



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 young people, please use this link: <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Faith-Adventures-How-To-FAYR.pdf>

Psalm 119: 1-4, 9-10 - God's people

Theme: Which way are you going to go?

Contents:

- [Introduction](#) 1
- [Together](#) 2
- [Experience](#) 3
- [Explore](#) 3
- [Express](#) 4

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

Psalm 119 is a long Psalm – 176 verses in all. It comprises 22 stanzas – each one starting with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet from Alesh through to Tav – that explains its length! This week we are dealing with a very small part of the psalm, just seven verses.

The psalmist sets out what we must do to live a good or 'pure' life and be blessed by God. (different translations use different words). The bar is set very high! We must follow God's rules, do no wrong, obey God's instructions and live according to God's word.

That is probably an impossible ideal – are we being set up to fail? Does it matter when we do fail, as long as we try our best?

Jesus sets the perfect example – an none of us can be as good as Jesus, right? But does that mean we shouldn't strive to be the best we can be?

The psalmist says that, if we do these things, we will be blessed by God. What does that blessing look like? How will we know if we've been blessed?

The Bible can be (and often is) used to argue many different, contradictory viewpoints and sometimes it can be difficult to know what the 'right' path to take – especially when, as a young person, you are beginning to explore your identity, your faith and beliefs and are more susceptible to peer and societal pressure. From where, or who, do we develop our view of right and wrong? God doesn't want us to feel guilty for failing, but God does want us to try to do what's right. This session invites us to explore how we make these choices.



Together

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

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

In-person – would you rather?

We have the choice to follow God's rules or not – just one of many choices we can make during a day. This activity invites participants to make choices.

You will need: a set of 'Would you rather?' questions.

This game can be played sitting down (assigning each choice an arm to raise) but it is better if different ends of the room are 'assigned' for choices.

Read out a statement and invite participants to stand at the end of the room that represents their choice.

Would you rather:

- Be able to breath underwater or fly like a bird?
- Give up biscuits or cake?
- Have fingers as long as toes, or toes as long as fingers?
- Remember all your dreams or remember none of your dreams?
- Be too hot or too cold?
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A quick search online will let you find many alternative questions.

Note: you can invite members of your group to come up with their own 'would you rather?' questions for the rest of the group.

Alternative 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: Sometimes the choices we make affect not just ourselves but others too. There is a series of Netflix called *Bear Grylls: You vs The Wild* in which viewers are given the opportunity to make decisions dictating what Bear Grylls will do when facing a decision.

You can see a number of short clips on YouTube at:
<https://youtu.be/unUycSGEcWY?si=oxJ1XB7dW-2LSjbL>

What choices do people make in the programme and why? Is it because those choices keep Bear Grylls safe? Or because they make the programme more exciting?

In the programme, Grylls says that what gets him through difficult times are the 3F's: friends, family and faith in the almighty." What do we rely on in difficult times?

Psalm 119:9 says, "How can a young person live a pure life? By obeying your word"

We sometimes complain about how many rules we have to follow. Are rules important? What might happen if we don't have any rules?

Choose one of the following videos to help start the discussion:

<https://youtu.be/WB3zoIACjul?si=atWiRFi4QVxP8SHG> - A day with no rules – why rules are important.

https://youtu.be/VPpd-6X3tEo?si=E12o3-mFzsK_ONrm_I will follow – Clip from Sister Act

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.

Alternatively:

Look at the different versions of this reading in different Bibles, especially the words 'blessed', 'pure', 'laws'. See if the different versions give you a different feeling about the psalm. How would you like the psalm to read? Rewrite it together.

Modern parables

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. Some young people may also occasionally 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.



Talking together: Going deeper

- I wonder what happens if you don't follow God's ways, follow God's instructions?
- I wonder whether rules in some settings are more important than in other settings??

Conversation starters

- What's the difference between rules, laws and guidelines?

Express

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

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.

Spoken prayer:

This prayer is made up of different lines – each line has 2 or 3 choices. Each time choose which line you would like to use in the final prayer. Then say the final prayer together.

You will need: a piece of paper with the following choices (and a pen to highlight what is chosen)

Line 1:

1. Almighty God
2. God of all

Line 2:

1. Thank you that you show us the right way to be
2. Thank you that we have choices that we can make

Line 3:

1. We know that we will make mistakes and get things wrong sometimes
2. We know that we will have to make hard choices and, sometimes, have to choose between doing what is right and doing something which is fun or easy.

Line 4:

1. We remember that your son Jesus didn't shy away from the difficult decisions despite the cost
2. We remember that people chose to crucify your son Jesus because of the choices he made.
3. We remember that following your rules meant that your son Jesus was crucified by people who didn't agree with him.

Line 5:

1. When we have decisions to make help us to remember that you are with us
2. When we have choices to make help us to remember that we should choose what you would us to choose
3. When we have decisions to make give us the courage to choose the right path

Amen



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.

Baking: On the Faith Adventures Children Together session you will find a recipe for making muffins. You may choose to use that recipe or find your own more suitable one. Remember to consider any food allergies or restrictions.

Acrostic poem: The verses today come from a much longer psalm that follows Hebrew alphabet – create or write your own acrostic poem that is a song to God using the letters from the words FAITH IN GOD or BLESSING or IDENTITY, here is an example for BLESS.

Be with us

Loving us

Everyday

Step by step

Side by side

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's the most difficult choice you've ever had to make?
 - Research what sorts of social injustice, equality projects are happening in your school, community or area and see if there is anything you feel you could become involved with. Always ensure an adult knows what you are involving yourself in.
 - Research something suggested by JPIT, [Resources \(jpit.uk\)](https://resources.jpit.uk) Commitment for life cforl.co.uk
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We hope you enjoyed exploring the Psalm 119 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