

Worship resources

Faith
Will...

christian
aid

An uncertain world can test faith. Yet when we are united by hope, together we can tackle injustice and help communities everywhere achieve lasting change.

Whether you've got five minutes or one hour, whether you're a huge congregation or a small group, in this guide you'll find everything you need to inspire everyone in your congregation to think about their legacy.



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Readings

Psalms 139:1-12 – read by Jo Dallas, Legacy Coordinator
John 14:1-6 – read by Dionne Gravesande, Senior Ecumenical Relations Manager

Prayer of thanksgiving

God of grace and truth,
we give thanks for all who bear witness to the light shining out through
the darkness,
who give thanks for all who dare to live out your story of love;
Who, in loving one another, recognise the image of God in all people,
We give thanks for all who speak tirelessly against injustice in this
world,
who dream of justice rolling down like waters, and righteousness like an
ever-flowing stream,
whose legacy is the conviction that change and transformation are
possible,
May their faith and perseverance shine through us like light,
so that all may see beyond the darkness to a world free from poverty.
Amen.

(Imogen Tate)

Thank you from Christian Aid
Alison Linwood
Christian Aid Legacy Manager

Faith
Will...

...inspire your worship

This section of your guide will support you in helping people consider pledging a gift in their Will this September, or perhaps at Harvest time. As well as transforming communities, gifts in Wills are a way for us to give thanks for God's generosity.



Why Faith Will?

By leaving gifts in their Will to your church and Christian Aid, your congregation can:

- Tackle injustice and help communities to achieve lasting change.
- 'Let their lives speak' and let their values live on.
- 'Pay forward' the generosity they have received in their lifetime.

Harvest is a wonderful time to talk about the impact of gifts in Wills. You could introduce the gifts in Wills theme by asking people to consider what the 'Harvest of our lives' might look like.

'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.'

Hebrews 11.1

Your Faith Will service

Feel free to use this service outline for your gifts in Wills service, or tailor it to suit your own context.

Opening response

Loving God, we have come to worship you.

Help us to pray to you in faith,
to sing your praise with gratitude,
and to listen to your word with eagerness.

Thank you that you are a generous God,
Who is faithful across generations.

Amen.

Opening prayer

Eternal and unchanging God,
We give thanks for those who have left us a legacy
of faith: those known to us personally and the
countless generations before them, as numerous
as the stars in the night sky.

Guide our hearts as we consider the power of
legacies to transform the world.

Make us generous in spirit, knowing that all we
have comes from you.

Help us to work towards a world in which all may
live life to the full.

For your name's sake.

Amen.

Repentance

'Therefore, since we are surrounded by so
great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every
weight and the sin that clings so closely,
and let us run with perseverance the race that
is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer
and perfecter of faith.' **Hebrews 12:1-2**

Lord Jesus,
Forgive us for the times that we have refused to cast
off the sin that weighs us down and clings to us.

Thank you that by your death and resurrection you
have set us free from sin. Help us now to cast off the
sin that hinders us and to run the race set out for us
with our eyes always fixed on you.

Amen

Bible reading

Read Hebrews 11:1-16

If you focus on the whole chapter, **end at verse 16.**

Talk

Alternatively, use these suggestions to help inspire
your sermon to fit with your set readings for the day.

Ideas for an interactive children's talk

Something that might seem like a small act of faith
now, such as pledging to leave a gift in your Will, can
be like a tiny acorn, which grows over time into a
mighty oak tree. You could use an acorn and a picture
of an oak tree to show this visually.

Or you could use invisible writing to show things that
are invisible now can become visible in the future.
Take a piece of paper and write a message of hope in
white crayon. Then go over the message using a dark
watercolour paint – the message will be revealed.

Offering

If your church normally takes an offering or collection, or if this is a Harvest service and you are asking people to bring up their donated goods, this would be a moment to introduce the idea of leaving a gift in your Will to your local church and to Christian Aid.

You could introduce this in the following way:

We've been thinking about how our faith might carry on after us and what our legacy might be.

One way you can let your values live on is by supporting your church and Christian Aid long into the future.

During our collection today, why not think about making a pledge to leave a gift in your Will to the church and to Christian Aid? Your generosity can transform lives now and in the future.

If you'd like to find out more, please find all the information you need in the Faith Will leaflet you have been given or visit caid.ie/faithwill.

Prayer

In this guide, you'll find plenty more ideas for intercessory prayers and reflections.

Ending of your service

Remind everyone of the theme of today's service, and if you did not do so at the offertory, invite people to take away a Faith Will leaflet at the end of the service.

You could also make these available on a table at coffee time, and have a few people ready to discuss them with others.

'These gifts can give future generations what they need, where they need it, to help them live on.'

Roger

Final blessing or Benediction

May God, who kept his promises to the great heroes of faith, inspire you to hold on to hope and persevere to the end, knowing that faith will move mountains and can transform the world.

And the blessing...

May God the Father, who loved the world so much that he sent his only Son to come among us in great humility, open your eyes to look for his coming again.

Amen.

May God the Son give you grace to live in the light of his coming as redeemer and judge.

Amen.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore.

Amen.



Roger, a retired Vicar and inspiring supporter of Christian Aid.



**Faith
Will...**

...inspire all ages

This section of your guide will help you inspire all ages about Faith Will, and teach children and young people about the power of faith.

In this section you'll find:

- **An all-age talk based on Hebrews 11:1.**
- **An activity for young children called 'Mighty oaks'.**

Faith Will: What can you do to involve young people?

Children will love the all-age 'Mighty oaks' talk. It's based on Hebrews 11:1 and can be tailored to suit Harvest and non-Harvest themed services.



Knowledge Chikondo is a wild fruit harvester from Kondo Vilage. He is plucking fruits from a nhengeni (*Ximenia caffra*) tree.

1. Bible verse

'To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see.'

Hebrews 11:1, Good News Bible

2. Suggested talk: Mighty oaks

To deliver this talk, you'll need an acorn (or a picture of one), and an image of an oak tree.

3. Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for the small things of the world: the acorn that grows into a mighty oak, the smallest acts of kindness to others.

Sometimes the problems of the world feel too big for us to change.

Help us to have faith that even our little actions can make a difference, and that we can make a better world, in our local community and beyond.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

4. Mighty oaks: Activity for young children

If your congregation includes young children or if you are running a separate children's group you may wish to use this version of the talk.

Try making the talk interactive. You could combine it with a craft activity, like making a collage or picture of a mighty oak growing from a tiny acorn.

To deliver this talk, you'll need an acorn (or a picture of one).



**Faith
Will...**

Esther Saizi in a church near her home.

...inspire reflection

This section of your guide will help you use creative activities for self-reflection during your Faith Will conversations.

In this section you'll find:

Reflective activities and prayer stations.

Faith Will: How can you help people think and reflect?

There are plenty of ways you can make your service interactive and engaging. Try setting up one of these activities as a prayer station, or a response to a sermon or talk.

'Faith Will... leave a legacy'

An activity about faith, and trusting in God's promises even if we sometimes don't see the results immediately, or even in our lifetimes.

[View in full on page 18](#)

'Faith Will... let our values live on'

An activity that reflects on Hebrews 11, and the old Quaker saying of 'Letting your life speak'.

[View in full on page 19](#)

'Faith Will... pay it forward'

An activity about generosity, reflecting on when we've received it in our lives and how we can pay it forward.

[View in full on page 20-22](#)





**Faith
Will...**

...inspire action

Whether you have five minutes or an hour, there are plenty of other ways you could choose to talk to your church about gifts in Wills. Every word, every conversation and every presentation could help create lasting change.

What other ways could you inspire your congregation about gifts in Wills?

Use our free resources and these ideas to hold a legacy moment. There are many ways to inspire your congregation to consider leaving a gift in their Will.

How? Get the conversation started in **five minutes**:

- **Show our short campaign film to your congregation.** This could be at a coffee morning or a church meeting – [go to caid.ie/Faithwill](https://go.to/caid.ie/Faithwill) to view and download the film.
- **Give away seeds** to show what's planted now grows and bears fruit later (foxgloves and poppies are seeds that like to be planted in the autumn).
- **Upload information** on Faith Will to your church website giving page.
- **Order and give out Faith Will leaflets** and highlight this information in your meeting or service.

If you have **10-15 minutes** free:

- **Share testimony from a community project** that benefitted from church funds.
- **Show a local map of your church's impact.**
- **Show a global map of Christian Aid projects around the world.**
- **Highlight stories of ordinary people** from your church or denomination's history who have left a lasting legacy.

If you have **an hour or more** free:

- **Hold a legacy supper.**
- **Hold an in-memory celebration** of loved ones in your congregation and their legacies.
- **Encourage conversation about legacies in café church** eg, how you would like to be remembered or what you hope your legacy of faith will be.



Knowledge holding washed nhengeni fruit kernels with some on the clean shade cloth drier.

Appendix

Service outline: A Faith Will prayer

God of Transformation,
who brought the world into being through your
word, making visible what was invisible,
hear us as we pray in faith.

In a world where resources are not shared equally,
where crops fail and parents go without to feed
their children,
in a country where too many rely on
foodbanks to get by,
we ask that you would,
help us to feed the hungry.

In the midst of wars and conflicts,
where neighbour attacks neighbour
and the innocent suffer most,
we ask that you would,
help us bring peace between nations.

In the face of a climate emergency,
where land is scorched or flooded,
and habitats destroyed,
we ask that you would,
help us protect your creation.

In a culture of fear of the other,
where the vulnerable are despised
and rejected,
we ask that you would,
help us give sanctuary to the persecuted.

Standing in a long line of people of faith,
we pledge ourselves to your service
and to working for a transformed world.
We ask that our lives would leave a legacy.

Merciful God,
you have promised to hear our requests.
We pray for the coming of your kingdom
of justice and peace,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

All age talk: Mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow

Today in our service we are talking about leaving a legacy. Does anyone know what this means? *[take suggestions]* Well, leaving a legacy is a bit like planting a seed and watching it grow – we don't always see the results but planting the seed can have a huge impact.

[optional Harvest introduction] Harvest is a time when we say 'thank you' to God for all that we have, especially for the food we eat and those who produced it. When a farmer or a gardener plants a seed or a bulb, they have faith that it will grow up into a healthy plant.

Some plants grow quickly. I wonder if anyone has ever sown any cress? If you've done that, you may have seen the seeds sprouting within a day. Or if anyone has planted a sunflower seed? A sunflower seed can grow to a plant that is 12 feet tall in three months!

But some plants take much longer to grow!

Today I want to talk to you about oak trees *[Show picture of an oak tree]*. Does anyone know how an oak tree starts? *[take suggestions]*

That's right – an oak tree starts off life as a tiny acorn. *[Show acorn or picture of one]*

There is a well-known expression, 'Mighty oaks from little acorns grow.' But do you know how long it takes an oak tree to grow from an acorn? *[take suggestions]*

Most oak trees won't produce a crop of acorns until they are 50 years old. They then take another 100 years to grow into adult trees. So they are not regarded as adult trees until they are 150 years old! A mature oak can grow up to 45 metres tall and nearly as wide.

At 700 years old, the oak has reached old age and its growth starts to slow. At 1,000 years old, it is approaching the end of its life.

[hold up the acorn again] How many acorns do you think an oak tree can produce in its lifetime?

(All age talk: Mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow – continued)

It's actually 10 million! 10 million of these tiny acorns [*hold up acorn or show picture*] – all of which have the potential to grow up into tall oaks like their parent tree!

When we plant seeds, we have faith that they will grow up into tall and healthy plants. Of course, we don't sit back and do nothing – we look after the plant by watering it, feeding it if necessary and weeding it. As we have talked about, some plants grow quickly – and we see the results of our work quickly. Other plants, such as trees, like the oak, take much longer to grow. But having faith means believing that the plant will grow – that something mighty like an oak tree will come from a tiny acorn and may live for 1,000 years.

The Bible verse we read at the beginning from the book of Hebrews reminds us that we can't always see the results of what we do immediately, and the impact might not be seen until long in the future – but it reminds us to have faith that good results – that may last forever – will come from the right actions.

That can happen when someone leaves a gift in their will to the church and to Christian Aid, a charity who work with people across the world to help them live full lives, free from poverty.

Think about how small acts of kindness can make a big difference to someone else's life. Can you think of some small acts you can do this week [*take suggestions*]. Can you be kind to someone at school who is being bullied or feeling left out? Can you pray for someone who is unwell and send them a card? Can you help out a bit more at home? Can you save something from your pocket money to give to charity? Or can you think of ways to raise money for charity – for example by doing some baking or washing some cars?

Are there any things you feel passionate about and want to change in the world? What can we do to help people who live in our local area? What can we do to help people who live further away?

Let's remember that 'mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow', but that it can take a long time – 150 years in fact! And just like the one oak tree that can produce 10 million acorns, by having faith that God will bless our small actions, they can all add up to something much bigger – a movement of kindness that can change the world for the better, long into the future!

Now let's pray together...

Young children's talk: Mighty oaks

Invite the children to stand in a circle around you, and lead them in the following:

We can see trees and flowers all around us.

We can see the mighty, tall oak that grows from a small acorn like this one [*show acorn*].

When we pray for others, or do kind things, it is like planting an acorn. Over time, the acorn will grow into a mighty oak tree.

I wonder if you can pretend to be a little acorn, fallen from the oak tree and now sleeping in the ground, waiting for the sun to wake it up?

Let's curl up into a tiny ball.

Lead children in curling up into a ball.

In the spring, as the sun comes out and the ground warms up, we begin to grow. The seed in the acorn sends out a taproot.

Let's show our roots with our fingers.

Lead the children in wiggling fingers.

We need to let our roots grow down deep into the earth. *Lead the children in wiggling fingers down.*

Then, after three, let a little shoot pop up.
1,2,3... Pop!

Lead the children in poking hands up above your head like a little shoot.

As the sun warms up and the rains fall, we begin to grow tall!

Gradually stand up, swaying like a growing stalk. Taller and taller, onto our tiptoes...

Reach up with pointy hands and on tiptoes.

Let's turn our faces to the sun!
Then let our branches spread out wide.

Stretch arms slowly outwards.

Now we're an adult tree, producing acorns of our own that can grow up into more mighty oaks.

(Young children's talk: Mighty oaks – continued)

Wiggle arms about.

Now we're ready to stand tall for 1,000 years!

Stand tall and proud, wiggle about if you want to.

Now invite the children to sit in a circle. Praise their actions – eg, saying 'What fantastic growing you did! What beautiful oak trees you grew into.'

Then conclude with the following prayer with actions.

When we do kind things or pray for others, it is like planting an acorn. It may seem like a small thing but it can have a big impact.

Let's pray together, using our hands to make the actions.

For our world:

Make a circle shape.

Jesus, hear our prayer!

Open hands upward to God.

For our church:

Praying hands.

Jesus, hear our prayer!

Open hands upward to God.

For our friends and families:

Arms around yourself.

Jesus, hear our prayer!

Open hands upward to God.

For the sick and lonely:

Fingers imitating tears falling down cheeks.

Jesus, hear our prayer!

Open hands upward to God.

For the hungry:

Both hands rubbing tummy.

For everybody!

Circle action above head.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer!

Open hands upward to God.

Adapted with permission from Sharon Moughtin, *Diddy Disciples, Book 1: September to December*, SPCK, 2017, p.98 and p.96

Alternative prayers

1. A prayer based on Hebrews 11:1

Faithful God, the same yesterday, today and forever.

Thank you for the witness of those who trusted your promises, even when the way ahead was uncertain.

When difficulties and obstacles arise, give us their hope and conviction that faith can make a difference, and that lives can be transformed so that all may flourish.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

2. A prayer suitable for Harvest festivals

Generous God,
At this Harvest time, we give you thanks for the bounties of the world you created: for our food and all those who grow, harvest and transport it.

Open our hearts as we consider how to live out our faith and share the generosity we have received with others, that our values might live on and we may leave a legacy that transforms the world.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

3. Alternative intercessory prayer 1

Compassionate God,
Trusting in your promises and unfailing love, we bring before you the needs of our world.

We pray for our local community and for all who work for good within it: for our schools and places of work. We extend our gaze outwards to the wider world, asking in particular that where there is conflict, you would bring peace, and where there is famine, you would bring a bountiful harvest.

Help us to not despair but to hold on to hope. Inspire us to act to make a better world, help us to be wise stewards of our resources. Be with us as we consider how to leave legacies of faith that can transform the world.

May we have confidence that even our smallest actions can have a mighty impact, now and forever.

Amen.

4. Alternative intercessory prayer 2

God of all comfort,
You promise to be with those who pray to you in
faith. Hear us now as we pray for the needs of our
world.

We pray for those who are discouraged and in
despair, and for those in our local community who
are struggling to get by.
Show us how to help them, Lord,
and inspire us to leave a legacy of hope.

We pray for those who labour but see little reward,
who toil yet see their crops destroyed through
drought or disaster.
Show us how to help them, Lord,
and inspire us to leave a legacy of hope.

We pray for our church community,
forgive us when we are distracted by our own
internal concerns.
Help us to be better servants of our community
and inspire us to leave a legacy of hope.

Lastly, we pray for ourselves.
Make us good stewards of all that we have.
Help us to let our lives speak through our
actions now and in the future,
and inspire us to leave a legacy of hope.

**God of hope,
you love us,
and hear our prayers.**

**Make us one in heart and mind
to serve you with joy for ever.
Amen.**

Inspire reflection

Activity 1: 'Faith Will... leave a legacy'

You will need:

- A table.
- A large tray filled with sand.
- A picture of the night sky or the cosmos, filled with stars.
- Copies of key verses below about Abraham from Hebrews 11.
- Strips of paper and pens.

For reflection

'Having faith' means doing what is right and trusting in God's promises even if we sometimes don't see the results immediately, or even in our lifetimes. Hebrews 11:1 expresses it like this:

'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval.'

Hebrews 11:1-2

One of those 'ancients' or ancestors in faith commended in Hebrews 11 is Abraham.

Abraham trusted in the promises of God, even though at the time they seemed unlikely to come to fruition. Abraham was promised descendants even though he had no children with his wife, Sarah, and they were both past childbearing age.

Yet we are told:

'By faith, with Sarah's involvement, he received power of procreation, even though he was too old, because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.'

Hebrews 11:11-12

In the same way, leaving a gift in our Will to our church and Christian Aid is an act of faith. We may not see the results in our lifetimes, but the number of lives we can transform through our gift might be as numerous as the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the seashore.

Actions

- 1 Run your fingers through the sand tray and think about how many grains of sand might be in this one small space. Now ponder how many more there might be on a favourite beach. Abraham was promised numerous descendants – but only one was born to him and Sarah. Consider God's promises in your life: what has been brought to fruition? What do you hope is still to come – for yourself, for your local community and for the wider world? What impact would you like your life (and your giving) to have?
- 2 Look at the image of the night sky. Think about your own experiences of looking at the night sky. Often, we cannot see all the stars – some are invisible to us, certainly to the naked eye, but they are still there. Or we may have had the experience of being spellbound by a sky full of stars, too many to count. Abraham did not see his many descendants in his lifetime, yet he had faith in God's promise that he would leave a legacy. It can be the same with the fulfilment of our hopes and prayers – we may not be able to see the results of what we hope and pray for immediately. What hopes and prayers for the future would you like God to bless and multiply? Again, think on a personal, local and global level.
- 3 Write your hopes and prayers for the future on a slip of paper, fold it up and hide it in the sand.

Inspire reflection

Activity 2: 'Faith Will... let our values live on'

You will need:

- Copies of the reflection below, including the quote from George Fox and from Hebrews 11:4.
- Speech bubble or fruit-shaped post-it notes or cut-out shapes.
- Some pens.
- [Particularly suitable for Harvest] If using the fruit shapes, you may want to include a photograph or drawing or a tree onto which people can stick their cut-out shapes or post-it notes.

For reflection

In the passage, Hebrews 11, one of the 'ancestors' commended for their faith is Abel, who was killed by his jealous brother Cain:

'By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's. Through this he received approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts; he died, but through his faith he still speaks.'

Hebrews 11:4

'Let your life speak' is an old Quaker saying, and the title of a book on vocation by the contemporary American Quaker author, Parker Palmer. It is a paraphrase of something written in a letter by George Fox, the founder of the Quakers. Fox wrote:

'Let your lives preach, let your light shine, that your works may be seen, that your Father may be glorified; that your fruits may be unto holiness, and that your end may be everlasting life.'

George Fox, 200th epistle

Think about your own life and consider these questions:

- How does the way you live 'speak' of your faith and values?
- What 'fruit' do you show in your life? What would you like to show?
- What would you like your legacy to be? How would you like your life to 'speak' to others after your death and to people you will never meet?
- How can you make that happen?

Action

- 1 Write your thoughts on the post-it notes or cut-out shapes (and add to the tree, if using this option).

Inspire reflection

Activity 3, option 1: Pay it forward web

You will need:

- A large pin board.
- A few balls of string and scissors or pieces of cut string.
- Some pins.
- Post-it notes.
- Some pens.

Actions

① What am I grateful for in my life?

Write this on one colour of post-it note and stick it on the board.

② Who has helped me in my life – through acts of kindness, generosity, time?

Think of specific people, their actions and the impact it had and write this on a post-it in a different colour. Place this second post-it at a little distance from your first post-it, then using the pins place a piece of string between the first and second post-it notes.

③ How can I 'pay forward' the generosity I have received? What do I want my legacy to be?

It might be an act of kindness, charitable giving or leaving a gift in my Will to my church and Christian Aid so my values and beliefs will live on. Write your thoughts on a third post-it (in a different colour from the previous two) and use two other pieces of string to connect your third post-it note to your previous two.

Stand back and look at the web of interconnectedness you have created, one that stretches back into the past and into the future and give thanks to God for it.



Inspire reflection

Activity 3, option 2: Paying it forward locally and globally

You will need:

- Three display boards.
- A picture or drawing of your church or a church shape to represent your church.
- A map of your local community.
- A map of the world.
- Post-it notes.
- Some pens.

Actions

Beforehand, prepare the three boards with the following images:

- 1 One with a picture of your church, or a church shape.
- 2 The second with a map of your local community, or pictures that represent it and some of the institutions within it, eg, schools, places of worship, factories and other places of work, food banks, shelters for the homeless people.
- 3 The third with a world map, and images of any projects overseas supported by your church already.

Invite participants to reflect on how they would like to pay generosity forward in each of these three locations, using the following questions.

For all three questions below, you might want to consider the difference leaving a gift in your Will would make to these communities.

1. **Reflect on all you have received in your life from others, perhaps from some in the local church community.** In an attitude of gratitude, think about how you would like to pay this generosity forward in your local church community. Write your thoughts on a post-it note and add it to the board.
2. **Think about your wider local community. How can you 'pay it forward' here?** Write your thoughts on a post-it note and add it to the board.
3. **Do the same for the wider world – the global community of which we are all a part. How can you pay it forward here?** Write your thoughts on a post-it note and add it to the board.

Inspire reflection

Activity 3, option 3: Paying it forward paper chains

You will need:

- Paper chain strips.
- Some pens.
- Glue sticks.

Actions

- ① Use the same questions as for activity 1, but instead of writing answers on post-it notes and adding it to a pin board, invite people to write their thoughts on paperchain strips (one per answer) and to then join these together using the glue sticks.
- ② Then join these to those made by others to create one large paper chain.
- ③ At the end of your service, invite someone to bring up the giant paper chain as an example of how we are all connected: to our past, present and future, and how powerful a chain of people 'paying it forward' can be.

