



# 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>

## Acts 12: 5, 7-16

**Theme:** Don't be surprised when God answers your prayers!

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

This week we continue our theme of ‘surprises’ by looking at Peter’s escape from prison. Peter was imprisoned because the church was causing problems for the people in power. Herod had seen that ‘cracking down’ on the church had proved very popular with people so he arrested more of them – including Peter.

We hear, in verse 5, how the church was praying very hard for Peter. It might be a question you could ask your group: What do they think the church was praying for? That he would stay well? That he would be treated justly? That he would be released? Or that God would send an angel to help him escape? I’m sure Peter was very surprised when the angel appeared. Rhoda was certainly surprised when she heard Peter knocking at the door of Mary’s house – but they weren’t the only people surprised in this story. I wonder if the prison guards, Herod and the mob were also surprised to find that Peter had disappeared? I wonder what the prison guards said to Herod? And I wonder what Herod said to the people who were expecting to see Peter put on trial?

Often God answers our prayers in ways that we don’t expect – or realise. Sometimes it can seem that God hasn’t answered our prayers at all. That doesn’t mean that God hasn’t heard our prayer – it’s often that we just haven’t realised that God has answered in a way we hadn’t thought of, or hoped for.



## Together

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

If used in a mixed-age group, 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 young people could 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*

### In-person and online game

See this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together for suitable games for this theme.

## Experience

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

**Watch:** Scene from Hook [https://youtu.be/VTJw-\\_kbb50?si=INfTGRUQvH2eRgT7](https://youtu.be/VTJw-_kbb50?si=INfTGRUQvH2eRgT7)

### Questions for discussion

- In the film clip Peter says to his son, "First impressions are so important" – what are your thoughts on this statement?
- Are there special people or places that hold special memories for you? Especially ones from when you were younger?
- I wonder why Wendy describes Peter as a pirate?

### Songs to listen to:

Every time I pray – The Bowery <https://youtu.be/UAabO2T3VKE?si=0GjPxd-DHuZztkzw>

God who listens – Chris Tomlin <https://youtu.be/MbWOM4wc9bo?si=sLIKkip6ktaQNNNa>



# Explore

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

## A new way to explore the theme

### Explore the story

There are lots of surprises and action in the story of Peter's escape from prison. Peter was surprised when the angel appeared. Rhoda was surprised when she heard Peter knocking at the door. The prison guards will have been surprised or shocked and I wonder how Herod reacted when Peter escaped?

Here are some ways to explore the story to enable you to catch the action, the surprise and all the emotions of the events.

### Freeze frame action scenes

With everyone sitting in a circle, retell the story together. What are the key moments? Recreate the scene as a freeze frame and take a photograph. Think particularly about what emotions the different people may be showing, what thoughts might be going through their heads. How could you caption the photographs?

As an alternative, you could make drawings to reflect the freeze frame scenes, using speech bubbles to capture the thoughts and emotions of the people in the story. Could you create the story as a comic strip or graphic novel?

### 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.

There is a story told that speaks of the power of prayer and God's protection. It is of a man who, when, approached by men wanting to harm him, was protected from harm because of the prayers of others. Read the full surprising story here:

<https://thoughts-about-god.com/angels /army-of-angels>

### Talking together: Going deeper

- I wonder why God let Peter be imprisoned in the first place?
- What are the barriers/closed doors (hidden or unhidden) for us in society?
- Does God ever not answer prayer?
- I wonder if there's a situation you want to escape from? Would you talk to God about it?

### Conversation starters

- I wonder if you've had any surprises this week? I wonder if God was in that surprise?
- If God could surprise you in any way, what would you want it to be?
- If God knows everything about us, why do we pray?



# 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.

## Surprising sticky note prayers

You will need: paper, sticky notes, pens, a tub or bag

Each member of the group should write their name onto a piece of paper and place them in a tub or bag. Everyone should then draw out one name (if they draw their own name, they must swap it). Think about the person whose name you have drawn and then write a short prayer on a sticky note, either that they will be aware of God with them through the week or pray for a specific situation that they are facing.

If some support is needed with writing a prayer, use these prayer prompts:

How will you start? – e.g Dear God or God of surprises

Who? – Don't forget to include the name of the person you are praying for

What will you pray about? – Specific situation or more general

Which style? – Simple request, using Bible verses or more poetic

Once the prayer is written, you could try to give the other person their prayer in a surprising way, such as passing it on in a handshake, hiding it in a shoe or bag, sticking it to their clothing or attaching it to their cup and biscuit after the session. God will know the prayer already, but it can be encouraging for the person who was prayed for to have the sticky note as a reminder.

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## 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.

## Research

Stories of persecuted Christians - Encourage participants to spend some time exploring stories of young Christians facing persecution around the world. Research the work of Open Doors, a charity committed to serving persecuted Christians. There are several stories and videos available on the Open Doors Youth Website via this link

<https://youth.opendoorsuk.org/stories/>

## Saving Sam

This is a team challenge where you must work together to get a gummy worm into a gummy lifesaver, only using one paperclip per person.

### *You will need:*

Teams of no more than four  
 One paper clip per person  
 A gummy worm  
 A gummy ring (Haribo ring)  
 A small paper cup

### *What to do:*

Sam the worm was out sailing and capsized. This is Sam's lifejacket (place the Haribo ring on the table). This is Sam's boat (place the cup on top to cover the ring). This is Sam (place the worm on top of the cup).

Your task is, using the paperclips your team was given, put Sammy back into his lifejacket and back in the upturned boat. You can't touch Sam, the ring or the cup with your hands, and don't even THINK about piercing Sam.

## 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:

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- 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. **What surprises you most about God?**
  - Research something suggested by JPIT [Resources \(jpit.uk\)](http://jpit.uk) or Commitment For Life [cforl.co.uk](http://cforl.co.uk)
  - Keep a prayer journal – write/or draw in all your prayers, after a week or two look back at the prayers and look to see how God has answered them. Did any surprise you?
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Thank you for exploring the **Acts** passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing [children.youth@urc.org.uk](mailto:children.youth@urc.org.uk) or by sharing it on [https://bit.ly/FACT\\_FB](https://bit.ly/FACT_FB)