

# Growing Together

Inspired by the Christian Faith

## Living well together

### Read Together



Do you have a nickname? A special name someone calls you because they know you well and still love you to the moon and back?

I had a nickname, so did my brother James – Jesus called us the ‘Thunder boys’. He wasn’t wrong. James and I had fire in our bellies, we wanted life to be fair for everyone, but we didn’t know how to make it happen. Then Jesus asked us to follow him.

Lots of people followed Jesus, not just his twelve disciples, there were women, children and often huge crowds. We were with Jesus all the time day in day out, following, listening, learning. It was special, but it wasn’t always easy being together like that. Sometimes our thundery nature got the better of us.

The worst time I am ashamed to remember, Jesus was telling us that he was going to die and would be going back to God. We should have been quiet or asked how he was feeling but no, James and I, asked Jesus if we could sit next to him in heaven!

Everyone was so cross – imagine ten brothers shouting at us and everyone else pitching in, it was awful. Jesus reminded us that none of us were more important than the other. He told us to care for and forgive each other, just as he had done for us.

James and John, the ‘Thunder boys’ who wanted everything to be fair. It took us a long time and we made some mistakes, before we learnt that fair doesn’t always mean the same thing for everyone.

Jesus said this to us soon before he died, ‘I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.’ \*

Jesus showed us that what really matters is how we live and how we love.

A long time after he had returned to God, I wrote my book about Jesus, my Good News and I was given a new nick name, people called me, The Disciple of Love.

\*The Gospel of John Chapter 13 verses 34 and 35



## Prayer Spaces



Sometimes in families we need to forgive others or forgive ourselves. If you have sand outside, you could draw what is upsetting you and when you are ready, you can ask God to help you forgive and smooth it away. You can do a similar thing indoors, by drawing or writing with felt pen on paper and then gently pop the paper into water until the writing or drawing fades away. Forgiving is not easy and sometimes it can take a long time, but it's always worth it and you can pray that God will help you.



## Courageous Advocacy



It's easy to tell people what we don't like about them, but we can forget to tell people what makes them so special.

Write, draw or record messages for different members of your family, telling them all about the great things you notice and like about them.

Who always smiles in the morning? Who makes your favourite meal? Who shares toys and games? Try having a household 'cushion conference'. Gather together, along with a cushion, and talk about how you're finding life in lockdown, but you're only allowed to talk when you have the cushion.

## Family Fun



Have you got any family photos you could look through together? See how many moments you can find that you had forgotten all about, what are the stories which go with those moments? Sometimes the best stories are when things didn't quite go right. If you don't have many photos can you remember some family stories which you could draw a picture of?

## Under 5s



Younger children can't always name their emotions and need to let off steam by stamping and shouting. This can be done in a fun way by playing games like, 'The Grand Old Duke of York...' so everyone gets to stamp and shout or you could all jump for God [www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdz8CpysuLQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdz8CpysuLQ) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBV0gESHy5M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBV0gESHy5M)

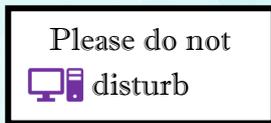
Using emojis to help little children express their emotions can provide a helpful insight into how they are feeling.



## Create and Make



Why don't you make yourself a 'Do not Disturb' sign that you can put on your door, or even wear, for the times when you don't feel quite ready for playing. Sometimes we need space and time out, even from our family and sometimes not everyone realises that but it's OK.



## Did You Know?



The Bible is full of stories about families, in lots of them the brothers and sisters struggled to get along. Can you think of any families in the Bible like that? Find out about what happened to Joseph and his brothers and how they were eventually reunited. The twins, Esau and Jacob, also have a story of falling out and eventually getting on again. There are stories about sisters too, can you find any?



Living close together, without the freedom to go out to school and visit different friends has been a challenge for our families too recently. Be encouraged that, as the Bible demonstrates, this has been

true for families for thousands of years.

