



# HEROES & VILLAINS



## 2021 CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH WORK THEME

Resources for everyone engaging with  
children, young people and young adults

# WELCOME TO THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (URC) CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH WORK (CYW) RESOURCES

Gathered in this resource pack, you will find a wealth of material to use and adapt for your work with children, young people, or young adults and in intergenerational contexts, all centred around the CYW theme for the year. Be creative. Don't limit yourself to looking only at the section that most obviously fits your context, as you will find that there is plenty that can be adapted. Follow the links to our website to find additional resources to complement the material included in this book.

We'd love to know how you use these resources or how we might improve on them for next year – please do email us at [children.youth@urc.org.uk](mailto:children.youth@urc.org.uk) with your feedback, or to share any additional ideas that you may try. If you don't have any children or young people connected with your church, please:

- Enjoy the colouring pages and use some of the prayers and other materials with your adult groups
- Pray for those churches nearest to you which do – maybe share some ideas with them
- Offer these resources to your nearest uniformed organisation or school.

PILOTS have their own pull-out section with four session plans and usually use these to work towards leading a service for Pilots Sunday in July. There are lots of games, craft and other ideas in these pages which can be used by all. Similarly, we have pages from Friends on Faith Adventures and from Families on Faith Adventures @ Home with links to more information about these two resources from URC Children's and Youth Work. All material can be photocopied for use, or downloaded from our website.

This resource is being written during a time of lockdown, when face to face work is not happening and churches are not meeting for worship in their buildings. Despite this, there is immense creativity happening in alternative ways of gathering, sharing and encouraging one another on our Christian journey: digital discipleship, meeting outdoors, doorstep deliveries and more. We do not know what 2021 has in store as we consider the "new possible" – we are the heroes of a new era of discipleship and mission.

Whether restrictions continue or not, let's consider how these materials can be adapted and used in different ways to increase their reach. There is a section on outdoor worship, for example, which encourages us to engage with God through nature. The URC website has a variety of information guides: [www.urc.org/information-guides.html](http://www.urc.org/information-guides.html) to help you reach children, young people, young adults and more via Zoom, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, church websites, YouTube and much more, and your local CYDO+ (Children's and Youth Development Officer or equivalent) can help you with this. Our resource bank [moodle.urc.org.uk/course/view.php?id=208m](http://moodle.urc.org.uk/course/view.php?id=208m) has more suggestions on how to use Zoom with youth groups, for example. Be a hero to other groups – share your ideas by sending them to us so that we can put them up on Facebook and on our website to inspire and encourage others.



Paul Robinson



HCYW Sam Richards



POCYW Lorraine Webb



Colouring picture	4
Drama – That’s heroic	5
Pre-school Plus	6
Toddler Praise	8
Resources – Pre-School Plus and outdoor worship	10
Outside worship / Forest Church	11
Suggestions for additional needs	12
Commitment for Life	14
URC Children Plus	16
Young heroes of the URC	18
Families on Faith Adventures @ Home	19
The importance of play	22
Suggestions for Messy Church	24
Intergenerational worship	26
Colouring picture	28
Preparing to lead worship	29
PILOTS worship materials	30
Friends on Faith Adventures (FOFA)	35
URCGSF – Guide and Scout Fellowship	38
Walking the Way challenge	40
Labyrinth and intergenerational prayer stations	41
URC Youth Plus	44
Sketch for URC Youth Plus	50
URC Young Adults Plus	53
Colouring picture	60
Useful links	61
Puzzle page	63

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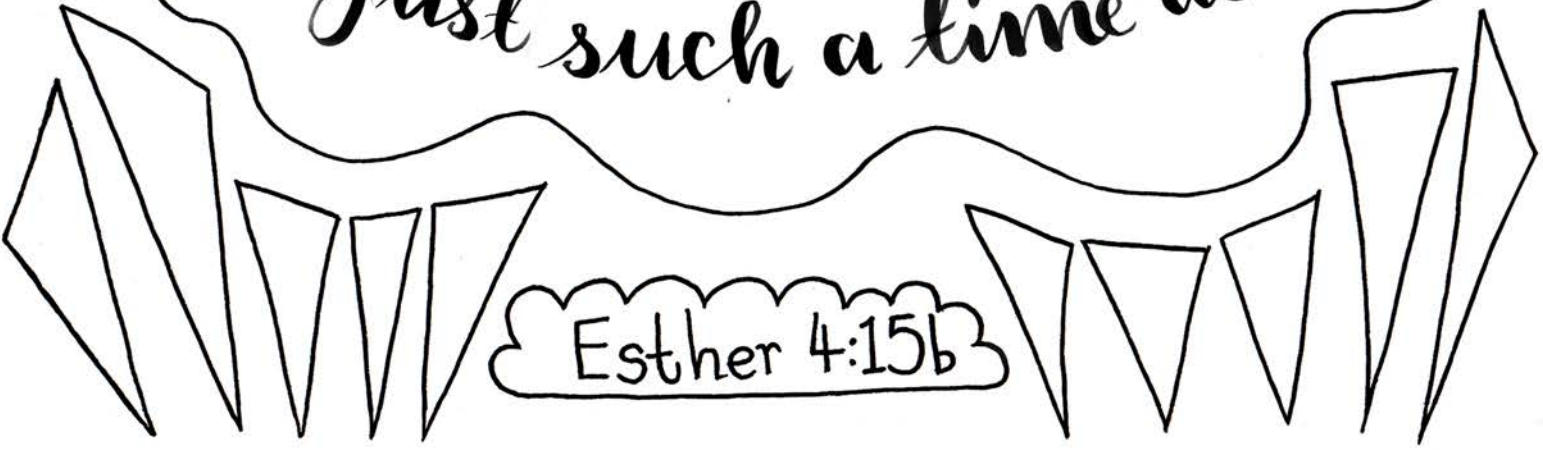


*"You may have been chosen..."*



*For just such a time as this."*

Esther 4:15b



Sid and Mel are talking excitedly and acting out actions of the superheroes they name. Toni, to one side, is quite matter of fact about her heroic deeds. They largely ignore her until the end ...

**Sid:** If you could be a superhero and have any superpower, what would it be?

**Mel:** I’d like to fly like Superman – get around the world super fast. I could take food to people who are hungry.

**Toni:** I do some shopping for Mrs Green at 53. Her arthritis is so painful she hardly goes out now.

**Sid:** Nah. Not flying. I want to be able to see through walls like X-ray Vision Man, so if I see anyone on their own, I can talk to them.

**Mel:** X-ray Vision Man? Who’s that? You mean Superman, right?

**Toni:** Old Joe at number 19 is lonely, so I go and read to him. He even likes Mister Men books.

**Mel:** No! What about having mighty strength, say, like Iron Man; halt a runaway train or stop a building falling down?

**Toni:** Shelia at 23 can’t take her bins out for the dustman, so mum asks me to give her a hand when we do ours. They can be very heavy.

**Sid:** How about being able to swim underwater like Aquaman. I would help people learn to swim or help people in trouble in the water ...

**Toni:** When we go swimming, mum lets me play with little Tommy. They say swimming is good for his confidence after the accident. He splashes around and it’s great fun

**Mel:** Think what we could do if we were invisible like the Invisible Woman ...

**Sid:** What could we do?

**Mel:** Well ... I don’t know but it could be fun.

**Toni:** Have you seen who lives at the top of our road?

**Mel:** Where?! The “Scary Granny” house?

**Sid:** I wouldn’t go in there ...

**Toni:** Mum said she’s invisible to most people because she never comes out and people are afraid, so she’s ignored. Me and my Dad dropped off some homemade cakes to her. She’s sweet really.

**Sid:** Come on Toni, what about being a hero? You know, like Batman catching the Joker red handed?

**Toni:** You should have seen the state of John’s house when we were clearing up after he was burgled. He was very sad.

**Mel:** Elastic man and his arms of elastic; we could reach into drains and pick up the things people have lost ...

**Toni:** Bert, our next door neighbour, is always dropping things. We often pop in and he’s usually struggling to pick up his newspaper or his slippers ...

**Mel:** Toni ... What are you on about? We’ve been talking about real heroes. Who are all these people you’re talking about?

**Toni:** Haven’t you seen them? They’re our neighbours ...

**Sid:** Forget them Toni! Don’t you wanna be a hero?

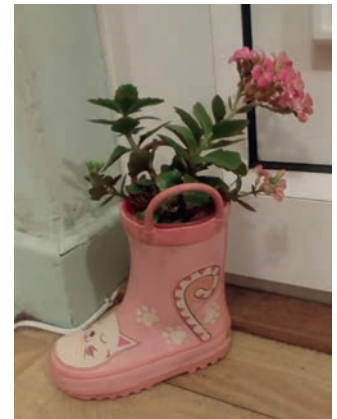


## Environmental heroes

### Activities

#### Amazing bee boots

Plant up your old welly boots with plants which will attract bees. Add a small tube filled with bits of bamboo cane to create a lovely home for the bees to live in too.



#### Nature scavenger hunt

Find something stripy, light, heavy, spiky, soft, crunchy, something that snaps, something furry, orange, green, red, well smelly, dry, bumpy, rough, thick, thin, tiny, huge, round.

#### Litter pickers

Get litter picking and tidy up your community. You can get information from Keep Britain Tidy or your local authority. If you do this as a group, why not get families involved? Have a competition: who can collect the most rubbish, what is the most unusual piece of rubbish you have collected and how many plastic bottles you collected?

#### Minibeast house

Be a bug superhero and create an amazing home for all the mini beasts in your garden. Get a container and fill it with materials you have gathered, then place it outside in a space where your bugs can find a home.



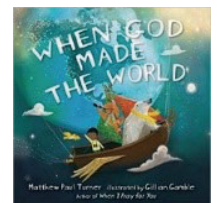
#### Sing some songs which are about nature

'Five Little Speckled Frogs', 'Wiggly Woo', 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star', 'Incy Wincy Spider' to name a few. See if you can find the things about nature mentioned in the songs.

## Books

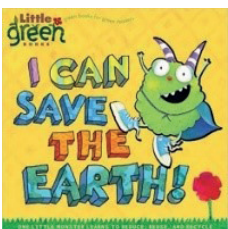
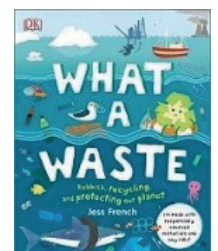
*"When God Made the World"* by Matthew Paul Turner

This is a rhythmic, journey through creation. It focuses on the complex way that God created our universe, including the biodiversity and all the complexity within it. This book gives us a greater wonder and respect for the planet and all God's creation.



*"What A Waste: Rubbish, Recycling, and Protecting our Planet"* by Jess French

This book reveals extraordinary facts about the waste we produce and its impact on us and our planet: It explains to children how they can make a difference by making small changes.



*"I Can Save the Earth! One Little Monster Learns to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle"*

by Alison Inches

The book, made from recycled materials, is about Max the Little Monster, who is an environmental nightmare. Max goes on a journey about environmental awareness, and when you read it you can learn tips on how you can become a little green monster too.

## Prayer

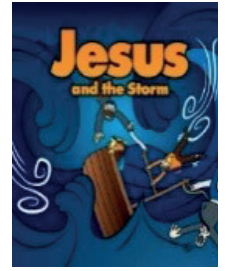
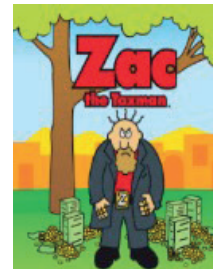
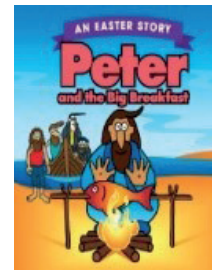
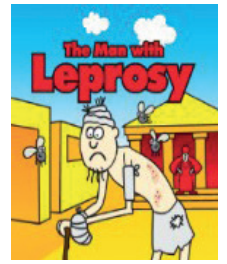
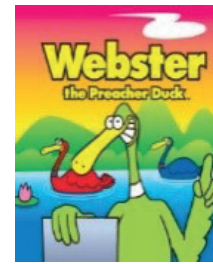
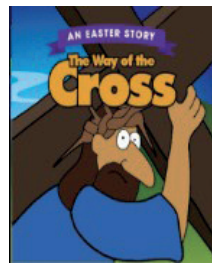
Thank you, God, for the world so sweet,  
Thank you God, for the food we eat,  
Thank you God, for the birds that sing,  
Thank you God, for everything!

Dear God,  
You made a wonderful world:  
Blue skies and fluffy cloud,  
Warm sun and night-time stars,  
Flying birds and swimming fish,

Crawling bugs and wiggly worms,  
Tall mountains and deep sea.  
For this wonderful world we  
live in  
Thank you

## Jesus – our hero

- Create story bags telling the stories of Jesus healing the little girl, Jesus sharing the food (feeding of the 5000), Jesus helping his friend to catch lots of fish. Use mini figures and some small items which can be played with afterwards.
- Make a quiet book – Jesus The Only Superhero – out of felt or card and on each page place a symbol which represents some of Jesus’ superpowers; a heart shape for sharer of love, a dove shape for bringer of peace, some plasters for healer, an arrow for showing the way, a candle for the light of the world.
- Dress up as Jesus with his different superpowers or create a dress up doll holding a torch, a plaster for healing, big heart on the chest for love, compass to show the way, hat with a dove on it as the bringer of peace.
- Think of all the superpowers Jesus has given us and make a mask, an image for your chest and a cape. Stick the superpowers (courage, love, trust, prayer, faith, caring, helping) on to the cape.
- Play a guessing game and try to work out what Jesus did to help the people he met. Use some symbols of Jesus’ superpowers: a heart shape, a dove shape, some plasters, a simple story book, a key, an LED candle or unlit candle a footprint shape, a fish.



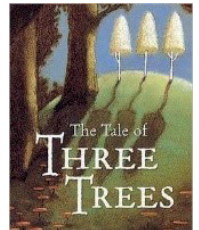
## Books

“Lost Sheep series” by Andrew McDonough

These lovely stories all point to Jesus in a fun and colourful way.

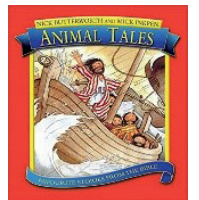
“The Tale of Three Trees” by Angela Elwell Hunt

This is a wonderful traditional folktale book about how the things you dream of may come true in different ways than you expect and it explores the amazing person Jesus is. Why not use branches from a tree outside as a group activity to make the feeding trough, cross and boat?



“Animal Tales: Favourite Stories from the Bible” by Nick Butterworth

This is a fabulous collection of stories about animals that encountered Jesus during his lifetime and how they were there when key incidents in his life took place.



## Prayer

Dear Jesus,  
 We are excited to learn more about you,  
 to read the bible and hear stories,  
 To hear of all the amazing things you did.  
 Thank you that we can play games together.  
 Thank you that we can explore and make things that  
 remind us of you.  
 Amen.

Dear Jesus,  
 Thank you for loving me  
 Help me to love as you love me  
 Show me how to help people the way  
 you helped others.  
 Amen

## Share the story of Moses

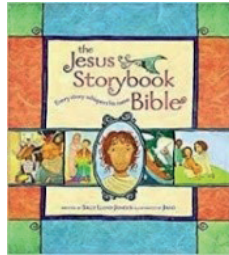
### Create a story sack to tell the story of Moses

You could use 'Let my people go', a story from Desmond Tutu's Children of God Storybook Bible. Put items in the story sack for children to explore as you tell the story.



Or

Using the Jesus Storybook Bible version, tell the story using paper bag puppets.



Or

Retell the story using road signs around the room and walk through it: [www.urb.org.uk/heroes-and-villains](http://www.urb.org.uk/heroes-and-villains).



## Activities to do around the story

### Sensory bins

Create one big sensory bin with elements of the all the plagues in it. You could use sand or rice to fill the bin, or even red water which would also represent one of the plagues.

Use these elements of the story: Plastic bugs for gnats, flies and locusts; a paper towel with a drop of red food colouring on it to represent the river of blood; some jumping frog party bag fillers for frogs; two toy cows for diseased livestock; a plaster or some red spots of felt for boils; a torch for darkness; table tennis balls for hailstones.

### Create some sensory tables

Table one: water / rivers turning to blood – red Skittles and milk experiment. Lay out a circle of Skittles on a plate of milk and watch the colours run.

Table two: frogs / waterplay – put a selection of toy frogs in water in a small paddling pool or stacker box. You could add little nets or small sieves to catch them.

Table three: gnats and locusts – use a sand tray or clean cat litter tray filled with sand. Hide bugs in the sand for children to find (bags of bugs are often sold at a reduced price after Halloween and can be bought cheaply). Alternatively, hide bugs around the room to be collected up by parents and toddlers together. This could be simply pictures stuck around the room.

Table four: people and animals get sores – rub some cream on each other's skin (baby lotion, sun cream or aqueous cream) or stick red spots on a doll.

Table five: thunder and hail – make simple rainmakers or shakers out of, for example, empty plastic bottles filled with rice. Use them to accompany singing 'I hear thunder' to the tune of Frere Jacques:

I hear thunder, I hear thunder
 
  
 Hark! Don't you? Hark! Don't you?
 
  
 Pitter, patter, rain drops. Pitter, patter, rain drops.
 
  
 I'm wet through. So are you.

Or

Outside activity – puddle jumping (make puddles if it's dry). Or you could put powder paint in the puddles, give children sticks to stir the colours together, put paper on the top of the puddle and lift it off to keep the pattern.

**"It's not who I am underneath,  
but what I do that defines me."  
Batman (Batman Begins)**



Table six: darkness covered the land – torch play in a dark play tent or play ‘Who’s in the dark?’ Children run around and when helper shouts, “darkness falls” the children curl up in a ball on the floor and the helper covers one child with a cloth or blanket. The other children get up and, with the helpers, try guessing who is under the cloth. More than one child can be covered at a time as a variation, or if they end up close together.

Table seven: killing the first born or saving the first – born Hebrews: have a large piece of paper with a door drawn on it for the children to paint round (or use an actual door).

**Circle time**

Something from each activity could be brought to a short circle time to recap the story.

An additional song could be used to tell the children why the plagues happened, and what took place afterwards. This could be sung to the tune of ‘The Grand Old Duke of York’:

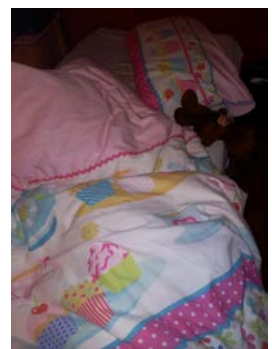
**Prayer time**

Use a bucket and some images for things which are in the wrong places or need putting right.

Pray that God will help us to do the right thing. Adults and toddlers can put the things in the bin that should be changed.























“I have never been especially impressed by the heroics of people convinced they are about to change the world. I am more awed by those who struggle to make one small difference.”  
*Ellen Goodman*

Moses led the Israelites  
 all through the desert bare  
 He taught them how to live God’s way:  
 Be kind and love and share.  
 And when they were good God was glad,  
 And when they were bad God was sad,  
 And when they learnt to live God’s way  
 what a happy time they had.  
 (Scripture Union)



# RESOURCES - PRE-SCHOOL PLUS AND OUTDOOR WORSHIP

## Story of Moses told with road signs

 God's people had been slaves in Egypt for many years	 God's sent ten plagues to Egypt to make Pharaoh change his mind.	 Locusts ate all the crops.	 ..and stop the slaves from leaving.
 They had been working hard building Pharaoh's pyramids	 It was going to be a bumpy road ahead. Rivers of blood.	 It was dark as night for three days.	 But then God took the first born of every family and they died.
 But God was with them and had heard their cries for help.	 Frogs everywhere.	 Each time Moses would ask Pharaoh, "Let my people go!"	 Pharaoh had had enough and told Moses and the people of God to go.
 God's had a plan to set the people free. He sent Moses to see Pharaoh.	 Flies and lice all around .	 A few times Pharaoh agreed....	 God's people took their things and ran. They were free!
 Moses said to Pharaoh, "Let my people go!"	 All the cattle died. People got boils.	 ..only to change his mind the next day...	 The end... Or is it just the beginning?
 But Pharaoh refused	 Storms of hail rained down.		



Ahead



Don't go this way





Straight ahead

Left




Right




## Trail Signs



I have gone home



Turn left



Turn right

# OUTSIDE WORSHIP/FOREST CHURCH

I love being outside with God, I walk and talk with him every day. In the early Church, when Jesus and the disciples met, it would have been outside in the open air or in one another's homes. They would have sat around together, listening to teachings or walking in small groups chatting about and sharing the good news Jesus had told them. We, as children of God, (that's all of us) can take all we need from the Bible. With the theme of heroes and villains, so many people come to mind from the Bible: David versus Goliath, Esther versus Haman, always God versus Satan. Good versus evil. So, how would that work in our outside worship or Forest Church?

For a start, why not cloud gaze and ask questions? Which cloud looks like a hero and which the villain? Or can you see a battle between good and evil as the clouds move across the sky? On a grey day, it's lovely to watch the sun pierce through the dark clouds and the rays of sun are a great visual illustration of God's power that will never be overcome. As the children are laying down, it's a great opportunity to ask them to pray, either for help to be a better version of themselves or to help with a problem etc.



But remember, we all have good and bad in us; we have free will and the choice to do the right or wrong thing. Why not make clay faces on some trees? If it's a big tree, get them to do nice, happy faces on one side and mean, nasty faces on the other, or use two trees. Look at all the faces; some will obviously look kind and some mean, but others may be hard to tell. Discuss how can we tell the good and bad people apart and the things they / we do. Tip: air drying clay (natural) is great for this craft activity as you can leave the face there and it will not harm the trees. But if using salt dough or Playdough, remember to take it off the trees and take it home.



If you're at the beach, make faces in the sand and use seaweed and shells to decorate your faces.

Another good way of showing your group that we all take wrong turns and make wrong choices in our lives, is by making them follow a nature trail. Using stones, grass and twigs, you can make the trail as easy or hard as you like, depending on age. On the adjacent page you will find some tracking signs you could use. It's great fun putting in some dead ends and finishing at a beautiful spot for a rest and a snack.

Another way to explore good versus evil, or heroes and villains, is to talk about what we are doing to the environment as you walk and talk through a forest, park, playing field, or a beach. Unfortunately, all these places will have litter. Give each person a carrier bag and a pair of gloves and as you walk along, pick up the litter you see. At the end, exchange the bags of litter for bags of sweets. Alternatively, get them to recycle: one idea is to make bird feeders using non-perishable plastic bottles or cartons (villain) into recycled reused feeders (hero).



Or your little ones may like using leaves to make masks for villains and crowns for heroes. Be prepared and dry some leaves in advance as it makes them easier to stick onto recycled card or paper.



You can be the hero with small acts of kindness to one another and the environment. Don't think just because you are small, your actions won't make a difference, because they will. Worshipping outside and discovering God's amazing world can bring any Bible story to life. Give it a go. Just remember to take everything you bring with you away so that when you leave, so you leave only your footprints behind.

**"Every villain is a hero in his own mind."  
Tom Hiddleston**

# SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL NEEDS

## Sensory bag

Create a sensory bag with materials that are hard, soft, gentle, strong. Explore it together, with musical sounds in the background which reflect strong or gentle moods.

## Create two superhero sensory bins

As the sensory medium you could use edible slime, coloured rice or pasta, items frozen in ice cubes, jelly, feathers. Be aware of any tactile defensiveness; does the child prefer to touch things that are wet, goeey, dry, soft, hard, edible, cold? Don't push them too far outside their comfort zone.



One sensory bin could have superheroes in – maybe Lego figures or other toys, or things associated with a particular superhero. If a child or young person has a particular interest in a certain superhero, eg Batman, try to focus on that and colour the medium that the items are in to match the superhero's theme (eg black and yellow).



The other sensory bin could have Bible superheroes. You may choose to have items specific to a range of heroes from the Bible if the child/young person has a knowledge of these. For example, Esther = beads, David = pebbles, Moses = arrows, Paul = a pencil or a chain, Mary = an ointment, Peter = a fish. Alternatively, you might choose to have symbols of Jesus as a superhero: a heart shape, a dove shape, some plasters, a simple story book, a key, an LED candle or unlit candle.

## Superhero walk

Make a trail of superheroes using pictures at a size that can be easily spotted by the child or young person, and at each station do an activity or prayer. The activity or prayer should be written on the back of the picture, together with the instructions of how to travel to the next station. You can find samples of these on the URC Website here: [www.urc.org.uk/heroes-and-villains](http://www.urc.org.uk/heroes-and-villains)

Go so quietly that nobody can hear you.

Listen to the sounds around you of things that God made; birds, wind, people, trees – say: "Thank you God." Fly like the wind to the next station.

Find a mirror. God has given you a smile to cheer people. Give your biggest smile.

Sneak up on the next station as though you are invisible.



Choose a coloured bean bag and throw it into a bucket. Keep trying until it goes in. God wants us to keep on trying and helps us to be patient. Stomp to the next station as noisily as you can.

God wants us to share the joy of loving Jesus – shout and sing and dance. Race like Flash to the next station.

Everything we do or say can affect others and God Let's say sorry by dropping a stone into a bowl of water. Make yourself as tiny as you can on the way to the next station.

God gives us strength to face big problems. Use your body to knock down a wall of boxes. Skip or zigzag to the final station.

Let's massage each other's hands with some nice ointment. Jesus wants us to care for each other.

## How to dye rice and pasta







- Put one cup of rice or mini pasta pieces into a Ziploc bag or plastic container with lid.
- Add one tsp of vinegar or lemon juice.
- Add food colouring to achieve the depth of colour desired.
- Fasten bag or container and SHAKE SHAKE SHAKE until all the rice or pasta is evenly coated.
- Allow to dry on a paper towel or tray. The more spread out it is, the quicker it will dry.
- Store in a Ziploc bag.

## 'Be bold, be strong' with Makaton – Becky George






[www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwdD3qlpmi8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwdD3qlpmi8)

Be  bold, be  strong, for the  Lord  your  God is  with  you.

Be  bold, be  strong, for the  Lord  your  God is  with  you.

I  am ~~~~ not  afraid -  no,  no,  no

I  am ~~~~ not  dismayed -  not  me!

Because  I'm  walking in  faith  and  victory

 Come  on  and  walk in  faith  and  victory

For the  Lord  your  God, is  with  you.

[www.widgetonline.com](http://www.widgetonline.com)

## What is Commitment for Life?

Commitment for Life is the URC's global justice programme.

# Commitment for Life

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

## What do we do?

Commitment for Life helps local congregations to walk the way of Jesus. Christ overturned many things that caused suffering: things like hunger, sickness, poverty and debtors' prisons. We see how Jesus was "moved by compassion" (Matthew 14:14, Matthew 20:1-16). Like Jesus, we also want to show compassion and work for justice. Our hero partners are Christian Aid and Global Justice Now. Together, we show the love of Jesus in practical ways. We focus on things like poverty, injustice, the effects of climate disruption. For example, Global Justice Now wants everyone, especially the very wealthy, to pay their fair share of tax. So, we call on our government to make just laws. Also, Christian Aid helps children, women and farmers who face climate disruption. We help them by walking the way of Jesus, and by working alongside our sisters and brothers.

## What can we do?

We can do three things.

1. We can learn more about the problems facing the poorest people. We listen to the stories told by our partners and learn about the issues.
2. We can pray. You can use the prayers we provide or your own. Ask God to send the Holy Spirit to bring about justice.
3. We can act by working for justice. We can use our voices and write to our MP's We can join in the campaigns hosted by Christian Aid and Global Justice Now. We can speak up at school, work, in church and online. We can share our gifts and money. Your gifts will support the people in our partner regions. Learn more by going to [www.bit.ly/URCFL](http://www.bit.ly/URCFL).

## Which countries and regions do we support?

Through our hero partner Christian Aid, we support four regions:

- Bangladesh
- Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory
- Zimbabwe
- Central America: El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua



You can find out more about the brilliant work of our hero partner Christian Aid at [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk) and [www.christianaid.org.uk/schools/our-work-young-people](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/schools/our-work-young-people). You can find out more about the work of our other hero partner Global Justice Now and the campaigns they support at [www.globaljustice.org.uk/youth](http://www.globaljustice.org.uk/youth). You can find out about the work of Fairtrade at [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

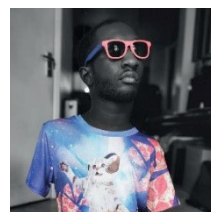
## Examples of young heroes



### Greta Thunberg

**"You are never too small to make a difference"**

At the age of 15, Greta Thunberg started protesting outside the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm while holding a sign reading "Skolstrejk för klimatet" which translates as "School Strike for Climate." She was joined by other school children, who began to protest in their local areas. The strikes grew into a global movement against climate change, known as Fridays for Future: [www.fridaysforfuture.org](http://www.fridaysforfuture.org).



### Isaac Harvey

Isaac Harvey is a videographer and president of Wheels and Wheelchairs. He uses his voice to campaign on social justice issues including fair disability perception, mental health awareness and climate justice.

You can listen to him on this episode of 'The Advocado Podcast' from the Christian Aid Collective: [open. spotify.com/episode/3VPngdmF5mf816sxShyf0Q](https://open.spotify.com/episode/3VPngdmF5mf816sxShyf0Q)  
Follow Isaac on Instagram:  
[www.instagram.com/iamisaacharvey/](https://www.instagram.com/iamisaacharvey/)  
[www.wheelsandwheelchairs.co.uk](http://www.wheelsandwheelchairs.co.uk)



### Henry Stapleton

Henry Stapleton used his keen interest in streetlights to make a big difference for a community in Free Town, Sierra Leone. After creating a booklet about streetlights and creating Henry's Lamppost Appreciation Society, he heard

about a community in Sierra Leone who had no access to electricity or streetlights. Henry held a cake and biscuit sale at his local church and raised money to purchase a solar lamp for the village. He is a recipient of the URC Lundie Award. Read about Henry and more of our URC young heroes on [www.urc.org.uk/news-from-the-lundie-memorial-award](http://www.urc.org.uk/news-from-the-lundie-memorial-award)

## Become a young Commitment for Life hero

It's not fair - roll the dice game.

**Aim:** To illustrate the theme of injustice and the need to help each other out of unfair situations.

**You will need:** a normal dice and one with only fives and sixes on it for each pair.  
You will have to make a special dice by covering a cube with stickers and adding your own spots. Make three sides with five spots and three sides with six spots.

**How to play:**

In pairs, one has the ordinary dice and one the special dice. Both roll their dice five times. The person with the highest score wins.

**Discuss:**

Who won, why, how the loser felt and how the game could be played more fairly. Is this like real life?

### To do: How do you think you could help these workers?

Think about the lovely clothes you purchase from well-known High Street retailers such as Primark and H&M etc. Did you know many of these clothes are made in Bangladesh by people working in poor conditions and on low wage. Is this fair?

When out shopping, look out for Fairtrade produce eg bananas, coffee, chocolate and be encouraged to purchase it.

For further discussion and action: how to be a hero, opposed to a villain.

We live on an awesome planet that's full of amazing animals, birds, fish, naturally formed landscapes, coral reefs, mountain ranges, seas, planets and countryside. However, due to climate disruption this is gradually being destroyed.

- In your family groups, schools, clubs, discuss how you can be creative in reusing household items, especially single use plastic so they don't end up on landfill tips.
- Use an online carbon footprint calculator to see how much carbon dioxide your actions release. Then take steps to change your ways help save the planet eg:
  - \* Walk or ride your bicycle to school
  - \* Turn off devices which use electricity, rather than leave them on standby
  - \* When feeling a bit cool, put on a jumper, rather than turning up the thermostat
  - \* Eat more vegetables and less red meat, or commit to one meat free meal each week
  - \* Take a shower, rather than a bath, and turn the tap off when cleaning your teeth
  - \* Take a holiday in this country, rather than fly overseas
  - \* Recycle your clothes, or purchase them from a charity shop rather than buy new
  - \* Watch the news, or read the paper for items reporting social injustice, and write to your MP.
- Discuss with the Elders of your church how your congregation can become an eco-church.  
[ecochurch.arocha.org.uk](http://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk)



**FAIRTRADE**  
INTERNATIONAL

## What is a hero?

- A person who is admired for their courage, outstanding achievements, brave or noble qualities, eg a war hero
- A person who appears to have extraordinary skills or powers, eg a sporting hero or explorer
- A hero could be the chief character in a book, play, or film, who typically embodies good qualities, and with whom the reader is expected to sympathize
- In mythology and folklore, a hero is often a person with superhuman qualities
- Someone we look up to and want to be like.

## What makes a hero?

- Desire to help others or a cause
- A desire to face and overcome challenges that test their strength of character and resolve
- Selflessness

Can we be heroes? Do we have a hero?

## What is a villain?

- In a film, novel or play, a villain is a character whose evil actions or motives are important to the plot, eg “a pantomime villain”
- A person responsible for specified problems, harm, or damage – an offender, lawbreaker, or criminal
- Someone who makes life difficult for others.

## What makes a villain?

- Greed, selfishness
- Being cruel and immoral
- The need to control people and situations
- Low self-esteem
- Poor role models
- Getting in with the ‘wrong’ set of friends.
- Being treated badly themselves by others.

What might turn someone into a villain? Are villains born bad? Have a look at: [www.despicableme.fandom.com/wiki/Despicable\\_Me\\_Wiki](http://www.despicableme.fandom.com/wiki/Despicable_Me_Wiki). Gru’s mother’s ignorance and neglect of her son is one of the main reasons Gru becomes a supervillain. That is until he encounters Margo, Edith and Agnes, who all see him as a potential dad.

Luke 15:11-32, the ‘Parable of the Prodigal Son’.

Who was the hero in this story? Who was the villain? Was there a change of roles?

## How do we deal with villains?

### Creative prayer

Look on our website for this fantastic creative prayer resource from Rachel Boxer:

[www.urc.org.uk/heroes-and-villains](http://www.urc.org.uk/heroes-and-villains)



### Heroes and villains prayer

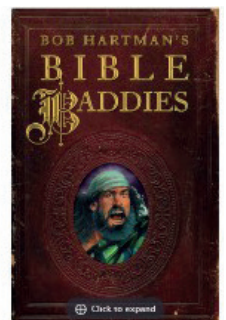
Can you write a prayer where the main words are replaced with emojis?

### Game

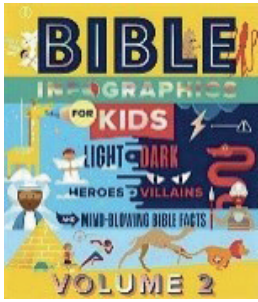
Be like Jesus, follow my leader, Jesus says (Simon says) After the game, ask for suggestions: if we are going to live like Jesus, what sort of things would we do? What did Jesus actually say in the Bible? Eg Jesus said, “Share your money with the poor.” Jesus said, “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Jesus said, “Be welcoming to everyone.”

### Books for children

Read more about the villains in Bob Hartman’s book *Bible Baddies*, written in a style which will appeal to lovers of the Horrible Histories book. Ideal for ages eight to ten.







The *Bible Infographics* books, from Harvest House Publishers, present Bible facts in a visual style with immediate impact from the moment you open the book. They are full of fun and quirky facts, as well as Bible knowledge and are aimed at ages nine to 12.

## Life hero – Fabulous Fairtrade and Eco Warrior

A superhero lives their life in a way that makes other people’s lives better.

Spend some time exploring how the choices we make in our lives can make a positive impact on someone else life.

Fairtrade is a way of making sure that farmers in other countries get a fair price for their food and products, fair trade farms also do not have children working on them.

Draw a body outline and fill it with the missions below. Then the group can draw or write ways to complete that mission.

### Support Fairtrade

Choose Fairtrade food – talk with parents about it, look for the Fairtrade logo when out shopping.



**FAIRTRADE**

Encourage others to choose Fairtrade – run a Fairtrade tuck shop at your church/group, give Fairtrade treats to friends for birthdays or celebrations, design posters to tell others, write to your local shops asking them to support Fairtrade.

Be knowledgeable about Fairtrade – find out which developing countries are Fairtrade, find out which foods and products are Fairtrade.

### Look after the planet we live in

Take care of the planet; recycle and reduce the amount of plastic you use, don’t waste food, do litter picking.

Look after living things; sponsor a tree planting, grow wildflowers for bees, make a bug hotel, take care of your pet. When the task is complete, sit back and look at all the ideas. Perhaps choose one or two to go away and do, make a start in making a difference.

## More eco activities

Find out if your church is an Eco church.  
[ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/how-eco-church-works](http://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/how-eco-church-works)  
[www.arochoa.org.uk/](http://www.arochoa.org.uk/)

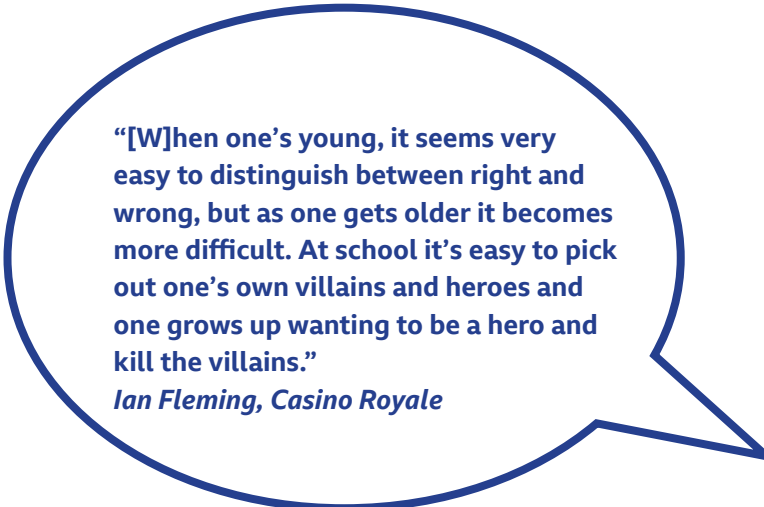
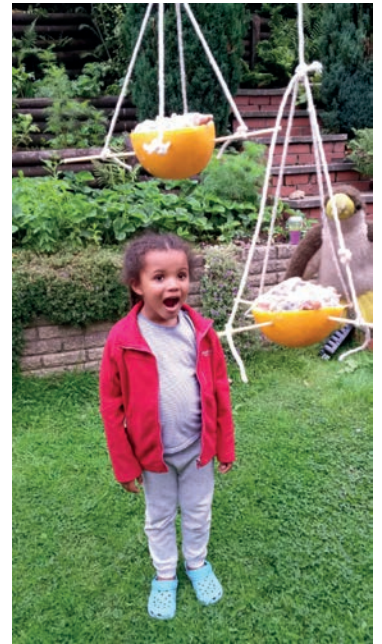
Off-setting  
[www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-call-for-evidence-on-carbon-offsetting](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-call-for-evidence-on-carbon-offsetting)

How ‘green’ is the URC?  
[ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/how-eco-church-works](http://ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk/how-eco-church-works)

Who, if you have one, is your Synod Green Apostle?

### Carbon footprint

Have a look at the link below – could you do this in your group or maybe with your whole church?  
[www.teachengineering.org/content/cub\\_/lessons/cub\\_whatkindoffootprint/cub\\_footprint\\_lesson01\\_worksheet\\_v3\\_tedl\\_dwc.pdf](http://www.teachengineering.org/content/cub_/lessons/cub_whatkindoffootprint/cub_footprint_lesson01_worksheet_v3_tedl_dwc.pdf)



**“[W]hen one’s young, it seems very easy to distinguish between right and wrong, but as one gets older it becomes more difficult. At school it’s easy to pick out one’s own villains and heroes and one grows up wanting to be a hero and kill the villains.”**

*Ian Fleming, Casino Royale*

These young people of the URC, together with many more, have been playing their part in the mission of God. It has been our pleasure to recognise their selfless work as they care for those in need, take on leadership roles, raise money, lead worship, reach out to the lonely or elderly, volunteer in the local community or abroad. Read more about them on [www.urch.org.uk/news-from-the-lundie-memorial-award](http://www.urch.org.uk/news-from-the-lundie-memorial-award)



A trust fund, established in 1895 in memory of the Revd Robert Henry Lundie, has recently been re-purposed to enable us to spotlight some of the amazing work done by children and young people across the synods.

Once a month, for 100 months, a medal and certificate is presented, together with £100 to be spent for children and youth in a way chosen by the recipient.



Grace Brierley  
12 years old



Emma Jackson  
17 years old



Keiran Ineson  
15 years old



Henry Stapleton  
7 years old



Charlotte Cassar  
16 years old



Noah Boyce  
5 years old



Poppy and Marrison  
Thorpe - aged 9 and 16

Who will be next? For information on how to nominate a child, young person or young adult under the age of 26, visit [www.bit.ly/lundie-awardURC](http://www.bit.ly/lundie-awardURC)

## Welcome to Families on Faith Adventures @ Home!

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, explore what it means to you and express that in words and action. 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:  
*Be the Star You Are*  
*The Book of Esther*



Illustration by richardgunther.org via freebibleimages.com

**Bible context:** the Book of Esther was written around 450 BC, probably by someone who worked in the court that Esther married into. It is the only book in the Bible not to mention the name of God: We are encouraged to find God at work within the story.

### Esther retold

There was once a king in Persia who had a prime minister called Haman. Now Haman hated the Jewish people. He especially hated one man called Mordecai. Haman had commanded all the Jews to bow to him but Mordecai had refused, saying he would not bow to a man. Haman vowed that he would get his revenge on Mordecai and his people.

Now the king was looking for a new wife to be queen and chose Esther, who moved into the palace. Her uncle was Mordecai and she had lived with him since her parents died. Nobody realised that Esther was a Jew, especially not Haman who actually crowned her queen.

Now, on with Haman's wicked plan. Haman was a powerful man and persuaded the king to make a rule that all enemies of the king would be destroyed. He told him that the Jews were the king's enemies.

Esther found out about the plan and told Mordecai; he reminded Esther that she was queen for just such a time as this and she must take action. They call all the Jewish people to come together and pray and fast to prepare themselves. Esther had a plan too.

She went to see the king (this was a brave thing to do) and invited the king and Haman to a special feast. She told the king that someone was trying to hurt her. The king was furious, asking, "Who is this person?" She pointed at Haman; "It is Haman, he wants to destroy the Jews and I am a Jew". The king was furious and ordered that Haman be taken away. Haman was never seen again.

The Jewish people were saved because of the bravery of a girl .

I wonder where you  
see God in this story?



### What's in the box?

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.

Gather together a homemade crown, some fancy fabric, jewellery, stars, something to make a noise with, a toy to represent Esther and something rainbow coloured to represent God's promise.

## Pray together

### Floating star prayers

This is a peaceful and reflective activity as you watch each floating star prayer open up. You can do this in a bowl inside or you could go outside into the garden and use a paddling pool or large container.

You will need: Thin paper, cut into star shapes

Pens

A bowl of water



What you do:

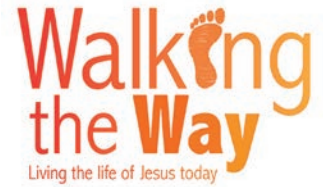
- Think about the things you would like to bring to God and write and draw them on the stars.
- Fold in the points on the star.
- Place the folded star gently on the surface of the water.
- Watch and wait as the folded paper gently open offering up your prayer to God. Sit quietly and reflect on the floating prayers.



I wonder who your encouragers are?

## Our Walking the Way challenge this time is ...

There are still things happening in the world which are unfair. Think about the things which need changing – maybe about the environment, or homelessness, or prejudice, or poverty, or refugees, and write a letter to your MP or to someone who can make a difference. Speak out like Esther did.



## To do together



### Window stars

You will need: Tissue paper, napkins (separated into one layer)  
Clingfilm or greaseproof paper  
Wooden skewers, pencils or straws  
Glue and thread



What you do:

- Firstly make star shapes by sticking the sticks/straws together using Sellotape or glue. Then when they are dry, glue them to tissue paper/napkins/cling film/greaseproof paper. (You could even glue them with glitter glue).
- After the stars have dried on the paper, trim the paper as close to the star as possible and coat them with some more glue to give them some strength and make them a bit more transparent.
- The stars that have multiple colours were made by gluing just one of the star's arms to the tissue paper, cutting it out when it dried, and then repeating for the other arms or the effect created by folding some of the excess paper toward the middle of the stars' arms. As it turns out, folding the excess paper is easier than cutting it close to the wood. Depending on the ages of your children, this is a step they may need some help with.
- This bit is for grown-ups: To hang the stars, first put a piece of clear tape on the back of one of the points. The tape gives the paper a little strength so that it should not rip when strung together. Thread a needle with a long piece of white or clear thread, and thread through the star, tying a small knot around the intersection of the wooden sticks to hold it in place. You can cover it with a piece of Sellotape to secure it in place.
- If you want to make a string of stars, repeat this at the top and bottom points of the star to join them.
- Repeating this process, we strung multiple stars to each line and ended up with seven lines that have three to four stars each



This is an excerpt from a Families on Faith Adventures @ Home resource. Find the whole resource, and much more, on [www.urc.org.uk/families-on-faith-adventures](http://www.urc.org.uk/families-on-faith-adventures), and visit our YouTube playlist: [www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0dWr4cxnjTTFdAY2f4KMuvVrsRkDfL-Z](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0dWr4cxnjTTFdAY2f4KMuvVrsRkDfL-Z)



Rough and tumble play can be difficult, as it walks a fine line between play and aggression. As children and youth workers in churches, we can find it difficult and often we will try to redirect their attention elsewhere.

However, rough and tumble play is a natural thing for children to want to engage in. We need to work out for ourselves how we can enable this play while setting appropriate boundaries to keep children safe. It is a very physical and active play and it involves many actions like wrestling, tickling, play-fighting, climbing or sitting on each other, 'Bundles' and chasing games like 'Tag' and 'It'. When this type of play is observed in children and in young people, you will almost certainly witness laughing, screaming and enjoyment as well as some pretend play and imaginative storytelling.

This type of play involves rule-negotiation and concepts of fairness and justice. It can support children to develop these ideas further throughout their lives. It helps to develop spatial awareness; understanding of social rules; to learn when to stop and to balance what they want with the desires of others therefore developing a sense of empathy. It enables the children and young people to manage risk safely and to manage aggressive feelings within a safe environment. It can be used creatively in developing their own narratives within the play. Additionally, it provides an environment where positive experiences of touch can be provided in a socially appropriate setting, this being a developmental need which we find it difficult to facilitate normally.

Rough and tumble play can create anxieties for children's and youth workers, mostly centring around: how should I respond? What if someone gets hurt? Is it something that should be discouraged because it may lead to a real fight or violence? This is something we need to be aware of as workers and we should learn to read the play situation.

It is always a good idea to set a safety signal before you begin any session and to make sure everyone understands what the safety sign, word or phrase is. All should understand that when anybody says this safety word, play stops immediately, because someone is feeling uncomfortable or is getting hurt. Keep this word the same for every session. For example, a widely recognised phrase is "time out" with a time out hand signal.

Here are some tips to help you to distinguish between play and real aggression:

- Watch body language. Are eyes smiling or are they frowning?
- Listen for laughter, play-shouting and giggling, not crying or screaming in pain.
- Closely observe the play, listen to any words spoken. Is there a narrative? Are the comments personal?
- Is everyone involved consenting to this play and joining in willingly?
- Are there positive rewards for all players? Is this not bullying when one individual or group dominates the play.
- Do stronger participants sometimes allow their opponents to win?
- Closely watch the contact; is it unrelenting, hard, harsh, violent, or relatively gentle and playful?
- Do participants sometimes change roles or take alternate roles? For example, the chaser is being chased.
- Does everyone know each other well? Rough and tumble promotes attachments. It is unusual for anyone to rough and tumble with strangers.
- Count the number involved. Violence tends to involve two individuals, rough and tumble or aggressive play can incorporate several at once. Bullying tends to centre on one where rough play will involve groups.
- Check. Most children and young people know that rough and tumble play is not real fighting. Encourage them to tell you if things go too far.

So next time you're told: "I'm the goodie and you're the baddie ...", join in and enjoy this play for what it is ... play!

## Rough and tumble games

### Grab and go

Seize the striped, polka-dotted, colourful, or plain socks your opponent is wearing while also keeping your own toes covered.

### Swing high and low

Hand over a few soft pillows and let them fly.

### Surf the surroundings

Grab a big couch cushion and use it to pull or push the "surfer" around the room, or to slide down a stair or two (just make sure there's space to land at the bottom).

## Skateboard pulls

Think about the Bible story in Matthew 9:1-8 of the friends who helped their friend onto a mat and lowered them through the roof of a house where Jesus was talking. Sit on the skateboard and hold onto a rope, pull each other around.

## Pull and push

Two people of similar height face each other, placing their feet against each other and holding hands. As each leans back in turn, you create a seesaw effect. Think about the story of Jonah, when the sailors were in a boat and were sailing through a storm.

## Leap frog

One person bends over and someone else leaps over them. It can end up with everyone on the floor laughing.

## Monkey hang

In the park, find some monkey bars and try and get from one end to the other. See how many bars each person can do. Alternatively, see how long you can hang on or can get up and over the bar, like a gymnast.

## The floor is lava (or “There’s a flood coming, Noah, Get in the boat!”)

This game works best if you have lots of chairs and furniture around, although you can play this game anywhere. Pretend that there’s a flood coming and you must get your feet off the floor and keep them dry. Try and get across the room without touching the floor.

## Other games and activities linked to specific superheroes

**Spiderman/woman:** untie the knot game

**Superman/woman:** pass the kryptonite, or get rid of the kryptonite. For kryptonite use a green ball or beanbag.

**Joker:** try to make others laugh by pulling faces, telling jokes etc.

**Captain America:** decorate a paper plate like Captain America’s shield. Use as a frisbee – who can throw their shield the furthest?

**Wonder Woman:** lasso of truth. Anyone captured within Wonder Woman’s Lasso of Truth has to obey her commands. One player is Wonder Woman and uses a hula hoop to capture another player, who must then perform an action eg five-star jumps, sing a nursery rhyme.

**Batman/woman:** make paper planes or bat jets and try to knock the villain (use a Lego figure) off a stand (e.g. an upturned beaker).

**Hulk:** use green playdough or salt dough for modelling activities.

**Eco heroes game:** identify three areas in your meeting space as recycle box, compost heap, and landfill. Leader calls out an item, and players can think about how they would dispose of the item and run to the corresponding area.

Recycle box	Landfill	Compost heap
cereal box	sweet wrapper	banana peel
plastic bottle	crisp bag	apple core
plastic bag	juice box	grass clippings
newspaper	light bulb	used tea bags
drinks can	disposable nappy	eggshells
old clothes	bubble wrap	potato peelings

## Youth

Play a social justice game. Hold a court session type of debate. Pick a current social justice issue as the subject. Spend time researching the issue, creating arguments, then debate for and against the issue in two teams. Put these views to a jury or a panel of judges. Maybe use consensus decision making in one session and simple majority in the other. Which one seems fairer?

Create a game of ‘would you rather ...’ to play, based on one of the Bible heroes.

Create a fantasy Bible football team, or create your own ‘top trumps’ of heroes and villains of the Bible.

Play steal the flag, bulldog or rounders (defenders and attackers).

“People are not born heroes or villains; they’re created by the people around them.”

*Chris Colfer*

# SUGGESTIONS FOR MESSY CHURCH



## Joseph – hero or villain?

The story of Joseph is like a giant rollercoaster with lots of highs and lows. It is a story of jealousy, hate, love, strength, wisdom, fear, and forgiveness. Like all of us, at times, Joseph did not always act wisely, and on occasions may have been more villain than hero. “God was in each situation, in and underneath all that was happening both good and bad, God was doing something good and making everything right again” (The Jesus Story Book Bible).

Use the crafts to explore the story and ask the question was Joseph a hero or villain?

### Create

#### Wibble, Wobble, Joseph

You will need a small ball, sticky tac or playdough, a marble or glass bead, a paper cone shape, glue and colouring pens. Make a small cut in the ball and put a blob of sticky tac inside the ball and press it firmly down to form a weight at the bottom. Add a glass bead or marble to the sticky tac to make the ball more stable. Decorate the cone shape to be Joseph with his multicoloured coat. Place the cone firmly over the ball with the weight at the bottom and Joseph at the top. Now try to knock Joseph over. Talk about how Joseph had lots of wobbles, good and bad, but God was always there to help him stand firm.



#### A coat of many colours

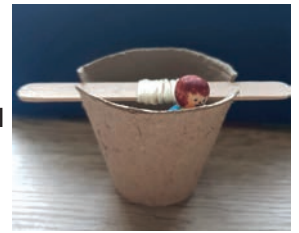
You will need some crispbreads, cream cheese and an assortment of fruits cut into slices. Take a whole crispbread for the coat and make sleeves out of two smaller pieces. Spread a layer of cream cheese over the crispbread and decorate with fruit to make a coat of many colours. Talk about how Joseph and his brother reacted to the coat that Joseph’s father gave him.



#### Joseph in the well

You will need a paper seedling pot or plain paper cup, a figure representing Joseph, a lolly stick and some string or wool. Take the cup or flowerpot and cut two slits either side to support the lolly stick across the pot. Wrap some string or wool around the lolly stick. Take your Joseph figure and stick it to the end of the

string. Place the lolly stick across the pot and lower Joseph down into the well. Talk about why Joseph’s brothers threw him into the well. What had made them hate Joseph? I wonder what Joseph thought about his brothers? I wonder if Joseph felt that God was with him in the bottom of the well?



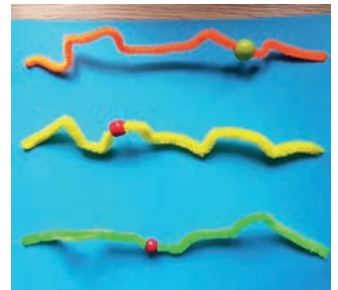
#### Dreams wheel

You will need two circles cut from card, pictures of Joseph’s dreams or ideas for children to create their own pictures, paper fastener, colouring pens and glue. Cut a quarter section out of one of the circles so that, when it is placed over the second circle, a quarter will be revealed. Colour in pictures or stick pictures of Joseph’s two dreams and Pharaoh’s two dreams in the four quarters of the bottom circle. Join the two circles together with the paper fastener. As you turn the circle, the four dreams will be revealed in turn. Talk about the different dreams and what they meant. I wonder how Joseph used the dreams?



#### Ups and downs

You will need a sheet of card or foam, pipe cleaners, Sellotape and some beads. Push one end of the pipe cleaner through the foam sheet and bend over at the back to secure. Put a bead onto the pipe cleaner. Bend the pipe cleaner to make some ‘ups and downs’ and then push the other end through the foam or card sheet and bend over to secure at the back. Do these two or three times on your sheet. Guide the beads up and down the pipe cleaner bends. As you guide the bead, think of the ups and downs in Joseph’s life and how God always helped him. I wonder what ups and downs you might be feeling?



#### Egyptian collar

You will need a paper plate and CDs for templates, felt or coloured card, sequins, sticky gems and shiny tape or card. Draw round the paper plate onto the felt or card and cut out. Draw round a CD to make





another circle, off centre, to form the neck space and cut this out. Decorate the collar with the gems and tape. Talk about how Joseph was released from prison and interpreted Pharaoh's dream and then Pharaoh was pleased with Joseph and made him a prince. God had looked after Joseph and had brought him through hard times to something good. I wonder how Joseph felt about it?

### Precious goblet

You will need a plastic wine glass (clear or gold or silver if available), marker pens and stickers. Decorate the wine glass with the pens and stickers. Talk about how Joseph hid the goblet in one of the sacks of grain to trick his brothers into coming back. I wonder why Joseph did not tell his brothers who he was straight away? I wonder why he hid the cup?



### A forgiveness heart

You will need a heart cut from strong card and some red wool. Wrap the wool around your heart until all the heart is covered with a thick layer of wool. Put a blob of glue on the end of the wool and tuck it into the heart to make it secure. Hold the heart and think about the story. How did Joseph show he had forgiven his brothers? Talk about how, no matter what had happened, God was in every situation.



## Celebration

Read the story *The Forgiving Prince* from *The Jesus Story Book Bible* by Sally Lloyd Jones, which retells the story of Joseph and his brothers from Genesis 37-46.

### Joseph's story jigsaw

The aim of this story is to enable children to explore all the different parts of Joseph's story, bringing them all together in one big jigsaw. You will need an outline of Joseph; this can be a simple gingerbread man outline or something more complicated. You will need to enlarge your image to make it as big as possible and cut it into eleven separate shapes. Explain that this is Joseph. We often hear parts of his story, but don't often see it all together at the same time. Which parts of his story do you know? Use the answers to build the blank jigsaw pieces, write them small in the corner of each piece.

Hopefully, the following answers will be included:

- Joseph is one of 12 brothers
- Joseph has a special coat; he was the favourite
- Joseph has dreams and shows off
- Joseph is flung into a well and sold as a slave
- Joseph the slave is tricked and ends up in prison
- Joseph interprets two dreams; one good and one bad
- Joseph is released and interprets Pharaoh's dream
- Joseph becomes Pharaoh's right hand man in Egypt
- Joseph saves the nation from starvation
- Joseph's brothers arrive and Joseph tricks them
- Joseph is reunited with his family, and his dad returns.

Now have some creative fun. The group draw, write and decorate the shapes – keep it simple is a good tip here. You will notice that each part of the story could have two sides to it, good and bad. There are times when Joseph is a hero, and times when he is a villain. Encourage the children to show both sides in the picture. Once it is finished, encourage the children to share their piece before adding it to the jigsaw.

Explanation: look at the whole picture. Here we see one man's life, many parts to it, some good, some not so good. There are times when he was doing amazing things, when he was a hero, and times when he was not doing well, perhaps a villain.

The jigsaw comes together to show us the whole story. One thing holds all the pieces together and that is God. (You can take a red or gold ribbon or string and wrap it around all the edges inside the jigsaw as you say this). All the time, through all the pieces, God was with Joseph. God had a plan for his life. God was with him when he was doing the wrong thing and when he was doing the right thing. God is in this story, every part. God is in our story too, every part.

## Creative prayer

You will need sandpaper, short lengths of wool. Talk about the rough feel of the sandpaper. What does this remind you of? Joseph was having a difficult time, but God brought a change and a new start for him. Feel the sandpaper with your fingers. Think about people you know who are going through rough, difficult times at the moment. Ask God to help and bless them. As you pray and think about these people, arrange the soft, coloured wool on the sandpaper as a sign of the new life and change you are asking God to bring.

Aim: to explore some heroes of the faith and consider how God can use us to do amazing things too.

Here we provide the elements that can produce an effective and interactive intergenerational service and we have left the final structure of the service for you to do. See page 61 of this booklet for suggested hymns / songs / video clips you might use.

### Gathering activity: a guessing game – Who am I?

Explain that you will read out some clues to some famous people, who are often called saints. How many can you guess in the least number of clues? Encourage people to shout out the suggested answers.

#### Who am I? (St Francis)

I was born in 1181.  
I was the son of a cloth merchant.  
I am known for my love of nature and animals.  
I gave up my possessions and family to take on a life of poverty.  
I lived Assisi, Italy.  
I preached to people about the life of Jesus Christ.  
I am patron saint of ecology and of animals.

#### Who am I? (St Nicholas)

I was born in C280.  
I lived in Patra, Lycia (part of modern-day Turkey).  
I was Bishop of Myra.  
My parents died when I was young and I used my inheritance to help the poor and sick.  
I was known as the protector of children and sailors and was associated with gift-giving.  
I am in the western world Patron Saint of Children.

#### Who am I? (Mother Teresa)

I was born in 1910.  
I lived in Skopje, the capital of the Republic of Macedonia.  
I went to Calcutta as Nun and became Principal of St Marys School for girls in Calcutta.  
I established a religious community, Missionaries of Charity, dedicated to the service of the poorest of the poor.  
I was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, that honoured my work.  
I was made a saint on 4 September 2016.



### Responsive Prayer of Thanks

We thank you, loving God for those who help us to learn more of you;  
those who love us, who challenge us  
and who nurture us;  
those who answer our questions;  
and those who encourage us to grow.  
We give thanks for teachers and storytellers  
who made God's stories come alive for us.  
*We give thanks!*  
For all the musicians who sing and play your praises.  
*We give thanks!*  
For ministers and lay leaders who lead our worship.  
*We give thanks!*  
For parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins,  
sisters, and brothers who encourage us.  
*We give thanks!*  
For our church families – we give thanks for all who  
have been part of this family.  
*We give thanks!*  
Amen

### Possible Bible readings for the theme

All-age version of the Beatitudes.  
You could ask different people of all ages to read it.  
Hebrews 11. The Hall of Fame: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=OlgXVih\\_iS8&list=PL5aPdmniG3y-riAyTSG3YbGyWoCXTUvVs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OlgXVih_iS8&list=PL5aPdmniG3y-riAyTSG3YbGyWoCXTUvVs)

### Main talk

Mission impossible: ask everyone to get into small groups and give every group a large piece of paper, some pens, and a mission impossible card.

Explain that the cards all have different missions on them. Their task is to design a superhero with all the gadgets and powers needed to do that mission.

Once complete, invite each group to read their mission out loud and share their design (you might like to give prizes for best designs, most creative, etc).

Once all have shared, explain that all these missions have been completed and not by a superhero. They were all achieved by normal people with no superpowers.

Go through the missions again and see if people can guess the answers, you might need to start them with an example. Finish with the Jesus mission.

What did all these people have in common? God was with them. They had faith. They were normal people, no superpowers.

The Bible is full of stories of normal people doing amazing things, by faith and with God's strength and power. It wasn't them that did the amazing things, it was God through them. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyR3w9Bl9VQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyR3w9Bl9VQ). I wonder what God can do through us.

I wonder what amazing things we will do today, tomorrow, in the future? It's often the small daily gentle things we do intentionally that make a difference in the world. We only need to have faith, follow God, and Live the life of Jesus today.

After a time of reflection, say the prayer of Teresa of Avila together.

**Prayer of St Teresa of Avila**



Christ has no body now on earth but yours. yours are the only hands with which he can do his work, yours are the only feet with which he can go about the world, yours are the only eyes through which his compassion can shine out upon a troubled world. Christ has no body now on earth but yours. Amen.

Encourage everyone to take their card(s) home to remind them of how they can be eyes and hands and feet for God.

**Mission cards and answers**

Fight and destroy the world's biggest baddie.	David beating Goliath with a sling and a stone.
Feed a whole country and save them from starvation.	Joseph in Egypt, planning ahead and storing grain.
Smuggle secret papers from one country to another without being caught.	Brother Andrew and others who have taken the Bible into countries where it is banned.
Take a VIP from a dangerous place to a place of safety without being seen.	Mary and Joseph, escaping Egypt with baby Jesus.
Transport thousands of people away from danger to a safe place – quickly.	Moses leading the people of Israel out of Egypt.
Save the whole world from disaster (death / destruction).	Jesus Christ, died on a cross and rose again to save us.

**Creative prayer activity: use me to do amazing things**

Hand out cards with images of eyes, feet and hands. Ask everyone to look at the card they are holding and think about ways in which we may be better eyes and hands and feet for Jesus in the world. Play some quiet music as people reflect and think and ask people to swap their cards as the music plays.

**Music suggestion**

'Wonderfully Made' by Scripture Lullabies  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=kf7Y0XhzMw8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kf7Y0XhzMw8)

**"No one is born evil, just like no one is born alone. They become that way, through choice and circumstance. The latter you cannot control, but the former..."**  
*Victoria Aveyard, Glass Sword*

What does the LORD require of YOU?

To

ACT JUSTLY

And to



and to

Love

MERCY

Walk humbly

With

your

GOD

The theme of Heroes and Villains reminds us that God does not seek perfection but asks of each of us that we give of our best. As we gather for worship, we bring both our strength and our weakness, and offer them up to God. The ingredients of worship help us to don the armour of God, preparing us to go out and live as God's people in our everyday life.

From the youngest (like David) to the oldest (like Abraham), regardless of our gender (whether we are an Esther or a Daniel) or our race and ethnicity (good Samaritan or Roman centurion), whether we stutter like Moses or limp like Jacob, all are called by God. We can all be inspired by the Holy Spirit, just as our URC Charter for Children in the Church reminds us [www.urch.org.uk/images/Children-and-youth/documents/Charter\\_for\\_Children\\_in\\_the\\_Church.pdf](http://www.urch.org.uk/images/Children-and-youth/documents/Charter_for_Children_in_the_Church.pdf). Through our worship, all should have opportunity for praise, prayer, deepening understanding and developing faith, and all should have the chance to have their contribution recognised – from preacher to flower arranger, musician to reader, cleaner to infant in the creche. Various members of the church family can be invited to contribute, either in advance or on the day. Perhaps they could choose the hymns and songs, read the Bible passage or present it in another format, write or lead prayers, produce some art during the service – each using their God-given skills and talents. It is important to recognise and honour everyone's contribution, whether or not it looks like worship to us.

## Preparing children and young people to lead worship

Children's and young people's worship should be owned by them. Expect them to bring insight and understanding that only children and young people can bring (Luke 10:21). They will be offering their best to God, whatever that may be, and encouraging others to do the same. Explain that leading worship isn't a performance and the congregation is not an audience, but that they are trying to help people get a little bit closer to God and respond to God's love. Try coaching them a little in how to use a microphone effectively, and how to prepare themselves so that they are calm and confident. Remember to pray for and with them beforehand, and ask God to be with and help them.

## Online worship

The Covid-19 pandemic may have been a villain, but on the positive side it also encouraged churches to think outside the box and develop their worship digitally. When preparing digital all-age worship, it is important to think about how live worship can be adapted to be more effective in this new medium. Often, this will involve filming parts of the worship in advance and using editing programs to link them together. It is more important than ever to think about how to make the worship interactive and to capture attention by appealing to different senses.

If using contributions from children and young people, as with any other contributors, of course, encourage them or those filming them to consider what is in the picture they see on their screen. Can you see their faces clearly? Is there anything in the background they don't want people to see? Encourage them to stand for a moment before they begin and after they finish to enable an editor to fit their piece into a longer act of worship smoothly.

Remember that you will need written parental permission before you can use any clips involving under 18s online. Remember, too, to check your church license for recorded music. [www.urch.org.uk/images/Communications/copyright\\_booklet\\_web.pdf](http://www.urch.org.uk/images/Communications/copyright_booklet_web.pdf)



**"I will fight for those who cannot fight for themselves"**  
*Diana (Wonder Woman) [DC]*

“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one trusted with much, much more will be expected.” Luke 12: 48b (New Century Version) This means, in other words, great gifts mean great responsibilities, greater gifts, greater responsibilities! Or, as Spiderman would say: “With great power comes great responsibility.”

## Introduction

The theme for this year is Heroes and Villains and we will look at them in:

- fiction
- the Bible
- community
- us.



Each of the four sessions will include:

- who?
- Bible reading
- activity or craft
- think about
- battle plan
- prayer.

This resource poses questions for you as leaders to share and talk things through with the Pilots. There are more ideas for discussion points elsewhere in the resource book together with lists of suggestions for general games and games related to specific Superheroes which could be used to embed the message. Very often a story can best be remembered by playing a game or activity related to the theme. Where the resource refers to a Company “cool wall”, you will find an explanation of this at the end of this section.

The battle plan will include suggestions for Pilots to undertake an action. This may take the form of learning a Bible verse, an action related to the theme, or keeping a personal log. Links will be provided to YouTube clips or websites, where appropriate for gathering further information. Talking about heroes will most likely be easier than talking about villains.

**Heroes are made by the path they choose,  
not the powers they are graced with.”  
Tony Stark (Iron Man)**

## Session one: heroes and villains in fiction

### Who?

Discuss superheroes, supervillains or other fictional heroes, villains with the Pilots. Who are their favourites? You might find the Pilots know an awful lot more about these characters than you do, so be ready to learn from them.

### Bible readings



Romans 15: 1-2

Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, and not just do what is most convenient for us. Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, “How can I help?” (The Message).

### Activity/Craft

- Start the Cool Wall. Have some pictures or names of superheroes or villains ready to use.
- Invite Pilots to create their own superhero or supervillain. This could be a sharing of ideas, following a time of small group discussion or Pilots could draw or make a three-dimensional playdough model.
- Design / make and wear the costume. Have a parade.

### Think about

- If Pilots could have a superpower, what would it be?
- How would they use their superpower to help others? How might that work? Remember, with great power comes great responsibility.
- What other characteristics should a superhero have?
- What might a superhero or supervillain’s back story tell us about them? What made them become a hero? What made them become a villain?
- Are heroes always perfect? Discuss some of the positive and negative characteristics of the Pilots favourite superhero / villain eg Superman was gentle, kind-hearted, the Hulk got incredibly angry, Iron Man could be rude, Harry Potter loyal and brave, Wonder Woman loving and compassionate, Elastigirl (Mrs Incredible) represents a mother’s ability to stretch herself in all direction, the envious nature of Lex Luther.
- What we can learn from our flawed heroes?

## Battle plan

Encourage the Pilots to develop their 'super memory'.

Ask Adventurers to learn by heart: Romans 15:2  
Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, "How can I help?" (The Message).

Ask Deckhands to learn: Nehemiah 8:10b "The joy of God is your / my strength!" (New Century version)

## Prayer



Powerful God, you made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. You gave us life, a super life in a super world full of super things.

You gave us a super gift; the gift of choice. We can choose how we live, use our lives, treat other people, and use the all gifts you have given to us. Help us to recognise our gifts and always to use them wisely and well. May we use them to help others but chiefly to glorify you and not ourselves. Amen

## Session two: heroes and villains in the Bible

### Who?

There are so many stories in the Bible that portray heroes and villains. Daniel is the chosen character here, but you may have a favourite character – choose them if you wish, then follow the format below to explore more about them and their stories. Other character suggestions may be found in the Ideas and Resources section.

## Bible reading



Read Daniel 6.

## Carrying out a waste survey

Remember to keep a record of everything that gets thrown away at home in a week.

- Are you surprised by how much or how little you throw away?
- How could you reduce the amount you throw away?
- Is there a follow on to this eg are you surprised by how much or how little you throw away?  
How could you reduce the amount you throw away?
- Ask the Pilots if they know about Captain Tom Moore, now Sir Tom Moore? Are they able to find out some information about him?
- Find out what might be happening in your area. You may have a local hero such as teenager Tom Hunt and his dog, Baggy.

[www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/52095386](http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/52095386)

- Find out about Rob Arnold – Big Art from beach rubbish [www.keepbritaintidy.org/news/waves-plastic-inspiring-art](http://www.keepbritaintidy.org/news/waves-plastic-inspiring-art)
- Continue with the Cool Wall – are there new names to add?

It would appear from the above stories, that heroes can be any age.

## Craft

- Make a musical instrument from junk and use it in worship.
- Turn a glass jar into a decorative vase / pen holder / candle holder. Paint or decorate it using pieces of coloured tissue.
- Create a picture or model using junk.

## Think about

It is not always obvious who the community heroes are and what they are doing. Very often the villains get the headlines.

- Who are the heroes in our communities?
- Do our community heroes always get recognised? Should they be rewarded?
- Who are the villains? Remember one of our definitions "a person responsible for specified problems, harm, or damage".
- What about other villains in the community eg vandals who destroy local amenities?
- What about graffiti artists? Is Banksy a villain? Heroes to some, villains to others?
- There may be an opportunity to talk to older Pilots about drug dealers, County Lines – the lives ruined by these villains.
- Think who are the heroes? The police, the medics, the church?

For many of us today our life is made easier by modern technology and machinery. We travel faster and further than ever before; we use materials such as plastic for convenience.

- Can we ever return to a life without manufactured goods or without technology?
- How can we create a balance in our lives?
- Might the environment benefit from you and your family by eating one meat free meal a week?
- Is it always large corporations who are responsible for the environmental crisis?
- How much do our individual actions contribute?
- What can we do to have a positive impact on our community and on our world?

## Battle plan

Think of three ways you will try to be more community minded at home, at school or at church.

## Prayer



Creator God,  
You fill the earth and sea and sky with life.  
Help us to care for all of your creation.  
Make us aware of our responsibilities as stewards of the earth.  
Holder of the past, present and future.  
Help us to learn from our mistakes in the past and to do better in the future.  
Help us to remember that you created us all in your image and that you want us to love others as you love us.  
Amen.

Remember, heroes might not always look like we expect them to!

## Session four: heroes and villains in us

Heroes may appear to be people with special abilities, like Superman or Wonder Woman, but we can be heroes too by following Jesus and helping others to walk with him.

## Bible Readings



Luke 6 12-16 – Jesus chooses the 12 apostles.

We tend to think that Jesus had only 12 disciples, when in fact he had many. These verses show Luke's account of how Jesus chose the 12 he most trusted, naming them his apostles. So, what is the difference between a disciple and an apostle? According to the Oxford Dictionary:

- Disciple: A personal follower of Christ during his life, especially one of the 12 Apostles
- Apostle: An important early Christian teacher or pioneering missionary; A vigorous and pioneering advocate or supporter of a particular policy, idea, or cause.

So, you can be a disciple without being an apostle but to be an apostle you must first be a disciple. Jesus' apostles were ordinary people, however when filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost they received the 'superpower' and moved from being 'learners' to 'doers'. They became vigorous advocates and heroes for Jesus.

Ask the Pilots who would they choose to be on their team if they had a special mission to carry out? It might be a school project, or a quiz team or sports team. What qualities would they be looking for?

Share with the Pilots the story of the coming of the Holy Spirit as seen in Acts 2:1–12 and 41. This is what we now call Pentecost, the Church's birthday.

It may seem that there are a lot of Bible references quoted in this session, but it is important for the Pilots to understand where their 'superpower' comes from as they become heroes for Jesus.

## Bible reading



Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through him, who gives me strength. (NIV)

## Activity / craft

Holy Spirit balloons.

- Give each Pilot an uninflated balloon. Before you tell the story of Pentecost, ask the Pilots to look at their balloons. There is not a lot they can do with them as floppy floppy bits of rubber. As you tell the story ask them to breathe small breaths into their balloon, holding them tightly so that the air doesn't escape. Talk about being filled with the Holy Spirit. When all the balloons are filled, give the signal to let go and let all the balloons fly round the room. The balloons become useful and can provide fun or enhance a place when filled with air. When the balloons are let go, the air can power them around the room. They can go anywhere when released.

Explain that at Pentecost, the followers of Jesus heard a mighty rushing wind. When the Pilots pick up their deflated balloons, talk about how the church was lifeless before God sent the Holy Spirit. After the Holy Spirit breathed life into the Church, people began to tell everyone they saw about Jesus. Despite speaking different languages, everyone could understand what they were saying, and thousands of people were added to the Church. The Church became alive and had the power to be what God wanted it to be.

If you have someone who can make modelling balloons you could use them to demonstrate that, when filled with the Holy Spirit, we can be shaped into what God wants us to be. Or, you could blow up a balloon inside a jar or bottle to demonstrate that we can take on a different shape when filled with the Spirit. Be aware that some children have a fear of balloons – they may



want just to watch or to do another activity in another part of the room.

### Popcorn

Make some popcorn to demonstrate change and growth when heat is applied to the corn, just as we can be changed with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Notice how some of the kernels respond more quickly to the heat than others, just as some people respond more quickly to the Holy Spirit. Others need more time, and some won't pop at all. But when each kernel is filled with the heat, it jumps around like people who can't contain their joy in Christ! Different flavours can be used to suggest different gifts given by the Spirit.

### Collage

Collect pictures of things that need power before they work eg torch, TV, phone, windmill, kite etc. Make a collage with these.

### Kites

You may be able to make a kite from red, orange and yellow paper and fly it outside.

[www.wikihow.com/Make-an-Easy-Kite](http://www.wikihow.com/Make-an-Easy-Kite)

### Pillowcase art

Provide each Pilot with a plain pillowcase. Decorate with fabric pens. Write the words 'Be all that God wants me to be' and decorate with balloons. Follow the rules given with your fabric pens for setting the dye.

### Think about

- Ask Pilots why they think Jesus chose ordinary people with faults and flaws to work with him and carry on his work?
- How do they think Jesus equips ordinary people like them, to become superheroes for Christ?
- Who, or what, might get in the way of us being heroes for Jesus? People who might make fun of us and try to turn us away from Jesus. Are they villains? Such people might include our friends.

Jesus gave his disciples a superpower: The Holy Spirit. The disciples felt frightened and lost after Jesus left them but when the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost they were changed into bold, confident people who could tell others about Jesus.

### Prayer



Lord Jesus, we thank and praise you for the life you have given us. Thank you for your Holy Spirit who is making us become more like you. We know that

sometimes we will make mistakes, but we know that you will forgive us and guide us to do better. We pray that we may be Heroes for Jesus so that you may be seen and reflected in our lives. Amen.

### Battle plan

Walking the Way is the URC's focus on whole life discipleship. Have a look at the 30-day challenge. Perhaps Pilots can do some of these. Remember, they are not called to do everything, they will all have different skills and gifts but there may be things here which they can do, and which could become part of their everyday life.

"I believe there's a hero in all of us, that keeps us honest, gives us strength, makes us noble and finally allows us to die with pride. Even though sometimes we must be steady and give up the thing we want most. Even our dreams." (Aunt May from Spiderman)

Visit the website for our Pilots Walking the Way challenge: [www.urc.org.uk/heroes-and-villains](http://www.urc.org.uk/heroes-and-villains)

## Ideas and resources

### General games and activities

- Kim's Game – using pictures of fictional heroes and villains.
- Pairs – hide images of heroes round the room. Give Pilots an image of villain; they must find a match.
- Timed challenges – have three or four challenges to be done in a ten minute period eg bean bags thrown into hoops, spaced at different intervals with points for each hoop; ping pong balls in the bucket – score points for each one in; stay still for one minute etc.
- Superhero Says – played like Simon Says.
- Villain, Villain, Hero – played like Duck Duck Goose.
- X-ray vision – create some feely bags with a number (eg six) of non-see through bags or gloves. Put an item(s) inside. The Pilots are not allowed to look but must feel the bag and try to work out what is inside, or you may allow them to put their hands into the bag to feel and guess the contents.

### Cool Wall

A few years ago, the TV programme Top Gear had a weekly 'vehicle Cool Wall'. Cars were moved up and down the wall according to performance, design, price, and personal likes and dislikes of the programme's three presenters.

Start up a company Cool Wall for your Pilots' group with a mix of characters from the Bible and real life. You can either print pictures from the internet or just put names up. Use a long piece of lining paper or wallpaper, divided into two parts and headed 'cool' and 'uncool'. The names / pictures can then be put into either into either category depending on Pilots' opinion.

As you go through the worship resource hearing stories about characters, add the names to the wall explaining why they have been placed there. They can be moved around as more is learned about them, or moved by others who may think a placing isn't appropriate.

Suggestions for Bible Cool Wall characters:

Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joseph (Old Testament), Pharaoh, David, Goliath, Daniel, Samson, Esther, Jonah, Ruth, Mary (Mother of Jesus), Joseph (New Testament), Simon Peter, Judas Iscariot, Herod, Martha, boy with loaves and fishes, Pontius Pilate, Saul / Paul, Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son, Zacchaeus.

Suggestions for secular characters:

Use the local and national newspapers or access the internet if you can. Discover people in your town, community, church or school. Ask the Pilots for suggestions. National and international could include such figures as Tim Peake, Greta Thunberg, SirTom Moore, politicians from this country and from other countries. You may find you will be adding names to this category as you go through the sessions.

## Suggestions for a Pilots service / worship

This is an opportunity to share with the church what you have been doing in Pilots using the URCs CYW worship resource, Heroes and Villains. It is an opportunity to widen the discussions you may have had with the Pilots and hear what views the adult section of the church has on the theme. It may be, of course, that there still is no singing in our churches, but YouTube clips of hymns and worship songs could be used if you have the facility within your church. Do remember to check for license requirements.

Always remember worship is worship, it is not a performance and it is important that the Pilots should enjoy the experience of leading worship. It is not about getting everything right but about simply doing the best that they can.

Below is a suggested order of service, but the Pilots may want to devise their own or use elements of this. Bible readings – no edition specified, choose the one you think will be most accessible to the Pilots. The two most quoted are The Message and New Century Bible and the Dramatic Bible.

Genesis 1	In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth ...
Nehemiah 8:10b	The joy of the Lord is my strength
Psalm 8	Creation Psalm
Psalm 46	God is a safe place to hide, a help when we need him ...
Psalm 104 (Creation)	Praise the Lord O my soul ...
Psalm 139	O Lord you have searched me...
Romans 15:1-2	Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, ...
Luke 12: 48b	With great power comes great responsibility...
1Cor 10: 31	Do all for the Lord ...
Acts: 2:1–12 and 41	Pentecost
Philippians 4:13	... Christ, who gives me strength.

### All Aboard!

**Call to worship** Verses from Psalm 104: 32-34?

**Hymn / song**

**Introduction to the theme**

**Prayers**

**Heroes and villains in fiction** Quiz, perhaps

**Hymn / song**

**Heroes and villains in the Bible**

**Bible reading** Appropriate to the characters chosen

**Daniel – (or other biblical character chosen)**

**Activity / dramatic reading**

**Prayers**

**Heroes and villains – in community**

**What's your carbon footprint?** Quiz? Challenge?

**Prayers**

**Hymn / song**

**Heroes and villains – in Us**

**Bible reading**

**Disciple or Apostle?**

**Prayers including the Pilots prayer**

**Hymn / song**

**All Ashore!**





## Friends on Faith Adventures (FOFA)

### Welcome

**(parents and carers asked to stay until after the Pilots Prayer)**

Welcome back to Friends on Faith Adventures. We are looking forward to going on a journey and nobody knows where we will end up. All we know is we have got our crate filled with adventure and an open path ahead. So, hold on tight and enjoy the ride!!

Today we are going to hear about David – Bible hero? Or villain? You decide!

### The Pilots Prayer

Lord help us to be:

**P**repared for adventure

**I**n all we do.

**L**oving and caring,

**O**pen to others

**T**ogether as one community

**S**haring the love of Jesus on our way.

**A**men

### Fun together

#### Pair the heroes

You will need: Card: 25 identical pieces. Stick pictures onto them so that you have 11 pairs of the Avengers (eg two pieces of card bearing a picture of Ironman, two pieces of card bearing a picture of Ironman Captain America etc). On the remaining three cards, stick pictures of Thanos (the bad guy from The Avengers).

What you do:

Place the pictures face down on the floor. Each person, in turn, turns over two cards. If they find a pair, they keep that pair and get another go. Otherwise, they put the cards back, face down. Anyone who picks up a Thanos card is out of the game. The winner is the one with the most pairs at the end.

#### The Big Story: The story of David

What you will need:

- A toy sheep
- A stone and a sling
- Two signs: one saying “Boo” and another saying “Hooray”
- A crown
- A pair of shorts
- A black mask, for a villain

**Reader 1:** We’re going to need a volunteer – you’ll do. (Pick a child volunteer) Today’s story is about one of the most well known people in the Bible – well, apart from Jesus, that is. I guess he’d win, hands down. But very famous, nevertheless. I wonder if you can guess who it is. Can we have a clue, please, glamorous assistant?

**Reader 2:** (Does a twirl and gets the sheep out of the bag, gives it to the volunteer to hold). This person certainly wasn't sheepish. Any guesses? No? Let's try another clue (does another twirl and gets a catapult out of the bag and gives it to the volunteer) Come on, have a shot at guessing who this guy is.

**Reader 1:** Our hero for today is ..... David (Hold up the card encouraging the children to cheer.) As a young man, he spent his days protecting the sheep for his dad and then he was chosen as king, even though he was very young and inexperienced. What an amazing hero! (Takes the crown out of the bag and puts it on David's head.) (More cheers.)

**Reader 2:** Hold on, hold on. You say he was an amazing hero? Superheroes wear their underpants over their clothes, don't they? Quick, put these on (Gives David a pair of large shorts to put on over his clothes.)

**Reader 1:** Yes, even before he became king (Removes crown.) David did an amazing thing. Without even any armour or weapons, apart from his slingshot and some tiny stones, David defeated a giant called Goliath who was terrifying all the soldiers of King Saul's army. (Hold up the hooray card and get children to cheer.)

**Reader 2:** Wow, that's real superhero stuff! But I remember a rather different story about David, once he was king. Didn't he fall in love with someone else's wife? Uriah was a soldier in David's army and had gone to war, leaving his wife at home. David spied on Uriah's wife while she was in the bath!

**Reader 1:** Ooh er! That's rather naughty! He was a bit of a villain then, wasn't he? Quick, change into the villain costume (Reader 2 gives David the mask and helps him take the shorts off and put the mask on.) Perhaps we need the other card (Hold up the boo card and get children to boo.)

**Reader 2:** That's nothing. He got her pregnant and tried to hide the fact by getting Uriah sent home from war so that he'd think the baby was his. And when Uriah was a hero and refused to come home when his troops were still fighting in the war, David arranged for Uriah to move right to the front line where he'd be in most danger so that Uriah actually ended up getting killed. What do you reckon? Is that something a hero should do? (Encourage the children to cheer or boo, according to what they think of David's actions.)

**Reader 1:** David married Bathsheba and made her his queen. Not that that made his behaviour acceptable, mind you. But their child became David's successor, Solomon, who became another famous king. So, I wonder what you think of David now? Hero or villain? (Encourage the children to cheer or boo, according to what they think of David's actions – and get David to dress either in superhero shorts or villain mask.)

**Reader 2:** And what about David's great talent for writing songs and making music? I heard he used to sing to King Saul when the king was feeling low and cheer him up. And he composed a whole load of songs to God which are included in the Book of Psalms in the Bible. That was a sort of superhero skill, almost as good as x-ray vision or telekinesis (Encourage the children to cheer or boo, according to what they think of David's actions – and get David to dress either in superhero shorts or villain mask.)

**Reader 1:** True. He was a good leader, I think. He led his armies into battle and won some great victories, (cheer and shorts) although that meant he ended up fighting his own son, Absalom, and killing him (boo and mask.) .... But he'd had to make a hard choice and do what was right and he really mourned the loss of Absalom. (cheer and shorts.)

**Reader 2:** David wasn't just a hero, then ... he was a bit of a hero and a bit of a villain. Fancy God choosing HIM to be such a major player in God's plan. We even remember that Jesus was a descendant of King David.

**Reader 1:** I don't think anyone's all hero or all villain, but I think there is a place for everyone in God's plan. I wonder what God has in store for you?

## Creative adventure

### Paper cup slingshot

You will need: A paper cup and a balloon

What to do:

- Tie a knot at the end of the balloon. Cut off the tip of the balloon (the cut-out portion should be around half the size of the bottom of your paper cup).
- Cut away the bottom of a sturdy paper cup.
- Gently stretch the balloon over the bottom of the paper cup. Pull up the balloon as far as possible and secure with sticky tape.
- Draw a picture of Goliath in the middle of a landscape A5 piece of paper. (you could find an image to print out too) Roll into a tube.
- The size of cup and balloon can make a difference so it is helpful to have a trial run before the session. To shoot, simply place a marshmallow or pingpong ball in the cup and hold it up, pull the end of the balloon and release. The marshmallow or pingpong ball should fly out of the cup. The aim is to knock Goliath over.



### Wondering questions to use during creative time:

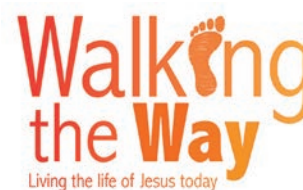
- I wonder why David did bad things when he knew what God wanted him to do?
- I wonder do we ever do things even though we know they are wrong?
- I wonder how you would feel to know you are chosen by God?

## Walking the Way challenge

Look for a way that you could be a hero this week.

### Adventurers GO!

So, today we have learned that David knew that he had a great responsibility being God's chosen one and he did some great things, but he also made mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes sometimes, but by trusting in God to guide us, we can all be heroes for God.



## Prayer

Thank you, God, for always being there with us, no matter what we do. When we know things are wrong, help us to say sorry and to do something to put things right; help us to be brave and to try to do the right thing, even when it is difficult. Help us to be the heroes you want us to be. Amen

### Alternative prayer

Get the children to sit in a circle. Give each child a piece of paper to write or draw on. Ask the children to write or draw on one side something that they have done that could be considered as being the act of a hero, and on the other side, to write or draw something that they have done that could be considered the act of a villain. Once they have done this, get them to screw the paper up into a tight ball. Get them to hold the balls of paper tight as someone says: Sometimes we do things we are not proud of and sometimes we do things we can be really proud of. Help us to make you proud more often. Amen.

Then, get the children to use the catapults they made to fire their prayer into the middle of the circle as an Amen.

### End prayer, for every session

We are Friends On Faith Adventures, travelling together with God. Adventurers go! Amen

# URCGSF – GUIDE AND SCOUT FELLOWSHIP

Scouting and guiding have promises and laws which help members to develop good practices, standards and skills for their lives. Many of the activities the members undertake help them to think through skills for life. Throughout their time in scouting and guiding, members are encouraged to reflect and grow – basically, to become heroes.

In scouting, this is an integral part of the World Challenge Award. Examples of some of the activities undertaken are:

Discuss the Beaver Promise and how it encourages you to do your best and to do good things for your community. Take part in an activity which reflects upon and explores your beliefs, attitudes and values. What values do you share as Scouts? Which values mean the most to you?



The Scout and Guide programmes also explore ways in which the members can contribute to creating a better world. There are several badges available.

**The Community Impact Badge –** a four-staged badge and applicable to all age ranges. Some of the activities undertaken are:

- Find out what issues and challenges exist in a community of your choice. The community can be local, somewhere else in the UK or in another country. Decide what action you should take. Take the action over three, six, nine, or 12 months according to the stage.



The loneliness of older people in care homes was highlighted during the lockdown, as families were restricted from visiting. In response, many Scouts and Guides wrote letters, made cards for care home residents, and even produced ‘rocks of kindness’, a painted pebble with a message of hope written on it.

**The Disability Awareness Badge –** activities include:

- Explore how your meeting place could be made better so nobody feels excluded. Learn the alphabet using finger spelling and then spell out some words. Describe two different ways in which a blind or visually impaired person can read eg Braille, or using a computer.



As a result of learning more about the disabilities of blindness and loss of hearing, groups have often gone on to raise money for Guide Dogs for the Blind and Hearing Dogs.

**Global Issues Badge –** activities include:

- Try different kinds of fairly traded products. Talk about the benefits of fair trade in the world. Find out about an international charity; what they do and why it is important. Investigate a recent natural disaster by looking at photos, news articles or videos online. Decide what five things were needed to help people after the disaster. Decide how best you can help when a natural disaster happens.



**Environmental Conservation Badge –** activities include:

- Learn how to separate recyclable and non-recyclable rubbish ready for collection. Find out where to take recyclable items that cannot be collected with the normal rubbish. Find out about the recycling symbols used on items. Get involved in a campaign to make others aware of an environmental issue. Take part in a project that improves local conservation.



The URC Guide and Scout Fellowship produces a number of activity sheets, and these can be found on the website [www.urgsf.org.uk](http://www.urgsf.org.uk). One of the sheets is based around Dr Who and covers, among other topics, saving the planet, what matters to you and a promise box.

The URC Guide and Scout Fellowship has recently published a book, *Time for Thought* (details are on the website: [www.urgsf.org.uk/newsitems.htm](http://www.urgsf.org.uk/newsitems.htm)). Here is one of the reflections:

### Skills for Life

It started with a marshmallow, and then some mince in foil. Soon it was a boiling billy, with a frying pan of breakfast on a cold morning, washing mugs, and plates and forks, at times things seemed like chores but we were learning skills for life.

How to dial 999, and how to treat a burn, turn a scarf into a sling, and use the knot you've learned. 'Unresponsive' adult on the floor, that needs a re-position, then some time onward we will find it is truly skills for saving life.

The games we play, people we encounter, and discovering new things.

Each meeting night different, and our camps, helps us grow and learn how to build new friendships, how to face a challenge, resilient in the difficulties with strong spirit because we have skills for life.

## The Boys Brigade

The Boys Brigade junior section has a themed programme on Superheroes with downloadable materials on their website. Scroll through their programme packs for a wide range of ideas on the theme, many of which include adaptations for use over Zoom: [www.boys-brigade.org.uk/programme/face-to-face-activities/](http://www.boys-brigade.org.uk/programme/face-to-face-activities/)

Steve Legg's All-age devotionals, just three minutes each, introduce us to the story of Gideon with some things to think about: [www.boys-brigade.org.uk/programme/devotionals/](http://www.boys-brigade.org.uk/programme/devotionals/)










**“You learn eventually that, while there are no villains, there are no heroes either. And until you make the final discovery that there are only human beings, who are therefore all the more fascinating, you are liable to miss something.”**

**Paul Gallico**

# WALKING THE WAY CHALLENGE

# HEV

Bible Superhero and their super power	Esther Standing up for what's right 	Moses Persistent 	Mary Magdalene Faith and joy 	David Bravery Song writing 	Mary of Bethany Listening 	Martha of Bethany Hospitality 	Paul Letter writing Joy in tough circumstances 
Can you complete one challenge in each column?	Stick up for someone who you think is being treated unfairly  Write a letter to your MP about an issue that concerns you  Read about the work of JPIT and the issues they tackle <a href="http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/issues/">http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/issues/</a>	Choose a verse from the Bible that inspires you and see if you can learn it by heart  Find out more about prisoners of conscience e.g. by researching Amnesty International <a href="https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions">https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions</a>  Go on a long walk around your local area and see how much litter you can collect	Keep a "joy" journal – record in a notebook or on social media something you are thankful for each day  Reach out and do something caring for someone without counting the cost  Make a prayer stone and carry it in your pocket to remind you to pray through the day	Write a song or a poem about your feelings, your faith, your relationship with God  Make a musical instrument out of recycled materials  Listen to some music by Christian musicians on the theme of Heroes and Villains	Spend a day trying to spend twice as much time listening to others as you spend talking  Find one of the Trialogue podcasts and listen to it, thinking about what it means for your life  Go outside and sit quietly and see how many different sounds you hear	Bake some cakes or biscuits and deliver them to someone who will appreciate being thought of  Look out for someone who has nobody to play with and make an effort to include them  Pay in a café for the next person's drink, or buy a suspended coffee	Send an encouraging card, a text message or even write a letter to someone who is alone or lonely  Make contact with someone you haven't spoken to or seen for ages  Try to spend a whole day (or even a whole hour!) without saying anything negative  Draw a cheering picture with a Bible message and put it up in a window for passers by to see
Bible Reading	Esther 7: 3	Exodus 3: 2-4	Mark 16: 9-11	1 Samuel 16: 23	Luke 10:39	Luke 10: 38	Colossians 4:18
Date Completed							
How did it go?							

Images from [www.lambsongs.co.nz](http://www.lambsongs.co.nz) via [freebibleimages.com](http://freebibleimages.com)



# LABYRINTH AND INTERGENERATIONAL PRAYER STATIONS

Six areas exploring different aspects of the theme. These can be used around an area as prayer stations or within a labyrinth. Each section has suggested Bible readings, thought starters and an activity idea. The activity ideas could be put onto one sheet to be added to as the participant goes around the labyrinth or as a station in the labyrinth.

## Surrounded by superheroes of the faith

How many superheroes can you name? The Bible is full of stories of heroes of the faith. Hebrews talks about us being surrounded by a cloud of witnesses who remind us of the amazing things we can do when we have faith in God.

### Bible reading



Hebrews 11.

### Consider

- Who are your heroes of the faith from the Bible or modern day?
- What is it about them that inspires you in the faith?
- The people listed in Hebrews all had one thing in common, everything they did, they did BY FAITH. How do you feel your faith is at the moment?
- What can we do to build our faith, make it stronger?

### Activity

Draw a picture of your hero in the faith and show what it is about them that inspires you, add it to the cloud of witnesses wall. Take some time to thank God for them and ask God to help you be a good example of the faith for others.

## Special identity: who are you in God?

All superheroes have a special identity or an alter ego; a side of them that's often hidden until the world needs them.

### Bible reading



1 Samuel 16:1-13.

In the story of David being chosen by God, we are reminded that God does not look at the outside – how muscly we are, how clever we are, how old or young etc – God looks at our heart.

### Bible reading



Psalm 51:10-12.

### Activity

Use the playdough provided to mould a heart and consider the questions as you do.

### Consider

There is no one else like you, God made you as you are for a reason. Thank God for making you and celebrate who you are. How is your heart? Use this opportunity to use David's words in Psalm 51 as a prayer.



## Special mission: what's your calling?

All superheroes have a purpose, they are in the world to serve and save others; to swoop in when people need a hero. God has a plan for our lives. We are all called to serve others. What is your calling / special mission?

### Bible reading



Jeremiah 29 v 11 – 13

Luke 3 v 10 – 11

Sometimes our journey does not go as we had planned – our path takes a different direction. If we have put it all in God's hands then we need to trust that, wherever the path takes us, it is part of God's plan. In all your ways acknowledge God and God will direct your path.

### Consider

- How are you serving others, how are you making a difference?
- What do you feel God's plan is for your life? What steps are you taking to fulfil this?
- How your life is going, is it as you expected? Are you nervous about the journey ahead?
- Perhaps you are excited about where you are going?
- Take some time to pray and give it all to God, asking him to hold you in his hand and guard and guide you in your ways.

### Activity

Listen to the song 'I the Lord Of Sea And Sky' as you reflect on this section (alternatively provide the words for people to read).

## Special powers: Holy Spirit and talents

All superheroes have amazing special powers that help them to be super. What superpowers would you have if you could choose one? God promises to equip us for the task ahead, not with superpowers but with every good gift that comes from God and with the power of the Holy Spirit.

### Bible reading



Hebrews 13:20–21

1 Corinthians 12:4–11.

### Consider

- Do you have the skills and talents to do what you feel called to do? If not, how can you equip yourself?
- Do you have gifts and talents that are not yet being used? How do you feel called to use them?
- What do others say they see in you? Celebrate these gifts and talents.
- Take some time to pray and ask God to give you all you need to be able to do the things you feel called to do and for the opportunities to serve.

### Activity

Chose a gift tag. On one side write the gifts and talents you have got and on the other write how you are or could be using them to serve others. Attach this tag to the giant present as a prayer and commitment to serve.



**"A hero can be anyone even a man doing something as simple and reassuring as putting a coat around a little boy's shoulder to let him know that the world hadn't ended."**  
*Bruce Wayne (Batman V Superman)*

## Special suit: armour of God

All superheroes have amazing superhero costumes and gadgets, bullet-proof Lycra suits that make them look fabulous as well as giving them what they need to fight the villains and save the day. We are reminded that God has given us not a Lycra suit but a whole armour to wear.

### Bible reading



Ephesians 6:10–18.

### Activity

Take some time to put on the clothes in the box and explore the armour of God.

Hat = helmet of salvation: one of the most important pieces of armour as it protects our head, our thoughts, and minds. It protects us when we doubt that we are saved. We can be strong in the knowledge that we are God's children, called and equipped.

Apron / High Vis vest = breastplate of godliness: we are called to be imitators of God, to take on the characteristics that Jesus showed us – to live the life of Jesus today. We are called to show glimpses of God's character to those around us, through God's strength and power.

Slippers / shoes = shoes of peace and salvation: we are called to go and tell others, to share God's peace and good news with others. How lovely are the feet of them that bring good news?

Belt = belt of truth: this reminds us that God is truth. There is no sin or deceit in God. God's words and promises are true, and nothing will change them. We can hold on to them, knowing they are not lies.

Toy sword = sword of the spirit (God's word): this is the only piece of armour that is a weapon as well as protection. God's words are sharper than a two-edged sword. When Jesus was tempted in the desert, he fought back using God's words from scripture.

Shield = Shield of Faith: the Bible tells us that in all circumstances we need to carry the shield of faith. Keep our faith in God strong as this is the very thing that will shield us from doubt and fear.

- Stand up – the Bible tells us that the armour allows us to stand against anything coming towards us.
- Stand still and know that God is with you. What habits do you have in your life that encourage you to regularly put on the armour of God?
- Is there a piece of armour that you often don't put on?
- Is there a piece of armour that you consider to be the most important?

### Activity

As you remove the clothes, use these prompts to pray. Thank God for each piece and ask God to help you to keep putting this piece of armour on daily.

## Special sidekicks: who's in your support group?

All superheroes seem to have a special friend, a sidekick, who watches their back and fights alongside them. God always gives us people who are going to journey with us, urge us on and keep us going, to watch our back.

### Bible reading



Galatians 6 v 1 -10

1 Thessalonians 5 v 4 – 11.

All of us need others around us for support, encouragement, and help. Take some time to consider who is in your support group and whose support group you are in.

### Consider

- Looking back, who are the people who have supported you? Are you still in touch?
- Who do you have around you now that offer support and help?
- Who is the person that you would always turn to?
- Who are the people who depend on you for support?

### Activity

Make a people paper chain. Decorate it to show the people who are in your support group and thank God for each one, perhaps think of ways to thank them too. On the reverse draw the people who you are supporting and take some time to pray for them.

## Movie superheroes

Below are short video clips from superhero films with discussion prompts. Where possible, encourage everyone to watch the whole film before focusing on the individual clips.

### Unbreakable (12)

After a devastating accident, David Dunn learns that he may be indestructible. He meets Elijah Price who is the polar opposite: his bones are brittle as glass. Elijah seeks to help David become a superhero.

Final scene: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=10TK19duC3s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10TK19duC3s). In this clip, we learn that Elijah orchestrated the train accident that David was involved in. He is also responsible for several disasters across the US. Elijah has done this in order to uncover superheroes who can make the world a better place.

#### Questions for discussion:

- Why do you think Elijah caused all those accidents?
- Could Elijah have done things differently?
- Do you think Elijah is a villain?

In superhero mythology, the hero always has a villain who seems to be the polar opposite of the hero. They are often two sides of the same coin.

- Is this true of Elijah and David?
- What makes one a hero and the other a villain?
- Are there any stories in the Bible that reflect this idea?
- What can we learn from this story?

### Captain America: Civil War (12)

The film takes place after the catastrophic events of Avengers: Age of Ultron where, in order to stop the villain, Ultron, an entire city is lifted off the ground and dropped back to earth, killing hundreds, if not thousands of people. The United Nations has written up a proposal that every superhero must sign. Superheroes will no longer be able to act independently but can only be involved in situations agreed by the UN. Tony Stark aka Iron Man and a group of Avengers believe it is right that every superhero sign this but Steve Rogers aka Captain America and his allies believe that this is wrong.

Group debate: [youtu.be/488DGwx44UA](https://youtu.be/488DGwx44UA). In this clip, the Avengers debate whether to sign the declaration.

#### Questions for discussion:

- Who do you agree with and why?
- What do you think should happen next?

As the film progresses, Captain America and the others who refused to sign the declaration are locked up.

- Is this the right response?
- How would you handle things?
- Who are the heroes and who are the villains in this scenario?
- Can you think of any characters in the Bible who are both heroes and villains?
- What can we learn from this story?

### Batman V Superman (12)

Batman isn't happy that Superman is able to do whatever he wants, regardless of the consequences, and so seeks to find a way to stop him.

Opening scene: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=3iFiv7\\_33TM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3iFiv7_33TM). At the end of Man of Steel, Superman kills General Zod after an epic battle across Metropolis. The opening of Batman V Superman shows this climatic battle from a different perspective. We see the battle from the ground and the chaos, destruction and panic it causes as many are killed and injured in the process.

#### Questions for discussion:

- Does seeing the battle from this viewpoint change your opinion of Superman and his actions?
- Is Bruce Wayne right to be angry with Superman?
- Who is the hero and who is the villain in this situation?

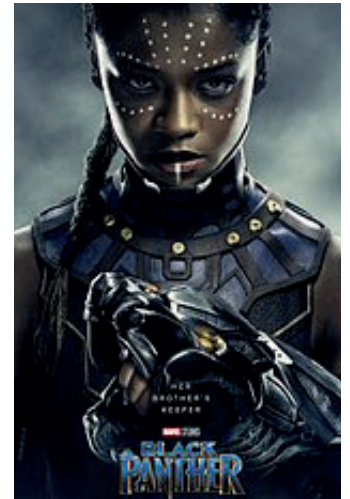
The film helps us to consider a scene from a different perspective.

- Can you think of a time when your opinion changed because you were able to see something from a different perspective?
- Can you think of a Bible story where someone changes their mind?
- What can we learn from this story?

## Black Panther (12)

T'Challa, heir to the hidden but advanced kingdom of Wakanda, must step forward to lead his people into a new future and must confront a challenger from his country's past.

T'Challa meets 'Killmonger': [youtu.be/y7h-LkZoA-Q](https://youtu.be/y7h-LkZoA-Q). In this scene, T'Challa meets with his challenger Erik Killmonger. He finds out that he is also an heir to the throne because they are cousins. T'Challa was brought up well in Wakanda but Killmonger grew up in a tough neighbourhood in Oakland. He saw his father murdered by T'Challa's dad and has been filled with hate ever since.

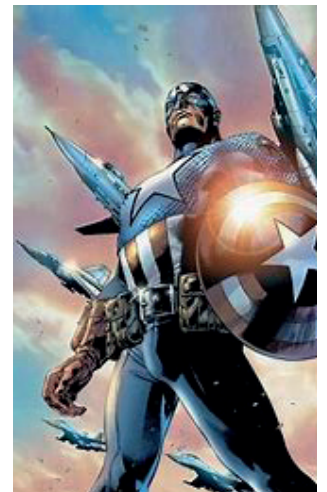


### Questions for discussion:

- Why is Erik Killmonger so angry?
- Do you think that anger is justified?
- Who is the hero and who is the villain in this situation?

Killmonger is a product of his environment. He witnessed his dad being murdered and harbours hatred for Wakanda because they are doing nothing to 'empower' their people.

- How would you react if you were Killmonger?
- At the end of the film Killmonger is given the choice to go to prison or die from his injuries. He chooses to die because he believes that is better than being in chains like his ancestors. What do you think of Killmonger's speech?
- Can you think of a story in the Bible where there is a blurring between who is the hero and who is the villain?
- What can we learn from this story?



**"You will find that if you look for the light, you can often find it. But if you look for the dark that is all you will ever see."  
General Iroh (Prince Zuko's Uncle, the Avatar villain)**

## Moral dilemmas

- Is it possible to neatly fit people into separate categories of hero or villain?
- Is there a real difference between heroes and villains?

This session aims to help explore and unpack our understanding behind the meanings of these two terms. It includes a range of activities to encourage discussion and creative reflection on this topic.

### Discussion starter

What do you think of when you hear the word hero? What do you think of when you hear the word villain? What words and images come to mind? How would you define each of these words? What is the difference between them?

### Heroes and villains continuum

Place a piece of paper with the word's hero and villain at opposite ends of a room. Provide a list of names and ask the group to place these figures according to where they feel they fall on the line from hero to villain. Ask participants to explain their reasons and then discuss together to see if the group can come to an agreement. See the table to the right for examples, or ask the group to come up with their own suggestions for discussion. Encourage participants to consider different perspectives. Suggested discussion questions are included below the table.



**“Doesn’t matter what the press says. Doesn’t matter what the politicians or the mobs say. Doesn’t matter if the whole country decides that something wrong is something right. This nation was founded on one principle above all else: the requirement that we stand up for what we believe, no matter what the odds or the consequences. When the mob and the press and the whole world tell you to move, your job is to plant yourself like a tree beside the river of truth, and tell the whole world - “No, you move.”**  
*Captain America [Marvel]*

Films / Books / TV Characters	Bible	Famous / Historical Figures
Willy Wonka (Charlie and The Chocolate Factory)	<b>Old Testament</b>	Mother Teresa
Queen Elsa (Frozen)	Eve	Barack Obama
Professor Snape (Harry Potter)	Adam	Florence Nightingale
Wicked Witch of the West (The Wizard of Oz)	Esther	Baden-Powell
The Hulk (Marvel)	Joseph	Margaret Thatcher
Katniss Everdeen (The Hunger Games)	Queen Jezebel	Edward Colston
James Bond	Moses	Rosa Parks
Maleficent (Sleeping Beauty)	Ruth	Martin Luther King Jr.
Dr Frankenstein	David	Queen Boudica
Frankenstein's Monster	Goliath	Nelson Mandela
<b>For older groups / young adults</b>	<b>New Testament</b>	
Dexter Morgan (Dexter TV Programme and books)	Paul	John Williams
Deadpool (Marvel comics)	The woman at well	Emmeline Pankhurst
Venom (Marvel comics)	Zacchaeus	
Nurse Ratched (One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest / Ratched)	Mary Magdalene	
Walter White (Breaking Bad)	Judas	
	Mary	
	Jesus	

### Helpful questions to promote discussion

- Do you think they are a hero or a villain? Why?
- Who might see them as a hero? Why?
- Who might see them as a villain? Why?
- What characteristics or behaviours might people respect and value about them?
- What characteristics or behaviours might people dislike or find difficult about them?



# Morals and ethics: The Trolley Problem Thought Experiment

Heroes and villains are often defined by what they do, regardless of whether their actions are good or bad. But what if we consider the context and moral implications of the behaviour and its outcomes? Would this cause us to readdress our thinking and possibly change our views on heroes and villains?



## The trolley problem

The trolley problem is a popular thought experiment devised by philosopher Philippa Foot. Discuss the scenario with the group and consider how they would respond and why. You could introduce the trolley problem using the scenario below, or by showing a video version.

## Scenario

Imagine yourself on a trolley which cannot be stopped. Up ahead on the track there are five immovable people who will be hit by the trolley and killed. You can choose to pull a lever to divert onto a side track, but there is one person on this track who will be killed.

You have two options:

- Do nothing and allow the trolley to continue on the main track and kill five people.
- Pull the lever and divert the trolley onto the side track where it will kill one person.

What would you do?

## Video versions

If you search for 'the trolley problem' online, you will find lots of videos. Here are some suggestions:

- [youtu.be/yg16u\\_bzjPE](https://youtu.be/yg16u_bzjPE) – would you sacrifice one person to save five? Eleanor Nelsen TED Ed
- [youtu.be/DtRhrfhP5b4](https://youtu.be/DtRhrfhP5b4) – clip from comedy programme The Good Place (content warning; contains gore and blasphemy)

## Follow up discussion

There are many different versions of this experiment to consider:

- What if you knew the person on the side track – would that alter your decision?
- What if the only way to stop the trolley was by pushing someone in front of it – would you push one person to save the five people?
- What if the five people were criminals – would this impact your decision?

## Discussion questions

- Do you believe that it is possible for anyone to be purely heroic or villainous?
- What do you think makes someone a hero or a villain?
- Can you talk about someone who you view as a hero?
- Where is God in villainous situations?
- Have you ever been a villain in a situation? How did that feel?

## Creative response

Following the discussions, set aside some time for creative response. Encourage participants to reflect on the topic of heroes and villains creatively and to respond in their preferred manner.

Here are a range of ideas:

- Drawing or painting – provide a range of art materials which can be used to create a piece of artwork based on the topic.
- Creative writing – encourage participants to create a piece of writing based on the theme.
- Song writing – encourage participants to create a song or piece of music based on the topic.
- Journaling – provide notebooks and pens for which can be used for reflective journaling.
- Podcasting – encourage participants to produce and record a podcast reflecting on the theme. You can record voice recordings using a mobile phone or laptop.
- Photography or film making – use a camera or video equipment to produce photos or videos. This can be done using mobile phones, no need for specialist equipment.

Allow an opportunity for participants to share their creations with the group.

The resource 'Showcase' from Youthscape may be helpful. It contains lots of ideas to help encourage young people to explore and express their creativity. It's available to purchase via the Youthscape website: [www.youthscape.co.uk/store/product/showcase](http://www.youthscape.co.uk/store/product/showcase)



## Bible Studies from Youth Assembly

Generally, most consider a hero as someone who strives to make wrong things right. In contrast, a villain is someone who works against what is right. This shared understanding raises some fundamental questions when we apply them in our world. The understanding that heroes and villains are clear cut may pose an issue when we consider people with such labels.

## Understanding biblical heroes and villains

The Bible usually presents heroes of the faith not merely by their high moral standards or character, but mainly according to their worship of God. Idolatry is what truly separates heroes from villains. No human being is perfect; there's a blend of good and bad among us.

We sometimes do good things that are profitable to others and sometimes do bad things that are unhelpful. Idolatry is disordered love; this is when we make other things more important than God. In other words, loving more than God that which should be loved less than God.

According to the protestant reformer, Martin Luther said, "Good works do not make a good person, but a good person does good works; evil works do not make a wicked person, but a wicked person does evil works". Therefore, heroes and villains can be seen not in a black and white category of morality but the filter of service to God and others.

- What may be the danger of labelling someone a hero or a villain?
- How does our knowledge of idolatry deepen our understanding of heroes and villains?
- What are the qualities and characteristics that make a hero or a villain? Eg attributes of a hero: selfless to serve – they put their needs of others ahead of their own, aiming to serve others. Eg attributes of a villain: self-serving – they put their own needs ahead of others.

## Old Testament – hero and villain

### Read Esther 4:1-17

The story of Esther presents an excellent example of one who may be considered a hero. Esther put her life

on the line for others. To help save the Jews, she risked her safety. Esther was the hero whom God called "for such a time as this' an opportunity to save the lives of Jews in exile.

- How do we prepare effectively for an opportunity?
- How do we overcome our fears and take courage?

### Read Exodus 2-4

Moses is generally seen as a hero by many, but he also had many flaws which made him less than perfect. He was saved from certain death as a baby and grew up with privilege in a society that was oppressed. He hit out and killed an Egyptian overseer who was beating a slave and ran away to avoid the consequences. He was called by God to action, but was reluctant to take on the challenge.

- What makes Moses a hero or villain?
- How might we help a friend who's acting like a villain?
- How might we recognise when we act like the villain, in order that we may learn from it?

## New Testament – hero and villain

### Read Luke 10:25-37 The Parable of the Good Samaritan

The Good Samaritan is arguably the most well-known parable. It portrays the Samaritan as the hero and the Priest and Levite as villains, alongside the robbers. The title 'Good Samaritan' is generally bestowed upon a person who acts heroically. The Samaritans and Jews were in most parts adversaries and did not get along. This fractured relationship adds weight to the heroic character of the Samaritan. He helps a Jew, whereas his own people neglected him; he shows kindness to others even when they are different. Jesus says we should love God and love our neighbour as ourselves. When we consider the Ten Commandments, the first five are about loving God; the next five are about loving others.

- What attributes set the Good Samaritan apart from the Levite and Priest?
- How does this story heighten our understanding of who our neighbour is?
- How do we develop compassion for others?
- How might the way we treat those who are different from us, make us a hero or villain?

*Joseph Amoah*

## A Question of History by Patricia Dzigbordi Akoli

This sketch was commissioned by the United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work team for the 2021 resource booklet Heroes and Villains.

Recommended age 14+.

This piece was in response to a snippet the author caught on Parliament Live TV on 1 October 2020, with an aim to open discussion around themes of identity, nationhood and history.

When performing this sketch, please feel free to adapt text to local dialects (eg with the use of nah, man and mate) and change names to what suits your context. While reading, please keep in mind that everyone is at a different place with their exploration and understanding of history.

Prompts to think about with when discussing or delivering this piece:

- We all have the potential to be both a hero and a villain
- How do we approach situations when people's attitudes challenge your own?
- What does it mean to explore history? What does it mean to interrogate history?
- Who do we identify today as the heroes and villains in history?
- What are their attributes/detriments?
- Are there small-scale heroes and villains?

### Transcription of the Parliament debate

Joy Morrissey, MP for Beaconsfield: "Does my right honourable friend agree that a review of the parliamentary art collection should be an opportunity to celebrate parliament's rich and central role in our nation's history and heritage. Rather than a political exercise to edit, re-write, and impose 'woke' contemporary interpretations of history on a place of such national importance."

Jacob Rees-Mogg, MP for North East Somerset: "Mr Deputy Speaker. We should take such pride in the history that is displayed through the arts in this house. It may be a slightly whiggish view of history. But you go to committee room ten and there is Alfred the Great defeating the Danes; starting our great island's story.

As you walk from here to the Houses of Lords you see on the walls the whole process of the civil war, you see King Charles the First raising his standard at Nottingham – you see the birds that flew. You see the history of our nation and it is something we should be proud of. We are a nation. A great nation. A successful nation. One of the greatest nations this world has ever seen, and we have done so much good not just at home but abroad and we should be proud of that.

We should recognise how we have recorded our history, how our forefathers have done it. Is something we should not dispose of but as the secretary of culture has said: 'Statues and other historical objects were created by generations with different perspectives and understandings of right and wrong. They play an important role in teaching us about our pasts. When raising these objects, we should seek to contextualise them in a way that enables the public to learn about them in their entirety. Our aim should be to use them to educate people about all aspects of Britain's complex past.' Both good and in my view primarily good, and occasionally bad."





## A Question of History

Set in October 2020. A couple of teenagers flicking through TV channels, stop for a couple of minutes on Parliament LiveTV. This is the conversation that follows:

*(One of the friends is a child of commonwealth migrants)*

**Friend 1:** What on earth are they saying?

**Friend 2:** What do you mean? What're they saying?

**Friend 1:** Did you hear what they said?

**Friend 2:** *(Slightly nonplussed)* Yeah?

**Friend 1:** Wait, isn't she American? Why's she talking about the rich history of 'our nation'? What right does she have in all this?

**Friend 2:** Well they're patriotic innit?

**Friend 1:** What, Americans?

**Friend 2:** Yeah and the British too. I guess – I think. *(Consideringly)* Well, mainly around football, the Queen's birthday, and I guess anything that makes a them and us type of thing.

**Friend 1:** It's just, I just...  
*(makes frustrated sound).*

**Friend 2:** *(Laughs)* Wait, calm down. Why is this annoying you so much?

**Friend 1:** First it was the tone.

**Friend 2:** The tone?

**Friend 1:** Yeah, the tone. You know when people are full of it, when what they say goes and what they think is right, is right. No explanation needed.

**Friend 2:** Yeah. But. You're being a little dramatic. So, don't agree with what they said on the news.

**Friend 1:** No! I don't. It just ... it just makes me angry.

**Friend 2:** Well that's what we get for flicking through the news.

**Friend 1:** Nah man. She said: 'don't impose "woke contemporary interpretations" on the past. What else is the past but somebody's interpretation? Like you're gonna sit there and pretend that – that there is one narrative: shiny with minimal damage. You can't just say, 'oh it's because that's how things were done back then'. *(Pause)*. And I don't like that she said it was political. It isn't politics. It isn't a game! It's people's lives.

**Friend 2:** Of course it's a game! Game's whatever the new thing is. The new word, hashtag. The popularity game of being present, current. Being 'woke'.  
*(Both laugh)*

**Friend 1:** Man, I'm starting to not like that word anymore. They're saying it like it's something that's bad. Disruptive.

**Friend 2:** *(Shrugs)* So what if it is? That's how it works with the things that upset society. Do you think people won't have an issue with that? Like look at when they were pulling down those statues in

the Black Lives Matter protests.  
 What does pulling down a statue do?  
 Or mashing one up? Nothing for me.

**Friend 1:** Of course it does something! People talk about it. Discuss things. Do things.

**Friend 2:** (*Looks doubtful*) Maybe. But if you just remove something, isn't it out of sight, out of mind? And you're angry about this now. What will you do? What can you do? That's the way those people think. How can you change how somebody thinks?

**Friend 1:** I don't know. But every time something relating to history is dismissed and they say: 'Oh that's just how things were back then. You're giving people a pass.

**Friend 2:** But that is how it was back then. How are people today supposed to wrap their heads around how people behaved hundreds of years before they even existed? I'm not dismissing it. But what are you supposed to say?

**Friend 1:** I don't know but you have to say something. You have to re-edit the past. Because who wrote it? When? And where? And why? If everything's set from a specific point of view, you have to go back to re-contextualise. Coz we don't understand how they even went about things. Like, well with the Bible.

**Friend 2:** Huh?

**Friend 1:** What were you saying the other day?

**Friend 2:** Oh yeah. There're just some bits that are just weird and confusing.

**Friend 1:** Yeah but to us in modern times. There was so much that people didn't understand that they kept stopping and going: 'That makes no sense, how am I supposed to apply this to my life?' Especially with bits that make (*siren sounds*) go off in your head. And we only get stuff now because people looked back and said actually there was other stuff going on in society, politics, money, blah, blah, blah.

**Friend 2:** Ok?

**Friend 1:** Mate. I'm saying there's not one narrative, you know there's not. If Britain's complex past isn't talked about – all bits of it. Or if it's just brushed off as 'primarily good, and

occasionally bad'. What am I supposed to think? Especially with my family not being from here. And all that I'm learning about colonialism and slavery and all this other stuff. It's just things like that. That makes me feel like I'm not part of the conversation. And – that they don't want me to be. Like I don't belong. (*Silence*)

**Friend 2:** Hmm. I don't know about that guy, or them people on the TV, but I don't think anyone's saying you don't belong.

**Friend 1:** Aren't they? Coz it feels like they're saying your history isn't important in our story and we don't need to talk about it.

**Friend 2:** But people are talking about it.

**Friend 1:** But for how long? When this stops being interesting and important for others, I'll still be me, with my story to tell. (*Pause*). I am a part of the conversation. And we need to talk about it. In art, in society, in politics, in church. And then we need to act. (*Pause*). This is a part of all our histories. We need to face it now, or how else can we stop the same things from happening again?

The End

**"You're the hero in your story but the villain in mine."  
 Lucy Gulliver (*The Broken Hearts Gallery*)**



## Legacies of slavery

We all like to think that we're with 'the good guys', that we're on the side of the heroes.

When it comes to exploring the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade, however, we may be disappointed.

The URC is still a very young denomination – not yet 50 years old. It could be argued that we have no connection with transatlantic slavery, but that would ignore the truth that we were born out of pre-existing Church traditions. The URC Historical Society has identified the following individuals of note amongst our forebears. There may be many others with a direct link to slavery, or who have gifted money or resources linked to the slave trade. As you read, as you reflect, ask yourself – to what extent are these characters heroes or villains? And where would you have placed yourself if you were there?

The text is interspersed with words of lament and prayer reflecting on the reality and legacies of the transatlantic slave trade. Read it slowly. Absorb what is being said, and reflect ...

- What do you see?
- What do you hear?
- What do you feel?

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.

**William Alers Hankey**, an ex-banker, was a Congregationalist and treasurer of the London Missionary Society. Hankey was also a slave owner and an apologist for the status quo. In 1832 Hankey sat before a parliamentary select committee and was asked: "Has the result of your experience, as Treasurer of the Society, led you to the conclusion, from the progress of civilisation among the slaves, that when instructed they have become more obedient and tranquil?"

Hankey replied: "Quite so. I believe their value, even in the market, has risen in proportion as they have been so instructed; we have had instances of that. A slave has been regarded as more valuable in consequence of his being instructed by the missionaries of our own and other societies."

(Silence)  
 You raped me.  
 Stripped me and uncovered my nakedness.  
 You stole my children,  
 delivered them into cruel hands –  
 whose love was self  
 and wealth  
 and supposedly God.

You shattered my history,  
 impregnated me with a future  
 that was not my own.  
 A future –  
 but never my destiny.

**Selina Hastings**, Countess of Huntingdon, was an extremely influential religious leader. She became a slave owner in 1770 when she inherited estates which were run using slaves. She purchased additional slaves to smooth the running of an orphanage which was part of her inheritance. The Countess promoted the writings and independence of formerly enslaved Africans who espoused religious views compatible with her own. It is a matter of debate as to the extent to which the Countess could be regarded as a Congregationalist, although there are URC congregations who have links with the Countess' legacies and work.

(Silence)  
 You abused my body,  
 tried to break my mind.  
 Closed your eyes to my suffering  
 and stopped your ears to my cries.

You couldn't see –  
 you wouldn't hear –  
 that what the Lord requires of you  
 is to act justly, love mercy  
 and walk humbly with your God.

**William Coward**, a young London merchant, acquired a plantation in Jamaica around 1676. On returning to England, his main business was as owner of several ships trading with Jamaica. Coward's biggest ship was hired on three occasions to carry slaves. He was an English Dissenter and used his resources to fund Christian activities. He supported men studying for the Dissenting ministry and left a large sum for this purpose. The Coward Trust continues to support ministry, and the training of ministers, in the URC today.

(Silence)  
 Cut off from my past.  
 How can I know who I am,  
 or where I am going,  
 if I don't know who  
 or where I have been?  
 Named.  
 Unnamed.  
 Renamed.  
 Separated.  
 Set apart.

Set against.  
 Cut off from my history.  
 Cut out of your history.  
 Trying to carve a new story  
 out of something  
 I cannot grasp  
 Stripped of pride.  
 Re-clothed in shame -  
 a costume I reject  
 but struggle to shed.

Person of faith.  
 Un-faithed.  
 Bestowed with a faith  
 to which I cling -  
 or cast aside.

www.eternitynews.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/  
 E102\_cpx.jpg



**Sir Culling Smith**, was a Christian campaigner whose beliefs closely mirrored those of Congregationalism. He served as a treasurer of the London Missionary Society after Hankey. As an MP, Smith piloted antislavery legislation in the 1830s but was himself a slave owner. He owned a plantation in St Kitts.

What have you heard? What have you seen? What do you feel? Heroes? Villains? Or both?

(Silence)  
 Enslaved.  
 Imprisoned.  
 Sold.  
 Set free.  
 Yet all too often  
 still in chains.

Feared.  
 Rejected.  
 Held back.  
 Held down.  
  
 If this is freedom,  
 for who?

Lamentations 3:35-36  
 When all the prisoners of  
 the land are crushed under  
 foot, when human rights are  
 perverted in the presence of  
 the Most High, when one's  
 case is subverted – does the  
 Lord not see it?

Be still ... reflect on the words of Bob Marley: *Redemption Song*: [youtu.be/OrY9eHkXTa4](https://youtu.be/OrY9eHkXTa4)

Seeing may be painful;  
 hearing may be difficult;  
 responding is costly.  
 Yet what does the Lord require of you  
 But to act justly, love mercy,  
 and walk humbly with your God?

## Prayer



Loving God

We lay before you the pain of our history –  
the lives stolen,  
the bodies broken,  
the blood shed.

God of justice

We lay before you the continuing legacies of slavery –  
racism; histories erased and re-written; a corrupt  
economic system;  
life chances dictated by the colour of a person's skin,  
or place of birth.

We confess the ease with which we turn from our past  
We confess the ways we are complicit in the wrongs  
of today.

God of love, open our eyes

God of mercy, unstop our ears

God of compassion, make us feel,

that we may respond with justice, mercy  
humility and love. Amen

## The Challenge ...

The Legacies of Slavery Task Group is working to  
increase awareness of issues relating to slavery and  
enable our response.

[www.urc.org.uk/legacies-of-slavery](http://www.urc.org.uk/legacies-of-slavery)

What will you do with what you have learned?  
Ignore...? Reflect...? Act...? You choose!

## Resources for further reflection:

Tarrus Riley: Love Created I:

[youtu.be/H-mwEj5Pon0](https://youtu.be/H-mwEj5Pon0)

John M Campbell, URC Minister: Bible Studies for  
Today: [www.urc.org.uk/legacies-of-slavery](http://www.urc.org.uk/legacies-of-slavery)

The International Slavery Museum:

[www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/international-slavery-museum](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/international-slavery-museum)

The Museum of London Docklands 'London, Sugar and  
Slavery 1600 – today':

[www.museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london-docklands/permanent-galleries/london-sugar-slavery](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london-docklands/permanent-galleries/london-sugar-slavery)



[www.thoughtco.com/thmb/ij2rkXJO8tqbKDB2ZIE20PZwkus=/768x0/filters:no\\_upscale\(\):max\\_bytes\(150000\):strip\\_icc\(\)/157503916-569fdc-c25f9b58eba4ad83d7.jpg](http://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/ij2rkXJO8tqbKDB2ZIE20PZwkus=/768x0/filters:no_upscale():max_bytes(150000):strip_icc()/157503916-569fdc-c25f9b58eba4ad83d7.jpg)



## Going deeper

It can be easy to separate the world into people who are heroes or villains – people who are like us, or who are different; people who are for us, or who are against us; people who believe what we believe, or who are wrong! But in reality, people are generally more complex than that. Even great heroes can have weaknesses and bad sides, and the worst villains have a good side to them. Winston Churchill was the Prime Minister who led Britain through the Second World War and pulled together a global fight against Nazism, but he was also racist about people in other countries and took part in atrocities committed by the British Empire abroad: [www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/not-his-finest-hour-the-dark-side-of-winston-churchill-2118317.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/not-his-finest-hour-the-dark-side-of-winston-churchill-2118317.html).

It's the same for us 'ordinary' people too. We are usually a mix of both villain and hero, depending perhaps on where we are, who we are with, or how we are feeling. Most of us have a 'bad' part of ourselves we might not like and that we may want to hide away or deny. We also have a 'good' part of ourselves that we might be proud of, the person we might wish we could be more often. God looks at us and loves us completely. We can try and practice living better lives, following Jesus' commands (1 John 3:23). Sometimes we may be breathing in God so closely that it feels easy to live like that.

## Think

### Yourself

Draw yourself as a superhero. What sort of costume would you have? What super powers would you want? What Christian gifts do you have?

I wonder what you like about yourself?

I wonder what you think God likes about you?

Would you think of yourself as a hero?

Are Christians called to be heroes? Perhaps it's heroic just to try to follow Jesus today.

Perhaps being a Christian is less about doing heroic acts, and more about the small things we do every day.

### Other people

Do you know any heroes?

I wonder what qualities you admire others?

I wonder how you think God sees them?

Who might you look at as a role-model? What is it you admire about them?

### Church and society

Do you think the Church is heroic?

I wonder what you admire about the URC?

I wonder what heroic things churches have done? If you can't think of anything, perhaps you could go and do some research and find out.

At other times we may also struggle with things we shouldn't do, as the apostle Paul did (Romans 7:15). Sometimes we may need to 'accept' these aspects of ourselves as a part of who we are and allow God to transform them for us (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The following two sessions are full of questions and thoughts to help you to think about these ideas a bit more. You can use them on your own or in a group. Each session includes a focus on yourself, a focus on other people, a focus on church and society, and some other suggestions to help you reflect.

## Session one: the hero inside

### Read:

I wonder what it means to be a hero? Is it about special, one-off acts or achievements? Can we be heroic in the way that we live every day? What might be a 'heroic' way to live as a Christian? Read some of these passages for some ideas: the Beatitudes (Matthew 5: 3-12); the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5: 22-23); the Parable of the Sheep and the goats (Matthew 25: 31-46).

For further exploration: Is being a hero less about what we achieve and more about how we achieve it?

For a printable version of the two charts, please go to [www.urc.org.uk/heroes-and-villains](http://www.urc.org.uk/heroes-and-villains)



## Pray Yourself

Thank God for your gifts, skills and talents.

Ask God for opportunities to use them, or for God to reveal them to you if you are unsure of what your gifts, skills and talents are.

Are there any spiritual gifts or attitudes you would like to grow in? Ask God.

## Other people

Thank God for the people that you look up to.

Ask God to show you how you can help other people to be heroic, to be the best person they can be.

## Church and society

Thank God for the people who have gone before us, who are great examples of faith and life.

Thank God for the good things the Church has done throughout history – as the body of Christ on earth.

Pray for God's guidance and wisdom for the church to be an agent of social change and justice in the world.

## Do Yourself

Think about your personal responsibility in the world that we live in. What might God be calling you to do?

Our primary call is to follow Jesus. How we do that will likely be directed by our skills, passions, gifts and experience.

Who is God calling you to be?

## Other people

Try getting into the habit of doing small regular acts of kindness, generosity, patience etc for other people.

Start small and try to make it a daily habit.

## Church and society

Explore how the URC commits itself to an intercultural journey embodying God's Love. [www.urchurch.org.uk/our-work/global-and-intercultural.html](http://www.urchurch.org.uk/our-work/global-and-intercultural.html).

The rooms at Church House (the URC's offices in London) are named after famous people from the URC's history – try to find out more about who they were.

## Session two: the villain inside

### Read

What makes a villain? Is it enough to do one wrong thing? Does it matter 'how' wrong it is (are there different levels of 'wrong')?

I wonder which villains you can think of in the Bible? Try to find some of these people's stories: King David; Judas Iscariot; Delilah; Pontius Pilate. Were they simply bad people? Why did they do what they did? Did something or someone lead them into it? Did they always do wrong? Did they ever change? Where did they end up? I wonder how God views villains? (Romans 3: 9-18, 23,24; John 3: 17)

## Think Yourself

I wonder if there are things that you dislike about yourself?  
How might God look at you?

Are there things that you have done wrong? Are there things you wish you could have done differently?

There is a difference between feeling shame (feeling worthless or no good) and feeling guilt (recognising we did something wrong). Feeling shame can often be rooted in not feeling valued by other people. Feeling guilty is rooted in what we have done. God looks at shame and wants to us to know we are fully loved and accepted. God looks at guilt and wants to know whether we regret what we did and if we want to be forgiven.

Look at this picture of the return of the prodigal son by Rembrandt. ([www.wikiart.org/en/rembrandt/the-return-of-the-prodigal-son-1669](http://www.wikiart.org/en/rembrandt/the-return-of-the-prodigal-son-1669)). The father is welcoming the son home. How is this welcome expressed? Does it feel welcoming?

I wonder who might be the villains or the heroes of this story? How does this painting add to or contradict this?

## Other people

I wonder what annoys you in other people? (sometimes this can highlight something we actually dislike in ourselves).

How have other people hurt you, or done wrong to you?  
How have you responded to the things other people have done?

What if you assume they are doing the best they can?

## Church and society

I wonder what frustrates or annoys you in the URC?  
I wonder what mistakes the Church has made in the past and today?

What can you find out about the URC (and other church's) involvement in the transatlantic slave trade?

What are the ongoing impacts on communities around the world and the structures of the URC?

[www.urchurch.org.uk/legacies-of-slavery.html](http://www.urchurch.org.uk/legacies-of-slavery.html)

[www.cwmission.org/what-we-do/cutting-edge-mission-initiatives/legacies-of-slavery/](http://www.cwmission.org/what-we-do/cutting-edge-mission-initiatives/legacies-of-slavery/)

*Personality tests can be a helpful way to reflect on who you are and how you respond differently in different situations or with different people:  
[www.16personalities.com/](http://www.16personalities.com/)  
[www.truity.com/test/enneagram-personality-test](http://www.truity.com/test/enneagram-personality-test)*

*Think about whether there are aspects of your personality that you find difficult. How do you respond to these parts of you – can you accept them as part of who you are? What would you say to someone else who saw the same in themselves? How do you think God looks at you?*

*Write a poem about yourself using the following lines to start: 'I am.....; I hope.....; I feel.....; I wish.....; I like.....; I know.....; I can.....*

## Pray

### Yourself

How easy do you find it to forgive yourself? Perhaps we can follow the example of how God forgives and accepts us:

1. Do you want to be with God and do you recognise that you have done things wrong? (1 John 1:8)
2. God forgives us, whatever we have done, if we ask. (1 John 1:9)
3. We are completely accepted by God – no 'ifs' or 'buts'. Nothing we do can make God love us more. Nothing we do will make God love us less.
4. Now can you see yourself as God sees you?

### Other people

How easy do you find it to forgive other people? Again we can follow the example of God forgiving and accepting others:

1. Have they acknowledged what they have done wrong? (Do they know they have hurt you?) Are they sorry for what they have done?
2. If they don't know or don't care that they have hurt you, you can still forgive them. They just cannot receive your forgiveness unless they have recognised what they did.
3. Do you want to forgive them? The alternative is to hold on to your anger and hurt, but this will usually hurt you more in the long run.
4. God has forgiven you and asks you to forgive others. Ask God to help you to forgive – it might not happen immediately, it might take time, you might need to keep asking God for help.
5. Sometimes showing your acceptance of someone (as long as this is safe to do) can help make forgiveness real.

### Church and society

What can the Church do to ask forgiveness of those that have been hurt?

Pray for honesty and wisdom where the Church has caused harm to people.

Write a lament on behalf of the church.

## Do

### Yourself

Write a list of the hurts that you might be hanging on to – burn the piece of paper – or write it on tin foil and wash it off – can you let go of them? (ask God to help you)

Consider what further steps you might want to take next.

### Other people

Is there someone you know who you might need to forgive? If they are aware and are sorry, try telling them. If they are not aware or sorry, you could tell them or write in a letter how you feel and that you want to forgive them.

### Church and society

How should the URC be responding today to the mistakes of our past? What can you do about it?

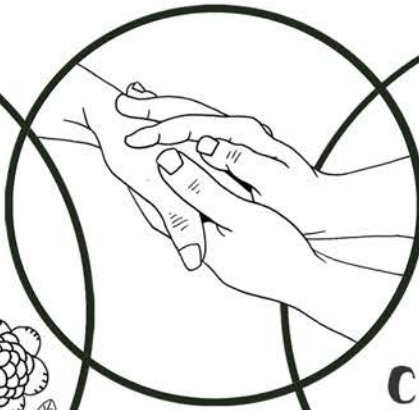
How can your church make a difference?

Encourage your church to respond to something that is wrong in your local area or in the world.

Write a reflection about the things that have touched you in this session.

You can send your reflections to the URC's Children and Youth Team or the Global and Intercultural Ministries Department, to be shared on their websites.

Blessed  
are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the  
Kingdom of  
heaven.



Blessed are  
those who  
mourn,  
for they shall be  
comforted.

Blessed  
are the meek,  
for they shall  
inherit  
the earth.

Blessed  
are those who  
hunger and  
thirst for  
righteousness,  
for they shall be  
satisfied.



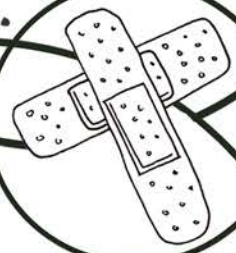
Blessed  
are the merciful,  
for they shall  
receive  
mercy.

SEE GOD  
Blessed  
are the  
pure in  
heart, for they shall  
see  
God.

Blessed  
are the  
peacemakers,  
for they shall be  
called sons  
of God.



Blessed  
are those who are  
persecuted for  
righteousness' sake, for  
theirs is the Kingdom  
of heaven.



## Suggested songs

- “Jesus you’re my superhero” by Hillsong Kids: [youtu.be/U7-pQrQBI\\_k](https://youtu.be/U7-pQrQBI_k)
- “I the Lord of sea and sky” by Daniel L. Schutte: [youtu.be/mgLwH5RdtPk](https://youtu.be/mgLwH5RdtPk)
- “All through history” by Nick and Becky Drake: [youtu.be/hQS2HHayr38](https://youtu.be/hQS2HHayr38)
- “Nothing is impossible” by Doug Horley: [youtu.be/SzYr3sXi2Js](https://youtu.be/SzYr3sXi2Js)
- “Nothing’s too big, big, big for his power” by Doug Horley: [youtu.be/Yopo6DvV9Z8](https://youtu.be/Yopo6DvV9Z8)
- “Every Giant Will Fall” by Rend Collective: [youtu.be/EF84v-oOhp0](https://youtu.be/EF84v-oOhp0)
- “Our God is a great big God”:  
[youtu.be/XgoBimxJy1A](https://youtu.be/XgoBimxJy1A)
- “Jesus is greater than the greatest hero”:  
[youtu.be/K1mlNnh3Uzc](https://youtu.be/K1mlNnh3Uzc)
- “Be bold, be strong” [youtu.be/zRvCUz6KFB4](https://youtu.be/zRvCUz6KFB4)
- “Put on the sword of the spirit”:  
[youtu.be/VNZIP7BLXdc](https://youtu.be/VNZIP7BLXdc)
- “Vagabonds”: [youtu.be/s27D7M8biul](https://youtu.be/s27D7M8biul)
- “The Earth is the Lords and everything in it”:  
[youtu.be/rAompuKQZo0](https://youtu.be/rAompuKQZo0) or  
[youtu.be/aJg0R7K0Pk](https://youtu.be/aJg0R7K0Pk)
- “Let your light shine”: [youtu.be/oXkxRNEy8XA](https://youtu.be/oXkxRNEy8XA)
- “All around me Lord I see your goodness”  
CMP 10: [youtu.be/x3SzDGJXHf4](https://youtu.be/x3SzDGJXHf4)
- “How great Thou art” RS 117; StF:  
[www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06nnffs](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06nnffs)
- “God in his love for us lent us this planet” RS 85:  
[youtu.be/3zpa-HJXrZI](https://youtu.be/3zpa-HJXrZI)
- “Now thank we all our God” RS 72 (Nun Danket)  
StF 81ii (Gracias): [youtu.be/yz0lKy9v8ZA](https://youtu.be/yz0lKy9v8ZA)
- “Wind beneath my wings”:  
[youtu.be/jorJh8DTMVM](https://youtu.be/jorJh8DTMVM)
- When a Knight Won His Spurs:  
[youtu.be/fzz5r2BO1xA](https://youtu.be/fzz5r2BO1xA)
- “Special kind of heroes” by Fischy Music  
(subscription needed):  
[www.fischy.com/songs/special-kind-of-heroes/](http://www.fischy.com/songs/special-kind-of-heroes/)
- “Jesus make me a hero” by Saddleback Kids:  
[youtu.be/GSfq67pwaq4](https://youtu.be/GSfq67pwaq4)

## Inspirational clips that can be used in worship

- Hero by Fearless motivation:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=403FGqa-Uv8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=403FGqa-Uv8)
- Good Job by the One Voice Children’s Choir:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkDNp4ATCso](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkDNp4ATCso)

- Superheroes by the Script:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIm1GgfRz6M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIm1GgfRz6M)
- “What is it to be a Hero” by Marvel:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBXXOVOJJpM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBXXOVOJJpM)
- “The way we walk” by Fusion:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwY57xgJCmg&t=10s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwY57xgJCmg&t=10s)

## Modern day parables

- “Room on the broom” by Julia Donaldson
- “Cops and the Robbers, Burglar Bill” by Janet and Alan Alberg
- “The Adventures of Captain Underpants” by Dav Pilkey
- “Superkid” by Claire Freedman and Sarah Macintyre
- “Ten rules of being a Super Hero” by Deb Pilutti

ROOTS for Churches – article [www.rootsontheweb.com/lectionary/2003/07-september-october-2003-b-proper-21/article-heroes-and-heroines-of-faith](http://www.rootsontheweb.com/lectionary/2003/07-september-october-2003-b-proper-21/article-heroes-and-heroines-of-faith)

ROOTS for Churches – Heroes and Villains Holiday Club activity ideas:  
[www.rootsontheweb.com/year-of-the-bible-2011/yotb-53-cyp-bible-heroes-and-villains](http://www.rootsontheweb.com/year-of-the-bible-2011/yotb-53-cyp-bible-heroes-and-villains)

[www.rootsontheweb.com/year-of-the-bible-2011/yotb-54-cyp-bible-heroes-and-villains](http://www.rootsontheweb.com/year-of-the-bible-2011/yotb-54-cyp-bible-heroes-and-villains)

More Heroes and Villains resources can be found on our website here: [www.urch.org.uk/heroes-and-villains](http://www.urch.org.uk/heroes-and-villains) and our resources here: [moodle.urch.org.uk/course/view.php?id=208](http://moodle.urch.org.uk/course/view.php?id=208)



**“You either die the hero or live long enough to become the villain.”**  
*Harvey Dent (The Dark Knight)*

# Bible baddies quiz

- 1) Who was the first murderer in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_ (Genesis 4: 1-12)
- 2) Who plotted to have all Jews killed because one man refused to bow down to him?  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Esther 3-7)
- 3) Which Philistine champion was defeated by a young boy? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 Samuel 17)
- 4) Which wily woman gave a strong man a haircut? \_\_\_\_\_ (Judges 16)
- 5) Who massacred many infant boys and murdered several members of his own family? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Matthew 2)
- 6) Which vengeful woman got her daughter to ask for a very strange dish as a reward for dancing?  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 14: 3-12)
- 7) Which queen, worshipper of Baal, led a campaign to kill the prophets? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 Kings 18-21)
- 8) This king destroyed the temple in Jerusalem and sent the Jews into exile in Babylon  
\_\_\_\_\_ (1 Daniel 1)
- 9) Which woman fancied her husband's servant and, when that servant refused her attentions, made a false allegation against him? \_\_\_\_\_ ( Genesis 39)
- 10) This slithery character shows that villains were around from the very beginning, placing temptation in the way of God's people \_\_\_\_\_ (Genesis 3: 1-15)



Can you name the Bible hero or villain from the emblems on their shield?

## Wordsearch

n	o	i	t	a	v	l	a	s	h	o	e	s	g
b	s	e	l	f	c	o	n	t	r	o	l	o	e
r	i	g	h	t	e	o	u	s	n	e	s	s	n
e	a	r	r	o	w	g	t	e	l	p	m	e	t
a	r	b	a	r	m	o	u	r	e	e	v	o	l
s	h	i	e	l	d	d	j	l	u	h	o	p	e
t	k	e	p	l	r	u	u	o	s	w	a	e	n
p	i	b	l	o	t	o	m	p	y	t	h	a	e
l	n	s	w	m	s	p	i	r	i	t	f	c	s
a	d	s	a	v	e	r	h	e	i	g	h	e	s
t	n	a	m	a	i	t	n	a	p	o	w	e	r
e	e	v	c	t	z	c	f	r	f	r	u	i	t
s	s	e	i	n	e	g	o	o	d	n	e	s	s
t	s	s	s	e	n	l	u	f	h	t	i	a	f

Can you find the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5: 22-23) and the armour of God? (Ephesians 6: 10- 18)

Nine Fruits of the Spirit

Six pieces of the Armour of God		
	of	
	of	
	of	
	of	
	of	
	of	



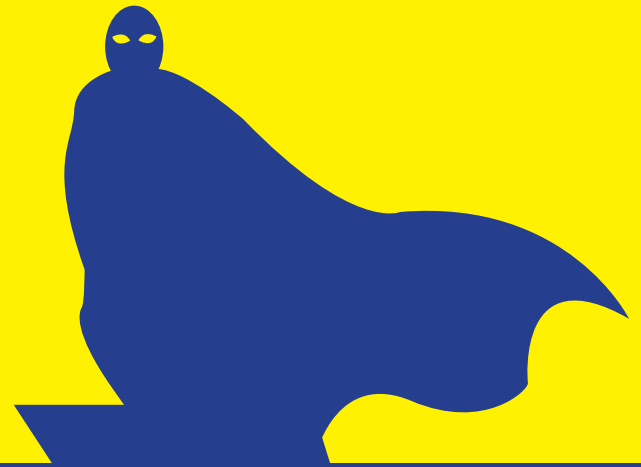
Walking  
the Way  
Living the life of Jesus today



Beacon: 



THE BOYS' BRIGADE   
> the adventure begins here



The United Reformed Church Children's and Youth Work  
86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT  
020 7916 8637 [www.urc.org.uk](http://www.urc.org.uk)

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