



# Faith Adventures for Children Together



*Committed to URC Children Together:  
enabling everyone to grow more like Jesus  
together in the home, church and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link:  
<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

## Psalm 9: 1-2, 7-11 – Celebrating Safe Spaces in God

Theme: We can celebrate that God protects us as a safe space

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### Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

#### Psalms

The book of Psalms is a collection of pieces written by different people from around 1500 and 500 BC. Psalms are poems that were meant to be put to music; they were often used in festivals or celebrations. David (David, the shepherd boy who God chose to be king) wrote over half the Psalms including this one. The Psalm is celebrating God as David's safe place. It's not a loud song with trumpets and drums; It is simply David quietly reflecting, celebrating and giving thanks to God for being his safe place.

The word Sanctuary originally meant Sacred place; but in the medieval age the term came to be attached to churches for those who were seeking somewhere to be safe from harm; they would seek sanctuary in a church. Those who were accused of crimes and being chased could claim sanctuary in a church (and the church grounds) which meant no one could touch them for 40 days, not even the King. They would be cared for, innocent or guilty, there was no judgement in sanctuary. People at their most vulnerable time found safety and care.

This session will use David's Psalm to reflect and wonder together about the sanctuary we find in God. Who do we turn to? Where do we feel safe?

Be aware of those in your group who may not always feel safe, those in looked after care or fleeing war or perhaps in unsafe situations in life.



# Together

How do I help my group to come together and get started with the theme?

## Gathering prayer

### Jesus, our friend

(use alternate index fingers to point and tap the middle of opposite palms)

### Be with us today

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move up and down twice)

### As we share together,

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move one forward and one back and alternate twice)

### Pray together,

(hands together, palm against palm, as though praying)

### Play together,

(hands to each side, palms up, make two small circles outwards)

### And get to know you better,

(point up with one hand)

### As children together in your family

(one hand out, palm down in front of you, move it sideways and up in three 'steps' as though to indicate children of three different heights)

### AMEN

(Two thumbs up, and bring fists slowly together to meet in front of you)

OR

**Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.**

**Help us to grow closer to you in all we do.**

**Help us to speak and to listen, to learn and to grow together,**

**Adventuring together with you wherever we may go.**

**Amen**

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## In-person Game

You can play any game which involves individuals finding somewhere that is 'safe' or 'barley'. For example, you could play Musical Chairs. If you have the space, you could play "Suits You":

You will need a pack of playing cards. Designate 4 areas of your space as a 'suit' (clubs, hearts, spades or diamonds), Turn over a card in your deck and the children must run to the space that corresponds to that suit.

If you want to develop the game further, once the children are used to where the spaces are, ask them to choose to stand in a space BEFORE turning over the card. If they are NOT standing in the space for the card suit, they get one point. The game is over when 10 points have been achieved (often by more than one child).

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## Online game

This game is just for fun but explores the idea of feeling the odd one out.

The group need to agree on 4 or 5 items that they all have, such as different types of fruit or 5 toys or 5 colours.

Each person holds the 5 agreed items on their lap or by the side of them, where they cannot be seen.

One person gives a countdown of 3,2,1 now and everyone holds up one piece of fruit.

The game is to try to see if you can get matches. You can look for a line of the same fruit in any direction on the screen or go for the group matching.

All reset and go again.

Keep the game fast paced and you might want to disable the chat function to prevent 'cheating' or conferring.

I wonder how it felt to be the odd one out? How did it affect the group reaching their goal?



## Experience

For this story we recommend using the New International Readers Version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+9%3A1-2%2CPsalm+9%3A7-10&version=NIRV>

### Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Pictures and words from children about being safe and happy by C&K

<https://youtu.be/a6t1XPefwIw>

Puppets (God is our refuge) by Bible Buddies [https://youtu.be/TO9uMS\\_6QQM](https://youtu.be/TO9uMS_6QQM)

### Songs to support the story

Under fives: Toddler Worship (Big and Strong) by Saddleback Kids with Izzi Ray

<https://youtu.be/6FOLI7AGRoI>

Five to elevens: **My Lighthouse** by Rend Collective <https://youtu.be/reAIJKv7ptU>

## Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

### Explore together the theme of safe spaces

Invite the group to think of places or people that help to keep them safe. Write the answers onto a big sheet of paper so that everyone can see that their contribution has been noted. The list can include places (e.g. nursery, school, home) or people (e.g. police officer, doctor, nurses, fire fighter).

Ask "I wonder how these places/people keep us safe?"

Some of these keep us safe all the time, some (e.g. fire fighters) keep us safe when we call them. Ask the group "I wonder if God always keeps us safe or only when we call God?"

Is there anyone in your wider congregation who has a job that keeps people safe, or works somewhere that keeps people safe? Could you invite them in to talk with your group and share what they do?

Information for leaders: Psalm 9 and 10 are acrostic poems – a poem, word puzzle, or other composition in which certain letters in each line form a word or words. In Psalms 9 and 10, the first letters of alternate verses starting with consecutive letters of the Jewish alphabet. An English translation might be:

*All my heart praises you Lord; I will tell others of the wonderful things you have done.*

*Because you judge everybody with fairness;*

*Clearly you offer a place of safety to those who have been treated badly*

Invite the children to write their own acrostic poem. They could spell out their own name – and use adjectives to describe them, or find words for each letter of the alphabet that describe God and how God keeps them safe.



## Modern parables

Jesus used stories to help people understand the things of God, even though they weren't necessarily overtly Christian stories. Lots of children's books can be used in a similar way as a conversation starter on the week's theme. Examples are shared here but you may think of others too.

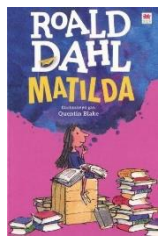
### *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*

Michael Rosen Helen Oxenbury



'We're going on a bear hunt' by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenby

<https://youtu.be/FEL7rJ4Vvjc>



### Matilda by Roald Dahl

Although there won't be enough time to share the whole book together, older children who have read it (or seen the film) could share important information with the group. Who are the characters? Where is the story set? What happens? How are problems solved?

In the story, Miss Honey helps Matilda to feel safe and learn how to celebrate the skills and abilities that she has. Which other people and places help her to feel safe in the story?

## Talking together: How might we talk about the story together?

- David is singing God's praises, remembering the times when God has been his safe place. What are the things that make you sing God's praises?
- The passage talks about God judging us fairly. I wonder what God thinks of me?

## Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder what celebration looks like? Can you celebrate on your own? What does reflective celebration look like?
- I wonder where you have seen things being done fairly,? tTake some time to celebrate them.

## What's in the box (for under fives)

Use the special box or bag and sing "wWhat's in the box/bag? What's in the box/bag? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box/bag" (to the tune of The Farmer's in the Dell). You could tap the top of the box/bag twice after the word 'box/bag'. Pull out the things one by one and then let the children play with them, talking about the theme or the story in simple terms.

This week's box/bag could include:

- Some figures or images of a firefighter, nurse, doctor, police officer. (as we celebrate the people who help us and keep us safe talk about who also keeps us safe that we want to celebrate)
- A flag or some ribbon (when we celebrate people who help us, let us cheer and clap for them)
- A heart (this reminds us of the big heart of the people who keep us safe, and the big heart of God where we are kept safe)
- A teddy (sometime we need something which reminds us of our safe place, our much loved teddy helps us to feel safe, lets cheer and celebrate our teddies.)
- A set of play people to act out the story or random shapes/bits you can move around to make pictures from the story as you tell it (eg stones, felt, twigs etc)



# Express

Praying together: how can you involve the children actively in prayer?

## Safe Spaces to be with God

How many words can you come up with that describe safe spaces? See how many different ones you can suggest. (If you are confident and have access to wifi, you could even use the mentimeter website to create a word cloud (<https://www.mentimeter.com/features/word-cloud>)). Remember that God is our safe space, just as these things are.

A fort or a castle or a den are typical safe spaces so why not build a blanket fort together using tables and chairs, maybe church kneelers, and some blankets and cushions. Squeeze inside together and thank God for being a safe space when things are tough. Maybe the children could come up with a sentence you could all shout out together to thank God for keeping close to us and watching over us and protecting us, no matter what.

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## Spoken prayer

Saviour God

Always with us

Find us when we are scared

End our fear

Stay with us

Protect us from harm

Always be near us

Cherish us as we worship you

Every day

Amen

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## Responding together

Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond. [See here for more suggestions.](#)

With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage them to use what they've got to hand in their response.

However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.

## Psalm 9 collage

**You will need:**

Some large pieces of paper

Some materials to collage with (fabric, various textures of paper or card, foil, feathers)

Glue, scissors

Colouring pens and pencils

Something to play some music on



### **What do you do:**

Ask your group to create a collage picture which reflects the ideas you have been exploring in Psalm 9. This could be a reflection of a safe place or person they want to celebrate (a lunchtime supervisor, a den where they feel safe), or it could be an abstract image which reflects how they want to praise God for keeping us safe. This should be a reflective activity as a response to the Psalm and so, to encourage that sense of reflection and protection, we suggest you play some quite music. Here is a suggestion which might help your children reflect and explore the topic,

"I Will Never Leave You" by Scripture Lullabies from the album "Hidden In My Heart Volume 1".

<https://youtu.be/JWxbYzAUYP>

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## **Protect an egg**

Think about the protection that God gives us – that we may be in tricky situations but God will help us through them, and that's a reason to celebrate.

You will need:

- An egg for each group
- A variety of junk/recycling materials and sellotape
- A washing up bowl or similar to drop the egg into, unless you want a mess to clean up later!

Get into small groups and challenge each group to create something that will protect an egg if it is dropped from a height. They can use whatever they choose to protect the egg but have a time limit in which to complete making their protective layer. Then hold each egg (in its protective container) as high as possible and drop it into the bowl below. Celebrate every egg that remains intact.

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## **Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way**

What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- Consider who can you help feel safe or included this week? Perhaps someone in the playground who is alone, or offering to pair or be in a team with someone who gets left out.
  - Make a point of saying thank you to those who make you feel safe or who keep you safe this week. I wonder how you will thank them?
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We hope you enjoyed exploring Psalm 9 with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing [lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk](mailto:lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk)

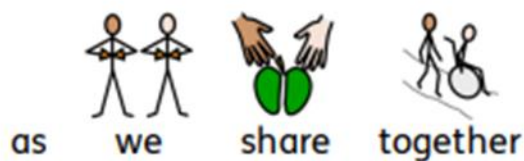
Why not have a look at next week's resource on the letter to the Philippians -rejoice always.



Jesus our friend,



be with us today



as we share together



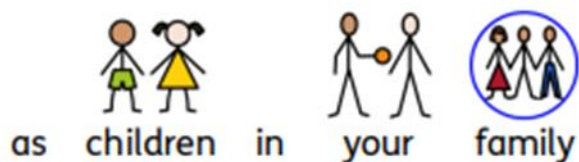
pray together



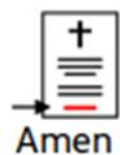
play together



and get to know you better



as children in your family



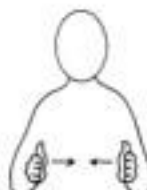
Amen



Right middle finger touches centre of other palm, repeat with left hand



Alternate hands back and forth

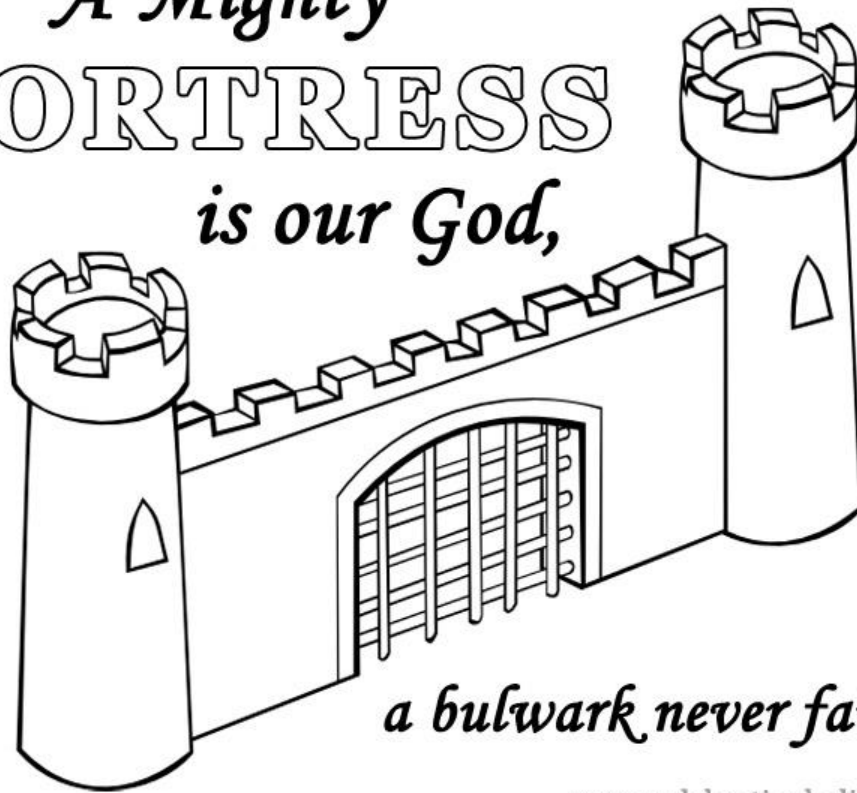






*A Mighty*  
**FORTRESS**

*is our God,*



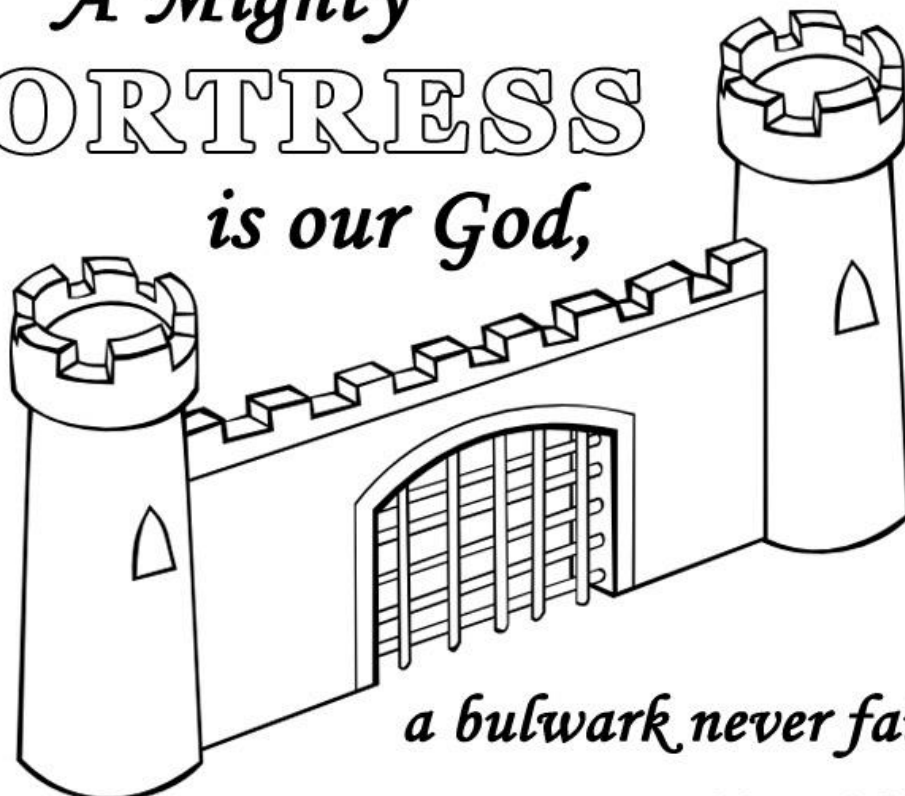
*a bulwark never failing!*

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*A Mighty*  
**FORTRESS**

*is our God,*



*a bulwark never failing!*

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