



SUPERSLEUTHS



***2021 URC CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH
WORK HOLIDAY CLUB MATERIAL***

WELCOME TO THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH CHILDREN'S AND HOLIDAY CLUB RESOURCES

Welcome to this, the first ever official United Reformed Church (URC) Children's and Youth Work (CYW) Holiday Club – Supersleuths. Tying in with our theme for the year, Heroes and Villains, we are taking you back in time to a 1950s detective agency, where our gallant detectives gather the clues to investigate the deeds of a gang of Bible characters called “The Disciples” and discover what really makes a true follower of Jesus.

This material is not designed to be prescriptive, although you may use it that way if you wish. Nor is it designed to be exclusive; feel free to swap and change the ideas included here for ones you think more suitable for your groups. It is written as a five-day plan, but you may decide to do a one-day extravaganza, a club once a week through the holidays, or maybe just select a couple of the sessions to do on two or three days in the week, especially if you need time to do a thorough clean in between sessions.

At the back of this resource, you will find several appendices. You may be thinking of adapting this material in a variety of ways, and the appendices will give you suggestions and ideas of how to do so for various different settings.

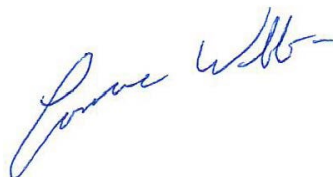
As this is our first venture of this kind, we would love some feedback. Do let us know what you found helpful, and if there is anything else you wish we had included. If we were to do another such resource next year, what would be most helpful to you? And do let us know how you use it – some pictures for our Facebook page would be greatly appreciated. Contact lorraine.webb@urc.org.uk or children.youth@urc.org.uk.



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IN THIS RESOURCE

Appendices: While the main resource is written with the five to 11 age range in mind, you may have some young people who are a little older or who come as junior helpers. The first appendix gives ideas for extending the material to take them a little deeper. You may have some children of pre-school age within your holiday club, so we have included an appendix on how to adapt the theme for little ones. You might be running a vintage holiday club and want the theme to tie in, and there is an appendix of ideas for the elderly and for those with dementia. Why not develop the holiday club as an intergenerational adventure, inviting adults and young people along, as well as children, to participate together? There is an appendix with some ideas for running an intergenerational event which may help in adapting these materials.

Overarching themes and activities: In the first section of this resource, there are some overarching themes and activities. Here, you will find ideas for decorating your hall or Zoom background, for making a magnifying glass puppet, and for ongoing/cumulative activities for your groups of children and adults. There are also the two songs which have been purpose-written for this material by Leo Roberts.

Reflections for volunteers: It is important for the volunteers running the holiday club to ground it in faith and sound theology, and to know where the theme is taking them. For this reason, we have included some initial reflections for the team to include in a daily pre-session briefing, with discussion points to stimulate their own thinking and learning, and a prayer.

Arrival activities: You will need something to keep your children busy from the moment they arrive until the holiday club session actually begins. These activities will take place in the team areas known as the Detective Dens, and are to encourage children to feel welcome and engaged,

and to start them thinking about the theme. They will be able to update their case files, as well as doing a challenge and creative activity engaging all learning styles.

Story: We have chosen to deliver the stories in a variety of styles, and encourage you to be experimental with different ways of presenting Bible stories. For those of you not confident with storytelling or drama, or for those of you running your holiday club over Zoom, there are videos of the stories being told by our team on our YouTube playlist, at bit.ly/3odY47V. There are also suggestions for YouTube videos you may wish to use to retell the story later in the session. These have been chosen because they tell the story in a way suitable for this age range, and are true to the Bible accounts.

Bible verse: There is also a focus on one Bible verse each day, which could be used as a memory verse.

Craft: These crafts are not prescriptive – you may substitute them with crafts of your own. We recommend checking Pinterest for ideas, or referring to past issues of Families on Faith Adventures at Home to stimulate your creative juices. These can be found at urc.org.uk/families-on-faith-adventures. Do try to use recycled or eco-friendly materials wherever possible. Craft time is a good time to talk – maybe use the reflective questions to prompt a conversation while you are engaging in the craft together, or ponder on what you have found out so far.

Games: One game is described here which has a link to the theme. You will undoubtedly want to include more games – probably some of the children's favourites.

Small group prayer activity: This is an opportunity for the small groups to pray together and to encourage a bit of creativity in prayer.



Prayer during this time can be far more personal, and encourage children and adults alike to build their personal relationship with God. Remember to allow time to listen and be still.

Recipes: We have suggested recipes and food activities that are themed to our days, and which are quick and easy for children to make themselves during the session, if you choose. If you are using them, it would be helpful to consider also serving fruit and a healthy drink. Alternative suggestions to cater for those with allergies are in brackets in the ingredients list. Please be aware of current local regulations about snacks – it may still be necessary to ask children and adults to bring their own snacks and not to share.

Drama: If you have made a magnifying glass puppet, this is the chance for it to take centre stage as it carries out its interrogation of the gang member. Again, these dramas are available on our YouTube playlist. If you choose to do the drama yourself, either dress someone up as the character being questioned, or use another puppet.

Song: You will want to include songs in your closing worship, and probably also through the session. One of our songs is about being a hero, while the other is a cumulative song with different verses to go with each of our Bible characters. You could sing just one verse and chorus for each session, or you could build it up by adding a verse on each time. Your church probably has additional songs which your children will enjoy – think about the lyrics and make sure they are appropriate for this age group, and theologically sound.

Closing prayer: The closing prayers are designed to be a little more active, and to allow everyone to get involved. Remember that prayer is for adults as well as children. This is not a time for the adults to go off and start tidying up! You might even want to encourage parents and carers to arrive slightly before the end of the holiday club session and join in the closing prayer with their children.

A typical holiday club might run like this:

Suggestions for a daily timetable 2 ½ hours

Arrivals – Detective Dens (10-15 mins)

Welcome to the small group
Getting to know each other (suggestions circle activities)
Arrival activities – group building and daily activity
Case file update (activities to download)

Detectives Briefing – Upfront Session 1 (45mins)

Active warm up (music and exercise routine)
Song/s
Meet MG, who will introduce the mini challenge
Mini Challenge (ideas to download)
Story
Memory verse

Detectives Investigate – Small groups (60mins)

Refreshments – recipe of the day
Crafts
Reflection
Prayer activity
Fieldwork – games

Detectives Update – Upfront session 2 (25 mins)

Song
MG interviews..... – Drama
Detective Den Update (interview the mini detectives)
Update the detectives board (what have we discovered so far?)
Closing song and group prayer activity

Detective Dens and Goodbye

Wind down, and gather up ready for collection from small group.



OVERARCHING THEMES AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE WHOLE WEEK

Each day, we will explore a different Bible character or characters who are suspected of being members of the infamous gang 'The Disciples'. We have offered a creative way to tell the story, as well as a link to a video, if preferred. The emphasis is to introduce elements of the Bible character for the day, and enable the children to truly investigate and bring their thoughts and ideas.

The idea is simply to explore and investigate each character, then at the end of the day make up their own minds what this person's character tells us about the gang they belong to. We all have a part to play in presenting the evidence and examining it together.

The personnel of the detective agency

- Holiday club leader is the boss of the detective agency, Supersleuths. This character could be called Sherlock Bones and could have a supporting lead called Dr Whatsit.
- A sidekick, who is a giant puppet in the shape of a magnifying glass, called MG. Remember that puppets can be very helpful in giving children information that you really want them to listen to, as well as being used as described in the activities for the day.
- Children are in detective teams investigating the members of a new gang on the block – the Disciples – to see what they can learn about them.
- Group identity/Detective Dens – designate one area of the hall for each detective team, and get the teams to come up with their own team name.

MG Introduction MG, or magnifying glass, is very keen to ask questions but not very good at giving answers, so always speaks in

questions. If you ask MG a question, they will answer, but always end with a question.

In the Detectives Briefing (upfront one), introduce MG to everyone. Each day, build up a short conversation, with MG asking questions about the day and a recap of the day before as the week progresses.

Ideas for making MG (the magnifying glass puppet)

Cut out a large circle with a handle – an old cardboard box painted black works well.

(a large frying pan makes an excellent template)

Cut a slightly smaller circle out of reflective paper to give the effect of the glass and then add eyes, nose and mouth. You can make the end of the mouth look like question marks which visually reminds of the magnifying glass's need always to ask questions.



Decorate your venue: The scene is set in a 1950s detective agency. You might want a desk and a chair with arms for your leader to sit at, an angle-poise lamp for interrogations, an old rotary-dial telephone, a coat-stand with a mac and detective hat hanging on it, a few cardboard files filled with papers hanging around, some wanted posters on the walls, and so on. We do not recommend you go for the smoke-filled atmosphere and nicotine-stained fingers, however!

Decorate each Detective Den: Set up a large investigation board for each small group. This could be a display board, a large whiteboard, or



even just a large piece of cardboard fastened to the wall. The children can be told in advance which story/character they will be exploring the next day, and come prepared to add evidence to the board, even before hearing the story of the day. What can they find out for themselves? What questions do they have, and what would they like to find out each day?

Draw pictures of the character, pin them to the board, and write words that you'd connect with that character. Add to it during each session. This board can be built up throughout the week, and older groups might like to find links between the stories and themes and join them with lines or string or ribbons. The big question of the day is, what do your investigations tell you about this member of the gang?

Make a detective arrival activity project for the whole week:

Cut out a cardboard head and shoulders (child-sized), and attach to a coat hanger. This gives you the frame to add a jacket or coat. Cut out some legs and a pair of shoes, and hang from the inside of the jacket or coat. Make a shirt front and tie using a large sheet of paper and any card or collage materials that you have. Make a hat and a disguise to add to the face.



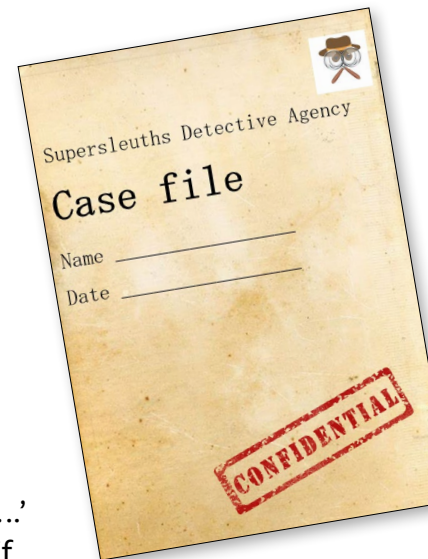
Each day, encourage the children to re-design the detective with a different disguise. This could involve changing the jacket, shirt and hat and glasses, or even making a wig from wool or strips of paper. The children will love the opportunity to create their own designs, and this is a project that they can think about when they go home. You can always have two or three detectives to add to your den.

Ongoing activities

Hotseat or Drama:

Each day you could offer a hotseat option: a chance to meet the character of the day and ask your planned questions to get more evidence. This would need a team member or a child who is prepared to take on the roles.

Alternatively, you could use the 'MG interrogates....' sketches (remember that if you don't feel comfortable doing this, you could use the videos with the puppet MG which are available in our Holiday Club playlist at bit.ly/3odY47V.)



Investigate Further: At the end of each session, when you have gained a bit more understanding of the characteristics of a disciple shown by that character, challenge the children and adults to find examples of that characteristic in others – maybe other Bible characters, maybe people they know, maybe people in the news or in a film or TV programme. Add those people to a heroes board in the Inspector's office – perhaps they too are members of the gang.

Continuing craft

Detective case file: decorate and create a file of evidence which will be built on each day. This would be best as a loose-leaf folder with plastic pockets. Put information you





Create a torch sheet: create a torch slider from card, and colour it to look like a torch.

Place a white piece of paper into a plastic folder and draw some clues to the Bible character onto the outside of the folder using black permanent marker pens. Remove the white sheet and replace it with a black one so that you can no longer see the images on the folder.

Slide the torch into the plastic folder on top of the black paper and see the part of the picture come into view.

Songs: You will find the sheet music at urc.org.uk/holiday-club

Sing along with Leo on Supersleuths by LeoRoberts soundcloud.com/leoroberts/supersleuths and Hero by LeoRoberts soundcloud.com/leoroberts/hero

have found out about each character into it, and build up your file as you investigate the characters throughout the week. Daily suggestions are given for case file activities.



Hero

A hero is somebody who stops things being bad,
A villain is the opposite and that is really sad.
So listen to me now and I will show you how,
You don't need a cape to be a hero.

Chorus

You don't need a cape to be a hero,
Or wear your underpants over your tights.
Just try to do some good, cos Jesus thinks you should,
No, you don't need a cape to be a hero.
You don't need to fly to be a hero,
Your feet they can stay firmly on the ground.
You can't fly like a bird, cos that would be absurd.
You don't need to fly to be a hero.

You don't need a mask to be a hero.
It doesn't matter folk know who you are
To undertake the task you don't need to wear a mask.

You don't need a mask to be a hero.

You don't need special clothes to be a hero.
Just wear the clothes that you wear every day.
I'm telling you the truth, you are not bulletproof,

You don't need special clothes to be a hero.

You don't need superpowers to be a hero.
For God has made you perfect as you are.
I don't think you oughta try to breathe while underwater.

You don't need superpowers to be a hero.

Words and music by Leo Roberts





Supersleuths

Hints are everywhere we look as we investigate
this book

We must search to see if we can find the truths
With a magnifying glass, and the right amount
of sass

We will be a group of modern supersleuths

Where you go, that's where I'll go, so said Ruth
And where you live, that's where I'll live, that's
the truth

I will take your God as my God, and your people
as my kin

For you love me and I love you

Our adventure must begin

There was Mary, there was Martha in their home
One was working, one was praying all alone
Both things needed to be done, but it doesn't
sound much fun

But they knew that very soon they would be
welcoming God's son

Timothy was really very young
At the time when his adventure just begun
And when he answered God's call, it was
helping his friend Paul
He showed courage and encouraged him
To share God's love with all

Esther lives in Persia, she's a Jew
And though scared she knew just what she had
to do
She gave Xerxes a request: please don't keep
my kin oppressed
Is she a hero or a villain? What d'you think,
what's your guess?

Abraham and Sarah were quite old
They could not have any children, they'd been
told
Ishmael did no wrong but then Isaac came along
Who's the hero, who's the villain in this song?

Words and music by Leo Roberts



ESSENTIAL THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Covid-safe: You will need to collect information for NHS Track & Trace or whatever is required in your area, and ensure that everyone is aware that anyone testing positive needs to tell the leaders, so they can inform those who have been in contact and instruct them to self-isolate. Ensure that everyone is aware that if they are showing any signs or symptoms of Covid-19, then they must stay at home.

If you have a larger number of children registered for your holiday club, you will need to organise them into small teams or bubbles. Try to keep children in these teams throughout the session and minimise mingling to keep your environment safe. You could mark out separate areas in your hall for different teams to sit. Also, try to have materials just for that team to use rather than sharing – maybe even individual packs.

Prepare all materials in advance, and allow these to stand for three days before using, minimising handling of materials.

Encourage children to wash and/or sanitise hands on arrival and departure, and before preparing food.

Check the current rules for your locality to be certain of numbers permitted and whether masks are needed for adults.

Keep the rooms you are using well ventilated. Remember to complete a Covid risk assessment for your holiday club, and have this checked and approved by your church leadership.

Online Holiday Club: You may have decided to do your holiday club over Zoom or a similar online platform. Much of the material here can also be done online, with children provided with a pack of resources to use during each session, although some of the games may need to be adapted. You can find examples of Zoom games on our website, [urc.org.uk/resources-](https://www.urchurch.org.uk/resources-for-children-and-youth)

[for-children-and-youth](https://www.urchurch.org.uk/resources-for-children-and-youth). It might be fun to dress up and/or to decorate your background.

Please make sure that your volunteers have all read the URC's online safety policy, which can be found at [urc.org.uk/images/safeguarding/GP5/Appendix_C_Model_church_online_safety_policy.pdf](https://www.urchurch.org.uk/images/safeguarding/GP5/Appendix_C_Model_church_online_safety_policy.pdf)

You can do small group activities online by using breakout rooms, but remember that you must have two adults who are DBS checked in each breakout room. You might also like to watch this helpful video from Ruth White to help you think about the pros and cons of online engagement with children: youtu.be/NzIzkG8-H4o.

Outdoors: You may have decided to run your holiday club outdoors. While some of this material is suitable for doing outdoors, you will need to enhance it with extra activities more appropriate for taking advantage of the outdoor space. Alternatively, you may have access to a marquee or large gazebo which you could use, or you could go outside for part of the session if you have the facilities for that. If you are using outside space, you will need to ensure that the area is clean and free from litter and animal faeces before and after your session, and you will also need to consider how you will ensure that children do not wander off from the area. You will need to think about safeguarding – how to ensure that no adults engage inappropriately with the children in your care, including those who are not on the team. You will also need to think about issues such as access to toilets.

Registration: It is important to keep an accurate register of the children and adults who attend on each day of your holiday club. This information will need to be kept according to your church's data protection and safeguarding policies.



Parents/carers must also fill in a registration/consent form, and children should not be accepted into the holiday club without it.

The registration/consent form must include: name and date of the event; child's details; details of two emergency contacts; details of any additional needs; any health needs, medication or allergies; acknowledgement of liability; consent for photographs; consent for first aid and emergency treatment; details of who will be collecting the child at the end of the session. Do not include any information which you do not actually need (eg gender).

Ensure that your registration/consent form states where parents/carers can access your data policy and safeguarding policy. These forms must be kept securely and used sensitively.

Sample registration forms are available at urc.org.uk/holiday-club

Safeguarding: Make sure you are familiar with your church's safeguarding policy, and that volunteers have received training. Everyone over the age of 18 who is taking part in your holiday club must have an enhanced DBS check for the church. Occasional visitors who do not have a DBS certificate must not be left alone with children, and the leadership of the club is responsible for ensuring that a leader is with them at all times. See the URC Good Practice 5 at urc.org.uk/good-practice-policy-and-procedures.

You may find that volunteers have children at the holiday club to whom they are related or have a close bond. They should be encouraged to remember not to treat those children any differently – hugs and kisses, sitting on laps or being alone with a child are fine at home, but not advisable in a church club situation.

Photographs: One or two people should be identified as designated photographers for the event, and should wear a badge identifying them as such. They should use a camera rather than

a smartphone to take photographs, and should only photograph those children whose parents have given permission. Photographs should not be used on any social media other than the church's or Church House official social media. See the URC Good Practice 5 for more information, at urc.org.uk/good-practice-policy-and-procedures.

Mobile phones: It is good practice that no mobile phones are brought into the holiday club area unless absolutely necessary.

Risk assessments: It is essential that you do a risk assessment for the venue you are using for your holiday club, and also to do risk assessments for the activities you will engage in. You must also do this for the precautions you will use to reduce the spread of Covid-19. Your church may have its own policy and template for risk assessments, but you may wish to use or adapt the ones available at urc.org.uk/holiday-club. Depending on the current situation with Covid-19, you may also wish your volunteers to complete a personal risk assessment. Risk assessments are useless if just put in a file. Ensure that all your volunteers have read the risk assessment or, better still, discuss it during your pre-session briefings. Please be aware that all risk assessments should be approved by your church leadership team.

Safety: Check the premises you use are safe, hygienic and suitable for children – think about stacked chairs, flooring, toilets and so on.

Children should not be allowed in kitchen areas unaccompanied.

Think about how to make your toilets a safe place without compromising privacy and dignity, so that you know when children have gone to the toilet and how long they have been gone. As far as this is possible, designate separate toilets for adults.

Have a routine for checking throughout the session that children have not gone missing from the group. Have a routine for the end of the session – perhaps tell the children that they are



superglued to the floor until their parent or carer comes to collect them – and then get the parent and child to come to a leader to be signed out.

Although it is not compulsory to have someone on the team who is a trained first aider, it is a very good idea. Make sure everyone on the team knows where the first aid box is, and nominate someone to ensure that the box is fully stocked. Have a first aid recording sheet or book, and keep clear and full records of any injury, however minor, who treated it, and what was done. Ensure that the record is dated and signed, and take note of anything that needs to be done to minimise risk of it happening again.

Behaviour: Remember that the children are at a club, and it should be fun for everyone. Do not impose rules that are not necessary, or enforce participation if the child feels uncomfortable. One member of the team should be the key person to speak to for any issues that arise, and this should be the only team member who liaises directly with parents or carers about behaviour. Remember that the best way of encouraging appropriate behaviour is to model it and to build positive relationships. You may want to watch the video on strategies to support behaviour that challenges which was prepared for leaders of our non-uniformed organisation, Pilots, and can be found at youtu.be/9XxpvUGVT_o. It is good to have a behaviour policy which all team members read, and which is available for parents. An example can be found at urc.org.uk/holiday-club. You may also want a simple code of conduct which all participants sign, an example of which can be found at urc.org.uk/holiday-club. It is helpful to have a short and punchy list of about five golden rules, framed positively ('we will' rather than 'we won't'), and which includes visual cues as well as words. This can be put up in each room and referred to whenever necessary.

Additional needs and inclusivity: All we do in our churches and fellowship should be as inclusive as we can possibly make it. Nobody should be excluded because of their background, ethnicity, physical or learning needs, gender, or for any other reason. Consider what adjustments may need to be made to enable all children to take part. You may find it helpful to watch the video on strategies to support additional needs that was prepared for leaders of our non-uniformed organisation, Pilots. You will find it at youtu.be/usZWfOfEhm8.

Timetable: Ensure that everyone is familiar with the timetable for the sessions. It is a good idea to establish a routine for your sessions, and stick with it as far as possible. It is also helpful to have a large-scale visual timetable for the session up where everyone can see it, maybe with smaller versions in any other rooms you use.

Debrief and review: Although you will be tired after an energetic session and want to clear up and go home as quickly as possible, it is good practice and helpful to have a daily debrief of how everything went, consider whether anything needs adapting for the next day, and capture positives and negatives for an overall evaluation of the holiday club. You might also like to include the children and their families in your evaluation.

Feedback: The writers of this resource would greatly appreciate any feedback on how your holiday club went, which parts of this document were useful to you, and whether there was anything additional that you needed. Please email children.youth@urc.org.uk. We would also love to see any photographs which you have the appropriate permissions to share with us.

