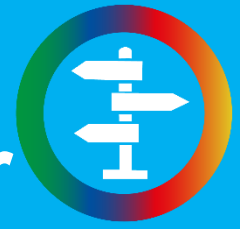




Faith Adventures for Children Together



*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>

1 Kings 10: 1-13 The Queen of Sheba

Theme: A journey of curiosity – it's good to ask questions about faith

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

1 Kings

Introduction

This month we are looking at the theme 'Journeys'. Journeys can be physical (going somewhere) or spiritual (personal growth).

This first week we look at the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon. Sheba (or Saba) was an ancient kingdom in southwestern Arabia (modern day Yemen). The Queen visited Solomon because she had heard that he was wise and also that he was a man of faith, and she wanted to learn more about him.

Nowadays, when we talk about people's faith we often use it to mean what religion (if any) they are. But the Queen of Sheba would have known that King Solomon was Jewish – so perhaps she wanted to find out more about him being a faithful person, more about his relationship with God.

We talk about 'faith journeys': from believing in God to having a personal relationship with God – and all the steps and stumbles along the way. This is a time in which we can share our own faith stories with the children and we can be honest and admit that we don't have all the answers – but we can keep looking for them as our journey goes on.



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

In-person game

Have a pile of reference books – children's encyclopedia, Bible, book of trees/birds/flowers/animals, atlas etc. You can choose whether or not you allow access to mobile phones.

Each team is given a question sheet. Each team can have one book at a time – to get another, they need to replace the one they have. The challenge is to be the first team to find answers to all the questions, or to get the most correct answers.

Online game

How wise are you? Warn the participants in advance that they need to bring to the session two fascinating facts that they didn't know but have found out, and a made up fact that isn't true. In turn, each participant reads out their three facts and the others try to guess which one's not true. At the end of the game, see how many of the true facts the group can remember between them.



Experience

For this story we recommend using the New International Readers Version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+10%3A1-13&version=NIRV>

Where can I find the story online?

Under fives story: VC kids - <https://youtu.be/HUZnpwba3ts>

Over fives: Sharefaithkids <https://youtu.be/8i2UdxgzdJ0> Kidstime-storytime <https://youtu.be/f-TlmtkRKs4>

Songs to support the story

Under fives: Who put the colours in the rainbow <https://youtu.be/l9GsKFlaRo0>

Five to elevens: Curiosity by H Beech and W Eldred <https://youtu.be/rU3wiO7pMHM>

Explore

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

Starter activity: Curiosity box

This activity encourages the children to wonder together, to be curious and ask questions. This was what the Queen of Sheba had in abundance. She had heard of King Solomon's wealth and faith and wanted to go and see for herself and ask questions. In a world where we need to have instant and correct answers, let's encourage the children to wonder again. Remember to keep the conversation flowing and accepting of everyone's ideas.

Find a box: it can be an interesting, old looking box or simply a cardboard box, whatever you have to hand.

Place in the box one or more items that you see as a curiosity. It might be something you have picked up at a car boot or charity shop, or something you have had in your family for years.

Create a curious atmosphere for the group.

Look what I have found in the attic. I wonder what might be inside?

Let's open the box and have a look together.

Encourage the group to explore the artefacts: What could they be? Who did they belong to? What were they used for? How old do we think they are? Where did it come from? How did it get here? What questions do you have about the item?

If you cannot find a suitable artefact, then you could do this activity using a photo of something but be aware that the children might find the wondering more difficult.

A new story to create together

Now we have opened our imaginations, we are ready to be creative together. This activity is based on the story in the passage and encourages the group to write their own story.

As a group or in pairs, use the template below to write your own story about someone who goes on an adventure to see something amazing and find out more. Simply replace the words in red with your own ideas, remember to be as creative and fun as possible. Encourage the group to explore all ideas before writing their final answer each time.



Once upon a time there was a **WHO**

They had heard about a **WHAT/WHO** and their amazing **WHAT** and wanted to see for themselves because **WHY**

The journey would be long and **WHAT**, as the **WHO(from earlier)** lived in **WHERE**

This is the route they would need to get there..... **ADD ROUTE DETAILS HERE. Where do they go? What's the ground like?**

There would be many challenges and risks along the way such as **WHAT**

So, without further delay, they packed their **WHAT** and made a start.

They took **WHO and WHAT** with them.

It was a long adventurous journey indeed but after **HOW LONG**, they arrived.

Up ahead they could see **WHAT**, their final destination.

The **WHO(from earlier)** was pleased to see them and made them welcome by **HOW**.

They enjoyed many hours together, they had many questions for the **WHO (from earlier)** such as **ADD QUESTIONS HERE**

The time came to leave and go back home, they were sad to leave but went having learnt something new which was **WHAT**

And they took with them gifts from the **WHO (From earlier)** of **WHAT**

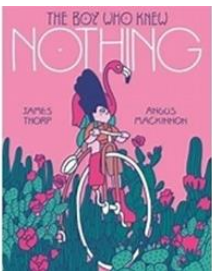
As they journeyed home, one question remained in their mind and heart which was **ADD FINAL WONDERING QUESTION HERE**

This story is called **WHAT**, The final stage is to give your story an exciting title.

If your group are struggling to build their story, you could use the story cubes made in the session to enable creative thinking.

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.



'The boy who knew nothing' by James Thorp and Angus Mackinnon
<https://youtu.be/6X0kvvRVds0>



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

- What questions do you think the Queen of Sheba wanted to ask? Do you think they were about his wisdom or his faith?
- How did this visit change the queen's opinion of Solomon and of God?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder who we might choose to talk to about their faith, their relationship with God, and what might we want to ask them?
- I wonder where you've always wanted to go or who you've always wanted to meet?

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 magnifying glass (get curious by using a magnifying glass to look at things carefully, the queen was curious about things she had heard about Solomon)
- A bottle of spices or a selection of different spices (look at the colour, smell it and maybe taste it, thinking about all the exotic things the queen brought to Solomon)
- Some purple velvet material or satin/silk (The queen was very rich. Feel how luxurious this fabric is - maybe the queen wore fabric like this?)
- A map (the queen travelled a long way to find out more about Solomon)
- A big question mark (The queen wanted to ask lots of questions, I wonder what you are curious about)
- 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 (e.g. stones, felt, twigs etc)



Express

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

Spice cupboard prayers

You will need:

A variety of different spices in their labelled containers and a world map or globe. A set of cards with the name of a spice on the front and the country of origin on the back. (There is a list of spices and their origins below)

Let the children choose a spice and tip a little out so that the children can smell it. One child can pick up the relevant card and read out where that spice comes from. Does anyone know anything about that country? Can you find it on the map? Pray for the people of that country (if it is a country where children know about some particular need there, you might make the prayer more specific e.g. 'We pray for the people of Turkey, especially those who were affected by the earthquake earlier this year'.)

Pray together "Thank you God for your wonderful world. Help us always to be curious about where our food comes from and grateful for those who produce it. Amen".

Cinnamon is from Sri Lanka

Nutmeg is from the Banda Islands in Indonesia

Saffron comes from Iran or Greece

Tumeric comes from India

Paprika comes from Mexico

Ginger comes from China or Nepal (amongst other places)

Cloves come from Indonesia

Oregano comes from Italy and Turkey (amongst other places)

Wasabi comes from Japan, Russia and South Korea

Cumin comes from India, China and Mexico

Allspice comes from the West Indies or Central America

Spoken prayer

Dear God

What an amazing world you have made, full of wonder.

There are so many questions we could ask you.

(Encourage the children to suggest some questions they might like to ask God)

Thank you that you give us curious minds, that we always want to know more.

Help us always to be curious about you.

Always looking to learn more and grow in wisdom with you.

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. See here for more ideas: <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.

Story Cubes (or Story Dice)

A story cube is a set of cubes (at least 3), on each face of which is a different symbol. The cubes are thrown and you make up a story which includes each of the elements that are facing up.

You can buy story cubes (there's even an app!) but you can also make your own. Use this template to make a cube: <https://www.firstpalette.com/printable/cube.html>

Invite the children to draw a symbol, or write a word, on each face. Pick three or more cubes and throw them like dice. If you have enough children in your group, divide them into smaller groups and each group will come up with a story that includes the three elements – how different are the stories? The more cubes you throw, the longer, and more involved and creative, the stories will have to be!

Masala Chai

You could try making this delicious drink that uses spices that the Queen of Sheba may have brought for King Solomon. Perhaps they shared a glass of this sweet, spicy tea when they met!

Depending on the age of your group, you may prefer to have adult helpers slicing the ginger and heating and straining the tea.



Ingredients

- 330ml Water
- 1 Tea bag
- 4 Slices of fresh ginger
- ½ Teaspoon Black peppercorns
- 4 Cardamon pods
- 2 Cloves
- 13g Sugar
- 100ml Milk or Dairy-free alternative

Method

- Measure, cut and count the spices. Add to a saucepan with the tea bag and water.
- Bring to the boil for 10 minutes.
- Add your choice of milk and sugar, then boil for another 10-20 minutes.
- Carefully strain the Masala Chai into a cup or glass.



Why not try?

If you have time, you could split your group into two teams and take it in turns to guess the names of the spices on the plate. For an extra challenge, team members could be blindfolded so they need to guess using their other senses!

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:

- Choose a person that you know has a relationship with God (a faith) and ask them some questions to find out more about how their faith grew and what difference it makes to them.
 - Think of a place in the world that you're curious about – maybe someone special lives there who you'd like to meet or the way of life is very different to yours or there's a building or something in nature there that captures your imagination. Why not plan a journey there – how would you get there, what would you take with you and what questions might you ask when you get there? Who knows, one day in the future you might even get to go there!
-

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **Psalm 121 A Traveller's Prayer**



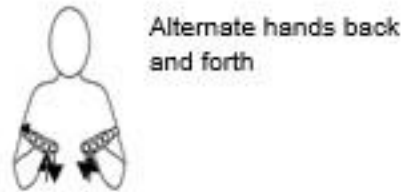
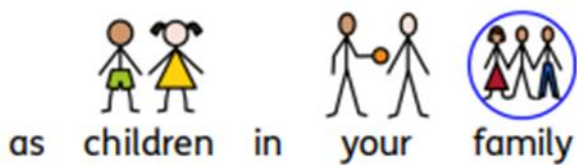
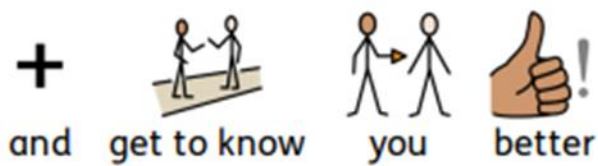
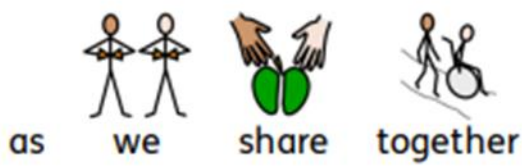




Illustration: Public Domain





Let's get curious together: find the answers

What is the capital city of Sri Lanka?	Columbo
What is the biggest seawater fish?	Whale Shark
What colour is the flower on a bottlebrush bush?	Red
What sport has the words crease, duck and googly?	Cricket
If you are lentiginous, what do you have lots of?	Freckles
What is the last book in the Old Testament?	Malachi
What is the name of the vacuum-cleaner in In The Night Garden?	Ninky Nonk
What is the tallest building in the world?	Burj Khalifa in Dubai
What is the smallest British bird?	Goldcrest
Who was the first ever Disney princess?	Snow White
What kind of animal is a dingo?	Wild dog
What is the name of the tree that produces conkers?	Horse Chestnut
How many teeth should an adult have, including their wisdom teeth?	32
What was the ugly duckling really?	Swan
What is the name of Peppa Pig's brother?	George



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