Faith Adventures Youth Resource

Embedded in Faith Adventures: Children Together, this youth resource is intergenerational in nature and designed to foster God-connection in church, home 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/Faith-Adventures-How-To-FAYR.pdf

Proverbs 27:1

Theme: Live for today with the anticipation of God's surprises

Contents:

Introduction 1
Together 2
Experience 2
Explore 3
Express 5
Handouts 8

Introduction: What would be helpful to know before we begin?

This is the first in a series under the theme of surprises. We start in Proverbs, which is a book of wisdom for daily life written primarily by wise Solomon. It is a book that tells no stories but gives guiding words for a better life. It has two main threads: living a humble life and learning from those who have gone before us.

The words we find in Proverbs 27:1 reminds us that it's good to have a plan for the future but live in a way that anticipates and expects God to surprise us. It's a chance to think how exciting tomorrow might be with God in charge.

For some people, especially those who are neurodivergent, the concept of surprise can be a challenging one and provoke anxiety. Surprise does not always mean total uncertainty – we can gain confidence in dealing with surprises by thinking of it in terms of "plan A" and "plan B" – that when things change unexpectedly, we can form a new plan, and that God knows the plans made for us and they are not plans designed to make us anxious because God has promised to be trustworthy. Think about positive surprises experienced in the past where people may have been anxious for a time, but the outcome was good. What strategies could be used to cope with the unexpected? Maybe it would be good to share experiences and strategies.

Together

Let's start our time with God and each other well

If used in a mixed-age group, then young people can support younger ones in using the gathering prayer in Faith Adventures: Children Together. If used in a youth group, you could use this opening prayer or encourage young people to open the session with a prayer of their own.

All mighty God,

Be with us as we learn more about you through stories and people in the Bible.

Help us to walk in your way and follow your path.

Be with us as we make decisions that affect our lives, and the lives of those around us.

Amen

Games

See this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together for suitable games for this theme, try the game below, or choose one of your own.

Red light, green light

Players stand in a line side by side.

One player is selected to be the "controller" and stands at the opposite end of the playing area.

The aim of the game is for players to move forward to the opposite end to tag the controller. The controller calls out the instructions below to control the game.

"Green light" – The controller turns away from players and covers their eyes with hands. Players can move forward towards the controller.

"Red light" – The controller turns towards players and uncovers their eyes. Players must immediately freeze and hold their pose. The controller calls out any players that they see moving and they are sent back to the starting line.

Play continues until one player reaches the end and tags the controller.
This player becomes the new controller, and the game is repeated.

Experience

Research different versions of this reading on **https://www.biblegateway.com/**
Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-read, The Message, NIRV

Alternatively use the Contemporary English version:
https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=proverbs+27%3A1&version=CEV

There are video versions of the reading and some suggested songs on the Children Together resource that may be suitable for young people too.

Watch:

- God of Surprises, Show Your Face by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati
  https://youtu.be/V9eB8shQ76Q?si=srk-uJVE-Nj2s2n6

What do you think about what Sister Doris Gottemoeller said in the video? Was it God that affected the decision? Have you experienced a similar situation?

- Kung Fu Panda clip by Dreamworks
  https://youtu.be/BkVsgXw7Iyk?si=H2jp7Zb3YPCKxc9r

The tortoise in the Kung Fu Panda film is considered wise, just like Solomon who wrote a lot of the Proverbs. What do you think the tortoise means? What does it mean for our everyday lives?

Explore

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

A new way to explore the theme

You may wish to use the explore section from this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together to guide your exploration of the theme this week as some of this is suitable for all ages:

The Remembered Bible
As a group, think about what stories in the Bible include examples of God surprising people. You might want to start with the Christmas and Easter stories and expand from there. Capture the answers on a large piece of paper and see whether, between you, you can sort them roughly into Biblical order. Discuss whether the surprises you come up with are good or bad surprises for the people involved and whether the outcome of the surprise changed over time, once people understood a little more about God's plan.

Begin to unpack whether God has surprised group members at all. Why might God surprise us?

Modern parables
This section includes references to TV programmes, films, books, TED talks, TikTok, etc aimed at this age group that will have been widely seen, or where a clip is available to use as a stimulus for discussion. You may also enjoy the picture book recommended for Faith Adventures: Children Together and explore the relevance of the story to the theme of the session in more depth – young people and adults are often well tuned in to the deeper meanings in materials aimed at younger people and the authors are often very aware of the adults reading the books to or with younger ones.

Here are some possible examples for this section:

Compilation YouTube of surprises
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GUlbK5CLwI

God is speaking by short Christian short film
https://youtu.be/qJARfWkQyH4?si=8qa0jY3NZDRMuFjG

Talking together: Going deeper

- Why does God surprise us? How does God surprise us? Are God's surprises always good?
- If God has plans for us, does this mean we cannot plan for the future or be proud of the things we achieve?
- Do you think God is ever surprised?

Conversation starters

- Do you plan ahead? What (if anything) are you anticipating in the future? Are there ways to cope well if plans change?
- How easy do you find it to trust God?

Express

How do we respond to what we've discussed and express our faith personally?

Praying together

Prayer Respond to the theme by writing or saying a short prayer. Alternatively use the creative prayer from Faith Adventures: Children Together for this session, or use the prayer activity below.
Alternatively light a candle and play some music while you listen and talk to God together.

Lectio Divina The purpose of this sort of prayer is to meditate on scripture using the 4 R's (Read, Reflect, Respond and Rest) in anticipation of God speaking to us.

Read:

"So always be ready. You don't know the day your Lord will come. Remember this: If the owner of the house knew what time a thief was coming, then the owner would be ready for him. The owner would watch and not let the thief enter his house. So you also must be ready. The Son of Man will come at a time you don't expect him. *(Matthew 24: 42 – 44 International Children's Bible)*

Don't brag about tomorrow! Each day brings its own surprises. *(Proverbs 27:1 Contemporary English version)*

Reflect:

Spend a minute thinking over the passages, what words stand out to you? What pictures form in your mind? What do you think God is saying?

Respond:

If God were standing in front of you saying these words, what would you like to say in response? Or do? Or draw?

Rest:

Take a minute to just slowly breath in and out.

Responding together

This is an opportunity for a social justice challenge, some research, craftivism, or a craft or STEM activity. You may have a specific activity chosen but free choice is also an option. Here are some suggestions for this week's theme. See Faith Adventures: Children Together for a craft and a STEM activity which may also be appropriate. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

Jumping paperclips

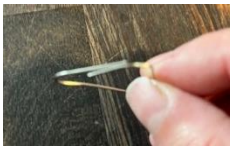
You will need: some paperclips

Optional: a paper receipt, or a rectangle of thin paper.

What you do:

Bend the paperclip to make it into a triangle.

Pull one end up so it is above the other end.



Finally twist the paperclip so that the end that is slightly above the other is now forced down below it (this is a bit tricky).

Hold it on a table then let go and see it jump. If it doesn't jump it has possibly been dropped the wrong way up or too slowly, so it has reverted to its former shape before hitting the table – just try again!

Alternatively:

Fold the paper into an "S" shape.

Clip the ends of the "S" together with your paperclips.

Pull the ends quickly to make the paperclips jump in the air.

Watermelon Pop

You will need: Watermelon, Rubber Bands, large bowl or pan, safety glasses.

The aim of this activity is to see how many rubber bands are needed to burst a watermelon.

This activity will be messy, so will be best in an outside area.

1 Put on your safety glasses. Take a rubber band and stretch around the centre of the watermelon.

2 Continue to add more elastic bands. Try to keep the bands as close together across the centre of the watermelon. (To speed up the process, you could get more people working together to stretch multiple bands together at the same time.)

3 Watch what happens to the melon as more bands are added. Keep going until the melon pops.

Watch this clip for video instructions - **https://vimeo.com/375487671**

Challenge

Discipleship doesn't stop when you walk out of the church door – it is a part of everyday life. Take a challenge with you and try to make it part of your week.

You may think of your own suggestion of what you as an individual or a group might do in the coming week in response to what you have explored today? If not here are some suggestions:

- Use one of the "conversation starter" questions or the question below to talk with someone of a different generation or from a different setting and share your questions, thoughts, insights together.
- Have a read of a few more proverbs, perhaps look at the first six verses of Proverbs 17. If you could add to the proverbs, what would yours say?

Thank you for exploring the Proverbs passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing **children.youth@urc.org.uk** or by sharing it on **https://bit.ly/FACT_FB**