



Wonderful  
YOUTH

Four sets of biblical sessions created for Black History Month to empower young people between the ages of 13 and 16 to become 'The best that you can be'

# Contents

Commissioned by the Baptist Union Racial Justice Group, and launched in 2018, **Wonderful Youth** has been written by contributors from Six Ways Baptist Church, Birmingham and John Bunyan Baptist Church, Oxford (both multicultural churches). Their aim is to equip young black and minority ethnic people to appreciate and love God's Word. Designed to be used during Black History Month in October, or at any other time of the year, **Wonderful Youth** also provides a window of opportunity for churches and youth groups to explore and celebrate some of the historical and current unique contributions from people of colour.

This version of **Wonderful Youth** includes the four sets of material created in 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2022.

**The sets of studies in this resource may be used in any order.**

<b>Wonderful Youth 2018: Ephesians 1:1-14</b>	<b>3</b>
Blessed	
Chosen	
Holy	
Loved	
Forgiven	
<b>Wonderful Youth 2019: 'No outsiders'</b>	<b>36</b>
The Centurion	
The anointing of Jesus by a woman in the city	
The woman who reached out to Jesus	
The parable of the Good Samaritan	
Zacchaeus	
<b>Wonderful Youth 2021: 'Love, joy peace and patience'</b>	<b>67</b>
Love	
Joy	
Peace	
Patience	
<b>Wonderful Youth 2022: 'Climate justice'</b>	<b>83</b>
All of God's creation has worth	
We are part of a community of life	
Our kinship with nature	
A 'prophetic voice' beyond stewardship	
Taking climate action as part of God's mission	



Wonderful  
youth

Five Biblical sessions created for Black History Month to empower young people between the ages of 13 and 16 to become  
'The best that you can be'

# Contents

The five studies in this resource may be used in any order.

Introduction	3
<b>Blessed</b>	
» Leaders' Notes	4
» 'Many blessings in many languages' sheet	8
<b>Chosen</b>	
» Leaders' Notes	9
<b>Holy</b>	
» Leaders' Notes	13
» 'Who is holy?' sheet	17
<b>Loved</b>	
» Leaders' Notes	18
» 'Love in different languages' sheet	24
<b>Forgiven</b>	
» Leaders' Notes	25
» Optional Resources	30
» 'Forgiveness Proverbs' sheet	31
» 'Forgiveness that makes a difference' sheet	32

Even though there is a vast number of resources on the Christian market to aid young people reflect on their Christian faith few, if any, intentionally enable young people of colour to see their image reflected in the resources. Drawing from a wealth of material coupled with exercises and activities, *Wonderful Youth* aims to address this imbalance by particularly enabling young people of colour to read the Bible through their cultural and theological lenses.

Commissioned by the Baptist Union Racial Justice Group, *Wonderful Youth* has been written by contributors from Six Ways Baptist Church, Birmingham and John Bunyan Baptist Church, Oxford (both multicultural churches). Their aim is to equip young black and minority ethnic people to appreciate and love God's Word. Designed to be used during Black History Month in October 2018, *Wonderful Youth* also provides a window of opportunity for churches and youth groups to explore and celebrate some of the historical and current unique contributions from people of colour.

# Introduction

## A brief introduction to Ephesians 1:1-14

It is generally believed that Paul wrote this letter whilst in Rome. There is evidence he had visited Ephesus on more than one occasion (Acts 18:18-21, 19:2-7). The letter is more general than some; it is not necessarily only to the church in Ephesus. Maybe this makes us more able to receive it as aimed at ourselves too?

The section we are looking at (Ephesians 1:1-14) is part celebration of God's saving power, part prayer of praise and part teaching session.

Paul is keen to remind the readers and listeners that they are not just random individuals dealing with life on their own, but have experienced God's love and grace and have been given special gifts in order to equip them for the work that God has in store for them. The key thing here is that Paul wants the people to keep hold of the knowledge that they are saved, that God has saved them and is giving them all they need, just as the people of the Old Testament were reminded again and again what God had done in the past.

The sense of this passage, which in the original Greek is one long sentence, is along the lines of 'Let us praise God because...'

So, more specifically, Paul tells the people they are:-

**Blessed** from heaven and through Jesus (verse 3);

**Chosen**, picked out by God to do his thing. We are valued by God simply because we are, but he also has a purpose for us (verse 4);

**Holy** because God has set them apart, and part of his purpose is for us to keep ourselves 'clean' (verse 4);

**Loved** by God, because this is the force at the source of all these blessings and gifts (verse 4-5);

**Forgiven** through his grace, through the death of Christ on the cross (verse 7).

For the people originally addressed by Paul, and for us today, because of God's 'glorious grace' (verse 6), we can count ourselves as being blessed, chosen, holy, loved, forgiven. And importantly, in this instance our focus with all of these qualities is that they are from God. At this stage in the letter it is not yet about what we *do*, other than giving thanks and praise to the Creator. The focus is on the fact that we are blessed *by* God, chosen *by* God, made to be holy *by* God, loved and forgiven *by* God.

# Blessed

## 'Blessed, chosen, holy, loved, forgiven'

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the spiritual blessings that Christ has brought us from heaven! - Ephesians 1:3 (NIV)

### Aim

To enable the young people to gain a better understanding of what it means to be blessed by God, to explore the concept of blessing.

### Lesson outcome

For our wonderful youth to be encouraged, comforted and inspired by the notion that they are blessed by God as all of God's goodness and the goodness of heaven are poured into us/our lives.

- » To know more fully that as believers we are blessed.
- » To count those blessings.
- » To better understand the meaning of what it is to be blessed by God.
- » To explore ways that we in turn can be a blessing to others and God.

### Materials needed

- » A flipchart/board or iPad and printer
- » A cup, jug of water, and a tray to put them on
- » A4 card or paper
- » Pens and other art supplies
- » A pinata and stick eg using instructions from: [www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Piñata](http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Piñata)  
Or buy one from Wilko  
<https://www.wilko.com/en-uk/donkey-pinata/p/0334318>
- » Wrapped sweets and words of blessing written on paper
- » A globe or map of the world - and blutack
- » Computer with internet access to show videos from YouTube
- » Projector and screen (if you have a large group)
- » Materials to make a blessing jar
- » Copy(ies) of the words of blessing in other languages
- » Copy(ies) of the prayers

### Introduction

The word 'bless' is used, in various forms, a great deal in our language both in church and in wider society. What do we mean when we say we are blessed? How does this work? Here is an opportunity to help the young people towards a deeper understanding of what it is to be blessed by God, especially as young people.

#### Introductory activity

##### **1 How was your week? (5 minutes)**

Draw up a list together (maybe on a flipchart/board/ipad (and then print) of everything good that has happened to the group over the past seven days. Include the 'obvious' and the mundane (eg food, home etc) as well as things that have gone well.

Or

Do this exercise as a visual thing by pouring a small amount of drink into a cup each time you come up with something. Refer to Psalm 23:5 'my cup overflows'.

##### **2 Talk together about (10 minutes)**

Discuss where good things come from? Why do they happen? You might want to write the following or similar on A4 cards/paper for people to focus on.

- 1 Is it all just random/chance?
- 2 Do we make our own 'luck'?
- 3 Do good things come from God?

Or

If you and the group are comfortable with doing so, you could have three people holding 1, 2 and 3 as below and group members have to go to whichever they believe. Then encourage the young people to talk about why they have taken that position.

## Prayers

### A Prayer of thanks and confession

Thank you Lord for the good gifts you share with us:

The gift of being caring and kind to one another,  
The gift of knowing you and that you are with us with your peace and protection.

Thank you for food we enjoy and things we have that others don't.

Thank you for our friends and families.

In Jesus' name, your dear son our Saviour,  
may you continue to watch over us,  
bless us and guide us in your wonderful ways.  
Amen

### Prayer of Confession

Loving God, I am sorry for all my wrong doing.  
I am sorry for hurting others with my words and my actions.

I am sorry for times when I have lost my temper towards my loved ones and other people because of being impatient and not caring for others' needs. I am sorry for these things.

Loving Lord Jesus Christ who suffered and died for our sins.

By your mercy and grace forgive us of all our wrong doings.

Amen

### Prayer for others

Dear God, I pray for my friends and family to receive your touch of love and power.

I pray that they may feel your assurance of presence in whatever they are going through in their life.

May the power of the Holy Spirit free them from all their worries, pain and sadness and may they feel the warmth of your peace and love right now.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

## Activities

Paul says that we have been given spiritual blessings... how do we experience these?  
Explore the notion of being blessed and how we respond to this

### 1 Blessing piñata (15 minutes)

Say something to be thankful for and whack it!  
Before the session, fill the piñata with a selection of wrapped sweets and some folded pieces of paper with words of blessing on them. You might want some of these words to be in different languages to link with activity 2. Suspend the piñata as securely as you can and then get the young people, taking it in turns, to strike one blow at it with a stick. If some sweets fall they receive these (or can share these) as a blessing. Keep going until the whole piñata is emptied.

### 2 Many blessings in many languages (10 minutes)

Using the list of words of blessing provided, print these/write them out and spread them randomly on a table and get the group to pin them on a globe/map of the world, as to where these words for blessed or blessing come from.

Language	Ways to say 'blessing'
Albanian	bekim
Polish	blogoslawienstwo
German	segnen
Chinese Traditional	zhufu
Hausa	albarka
Yoruba	ibukun
Filipino	basbas
Malay	berkat
Turkish	nimet
Arabic	barika
Swahili	baraka
Zulu	isibusiso
Patois	bless up
Somali	barakada

### 3 Listen and talk (10 minutes)

Listen to/watch Daniel Caesar 'Blessed':

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKmn7JPFra8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKmn7JPFra8)

How do we react to feeling blessed even though we are a mess? 'And yes, I'm a mess but I'm blessed'

Or, similarly listen to these songs and discuss:

a Chance the Rapper - 'Blessings'

[www.youtu.be/KeqmbhyoFZQ](https://www.youtu.be/KeqmbhyoFZQ)

b Jason Gray - Remind Me Who I Am

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSIVjjiY8Ou8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSIVjjiY8Ou8)

## Open the Word

### Read and talk (10 minutes)

Take a look at Matthew 5:1-11 and what Jesus says about being blessed or 2 Corinthians 9:8 and what Paul says about how much God will bless us, when He will bless us, what with and what for.

### Many sorts of blessings (10 minutes)

'Blessing' is a loaded word. In most cultures, generally it connotes material wealth, good health, status and power, happy family etc. And this is in keeping with much of the Old Testament understanding of what blessing is about (eg 1 Chronicles 4:9-10). But what Paul is talking about must surely be based on the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth and what he says about blessing (Matthew 5:1-11).

Get the group to compare and contrast – maybe draw up a list/write this up on a flip chart as the discussion develops.

If appropriate, discuss what is termed as 'prosperity gospel' propagated by some churches which have attracted large numbers of young people.

### Bible blessings (10 minutes)

Blessings can be associated with protection and happiness. God's blessing protects and helps guide us. Use these Bible verses to remind you of the ultimate blessing of protection promised to us. You might wish to discuss them together.

**Philippians 4:19** - And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory

**James 1:17** - Every good and perfect gift is from above

**Isaiah 41:10** - So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God

**Psalms 91** - a prayer about blessing and protection

## Activities

### 1 Blessing jar (10 minutes)

Suggest that the young people might have a 'Blessing Jar' – encourage young people to add some money to it each time something good happens in the week(s) ahead. Give the money to BMS World Mission, Christian Aid, Tearfund or similar. Maybe you could have some jars and materials ready and could make one in the group whilst you discuss some of the aspects of blessing mentioned here in the session. Or at least have one ready for yourself as an example. Add some money to it during the session to emphasise what a blessing it is to be with the young people.

### 2 Create (15 minutes)

Get the young people to create a picture: How would you express 'blessing' in art?

### 3 Many blessings many cultures (15 minutes)

Get the group to look at and/or listen to/read these examples of prayers of blessing from different cultures. You might want to draw out or point out that all of these are about wanting as much of God's goodness to be with the person we are blessing.

#### *An Irish Blessing*

May the road rise to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back,  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
The rains fall soft upon your fields and,  
Until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

#### *A Shinto Prayer*

Although the people living across the ocean surrounding us,  
I believe, are all our brothers and sisters,  
why are there constant troubles in this world?  
Why do winds and waves rise in the ocean surrounding us?  
I only earnestly wish that the wind will soon puff away all the clouds  
which are hanging over the tops of the mountains.

#### *A Nigerian Prayer*

May togetherness of this earth continue to guide us and may the divine bring peace and understanding to protect the world.

## Activities (cont'd)

### ***A Queio Apache Prayer***

Looking behind, I am filled with gratitude.  
Looking forward, I am filled with vision.  
Looking upwards, I am filled with strength.  
Looking within, I discover peace.

### **4 Write a blessing (10 minutes)**

Get the young people to write their own blessing either as a group or as individuals.  
Read them out to bless each other.  
Maybe they could be used in Sunday worship?

*Or*

The young people could write a prayer of blessing for a place/situation or group of people that is in the news.

## Close

- » Think about where good things in our lives come from.
- » What can we do with those good things, the blessings that we receive?
- » How can we be a blessing this week?

# Wonderful Youth: Blessed

## Many blessings in many languages

Group leader to copy this sheet onto paper or card and trim to give the individual words

<b>bekim</b> <i>Albanian</i>	<b>blogoslawienstwo</b> <i>Polish</i>
<b>segen</b> <i>German</i>	<b>zhufu</b> <i>Chinese traditional</i>
<b>albarka</b> <i>Hausa</i>	<b>ibukun</b> <i>Yoruba</i>
<b>basbas</b> <i>Filipino</i>	<b>berkat</b> <i>Malay</i>
<b>nimet</b> <i>Turkish</i>	<b>barika</b> <i>Arabic</i>
<b>baraka</b> <i>Swahili</i>	<b>isibusiso</b> <i>Zulu</i>
<b>bless up</b> <i>Patois</i>	<b>barakada</b> <i>Somali</i>

# Chosen

## 'Blessed, chosen, holy, loved, forgiven'

*Chosen before the foundations of the world to be holy and blameless Ephesians 1:4*

### Aim

To help young people to appreciate why God has chosen them.

### Lesson outcome

- » To explore what it means to be chosen by God to serve him
- » To explore what it means to be chosen to serve others
- » To explore what it means to be chosen to serve creation
- » To help young people appreciate the amazing difference they can make to the lives of others and creation.

### Materials needed

- » Bibles
- » Paper
- » Pens/colouring pencils

### Introduction

#### Icebreaker activity - 5 minutes

Share the list of names below with the group. Discuss with them what they think God has chosen the people to do?

- » Mary the mother of Jesus
- » Nelson Mandela: He was a South African anti-apartheid revolutionary, political leader who served as president of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. He was the country's first black head of state.
- » Shami Chakrabarti: member of the House of Lords and Labour Party politician.

### Open the Word

#### Chosen by God to serve God - 10 minutes

Discuss with the group how and why they think God chose the following characters? Feel free to answer the related questions.

#### Moses

You remember when God met Moses at the burning bush and called him and chose him to do a massive job? At first Moses thought God had made a big mistake. And that is because Moses thought he was very small in his own estimation. As a result, Moses made a number of excuses. One of them was: 'When I go down there, who shall I say sent me?' God replied: 'Say I have sent you.' Eventually God convinced Moses to go and Moses went to the Egyptians and challenged Pharaoh.

#### Questions:

- » What was the big job God called Moses to do? (Exodus 3)
- » Why do you think Moses was reluctant to follow God's leading?
- » God chose Moses to lead. Do you have any idea what you think God might be choosing you to do both now and in the future?

#### Hannah

Hannah was unable to have a child. She so wanted a son but God said 'no, not now'. So she begged God for a child. In return she promised to dedicate this young man to God's service. Her son was born and Hannah followed through on her promise. She took the child to Eli the priest and left him to be raised in the Temple.

## » Open the Word (cont'd)

### Questions:

- » What was the name of the son Hannah gave birth to?
- » Discuss why you think God might have chosen her son?



### **Martin Luther King**

Moses and Hannah were not the only people chosen by God to serve God. There were, and remain, many others - including Martin Luther King. Despite being chosen by God to lead the Civil Rights Movement, this Baptist Minister had a challenging life. His grandma died. He was very close to her and because of her death he attempted suicide. And then there were the many hate letters. He was also attacked and nearly died. Martin was fortunate to recover from the knife attack. Martin was chosen by God to serve God and others. He did this by campaigning for equality for African Americans, women and poor people. Martin was eventually killed. This was mainly because of his growing influence. A lot of white Americans were getting scared. Martin had to be stopped.

### Questions:

- » Discuss what you think Martin Luther King was chosen to do? (5 min)
- » What is your understanding of an 'activist'? What do they do?
- » Do you think that God has chosen you to be an activist – to help, support and speak with, and sometimes on behalf of, others?

### **Jesus**



The only person to live to serve God perfectly was Jesus. Jesus was chosen by God to live and breathe with broken people, sinners, like you and me. There are so many stories in the New Testament to illustrate Jesus' commitment and love for people on the margins. As the Bible says: 'the poor you will always have with you.' Jesus had a way of mixing with the poor, making them feel important. Jesus was the best at inclusion. Find one story in the bible which illustrates Jesus' commitment to people on the margins. Use the story to discuss why you think God chose Jesus to care for the poor and needy?

## Prayers

### **Prayers of Thanks - Chosen by God**

Thank you God for choosing us. Thank you for all the love that you have lavished on us.

We confess that we often forget that you see us as incredibly important – as wonderful youth created in your image.

Help us God to see the potential you have for us and to live our lives to reach that potential.  
Amen

## Open the Word

We are not only chosen to serve God but each other as well. This section will focus on being chosen to serve others.

### **Exercise (10 minutes)**

God has chosen the following people to serve others:

- » **Rose Hudson-Wilkin** - first Black female Chaplain to the Queen
- » **Kang-San Tan** - General Director of BMS World Mission
- » **Lynn Green** - General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain



How would you serve others if you were the Chaplain to the Queen, General Director of BMS World Mission or the General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain?

### **Images:**

Martin Luther King - [www.pixabay.com](http://www.pixabay.com)  
Jesus - Attila JANDI / Shutterstock.com

## Open the Word (cont'd)

### Examples of two people who served others

#### **Sam Sharpe**

Sam Sharpe was a Baptist deacon and enslaved person who played an important role in the 'Great Jamaican slave revolt'. He was one of the leaders of the group of enslaved people and leader of a sit-down strike against slavery. He was executed with more than 500 others. The revolt led by Sam Sharpe had a huge influence on the abolition of slavery and he is honoured as a national hero in Jamaica. His actions were clearly motivated by his faith and by his reading of scripture.

#### **Malala Yousafzai**

Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate. She is a strong advocate of human rights, particularly among women and children. Her advocacy has grown into an international movement. She is now the most prominent citizen in Pakistan. While on a bus, after taking her exam, she was shot by a Taliban gunman in an assassination attempt in retaliation for her activism. She remained unconscious and was eventually moved to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, UK. The attempt on her life created an international outpouring which resulted in her becoming the most famous teenager in the world.

### Questions (5 minutes)

- » What do Sam Sharpe and Malala Yousafzai have in common?
- » Do you think that they were both chosen to serve God and others? Explain how and why if you think they were?
- » In what ways do you think God is calling you to serve others?

### Chosen to serve others (5 minutes)

In your groups, choose three biblical characters known to you and discuss how you think God chose them to serve others. Examples that come to mind are: Daniel, Amos, Joseph.

You really do not have to go into detail. This is a quick exercise which should take 5 minutes.

## Prayer

### Prayers of Intercession (5 minutes)

In your groups, pray for the following people who have been chosen by God to serve others:

#### **David Lammy: MP for Tottenham**

David has been an MP for many years and sometimes finds his job very challenging - particularly when he sees the increasing numbers of homeless people in Tottenham and feels he is unable to fix the problem.

#### **Theresa May: Prime minister**

We need to pray that she leads carefully and wisely. Pray that her advisers give her good advice and that she seeks, not just their advice but, God's wisdom too.

#### **Donald Trump: President of USA**

A potential force for good and prayers of intercession.

#### **Kim Jong-un: President of North Korea**

North and South Korea have been distant for many years. Now we can pray that the two nations will begin to speak and work together. Pray that Kim Jong-un will take the lead on this matter and reach out to the South Korean President so that peace will reign in South and North Korea.

### Prayers of Intercession (5 minutes)

In your groups, designate one person to mime one of the following. After the group has guessed who is being mimed, quickly pray for the person as they serve others.

- » **Your pastor** – Who has been called to serve your church.
- » **Other individuals in your local church** – Pray for the deacons, elders, teachers, young people, children – pray that they will know they have been chosen to serve others.

## Open the Word

### Chosen to serve creation

As well as being chosen to serve God and others, we have also been chosen to serve creation.

### Quick exercise (5 minutes)

- » In groups, define creation in a sentence. Encourage the young people to write their sentence down or just speak it out. Some may prefer to express their thoughts by drawing
- » Discuss why the young people think we have been chosen to serve creation.

### Open the Word: (5 minutes)

Choose just one of these passages and talk about the lessons it teaches us about creation.

- » **Psalm 139:14** - For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful I know that full well.
- » **Romans 8:19** - For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.
- » **Genesis 1:26** - Then God said, "Let us make humans in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals and over all the creatures that move along the ground".

## Activity

### Prayer for creation (10 minutes)

By using one or some of the above passages, ask the young people to write a prayer - either on their own or with others - which expresses thanks to the creator God for his creation. Encourage the young people to pray their prayer in public and invite others to say 'Amen' to it.

Because we have been chosen to serve creation, ask the young people to add to the list of things that we can do to demonstrate our respect for it:

- » Water covers more than 70 percent of the Earth's surface but most of that is salt water. Fresh water is limited and today a third of the world's people lack access to clean drinking water. Use only as much water as you need. Don't waste water.
- » Eating locally grown food supports local farmers in your own community.
- » Conserve energy - walk, ride a bike and use public transportation more. Drive less. Not only is this good for our health, we will also save money. Also turn off lights and unplug appliances when they are not in use.

Is it possible to add one more solution to the list? Feel free to discuss what the young people suggest.

### Exercise: (10 minutes)

In groups, do a quick sketch of the UK followed by a sketch of a less rich continent and then discuss within the group how best your church can practically support the country/continent you have sketched.

Your young people's suggestions of support do not have to be massive things. Encourage them to discuss their ideas with others and think about how they can be implemented.

## Close

Ask your group to discuss with each other what they have learnt from this session and how they think they will begin to apply this learning at home, school and with friends.

# Holy

## 'Blessed, chosen, holy, loved, forgiven'

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. Ephesians 1:4

### Aim

To help young people to gain a better understanding of what holiness is and to better equip them to gain greater holiness.

### Lesson outcome

- » For our wonderful youth to take seriously their calling to live lives that are good and honouring to God.
- » To explore what holiness means.
- » To look at different ways that holiness might be developed.
- » To equip our young people in living lives that are as good and godly as possible.

### Materials needed

- » Copy of the 'Who is holy?' sheet of names of famous people, trimmed to give individual names/descriptions
- » Computer with internet access to show videos from YouTube
- » Projector and screen (if you have a large group)
- » Copy of *Run Baby Run* by Nicky Cruz or *The Cross and the Switchblade* by David Wilkerson
- » 'Spot the difference' sheets - lots are available online following a Google search, but check copyright restrictions before copying
- » Bibles
- » Happy families card game
- » Credit-card sized cards to create 'pledge cards'
- » Materials to make loom wristbands
- » A branch or large paper to make a tree shape
- » Paper to make leaf shapes
- » Scissors
- » Pens/pencils

### Introduction

The word 'holy' might seem irrelevant or at best a bit of a joke to many people. But if Paul is saying that we must be 'holy and blameless' in the eyes of God, and if we take God at all seriously, we need to take this seriously too!

#### Introductory activity

##### 1 Who is holy? (10 minutes)

Put the printed names of famous people in a random order on a table and, as a group, arrange the people in an order of holiness. Who is holiest? Why?

Discuss what other words might be used instead of 'holy'. Is there merit in the good things that people on the list say and do even if they do not claim to be Christian? Does this matter?

Use these questions as criteria to assess how 'holy' or not these people are:

- » What do they do? What don't they do?
- » What do they say or communicate?
- » How are they about relationships?
- » How are they about people different from them?
- » What do they do with their money, talent, time?

You might want to research some more biographical information on some of these people, in order to be able to highlight for the young people 'good'/'bad' things that they have said and done.

## Introduction cont'd

### 2 Holy Mimes (5 minutes)

Get the group to do a brief mime for the others to guess. Give them 'holy' and 'non-holy' behaviours:

- » 'Holy' = praying, reading the Bible, going to church, being polite and respectful, encouraging others.
- » 'Unholy' = stealing, drinking, smoking, bullying/excluding others, gossiping.

### 3 Talk together about (5 minutes)

- » Ephesians 1:4b What does it mean to be holy today? How can we be set apart? Are we sacred to God? Can people around us see that we are different?
- » You might want to look at Colossians 3:1-15 (advice on how to live)
- » or Philippians 2:14-16 (shining like stars)
- » or 1 Peter 2:1-10 ( a royal priesthood)
- » Luke 6:20-23 (behaviour and attitude that is blessed)
- » Micah 6:8

## Prayers

### A Prayer of thanks and confession

Holy God

What can we say? You are awesome and amazing and totally perfect.

We pray today that you would help us to reflect you and your perfect ways.

You have made us, fearfully and wonderfully, in your image.

Black, White, European, Asian, wherever we place our roots, no matter what we look like, we are made in your image. Help us to grow to be more like you.

In Jesus of Nazareth we have seen how you need us to be and we are sorry that too often we don't follow the ways that Jesus showed us. We are sorry that we fall out, we do stuff that is 'unholy', we do our selfish thing.

You have shown us a better way to be. Help us today to make a new start to follow Jesus' example and to look to people who are good influences, good voices in our lives.

Amen.

## Prayers cont'd

### A Prayer for others

Holy God, you have the power to enable your people to change. You can transform.

So, we pray for people who need to move with you:

- From darkness to light;
- From despair to hope;
- From hatred to love;
- From violence to peace;
- From hunger to plenty;
- From too much to enough;
- From bad ways to good;
- From lonely to loved;
- From no meaning to you;
- From confusion to clarity.

Loving God,

We pray for people in our lives who need the changes you bring. We pray even for people who have hurt us and done us wrong.

And we pray for people who need your transforming love:

- in war zones;
- in refugee camps;
- on traffickers' boats;
- in women's refuges;
- in big business rooms;
- in schools and colleges;
- on street corners;
- in police cells and prisons;
- in the public eye and in private places.

Good, bad, trying hard, not trying enough: help us all to leave behind what is not good and to move towards the holiness that you show us. We pray for a world where your wholesome way of peace and goodness is the norm.

Help us to understand that being holy is about every aspect of life, not just the bit we smarten up on a Sunday, not just about our personal stuff but about how we affect the whole world around us.

Help us to keep believing that change is always possible if we trust in you and your glorious love!

We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

# Open the Word

Paul says we have been selected to be set apart for God, to be as free from blame as we can be. This might seem far off from our experience and understanding but at its simplest it is about transformation in our behaviour and attitude. Here are some ideas on how to bring about this kind of change.

## 1 Watch a clip about transformation (10 mins)

Linvoy Primus: *My Story by Christians In Sport* on <https://www.thefuelcast.com/library>

or

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhV17LChVWM&sns=em>

Look at the story of transformation that Nicky Cruz experienced. Or use an extract from his book, *Run Baby Run* or David Wilkerson's *The Cross and the Switchblade*.

## 2 What would you do? (5 minutes)

Act out or describe two scenarios where there are choices that might be made to go the holy way and the unholy way: eg not getting a bus/train ticket or finding some money and keeping it.

## 3 Do a spot the difference puzzle (5 minutes)

Distribute the spot the difference puzzle sheets you have downloaded for the young people to complete.

## 4 Play 'Spot the Difference' (5 minutes)

One member leaves the group where they cannot see or hear the rest. Meanwhile the remainder of the group makes one change to one person's appearance (eg take out a hairclip; remove an earring; undo a shoelace; swap an item with someone else). The returning group member has to spot the difference that has occurred.

## 5 Me without you (10 minutes)

Listen to the track *Me without you* by Tobymac available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZu6kn\\_\\_0o4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZu6kn__0o4)

Talk about the difference it makes to follow Jesus.

Illustration: lenm | istockphoto.com

## 6 Holy Movements (10 minutes)

Being holy should be about our whole way of being: every area of our lives. This includes standing up against injustice and therefore standing up for what is right.



You might want to look at movements like Woke/Me Too which might be regarded as holy in terms of their activity and who they represent?

Discuss why God might regard these movements as holy? And perhaps the young people would also like to discuss what holy movements they would create and why? You might want to refer to the words from the prophet Isaiah 58:1-12 or from Micah 6:8? Or look at some news resources about these campaigns?

## 7 Filial Piety (10 minutes)

This is a powerful concept in many Asian cultures. It is derived from the teachings of Confucius. In essence it is about honouring your father and mother (see Exodus 20:12 - Ten Commandments).

Get the group to discuss how it might be helpful to have an awareness of this and consider how it might be understood as a way of 'being holy'. You might want to do this whilst playing the card game of Happy Families.

## 8 Unholy behaviour (10 minutes)

If you feel it appropriate with the group you have, look at what the Bible says about these issues raised by Paul:

**Galatians 5:19-21** - 'Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God'. (ESV)

Focus on one or two of the behaviours raised by Paul. How do the group feel they can 'keep holy' concerning these?

Talk about how people might react if someone pointed out something about their conduct that is not good/wholesome/holy?

## Activity

How are we going to behave in the week ahead and beyond? How holy can we be? You might want to combine some of these practical actions with some of the discussions above.

### 1 Pledge cards (10 minutes)

Make credit-card sized Pledge Cards with three numbered promises about positive changes in behaviour/attitude.

### 2 Wristbands (10 minutes)

Make loom wristbands using three different colours to represent different ways we will change our behaviour/attitude and to act as a reminder.

### 3 Holy tree (5 minutes)

Use a branch to make a tree, or cut out a shape of one to go on the wall where the group meets. Cut out and decorate leaves to hang on the branches. Encourage the group to write/draw on the leaves things they want to be more holy about.

### 4 Staying holy (5 minutes)

Talk about practical ways that people can be more/stay holy: praying, fasting, reading or listening to devotionals, listening to other people who are good and wise voices.

### 5 Choices (5 minutes)

Talk about choices in how we use social media to be holy or unholy. How does your Instagram/Snapchat/Twitter self look to people? Does it match up to the kind of person you know about through the Bible, the example of Jesus?

## Close

It's easier to be holy at church, but what about 10am Monday morning or 8pm Tuesday? How will things go for us? What can we do to keep ourselves different, holy, to reflect God's love in us?

# Wonderful Youth: Holy

## Who is holy?

Group leader to copy this sheet onto paper or card and trim to give the individual names

<b>Queen Elizabeth II</b>	<b>Ed Sheeran</b> <i>singer-songwriter</i>	<b>Romele Lukaku</b> <i>Belgian and Man Utd footballer</i>
<b>Barack Obama</b> <i>ex-President of the USA</i>	<b>Lenny Henry</b> <i>actor, comedian, writer, Founder of Comic Relief</i>	<b>Pope Francis</b> <i>head of the Roman Catholic Church</i>
<b>Robert Mugabe</b> <i>ex-President of Zimbabwe</i>	<b>Cyril Ramaphosa</b> <i>President of South Africa</i>	<b>Nadia Hussain</b> <i>winner of Great British Bake Off</i>
<b>Angelina Jolie</b> <i>actor and human rights activist</i>	<b>Ya Ya Toure</b> <i>Man City footballer from Cote d'Ivoire</i>	<b>Donald Trump</b> <i>President of the USA</i>
<b>Aung San Suu Kyi</b> <i>'prime minister' of Myanmar/Burma</i>		

# Loved

## 'Blessed, chosen, holy, loved, forgiven'

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. **He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will**, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace. *Ephesians 1: 2-7 (NRSV)*

### Aim

To enable the young people to explore what it means to be loved by God, and how to show that love to people in the world.

### Lesson outcome

For our wonderful youth to know the love of God, to develop a deep understanding that they are loved no matter what, and to see how we can make a difference in the world through God's love.

- » To know that God's love for us is constant
- » To understand the different ways God shows his love
- » To understand how feeling loved by God equips us to make changes in the world

### Materials needed

- » Copy of opening prayer on paper or screen
- » Copy of 'Love in Different Languages' sheet
- » Clips of famous love songs
- » Bibles
- » Large paper - or a board for each small group
- » Pens/colouring pencils and/or pens
- » Small prize for the winning small group - love hearts or chocolates
- » Information about the persecuted church from agencies such as Open Doors ([www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)), Christian Solidarity Worldwide ([www.csw.org.uk](http://www.csw.org.uk)) and Release International ([releaseinternational.org](http://releaseinternational.org))
- » Old newspapers/magazines, scissors and glue
- » Art materials
- » Images of Jesus from around the world - eg [www.beliefnet.com/columnists/buzz/20-faces-of-jesus-from-around-the-world/?pid=760](http://www.beliefnet.com/columnists/buzz/20-faces-of-jesus-from-around-the-world/?pid=760)

### Introduction

Love means different things to many people. For some, being loved means receiving affection, gifts, or someone's time. The dictionary definition of love is described as a 'strong feeling of affection'. In the New Testament, the term 'love' is used numerous times and, as the New Testament was originally written in Greek, that one word has a few different meanings. There is 'Phileo' a brotherly friendship love, 'Eros' a passionate love, 'Storge' a family love, and 'Agape' which is unselfish, unconditional, it is God's love for mankind.

In today's society it can be hard for people to accept that they are loved by God without having to do anything. People can think they have to earn God's love, and believe they can lose God's love by not doing enough good, or by doing something wrong. However God's love is unconditional - there is nothing we can do to make God love us more or less; God knew us and loved us before we were even created; he knew all the good and bad we would do in our life and still loved us.

In today's lesson the young people will learn more about God's love for us and how that was made perfect through his son Jesus Christ.

## Prayers

### Opening Prayer

Ask the young people to read the prayer below or say their own prayer

Thank you Lord for the Bible,  
for the lessons that we can learn from studying it  
and following your instructions.

We pray that today our hearts, ears and minds  
are open to hear from you and to put your words  
into practice in the coming week.

In Jesus' name,  
Amen

## Activity

### Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

Name one thing you are thankful for this week.  
*or*

Play clips of famous love songs and get the  
young people to guess who is singing.

### Game (5-10 minutes)

Mix up the words on the 'Love in different  
languages' sheet and see if the young people can  
guess the correct word for each country.

The correct translations are as follows:

Spanish	Amor
Polish	Milosc
Bengali	Bhalabasa
Russian	Lyublyu
Japanese	Ai
Hindi	Mohabbat
German	Liebe
French	Amour
Italian	Amore
Turkish	Ask

## Open the Word

Read Ephesians 1:4-5, Romans 8:31-39 and  
John 3:16

Ask the group their thoughts on the readings.  
What verses stick out to them?

## Prayers

### Prayer of thanksgiving

Lord God thank you for loving us. We give  
thanks that you loved us before we even knew  
you and your love for us is wider and deeper  
than we can ever imagine. Thank you for daily  
providing for us with food, water, shelter,  
clothing, friends, and family; and thank you for  
your Word that we can learn from and draw  
closer to you.

In Jesus' name we give thanks.  
Amen

### Prayer of confession

*Give the group a moment to think of something  
they are sorry for.*

Lord God we are sorry for all the things we do  
wrong, for the bad thoughts we have, and the  
times we chose not to do good. We say sorry for  
all the things we know we have done wrong and  
the actions we may have forgotten about.

Lord we ask for your forgiveness for every time  
we have not shown love to others, when we  
have been stingy with our love, or judged the  
behaviour of others.

We ask for your help to show your love in prayer  
and action in Jesus' name.

Amen

### Prayer for others

*Ask the group to think of people who need to  
feel God's love.*

Lord we pray for the people in our minds  
who need to know your love. We ask for an  
opportunity to show your love. We pray for our  
family, friends and neighbours - for you to meet  
all their needs by your grace and mercy.

Lord God we ask that you guide those who  
are lost and struggling, give wisdom for those  
in tough situations, and provide physical and  
emotional healing to those in pain.

We pray for the world around us that people  
may have their hearts and eyes open to the  
truth of Jesus' love.

Amen

## Open the Word

Ask the group to think of the last thing they did to show someone love, and the last thing someone did to show love to them.

Before sharing their memories, get the group to show this action without using words and get the rest of the group to guess the action.

Afterwards discuss what was loving about each behaviour.

### Discussion (5 minutes)

Ask the group whether they still feel loved by a parent/caregiver when they have been told off? For example, told off when they didn't look when they crossed the road, stood too close to the fire, got into trouble for not completing school work.

**Leader's notes:** *God showed his love for us by allowing his son Jesus Christ to die for us, for daily providing for us, protecting us, guiding us, disciplining us. Make the point that because God loves us he sometimes has to discipline us. This may not feel good at the time but it is for our own good. Refer to Hebrews 12:8.*

### Love Quotes (10 minutes)

This activity will help the young people to know where to find verses in the Bible.

In teams, get the young people to look up the verses and write them on a board. The first team to complete wins a prize (eg lovehearts, chocolate).

- » **Romans 13:8** - 'Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law'
- » **1 Corinthians 13:4-5** - 'Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs'

- » **1 Corinthians 16:14** - 'Do everything in love'
- » **1 John 4:16** - 'And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them'
- » **Ephesians 4:2** - 'Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love'
- » **1 Peter 4:8** - 'Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins'
- » **John 15:12** - 'My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you'
- » **1 Corinthians 13:13** - 'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love'
- » **John 3:16** - 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life'
- » **John 15:13** - 'Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends'
- » **Romans 5:8** - 'But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us'
- » **Psalms 86:15** - 'But you, O Lord are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness'

### How far would you go to show love? (10-15 minutes)

Ask the group what they know about the persecuted church. Use information gathered from Open Doors UK, Christian Solidarity Worldwide and Release International to give examples of people risking their life to share their faith, and live as a Christian. Make the point that people are motivated by love from God and the Great Commission.

### Discussion points:

Is everyone loveable?

How do we show love to those who persecute us?

## Activity

### Heart Collage (15-20 minutes)

The young people make a heart collage using old newspapers/magazines with Bible love quotes, which can be displayed in church.

The following discussions can be held whilst they work on the collage:



**1 Sam Sharpe**, also known as Daddy Sharpe, was an enslaved Jamaican man who was the leader of the widespread 1832 rebellion in Jamaica. Sam Sharpe was a Baptist deacon and preacher

who, unlike many enslaved Africans, could read the Bible. His reading of the Bible helped him realise that God hated enslavement - a message he eagerly shared with other enslaved people. Because of the injustice Sharpe witnessed, he created a plan of passive resistance in 1831, in which the enslaved refused to work on Christmas Day 1831 unless they were paid for their work on the plantations. But they were not. The enslaved rebelled. On May 23, 1832, Sharpe was hanged. The words that immediately preceded his execution were: 'I would rather die on yonder gallows than live in slavery.'

- » How do you think Sam Sharpe would define love?
- » How did Sharpe demonstrate his love for enslaved people?
- » What lessons do we learn about God from this story?



**2 Florence Nightingale** was a celebrated English social reformer, and the founder of modern nursing. She came to prominence while serving as a nurse during the Crimean War where she tended to wounded soldiers. She has been dubbed 'The Lady of the Lamp,' making rounds to wounded soldiers at night.

- » How do you think Florence Nightingale would define love?
- » How did Florence demonstrate her love?
- » What lessons do we learn about God in this story?



**3 Mary Seacole** While many people give plenty of credit to Florence Nightingale for changing large swathes of medical care during the 19th century, Mary Seacole was another key contributor and radical reformer. It's safe to say that Mary Seacole is the unsung hero of 19th century nursing. Her father was Scottish and her mother Jamaican. She applied to join the same nursing group that Nightingale successfully applied to but was rejected on the grounds of her race. But this did not deter her. She borrowed money and made the 4,000 mile trek to Crimea in order to help the wounded and injured soldiers. Relying on her knowledge of Jamaican tropical and herbal remedies and medicine, she created boarding houses for the soldiers.

- » How did Mary Seacole express her love?
- » How easy do you find it to show love when people are standing in your way?
- » What do you think motivated Mary's love?



**4 Mary Eliza Mahoney** was the first African American woman to complete nursing training and become a registered nurse. Mahoney worked at the New England hospital for Women and Children before she was accepted to the hospital's nursing school at the age of 33. In the face of racism against black nurses, Mahoney advocated for the rights of all black nurses and went on to co-found the National Association of Coloured Graduate Nurses in 1908.

- » Is it possible to challenge racism with love?
- » What do you think God feels about racism?
- » How would you feel if you had to help someone who had done you a wrong, for example someone who was racist towards you, a school bully, or someone who did not help you when you needed them?

Image credits:

1 Sam Sharpe Project | [www.samsharpeproject.org](http://www.samsharpeproject.org)

2 GeorgiosArt | [istockphoto.com](http://istockphoto.com)

3 World History Archive / Alamy Stock Photo

4 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division, The New York Public Library

## Activity cont'd



**5 Pandita Ramabai** was an Indian Christian in the 19th century, originally from a Hindu background. She heard of the Christian faith whilst in Calcutta; however, she was resistant to

Christianity as she felt it would mean accepting European culture, but after a missionary explained the freedom in Christianity she fully accepted Christ and kept her Hindu eating and dressing traditions. After living in a culture where women were treated as second class citizens and the Caste system created a divide, Ramabai was already passionate about social justice.

Her faith in Jesus encouraged her to support outcast children, widows, orphans and destitute women, and to translate the Bible into Marathi. Ramabai's love and faith in Jesus was practical, and connects to James 2:14-26 - 'Faith without works is dead'.

- » Can we really love someone if this love isn't shown in a practical way?
- » How do we/can we show love to people are in need (homeless, hungry etc)?
- » How do you feel when you show love to someone but they don't thank you or show any appreciation?

### **The love of God (15-20 minutes)**

Ask the group to draw a picture that reflects the love of God, either for you or somebody else. The image can be as abstract as you want it to be. The important thing is to reflect your understanding of the love of God in the picture you are drawing.

- » Ask the group if they found the exercise difficult or easy, and why?
- » What does your picture say about the love of God?

*And / or*

### **Images of Jesus**

Look at images of Jesus from around the world.

- » Does the image of Jesus speak about the love of God?
- » Why does it? Why does it not?
- » Choose an image of Jesus that connects with you. Use this image to create some prayers of love and present them to the Jesus you have selected.

### **Songs:**

The list of songs below talk about God's love for people, and shows that their worth is found in God through Jesus. These songs can be found online and played during the craft activities.

- » Jordan Feliz – Beloved
- » Nicole C Mullen – Hey Girl
- » Guvna B featuring Keisha Buchanan – His love
- » Jamie Grace featuring Morgan Harper Nichols – Daughter of the King

### **Discussion/Activity (5-10 minutes)**

**Leader notes:** God's love for us is unconditional, and is directly related to his grace – refer to the book of Hosea and Romans 8. God knew all the bad we would do, and what would be done to us but God loves us even when he dislikes our behaviour.

Ask the group to think about the worst thing that they have ever done, someone from history who has done something to hurt others, and the last person who has said or done something to upset them.

Ask the group if they/the people are still loveable in the eyes of God

*And / or*

Download or draw a large picture of a smiling cartoon face, get the group to write/scribble/ draw all over the picture until the face is covered (you could use art material). Ask each of the group to use one word to describe the image (eg messy, disgusting, ugly). When everyone has finished, make the point that things might happen to us that change the way the world looks at us but God always looks at us with love.

Illustration: shutterstock.com

## Close

Ask the group to close their eyes and imagine their happiest memory, and the person they care about the most. Leaders could play instrumental music to create a relaxing moment. Give the group a couple of minutes to think, then get them to open their eyes and, if they want, share how that felt. Then explain that God's love for people is a million times more than the positive feelings they just had.

### **Closing prayer**

Give the group the option to write prayer requests. The leader will then pray for these, and topical situations in the news.

God we thank you that you loved us enough to send Jesus to die for us. We ask that each day you reveal to us how much you love us, and enable us to take every opportunity to show love to others. Help us to read your word and pray to you so we draw closer to you each day.  
In Jesus' name,  
Amen

## Love in different languages

Group leader to copy this sheet onto paper or card and trim to give the individual words.

<b>Spanish</b>	<b>Hindi</b>	<b>Amor</b>	<b>Mohabbat</b>
<b>Polish</b>	<b>German</b>	<b>Milosc</b>	<b>Liebe</b>
<b>Bengali</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>Bhalabasa</b>	<b>Amour</b>
<b>Russian</b>	<b>Italian</b>	<b>Lyublyu</b>	<b>Amore</b>
<b>Japanese</b>	<b>Turkish</b>	<b>Ai</b>	<b>Ask</b>

# Forgiven

## 'Blessed, chosen, holy, loved, forgiven'

### Aim

To enable our wonderful youth to fully grasp God's all-embracing plan of forgiveness.

### Lesson outcome

- » For our youths to recognise that they are accepted by God, no matter what they have experienced, have done or have been. Christ's loving sacrifice covers all wrongs and allows whoever will to come into full fellowship with him and the Father.
- » For teenagers to work through the oft-times difficult truth that there is also a need to forgive others and to create something positive out of our painful experiences.
- » To look at how Christ's sacrifice has made forgiveness accessible for all.
- » To explore the various areas of 'Forgiven': Being forgiven; forgiving oneself; forgiving others.
- » To look at how forgiveness can sometimes create something powerful from something painful.

### Materials needed

- » Set of 'good/bad/neither' action cards in an envelope for each young person
- » Set of 'Good', 'Not good', 'Neither' signs for each young person
- » Copy of 'Forgiveness Proverb' sheet
- » Cross (Optional)
- » Posters with the words NO FORGIVENESS and JESUS' ACTION FORGIVES US
- » Collection of bin bags, handbags or clothes
- » Computer with internet access to show videos from YouTube (optional)
- » YouTube: Power of Forgiveness – Royston (Optional)
- » Copies of Maggy Barankitse / Mary Johnson sheets - one per pair or small group

### Notes for leaders

Forgiveness - the truth that we are forgiven through Christ - is powerful; liberating and freeing us from guilt and pain. For many it is something long desired. However, for others the whole area of forgiveness, to truly feel forgiven, is often hampered by low self-esteem and a sense of worthlessness, or by simply reasoning that some acts are beyond forgiveness. Likewise, for others, because of the crime, the wrong done against them, forgiveness may be a step too far. Indeed, to feel forgiven, to forgive oneself and to forgive others is all too often a work in progress. Mindful of this we have tried to present the material sensitively. Everything is open to tweaking or changing. We hope that from this material our wonderful youth will understand and be able to articulate the fact that God is a God with arms outstretched who desires to forgive and to heal.

To reinforce the message of forgiveness and to make clear that, regardless of how long the process takes, forgiving others through the restorative power of Christ is possible, we have suggested the teacher write the words: 'JESUS' ACTION FORGIVES US' on a poster and hold it up at significant times throughout the session.

This lesson has been designed to allow for shorter or longer teaching sessions. For example, in the discussion on guilt in Part 2 'Forgiving Yourself', the Apostle Paul's feelings of guilt and the Bible exercise can all stand alone and brought to a positive conclusion for self-forgiveness. The teaching times can be set to desired time frames. Leaders' notes are provided throughout.

## Introduction

God sent his Son to forgive us of all that can separate us from him. Today let's see what that truly means and how it is played out in our lives. Select one of the openers provided.

### Opening Activity (5 minutes)

#### Game 1

- » Give each young person an envelope with 'good/bad/neither' action cards eg Rude to my parent/guardian; give a gift; kicked the cat; helped in the garden; burned the dinner; cooked the dinner; swore at the teacher; laid the table; sang to an audience; did my homework; hugged somebody; ate all the chocolate etc. Try to make up as many as possible.
- » Give each young person the words GOOD; NOT GOOD; NEITHER on separate cards to lay out in front of them.
- » Give the young people 45 seconds (or however long you chose) to put each action into one of the three categories.
- » When the time is up, check who has managed to categorise all the actions or those who have categorised most of them.
- » Flag up some or all the actions and ask them in which category they placed them. Some place-selection will lead to discussion and/or alternative placing.

Or

#### Game 2

- » Ask the youth to match each 'Forgiveness Proverb' to its correct country of origin. To save time these could be divided between teams.
- » Go through the answers with the teenagers:
  - » It is fitting for a great God to forgive great sinners (**Israel**)
  - » Forgiving the unrepentant is like drawing pictures on water (**Japan**)
  - » Forgiveness is more satisfying than revenge (**Saudi Arabia**)
  - » One can forgive a murder but not impoliteness (**China**)
  - » Women and fools never forgive (**China**)
  - » Where blood has been shed the tree of forgiveness cannot grow (**Brazil**)
  - » He who forgives a thief is a thief himself (**Spain**)
  - » The offender never forgives (**Russia**)
  - » Who forgives wins (**Africa**)
  - » If I die, I forgive you; If I recover, we shall see (**Spain**)
  - » If you offend, ask for pardon; if offended, forgive (**Ethiopia**)
  - » They forgive the wine, but they hang the bottle (**France**)
  - » You forgive everything of someone who doesn't forgive himself (**China**)
  - » God forgives sinners, otherwise his heaven would be empty (**Germany**)
  - » Be patient with your enemies and forgiving of your friends (**Afghanistan**)
  - » If there were no wrongdoings, there would be no forgiveness (**Egypt**)

## Open the Word

Read Ephesians 1:1-15 (focusing on verses 7-8)

### 1 The Message of the Cross (10-12 minutes)

#### No forgiveness

Hold up a cross and ask your teenagers what it symbolised at the time of Jesus.

*Teacher's note:* The cross in Jesus' day was considered a thing of scorn. It was a cruel device designed for torture and humiliation.

It was a thing of shame, retribution, punishment and death; vengeful and unforgiving. The Romans used it as a warning to their subjects that mercy would not be shown to anyone who questioned Roman rule. Daily the vision of the cross struck fear into the hearts of those who gazed upon it. Many of those who challenged the power of Rome were crucified; nailed to the cross, often hanging for many days before death relieved them of their suffering.

Hold up the NO FORGIVENESS poster.

## Open the Word cont'd

### Forgiven

Hold up the cross again and ask your teenagers what it symbolises for Christians.

*Teacher's Note:* Jesus took on the shame, pain and guilt of the cross even though he was not guilty of any crime. He knew there was not one person on the earth who was not guilty of some wrongdoing. He knew that that wrong, that sin, separated us from our holy God, destroying any chance of a relationship with him. All humanity was guilty, for all have sinned and are deserving of death.

- » What were the words that showed us the heart of Christ on the Cross?
- » What did Christ's action do for you and me?

*Teacher's Note:* Christ desired for us to be forgiven of all our wrong and set free from the endless guilt and shame which so often accompanies the faults we make. His plan was to wipe the slate clean. To do this he took on all our sin and volunteered to die in our place.

Hold up the JESUS' ACTION FORGIVES US poster.

### Nailed to the cross (1)

Ask the teenagers to take a brief moment to think of those areas in their lives where they are grateful for **God's lasting forgiveness**. Ask them to imagine themselves nailing these things onto the cross.

## Prayer

Give the teenagers the opportunity to offer a prayer of thanksgiving or use the prayer below.

### Thanksgiving

Almighty God, we thank you that there is nothing that will ever drive you away from us.  
Thank you for the symbolic message of forgiveness in the cross  
and for your willingness to wipe the slate clean.  
Thank you for all that your death means for us  
and for your unfailing love.  
Amen

## Open the Word

### 2 Forgiving Yourself (12-17 minutes)

Discuss what you think it means, 'To be burdened down with guilt.' (2 minutes)  
List or brainstorm reasons for the Apostle Paul to feel guilt. (5 minutes)

Ask for a volunteer. As each area of guilt is called out, have the volunteer put on a piece of clothing, bag etc. These represent the feelings and burdens that come when one does not feel forgiven. Possible reasons for Paul to feel guilt:

- » Refuted and denounced the teachings of Christ
- » Denied Christ was the Son of God
- » Actively endorsed the persecution of the followers of Christ
- » Stood by, holding the cloaks of those who taunted and stoned Stephen (the first Christian martyr) to death
- » Made it his purpose thereafter to persecute the Christians

Ask the teens to call out a few more situations which could lead to a desire to be forgiven eg verbal abuse, theft, etc. Continue to place items of clothing/bags on the volunteer for every suggestion made.

If anybody should be burdened down with guilt, it should have been Paul. Yet, he writes, **'In him we have redemption through his blood, and forgiveness of sin.'** Ephesians 1:7.

### Freedom from guilt (5-10 minutes)

Ask the teenagers to look at Ephesians 1:1-15 and call out, or write down, the words or phrases Paul uses in these verses which shows he believes his guilt is lifted (volunteer to stay at the front).  
Eg v2 grace, peace; v3 blessed; v4 blameless

As they call out these words, ask individuals to take off the extra baggage covering the volunteer.

Explain that Christ's forgiveness means we don't have to beat ourselves up over past indiscretions and poor conduct. Because Christ forgives us, we can forgive ourselves.

NB Forgiving ourselves is important because guilt lays on us a sense of worthlessness and self-loathing.

Hold up the JESUS' ACTION FORGIVES US poster.

## Open the Word cont'd

### Nailed to the cross 2

Ask teenagers to take a moment to think of those areas where they struggle to forgive themselves. Ask them to imagine themselves laying these at the foot of the cross.

## Prayer

Oh Lord,  
There are things I have done that have left me  
ashamed  
These things I wish I could undo  
I have said things I wish I could unsay  
So often I hate what I do  
You know my heart and how I feel  
And you forgive me.  
Help me to hold on to that truth  
So that I can live in that reality  
I AM FORGIVEN.  
Amen

## Open the Word

### 3 Forgiving Others (12-16 minutes)

Make sure the teenagers are seated. Ask them to stand and then sit back again if they could forgive the following situations:

- » Your best friend and business partner has wiped out your joint £10,000 bank account
- » Your brother/sister sold your mobile phone and laptop to fund a holiday
- » Someone has spread a vicious lie about you which has cost you your job
- » Your Asian friend has just suffered a vicious attack by a known racist thug
- » Your home has been burnt to the ground on religious grounds

### Why is it important to forgive? (5 minutes)



**Martin Luther King** did not have an easy life. In fact, the hardships he endured were horrendous. He was beaten, pushed around, ridiculed, expelled from cities and incarcerated.

## Open the Word cont'd

He received hate mail and threatening letters. The lives of his children and his wife were constantly under threat. But he chose to forgive his oppressors. Here is what King wrote: *'Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude.'* (Martin Luther King)

Here is what the Apostle Paul wrote:

***'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.'*** (Romans 12:21)

NB Forgiveness is ongoing.

2018 marks the 50th Anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King. Until the day he died he held on to forgiveness.

**Mary Karen Read** was a 19 year old Korean girl who moved to Virginia, USA. She was one of the 32 students and college staff gunned down on 16 April, 2007, in what is now called, 'The Virginia Tech Shooting.' Here's what she wrote: *'When deep injury is done to us we never recover until we forgive... Forgiveness does not change the past but it does enlarge the future.'*

(NB ***The Power of Forgiveness – Royston*** available on YouTube, is an excellent sketch produced as a result of Mary's diary entry - Information on Mary Karen Read can be used with or without viewing the sketch) (4:00 mins)

### Discussion (3 minutes)

With reference to the sit/standing scenario, Martin Luther King's life and Mary Karen Read's journal entry, have the following discussion:

- » Is there anything that cannot or should not be forgiven? Why?
- » What do you think Mary Karen Read (and the young man in the sketch) is/are saying here?

**Teacher's Notes:** When we do not forgive we become vengeful, obsessed with pay back, embittered and twisted (see Optional Resources: Billy Johnson). Bitterness often leads to hate and hate often leads to evil. Evil thoughts are created in us to the point that it often dictates what we think, say and do. Evil corrupts the soul. Forgiveness seeks to reverse that. Forgiveness is important to the human well-being.

## Open the Word cont'd

'We all get to the point where we realise human life would be totally impossible without forgiveness.' (Desmond Tutu: 'The Act Of Forgiveness')

### **Some use their painful experience to bring about change (10-15 minutes)**

For some people their painful experience has been the driving force to help themselves and others find a better way, teach a truth, question an ideology, establish places of empowerment or liberate from various forms of oppression. This resolve to make love work and conquer within forgiveness, and often within pain, has resulted in lives being changed forever.

#### **Teenager's Creative Contribution:**

(See alternative activity in Optional Resources)

## Activity

### **Forgiveness that makes a difference**

Split the young people into two groups or into pairs. Hand each group an information sheet on either Maggy Barankitse or Mary Johnson and Oshea Israel.

Ask them to read through the remarkable story of the woman selected.

Ask both groups/pairs to come up with a caption or a piece of art for a newspaper to accompany the information given. The caption or the art work should sum up the lives and activities of these women.

Once finished one person can tell Maggy's or Mary's story to those who don't have the information. The corresponding art pieces can then be presented.

## Open the Word

### **Conclusion (5 mins)**

Forgiven: The concept of forgiveness was forged in the heart of God and demonstrated through the life and action of Christ. There are many sides to forgiveness. To be forgiven, to accept forgiveness and to give forgiveness – these positions do not sit well or comfortably with everybody. To give and receive forgiveness is not always easy. It may take an age for some people to get to the place where forgiveness is possible. Some may never want to get there; the pain too great or the transgression too horrendous. Yet, history is full of people who, primarily through the love and strength of Christ, have forgiven others of horrendous wrongs. So forgiveness is possible. For the Christian it is important to remember that even when we cannot understand why certain things have happened, when forgiving someone seems impossible, it is then that Christ asks us to share the load with him.

NB Forgiveness may not change the person who has been forgiven but it will change the one who forgives.

### **Nailed to the cross 3**

Ask teenagers to take a moment to think on those areas in their lives where they would like God to stand with them, strengthen them, hold them and walk with them. Ask them to imagine themselves being hugged by Christ at the foot of the cross.

## Prayer

God, the hurt we feel is often so strong  
We cannot see the sunshine  
We cannot see anything but unkindness and suffering.  
Please hold us in our pain  
brighten our path  
lighten our hearts  
Walk with us on our journey  
Live through us and lead us to a place of peace.  
Amen

## Optional Resources

### 2 Forgiving Yourself

**Watch 'The power of forgiveness – Sammy Rangel'** – TEDxDanubia available on Youtube (21:36)

**Watch 'Rediscovering hope through self-forgiveness – Billy Johnson'** - TeDx Talks available on Youtube (9:43)

Billy Johnson stole drugs from a drug dealer. In an act of revenge, the drug dealer killed Billy's younger brother. Grieving and guilt ridden, Billy went to the drug dealer's home and shot him dead. Billy spent over 20 years in prison for murder. With two deaths on his conscience, guilt drove him to further acts of rage and violence whilst in prison... guilt was tormenting him.

*'I was an empty shell buried in a coffin, alive... I'm slowly trying to put the pieces of my life back in place. At moments I still feel pain but my faith in God drives me every day. And being able to dig deep beyond the surface, to find his light of self-forgiveness is the most rewarding feeling you can feel.'*

### 3 Forgiving Others

**Watch 'The power of forgiveness - Royston'** available on Youtube (4:02 minutes)

» What words would you use to describe the young man in this video?

This video was produced in response to the final journal entry of Mary Karen Read.

Desmond Tutu said, 'It's **so easy** for the victim to hold on to their victimhood.'

See also:

**Watch 'Without forgiveness there is no future - Desmond Tutu'** available on Youtube (4:16 minutes)

**Watch 'Corrie Ten Boom: A message on forgiveness'** available on Youtube (4:22 minutes)

Romans 5:5

Corrie Ten Boom's family were Dutch Christians who hid Jews in their homes from the Nazis in WWII. The family was put into a concentration camp as a result and Corrie's sister died in the camp before Corrie's very eyes. Years later, one of the Nazis who tortured them in the camp asked for her forgiveness.

*'I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart but forgiveness is not an emotion... forgiveness is an act of the will and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart... 'Help' I prayed silently... and an incredible thing took place... this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being... 'I forgive you brother, I cried, with all of my heart...'* Corrie Ten Boom

### Forgiveness That Makes A Difference

**Watch 'Maggie Barankitse: Love made me an inventor'** available on Youtube (7.51 minutes)

This is an excellent piece on the act of forgiveness in action.

**Watch 'African woman forgives criminals who murdered her family, visits one in prison'** available on Youtube (2:45 minutes)

**Watch 'The power of forgiveness CBS'** available on Youtube (3:29 minutes)

### Peace and Reconciliation

Nelson Mandela joined the struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa. As a lawyer he was intelligent and vocal so it wasn't long before he was arrested. He was sentenced to life in prison but after spending 27 years in isolation on Robben Island; deprived of his human rights, family and friends, he was released in 1990. On release he did not seek revenge and retribution but reconciliation. Mandela chose to forgive and do something with the power that choice gave him. He pledged to forgive and work with the oppressors of the evil regime in order to build a free and democratic South Africa.

**Watch 'Forgiveness, in memory of Nelson Mandela 1918-2013'** by Tim Grable available on Youtube (4.04 minutes)

### Creative Contribution

Ask teenagers to listen to the song **Forgiven** - by David Crowder and Ed Cash.

### Art Piece

Chose one from the following:

- » Draw a piece of art which expresses the truth of this song.
- » Put together a dance which expresses the truth of this song.
- » Produce an acrostic poem using the word 'Forgiven.'

## Forgiveness Proverbs

### Forgiveness Proverbs

See if you can match the following 'forgiveness proverbs' to the correct country.

- It is fitting for a great God to forgive great sinners
- Forgiving the unrepentant is like drawing pictures on water
- Forgiveness is more satisfying than revenge
- One can forgive a murder but not impoliteness
- Women and fools never forgive
- Where blood has been shed the tree of forgiveness cannot grow
- He who forgives a thief is a thief himself
- The offender never forgives
- Who forgives wins
- If I die, I forgive you; If I recover, we shall see
- If you offend, ask for pardon; if offended, forgive
- They forgive the wine, but they hang the bottle
- You forgive everything of someone who doesn't forgive himself
- God forgives sinners, otherwise his heaven would be empty
- Be patient with your enemies and forgiving of your friends
- If there were no wrongdoings, there would be no forgiveness

Afghanistan; Brazil; China; Egypt; Ethiopia; France;

Germany; Israel; Japan; Russia; Saudi Arabia; Spain

(you'll need to use some of these countries more than once!)

## Forgiveness That Makes a Difference

### Maggy Barankitse

Maggy Barankitse is known as 'The mother of ten thousand children.' In 1993 thousands were killed in Burundi in the ethnic cleansing between the Hutus and Tutsis. No one was spared, not even children. Maggy was stripped, tied up, beaten and made to watch as seventy-two people were murdered before her eyes - including her family. Many were mutilated. She watched as they beheaded her best friend and her friend's husband. Maggy survived. Afterwards she did something remarkable.

The Mother  
of Ten Thousand  
Children

Maggy opened the 'Maison Shalom Centre' (Shalom' means peace) to look after the orphaned children of Burundi from both ethnic groups. Her work didn't stop there. She began to help former child soldiers and those children living with Aids. Maggy has since opened 130 more centres in Burundi. She has received international praise and numerous awards. She says the challenge of helping needy children is big but the human spirit is bigger and stronger. Maggy's whole message is about forgiveness. She forgave the criminal who burned her three aunts alive and she actually visited him in prison.

Her story is truly remarkable.

'My vocation is  
to distribute hope;  
to give love.  
It's our human vocation...'

Maggy Barankitse



One young girl Maggy adopted as an orphan child later got married. The man who killed the girl's parents was at the wedding. The girl went to him and said,

*'Now I can forgive you forever because our mum (Maggy) taught us to stand up and fight in dignity, without violence.'*

Photo: EFE News Agency / Alamy Stock Photo

## Forgiveness That Makes a Difference

### Mary Johnson

Mary Johnson thought her world had come to an end when 16 year old Oshea Israel killed her 16 year old son at a party. Oshea was given a 25 year sentence. For 10 years Mary could not forgive him.

However, that all changed one day when she felt the Lord ask her to set up a group for the mothers of murdered children and for the mothers of those children who have murdered. Although Mary was reluctant, God persisted until she finally agreed. However, Mary knew that for this project to truly work, and be the oasis she felt God wanted it to be, she first had to forgive the boy who killed her son.

Although it was very painful she reluctantly began visiting Oshea in prison. This went on for some time. Then one day an almost impossible challenge arose. Oshea asked her for a hug... Mary felt sick to her core; this was too much to give. Again, with mind, body and soul aching, Mary silently whispered, 'Ok Lord.' She got up, walked around the table and hugged her son's killer. Shaking uncontrollably and full of grief, Mary felt her legs start to buckle and she began to faint. Then something incredible happened. Oshea held on to her to protect her from the fall; cradling her in his arms, safe from harm.

In that moment love replaced the hate and resentment Mary had towards Oshea. In that instant Mary's love held on to Oshea and... 'The Forgiveness Project' was born.

When Oshea got out of prison, Mary found him a place to live - right next door to her. They are not just neighbours - Mary feels as if she has gained a son and Oshea regards Mary as his mother from God.

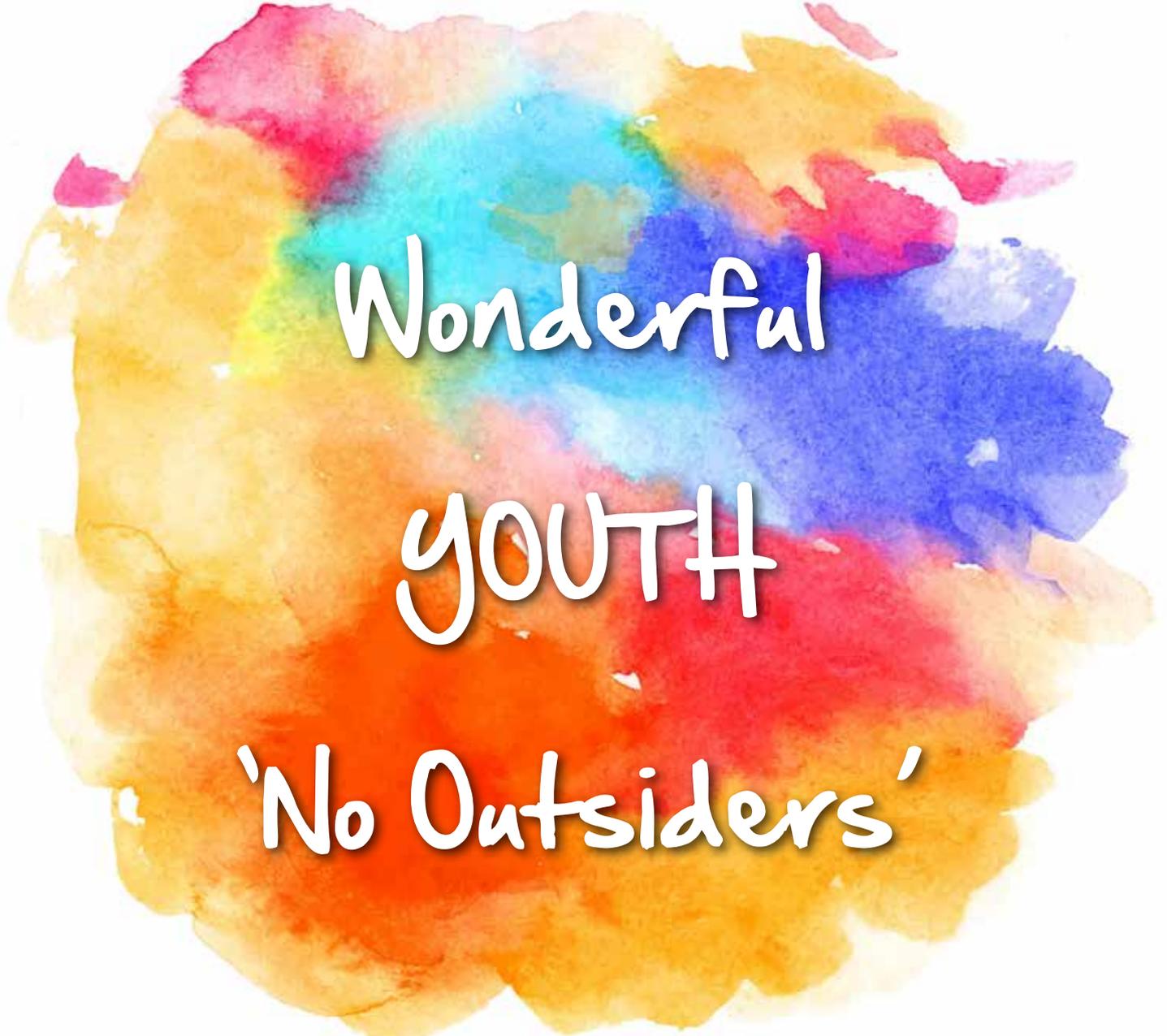
They are not just neighbours - Mary feels as if she has gained a son and Oshea regards Mary as his mother from God.

The  
Forgiveness  
Project



Photo: Mary Johnson and Oshea Israel - On Being

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/speakingoffaith/5739204007/in/photolist-9KcJTy-9K9Vpe-9Kdjwb-9K9YcB>  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/legalcode>



Wonderful  
YOUTH  
'No Outsiders'

Five Biblical sessions created for Black History Month to empower young people between the ages of 13 and 16 to become  
'The best that you can be'

# Contents

The five studies in this resource may be used in any order.

Introduction	3
<b>The Centurion</b>	
» Leaders' Notes	4
» 'Who's who?' sheets	9
» 'Who's who?' answer sheet	12
<b>The anointing of Jesus by a woman in the city</b>	
» Leaders' Notes	13
» 'How do you feel?' sheet	17
» 'Welcome in different cultures' sheet	18
<b>The woman who reached out to Jesus</b>	
» Leaders' Notes	19
» Quiz sheet	22
<b>The parable of the Good Samaritan</b>	
» Leaders' Notes	23
» 'Circle of friends' samples sheet	26
<b>Zacchaeus</b>	
» Leaders' Notes	27
» 'Saying sorry' sheet	31

Even though there is a vast number of resources on the Christian market to aid young people reflect on their Christian faith few, if any, intentionally enable young people of colour to see their image reflected in the resources. Drawing from a wealth of material coupled with exercises and activities, *Wonderful Youth* aims to address this imbalance by particularly enabling young people of colour to read the Bible through their cultural and theological lenses.

Commissioned by the Baptist Union Racial Justice Hub, *Wonderful Youth* has been written by contributors from Six Ways Baptist Church, Birmingham and John Bunyan Baptist Church, Oxford (both multicultural churches). Their aim is to equip young black and minority ethnic people to appreciate and love God's Word. Designed to be used during Black History Month in October 2019, *Wonderful Youth* also provides a window of opportunity for churches and youth groups to explore and celebrate some of the historical and current unique contributions from people of colour.

# Introduction

## A brief introduction to 'No Outsiders'

Luke shows us a Jesus who welcomes, walks with and heals individuals - both in their own right and as representatives of social groupings, who at the time would have been looked down upon or shunned or worse.

Jesus sets out his agenda in his home synagogue as he proclaims: good news to the poor; release of captives; recovery of sight; and the freedom of the oppressed (Luke 4:16-30). This is exciting, edgy stuff and it sets the tone for what Luke reveals to us about his ministry.

**The Centurion** (Luke 7:1-10) - a racial and power gap is bridged in a time of need because of a relationship which cuts through the social, political, religious and ethnic divides.

**The anointing of Jesus by a woman in the city** (Luke 7:36-50) - an urban story of inclusivity, openness and outrage. The true faith is shown by the voiceless and nameless person from the margins.

**The woman who reached out to Jesus** (Luke 8:40-56) - a woman in a place where she should never even have been, has a powerful healing encounter. The untouchable outsider meets Jesus.

**The parable of the Good Samaritan** (Luke 10:25-37) - the old enemy, the Samaritan, is the merciful hero of the piece. Crossing the boundary of prejudice to show love to his neighbour.

**Zacchaeus** (Luke 19:1-10) - rich and powerful yes, but unpopular. Raises questions about who is included in the Kingdom and what needs to be done to get there. Also, issues around who is on the edge trying hard to be noticed or trying to find out. Plus expectations of hospitality.

In each episode and in the story of the Good Samaritan, either through who he chooses to heal or welcome or what he shows us in his storytelling, Jesus is emphasising his inclusive nature. Each time, the choices that Jesus makes go against the accepted way of doing things and seek to involve and affirm people who are outsiders. It is no big leap to reflect this in how we relate being overlooked, oppressed, excluded, silenced because of being a person of colour, or a woman, or having a disability, or being a young person.

So what we might do as we work with this theme is apply it to life today and see how the Jesus agenda should be our agenda through including outsiders, affirming the oppressed, giving voice to the silenced, setting modern day captives free!



Welcome

# The Centurion

Luke 7: 1-10

## Aim

- » To enable the young people to gain a deeper understanding of how we are all created in the image of God.
- » To look at the issues that may challenge Godly cohesion in our society.
- » To encourage our youth to look beyond the superficial and see what is really important

## Objectives

- » To challenge our youths to be as Christ to others: the friend, the help, the source of encouragement
- » For our youths to make informed assessments on social attitudes and challenge injustice and prejudices and be the voice for the voiceless

## Lesson outcome

For our wonderful youth to chose to become a reflection of the welcoming, embracing and loving heart of Christ.

## Materials needed

- » Printed worksheet of 'Who's Who?' including the list of jobs or occupations
- » Blindfold
- » Flip chart or large piece of paper
- » Bibles
- » Pens and paper

Croeso

Aloha

## Prayers

Lord, may we be a living reflection of you.  
May our actions resemble the attitude of the Centurion.

We long for you to say of us  
'I tell you, I have not found such faith,  
such a desire to do right,  
in such as this young man or woman.'  
Father, may your will be done in us.  
Amen.

Lord God,  
We praise you for the gift of concern.  
We thank you for all those who go the extra mile  
for others.  
We thank you Lord that we are all worthy of your  
care  
And your love.  
Amen.

Father, help us to be mindful of the needs of  
others.  
We are so blessed to be living in a land of peace  
and relative prosperity  
We sometimes lose sight of the bigger picture.  
We forget that not all lives are lived without fear  
or suffering.  
Help us to be mindful of those places where loss  
is so real.  
Forgive us when we forget how  
difficult life can be for others.  
When we forget,  
gently nudge us to remember  
and reflect.  
Amen.

## Introduction

### Introductory activity

#### 1 Who's who? - matching person to profession (5 minutes)

Place the pictures of people of different nationalities, ages, abilities on the table. Also place the names of the jobs/occupations of those individuals on the table and ask the young people to match the person to the job. Then hand them the sheet with the correct answers.

*The teenager will get a few wrong and may be surprised by their findings and the facts*

#### 2 Guessing with a blindfold (5 minutes) optional

Ask for a volunteer. Blindfold the individual. Ask for 3-4 volunteers who wouldn't mind their face being touched. Ask the blindfolded person to guess who the other member of the team is by touching and feeling around their face.

*Some participants may not guess the identity of others if blindfolded. This exercise could be used to highlight the fact that until we truly see each other as 'individuals' - how they think, feel, live and fellowship - we will never truly know them.*

#### Introduction (5 minutes)

Today we are going to look at a story about a *relationship* that challenged the norms and expectations of the day. This actual event could be set at any time, in any place and in any community. However, it is set in Israel in a place called Capernaum. Jesus has just entered the city after teaching elsewhere about God's expectation of his people: 'Love your enemies, do good to those that hate you,' (Luke 6:27).

#### Brainstorm

Romans occupied Israel during the time of Jesus. What was the general view held by the Jews of Jesus' day regarding their Roman rulers?

**Answer:** Cruel, barbaric, mighty, unforgiving, intolerant, ungodly, hedonistic, irreverent, highly trained, fighting machines, loyal, etc.

## Open the Word

**Read:** *Luke 7:1-10 The Kind Centurion*

The main person in the story is a Roman Centurion; a captain of 100 foot soldiers. He has sworn his allegiance to Rome and is ready to fight to ensure her power and expansion. He is strong, courageous in battle, standing his ground even if his life depends on it. No one under his command ever questions his authority. His is the final word. To the Jew he is part of the despised Roman occupation, governing them, and therefore the enemy of Israel. Romans are their oppressors. So, although the centurion has shown himself to be a friend of the Jews by caring for their nation and building their synagogue, he still represents Roman force and occupation.

This Centurion has a servant who is gravely ill and close to death. We see that the Centurion is so anxious over the health of his servant that he sends a group of Jewish elders to ask Jesus to come and heal him.

#### Barriers to Relationships (6 minutes)

##### Brainstorm

We have already stated the general character and traits of a Roman soldier but what were the attributes of the Centurion in our passage?

Most Jews would have expected their Roman masters to be vulgar, aggressive and uncharitable. They would have **pre-judged** him yet the Centurion in our story shows none of these traits. He is one who shows care and concern. The Centurion highly valued his sick servant. **He is his friend.**

##### Discussion

- » What was it that made the youth place some of the positions/descriptions in the Who's Who exercise alongside the chosen characters?
- » Are similar judgements made about others and if so why?
- » Is this something we see happening more and more in our society?

## Activity

### Statements (6 minutes)

Write on a large sheet of paper one or two statements which have been said about foreigners or used to describe them (eg 'they don't speak our language').

Ask the teenagers to write out or brainstorm as many as they have heard. The statements below could be used for this.

- 'They are not like us'
- 'They are taking our jobs'
- 'They don't speak our language'
- 'They are all terrorists'
- 'They are dirty... they smell...'
- 'They are draining the NHS'
- 'They are taking over the country'
- 'They are taking our homes'

Give statistical facts to the contrary, such as:

- » Only 1 in 8 employed within the NHS are foreign nationals ([The Independent - 4 June 2018](#))
- » 86.2% of teachers are white British only 13.6% are from other ethnic groups ([gov.uk - September 2018](#))
- » 3.9 million Black and Asian are stuck in menial agency work with little chance progress ([tuc.org.uk - April 2019](#))
- » The foreign born population is three times more likely to take up private rental compared to UK-born people ([The Migration Observatory - 3 November 2017](#))
- » In order to become a British Citizen, foreign nationals are required to speak good English or to have successfully completed an English Language (ESOL) course and attended Citizenship classes. ([gov.uk/english-language](#))

Taking on board the introductory exercise (Who's who?) and the statements, how could some people feel on coming into the country?

### 'Don't judge a book by its cover' (5 minutes)

Put young people in pairs and ask them to write one sentence to explain what the idiom, 'Don't judge a book by its cover' means.

**Meaning:** Don't prejudge someone's or something's worth, value or character by their outward appearance or by what you assume about them or it.

- » NB: Sometimes the very person we would want to reject becomes the person who stretches out their hand to help us when we need it. The last person we think may help (ie The Centurion) actually is the first to volunteer their services.

You may want to ask someone to read out the words of the following poem (Optional):

*If you judge a book by its cover  
You will never ever discover  
The beauty in the pages  
All the rhymes and the phrases  
The valleys, the hills  
The mysteries and the thrills  
The lows, the highs  
Soaring into the skies...  
If you judge a book by its cover*

*Why judge a book by its cover?  
It may not reflect the colour or the glory  
Or words unfolding a fantastic story  
A tale that draws you to feast  
Over a wonderful masterpiece  
What a shame if these things you don't  
uncover...  
My sister, my brother  
Never ever judge a book  
by its cover*

By C Hudson-Roberts

The Jewish officials were confronted by the truth of the character of the Roman Centurion. They saw first hand that one cannot 'judge a book by its cover.' They were convinced by his goodness:

*'This man deserves to have you do this because he **loves our nation** and **built our synagogue.**' (v4-5)*

The Jewish officials offer us an example of how all peoples should be received and appreciated for who they are and for their contribution to our society. Just as with this Centurion, many people who make this country their home, love and respect it and make substantial contributions towards its positive growth.

## Stewardship: Welcoming the Stranger: (12 minutes)

### **Attitudes towards Asylum Seekers**

- » The Centurion provided asylum for the Jew. He could have ignored his servant's sad situation but he made him comfortable and actively sought to relieve him of pain and discomfort and keep him safe. **He chose to do something about it.**
- » **Stewardship:** The Centurion shows us the true meaning of love, care, friendship and stewardship.

### **How did he do this?**

- » He firstly saw the sick servant as *a person*
- » He saw that he had *a need*
- » He *acted* upon it
- » He got *a result*

### **Our Call to Stewardship**

Britain can be a daunting place for young asylum seekers, refugees and foreigners moving here from other countries. In many parts of the country our schools are now culturally diverse yet the whole educational experience can be particularly overwhelming for them.

Ask the youth to list those cultural and social differences.

Appearance: The person whose *appearance* is different to ours.

Dress: Those whose dress reflects a different *culture* or a different social position

Language: The person who speaks differently, or speaks another *language*

Dietary Habits: The person who eats Kosher or Halal foods

Cultural beliefs: The person whose lifestyle and parental expectations differ to those of Western society

Religion: Those who don't share the same *faith system*

Differences are sometimes wonderfully celebrated but unfortunately, far too often, they can also be ridiculed and challenged.

## Application

Sadly, often within the school system, students who are different become victims of malicious words and physical attack. All too often those picked on stand alone. As one student once said about a similar incident,

*"I'm picked on every day. They laugh at me when I walk past and constantly make fun of me. They push me and hit me... they take my things... I hate my life."*

Many people feel uncomfortable with the unkindness shown to others. They know what is happening, they don't like what they are seeing but they do nothing about it. Here's what a student said about another incident,

*"So often I felt guilty for not shouting 'Stop' at the brutality they were inflicting on him. I hated it but just watched."*

- » How could we make things better for those seeking a home where we are?
- » What could we do to welcome the stranger in our school/church/youth club?

### **Task**

Place teenagers into pairs and ask them to think of and then create a slogan which could be hung up in a school, church, youth club, etc, that would promote, celebrate and/or highlight tolerance, acceptance, support and sensitivity towards differences in others.

Willkommen

Witany

Velkommen

## Close

### Conclusion (3 minutes)

Today we have looked at the need to be a help and a comfort to others seeking possible refuge, warmth, hope and acceptance. It is easy to do nothing, to blame or to think the worst. But as we have seen, the Centurion was a man who cut across the expectations of those around him. He challenged the status quo. He cared for the needs of the other and sought to bless them. He held his resident society as relevant. He set the standard by which we should operate and this asks us to pause before we pass judgement on others and cause discomfort. We cannot afford to judge a book by its cover.

The Jewish leaders were compelled to acknowledge the goodness of this Centurion and his acts of charity possibly gave them much to consider on their own attitudes towards the Romans. Jesus marvelled at this foreigner and in his complete faith in him. Jesus' words about him would certainly have been saying to his listeners that there is much to learn from this Centurion.

There are many young people of difference around us. Our schools are increasingly becoming multi-ethnic/cultural. What does our God ask of us? To be a voice for the voiceless, to strive for justice for all and show kindness. To be a friend to the friendless - in short, to do our bit.

## Closing prayer

Father, you know how hard it can be to speak out and be the voice of compassion and care.  
To offer an ear, a hand, a shoulder.  
But Father, help me to be bold enough to be a friend to those who need and long for friendship.  
Help me to be that smile that some of my peers long to see.  
Help me to be willing and available.  
Be my wisdom and my guide as I seek to speak into the lives of others  
In your name I pray.  
Amen.



Bem-Vindo



Hosgeldiniz



Vítejte



Welcome

# Wonderful Youth: Centurion

## Who's Who?

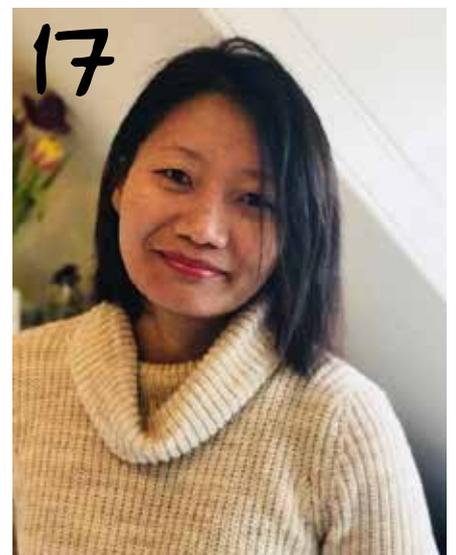
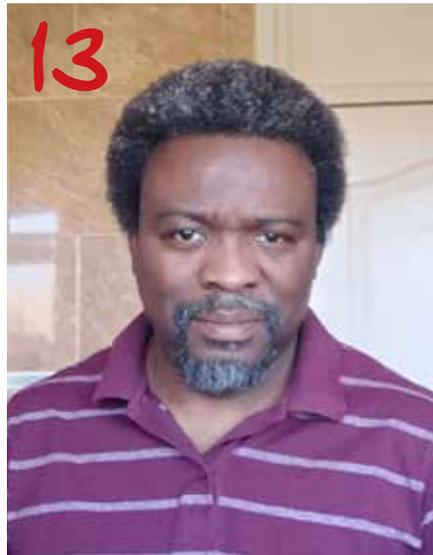
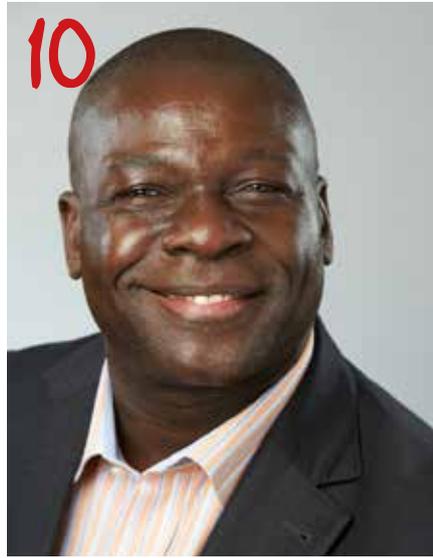
Group leader to copy this sheet onto paper or card and trim to give the individual people



# Wonderful Youth: Centurion

## Who's Who?

Group leader to copy this sheet onto paper or card and trim to give the individual people



# Wonderful Youth: Centurion

## Who's Who?

Group leader to copy this sheet onto paper or card and trim to give the individual occupations

<i>Stay at Home Mum and Foster Carer</i>	<i>Baptist Minister</i>	<i>Associate Construction Cost Manager</i>
<i>Business Consultant</i>	<i>Associate Specialist Psychiatrist</i>	<i>Lecturer in Hebrew and Old Testament Studies</i>
<i>Composer</i>	<i>Plumbing and Heating Technician</i>	<i>Quality Control and Health Regulator to Hospitals</i>
<i>First Tier Tribunal Judge</i>	<i>Magistrate</i>	<i>Training and Development Officer</i>
<i>Language Teacher</i>	<i>Care Assistant</i>	<i>Offshore Oil Health and Safety Consultant</i>
<i>Accountant</i>	<i>Teaching Assistant</i>	

# Wonderful Youth: Centurion

## Who's who? answer sheet

- 1** Cassie Kinoshi      Composer - Winner of the BASCA Award, 2018 (British Academy of Song Writers, Composers and Authors)
- 2** Kathryn Bracewell      Baptist Minister
- 3** Marcia Hudson      Quality Control and Health Regulator to Hospitals
- 4** Simon Richard      Magistrate
- 5** Kalpina Thomas      First Tier Tribunal Judge - a Judge on mental health tribunals and a consultant Forensic Psychiatrist
- 6** Emmy Pearce      Care Assistant
- 7** Paul Hudson      Offshore Oil Health and Safety Consultant
- 8** Nadia Lavelette      Training and Development Officer
- 9** Amy Malumba      Associate Construction Cost Manager
- 10** Toks Kinoshi      Business Consultant
- 11** Fadia Aidibi      Teaching Assistant
- 12** Allison Joy      Stay at Home Mum and Foster Carer - previously a PA in the House of Commons
- 13** Dr Jide Adewumi      Associate Specialist Psychiatrist
- 14** Emma Barker      Language Teacher
- 15** Kelsey Marshall      Accountant
- 16** Jon Howlett      Plumbing and Heating Technician
- 17** Keyigumpeule Thou      Lecturer in Hebrew and OT Studies - currently undertaking research on Interpreting the Dead Sea Scrolls

# The anointing of Jesus

## Luke 7: 36-50

An urban story of inclusivity, openness and outrage. The true faith is shown by the voiceless and nameless person from the margins.

### Aim

- » To help the young person know that God loves and accepts us all; to know no one is excluded from God's kingdom

### Objectives

- » Learn how to identify people in their life who are outsiders
- » Respond effectively to those who are marginalised
- » Take positive steps to prevent people from feeling marginalised

### Lesson outcome

To encourage the young people to think about who in their world might feel like an outsider, the emotional impact it has, and what can they do to make all people feel welcomed.

### Materials needed

- » Printed copies of 'How do you feel?' sheet
- » Sheet with 'welcome in other cultures'
- » Computer with internet access to show videos
- » Projector and screen (if you have a large group)
- » The Message version of the Bible
- » Pens and paper

### Prayer

Father God we thank you that we are welcome in your Kingdom and can freely hear and study your word. We pray that our eyes, hearts and ears are open to what you want us to understand today and that we will have the strength to do all you ask of us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen

### Introduction

#### Icebreaker (5 minutes)

Read the descriptions of the biblical characters/ famous women who were once on the outskirts of society and get the group to guess who they are.

- » Rita Ora: world famous singer who was born in Yugoslavia (now known as Kosovo) whose parents left the country during the persecution of Albanians
- » Malala Yousafzai: originally from Pakistan but moved now to Birmingham after the Taliban tried to kill her for writing blogs on Taliban rule
- » Naomi: left Bethlehem for Moab with her husband and sons after a famine, was left in a difficult situation when her husband and sons died
- » Mila Kunis: actress who was born in Ukraine and moved to America after her parents feared religious persecution
- » Alek Wek: model and fashion designer whose family left Sudan during the war
- » M.I.A: singer and rapper moved from Sri Lanka to the UK in the 1980s as her family are from the Tamil race
- » Rahab: Prostitute woman from the Old Testament who hid Joshua's spies, and was later seen as righteous for helping God's people

Benvenuto

Namaste

## Open the Word

**Read:** *Luke 7: 36-50 from The Message*

### Short discussion questions (5 minutes)

- » What are your initial thoughts on the reading
- » Did Simon have a right to look down on the woman because of her past?
- » How might the woman have felt if Simon had said his comments out loud
- » Do you think it was right for the woman to use all the perfume

## Prayer

### Prayer of thanksgiving:

Father God, we thank you for always providing for us, that we have people who care for and love us. We thank you that you provide for all our needs, and that you don't withhold anything good from us.

**Encourage the group to name one thing they are thankful for.**

In Jesus' name we thank you.

### Prayer of confession:

Father God, we are sorry for all the times we have done wrong, when we have not listened to your voice and put our needs first. We are sorry for all the times when we have missed opportunities to do good, and walked away when we have seen people treated badly. We are sorry and we do ask for forgiveness in Jesus' name.

### Prayer for others:

Father we pray for the women who have been marginalised and treated wrongly for doing what you called them to do. We ask that you give them wisdom and courage to do all you call them to do; we pray for safety for them and their family; and for you Lord to change the hearts of all who mean them harm.

In Jesus' name

Amen

## Activity

### Games (5-10 minutes)

- » Half of the group stand as still as a statue, the other half try to get their attention. If someone moves, they are out and the other team have a go. Discuss how it felt to try and get someone's attention and be ignored.
- » Ask the group to make a circle and hold hands. The aim is to keep the circle. One person has to try and join the circle. How does it feel not to be allowed in?

### Let's Pray (5-10 minutes)

- » How do you feel when people ignore you, or treat you badly? Have the images of feelings/mood faces cut out, get the group to choose feelings and stick them on a poster.
- » Ask the young people to remember a time when they felt like an outsider. Ask them to write down what happened on a piece of paper. Gather up the papers and give them to different young people to read. Spend some quiet time praying for people who may be in that situation now.

## Open the Word

### Understanding the reading (10 minutes)

In the Bible reading the woman uses all she has to show her love and respect to Jesus. Money and gifts is one way to show your appreciation to others but is not the only way - for example, using your talents or time to bless others.

In the film *Mully* Charles Mully uses his past experiences to build an orphanage that has supported thousands of children. Charles gives a second chance to many children who, if left, would have been on the outside of society.

- » Show the trailer for the movie<sup>1</sup> to the young people or a clip<sup>2</sup> and ask for their thoughts on how Mully included those children on the outskirts of Nigeria

**Leaders notes:** Instead of looking down on people like Simon did, we can be welcoming to everyone no matter what their past has been like. We should also take the lead at welcoming others and not wait for others. As it was Simon's house he should have been the one who was most welcoming to Jesus.

1 [mullymovie.com](http://mullymovie.com)

2 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRLE-DVHAIK](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRLE-DVHAIK)

## Activity

### Welcomes from other cultures (10-15 minutes)

Let's look at welcomes from other cultures to see what we can learn.

Split the group into teams. Two people from each group have to mime the following welcomes and get the remaining team to guess the country. [Or the leaders do the miming then ask the young people to guess.]

- » **India:** when arriving at a house the hostess will offer water which is to be accepted and drunk
- » **United Arab Emirates:** guests are served coffee and dates
- » **Tibetan monks:** stick their tongue out, and/or press their hands together and place them in front of their chest to show peace
- » **Philippines:** elders are greeted by taking one of their hands and gently pressing onto your forehead, it shows respect
- » **Japan:** bowing
- » **Oman:** men greet each by pressing their noses together
- » **New Zealand:** traditional Māori greeting of pressing their noses and foreheads together and looking each other in the eye
- » **Malaysia:** stretch out their hand and touch the other person's fingertips and then bring hands to their hearts
- » **Kenya:** tribe warriors perform a jumping dance
- » **Thailand:** pressing hands together in prayer style and slightly bowing their head

Many women are excluded from society and spoken about in negative ways, however God sees the worth in all of us. Watch the video and discuss how God can change lives, and makes people feel welcomed into his kingdom and redeem their worth.

<https://www.ucb.co.uk/stories> (Chantell's story)

**Warning this may not be suitable for younger secondary children as she discussed losing her virginity and becoming a lap dancer.**

**Leader's notes:** Draw out from the discussion that to God we are all the same, we can be ashamed to approach God but he calls us to 'come boldly' to his throne of grace; that we are to accept and welcome all people no matter their background

Ask the young people to think about the negative words you have heard used about women. Put the group into pairs and ask them to write a rap/poem in response to the negativity.

Then watch the 'kids recite phenomenal woman' video in which children between the ages of 6-11 recite this poem by Maya Angelou [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=108&v=8folw5SU718](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=108&v=8folw5SU718)

## Prayer

### Leaders notes:

Many women can feel excluded from society when they try to seek change and/or become Christians. Read out some information about the women in the Release magazine:

<https://releaseinternational.org/release-women/>

**Twen's story** <https://releaseinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/PoF-profile-Twen-bw-03.pdf>

Ask the young people to pray for the women.

## Close

### Words in action (15 minutes)

What can you do this week to welcome people at church, in our neighbourhood, or school?

**Leaders notes:** Give the young people an option of writing encouraging letters/drawings to people who have been imprisoned for their beliefs. Letters help people know they are not forgotten and are still a part of society and God's kingdom.

### For more details:

<https://www.csw.org.uk/connectencourage.htm>  
<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/act/letter/>

## Closing prayer

Lord God we thank you for your word.

We ask that this week you help us to be more loving and encouraging to others who may feel on the outside of society.

We pray that your Spirit directs us to those who most need to feel your love and kindness this week.

In Jesus, name.  
Amen



Hosgeldiniz



Selamat datang

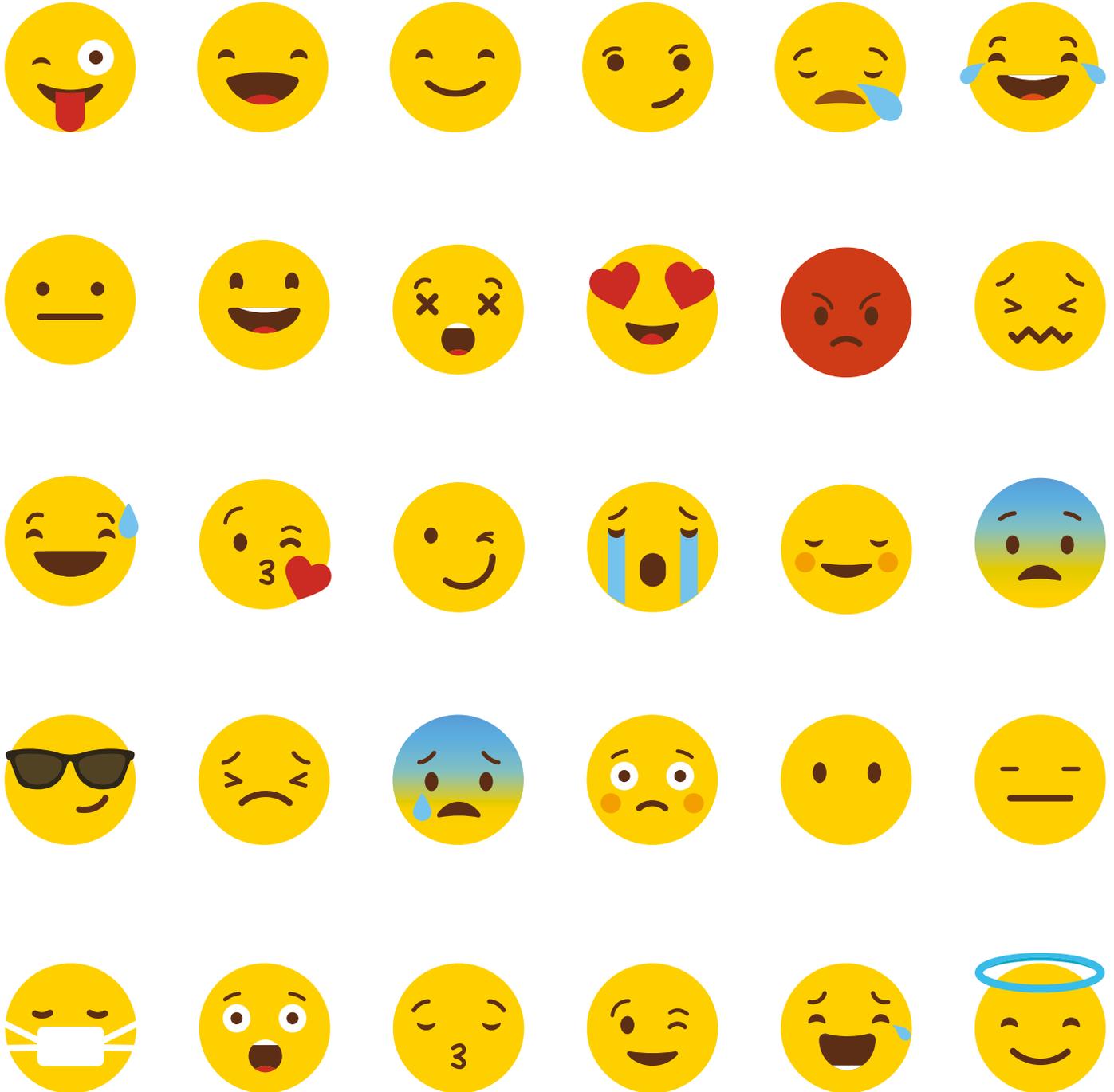


Velkommen

# Wonderful Youth: Anointing

## How do you feel?

Group leader to copy this sheet onto paper or card and trim to give the individual moods.



# Wonderful Youth: Anointing

## Welcome in different cultures

Group leader to copy this sheet onto paper or card and trim to give the individual instructions.

<p><b>When arriving at a house the hostess will offer water which is to be accepted and drunk</b></p> <p><i>India</i></p>	<p><b>Guests are served coffee and dates</b></p> <p><i>United Arab Emirates</i></p>
<p><b>Stick their tongue out, and/or press their hands together and place them in front of their chest to show peace</b></p> <p><i>Tibetan monks</i></p>	<p><b>Elders are greeted by taking one of their hands and gently pressing onto your forehead, it shows respect</b></p> <p><i>Philippines</i></p>
<p><b>Bowing</b></p> <p><i>Japan</i></p>	<p><b>Men greet each by pressing their noses together</b></p> <p><i>Oman</i></p>
<p><b>Traditional Māori greeting of pressing their noses and foreheads together and looking each other in the eye</b></p> <p><i>New Zealand</i></p>	<p><b>Stretch out their hand and touch the other person's fingertips and then bring hands to their hearts</b></p> <p><i>Malaysia</i></p>
<p><b>Tribe warriors perform a jumping dance</b></p> <p><i>Kenya</i></p>	<p><b>Pressing hands together in prayer style and slightly bowing their head</b></p> <p><i>Thailand</i></p>

# The woman who reached out to Jesus

Luke 8: 40-56

## Aim

- » To enable the young people to appreciate that Jesus came to set them free from the things of this world that limit their lives
- » To encourage the young people, in their lives, to reach out to Jesus

## Lesson outcome

For our wonderful youth

- » To understand the text and in particular the significance of what both the woman and Jesus do
- » To consider ways that individuals and groups have to take risks to break through in life
- » To get to grips with the notion of a miracle such as this

## Introduction

This woman is in a place where she should never even have been and gets to have this amazingly powerful healing encounter with Jesus. The untouchable outsider meets Jesus: she is a woman and she has a continual flow of blood. These two things mean that under Jewish law she should not come into contact with a man. But she has suffered for 12 long years and no doctor has been able to help her. So, in the busyness of the crowd as people clamour and press in to get to Jesus... she manages to touch the very outer part of Jesus's clothes. And she is healed, there and then. And Jesus knows this. He attributes it to her faith.

## Materials needed

- » 'Feely bag' containing a random selection of items
- » Images of different styles of dress and countries
- » Computer with internet access to show videos
- » Projector and screen (if you have a large group)
- » Bunting materials - cotton fabric, paint, glitter, felt tip pens, string, scissors, thread and needles or safety pins
- » Pens and paper

## Activity

### Introductory activities (10 minutes)

**Tig and tag** – play this traditional 'playground' game where individuals have to be touched to be released.

*Talk about the way that having contact with someone who is on our side can set us free.*

**Feely bags** – a cloth bag containing a random selection of mystery items (quantity depends on the size of your group). The group members take it in turns to feel the bag to try to identify one item each.

*Talk about the importance of touch.*

**Quiz** – Have images of different styles of dress and a list of countries from around the world and get the group to match the style of dress with the country usually associated with it. Use the sample worksheet or create your own.

*Jesus was wearing a style of dress that meant the woman could reach and touch his cloak. Also, appreciation of 'difference'.*

## Prayer

### **Prayer of thanks and confession**

We thank you God, that through Jesus, we have the route to freedom.

We thank you that through Jesus we can be made well.

We thank you that through Jesus we are welcomed whatever.

Forgive us Lord for the times when we do stuff that limits other people's freedom.

Forgive us when we crowd out people who are in need.

Help us to have the faith to know that you are freedom!

Amen

### **Prayer for others**

Lord Jesus, our freedom!

We thank you for all those who have believed, like this woman, that you can set us free.

We thank you for the way you have set so many people free from so many things!

But we know that there are so many people in our world who are not free, so we reach out to you, like the woman who reached out to Jesus.

We reach out for peace in our world.

We reach out for justice for all who are wrongly accused, wrongly arrested and imprisoned because of the colour of their skin or their background.

We reach out for freedom from governments who keep people down.

We reach out to you, Lord Jesus.

Amen



## Open the Word

**Read:** Luke 8: 40-56

This woman, who to us has no name, is somehow able to battle through the crowd and reach out enough to be able to touch Jesus' clothing. Get the group to think about how tough and scary this must have been.

Talk about how there are so many people, past and present, where prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage have made it really hard to achieve or even to enjoy a reasonable life.

### **Video discussion (10 minutes)**

Watch all or some of these clips and discuss issues that arise:

**Lenny Henry talks about his parents:**

[www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04frjqh](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04frjqh)

**The Obama moment:**

[www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04hr09s](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04hr09s)

(there is a very brief and mild use of swearing in this one – this is at your discretion)

**Errol Lawson's testimony:**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvbcoGAHgUs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvbcoGAHgUs)

**Stormzy sets up a scholarship fund** to enable young people of colour to access Oxbridge education more readily:

[www.cam.ac.uk/news/stormzy-unveils-cambridge-scholarships](http://www.cam.ac.uk/news/stormzy-unveils-cambridge-scholarships)

**Brother Peter Tabichi**, winner of the 2019 Global Teacher Prize:

[www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47658803](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47658803)

## Activity

### Freedom bunting (10-15 minutes)

Cut out triangles/squares of cloth for the group to decorate with whatever resources you have.

As you do this creative activity together, talk about it being a way of remembering the following:

- » that our unnamed woman touched the hem of Jesus' cloak and then was set free;
- » that we should reach out to Jesus, who set us free;
- » that we should celebrate people, especially from BAME background, who have broken through barriers such as racism and sexism to achieve great things;
- » that we should pray for and try to help people who still need to be set free.

Attach the material to the string/rope to create a line of bunting.

Use what the bunting represents as a focus for prayer.

## Close

### Reach out for freedom (5-10 minutes)

Inspired by Jesus and by the woman who shows such great faith in him, challenge the group to strive to set goals for the year ahead.

These might be very personal.

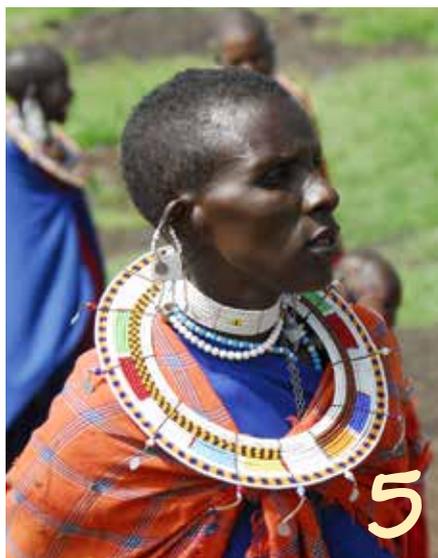
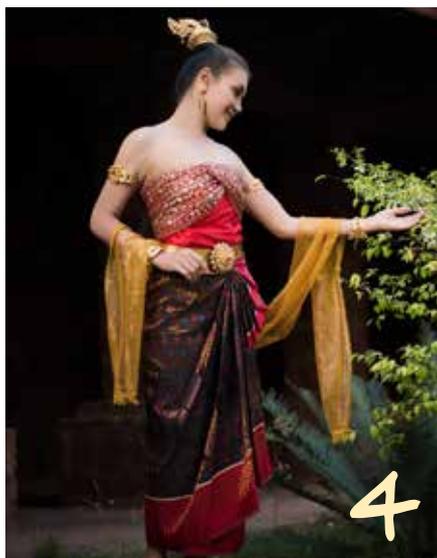
Encourage the group to write these down on a postcard to send to themselves or on a blank piece of card to simply take home with them.



# Wonderful Youth: Reaching out

## Quiz

Group leader to copy this sheet onto paper and trim to create individual photos.



### Photo credits:

- 1 Sofia Henriques | freeimages.com
- 2 Nick Pye | freeimages.com
- 3 Murat Cokal | freeimages.com
- 4 jcomp | freepik.com
- 5 Zsolt Zatrok Dr | freeimages.com
- 6 Jeffrey van Rossum | freeimages.com

## Answers

1 Senegal

2 Peru

3 Turkey

4 Thailand

5 Masai (Kenya and Tanzania)

6 Vietnam

# The parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10: 25-37

## Aim

- » To enable the young people to gain a deeper understanding of how Jesus crosses all boundaries, challenges prejudice and breaks down all barriers of discrimination, especially, as shown here, in the case of racism
- » To gain a greater appreciation of the importance of acting with love, mercy, compassion
- » To become even better as Christian citizens

## Objectives

- » To understand the text and, in particular, the message that Jesus is communicating
- » To take a more active and proactive approach in helping other people, especially those from a background different from their own
- » To put ourselves in the shoes of all of the characters in this story

## Lesson outcome

For our wonderful youth to understand:

- » That everyone is our neighbour, in the words of New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern in response to the Christchurch massacre: *"they are us"*
- » The importance of helping others across all boundaries

## Materials needed

- » 3 chairs and 6 dessert spoons
- » 2 parallel rows of sturdy (but not too heavy) chairs
- » Bibles
- » Flipchart and pens
- » *The Windrush Legacy - faith in migration* DVD (available from London Baptist Association)
- » Selection of paper in different colours and textures, scissors and glue
- » Computer with internet access to show videos
- » Projector and screen (if you have a large group)

## Introduction

The old enemy, the Samaritan is the merciful hero of the piece. Crossing the boundary of prejudice to show love to his neighbour. The cue for Jesus telling this story is a lawyer trying to catch him out (v25) and then wanting to justify himself (v29). It seems Jesus then has to get the lawyer to see who his neighbour is, to challenge his established ideas. Not only does it turn out that the true neighbour is the one who is the untouchable outsider whom the lawyer presumably was highly prejudiced towards; but turns out also that the neighbour is the one who helps, who is 'neighbourly', crosses the boundary, shows the compassion.

Samaritans were from the same roots as the Jewish people but there had been a separation many years before the time of Jesus, so now there was great animosity.

Under Jewish law, the Priest and the Levite would be forbidden to have contact with the bloodied man lying on the roadside. They were doing the right thing by the law, but Jesus is wanting to show a different way that breaks free from the law and is driven by mercy and love.



## Activity

### Three-way spoons game (5-10 minutes)

You need:

3 players, 3 chairs and 6 dessert spoons.  
Set the chairs in a triangle with about 2-3 metres between each chair. Place two spoons on each chair.

One player stands behind each chair with their hand on the back of the chair. On the command "Go!" each player has to run to another chair and pick up one spoon at a time and then run to place this on their own chair. The first person to get three spoons on their chair is the winner.

*The game is fast and furious and ultimately selfish. It is about looking after number one. This sort of approach is part of what Jesus is seeking to challenge in the Good Samaritan story.*

### Chair relay (10 minutes)

You need:

2 parallel rows of sturdy (but not too heavy) chairs.  
Split the group into two teams. One team stands on one row of chairs, one on the other. Leave a gap of at least 1.5 metres between the two teams.

The two teams have to move their row of chairs along to a finishing line by passing the rearmost chair along the line to the front and shuffling the chairs along in this way again and again. Teams are not allowed to get down off the chairs.

*The team that wins is most likely the team that helps each other.*

## Open the Word

**Read: Luke 10:25-37**

### Crossing over the road (10 minutes)

What would make the young people cross over the road? Examples: someone with a big dog; someone who is shouting; someone we have fallen out with.

Get the group to come up with their own suggestions. Write these on a flipchart.

**Reflect:** sometimes this is understandable. It is about keeping ourselves safe. The Samaritan takes a risk in helping the man who has been attacked.

One risk might have been rejection.

Use the example of Dass's story from *The Windrush Legacy - Faith in Migration* DVD when, as a nurse, some white patients in hospital did not want her to touch them.

The response that is held up by Jesus as the right response to the problem, is that from the outsider - from the person that the others would not trust, nor even like.

Who might the group struggle to give help to or receive help from?

Who from the world today might we put into the story?

### Discussion (10 minutes)

Discuss any or all of the following:

- » Read or recount the story of Pastor Norbert Valley: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/10/switzerland-authorities-must-drop-absurd-charges-against-priest-who-showed-compassion-to-asylum-seeker/>
- » and/or think about this quote on the parable of the Good Samaritan:  
*"I imagine that the first question the priest and Levite asked was: 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?' But by the very nature of his concern, the good Samaritan reversed the question: 'If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?'"*

Martin Luther King Jr, Strength to Love

- » Read or recount the story of Ivan Humble <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/ec9df017-8af5-4bd0-96e4-e6d86141bed1>



## Open the Word

### Let justice roll... (5-10 minutes)

It is really good that for thousands of years this story has inspired act after act of kindness. One danger with this story is that it can just become a justification for lots of individual/token, but nevertheless good, acts of kindness.

We should not overlook the way that Jesus and the Samaritan in his story were challenging the way society, religion, law worked at that time. In our time we should do positive things that challenge injustice more widely and provide help more widely.

Maybe you might want to look at Micah 6:6-8, Amos 5:24 or Isaiah 58:1-12 and/or encourage the young people to not only help individuals but support the work of charities like Christian Aid, Oxfam, Tearfund, Shelter, Amnesty, Open Doors and more besides.

### Rainbow alliances (5-10 minutes)

Discuss how the African National Congress led by Nelson Mandela crossed racial and other social boundaries, uniting people from all sorts of backgrounds in opposing apartheid. Is this the best way to bring about change? How might it complicate things?

### A Good Samaritan? (5-10 minutes)

Look at the story of Pastor Bennie Newton, who intervened to save a man caught up in rioting. Best to describe the situation rather than watch a clip.

See: <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/04/28/obituaries/benny-newton-los-angeles-pastor-60.html>

Croeso

Welcome

## Activity

### Drama (10 minutes)

Retell the parable as it is, or bring it up to date and to the young people's context.

### Art (10 minutes)

Encourage the young people to draw around their hands on different types of paper, cut them out and create a circle of hands picture (see the samples on page 26). Use paper in different shades and textures to reflect different ages and ethnicities.

## Prayer

### A Prayer of thanks and confession

Loving God

Help us to worship and serve you.

Help us to learn from what Jesus shows us.

Please forgive us when we have crossed over the road to avoid people.

Forgive us when we try to catch people out.

Forgive us when we hide behind rules or even reasons when we could actually do more to help.

You showed us how to live alongside each other.

You showed us how to be good neighbours.

Help us to live this out, to live as you want us

to live, to walk in the footsteps of the Good Samaritan, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Amen.

### A Prayer for others

Who is our neighbour?

Jesus of Nazareth, you are our neighbour.

Help us to see you in all of our neighbours.

Help us to take risks to help those in need.

We pray for all of our neighbours today

People next to us

People far away from us

People who will go to bed hungry

People who are seeking safety

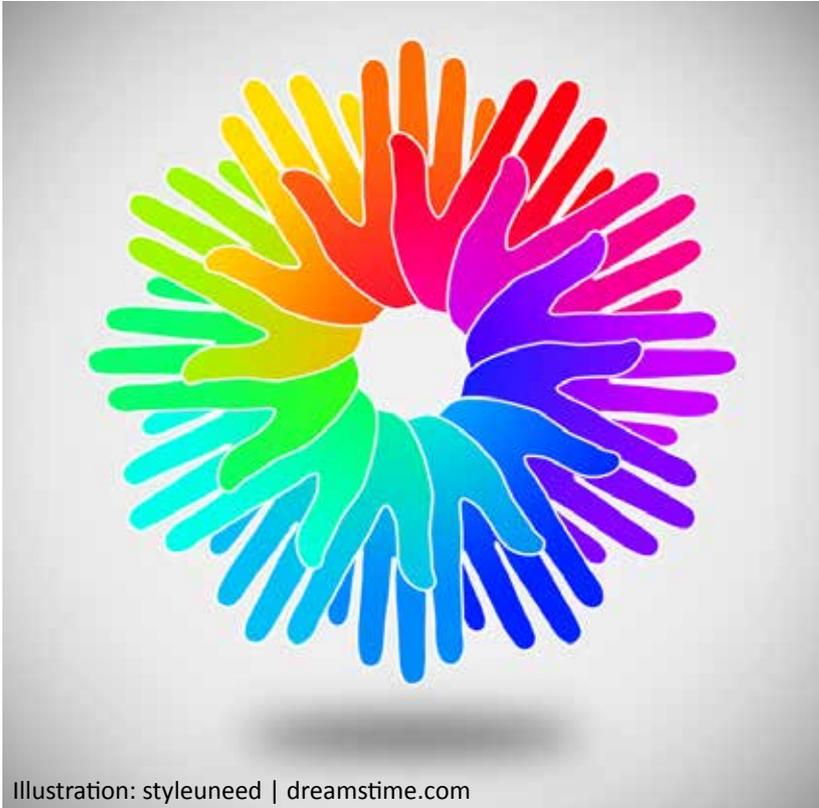
People who are different from us and yet the same.

We pray for our neighbours.

Help us to see you in our neighbour.

Amen.

Circle of hands samples



# Zacchaeus

Luke 19: 1-10

## Aim

- » To encourage young people to be the best they can be by learning about the power of repentance

## Objectives

- » To help young people better understand how they can relate to the story of Zacchaeus
- » To help young people understand more deeply the forgiving God
- » To help young people put into practice the regular discipline of repentance

## Lesson outcome

- » To enable young people to understand the real meaning of repentance and to develop the discipline of repentance in their daily lives

## Materials needed

- » Bibles
- » Paper and pens
- » Copies of 'Saying sorry' sheet
- » Computer with internet access to show videos
- » Projector and screen (if you have a large group)
- » Journal notebooks (one for each young person)
- » Masking tape and balloons

Willkommen

Welkom

## Introduction

Zacchaeus was a tax collector of the city of Jericho and learnt that Jesus the prophet was passing through the city. Since Zacchaeus was short in stature, he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed up into a sycamore tree to have a better view of Jesus. When Jesus arrived, he noticed Zacchaeus in the tree and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.' After arriving at Zacchaeus' residence, he said to Jesus; "half of my goods I give to the poor and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold". His actions reveal that his repentance and faith are genuine.

The example of Zacchaeus, who gave away half of his goods, emphasises the kind of open-hearted kindness that characterizes those whose hearts have been transformed by the gospel. Jesus then says, "salvation has come to this house".

The story also reinforces the wonderful love of Jesus, for if Jesus can forgive a corrupt tax collector he can forgive anyone.

### Icebreaker (2 minutes)

Watch the video of the story of Zacchaeus (in Spanish) available from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UuF\\_4PsqA-0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UuF_4PsqA-0)

- » Whilst watching the video, encourage the young people to listen out for four Spanish words they are able to translate into English.
- » After you have finished watching the video, discuss the Spanish words that the group is familiar with.

## Activity

### The Windrush Scandal (10 minutes)

The Windrush scandal concerned people who were wrongly detained, denied legal rights, threatened with deportation and, in at least 83 cases, wrongly deported from the UK by the Home Office. Most of those impacted were British citizens who had arrived in the UK before 1973 from the Caribbean countries as members of the Windrush generation. As well as those who were wrongly deported, many were wrongly detained, lost their jobs or homes and denied medical benefits. Indeed, this was a massive scandal.

Encourage the young people to have a look at the first two minutes of the YouTube video *Windrush: Grandmother re-enters UK - BBC News* at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=GamxNrkwqMw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GamxNrkwqMw)

The story highlights the tragic story of a Caribbean grandmother who was not permitted to return to the UK from the Caribbean. After you have watched it explore some of the following questions:

- » Are there similarities between the Windrush scandal the story of Zacchaeus?
- » Explain why you think it might be difficult for those impacted by this scandal to forgive the Home Office/ Government?
- » As you can see from the reading of the Zacchaeus' story, he gave 'half of his goods to the poor' as a form of repentance. Do you think the Government should make financial compensation to those impacted by this situation?
- » Discuss how difficult it is for you to forgive those that have hurt you?

### Prayer activity (5 minutes)

*You may want to do this exercise in a group or the young people may rather do it on their own. Either way pens and papers are needed for this exercise.*

- » Ask the young people to write on paper how they think they may have hurt God in the last few days.

- » Ask them to reflect on who they have excluded and why, and to write this on the paper.

Gather up the papers and burn them or shred them - the important thing is to get rid of them. Remind the young people that when we repent of our sins we are totally forgiven by God.

Ask the young people to read 1 John 1: 8-9 to each other.

- » Now ask the young people to reflect on who they have included into their close circle of networks and why, and to write this on paper.

Encourage the young people to pray for each other to be welcoming of others.

### Forgiveness logo (7 minutes)

Ask the young people to quickly sketch a couple of the following brands: Burger King, M&Ms, Pizza Hut, Subway, KFC, YouTube, Gucci, Vans, Coca Cola, Gap, Nike, etc. Each young person then shares their sketch with the group and the others can briefly explain what the brand means to them and why they might find it attractive.

After this, encourage each young person to create a logo/symbol representing the forgiveness of God. The group can discuss what they find helpful about the sketch and why they think the symbolism speaks of a forgiving God.

## Prayer

Dear Lord,  
Thank you for your kindness, love and mercy.  
We are so grateful to you that when we confess our sins you are faithful and just to forgive our sins. We are so sorry Jesus for the times when we have said things that we should not have said, gone to places that have made you unhappy and treated people unkindly.  
I repent for not following in your ways.  
Please God have mercy on me.  
In Jesus' name.  
Amen

## Activity

### Saying sorry (5 minutes)

Different nationalities have different ways of saying sorry, or 'I apologise'.

Think about one thing that you may have done recently to hurt, even slightly, one of your friends.

Say sorry to your friend, not in English but, in one of the languages on the worksheet.

## Open the Word

Zacchaeus did not only repent, he went a step further and made reparations. Realising that he was a part of a bigger system of oppression - one that rewarded him for the kind of activities he was conducting on behalf of the authorities - he not only confessed his sin but promised to give away half of his accumulated wealth and make amends to all those who fell victim to his wrongdoing.

## Activity

### Keep a Journal (5 minutes)

Give each of the young people a small notepad and encourage them to keep a journal in which they:

- » write about some of the things they might have done that have not made God happy
- » write about some of the things they need to repair as a sign of their repentance. This may be offering an apology to a friend or paying someone back because they have taken their generosity for granted.

Let the young people know that they don't need to write in their journal every day, but encourage them to update it from time to time.

## Prayer

Before you spend time praying for others, think about some of the countries that Britain profited from in the past. Sadly, many of these countries are still suffering from the legacy of historical mistreatment - countries such as Jamaica, India, Burma, South Africa, Ethiopia. Choose one of these countries, go online and do a little research about the country and then pray for it.

The following prayer of intercession is only a guide:

*Lord we thank you that you have created all people in your image.*

*All the nations of the world are important to you.*

*You value all people regardless of ethnicity, nationality or background.*

*I pray that the legacy of British rule will not hold India back. We thank you God that, despite British rule in the past, India continues to grow from strength to strength.*

*May it become a nation that is able to feed all its poor, home all its homeless and be a nation where rich and poor live in peace, stability and harmony.*

*In Jesus' name.*

*Amen*

## Open the Word

### Read: Luke 19: 1-10

Read the story of Zacchaeus aloud and discuss the following questions:

- » Why did Zacchaeus not have any friends?
- » How was he able to see Jesus?
- » How did Jesus show Zacchaeus love?



## Activity

### Game (5 minutes)

Place several pieces of masking tape on the floor in the room, one for each young person. Have each young person stand on a piece of masking tape and explain that they must keep their feet on the tape at all times.

Then blow up a balloon and explain that it represents Zacchaeus.

Tell the young people that they are going to pretend to be the people that did not like Zacchaeus and must try to keep the balloon off the ground without stepping off their tape. [If you have a large group, add extra balloons.]

After the game, talk about the importance of acceptance and inclusion that Jesus showed to Zacchaeus.

Explain that Jesus accepts and include all people regardless of gender, race or disability and we are to include all people in our friendship circle.

## Prayer

Conclude by asking the young people to pray for each other.

Namaste

Aloha

Bem-Vindo

Witamy

Benvenuto

Willkommen

Welkom

Welcome

Vítejte

Croeso

Hosgeldiniz

Selamat datang

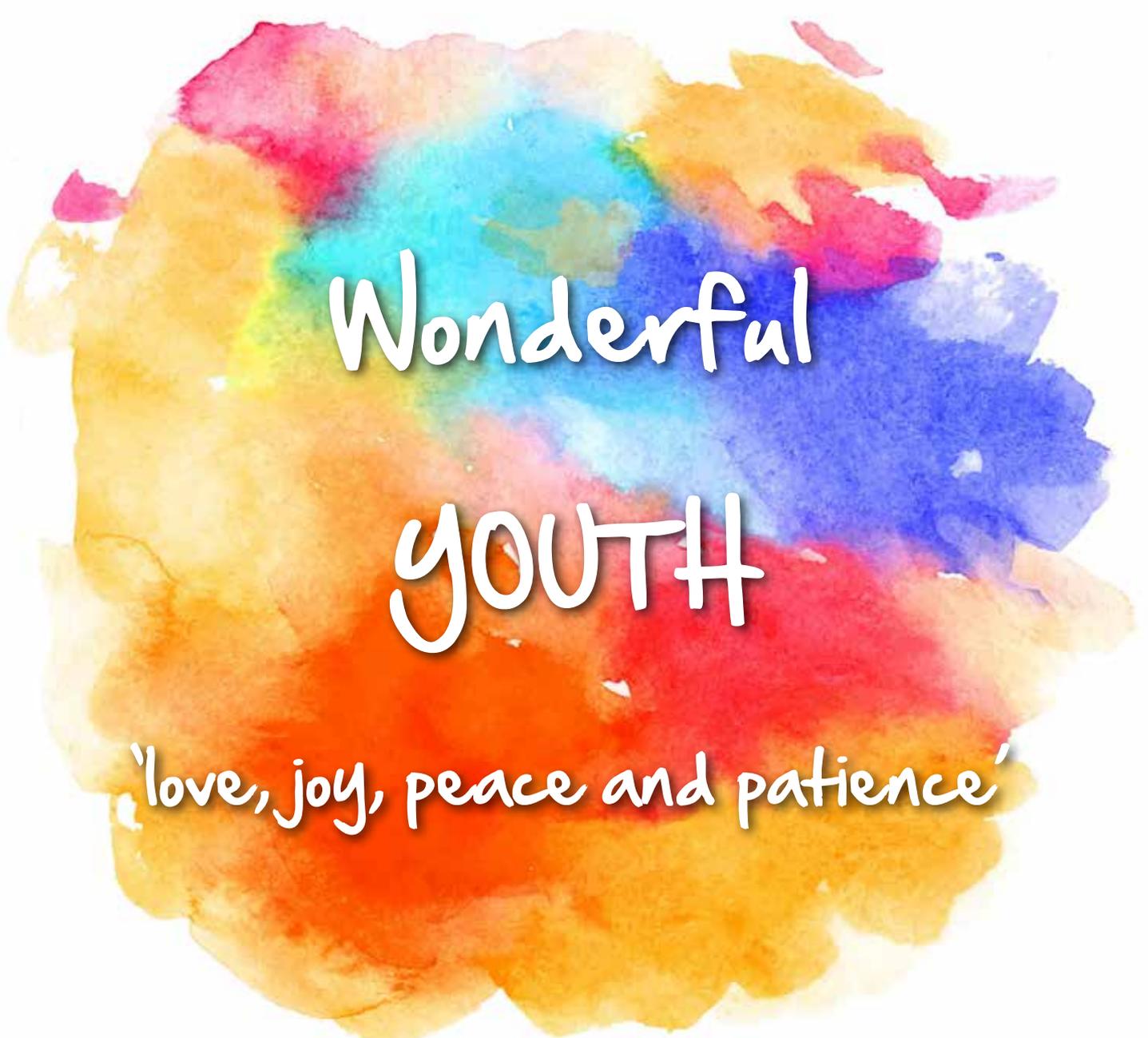
Velkommen

# Wonderful Youth: Zacchaens

## Saying Sorry

Group leader to copy this sheet onto paper.

<b>Toobaddu</b> <i>Swahili</i>	<b>Ironupiwada</b> <i>Yoruba</i>
<b>Ukuphenduku</b> <i>Zulu</i>	<b>Tovbe</b> <i>Turkish</i>
<b>Aithri</b> <i>Irish</i>	<b>Anger</b> <i>Swedish</i>
<b>Pagsissisi</b> <i>Filipino</i>	<b>Tobat</b> <i>Malay</i>



Wonderful

**YOUTH**

'love, joy, peace and patience'

Four Biblical sessions created for Black History Month to empower young people between the ages of 13 and 16 to become  
'The best that you can be'

# Contents

The four studies in this resource may be used in any order.

Introduction	3
Love	
» Leaders' Notes	4
Joy	
» Leaders' Notes	7
Peace	
» Leaders' Notes	10
» Black Lives Matter images	13
Patience	
» Leaders' Notes	14

Even though there is a vast number of resources on the Christian market to aid young people reflect on their Christian faith few, if any, intentionally enable young people of colour to see their image reflected in the resources. Drawing from a wealth of material coupled with exercises and activities, *Wonderful Youth* aims to address this imbalance by particularly enabling young people of colour to read the Bible through their cultural and theological lenses.

Commissioned by the Baptist Union Racial Justice Hub, *Wonderful Youth* has been written by contributors from Six Ways Baptist Church, Birmingham and John Bunyan Baptist Church, Oxford (both multicultural churches). Their aim is to equip young black and minority ethnic people to appreciate and love God's Word. Designed to be used during Black History Month in October 2021, *Wonderful Youth* also provides a window of opportunity for churches and youth groups to explore and celebrate some of the historical and current unique contributions from people of colour.

# Introduction

## A brief introduction to Galatians 5 and the Fruit of the Spirit

In his letter to the Galatians Paul really goes for it in setting out his divinely appointed credentials (chapter 1): evidently, he feels the need to assert himself and the powerful message he brings from Jesus for the church in Galatia!

Paul is concerned that the Galatian Christians are slipping back into their old ways and are being distracted and 'bewitched' by dodgy teaching (chapters 2 and 3).

The letter plays on contrasts between sound and unsound teaching; grace and law; freedom and slavery; spirit and flesh. And so, when we get to chapter 5 Paul is urging the people there, and us also, to not get caught up in our basic fleshly desires and excesses. Instead, Paul asserts that if the believers in Galatia are the 'real thing' it should be obvious in how they conduct themselves - in the good qualities that they exhibit.

Therefore, he offers this list of noble qualities that we know as being the 'fruit of the Spirit'. If we have God in us, if we believe in Jesus, these are the marks that others should notice and that we should be aware of: 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control'. Helpfully, Paul does not specify how much of each of these we should have. The reality is that some of them come easier than others depending on who we are, how we have been shaped, what is going on in our lives. But they are helpful tools for us to measure ourselves by as Christians trying to live out our lives in this broken world.

And finally, Paul says 'there is no law against such things' (Galatians 5: 23). Is he being a bit sarcastic here? Maybe, but more likely he is wanting to emphasise this contrast between the freedom there is with the Spirit of God and the very human preoccupation with being all legalistic about religion.

So, in this edition of *Wonderful Youth* we focus on the first four qualities that Paul features in his list: love, joy, peace and patience. And we explore how it is that young people, (all people!), can work with God on these fruit of the Spirit.

# Love

## Galatians 5: 22

### Aim

- » To enable the young people to be reminded of the fundamental importance of love, and to work on ways of being people who show love and respect towards others.

### Session outcome

For our wonderful youth...

- » to gain a richer understanding of the Christian concept of love
- » to be able to develop more of a distinction between agape love and other forms of love
- » to adopt some new ways of showing love to others.

### Materials needed

- » Computer with internet access to show videos
- » Projector and screen (if you have a large group)
- » Dice
- » Love Heart sweets
- » Bibles (including *The Message* version)
- » Flip chart or large pieces of paper to make posters
- » Pens and paper
- » Word searches and puzzles about love
- » Ingredients to make and/or decorate biscuits



### Introduction

Love is one of the fruit of the Spirit that Paul lists in Galatians chapter 5.

Love is at the heart of who God is and how the world works: Paul writes elsewhere about it binding everything together (Colossians 3:14). Here we are looking at love as the feeling that we have and the things that we do which reflect God's nature. Love is like the glue that holds everything together and helps us to be truly human with each other. It is fundamental to being human and yet really hard to pin down exactly what it is!

In the context of what Paul is writing about, love is something we do, as we show we are *being* loving.

### Introductory activity

#### 1 Watch

Look at this John Lewis advert to begin thinking and talking about what it means to show love.  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nrty4kt2KKA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nrty4kt2KKA)

#### 2 Marmite game

Using a list of items, such as those listed below, get the group to give a quick response if they love or hate it by saying "Love It" or "Hate It!" as appropriate.

Suggested items: Marmite, KFC, Man City, Hip Hop, Boris Johnson, Ginger Beer, dogs... *add more as appropriate.*

#### 3 Get a sweet

The group take it in turns to roll the dice and if they roll a 2, 4 or 6 they can take a Love Heart sweet.

## Open the Word

### 1 Love is...

- » Read Corinthians 13: 4-8 (*Message* version) Look at what Paul says about how we should act lovingly.
- » Talk about which of these ways of showing love come easiest and which comes harder.
- » Invite the group to add to Paul's list some examples of what love is.

### 2 Respect!

Sometimes it's hard for us to get a grip on what this kind of love is actually about. Rwandan writer Bangambiki Habyarimana says: "Respect is love in action".

Is it helpful to think about love as being pretty much the same as respect?

Take what Jesus says about the most important commandments (Mark 12:28-31): and replace love with respect... discuss what 'respect' means for the young people.

### 3 Loving our neighbour

In Mark 12:28-31 Jesus says we should love our neighbour. Talk about this in the group with reference to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Is BLM a good example of what it means to love our neighbour?



## Activity

Dr Martin Luther King, Jr said: "Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into friend."

### The Power of Love

Listen to, or read, part of the sermon from Meghan and Harry's wedding.

- » Listen to the sermon:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhV0PL49d3Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhV0PL49d3Y)

- » Read the sermon:

[www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-and-writing/sermons/power-love-bishop-michael-currys-sermon-wedding-prince-harry-and](http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-and-writing/sermons/power-love-bishop-michael-currys-sermon-wedding-prince-harry-and)



Focus especially on what Bishop Michael says about the power of love and his list of things he imagines if love is the way. What could the young people add to Bishop Michael's list?

### Acts of Love

Look at: [www.6seconds.org/2020/02/27/kindness-and-loving-75-ways](http://www.6seconds.org/2020/02/27/kindness-and-loving-75-ways) and encourage the young people to make their own list of acts of love.

### Showing Love

Create a heart-shaped poster with ideas of ways we can show love.

### Puzzles

Find word searches or puzzles about love, for example from:

[www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/65654107043648897/?nic\\_v1=1alrrhl4Xl7rnComxfvac%2BxWrzMkrPfhSoa%2FXaRIZA3gYq%2FWPXxvwLr2mBQp6CgGbE](http://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/65654107043648897/?nic_v1=1alrrhl4Xl7rnComxfvac%2BxWrzMkrPfhSoa%2FXaRIZA3gYq%2FWPXxvwLr2mBQp6CgGbE)

### Giving love

Make heart-shaped cookies to give away to other people.

# Prayers

## **A Prayer of thanks and confession**

Sometimes God, we can't be bothered to show love.

Please forgive us when we are too lazy to show love and respect to each other.

Forgive us when we disrespect one another.

Forgive our lack of care.

And yet, you, loving God...

You are love!

Thank you that you have shown us how to do it,

Thank you that you have told us how to do it.

Thank you that you love us so we can be loving others.

Amen.

## **A Prayer for others**

Loving God,

We are made to give and receive love.

We pray today for more love to be given, more love to be received.

Where people are hurting and hating: put the love back in.

Where people are falling out and feel they are failing: put the love back in.

Where it has all gone wrong: put the love back in.

Where we disrespect and disappoint: put the love back in.

Loving God,

Help us to do love, be love, give and receive love.

We are made to love.

We are yours.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the King of love.

Amen.

# Joy

## Galatians 5: 22

### Aim

- » To enable the young people to appreciate that joy is a gift from God given by the Holy Spirit.

### Session outcome

For our wonderful youth...

- » to gain a richer understanding of the Christian concept of joy,
- » to be able to develop more of a distinction between being happy and being joyful,
- » to embrace being joyful.

### Materials needed

- » Computer with internet access to show videos
- » Projector and screen (if you have a large group)
- » Bibles
- » Pens and paper
- » Art materials



### Introduction

Joy is one of the fruit of the Spirit that Paul lists in Galatians chapter 5.

The concept of joy is of an emotion that brings great pleasure and happiness, but for the Christian it is also the belief that God is in control and that ultimately everything is going to be alright - which means we can choose to praise God in every situation.

#### *Introductory activities*

#### **1 Top 10 things that give people joy**

Have a look at the list of things that give people joy at: <https://vocal.media/motivation/10-things-to-bring-you-joy>

Discuss this list and then get the young people to write their own Top 10.

#### **2 Chocolate game**

Play any game that involves eating chocolate/ winning chocolate (eating chocolate is often said to bring people joy!)

#### **3 Cadbury advert**

Watch the 45 second advert at:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLvBtcpSEx4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLvBtcpSEx4)

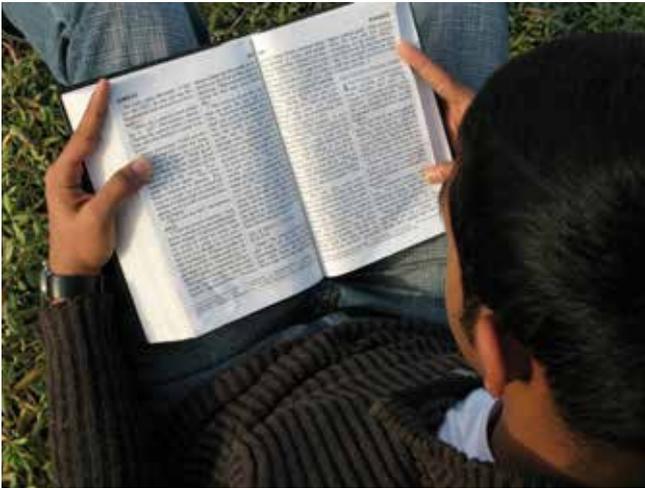
Discuss the advert and the idea of something as simple as chocolate bringing joy.

#### **4 What makes us happy?**

Discuss and develop the idea of joy being something much much deeper and more impressive.

## Open the Word

If we have God in our lives, if we have the Holy Spirit in us, then we should also have joy in our lives.



There are many references to being joyful throughout the Bible. Ask the group to look up at least one of these verses about joy. What reasons might they be able to see for being joyful even when things are tough?

### **Proverbs 17:22**

A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. (ESV)

### **John 16:22**

So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. (ESV)

### **Psalms 30:5**

Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning. (NLT)

### **Nehemiah 8:10**

Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength. (NLT)

### **'Breath for joy'**

Amanda Gorman, the youngest poet to speak at a US presidential inauguration, says that she hopes that there is a breath for joy in her poem, *The Hill We Climb*. Listen to, or read, the poem and talk about any joyful ideas or images.

[www.cnbc.com/2021/01/20/amanda-gormans-inaugural-poem-the-hill-we-climb-full-text.html](http://www.cnbc.com/2021/01/20/amanda-gormans-inaugural-poem-the-hill-we-climb-full-text.html)

## Action

Provide the following template for the young people to complete:

Dear God

When I feel ..... please help me to choose joy.

When things aren't good..... please help me to choose joy.

### **Singing for freedom in Eritrea**

Watch this short film about Helen Berhane, a Gospel singer from Eritrea, who was imprisoned in a shipping container in appalling conditions, but chose to rejoice.

[www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06s0fln](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06s0fln)

Discuss how the young people might react in such situations?

You might find it helpful to look at Paul and Silas' experience in prison (Acts 16:20-25).

### **Joy (We are Family)**

Watch this South African acapella group The Soil singing 'Joy (We are Family)'.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UJEH4GbtQk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UJEH4GbtQk)

Discuss how people - family and friends - can bring us joy in our heart!



### **Joy emoji**

Design an emoji or other short form way of indicating joy.

### **Work of art**

Create a joyful work of art.

### **Worship songs**

Listen to, watch and/or sing one or both of these worship songs.

» *Today O*

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=-P-H9ha3fns](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-P-H9ha3fns)

» *I'm trading my sorrows*

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9lyunZraZc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9lyunZraZc)

Talk about how they work as ways of being joyful in spite of all we might face.

# Prayer

## **A Prayer of thanks and confession**

Thank you God for all the things in this world that give us joy!

Thank you God that joy is something you have given to us, something that you want for us.

So forgive us Lord when we act in ways that don't exactly set the world on fire with happiness.

Forgive us for when we get stuck in a downward spiral – and help us to get out of it!

Help us to remember the power of joy – to smile and laugh, to be positive with people and help others to feel OK about stuff.

Amen.

## **A Prayer for others**

Loving God,  
Hear our prayer for people whose lives have no joy in them.

Hear our prayers for people whose ears are closed to laughter.

Hear our prayers for people whose situations are full of hardship.

Hear our prayers for all whose hearts are full of bitterness and sad feelings.

We pray that all might experience the joy that you bring.

We pray that we might be people who bring joy. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

# Peace

## Galatians 5: 22

### Aim

- » For our youth to recognise that peace is something God desires all people to experience.
- » For the youth to appreciate that God's gift of peace is freely given through the Holy Spirit.

### Session outcome

For our wonderful youth...

- » to explore the notion of peace,
- » to appreciate that 'peace' is integral to feelings of well-being,
- » to recognise that God alone gives lasting peace through his Holy Spirit,
- » to actively pursue peace.

### Materials needed

- » Straws - enough for one per young person
- » Two small light plastic balls, or pieces of paper
- » Words and emojis linked to peace or anxiety
- » One or more copies of the Black Lives Matter images (page 13)
- » Large board or pieces of flipchart paper
- » Pens and graph paper



### Introduction

Peace, one of the fruit of the Spirit, is something people world wide strive to find wherever they can. In many places and amongst some people, peace is hard to see. Inner and outer conflict rules. Yet, Christians believe God offers a peace that remains, even when life seems tough. This is his gift, lovingly given, through his Holy Spirit.

#### Introductory Activities

##### 1 Working together

Organise the youths into two teams. Hand each person a straw. Give each team a small, light, plastic ball, or a piece of paper (15cm x 15cm), or anything light enough to be held by a straw's suction. Each member of the team passes the paper or light object around the circle using suction through the straw. If the object falls, the team starts over again. The team that completes this task first, wins.

This game encourages working together.

##### 2 Emoji game

Print and cut out words and emojis linked to peace or anxiety. Organise the youth into two teams/pairs. Tell each team to match the words with the emoji. The first team to finish wins.

##### 3 Exploring Peace for Black and Brown people

Show the group the Black Lives Matter images, and ask these questions:

- » What do these images say to you?
- » What do you think peace looks and feels like for Black and Brown people?
- » How would Jesus respond to racism?
- » How do you think the following characters advocated for peace: Sam Sharpe, Payal Jangid, Emma Gonzalez, and Sophie Cruz?

## Open the Word

**Read:** Galatians 5: 22

This reading is saying that God's Holy Spirit can produce beautiful fruit in us which can enhance our lives. God offers us peace and gives us Christ as an example of how living in peace is possible. Christ's character and nature is the greatest example of the fruit of the Spirit. He offered those who were down-hearted, distressed or in need, a way to find hope, comfort and peace.

The fruit of the Spirit are a by-product of Christ living in us and his Spirit working through us.

- » Ask the group to name some of the things that cause stress, and write them on a flipchart.
- » Hand each person a graph sheet. Ask them to individually choose and write down seven of the stress factors and then indicate the level of stress they feel this gives (stress levels 1-10).
- » Share and compare. Which of the stress points chosen have the highest figures. Which are relatively low (this is informative and is an indicator for future discussion/action/programmes).
- » What are the things young people do to find peace today?

### Explore scriptures

Possible texts to explore:

#### **Colossians:3:15**

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

#### **Hebrews 12:14**

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

#### **1 Peter 5:7**

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

#### **James 3:18**

Those who make peace sow the seeds of justice by their peaceful acts.

#### **Psalms 29:11**

The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.

#### **1 Thessalonians 5:15**

Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

#### **Philippians 4:7**

Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

#### **Romans 12:18**

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

#### **Romans 14:19**

So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

#### **Psalms 34:14**

Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

#### **1 Peter 3:9**

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

#### **1 Peter 3:10**

Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech.

#### **1 Peter 3:11**

They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it.

#### **Romans 12: 17-21**

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay', says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head'. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

#### **Psalms 119:165**

Those who love your teachings will find true peace, and nothing will defeat them.

# Prayer

## Prayers for Peace

Dear Father,  
sometimes it's hard to understand why life is the way it is.

The noise, the hostility, the differing messages,  
the things that get in the way of my peace.

Father, help me to find calm in you,  
lead me to a place of complete rest  
safe in the knowledge that you,  
through your Holy Spirit  
will always bring me peace.

Lord,  
I thank you that you are my peace,  
You can cut through all of my anxiety  
and the questions that sometimes bombard my  
life.

Therefore I praise you.

Thank you that my faith rests in you.

When life threatens my peace, help me to  
remember

that you are always present.

Thank you for your Son who has shown me how  
to live in peace and love.

May I always remember that all things are  
possible

through the working of your Spirit

Amen.

Dear Jesus,  
When I scream, when I shout  
when I throw things about,  
give me your peace.

When I am sad  
can't be glad  
misunderstood  
extremely bad,  
give me your peace.

When the world seems ugly  
when I am weary  
when all is dreary,  
give me peace.

When I don't know where to go  
help me to remember  
and to know  
that you are still near me.

When I call  
you will hear me  
and will give me your peace.  
Amen



# Patience

## Galatians 5: 22

### Aim

- » To understand what it means to be patient
- » To reflect on the difficulty of always being patient
- » To consider the areas of the young people's lives where they may have to be patient.

### Session outcome

For our wonderful youth...

- » to explore the idea of patience
- » to understand the importance of waiting patiently
- » to recognise the times when God has demonstrated patience, and continues to do so
- » to commit to developing ways of being patient.

### Materials needed

- » Bibles
- » Computer with internet access to show videos
- » Projector and screen (if you have a large group)
- » Paper and pens

### Introduction

Our God is long-suffering and of great mercy. The Old and New Testaments give numerous examples of God being very patient with his people; being slow to anger, abounding in mercy, and never ending in love.

As people of God we are called by his Holy Spirit to show the same patience to ourselves and others, we are called to do this time and time again - but no one said that this would be easy. When we hear the word of God we need to wait patiently and pray for it to be rooted and grounded in our hearts and spirit, so we become grounded in the faith into mature disciples.

We want our young people to be full of faith and patience as they walk in the faith so they can fulfil the purposes of God in their life.

Patience

## Prayer

### A Prayer of repentance

Dear God, we live in uncertain times when we want answers now and are frustrated when we have to wait. Sometimes our impatience causes us to make wrong decisions that go against your will.

Lord we are sorry for the times we haven't waited for your timing, when we have rushed ahead without waiting for an answer to prayer. We are sorry for the bad consequences this may have had on others.

Please Lord, help us to be like Noah who took you at your word and patiently prepared the ark; and like Job who knew all things would make sense in your timing.

## Activity

### Let's talk

- Discuss the following questions with your group
- » What is the longest time you've had to wait for something?
  - » How did it feel to wait?
  - » Was it worth the wait?

Many people in other countries have to wait for things that we in the UK may take for granted. For example, people in refugee camps or poorer countries have to wait for someone to collect clean water, for food, for electricity, and even for justice. Some people are still waiting patiently for the right to vote, and the right to practice their faith freely.

Ask the group to consider these examples of people waiting, and ask them if they would be able to wait patiently:

- » Asia Bibi waiting to be found innocent of blasphemy charges, and then waiting to be allowed to leave Pakistan.
- » Doreen Lawrence waiting for someone to be convicted of her son's murder.
- » MPs Diane Abbott, Keith Vaz, Bernie Grant, and Paul Boateng waiting until 1987 to be the first ethnic minorities elected to Parliament in over 100 years.

## Open the Word

Open the scriptures and ask the group to choose one as a memory verse:

- » Hebrews 12: 1
- » James 1: 3
- » Romans 2: 7
- » Numbers 14: 18
- » Psalm 86: 15

### Discussion questions

- 1 Are there consequences if we don't wait on God's patience?
- 2 Did *not* waiting for something have a bad impact on you?

### Open the Word

What were the consequence of the actions below?

Genesis: Abraham decides not to wait for his promised son from Sarah, instead has a son with Hagar.

Genesis: Esau sold his birth-right because he couldn't wait for a meal.

Genesis: Israelites worship the golden calf instead of waiting for Moses to return.

### Discussion questions

Watch one of these videos about the book of Hosea.

From the Bible Project (7 minutes 35 seconds):  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE6SZ1ogOVU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE6SZ1ogOVU)

From the Gospel project (3 minutes 37 seconds):  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=MY05XI67ets](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MY05XI67ets)

- 1 How much patience and love did God show to his people the Israelites?
- 2 Could you show this amount of love and patience to someone?

### Individual reflection:

- » What can you do to increase your patience?
- » How much patience has God shown to you? Do you need to say thank you?
- » Ask the group to spend time in quiet prayer or write their own prayer of thanks.

Where would we be if these people hadn't shown patience:

- » In translating the Bible into English (and other languages)?
- » On gaining the right to vote?

## Prayer

### ***A Prayer of thanksgiving***

Lord God,

Thank you for the people who have gone before us and shown great patience – our parents, siblings, and teachers when we thought we knew the right way.

Thank you for their love towards us.

# WONDERFUL YOUTH



Five Biblical sessions created for Black History Month to empower young people between the ages of 13 and 16 to become 'The best that you can be'

# CONTENTS

What does Climate Justice mean to you?	3
Contributors	4
<b>Sessions:</b>	
- All of God's creation has worth <i>Written by Isabel and Gerard Goshawk</i>	5
- We are part of a community of life <i>Written by Ruvimbo Makumbe</i>	8
- Our kinship with nature <i>Written by Grace Twum</i>	13
- A 'prophetic voice' beyond stewardship <i>Written by Hannah Thomas</i>	17
- Taking climate action as part of God's mission <i>Written by Christine Hudson-Roberts</i>	21

## *Recommendation to youth leaders:*

Some of these sessions include links to videos on YouTube. We have no control over the adverts which may be displayed on YouTube before the videos are shown, and are aware that some content may not be appropriate for the young people in your group. We therefore suggest you access the videos before the start of your session and pause them after the adverts so that you ready to share the video content only with your group.

# WHAT DOES CLIMATE JUSTICE MEAN TO YOU?

Commissioned by the Baptist Union Racial Justice Group this edition of *WONDERFUL YOUTH* has been written by contributors from Six Ways Baptist Church, Birmingham, John Bunyan Baptist Church, Oxford and Christian Aid. *WONDERFUL YOUTH* intentionally centres on Black and Brown young people and provides opportunities for Baptist churches to do the same. This fourth edition considers the impact of climate change on Black and Brown communities. With the support of Christian Aid it also recommends how climate injustice can be mitigated. We trust that this new resource will inspire and challenge the young people in your church.

The *WONDERFUL YOUTH* team

## Christian Aid Collective:

We are a community of 18-30 year-old Christians who care about dignity, equality, justice and love.

Powered by Christian Aid, we campaign to change the world.

We use our prophetic voice to speak truth to power as a key tool to help the fight against global poverty and witness real climate justice.

Follow us on Instagram for live updates: @thecacollective  
Check out our website for more information: [caid.org.uk/collective](https://caid.org.uk/collective)



## Baptists Together:

Racial justice issues have been recognised as a key concern for our Union for many years, with the Racial Justice Working Group being set up at the March 1995 Council in response to the growing diversity of our country and churches.

*WONDERFUL YOUTH* is one example of the Baptist Union's intention to become anti-racist, the importance of which was highlighted by the murder of George Floyd in 2020.

Check out our website for more information: [baptist.org.uk/racialjustice](https://baptist.org.uk/racialjustice)

This is the fourth edition of the resource - earlier editions can be found at [www.baptist.org.uk/wonderfultyouth](https://www.baptist.org.uk/wonderfultyouth)

# CONTRIBUTORS



## CHRISTINE HUDSON-ROBERTS

Formerly a Religious Studies Teacher and the Head of Lower Secondary in London schools. Today she is a full time Foster Carer living in Oxfordshire.



## GRACE TWUM

A Christian Aid Prophetic Activist Alumni. She is also a new Regional Coordinator for Just Love UK. She recently finished her degree in Human Geography and Environment at the University of York, and is passionate about 'Jesus and Justice' in many forms of activism and campaigning. Follow Grace on Twitter: @AcupofGrayz and Instagram: @adjua.grace



## HANNAH THOMAS

The Digital Communications Officer at the Mayor of London's Violence Reduction Unit. She previously project managed the Prophetic Activist Scheme, a national volunteering scheme to train, equip and empower young people (18-30) to campaign for climate justice. Hannah also volunteers as a Charity Sphere Leader for Just Love, supporting graduates seeking to create change in the UK charity sector. She is also a trustee at Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS-UK).



## ISABEL AND GERARD GOSHAWK

Members at Six Ways Erdington Baptist Church, Birmingham, which is a diverse church in a diverse community. Six Ways is the first Church of Sanctuary in England. Isabel and Gerard are committed to justice and involved in various local community projects. They have been involved in the *Wonderful Youth* project since its outset.



## RUVIMBO MAKUMBE

A Christian Aid Prophetic Activist Alumni whose work focuses on bringing healing to others through various means such as speaking up for justice especially for those whose voices are often silenced. She does this through being a speaker and a writer, marrying that with her professional expertise in strategic marketing. Currently, Ruvimbo is also studying Black theology in the pursuit of becoming a qualified Womanist theologian. LinkedIn: @Ruvimbo L Makumbe



## SARAH-JANE NII-ADJEI

Sarah-Jane is enthusiastic about empowering people and communities to flourish. She is also passionate about climate justice and increasing the voices of people of colour and faith within the climate justice movement. Currently at Christian Aid, Sarah-Jane harnesses her experience of working with marginalised communities and passion for climate justice to lead a programme of work seeking to place the voices of Black faith leaders and theologians at the heart of the global Climate Justice Movement.



## WALE HUDSON-ROBERTS

Wale is a part of the *Wonderful Youth* writing team. He is Baptists Together's Justice Enabler and pastor of John Bunyan Baptist Church in Oxford.



# All of God's creation has worth

God valued creation before and after he made us. Creation is an expression of God's goodness and witness to Him, and not only for human use. The whole of creation praises and glorifies God our Creator.



*'We shouldn't exclude prosperity but it's important to remember that looking after the earth is part of our holistic prosperity.'*

Rev Delroy Henry, New Testament Church of God



# ALL OF GOD'S CREATION HAS WORTH

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- » To help young people appreciate that God valued creation before and after he made human beings and that creation is an expression of God's goodness.
- » To gain a greater appreciation of how God views creation.
- » To help young people to value all of God's creation.

## SESSION OUTCOME

For each young person to appreciate how amazing God's creation is and to see how it reflects God's goodness.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- » Pens and paper
- » Bibles (NLT version)
- » Paper, paint, crayons and felt tips
- » Computer with internet access to show images

## PRAYER

God of creation.

We close our eyes in prayer now but pray that you would open our eyes to the beauty and the wonder of the world that you have made.

We praise you that it is all so clever.

We praise you that it all works together.

We praise you that your creation looks good!

Open our eyes to your brilliant creation!

Amen.

## INTRODUCTION

### True/false quiz on amazing creation facts

- 1 The smallest mammal in the world is the Bumblebee Bat which is 2.5 cm long and weighs 2 grammes. (True)
- 2 The tallest tree in the world is 115.92 metres tall and is a Giant Greenwood in California, USA. (False - it's a Giant Redwood)
- 3 The Great Barrier Reef can be seen from up in space. (True)
- 4 The sunset on Mars looks green. (False - it looks blue)
- 5 Sharks do not have bones (True)

Feel free to add your own to the above!

## OPEN THE WORD

### Read: Genesis 1: 4-25 (NLT)

#### Questions:

- » What does God use to create everything?
- » For how many days is God at work?
- » Which day is the busiest?
- » How many times does it say 'it was good'?

In these verses we learn how God created all the different parts of our world in a particular and very practical order. We don't get a huge amount of detail as to how God did it or what exactly was created but the overall premise is that it happened and it was good!

### Read: Romans 1: 20 (NLT)

The apostle Paul is writing to the believers in the church at Rome and he wants to make it very clear that, as he puts it, there is no excuse for not knowing God. Why? Because when we look at the earth and the sky and everything that God has made, we can see God's awesome power and his incredible love in action.

#### Questions:

- » What parts of God's creation demonstrate God's power?
- » When we think of God's power, how does it make us feel?
- » What in God's creation shows God's love and incredible attention to detail?
- » Jesus said that God doesn't forget a single sparrow and that we are more important than a whole flock... how does that make us feel?



## ACTIVITY

### Compare and contrast

Look together at some images of different contexts and discuss which ones are most appealing and most attractive, eg Lake District... Sahara... Nigeria Delta... Negril... El Salvador... Caspian Sea... India... cityscapes... Birmingham... New York... Mumbai

### Beauty in creation where we are

Take the young people to somewhere just outside the church building and see how many signs of beauty you can find... a grass verge by a road... a patch of sky behind a building... graffiti on a fence... sunshine on a car roof...

Introduce the idea of 'beauty in the eye of the beholder'.

### Art work

Create a piece of artwork: individually or as a group. Maybe it could be of something in nature or in the local environment. How can you declare that it is good?

Or challenge the young people to take photos on their phones in the week ahead of God's created beauty in the local community and create a montage of these when next you meet (a paper one or on the church website etc).

## CLOSE AND FINAL PRAYER

### A Prayer of thanks and confession

God in creation,  
you are the origin of all things.  
We pray that today we might look at all things  
around us and see with you that it is good.  
And help us to see something of you, in  
everything and everyone.  
Help us to see you  
in the view from our window  
in the weeds on the roadside  
in the park and the playing fields  
in sunlit sky in the street-lit sky  
in pigeons and parakeets  
in all things.  
Help us to see you and see with you, that it is  
good.  
Amen.



Rose is widowed and lives with her six grandchildren in a village affected by severe drought. When she was younger the rain was more reliable and she didn't skip meals. But not anymore. She prays that rains will become more normal like they used to be. Photo credit: Christian Aid/ Adam Finch

# We are part of a community of life

God placed humans in a community of interconnected relationships. Creation is life-centred and all living beings are sustained by God.



*'In Nigerian Igbo language, God is called Chineke meaning "God of creation; God the creator." There is an inclination that the earth belongs to the Lord and we must be good stewards of our creator's land as also stated in Psalm 24.'*

Rev Marcus Chilaka, RCCG Living Water Parish

# WE ARE PART OF A COMMUNITY OF LIFE

**'A friend is there to help, in any situation, and relatives are born to share our troubles.'**

Proverbs 17:17 (CEV)

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- » To connect with the stories of those in communities different from ours.
- » To understand their struggles and start exploring the word of God to find the answers of how God would respond, and how we ought to respond as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- » To connect with the stories of those from a different background.
- » To find God in their stories
- » To build a response using the word and will of God.

## SESSION OUTCOME

To engage the young people in reflecting and responding to their brothers and sisters who are experiencing times of adversity.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- » Printed copies of the two letters (page 12)
- » Two pieces of paper
- » Pens and pencils
- » NKJV version of the Bible
- » Colouring stationery

## PRAYER

Father God we come before you, ready to hear your voice and to respond to the mandate you have placed upon us and entrusted us with - to look after the poor and the sick.

We come before you as your children, ready to hear from a father who gives good gifts.

Speak to us now. Bring new revelations.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

## INTRODUCTION

### Icebreaker questions:

How long can a person go without water:

- a 6-10 days
- b 14-18 days
- c 3-5 days?

Correct answer 3- 5 days.

### Share Interesting Fact:

On a global scale, half of the people who drink water from unsafe sources live in Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa, only 24% of the population have access to safe drinking water, and 28% have basic sanitation facilities that are not shared with other households.

Take time to reflect on this fact as you read the following scripture.

## OPEN THE WORD

**Read: Matthew 25:31-46 NKJV**

### Discussion questions (5 minutes)

- » What is standing out to you in this scripture?
- » What is revealed about Jesus' expectation for us?
- » Would you say we are shown Jesus' priority in our purpose and why?
- » What outcomes can we take away from this?

## PRAYER

### Prayer of thanksgiving:

Heavenly Father  
our provider and protector.

Thank you for providing for our families and our communities.

Thank you for ensuring that we are clothed, that we have clean water to drink and that we are able to access regular running water.

### Prayer of confession:

Dear Lord Jesus,

We come to you to ask for your forgiveness.  
Forgive us for the times we have taken for granted the blessings you have given us.

For the times we have not used what we have to help others.

Thank you Jesus, Amen.

### Prayer for others:

Father, we pray for those people who are living in poverty, those who lack water.

We pray for strength and for your provision to be made known in their lives.

We invite Kingdom resources over their lives.  
Amen

## ACTIVITY

### Writing letters (5-10 minutes)

**Read the letters from Tino and Esther (page 12)**

### Discussion Questions

- » What stood out to you from these letters?
- » How does God view them and their challenges?
- » What can the church do to help and support them, given they live in another country?

### Activity Part 1

Pick between Tino and Esther to write a letter to them, a poem, a song or art drawing. Things to include:

- » A bit about you
- » A bible verse to encourage them with their current challenges
- » A prayer

### Activity Part 2

Split the young people into two groups - one that will respond to Tino's letter and one for Esther. Come up with an idea of what you would do as a community/church to support them with their current challenges.

### Examples:

- » Bake sales etc
- » Send them a picture with encouraging words
- » Donate clothes
- » Commit to praying for them regularly.

### Words in action

What actions can you start taking this week to support and help someone who lives under challenging circumstances like Tino and Esther? Where can you find their stories?

- » Write down three different things you can start doing this week.



## *CLOSE AND FINAL PRAYER*

Our Father in heaven,

Thank you for every word that you have brought to us today.

Thank you for the time of reflection and the ability to learn from the stories of others.

Help us to be more alert and more in tune with how we can continue speaking on behalf of those who have no one speaking up for them.

Highlight to us who we can help and how.

Fill us with boldness and the ability to serve others.

## WRITING LETTERS ACTIVITY

### **Letter from Tino - Harare, Zimbabwe**

To the person reading this...

My name is Tinotenda, I am a girl and live in Zimbabwe. I am eighteen years old and I recently finished my A Level and I was doing commercial subjects namely Business Enterprise Skills, accounting and Computer Science. I am the first born in my family and I have a little brother.

I aspire to major in IT or maybe accounting one day in University. Zimbabwe is an economically challenged country and some of us are not as fortunate as the rest of you guys abroad are. We hear you have benefits such as regular running water, better economy, you have electricity and wifi all the time and even go to school for free. Well, to us all this is considered as a myth. I have been in boarding school and as hard as it is to believe, my parents' combined pay cannot even cover for half of the fees. Not to mention my brother's also. Fees, bills, fuel, airtime/data that have to be paid using the same pay cheque.

I would love to help my family sustain a better living but finding a job in Zimbabwe is nearly impossible, even for people with high class degrees and certificates. So imagine how difficult it will be for a person who just finished high school. Poor families over here will watch a family member die with no medication or at least help from the hospitals because of the lack of financial resources.

It's a shame we live daily with these challenges, but with the Almighty to guide us we somehow manage to live joyfully through it all. My results haven't come out yet and I am kindly asking for your prayers, please pray for me so that whatever happens I will succeed or be able to rise up. I pray that God answers the prayers of whoever reads this.

Thank you!

### **Letter from Esther - Harare, Zimbabwe**

Dear Brother or Sister in Christ

My name is Esther Ndlovu. I am 8 years old. I live in Harare in Zimbabwe. My favorite subject is English. I love God so much because he also loves us and takes care of us. Whenever we pray to him he hears and answers us. He is always with us, he never leaves us alone.

My dream is to become a teacher when I grow up, because I would like to see other children becoming educated and following their dreams.

The challenge that I am facing is that my parents have difficulty to pay my school fees because they are missionary workers. They are not employed they do only missionary work. They are not always able to afford to buy for me the toys and clothes I wish to have and I am so sad about that.

Please pray for God to help me excel at school and to provide my parents with condition to pay my school fees at all times.

Yours in Christ

Esther Ndlovu



Faith Muvili lives near a sand dam built by ADS. She is married with five children. Thanks to the water from the dam, she now has a kitchen garden where she grows fruit and veg to feed her family. She also sells them to pay for her children's school fees. Photo credit: Christian Aid

# Our kinship with nature

God gave humans a unique role to care for creation, as stewards who 'look after', 'serve' and 'keep' it, while enjoying creation's provision for human livelihoods. The land itself is not to be worshipped as a deity; it produces the offerings of God.

The first thing God sanctified was time (Gen 2:3). Humans have the responsibility of safeguarding the Sabbath principle not only for themselves, but also for creation itself, to rest and experience renewal.



*'Not by my will but the will of the Lord (Mark 14:36) comes to mind. We need to consider preservation and God's earth as part of God's will for his glory'.*

The Venerable Rosemarie Mallet Arch Deacon of Croydon for Diocese of Southwark



# OUR KINSHIP WITH NATURE

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- » To help the young people know about their relationship with nature and that God has given them the responsibility to look after his creation by connecting and reflecting with nature.
- » To help young people understand their unique role to care for creation as stewards.
- » To explore how stewardship is a form of worship.
- » To understand the importance of sabbath for rest and renewal.

## SESSION OUTCOME

For each young person to have pragmatic approaches towards looking after God's creation and learn the importance of trust and rest in him.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- » Pens and paper
- » Permanent markers
- » Rocks (from outside)
- » Paint, glue, brushes, googly eyes (optional)
- » Projector and screen (if you have a large group)
- » Computer with internet access to show videos

## PRAYER

Heavenly father, thank you for the gift of creation.

From the clouds above to the seas below, we praise the works of your hand.

Please help us to understand our roles as stewards to look after, serve and protect the world you created.

May we take moments out in nature to reflect on your goodness and rest in renewal.

Amen.

## INTRODUCTION

As children of God we should be motivated by scripture in all that we do to care for each other and the planet. This can be achieved in the lifestyle choices we make everyday - from taking shorter showers, or walking to school or even consuming less meat. If we are to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbours as ourselves (Mark 12:29-31), we need to take our role as stewards seriously.

Using a computer and projector watch the following videos (Approx 10 mins)

- » Does the Gospel have anything to do with creation care?

<https://youtu.be/NtTMQnfJovU>

- » Creation Care and Why Environmental Stewardship is a Biblical Principle

<https://youtu.be/tec5WWgA0mk>

### Alternatively

Ask the young people what they think it means to look after the earth. Encourage conversation with prompts such as:

- » 'Put your hand up if you recycle'
- » 'Put your hand up if you walk to school'
- » 'Put your hand up if you cycle or take public transport'
- » A thought-provoking question could be 'Do you think there are more leaves or grass in the world?'

As it says in Mark 14:36 'Not by my will but the will of the Lord'. Ask the group what is a loving thing to do to ensure everyone can enjoy nature.

## OPEN THE WORD

### Read: Genesis 1:29-30 and Genesis 2:15

#### Understanding the reading

In these two passages God is speaking to Adam and Eve about their role as stewards. God gave them the responsibility to 'work it and keep it'. It is clear to them that looking after all the plants and beasts on the Earth also provided them with the means of food and shelter to flourish.

#### Short discussion

Ask the young people about how God provides for them through creation.

eg Do they remember the last time they saw a rainbow or a beautiful sunset? Talk about any of the fruits or vegetables that they like to eat or the places they like to visit and spend their free time. Remind them that God created all of those things and experiences.

### Read: Genesis 2:3

#### Understanding the reading

After God created the world he rested on the seventh day. This is also known as the sabbath. Likewise, although we have busy lives we should remember to take breaks and have quiet time with God as a way of worship and self-care.

#### Short discussion

Ask them 'what does rest mean to you?'

### Read: Psalm 18:2

#### Understanding the reading

In this Psalm David describes God as his rock and his deliverer. God has created us and everything in our world, and we can trust him to provide and deliver us. We can trust him and rest in him. As we take responsibility in looking after creation let us remember that we can only do it with God's strength and we are not alone. Nothing is too hard with God especially amongst eco-anxiety.

## ACTIVITY

### God is our Rock

#### Pet Rock (God is known as our rock that cares for us)

- » Each young person should go outside and find a rock that they would like to keep as a pet. They can then give it a name and take time to describe the characteristics of the rock from its size, shape, colour and texture. Get them to decorate it and sketch it on a piece of paper and give the rock unique characteristics
- » Help the young people to understand that, just like this rock, God has given us unique characteristics and he also looks after us - just like the exercise is encouraging them to do.
- » Remind them that God has given them a special job to look after creation.

#### Cloud exercise (The first thing God sanctified was time Genesis 2:3)

- » Time belongs to God and we have the responsibility to use it well. Sometimes we get distracted by so many things in life, that we forget to stop and rest (Sabbath).
- » Explain that our minds can also be busy and cloud our focus on God. Our thoughts come and go across our minds like clouds in the sky. Some are big, some are wispy and some are even rain clouds.
- » On a piece of paper, ask the young people to write down, think and reflect on what they have learned, and how they are feeling, in the shape of clouds. Take moments of silence to lift them up as prayer requests to God.



## *CLOSE AND FINAL PRAYER*

### **Words in action**

What can you do this week to look after God's creation?

### **Leaders Notes**

Encourage the young people to think of ways to enjoy and notice nature in their daily lives eg their commute to school and identifying different species of trees, observing the shapes of clouds in the sky. Encourage them to recycle and opt for vegetarian options when they can.

### **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, you made the heavens and all the stars.

You made the earth and everything that is in it.

You give life to everything and provide for all our needs.

Please help us to appreciate and respect your world everyday in our little actions, so that we can love our neighbours as ourselves.

Amen.



As the children are in school, Rose collects water from miles to cook for them. She prays that the rain will become more normal like they used to be.  
Photo credit: Christian Aid/Richard Finch

# A 'prophetic voice' beyond stewardship

Christ came to challenge authority with his gospel, to speak against any form of injustice and to protect the vulnerable, poor and the oppressed. God has called us to use our prophetic voice to hold to account the powers' of ecological and social exploitation. A prophetic voice speaks with moral courage to effect change, and assures people and the oppressed that justice will prevail.



*'Let's stand together on Psalm 143:10 to speak up for brothers and sisters affected by flooding, drought and pollution.'*

Rev Wale Hudson-Roberts Baptists Together Justice Enabler



Supporting scripture -  
*1Kings 21 | Isaiah 1:16-17 | Isaiah 29:19-20 | Gen 12:1*



# A 'PROPHETIC VOICE' BEYOND STEWARDSHIP

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- » To help young people understand that Jesus is the ultimate social justice activist.
- » To explore the meaning of prophetic voice.
- » To understand the biblical understanding of justice.
- » For each young person to practise faith in action through art.
- » For each young person to make room for God's voice and spirit to fill them up with moral courage.

## SESSION OUTCOME

- » For each young person to know they have the moral courage needed to be a prophetic voice for climate justice.
- » For each young person to have practised prophetic voice through art.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- » Pens, colouring pencils and A4 paper
- » Stapler
- » Bibles
- » Laptop with internet access
- » Projector and screen

## PRAYER

Father, thank you for your good gift found in creation.

Please fill us up with your spirit so that we may be agents of change as we use our prophetic voice to champion climate justice.

Give us courage, wisdom and boldness.

As you raised up righteous leaders like Nehemiah, help us to rebuild our hearts, homes and church as we move stewardship into life-giving action.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1 Word Association Game

Gather the youth to sit in a large circle. The youth leader should say each word list below at the start of each round. Once a round begins, each person has 2 seconds to say the first word that comes to their mind. If they take too long, they are eliminated from the next round. Each round should gain speed gradually until one person remains.

Creation  
Stewardship  
Pollution  
Flooding  
Drought  
Climate change  
Poverty  
Power  
Climate justice

### Questions for youth leader to ask the group:

- » How did these words make you feel?
- » Do you hear these words often?
- » Who do you think faces the impact of these words eg climate change

### 2 YouTube Videos

**It's Time for Climate Justice** (1:18 minutes)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0VrtY4KW0w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0VrtY4KW0w)

**Ella's story** (3:17 minutes)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuhXUH2U\\_EI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuhXUH2U_EI)

**Climate Justice: Why Young People Care and What The Church Can Do To Help** (2:07 minutes)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=q19y5y43NrY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q19y5y43NrY)

## ACTIVITY

### 1 Young Adult Climate Justice Stories Resource

Use a projector and screen to display the illustrations in this resource from Christian Aid ([www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/get-involved/young-adult-climate-justice-stories](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/get-involved/young-adult-climate-justice-stories)) and have different youth read each story.

#### Questions to ask the group:

- » How do these stories make you feel?
- » What words stand out to you?
- » What do these illustrations tell you? Is it how you would have visualised the story? If not, how would you illustrate the story?

### 2 Prophetic Voice through Art

Now it's time to put what God has placed in the hearts of young people to paper through art. Like the illustrative resource that has just been shared, young people can prophetically express what achieving climate justice looks like through art form.

Play some worship music ([click here for a suggested playlist](#)) and encourage silent reflection on the questions:

- » How can our church work towards climate justice?
- » What is God saying to you? What's on your heart? What do you see in your mind?

Using paper, pens, colouring pencils etc encourage the youth to be as creative as they want to be. They can draw their response to the question (How can our church work towards climate justice?). They can draw, create cartoons, mind maps - whatever they feel creatively, feel free to do.

Once all drawings/pieces of artwork are done, using a stapler, connect all the different pieces of paper and pin to a board so they collectively make a large mural board.

During a Sunday service, invite the youth to speak to the church about their drawings/artwork.

Invite them to share:

- » what God placed on their heart
- » what climate justice means to them.
- » what they are challenging their church to do to achieve climate justice in their local context.

## OPEN THE WORD

### God created the world

God is the Creator who brought the earth to existence and to function through his perfect ordered design. From the largest mountains to the tiniest pebble, God created it all.

- » Psalm 104: 25-30
- » Psalm 24:1
- » Colossians 1:16-17
- » Nehemiah 9:6

Every living thing is part of God's creation. Plants and animals are all part of the environment God created on the Earth. God deeply cares for each living thing and it is catered for through his perfect design.

- » Isaiah 43:20
- » Job 37:14-18
- » Matthew 6:26
- » John 3:16

God calls us to care for his creation. In the Bible, God calls us to steward his good creation and to also be a prophetic voice, through word and action, for those who are marginalised, persecuted, suffering and victims of injustice. Prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesy about the dire consequences that happen when we do not obey God, but allow injustice resulting in people not being able to enjoy God's good creation.

- » Micah 6:8
- » Genesis 1:26
- » Ezekiel 34:2-4
- » Isaiah 24:4-6
- » Jeremiah 2:7



## *CLOSE AND FINAL PRAYER*

Prophetic voice, meaning to speak truth to power can take place in lots of different ways. For Ella's mum it meant campaigning for justice over Ella's death, for the church it could mean reducing waste, investing in renewable energy, planting more trees and so much more! God speaks to us in lots of different ways and can give you the moral courage and wisdom to know how to move your voice into action. Keep praying and discerning how God can use you for climate justice!

Father God, Creator God,  
you are holy, Lord of our lives and worthy of all our praise.

We're sorry for the ways in which we have failed to live out your command to steward the Earth and do justice.

Please help us to move our words into action so that no one, like Ella, has to suffer. Give us boldness to encourage our leaders to be more climate friendly.

Help us to be prophetic so that we can follow the ways of the ultimate justice advocate, your son, Jesus.

In your name we pray,  
Amen



A women's cycle race in Burkina Faso to mark international women's day. Photo credit: Christian Aid/Amy Shappe

# Taking climate action as part of God's mission

In Romans, Paul suggests that creation itself is groaning and needs redemption. God has an eternal purpose for creation, and it is our role as humans to take climate action as part of His transforming mission.



*Climate justice involves all of us. Because our survival is at stake, it should be amongst the most urgent theological issues for our action and meditation. Inaction could result in a life or death situation for our brothers and sisters suffering in our home countries and indeed other areas in the global South. It has to be at the top of our agenda.*

Dr David Muir, Senior Lecturer of Ministerial Theology



Supporting scripture -  
*Gen 1:1 | Rev 21:1-5 | Colossians 1:16-17, 20 |  
Ephesians 1:10*



# TAKING CLIMATE ACTION AS PART OF GOD'S MISSION

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- » To explore our God-given purpose within creation.
- » To look at God's amazing investment into our well-being.
- » To help young people recognise that stewardship is an expression of discipleship.
- » To recognise this world God called 'good' is an expression of his love towards us.

## SESSION OUTCOME

- » To help our youth to recognise their role in healing, nurturing, cherishing and supporting the world whenever possible.
- » To look at tangible ways of caring for the planet.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- » Pens, pencils, glue, paper
- » Scissors
- » Bible
- » Cleaned, throw-away items
- » A3 paper
- » Laptop, with internet access
- » Projector and screen
- » Copies of page 27 (optional)

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God of all creation,  
thank you for our world.  
The magnificence of the sky  
the beauty of the sea  
the breathtaking wonders of the land -  
all reflections of your colourful mind  
and of your great love.

You made our world perfect,  
then you placed us in it.  
How you love us.  
Help us to reflect your love  
as we live within your creation.  
Help us to keep, feed, love, nurture  
and respect it.  
And Lord, help us to ENJOY it. Amen

## INTRODUCTION

### Icebreaker (3 mins)

Items: Two large bags of clean rubbish. Two tables.

Collect two bagfuls of throwaway items (crisp bags, tin cans, tin foil, cling film, plastic bottles, cardboard boxes ect) and place one bag on each table. Ask the youths to empty the bags onto the table and place the items into either a reusable or non-reusable pile. Have each group examine where the other group placed the items making changes where possible. Inform them that we throw away more than is necessary or healthy for our planet. Much of it can be recycled or used for some other purpose.

### Introduction

We will be looking at the Genesis 1 story of creation. It is a narrative of great design, craftsmanship and purpose. It is also a story of partnership between God and humankind. It's one of God handing over the reigns of his grand design into the hands of his prized creation. He called Adam and Eve to stewardship; to look after it, maintaining harmony and care within the world. That mandate, to look after creation, is still the heartbeat of God today.



## OPEN THE WORD

### Theological Understanding of Creation

(5 mins)

#### Creation itself

Genesis 1:1-26; 31.

As the text is read, ask the youths to take note of how many times it's stated God saw that his creation was good.

#### Question:

- » How would you describe the character of God based on the creation story?

The world is beautiful. This beauty reflects the heart of God. It is not randomly created. It's crafted by the colourful, artistic and scientific mind of God and through his power.

#### 'God saw that it was good.'

#### Question:

- » How many times is it stated, 'God saw it was good'. (verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31)
- » What words would you use to describe God's creation?

God crafted the world for the joy it would bring him. He created humankind for added pleasure and communion and to share the world with him. He was, and is, proud of his creation. This amazing creation is an expression of his amazing love towards us. He created it healthy and good.

### Consequences of humankind failing in their duty (5-15mins)

There are always consequences to wrongdoing. Adam and Eve later disobeyed God's command and the world suffered for it.

#### Cursed be the ground

Genesis 3:17-18

Since the disobedience of Adam and Eve the Earth has struggled to stay healthy. Their disobedience affected all creation - the land was cursed.

#### Creation groaning

Romans 8: 21-22

These verses tell us how the world has been groaning under the effects of decay and disease. Today the effects are seen around the globe.

**Sustaining its beauty and health is now of the utmost importance.**

**Video:** 'His epic message will make you want to save the world': short film showcase National Geographic (4:05 mins)

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=B-nEYsyRIYo>

### Climate change in the more vulnerable regions (5 mins)

Climate change is a global crisis but poorer countries are experiencing it devastating effects more than most.

#### Brainstorm:

What are the consequences of climate change for poorer countries and small islands?

**Extreme weathers:** Storm surges, hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, rising temperatures, erosion.

**Vital infrastructures are threatened:** Water resources, fisheries, coral reefs, agricultural resources and tourism income.

Poorer countries contribute far less to greenhouse gas damage than richer countries yet they suffer the results of climate change more.

#### Question (Optional):

- » Why do you think this is?
- » Why do you think small islands are at greater risk from climate change?

'Put simply, small islands are vulnerable to climate change because there is nowhere to go as the sea rises, nowhere to hide when extreme weather such as hurricanes arrive.'

*(How does climate change affect a small islands. [www.encyclopedia.com](http://www.encyclopedia.com))*

### African Mountainous Regions (3mins)

In some mountainous African regions extreme weather has swept away weather defences causing sudden floods, soil erosion and landslides, even burying some settlements and farms.

Imagine you are living in this mountainous area and you suddenly hear a distant rumbling and then you feel the ground shaking beneath you.

#### Question:

- » What are the different feelings you would be experiencing?
- » What would or could you do?

## ACTIVITY

### Personal Responsibility (5-15 mins)

#### The Mandate: Stewardship

Read Genesis 1:26; 2:15; Psalm 8:6-8

Ask the youths what they understand from these scripture passages.

- » Environmental stewardship is our responsibility: to protect, sustain and restore creation.
- » God trusts us enough to place the protection of this planet into our hands.

**'Dear Future Generation: Sorry'** With lyrics by Prince Ea (6:02. Finish at 4:50mins) (Optional)

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=eRLJscAlk1M>

As the young people watch this video ask them to make a note of the line that really speaks to them, then ask one or two to share them afterwards.

#### Optional (4-6 mins)

Photocopy or cut out the statements on climate change (page 27).

Ask the youths to:

- » Place the statements in order of importance. After this, allow them to give reasons for the order they chose.

Or

- » Point out which statement they feel is the most important and why.

God has asked us to take charge of all he has created. This is a massive responsibility but he has given us authority over the Earth so, although it may be a big task, it is not impossible. If God has given us the authority to take care of our world he will give us the ability to make a difference to our environment.

#### Getting involved (10-14 mins)

**'Dear future Generations: Sorry'** With Lyrics by Prince Ea (4:50 – 6:02 = 1:12mins) (Optional)

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=eRLJscAlk1M>

Here Prince Ea talks about an outreach he is involved with.

Arrange your youth into smaller groups and ask them to think of ways they, along side their church, can involve themselves with climate change. Ask them to share their ideas.

Suggestions may include:

- » Organise a conference
- » Organise a climate change service
- » Create a climate change action team
- » Organise a peaceful campaign/protest
- » Speak out through craft, eg create a collage from rubbish promoting preservation

Discuss how they could implement their ideas within/on behalf of the church.

## CLOSE AND FINAL PRAYER

### Closing Reflection (4 min)

It has been said that the last decade was the warmest on record. Global warming is harming our world. More than 1 million species are at risk of extinction by climate change. Whole countries, often the poorer ones are in danger of freak weather changes that will cause devastation. Our world is in need of help. Yet, our world is not without solutions. It has you. It has me. God has us. He has asked us all to look after our world. He has given us the right to make positive change. You have been privileged with ability, understanding and youth. Your choices, your actions, your voice speaking from the heart of God added to many others can seek to heal the mistakes of the past. You are the new generation of hope. One step at a time, one act at a time will help to create a healthy world.

### Closing Prayer

Ask for volunteers to close the session in prayer.

or

Father, you have called me to look after your world,  
thank you for that opportunity.  
You have made me your steward  
to find ways to protect  
the trees and plants of the land  
the sea and the life within it  
and the air we breath.

You have entrusted me to represent you  
to find ways to sustain our world.  
Thank you for believing in me.

Help me to do your will.  
Help me to nurture your world  
Give me the strength to speak  
up for the health of our planet.  
Stand with me  
as I do whatever I can  
however big or small  
to keep your world shining.

Amen

## FURTHER OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Recycle/Up-cycle

Ask your youths to pick an item from the rubbish used in the icebreaker and up-cycle it. Turning it into something that can be used is a great way to recycle unwanted items.

### Creating a collage from rubbish

Collect a large amount of unwanted papers, boxes, bottle tops, material, string etc. Ask the group to create a collage which addresses climate change.

### Reporter for the day

Photocopy the information on India, Pacific Islands, and the Caribbean (page 27). Inform the young people that they are reporters giving their TV audience the latest information on the situation caused by climate change. They can report on all three countries or focus on only one. They report back to the group.

### Taking action - discussion

*'Not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.'* Philippians 2:4.

**Question:** How relevant is this statement to world calamities caused by climate change.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

**Dear future Generations: Sorry** by Prince Ea  
(Rap 4:50 mins)

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=eRLJscAlk1M>

**Dear future Generations: Sorry** by Prince Ea  
(Get involved 4:50-6:02)

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=eRLJscAlk1M>

**Marvin Gaye Mercy, Mercy Me** (lyrics) HD  
Classicsongs

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=efiDnHS3fzk>

**We can be more** - a 13-year-old poet campaign  
to save the world by Solti Raphael TEDxSydney  
(3:45mins)

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=lm0r3yFh0zU>

**His epic message will make you want to save the world** - short film showcase National Geographic  
(4:24 mins)

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=B-nEYsyRIYo>

**When the water is gone** - Rudy Francisco (from  
1:06-2:20)

[https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=vtJ9\\_mDYGNE](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=vtJ9_mDYGNE)

**The dirty truth about Laundry Detergent** -  
Earthwash (2:03 mins)

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Cgyt7H2Th-w>

### **Christian Climate Action**

This is a possible resource which can be used when thinking on how our youths work alongside the church concerning climate change. Look up this organisation before the lesson to get an understanding of their ethos and motivations.

<https://christianclimateaction.org/>

### **Climate and Racial Justice film**

This film from Christian Aid was created to raise the profile and voices of people from underrepresented communities and their perspectives on climate and racial injustice.

<https://youtu.be/MjPt4gEV7A0>

### **Young Adult Climate Justice Stories Resource**

A resource from Christian Aid

[www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/get-involved/young-adult-climate-justice-stories](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/get-involved/young-adult-climate-justice-stories)

## *PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ACTIVITY STATEMENTS*

The most critical issue we are facing is climate change.

If we don't address climate change there will be no future for us.

If we don't have a planet to live on, nothing else matters.

We should focus on the three Rs - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

We should make sure we do as little as possible to damage the Earth.

So many of us have enjoyed the environment but if we don't look after and protect it then future generations will not have the same choices we have had.

God gave us this entire planet to protect. If we don't protect the planet then we are throwing away God's gift.

We only have one earth, there's nothing we can go back and redo once we have destroyed it.

I wonder what Jesus would have to say about climate change.

## *REPORTER FOR THE DAY ACTIVITY*

**India:** The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that India could face multiple climate change disasters over the next two decades if greenhouse gas emissions are not taken seriously. If the Indian authorities do not make positive changes by 2030 the climate catastrophe will be irreversible.

**Pacific island countries:** Three cyclones hit the Pacific islands between 2020 and 2021. Seawalls built as weather defences crumbled under the strong battering of water and winds leaving the water to sweep into the land. Some people had to evacuate their homes.

**Caribbean:** During 2020 the Caribbean experienced 30 tropical storms - including six major hurricanes. The Caribbean is still recovering. Buildings built to withstand category 4 hurricanes couldn't withstand the strong winds of the category 5 hurricanes hitting the islands.



Wonderful  
yOUTH