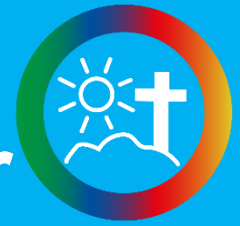




# Faith Adventures for Children Together



*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>

## Revelation 21:1-4 and 22:1-2

Theme: God's promise: our hope and light in the darkness

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

#### Revelation 21:1-4 and 22:1-2

It is believed that the apostle John wrote this book around 95 years after Jesus was on the earth. John would be among the last surviving disciples and is writing whilst in prison in Patmos. Revelation is the only book in the Bible that is completely a book of prophecy. It speaks to the reader about the times just before Jesus comes back. It is full of symbols and signs to look for that God gave to John in visions (God dreams). It can be difficult to understand the content but it tells us of what could happen in the years before Jesus' return and how he will invite us to join him in the new heaven and the new earth.

For this session, this passage offers a glimpse/vision of what the world could be if it were how God intended it to be. John had a dream of a perfect place, a dream given by God – our dreams and hopes can give us a glimpse of how God's world could be. This is a passage full of hope at a time when we could be thinking how badly we have damaged creation and sometimes how helpless that can make us feel about the future. The passage helps us to dream for what we should be aspiring to, the hope we have for the future; and encourages us to consider: What is our hope, what is our dream for our world?

This session is released around the time of Hallowe'en and could lend itself nicely to celebrate God's messages of hope in our darkness. Whilst we haven't offered it as a Hallowe'en alternative



resource, it does enable wondering around turning away from all the dark things, exploring God's promise of a new earth and a reminder that hope pushes the darkness and fear away.

## 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

This relay race is about making things like new. You will need a number of assorted clean pairs of socks of various colours and sizes. A leader should have one of each pair in a pillowcase, while the other sock from each pair should be placed in a pile at the far end of the hall. Sort the children into teams, lined up ready for a relay race, with the pile of socks in the middle of the room and the leader at the far end of the room. Each team needs a basket or box of pegs.

On the signal, the first runner from each team runs to the leader and pulls a sock out of the pillowcase. They then have to run to the pile of odd socks and find the matching pair, then run to their team, grab a peg and peg the socks together. The next player in each team then



runs to the leader with the paired socks, places them tidily on the floor or a table (or if you're able to put up a washing line or clothes airer, hangs them up) and then takes a fresh odd sock out of the pillowcase. The winning team is the first where every player has delivered a pegged pair of socks to the leader.

*This game could just as easily be played outdoors.*

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### Online game

Have a game of anagrams where words on a theme are muddled up (especially if you can make new words out of them) and participants race to un-muddle them. Or use the whiteboard app for one person to draw a random squiggle. The tasks for one of the other participants is to turn that squiggle into something by adding to the drawing. This is also a good pen and paper game.

## Experience

For this story we recommend using the Easy-to-Read version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+21%3A1-4%2C+22%3A1-2+&version=ERV>

### Where can I find the story online?

Under fives: Re-Creation story by Crossroads Kids <https://youtu.be/-eZxdYQCoUE>

Over fives: A forever promise –new heaven and new earth <https://youtu.be/3I3JK8fBNWQ>

### Songs to support the story

Under fives: Creator God Nick and Becky Drake <https://youtu.be/ywkquREnrq0>

Over fives: Hope – All Stars Kids Club [https://youtu.be/r\\_t5xitQjlc](https://youtu.be/r_t5xitQjlc)

## Explore

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

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#### Let's Recreate/re:vision the world

This section offers us the opportunity to get creative together on a group project whilst we chat and discuss themes from today's passage.

You could offer some 'show and tell' as an introduction – invite visitors from the community or the congregation to come and show the different stages of mending something. It could be a local book repairer or a volunteer from the local repair shop, or someone who grew up with the idea of make do and mend and now excels in it. Keep it short and engaging and encourage the children to see how we can fix things and even make them better than they were before.



Then it is time for us all to get creative. You will need one large picture of creation. Hand drawn is best; keep it simple with sea, sky, trees, birds, and so on. Try to make it large enough to fill a central table for our group to work on it together. Crumple it up and then open it our again, leaving the creases in, place your tea cup on it a few times to leave tea circles, perhaps make a few rips or holes in the picture, get it a little wet. Basically, you are spoiling the picture.

Gather your group around the picture and ask what they think of this picture of creation, how do they feel looking at it? It is spoiled, but it can be restored and that it our task today, as a whole group, working together.

On a separate table have some quality craft and repairing materials, tape, crayons, spare paper, collage materials, glue, tissue paper, crepe paper and so on.

Encourage the group to work together to restore and bring the picture back to life. They can repair tears and holes, restore the colour and detail, and add embellishments. This will take the majority of your session.

As you create together, use the wondering questions in the session materials and those below to have a conversation about the passage and themes of the text.

Further wondering:

In what ways can we 'fix' what is broken in our world?

You might want to explore gender stereotypes of who fixes what. Who fixes things in your house? Do men fix cars and women fix clothes?

You could read the passage a few times Lectio Divina style. Explain that you are going to read the passage to them three times and, after each time, ask the group what stood out to them. You could read a different version each time.

Here is a link to a song based on the passage written and performed by our own Leo Roberts. You could play it as a reflection while we create.

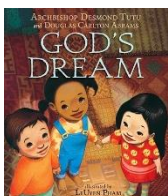
[https://bit.ly/Leo\\_dreams\\_visions](https://bit.ly/Leo_dreams_visions)

### Meditation

This beautiful meditation was created by Nicola Grieves to support this theme. Watch and wonder together: [https://youtu.be/HjGw\\_O2h5bE](https://youtu.be/HjGw_O2h5bE)

### 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.



'God's Dream' by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Adams | <https://youtu.be/TnDDvOkdHgM>



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

- What does hope look like?
- I wonder why God might have wanted a new heaven and a new earth?
- What do you think it means if God makes a home among us? What might that be like?

## Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder what your hopes and dreams are for creation?
- I wonder what fruit might be growing on the trees in John's dream?
- I wonder, if you were God, what would you fix first?

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

Use the special box or bag and sing "What'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 twice after the word 'box'. 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 could include:

- A kaleidoscope or telescope – where can we find glimpses of God in our world?
- Leaves – the leaves of the trees remind us of the seasons and the beautiful world God has created. How do we care for it?
- Anchor – God has made us a promise. God will never let us go, just like an anchor holds a ship or a boat and stops it floating away
- House – the earth is God's home and our home; we should look after it
- Heart – God loves us and cares for us
- Cloud shape – God's dreams are big dreams
- Candle – the candlelight pushes the darkness away; God does the same
- 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?

### Candle prayers

God's promise of a new heaven and a new earth is our hope and brings light into the darkness.

Light a single candle. This candle is a reminder of the hope that we have in God's promise.

Enjoy the light, look at the candle, watch as it flickers and lights up the room.

Sit quietly as you look at the flame and talk to God about your hopes. Ask God to help you share the message of hope.

When you have finished your prayer time, blow the candle out and watch as the smoke continues to fill the room, reminding us that even when we can't see the light, God is always with us.





## Spoken prayer

God who lives with us,

You created things so small that we can't see them.

Your dreams are so big that we can't imagine them.

We have dreams, too. We dream of a world in which everyone has what they need, where nobody suffers or is in pain.

We know that this is one of your dreams, too.

We hope that you will help us to make this dream come true.

Amen

## 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. <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>.

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.

## Fruit Kebabs



You will need – Selection of different fruits, knife, kebab skewers, bowls

- Prepare the fruits by cutting them into small pieces of around 2-3cm thickness and placing into bowls.
- Give each participant a kebab stick and thread a selection of different fruits onto the stick.

Safety – Take care when using sharp objects including knives and kebab sticks and supervise children during this activity. Remember to be aware of any food allergies within your group.

If you have small children in your group, remember to cut grapes in half lengthways before giving them to the children to use as otherwise they can be a choke hazard. Similarly ensure apples and pears are peeled and soft to eat.

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## Cleaning Coins

You will need: Copper coins (1p or 2p), cups, paper towels, selection of cleaning substances (see suggestions below)

Suggested cleaning substances (Remember to be aware of any allergies in your group.)

- Water
- Lemon Juice
- Cola



- Washing up liquid
- Ketchup
- Vinegar
- Milk

In this activity participants will investigate which substances will be best at cleaning a copper coin. Ask participants to discuss which substances they think will be best at cleaning the coins and making them shine.

- Place a coin into a cup and cover with a small amount of the selected cleaning substance. Make sure that the coin is coated in the solution.
- Let the coins soak in the solutions for a few minutes. (You could run a different activity while you wait for the coins to soak)
- Remove the coins and wipe of excess solution using a paper towel.
- Check the coins and compare them. Which is the cleanest? Which are still dirty? Compare the substances and rank them based on how well they cleaned the coins.
- Discuss which substances were the best cleaners? Were you surprised by any of the results?

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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:

- God's promise is one of hope. The end of October is when many people celebrate Hallowe'en. The name means "All Saints Eve" because it is the night before Christians celebrate All Saints Day. Go for a walk around your neighbourhood and see how many jack'o'lanterns/pumpkins you can see carved with a symbol of hope instead of a scary image. Remember the light inside all the pumpkins was put there to drive the darkness away.
- As we think about making things new and how they should be, why not take this chance to make things better for someone in your family by offering to clean, mend or upcycle something. You could maybe offer to do the dishes or vacuum the carpet, clear some weeds out of the garden, sew on a button, repair a toy. One tiny step towards a better world!

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We hope you enjoyed exploring the story from **Revelation** 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 month's resource on Friendship?

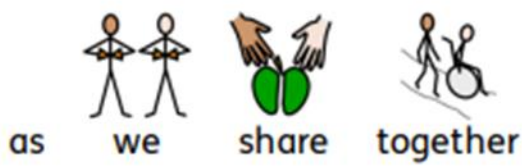




Jesus our friend,



be with us today



as we share together



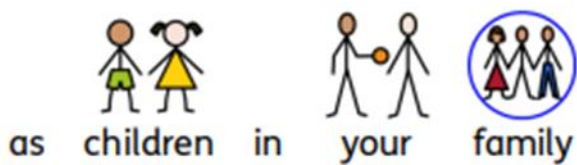
pray together



play together



and get to know you better



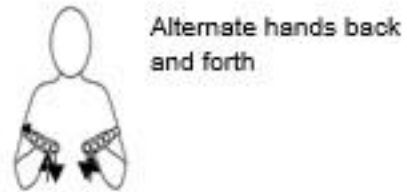
as children in your family



Amen



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



Alternate hands back and forth

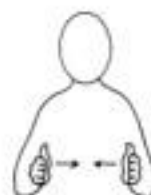






Illustration by flamecreativekids.blogspot.com

