "Wonderfully Made" by Scripture Lullabies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adl3aAf2Wl0>

Ideas to Retell/Explore the Story

A walk with Gran

Talitha was not impressed. She'd almost got to the highest level on the game she was playing – she'd been trying all morning – couldn't Gran have picked a better time to come calling? And Dad just hadn't listened when she'd tried to explain. No, it seemed like the playstation was going to be switched off and she was going to have to go out on a boring walk. Well, she wasn't going to enjoy it, that was for certain. And perhaps if she was grumpy enough, Gran would get the message and bring her straight home again.

Still, it was nice to see Gran. She was one of those people who knew Talitha through and through and loved her no matter what mood she was in. She'd understand – it was just bad timing.

As the door closed behind them, it was just Gran and Talitha and they set out together. The weather was a bit overcast and drizzly and it really matched Talitha's mood. She didn't hold Gran's hand, didn't return her beaming smile, and she used every ounce of her willpower to maintain a grumpy face.

"I hate this weather, it's so dull and damp and disgusting," she muttered under her breath.

"Oh, but Talitha, look how the raindrops are nourishing the plants around us. I know they look like weeds to some people, growing in the cracks of the pavement, but they are wild flowers and God is looking after them. God is in the raindrops and the drizzly weather as well as in the sunshine, you know". Gran smiled at Talitha, seeming not to notice her granddaughter rolling her eyes and shrugging her shoulders. Honestly, did Gran not understand how much Talitha wanted to be at home?

At the end of the street, they turned to walk through the row of shops that served their part of town. Despite the dull weather, the pavements were filled with people going this way and that and the shops were all bustling. There were people of all ages, adults and children, some elderly, some tiny. There were people of all colours and shapes, some using a walking stick, some in buggies, and one in a wheelchair. Talitha glanced at the shop windows as they walked – a greengrocer with fruit and veg of every shape and colour where Dad usually got the fresh food for the week; a butcher with an assortment of meat, including Talitha's favourite sausages which they'd had on the barbecue only last night; a bookshop with so many books in the window. "This town is always so busy," she grumbled.

"Oh, but Talitha, look at the wonderful variety of people in our town. We're so lucky to live somewhere with such diversity. All these people have different homes and families, have different talents and experiences, different stories to tell. Each one is special to God and God surrounds us with people who help us and can be helped by us. Who knows, someone here might be a stranger now but might be a friend to us in the future! And aren't we lucky, too, to have a source of good food to keep us fit and healthy? God is in the noise and the bustle and the people around us, you know!" Gran smiled at Talitha, who managed a smile back and slipped her hand into Gran's hand.

One busy road to cross and they were in the park. Talitha loved the park, especially when Gran was with her. Somehow Gran seemed to know all the different birds and flowers and

trees and had an uncanny knack for spotting them. “Look, Talitha! Look at those two squirrels chasing each other up that tree! They remind me of when you and your brother were really tiny and were always chasing each other round and round the roundabout in the playpark until you were both quite dizzy. And can you hear that sound? That’s a starling trying to sing. I can remember when you used to sing in the shower. You were upset when you used to get some of the notes wrong and I haven’t heard you sing for a long time, but to me your singing was the most beautiful sound – just so full of joy. God was in your singing, and your running and chasing, just as God is in the lovely things in this park. And look, the sun has come out to join us on our walk.” Gran smiled at Talitha, who squeezed her hand tightly and smiled back.

“Come on, Gran, race you to the play area!”

There was no rushing Gran, but she soon caught up with her excited granddaughter who ran a couple of laps around the roundabout – just for old time’s sake – before jumping on a swing. She was perfectly capable of swinging herself, but it was nice to feel her Gran’s hand touching her back and giving her just an extra push. Over on the seats nearby was Mrs O’Grady from next door. Talitha knew she was pregnant and wondered how long it would be before they heard the sounds of a new baby in the neighbouring house.

“Oh look, Talitha! Mrs O’Grady was telling me her new baby is due in the next couple of weeks. I remember your dad first telling me about you and showing me the picture of the ultrasound scan. I was so excited – I couldn’t wait to meet you for the first time and hold you in my arms. You were such a sweet little scrap. I loved you even before I saw you, you know, you with your deep dark eyes and your little button of a nose!” Gran smiled at Talitha, who leapt off the swing and ran round to give her Gran a massive hug.

“Oh Gran, you know me so well and I do so love you! You’re the best!”

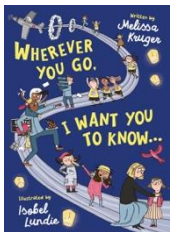
Gran smiled, “I knew you even before you were born and love you more than you can ever imagine. God knows loves you that way too – even more than you or I possibly can imagine. I think we’re pretty blessed, you know.” And Gran and Talitha set out to walk home, hand in hand, a spring in their step.... and Gran smiled as she heard a quiet voice start to sing beside her....

Psalm 139 Modern day parables

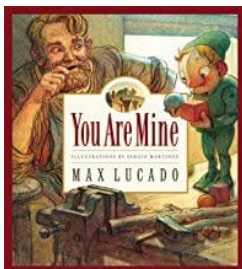
There are many wonderful stories that have been written to explore the themes of today's psalm. Here are a few to choose from. Enjoy them together to get the discussion going.



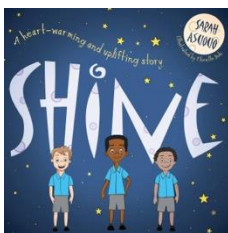
Near by Sally Lloyd-Jones
<https://youtu.be/3leG2S5krzs>



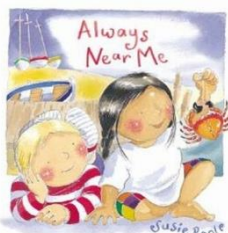
Wherever You Go, I Want You to Know
Melissa B Kruger & Isobel Lundie
<https://youtu.be/4hz7RcY7lcE>



You Are Mine by Max Lucado
<https://youtu.be/7RC0oBpY6Oo>



Shine by Sarah Asuquo
<https://youtu.be/a0eKNW0X2mo>



Always Near Me by Susie Poole
<https://youtu.be/kSGCXjwYqCl>

Table Top Discussions

Each day over a mealtime, have a quick conversation, perhaps you could do it at breakfast time. Here are a few questions to get you going.

What is your earliest memory? What about your earliest memory of each person in your family? You could look at some old photographs together and talk about the memories they evoke.

Why might someone try to run away from God? Is it scary or reassuring to know that God is there wherever you go and knows you inside out? When can it be helpful to know that? Does it change how we talk to God?

Part of the psalm that David wrote talks about killing his enemies. Do you think God would like that part of the psalm? David was very human, just like we are. Do you sometimes do and say things that don't quite fit with the things we say and learn about God's way?

Are there things about you that your family don't know? What can you tell them which might surprise them?

Play "How well do you know me?" Give everyone in the family a pen/pencil and paper. Ask these five questions and get everyone to write down what they think the answer is. Then compare your answers and see who knows you best.

- 1) What is my favourite colour?
- 2) If I could choose to be an animal, which animal would it be?
- 3) What achievement am I most proud of?
- 4) If I could go anywhere in the world for a week, where would I choose?
- 5) What is the first thing I like to do when I get home?

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:

God knows all about me
Psalm 139



Illustration by www.lambsongs.co.nz via
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A mirror



A scan photograph of your child if you have one, or a photo of when they were newborns – a baby book if you have one - this may get damaged so make sure you use a copy or look at it with your child!



Something with
rainbow colours for
God's promise



Your child's favourite toy,
especially one they've had
since a baby

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



Some of your child's
favourite clothing – including
baby clothes

Pray Together

Rainbow person

*I praise you because you made me in an amazing and wonderful way.
What you have done is wonderful. I know this very well. Psalm 139:14*

You will need:

- Person template
- Wax crayons or pastels
- Plain paper

Using the wax crayons, make a rainbow of colours around the edge. Make a strong mark of colour - the softer the wax crayons are, the easier it will be to smudge them, so you may want to warm them slightly over a bowl of hot water.



Place the template on a sheet of plain paper and hold it down firmly – a blob of sticky tac will help to hold it in place. Using your finger, smudge the colours from the template to the plain paper. When you have smudged all the way round, carefully remove your template and you will have a figure glowing with all the colours.

The psalm tells us that we are wonderfully made, each one of us beautiful and unique. God has made each one of us unique - just as each outline you create will be completely unique. God has made each one of us special and loves each of us for who we are.

Think about all the things that you enjoy and can do and say thank you to God for making you the person you are.

God knows you

*All the days planned for me were written in your book
before I was one day old. Psalm 139:16*

God knows all about us and, even before we were born, he had plans for each of us. Write your name on your hand and then make a fist covering your name. Think about how God knows you and knew you before you were born. Hold your hand tight and know that you are precious to God.

Now think about your hopes and dreams for the future. Where would you like to travel, what would you like to do? As you slowly unfold your fingers to reveal your name, speak to God about his plans for your life.



A prayer to say together:

*Dear God,
We give to you all our plans and all our dreams
and all that we value and love.
Please hold them all in your loving hands.
Through the sad times and the happy,
help us always to trust you.
Thank you that in all of life's ups and downs
we are always loved by you.
Amen.*

Pocket prayer

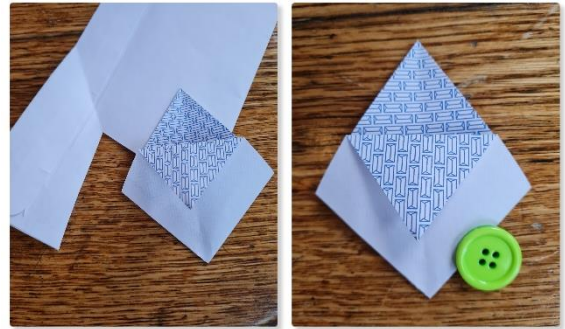
*If I rise with the sun in the east, and settle in the west beyond the sea,
even there you would guide me. With your right hand you would hold me. Psalm 139:9-10*

You will need: Envelopes and buttons

Stick down the flap of an envelope and then cut a diamond shape from the corner. You will be able to get four diamond pockets from one envelope.

Choose a button to represent yourself and put it inside the pocket as a symbol that God is covering, holding and protecting you wherever you go.

Place the pocket with your button in a pocket or a bag where you can touch it and remember that God is always with you.



A prayer:

*May the peace and light of the love of God
be with us wherever we go.
May he guide us, protect us and encourage us,
so that we may always walk
in God's never-ending light.
Amen.*

families on faith adventures

at home

*I wonder what you'd want
to say in a song to God?*

*I wonder if there are
times in your day
when you find it easy
to remember God is
with you?*

*I wonder when it's
hardest to remember
God's there?*



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

*I wonder which is
your favourite part of
this psalm and why?*

*I wonder whether you think
the Bible should miss out the
nasty bits and why the writers
chose to include them?*



TO DO TOGETHER...

Layers

You will need:

- Coloured paper
- Glue or tape



What you do:

Using the template, carefully cut out the various body shapes in different coloured paper. You can either layer the bodies up from large to small and stick them with glue, or use the sheets of paper with the body shaped hole to create an image of decreasing body sizes. If you are doing the latter, tape the sheets of paper together with Sellotape on all 4 sides, which will keep them level.



Psalm 139 tells us that God has searched us and knows all the layers of us, even the ones nobody else can see.

Keep this image to remind you that God knows you and loves you through and through.

This Is Me Frame

You will need:

- A strong piece of card
- Some coloured strips of paper
- Glue



What you do:

Cut out a shape from the card to make a frame. We made a face shape, but a square shape will work just as well.

Ask people for positive words which describe you.

Write these words on the strips of paper and glue them to the frame.

You could look through the frame and take a photo, or glue a mirror behind it, or use it as a photo frame.

God knows who we are at our very centre and sees us just the way we are.



All About Me

You will need:

- An old notebook or folder or scrapbook
- Photographs of yourself
- Some sheets of paper

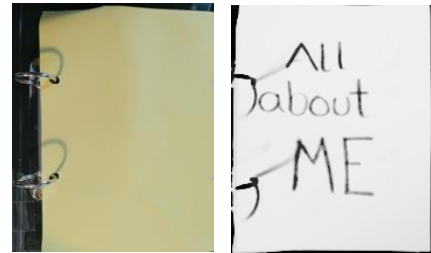


What you do:

Create a book or a folder which is all about you.

On the pages you can put bits of information about yourself. What you like to eat, who is in your family, what you like to play with, if you have pets.

Remember to leave lots of blank pages in the back of the book so that you can add new things onto the blank pages as you get older- maybe move to a new class and change teacher, move from Beavers/Rainbows to Cubs/Brownies and on to Scouts/Guides, start to like different activities or experiences, or have new family pets.



On the outside, decorate it with pictures of you from when you were very young to the age you are now. Again, leave some space so that you can keep adding to it as you get older, because your story hasn't finished yet. Only God knows what's in store.



The
United
Reformed
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:

One of the really memorable lines of this psalm is "I am fearfully and wonderfully made". Remind yourself of this throughout the day, especially when you look at yourself in the mirror. Remind yourself of it if people tease you or say unkind things about you, or if you are ever tempted to say unkind things to yourself. You are fearfully and wonderfully made and God loves you just as you are.

Outside:

Run/cycle/scooter as far and as fast as you can safely do so – remembering not to go further than you are allowed! When you reach your limits, shout out "Hi God! You were here waiting for me before I even got here!"

For Others:

In the psalm, David wished all kinds of bad things on the people he viewed as his enemies, but Jesus taught us that that's not the right way. Jesus taught us to forgive others. So find a chance to say a prayer for those people we find difficult to like for the things they do and say and ask God to help us to forgive them.



The
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**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.



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