



Diocese of Bristol

Families growing faith at home

Church@Home is a fantastic all-age resource that has been created to encourage and help families enjoy a time of worship, explore the Bible, pray together and grow in their faith in the comfort of their own homes.

Church@Home provides a fun, engaging and easy-to-follow session every Sunday using a Bible reading selected from the Church of England Lectionary. Each session lasts approximately twenty minutes and provides age-related material for toddlers to teenagers to accommodate everyone in the family. Thought-provoking questions, fun activities and crafts bring the Bible story to life as well as creative prayer ideas to help families focus, learn and grow in their faith together. Additional teaching and craft suggestions are also provided for families with very young children.

Church@Home can also be used as a fun way to help families connect with other families on Sunday mornings too during this time of distancing. Invite everyone to begin **Church@Home** at the same time and perhaps set up a WhatsApp group where families can share what they have done, or discuss the topic further together.

If your family or families in your church are using **Church@Home** please let us know. We would like to keep in contact, find out how you are doing as well as hear how **Church@Home** is helping families grow in their faith, so that we can share and inspire others during this time of distancing.

chris.priddy@bristoldiocese.org

Thank you ❤️



Sunday 18 October 2020
20th Sunday after Pentecost

Words and actions

Matthew 22:15-22

Time to focus...

Find a place where the family can all sit comfortably - around the table, on the lounge floor etc. As you gather, if possible, light a candle to mark the beginning of your worship time. Quietly stare at the candle, watching the flames flicker and glow.

Set the scene...

Imagine you are holding an apple. The skin feels shiny and smooth. It has a beautiful shape and looks like really tasty apple. However, you cannot tell if this apple is good by looking at the outside. You have to look on the inside to know if it is a good apple.

Watch the story...

Learn about the Jewish groups mentioned in the Gospels from ['What's in the Bible?'](#)

Explore the story...

One day, while walking through an orchard, a man stopped under an apple tree. It was loaded with beautiful apples just waiting to be eaten. The man picked what he thought looked like the best apple on the tree. He took out his pocket knife and cut it open for a taste. To his surprise, the apple was rotten inside.

Some people go to church every Sunday; they read their Bibles, sing every hymn, listen to every word the preacher says, but it doesn't change anything in their heart. They look good on the outside, but their goodness is only skin deep. Their worship is for appearance only and not from the heart.

This isn't anything new because Jesus faced the same problem in his day. The Jewish leaders were always trying to trick Jesus and in today's reading, Jesus uses a specific word to describe them; 'hypocrite; "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me?" (v18). In Mark's gospel religious leaders are complaining to Jesus because they had seen some of his disciples eating without first washing their hands (7:1-22). Religious laws and traditions were very strict about washing your hands before eating.

Jesus answered, "You are nothing but a bunch of hypocrites. The prophet Isaiah must have been talking about you when he said, 'These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship has no meaning because they have replaced God's laws with their own traditions'"(v6-7). Those religious leaders were very concerned about clean hands, but Jesus was more concerned about a clean heart. We should be too, so ask God to prompt you when your words do not match your actions.

End with a prayer...

Dear heavenly Father, help us to honour and worship you with our hearts and actions. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen



Sunday 18 October 2020
20th Sunday after Pentecost

Words and actions

Creative ideas / toddlers to teenagers

0-5s...

Fun activity: To play "Say and Do" everyone does as you say. For example, say, "jump in." Participants will say "jump in" as they do so. Use the directions jump in, jump out, jump right and jump left. Make it harder as everyone to do the opposite of what you say. For example, say, "jump in." everyone will say "jump out" as they do so. Again, use the directions jump in, jump out, jump right and jump left.

5-11s...

Worship: Dance and sing along to "[Praise your name](#)"




Creative prayer: Every member of your family needs a piece of paper. Ask them to draw around and cut out the shape of their own hand.

On the four fingers they should write:

- something to praise God for
- something to thank God for
- something for which they would like to ask God's help
- something they would like to say sorry about

Your family can fold down the fingers if they wish to keep their prayers secret leaving the hand in the 'thumbs up' shape - a reminder that God has heard your prayers. Conclude in prayer leaving pauses for people to say their own prayers.

11-18s...

-  1) A hypocrite says one thing but does another. Have you experienced this?
- 2) Why does Jesus call the religious leaders hypocrites?
- 3) How much of your life do you divide up between God and other stuff?
-  Ask God to prompt you when your words do not match your actions.
-  Give an extra hour of your time this week to serve God.

"Let my words and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to You" - Psalm 19:14