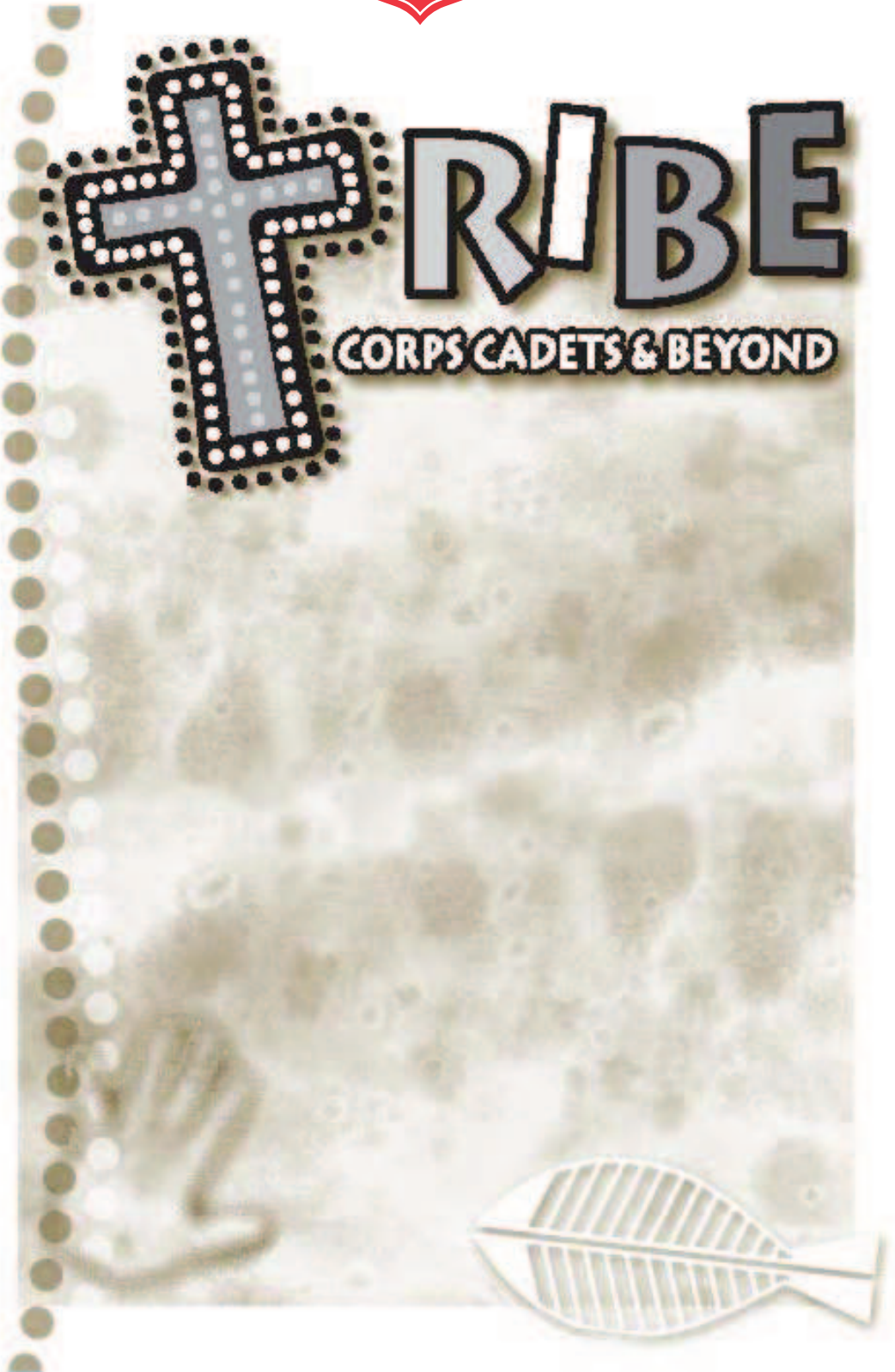




CROSS RIBE

CORPS CADETS & BEYOND



Unit 2



A LEADER'S AIM & PRAYER

I am discipling young people so that they can say, 'I acknowledge Jesus as my Saviour and Lord.'

I know that they will watch my life. Help me to live so that they only see Jesus in me.

I will study God's word so I can present its great truths faithfully and well.

SAFETY AND CARE

Carelessness is the opposite of loving. True care will be anticipatory (thinking ahead and being responsible), pro-active (their concerns are my concerns) and personal. The most important thing is not the program – it's the person. So keep your ministry safe! Don't assume that everything will be OK – build safety and care into your youth ministry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Various versions of the Bible have been used including the Good News Bible (GNB), Contemporary English Version (CEV) and the New International Version (NIV).

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LEADER'S NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to TRIBE! You have chosen a great resource for young people in the 12 to 16 age group who are meeting in small groups within The Salvation Army. Some of your group may be enrolled Corps Cadets and others may be young people not connected with any church. They are attending TRIBE for various reasons and you are holding a tool in your hands that can make an impact on their lives.

In this handbook you will find 20 sessions you can use at any time and in any order. Have a look at the contents page and think about how often you meet and any other events that may be on in the next 6 months that will cut into your group time – things like school holidays, corps events and divisional events. A few of the sessions may go together and others are stand-alone ones. So be flexible and work out how many of the sessions you can fit into a 6 month block and which ones are most suitable for your group.

Each *TRIBE* session has several sections that take you through the teaching material. They are written to last about 45 to 60 minutes and always provide more material than you can use, so you need to carefully plan and prepare.

* **AIM**

What the session is focussing on is spelt out in the aim. Once you are clear about aims, you can prepare in a way that will reinforce the purpose of the session.

* **OBJECTIVES**

These are for your referral only and reflect desired learning outcomes. The objectives state the ways in which the young people's thinking, attitudes or beliefs might be modified or reinforced. Sometimes you may want to concentrate on only one or two objectives and at other times you will be able to work on them all.

* **FROM THE BIBLE**

These will be the main passages included in the *TRIBE* lesson. You need to check out these verses to find out what God has to say on the topic.

* **INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER**

This is information, advice and so on that may be useful in your preparation and presentation. Sufficient material will be given in order that you have no difficulty in knowing how to answer any questions raised during the session, what the session is about and how to go about conducting the session. Sometimes this is supplemented with side column boxes with LEADER TIPS or NOTES that give specific information.

❖ **GETTING STARTED**

By using one of these warm-up activities at the start of the session, you'll help the group unwind. It will be based around an activity connected with the theme of the session. Sometimes this will lead to a revision of previous work or it will prepare them to tune into the general theme of the session. Try to give a time limit on the starter. The young people should be able to tie this activity into the aim of the session and you can do this under the sub-heading 'Point to make'.

❖ **GOING DEEPER**

By exploring some of the different teaching approaches, you'll find out as a group what the topic is all about. Some of the main ideas will be suitable for large groups; some for small; some for older groups; some for younger groups; some to involve input and some to involve discussion. All should involve interaction. There will always be more teaching ideas suggested than there is time to use, **SO BE SELECTIVE AND FLEXIBLE!** Choose one or more of the teaching approaches, depending on what you want to accomplish. You may have some other ideas to add – just check that you are still true to the aim and objectives.

❖ **TAKING IT HOME**

By this brief summary of the teaching, the young people will be helped to look at how it applies to their living today. This segment also offers a challenge through the Get Involved and Grow strand for the young people to think about how they can do something practical that involves a response from them.

❖ **WORK SHEETS**

Photocopy these for the young people depending on whether they are juniors or seniors. The work sheets have specific activities that arise as part of the session and are a useful tool for feedback on whether you are getting the message across.

Well, now that you have a brief overview of the session format, pray, plan and prepare to lead your group through some exciting times. Think of your young people as unique persons, created and loved by a mighty God who desires the very best for them. As their leader you will want to build meaningful relationships with your group and use the best resources available to help shape their lives. There is help available for you through training and networking with other leaders through your Divisional Youth Secretary. We pray that God will equip you and lead you in this ministry.





GET INVOLVED AND GROW

An important part of nurturing any person in their understanding of the Christian faith is to help them see that Jesus expected us to listen and then obey by doing.

If you love me you will obey my commandments – John 14:15

A great challenge that every leader must present to those they are discipling is that they need to 'get involved' and be committed.

Because of its importance this strand of the TRIBE program is set out at the beginning of this Handbook and is called **GET INVOLVED AND GROW**.

A wide choice of challenges is presented so that every group may choose those that particularly suit their situation – country, city, small or large.

A Your Choice challenge is included because it is always exciting when a group sees a specific need and thinks of a way they can help.

As your group members grow in spiritual discernment you will be able to suggest that they take on a challenge that has appeared to be too difficult or demanding. This will give them the joy of knowing that they can do marvellous things in God's strength.

The challenges are divided into three sections:

1. Get involved in worship
2. Get involved in mission
3. Get involved in training for leadership

As each challenge is listed a short explanation is given for those that are not self explanatory. The suggestions are the same for each year. Following discussion with your group, aim to have each member accept five challenges from each section – every unit (or six months).

Nurturing young people so that they grow to be committed, active members of our corps community is a 'huge' task and one that you as a leader are taking on.

Seek out discipleship partners from soldiers in the corps who will uphold you with their faithful prayers and keep them informed of your needs.

IT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!





GET INVOLVED AND GROW IN MISSION (REACHING OUT IN SERVICE)

Motivation: (Matthew 25 :40 GNB) Whenever you did this for one of the least important brothers of mine, you did it for me.

- ❖ **HELP WITH OPEN-AIR OUTREACH**
- ❖ **BE AN ENCOURAGER**
(e.g. Write or phone somebody who is feeling a bit sad, or who should be thanked for a great job.)
- ❖ **TAKE PART IN THE RED SHIELD APPEAL**
- ❖ **BE INVOLVED WITH THE YOUTH GROUP**
- ❖ **PRAY FOR YOUR FRIENDS**
(Pray regularly for the specific needs that a friend has.)
- ❖ **CARE FOR OTHERS**
(Help someone with a disability with a task they find difficult to do.)
- ❖ **HELP WITH TODDLERS**
(If your corps runs a creche, take part as a helper.)
- ❖ **PARTICIPATE IN A SCHOOL GROUP**
(Find out if your school has any Christian gatherings and join one.)
- ❖ **HELP AT A COMMUNITY WELFARE CENTRE**
(for several hours)
- ❖ **BE INVOLVED WITH CAROLLING/ CHRISTMAS OUTREACH**
- ❖ **BE A FRIEND**
(Chat to a newcomer and introduce them around)
- ❖ **HELP ANOTHER CORPS**
(Be involved in leading a meeting at a smaller corps)
- ❖ **ACCOMPANY A COMMUNITY CARE MINISTRIES WORKER**
(on visitation at a special time such as Christmas, Mother's Day etc)
- ❖ **BRING A FRIEND WHO DOES NOT ATTEND THE ARMY ALONG TO A YOUTH GROUP**
- ❖ **HELP AT THE LOCAL SHOW**
(e.g. distribute literature, help on a stall)
- ❖ **BE A HELPFUL MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY**
- ❖ **VISIT A NURSING HOME AS A MEMBER OF A GROUP**
- ❖ **HELP WITH OTHER APPEALS**
(e.g. Forty Hour Famine)
- ❖ **MAKE A POSTER FOR A SPECIAL EVENT AT YOUR CORPS**
- ❖ **SHARE A CHRISTIAN BOOK/VIDEO WITH A FRIEND**
- ❖ **DO AN UNEXPECTED FAVOUR FOR SOMEONE**
- ❖ **PREPARE INVITATIONS FOR A SPECIAL EVENT AND HELP GIVE THEM OUT**
- ❖ **YOUR CHOICE**





GET INVOLVED AND GROW IN WORSHIP

Motivation: (Psalm 100:1 GNB) Sing to the Lord, all the world! Worship the Lord with joy; come before him with happy songs

- ❖ **WORSHIP REGULARLY**
(By attendance and attitude)
- ❖ **DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL DEVOTIONS**
- ❖ **MEMORISE SCRIPTURE**
(Approximately 6 – 8 verses)
- ❖ **READ THE BIBLE IN A MEETING**
(Prepare beforehand and give the congregation time to find the passage)
- ❖ **REPORT ON HOW A WORSHIP SERVICE HELPED YOU**
- ❖ **REGULARLY WEAR THE CORRECT UNIFORM FOR THE SECTION YOU ARE IN**
- ❖ **TAKE PART IN A SMALL GROUP**
(Singing, playing an instrument, drama or creative dance)
- ❖ **LEAD A WORSHIP SEGMENT AT TRIBE**
(Use a song that helps you worship)
- ❖ **OPERATE THE AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT**
(Overhead projector, Power Point presentations and so on – for four meetings, changing transparencies slides efficiently)
- ❖ **KEEP A PRAYER DIARY**
(List your prayers and tick them as they are answered)
- ❖ **TELL OTHERS WHAT GOD HAS DONE IN YOUR LIFE** (Spontaneous or prepared testimony)
- ❖ **GIVE A CHILDREN'S STORY USING A VISUAL AID**
- ❖ **DESIGN A PRAYER BOOK MARK**
(To help you remember the types of prayers we can pray)
- ❖ **TAKE PART IN A MUSICAL SECTION IN YOUR CORPS**
- ❖ **PRAY PUBLICLY IN A MEETING**
(Write out the prayer beforehand so that you can include all the things you should pray about)
- ❖ **CHOOSE SONGS AND CHORUSES**
(Select 4 – 5 that could be used in a worship service on a given theme)
- ❖ **SPEAK ON A GIVEN TOPIC**
(Have 2 weeks' preparation – use a Bible verse or talk on a famous Christian)
- ❖ **TAKE UP THE OFFERING**
(And explain why giving is a part of worship)
- ❖ **TAKE PART IN A SCRIPTURE PRESENTATION**
(Use drama, mime or creative dance or verse speaking with a visual presentation)
- ❖ **MEMORISE A SONG**
(Choose one with words that help you)
- ❖ **HELP WITH THE PA SYSTEM**
(Indoors or outdoors)
- ❖ **YOUR CHOICE**





GET INVOLVED AND GROW IN TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP

Motivation: (1 Timothy 4:6 GNB) If you give these instructions to the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus.

- ❖ **LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY**
(Explain what responsibilities you hold e.g. class captain, prefect, monitor, team captain, patrol leader)
- ❖ **HELP TO ORGANISE A MONEY RAISING EFFORT FOR SELF DENIAL/OWSOMS**
- ❖ **LEAD A SONG IN A PUBLIC MEETING**
- ❖ **HELP THE JUNIOR SOLDIER SERGEANT**
(Assist with bronze level Juniors Soldiers for four weeks)
- ❖ **HELP WITH STREET MINISTRY**
(Hand out literature or help on a stall)
- ❖ **ASSIST A LOCAL OFFICER**
(For one month)
- ❖ **REPORT ON THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A LOCAL OFFICER**
- ❖ **COMPLETE SOME TRAINING IN YOUTH OR CHILDREN'S WORK**
- ❖ **TEACH A CHORUS TO YOUR YOUTH GROUP OR TRIBE GROUP**
- ❖ **ORGANISE AN OUTING FOR YOUR TRIBE GROUP**
(e.g. to a Christian concert)
- ❖ **DEVELOP AN AWARENESS OF OFFICERSHIP**
(Recognise that God calls people to serve Him in full-time work)
- ❖ **HELP TO PLAN A CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**
(e.g. for a nursing home and be involved in presenting it)
- ❖ **LEAD CHORUSES IN A MEETING**
- ❖ **ASSIST WITH THE SETTING UP OR PACKING UP**
(In any section for several weeks)
- ❖ **REPORT ON HOW OUR OFFERING IS USED**
(This may be worked out with the help of the Corps Treasurer)
- ❖ **HELP WITH FUNDRAISING FOR THE YOUTH GROUP**
- ❖ **USE YOUR TALENTS**
(Think about what special talents you have and find out how your gifts could be used for God)
- ❖ **LIST THE LOCAL OFFICERS IN YOUR CORPS**
(Briefly describe their respective roles)
- ❖ **HELP PREPARE SPECIAL GIFTS**
(Ask how you may help the Community Care workers prepare for a special event e.g. Christmas, Mother's Day gifts)
- ❖ **PLAN A MEETING ON A GIVEN THEME**
(Songs, Bible reading, choruses, drama all fitting in)
- ❖ **BE INVOLVED IN SOME FORM OF YOUTH OUTREACH**
(e.g. coffee shop, street theatre)
- ❖ **YOUR CHOICE**



A FEW WORDS FOR YOUTH WORKERS - YES ... THAT'S YOU

George Barna is an American researcher who is known for his nationwide surveys and interviews with teens and pre-teens published in his book *Real Teens* (Regal Books, 2001). This age group born after 1984 (which includes your TRIBE group) is called the 'Mosaic generation' and is said to be 'highly mobile, information drenched, totally connected, decidedly upbeat and dedicated to making a difference in the world around them.'

Barna gives the following suggestions (based on his research) for helping youth workers have positive outcomes in their ministry:

Your preparation for effective ministry to teens should include:

- ❖ Understanding the world of the teenager.
- ❖ Entering your ministry with a worldview (know yourself before you try to know them).
- ❖ Entering with a philosophy of youth ministry (have a clear vision of why you are engaged in youth ministry).
- ❖ Praying daily for each teen in your group by name addressing their individual needs).
- ❖ Finding resources (by calling favours from friends, seeking resources from your corps and developing creative solutions to problems that might hinder effective ministry).

Your performance of ministry duties should include:

- ❖ Intimate involvement (be a friend).
- ❖ Modelling (live the lessons you teach).
- ❖ Experiential learning (learning that is hands-on and interactive).
- ❖ Unapologetic commitment (to loving and serving Christ and to caring for the teens in your group).

(Summarised from *Real Teens* by George Barna, Regal Books, 2001, pages 149 - 155.)

.....

Our job as youth ministry workers is to plant and water and to do that well (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). We're to provide a foundation for faith to grow on. We're to provide a mirror for the faith of our teens. We're to give them spiritual markers where they can look back when re-evaluating their faith and can say at these points, "I know God has been real in my life." Obviously that's a lot for us to do, and parents play a much larger role in this. But we absolutely have our part, too—may we do that part well.

(Brenda Seefeldt, *Youthworker Journal*, Sept/Oct 2005)

.....

GETTING BACK TOGETHER

Here are some suggestions for starting your TRIBE year:

- Make the first meeting informal so the young people feel comfortable together as a group. Have a games night. OR Watch a video together. OR Go out for breakfast / supper as a group.
 - Start with the first session on self-esteem by watching the movie *Princess Diaries* (if you think this suits your group). Use the first part of the movie where Mia starts her day feeling lost and unimportant at high school by being greeted by a teacher as 'Lily's friend' and then sat on by a male student. Continue with the teaching from the session and then watch the rest of the movie together.
-



GOIN' OUT

SESSION 1

FROM THE BIBLE

Selected passages.

AIM

To encourage the young people to consider the need for care when deciding to 'go out.'

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will:

- ❖ realise that it is not only physical attraction and/or mental stimulation that determines who to date, but it is important to first ask for God's guidance.
- ❖ examine their own attitude to dating and the opposite sex and come to the realisation that mutual respect is very important;
- ❖ be made aware of the importance of allowing God to be part of their choice in friends and to realise how important it is to choose wisely.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Don't be fooled into thinking your young people are not old enough to be interested in this topic. Even those young people who have not as yet physically matured will be surrounded by talk and TV programs where 'relationships' are openly discussed or displayed. Sadly, too openly sometimes.

If we do not give them time to discuss such vital issues from a Christian perspective, who will? We must help them see that it is part of God's plan that humans fall in love and marry.

They need to understand that God loves them and will help them in a wise choice of friends if they ask Him.

Sex is the 'number one interest of 99% of young people', claims Lance Pierson (*The Pastoral Care of Young People*, Grove Books). Yet we often avoid it in our teaching programs. There are two main reasons it gets left out: embarrassment and embarrassment! Leaders may be embarrassed – especially if they have to talk personally. And if leaders aren't, young people often are. It's because it is such an important and personal topic that talking about it becomes risky. If we as leaders won't talk openly, we ought not to be surprised when young people end up with a whole set of non-Christian values and attitudes.

Two things need saying about the way we teach in this area:

1. **Be positive.** Avoid reinforcing the false ideas that God is anti-sex, and that marriage is a last resort for the weak! Even if a close relationship is inappropriate for our young people just now, they need positive attitudes for the future.

CHECKLIST ✓

You may decide to go straight into the teaching rather than spend time on the starter.

There are 3 teaching approaches. Approach 1 uses two 'Dear Sally' letters that are on the junior work sheet as activities 1 and 2.

Both juniors and seniors will benefit from this approach.

Approach 2 is a quiz – 'What Do You Think' (activity 2) and is for the use of both groups. This is followed by activity 4 – 'My ideal guy/girl' and includes discussion and looking at Bible verses.

Approach 3 is for seniors and uses activities 1 and 2 on the senior sheet.

If, after reading the session content, you feel uncomfortable about leading this session, you may find it useful to invite a guest (or a couple) along who would relate well to your young people.

And how do people learn how to handle close relationships if they never have them?

2. **Be relevant.** For your group, going out is the big issue (Should I? Why aren't I? Will I? Is it right to?), not engagement and marriage. (How do I choose? When do I know?) Of course, the older ones will need teaching about marriage. But right now, there are other issues which are even more important.

There are other sessions over the four year *TRIBE* program that deal with some of the issues that may be raised in your discussions (e.g. choosing a partner, marriage and divorce).

So, this session is a can-opener, designed to get the young people taking and thinking about the whole area. It will raise more questions than it answers, so be prepared. And don't think that because you have 'done' this session, you have 'done' relationships. It's a crucial area for any young Christians – see them through it!

FURTHER READING

Chosen to be a Soldier, Chapter VIII, 'Christian standards of sexual morality' Sections 1 and 2.

CLIFTON, Shaw, *Strong Doctrine, Strong Mercy*, The Campfield Press, St Albans, 1987, chapter 11.

GETTING STARTED

1. These could be the top ten Christian 'pick up' lines. Read them out allowing your group to react to each one.

'We know these are a bit of a joke, but in reality what is 'going out' all about.' Discuss.

1. Nice Bible!
2. I would like to pray with you.
3. You know Jesus, me too.
4. How about a hug, sister?
5. What are your plans for tonight? Feel like a Bible study?
6. The Word says: 'Give drink to those who are thirsty, and feed the hungry', how about dinner?
7. Is it a sin that you stole my heart?
8. Nice bracelet. What Would Jesus Date? I mean 'Do'.
9. Excuse me, I believe one of your ribs belongs to me.
10. My friend told me to come and meet you, he said that you are a really nice person. I think you know him. Jesus, yeah that's his name

Or

2. **Play the game 'Winks'**

This game needs a large group with an equal number of male and female players.

Chairs are arranged in a circle, facing inwards. Involve all your helpers

to try and get even numbers of boys and girls. One boy stands behind each chair with his hands behind his back. Girls sit in the chairs, except for one chair left vacant. The boy behind that particular chair is 'it'. He must get a girl into that chair. He does this by winking at any one of the girls seated in the other chairs. She then tries to get out of the chair she is sitting in without the boy behind her tagging her on the back. If she is tagged, she must remain in her chair and 'it' tries again, either by winking at another girl or the same one. If the girl winked at can get out of the chair without being tagged, she takes the chair in front of 'it' and the boy with the vacant chair is now 'it'.

The game proceeds in this manner. Anyone who can avoid becoming 'it' is declared the winner. Halfway through the game, have the boys switch places with the girls.

Keep the game moving and only play for a short time.

GOING DEEPER

1. Dear Sally ...

Have someone read the first 'Dear Sally' letter and follow it with discussion using the following questions.

'Dear Sally' (frustrated)

- Have you every felt like this?
- Will they ever get to date the person they like!
- Do you agree with the advice given by Sally?
- When adults make us feel we can't be trusted, how should we react?

'Dear Sally' (confused)

Have someone read the second letter then encourage the young people to write their own reply and discuss.

(If the young people themselves do not bring out all the points you think should be made, ask questions to help them think more deeply. e.g. Do some kids brag about conquests they have not even made? How can you cope with other kids jeering at you because you're still a virgin? Have you told him that his feelings are very natural?)

2. What do you think?


Complete activity 3 on the work sheet – 'What do you think?' (Adapted from *Talksheets* by David Lynn, Zondervan Publishing House, 1987.)

Take time for your group members to look at this activity.

Allow time for discussion (every point can't be discussed at length).

- Look especially at point 'e' (Christians going out only with other Christians).
- Refer to 2 Corinthians 6:14, 15. Look it up in a few different versions. What does 'working (yoked – NIV) together as equals with unbelievers' mean?
- What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?
- What ways will they never be together?
- 'If you are a Christian, God must be the most important Person in your life.' Do you think non-Christians understand this?

Complete activity 4 on the work sheet – 'My ideal guy / girl'. (Adapted from *Talksheets* by David Lynn, Zondervan Publishing House, 1987.)




Issues involved in 'going out' are a lot more serious than games or pick up lines.

It is right and natural for teenagers to become interested in the opposite sex. This is part of God's plan for us. He wants us to find someone special with whom we can share our future.

Friendships lead to going out.

What happens when we go out? This is what we want to discuss in this session.




LEADER TIP

This is activity 1 on the junior work sheet.



FOR EVERYONE



LEADER TIP

It is recognised that Christian/ non-Christian marriages do work. But it is important to stress to the young people, particularly those from these marriages, that in spite of the successes they know, so often the believer gives away his or her faith rather than the unbeliever becoming a Christian.

DEFINITION

Betrothed: promised in marriage to a future partner – engaged.

This encourages the young people to assess their priorities and their values, because they are limited to choices. By doing this, the most important characteristics will become evident. After a few volunteers share their choices, tally up the 'votes' for each one and discover what the majority consider most important.

There are no clear guidelines in the Bible as to who you should go out with, because in the days when the Bible was written, marriages were arranged by the parents. A child of three years old might therefore be betrothed to a seemingly suitable partner whom she might not meet until the wedding night.

The wedding would probably be held when she was about 12 years old; before the age of puberty. And who wants to start getting really serious before puberty?

But the Bible does give some pretty clear principles which we should use. Jesus said, '... anyone who looks at a woman and wants to possess her is guilty of committing adultery with her in his heart' (Matthew 5: 28, GNB). The Bible is pretty clear about lust – it's in the same league as adultery.

So what is lust? Is it admiring someone? Lust is using our imagination to mentally undress and have sex with someone. So it's OK to look at a person and say to yourself 'cute'; but if we start wondering about sex with the person, we have gone too far.

Something else about lust. It is the opposite of love. Lust is out for as much as it can get – it's very selfish; but love is more interested in the other person and it puts the other person's feelings first (think about 1 Corinthians 13 and 1 John 2:16). When we reach the point that we are more interested in what we can get, than how the other person feels about it, it's too far.

It is important that you figure out your limit before you get into a situation where you need to use it. Thinking clearly is almost impossible when your hormones get going. So beforehand have a think about what is important to you. Is love and friendship more important than what you can get?

3. Discussion

Read the two stories on the senior work sheet and discuss them using the following points.

'Out of Control'

- What was the big change in their relationship?
- Why was it impossible to shift the relationship into reverse?
- Is it possible to start again?
- Read this verse 1 John 1:9. How does it answer these questions?

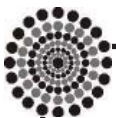
'Keeping it' Discussion

- Why is the writer recommending virginity?
- Why is virginity 'something worthwhile having'?

Read Ephesians 5:3; 1 Corinthians 6:18 - 19.

VERSE

'Don't allow love to turn into lust, setting off a downhill slide into sexual promiscuity, filthy practices, or bullying greed.'
Ephesians 5:3 (The Message.)



**FOR
SENIORS**

TAKING IT HOME

A Christian's first love should be God and therefore reflected in all relationships – including 'going out'. This means setting boundaries to our behaviour and being careful that God is pleased by everything we do.

Thank God for the friends He has given us. Pray for wisdom and guidance in our relationships.

FOLLOW-THRU

Some of your young people may like to take up the challenge in Get Involved and Grow in Mission to invite a friend who does not attend the Army along to a youth group event. If this friend is one they find physically attractive, it may help them to consider how spiritually compatible they are.

Go in' Out

1.

Dear Sally ...
I'm 13 years old and quite mature for my age. I went to a camp where I met this unreal guy! He is a bit older than I am, but I feel so grown up and important because he was attracted to me.

He's asked me to keep seeing him but my parents think I'm too young to go out on a 'date' with nobody else there.

I'm so angry I feel like sneaking out one night just to prove to them I am mature.

Why can't they trust me?

What do they think I'll do anyway?

I only want to have a good time. (And it would be nice to be able to do a spot of 'bragging' about my catch to the other girls at school.)

What should I do?

Signed
Frustrated

Dear Frustrated,
 You're at an exciting time in your life! It's part of God's plan that you now grow up. Your body has matured and hormones have begun to play a big part in how you think and act.

These hormones are extremely powerful and they were placed in your body by God – so that the sexual drive is only second to your hunger drive. Your parents know exactly how strong this drive is and more than anything else they want to keep you safe.

Would God think it was OK behaviour to sneak out for any reason? And would it be really mature to do that?

Do your Mum and Dad feel that it's OK for you to go out in a group and get to know each other better?

They probably tell you that you've got all the time in the world but naturally you want action NOW! It's very natural to want to brag about our 'catches' but what kind of feelings does bragging bring out in your group?

If you're really mature you need to think about all these things.

Sally

2.

Dear Sally ...
I'm a 14 year old boy and all my friends brag about the girls they go out with. Some of them even give graphic explanations of what they've actually done!

I'm only just starting to grow, my voice is breaking and I'm getting zits. There's this girl I really like but she's taller than me and seems so trendy. When I get a chance to talk to her, I just get tongue tied and mumble and walk away kicking the ground in frustration.

Will things ever improve?

Signed
Confused

Dear Confused

3. What do you think?

	Yes	Definitely	Sometimes	Never
a. A person should go out with as many people as he / she can.				
b. Christians should pray together when they go out.				
c. The best age to begin going out is 14.				
d. Making out is okay as long as the couple doesn't go all the way.				
e. Christians should go out only with other Christians.				
f. It's permissible for a girl to ask a guy out.				
g. The purpose of going out is to prepare for marriage.				
h. If your parents don't approve of the person you are going out with you should stop seeing her / him.				
i. Couples should share expenses when they go out.				



Discuss answers as a group.

HIGHLIGHTS

- It is part of God's plan that humans fall in love and marry.
- He wants us to find someone special to be our future partner.
- Our parents want to protect us from hurt when they try to 'slow us down'.
- Going out in groups can be lots of fun.

4. My ideal guy / girl

I would like to go out with a person who: (✓ four)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>___ can be open and honest with me.</p> <p>___ treats me as if I am special and with respect.</p> <p>___ will listen when I need to talk.</p> <p>___ is popular.</p> <p>___ won't go out with anyone else but me.</p> <p>___ is very good-looking.</p> | <p>___ likes to try new and different things.</p> <p>___ is very intelligent and gets good grades.</p> <p>___ is involved in church activities.</p> <p>___ wants to 'get physical' right away.</p> <p>___ has a lot of money.</p> <p>___ is a strong Christian.</p> <p>___ has a sense of humour.</p> |
|---|---|

Goin' Out

1. Out of Control

It didn't start out to be a serious relationship. But then I guess relationships never do.

We met through some friends. We went out and really enjoyed each other's company. As the weeks went by, we fell in love.

I began to notice that I didn't have as much time for the things that had always been so important to me – like my studies or sport. My old friends started to dwindle away; I just couldn't find the time to keep up the contact. We were always together.

But I didn't mind the changes enough to do anything about them. There was something comfortable and nice about having someone who thought I was so special.

To begin with, we just hugged and kissed. Then we started petting. And before too many weeks passed our sessions were

getting pretty heavy.

The next step seemed so natural, but deep inside I felt guilty and dirty.

It started to happen regularly until it seemed to be all we ever did. Oh, we still went out. We still did a lot of the same fun things together. But somehow everything was a lot different. Everything seemed to revolve around our sessions together . . . it was like that it was the relationship.

We still talked. But never really said anything. Our communication was physical. We became really possessive of each other, accusing each other of not wanting to spend time alone whenever friends asked us out.

Jealously crept in.

We had big arguments about that.

Surely relationships weren't supposed to be like that. The good times were great but they didn't take away the unhappiness and guilt I felt about our physical relationship, though. I vowed to myself a couple of times that I was going to draw some new lines. But I discovered it was impossible to shift our relationship into reverse.

Now we have split up. It would never have worked. But every relationship I have had since seems tainted and I can't be honest about it.

It feels as if I have given away part of me and I will never get it back. Nothing since seems to be completely whole.

What started as a simple, natural progression has changed me, hurt me, stopped me.

I wish I could start again.

2. Keeping it

There's something to be said for virginity, it really is something to hold on to till you're married.

I'm sixteen and my boyfriend is not a virgin to me. It really kills me when I think, if I were ever to marry him, I wouldn't be the first to make love to him. It hurts me just to know that he's enjoyed sex with someone else. It also makes me feel insecure in our relationship, because I know that he shared with her, something I won't share with him now.

Despite what I feel though, I cannot complain because I'm not a virgin either. I lost my virginity years ago, before I became a Christian. And it's a truth that hurts me. I know that God has forgiven me (verses such as Romans 10:9 assure me of this), but my virginity is gone and it will not come back. It's a gift I can no longer give my husband on our wedding night. I never feel really 'clean' or 'pure', I find it really hard to forgive myself – and I find it hard to forget about this other girl.

'So then, my brothers, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer.' (Romans 12:1) because 'Any other sin a man commits does not affect his body; but the man who is guilty of sexual immorality sins against his own body' (1 Corinthians 6:18).

If you are single and are lucky to have made it to this point in time a virgin, keep it that way. No matter how strongly you feel about someone, wait until you are married before you give them all you have to offer. Love clouds your view, and you will regret it later. After all, the Lord commands that 'it is not right that any matters of sexual immorality or indecency or greed should even be mentioned among you' (Ephesians 5:3).

Please, learn from our mistakes, don't make your own. As Christians, we love you, and we don't want you to suffer, in this way.

God has given us the strength, that we can say 'no' to sex these days, and he will give it to you too if you want it, and virginity is something worthwhile having.

3. What do you think?

	Yes	Definitely	Sometimes	Never
a. A person should go out with as many people as he / she can.				
b. Christians should pray together when they go out.				
c. The best age to begin going out is 14.				
d. Making out is okay as long as the couple doesn't go all the way.				
e. Christians should go out only with other Christians.				
f. It's permissible for a girl to ask a guy out.				
g. The purpose of going out is to prepare for marriage.				
h. If your parents don't approve of the person you are going out with you should stop seeing her / him.				
i. Couples should share expenses when they go out.				



Discuss answers as a group.

We cannot really love anybody with whom we never laugh.

82% of teenagers want to have one marriage partner for life. (Barna Research, 1998)

4. My ideal guy / girl

I would like to go out with a person who: (check four)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> can be open and honest with me. | <input type="checkbox"/> likes to try new and different things. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> treats me as if I am special and with respect. | <input type="checkbox"/> is very intelligent and gets good grades. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> will listen when I need to talk. | <input type="checkbox"/> is involved in church activities. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> is popular. | <input type="checkbox"/> wants to 'get physical' right away. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> won't go out with anyone else but me. | <input type="checkbox"/> has a lot of money. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> is very good-looking. | <input type="checkbox"/> is a strong Christian. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> has a sense of humour. |

The honeymoon is a short time of doting between dating and debting.

Love makes time pass; time makes love pass. (French proverb)

SESSION 2

AM I REALLY SAVED?

FROM THE BIBLE

Selected passages.

AIM

To help the young people understand that having accepted God's gift of salvation, it is faith not feelings that links us with Him.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will:

- ❖ understand that salvation is received by faith.
- ❖ know that 'whoever believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart.' 1 John 5:10 (GNB);
- ❖ be encouraged to maintain that assurance;
- ❖ realise that feeling 'down' does not mean I am no longer saved.

✓ CHECKLIST

For the Getting Started activity you will need to prepare the parcel beforehand. Decide how you are going to present the approaches.

Approach 2 requires the testimony of a Salvationist who should be well prepared beforehand following the suggestions under approach 2. You will need to prepare the audio tape if you choose this option.

You will know which of these suggestions will benefit your group most.

Using three different leaders or older young people for the presentation of approach 3 may help this session to be varied. It is clearly set out under three headings:

- a. God's promises;
- b. The Holy Spirit within us;
- c. The outward change seen by others.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

The Salvationist Handbook of Doctrine, *Salvation Story* says this about assurance of salvation.

'We believe that God, who has accepted and saved us and given us eternal life, has given us also the assurance of our standing in him. The Holy Spirit is the seal and guarantee of our salvation and assures us of the truth of the gospel message and its effectiveness for us. Our new life, our determination to obey God, our break with the past and our new spiritual direction give evidence of our adoption into God's family. We can be assured because the Holy Spirit speaks to us and our lives have been changed.

Our confidence is based not on changing moods or feelings but on the word of God. When we accept the biblical promises of God concerning our justification and regeneration, and our acceptance into God's family, we base our trust on the faithfulness of God who has given his promise and who can be trusted.

Assurance does not mean that we may never be troubled by doubt following our conversion or that we shall always be consciously aware of the work of the Spirit within us. At times when we are not consciously assured of our salvation, however, we remember that an ongoing union with Christ depends on his work and not our feelings.

Some people receive their assurance in a moment of intense experience; with others the assurance is quietly given like the slow breaking of dawn. Such assurance must be affirmed daily by obedience and never made an excuse for carelessness or complacent presumption. It is the changed life that is evidence for the work of grace within.

LEADER TIP

It is important right from the start to make sure the young people know what it means to be 'saved' – don't presume they know.

It is God's will that his children should know they belong to his family and so continue on their way in joyful confidence, not in fearful uncertainty. The gospel call to salvation is to faith, not fear.'

(Psalm 138:7 - 8; Romans 8:14 - 17, 35 - 39; 2 Corinthians 13:5 - 7; Ephesians 1:13 - 14; Philippians 1:6; 1 John 4:19 - 21; 5:10.)

From *Salvation Story*, pages 82 - 83.

There may be problems with assurance for those who have grown up in Christian homes. On the one hand, they may mistakenly assume that they are saved simply by birthright. On the other, they may be longing for a 'blinding light' experience and even believe that they are not genuinely saved in the same way as those who 'remember the time and can tell you the place'. Your young people may need to understand this situation.

In adolescence, emotions are strong and variable. For this reason, those who seek for a 'feeling' of being saved can be very disappointed. Yet emotions are important and teenagers need to talk about their feelings. Many of them are quite certain that if they are not continually experiencing a 'high' spiritual experience then they are not longer or have never been saved. Remember adolescents **do** depend on their feelings. We need to show them that feelings are not a sign of salvation.

GETTING STARTED

1. Pass around a sealed parcel. Assure the group that it contains something they will like. Each must publicly say whether he/she wants part of the contents. Then open the parcel and share the lollies (or whatever) with those who accepted. Discuss belief based on trust.

Or

2. Look at a bank note (preferably \$100 or a similar large amount) or a cheque. What is its value? Not much as a piece of paper but because it contains a promise over the signature of someone who can be trusted, it is of value.

And/or

3. Each chew a small sweet. After all have eaten, ask 'Can you prove that you enjoyed it? Or do we have to take your word for it?'

GOING DEEPER

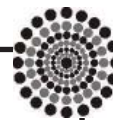
1. Ask your young people to work in a small groups to write a definition of the word 'saved'. Talk about their definitions and compare them with this one:

'Saved' is being rescued from a dangerous or life threatening situation. Spiritually I am saved when I realise I need to be rescued and so in faith I accept God's gift of salvation through Jesus' death.

How about you at this stage of your life? Would you answer 'Yes' to someone who asked 'Are you saved?'

Do the following questionnaire together. It is activity 1 on the work sheet.

Circle the percentage that best describes where you are at this time of your life.



LEADER TIP

Further reading on stages of faith in young people will help you understand where this age group is coming from with their emotions. Chapter 7 'Faith development and conversion' in *Children Finding Faith* by Francis Bridger (CPAS, 2000) is recommended.



There are many times and situations when we have to trust – we cannot rely on hard evidence to prove something we 'know' is true. When saved people have doubts about their salvation, they must remember that it is faith not feelings that link us to God.

% OF THE TIME

	none	part	half	most	all
a. I am confident I am a Christian.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
b. I love the Lord with all my being.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
c. I care about and love others as well as myself.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
d. I try to obey Christ's teaching.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
e. I try to glorify God in all that I do.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
f. I want to do God's will, rather than my own.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%



LEADER TIP

The testimony could be written by the Salvationist and read by a young person with discussion following or have it on audio tape or video or in person with questions from the young people.

2. **A testimony of assurance** of salvation given by a Salvationist well-known to the young people could be very helpful.

3. **A look at the evidence**

There are **three** main evidences of salvation which enable us to be sure we are saved. (Make a list as you explain these.)

Salvation is God's gift of forgiveness of past sins. We know we have it through:

- God's promises in the Bible.
- The Holy Spirit within us
- Progress in our Christian living being evident to others

a. **God's promises**

When Jesus was fighting temptation, He quoted Scripture. Knowing what the Bible says about being saved, means we have a weapon to use when doubt and despair settle on us and make us wonder if we are saved. We'll look at some of these verses together. The Bible clearly teaches that salvation is freely available. If we doubt our salvation, think about the best known verse in the Bible. (John 3:16 – read it together.) God's intention is quite clear. He promises salvation to all who accept. There are many other verses making this promise.

Have a number of different young people read these verses out and then explain what they think the verse is saying about God's plan of salvation.

Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Colossians 1:21 - 22; 1 Timothy 2:5 - 6; John 6:40; Matthew 10:22.

If our salvation depended on our goodness or cleverness, we would have every reason to be worried. No one is **good enough** to deserve salvation and none **clever enough** to work for salvation. Our salvation comes from God's great love and we can all depend on that.

Martin Luther was a member of a Roman Catholic order. He had studied theology and followed strict rules for many years. No matter how good he tried to be, he did not feel 'saved'. He tried



LEADER TIP

This is activity 2 on the junior work sheet.

'good works' and 'penances'. But he was not happy. He was still searching for God's pardon and peace, working out ways to earn it. In his time many people in Europe would make a pilgrimage to Rome because it was the Holy City where the Pope lived. When they reached Rome, they would climb up the Holy Stairs – the steps leading to the Vatican. They would climb them on their knees as an act of penance. They thought that this discomfort would convince God that they deserved forgiveness. Luther knew from his own experiences that they wouldn't find it, that there must be another way. As he studied Romans he was struck by the phrase 'the righteousness of God'. But as he continued studying, God showed him that the 'righteousness of God' is the goodness which brings Him to forgive us. We are saved not through our goodness but through the goodness of God. We call this justification.

DEFINITION

Penances – doing hard things to show sorrow for wrong actions.

b. **The Holy Spirit within us**

John says, 'whoever believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his own heart' (1 John 5:10, GNB). When we are saved, we experience the favour of God and recognise that His Spirit within us is assuring us that we are saved. (Romans 8:16 – 'God's Spirit makes us sure that we are his children.' CEV) Some people have a special experience. When they accept salvation, the whole world seems different. Some of them say 'even the grass looked greener and the sky bluer'. But this experience does not come to everybody and many Christians have to cling by faith to God's promises and to rely on the quiet voice of God's Spirit telling us that although we feel no great excitement, God does indeed save and accept us.

Catherine Booth was born into a godly home and even as a young child wanted to please and serve God. By the time she was twelve years old she had read the Bible through eight times, was secretary of the Junior Temperance Society and living a Christian life. On her thirteenth birthday, she asked for a book of theology as a gift, saying: 'Theology is about God and what could be more important than to study the nature and purpose of God?' At fifteen, she broke off a relationship with a young man before she could fall in love with him, because the Bible says: 'Do not try to work together as equals with unbelievers.' (2 Corinthians 6:14, GNB.)

DEFINITION

Temperance – moderation in the use of alcohol and even total abstinence from anything to do with bodily appetites and passions.

Yet at seventeen, although she could not remember a time when she did not pray to God and want to please Him, she felt that she did not have the assurance of salvation. She prayed that God would show her the truth. One night 'she went to sleep with her Bible and prayer book as usual under her pillow and in a last prayer asked, as she had done many times before, that she might awake to the assurance of her acceptance with God'. In the morning she opened the hymn book and read:

'My God I am Thine,
What a comfort divine!
What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine.'

As she read these words, it all fell into place. A simple song gave her the assurance she had searched for. Speaking about this later she said with assurance, 'I no longer hoped that I was saved, I was certain of it. The assurance of my salvation seemed to fill my soul.'

Catherine had sought God and He kept His promise. She was sure of salvation because God's Spirit had spoken in her heart.

c. **Progress in our Christian living is evident to others**

The third evidence of salvation is in our everyday lives. Once we are saved, our living begins to reflect our love for God and we are given a new power to live right.

The Bible says that salvation makes us 'a new person' (2 Corinthians 5:17, CEV). We know that we are saved because we experience God's power. We find that with His help we can do what we know is right. Those who watch our lives see God's power working in us.

Richard Slater was an agnostic who scoffed at religion. One day he went to an Army meeting simply to see what happened. One of the testimonies came from a young girl who worked as a house maid. She said, 'I'm saved and I know it and my missus says she knows it too because I don't sweep the dust under the mat but stop and pick it up.'

Slater was impressed by this simple testimony. He realised that her religion was real because it helped her live right in everyday simple things. As a result of this testimony, Slater was converted and became a famous Salvationist musician and songwriter.

Did you notice that the young girl gave two evidences of salvation in her testimony? She had experienced it and her missus saw the evidence as well. There was a change in her life that could be seen by others.

If you were giving your testimony, what would you say to show that there has been progress in your Christian life that can be seen by others?

DEFINITION

Agnostic – one who says there is no way of knowing the truth about God.



LEADER TIP

Check in recent Salvationist publications e.g. *War Cry* for testimonies of people whose lives have been changed.

Some testimonies are available on line: at www.firezone.co.nz

TAKING IT HOME

Try to remember that there may be many times when you feel miserable or a failure or rejected.

These feelings are a natural part of life. Talking to an older person may help.

Believe that what God has said is true. Hang on to God's promise. So long as we **know we are trusting and obeying God, we can be sure we are saved.**

FOLLOW-THRU

Using this session your group may like to accept the challenge to plan a meeting on a given theme in Get Involved and Grow in Training for Leadership.

Make sure the plan is then used either in your corps or in 'helping in another corps'.

FURTHER READING

Salvation Story, MPG Books 1998.

The New Lion Handbook to the Bible, Lion Publishing, England 1999.

Am I really Saved?



- HIGHLIGHTS**
- God does not turn away any person who comes to Him.
 - We accept God's gift of salvation through faith.
 - We can count on God to be true to His promises.
 - We can experience the Holy Spirit's power within us.
 - Others will see that we are living to please God.

1. Circle the percentage that best describes where you are at this time of your life.

	% OF THE TIME				
	none	part	half	most	all
a. I am confident I am a Christian.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
b. I love the Lord with all my being.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
c. I care about and love others as well as myself.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
d. I try to obey Christ's teaching.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
e. I try to glorify God in all that I do.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
f. I want to do God's will, rather than my own.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%

2. Write beside each reference how the verse assures you that you are saved.

Romans 5:8 _____

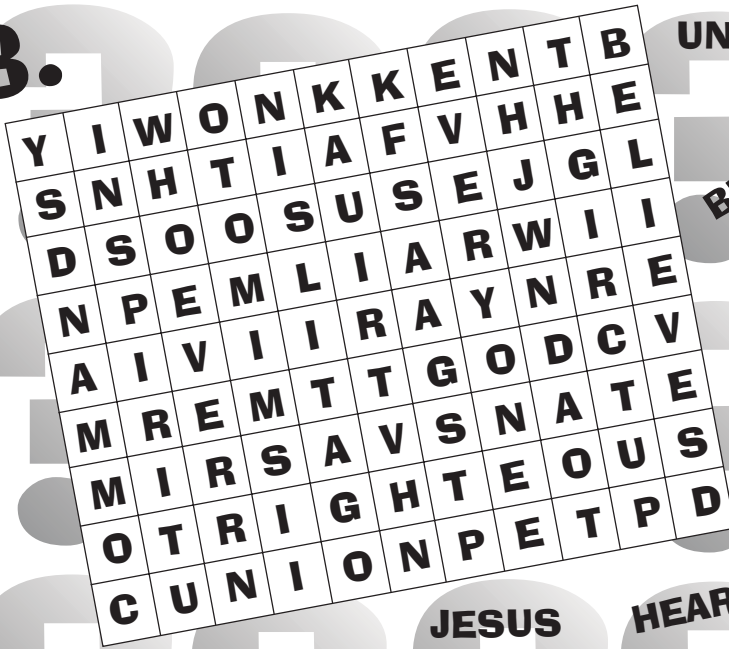
2 Corinthians 5:15 _____

Colossians 1:21 - 22 _____

John 6:40 _____

Matthew 10:22 _____

3.



UNION

SPIRIT

KNOW

COMMANDS

BELIEVES

SON

PUT

EVERYONE

WHOEVER

FAITH

RIGHT

TESTIMONY

PEACE

JESUS

HEART

GOD

RIGHTEOUS

LIAR

The missing words from the Scripture verses below are all found in this word puzzle. (You need the Good News version.) After you have found them all, write the unused letters on these lines.

Romans 3:26 tells us that, 'In this way God shows that he, himself is _____ and that he puts right _____ who _____ in _____.'

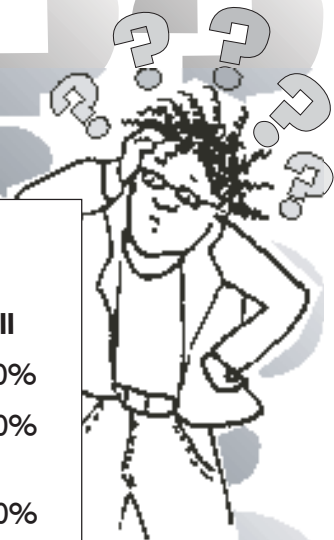
Romans 5:1 says, 'Now that we have been _____ with God through _____, we have _____ with _____ through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

I John 3:24 says, 'Whoever obeys God's _____ lives in _____ with God and God lives in union with him. And because of the _____ that God has given us we _____ that God lives in union with us.'

I John 5:10 says, 'So whoever believes in the _____ of God has this _____ in his own _____; but _____ does not believe God, has made him out to be a _____, because he has not believed what God has said about his Son.'

So, next time I'm tempted to think I'm not saved, I will:

AM I REALLY SAVED?



1.		% OF THE TIME				
		none	part	half	most	all
a.	I am confident I am a Christian.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
b.	I love the Lord with all my being.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
c.	I care about and love others as well as myself.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
d.	I try to obey Christ's teaching.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
e.	I try to glorify God in all that I do.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
f.	I want to do God's will, rather than my own.	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%

2.

Match these words with their meanings:

Justification	What we know because it has happened in our lives.
Assurance	Being put right with God as though sin had never happened.
Salvation	God's gift of forgiveness of past sins and power to live right.
Experience	Knowing that we are saved.

God saves people to recreate them in His own image for a life of good deeds.

3. Teenagers who get involved in doing things at their church keep going!

Think about the three kinds of assurance of salvation that we have discussed in this session:

- God's promises;
- the Holy Spirit within us;
- progress in our Christian living is evident to others.

Which one would you emphasise to each of the following:

- * A teenager from a Salvation Army family? _____
- * A former drug addict? _____
- * A very young child? _____
- * A person who only learned about God in old age? _____
- * An African villager? _____
- * A senior student? _____
- * A Christian who is not sure of his/her salvation? _____

The New Year usually gives people a fresh start.

Only one in ten Chinese Christians has access to a Bible.

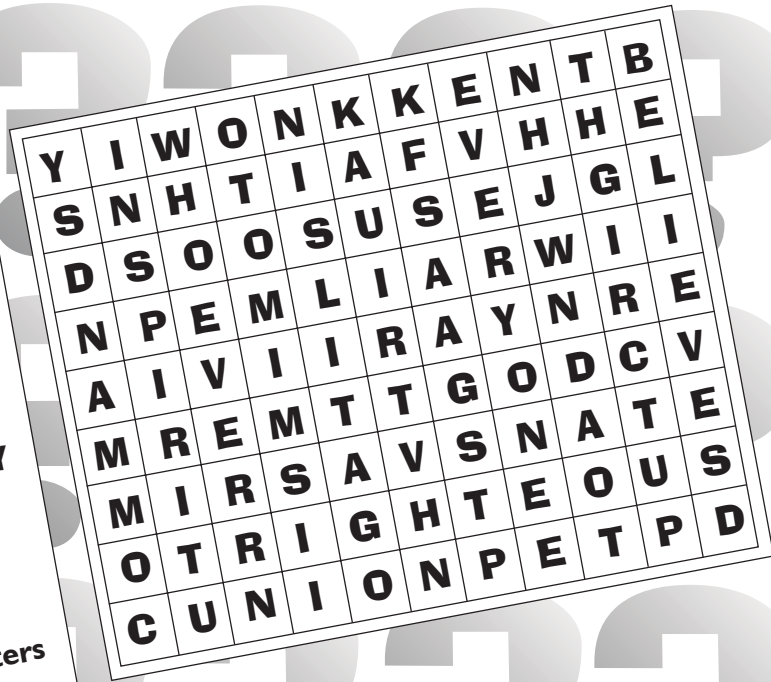
4.

Find these words in the wonderword.

RIGHTEOUS **COMMANDS**
EVERYONE **UNION**
BELIEVES **SPIRIT**
JESUS **KNOW**
PUT **SON**
RIGHT **TESTIMONY**
FAITH **HEART**
PEACE **WHOEVER**
GOD **LIAR**

Then write the unused letters on these lines.

-----!



5.

Now write a few sentences explaining how we can be sure we are saved. Try to use all the words in column 1.

The words in column 2 come from 1 John 3:24 and 1 John 5:10 (GNB). Read them in your Bible, then write out the verse that you find helpful.

R U SURE?

SESSION 3

AIM

To help the young people understand that honest doubt and questioning can lead to greater spiritual growth.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will:

- ❖ distinguish between honest questioning and arrogant doubt;
- ❖ be more aware of their own doubts and uncertainties;
- ❖ see that doubt, when faced and worked through, can be an opportunity for growth;
- ❖ realise that it is OK to talk about their doubts;
- ❖ know how to use doubt as a springboard to developing faith rather than an occasion for feeling guilty.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

This study is based upon the recognition that the Christian life is one of constant growth (2 Peter 3:18). We can know that we are saved but Paul explains in Philippians 3:12 - 16 that our Christian life is like a race – we keep pressing onwards, learning as we go.

If this process does not take place, we remain as babies, capable only of being fed milk and never knowing a closer relationship with God.

Very often this growing takes place during a crisis in our lives. A broken relationship, an unexpected tragedy involving suffering for those we love or ourselves etc. can leave us standing in despair. We can feel stripped of our faith as our angry hearts cry out, 'Why?', 'Where were you, God?', 'Don't you care about me?'

Yet such experiences are an integral part of life. Nobody escapes them. Some of us may seem to come through them unscathed, while others struggle for a long time agonising over the doubts that have attacked what they thought was their firm faith.

These experiences can leave us bitter and cynical or they can lead us to grapple with how we see God. When we find that our perceptions of God have suddenly become inadequate, we experience doubt. Growing in faith or faith development occurs as we work our way through to a more mature perception of the 'Christian Way'.

The book of Job deals with this problem. In the introduction of the Good News Version it says this:

'The book of *Job* is the story of a good man who suffers total disaster – he loses all his children and property and is afflicted with a repulsive

FROM THE BIBLE

John 11:15 - 16; John 14:3 - 5; John 20:19 - 29; selected passages from Job.

CHECKLIST

Decide which Getting Started activity you will use and prepare what you need.

There are four teaching approaches. They are all important. Approach 2 involves filling out the questionnaire that is on the work sheet. This exercise may be handled in several ways, depending upon the preferences and sensitivities of each young person. For example, he/she may wish to regard the exercise purely as a personal evaluation. Others may wish to share results with you privately and some may be prepared to share with other young people. Some may wish to have specific matters dealt with by the group.

It is important that this exercise, while serious in intent, should not be taken TOO seriously, i.e., it should not become an inquisition. If the young people are made to feel guilty about their doubts, the purpose of this exercise will be subverted.

You may find you have to cut back on the references to be read from Job but try to keep the ideas intact.

You will need a board or chart to list the young people's ideas in Getting Started 1 and approach 4.

disease. Then in three series of poetic dialogues the author shows how Job's friends and Job himself react to these calamities. In the end, God himself, whose dealings with mankind have been a prominent part of the discussion, appears to Job.

The friends of Job explain his suffering in traditional religious terms. Since God, so they assume, always rewards good and punishes evil, the sufferings of Job can only mean that he has sinned. But for Job this is too simple; he does not deserve such cruel punishment, because he has been an unusually good and righteous man. He cannot understand how God can let so much evil happen to one like himself, and he boldly challenges God. Job does not lose his faith, but he does long to be justified before God and to regain his honour as a good man.

God does not give an answer to Job's questions, but he does respond to Job's faith by overwhelming him with a poetic picture of his divine power and wisdom. Job then humbly acknowledges God as wise and great, and repents of the wild and angry words he had used.

The prose conclusion records how Job is restored to his former condition, with even greater prosperity than before. God reprimands Job's friends for failing to understand the meaning of Job's suffering. Only Job had really sensed that God is greater than traditional religion had depicted him.

(Introduction from the Book of Job in the Good News Bible © The Bible Society in Australia Inc. Used by permission.)

In the book *Courage to Doubt* (SCM 1983), Dr Robert Davidson illustrates the role of questioning and doubt in the spiritual development of some of the great men of faith in the Old Testament.

Dr James Fowler has also written about research into faith development. It clearly shows that **faith** grows by stages marked by clear differences in style and quality and that **doubt** is one of the key factors that precipitates movement from one faith-stage to next. When doubt is discouraged (often as wrong or sinful) then growth in faith is seriously inhibited.

There is a difference between doubts that spring from life's experiences and the refusal to believe because 'if I can't see or feel it then it doesn't exist.' The latter is what we call arrogant doubt.

Faith is a normal process in a healthy person's life. We all believe that the lights will come on when we turn the switch, that the train will reach the correct destination, that the chair will support us. To lose this faith leads to paranoia.

Many people are troubled by doubts because of their lack of self esteem and experience great feelings of guilt about their 'poor Christian experience'. It is normal for every thinking person, as they consider the meaning of life, to go through periods of doubt.

This session concerns the doubts that many young Christians experience. The various causes of doubt need to be explored and ways of coping with doubt considered. However, doubt needs to be seen as an opportunity for the growth that is experienced as they come to terms with questions about their faith. The response of Scripture to various types of doubt is relevant. God seems to be sympathetic with the honest questioner (Psalm 73:2 - 3; Jeremiah 20:7; Mark 16:11; Luke 24:11, 38 - 41; John 20:27) in contrast to the arrogant doubter.

FURTHER READING

An excellent book is *Reaching for the Invisible God* by Philip Yancey and more particularly the chapter in Part 2 entitled 'Room for Doubt.'

GETTING STARTED

1. Scrambled eggs

(Adapted from *Quick Crowd Breakers and Games*, Group Publishing, 1992.)

Blindfold two or four people (the more squeamish they are, the better). Ask them to remove their shoes but keep their socks on.

Before they are blindfolded, show them a dozen eggs being placed on the floor. Now they will memorise where the eggs are, thinking that the object is to walk through without stepping on an egg.

But the fun thing is that the eggs are taken away while the people are blindfolded. Place crackers (three high) and water on the walk. One by one, the blindfolded people walk through. When they think they've stepped on an egg, they really dance!

Or

2. Discussion

Who believes in Santa Claus?

- Do you remember when you first thought that Santa might not be real?
- Do you remember whether this came about as the result of an unexpected discovery, like catching Mum and Dad with the present?
- Or did it take longer – a matter of putting together bits and pieces of evidence? You may remember comparing the size of the household chimney with Santa's waistline. Did you even have a chimney? And were there problems arising from the existence of so many Santas? You were told that they were merely Santa's helpers, but did you really believe it?

Do you wish that you still enjoyed that childlike faith? What do you most value in that earlier 'stage of faith'? What do you most value in your present condition?

Here we see the process of doubt at work as a necessary activity in separating what is real from what is not real. Looking back at this childhood experience may help us see in a more positive light the place of doubt in our spiritual life.

Can you draw any other examples from your experience of how faith and doubt interact with each other?

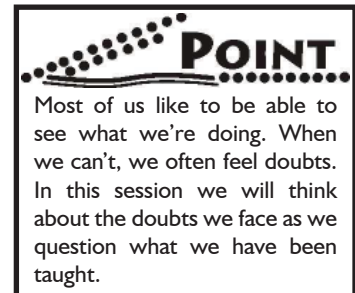
What about:

- when you learned how children come into the world?
- that parents are not perfect?
- that all policemen are not necessarily caring?
- that the world is not always a good and friendly place?
- any others?

When you realised that the tooth fairy, the Easter bunny and Santa Claus did not exist, how did you feel about God? Did you wonder whether faith in Him ought to be discarded, too?

Are there ideas you had about God when you were little that you have now discarded? e.g: Did you used to think that God:

- a. was like Santa Claus?

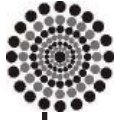


LEADER TIP

You may like to list some of these ideas on a chart.



FOR SENIORS



LEADER TIP

You could video this interview a few weeks before the session.

- b. was a big old man who spied on you?
- c. wasn't real if He didn't answer your prayer immediately?

Or

3. Interview

Invite along a senior soldier who would answer these questions honestly. Give them a copy of the questions beforehand so that they can have time to consider how best they can answer the questions.

You may like to give various young people the questions to ask so they can feel involved.

Be careful that you control the time allowed for this interview so that you still have adequate time for the teaching in Going Deeper.

Questions for the interview:

- As you look back over your life, what has been your greatest doubt?
- Was it resolved? If so, how?
- How did you feel during the period of doubt? Fearful? Adventurous? Worried? Ashamed? Any other feeling that you can recall?
- Do you now see it as a good or bad experience? Did it do any damage to your faith? Or did it strengthen your faith? Or did it do both, damaging what was inadequate to build something better?
- Did the experience teach you anything about the best way to deal with doubt?
- Were fellow-Christians generally helpful, or not?
- What was the most valued kind of help, if any, that you received?
- If you decided not to share your doubt, are you glad that you did not, or do you wish that you had?
- What would be your attitude to those who might share their doubt with you?

POINT

Times of doubt come to all people. How we handle them makes a significant difference to our spiritual life. We can and must learn how to grow through doubt.

GOING DEEPER

I. A look at a renowned doubter

We know many of the disciples by their various characteristics. Do you know which one was known as 'the Doubter'?

Let's see what the Bible says about this man and whether such a name is really justified.

The New Testament does not tell us much about Thomas. Though mentioned in all four gospels, we read nothing of his background or subsequent career. We know only that he was a disciple and that he was a twin (John 20:24. 'Thomas' is the Hebrew and 'Didymus' (AV the Greek for 'twin').)

- a. John 11:15 - 16 (Thomas shows loyalty.)
It was becoming an increasing possibility that the career of Jesus might end in disaster. He had already been threatened with death (Luke 4:29; John 10:31) and the raising of Lazarus made the Jewish authorities even more determined to get rid of this dangerous man. (John 11:53.)

Now, going to Lazarus in Bethany meant going closer to Jerusalem. It was Thomas who saw the terrible possibilities of such a move.



LEADER TIP

Have different young people find the following verses about Thomas to read aloud and then say what the verse tells us about Thomas.

What do you make of Thomas' response, 'Let us all go with the Teacher ...'? What might it tell us about the character of Thomas?

What about me? How loyal would I have been?

b. John 14:3 - 5 (The honest Thomas.)

Thomas' question here gives evidence of intense confusion. By this time probably all of Thomas' fellow disciples shared his misgivings. Jesus himself knew that the time had come for Him to die (John 13:1.) Judas had made up his mind to be the instrument of Jesus' delivery to the authorities (John 13:2) and the disciples were told that the betrayer was actually among them (John 13:21)!

Yet Jesus tells them not be 'worried and upset'. He talks about a 'place' and a 'way' in a perfectly calm manner apparently in the belief that the disciples knew perfectly well what was meant.

We are probably right in assuming that they were quite confused by what Jesus was saying, the calm manner in which He said it, in view of the forces which were closing in upon Him. But only one of them spoke up – Thomas!

There would have been pressures operating upon him to keep quiet so as not to make a fool of himself by confessing ignorance, so what does his question tell us about him, and a possible way of dealing with doubt?

What about me? Do I keep quiet rather than appear ignorant or ask a question when I don't understand?

c. John 20:19 - 29 (The doubting/believing Thomas.)

Once we have looked at Thomas' response to the news that Jesus was alive, we need to consider several questions before deciding as to the fairness of his nickname.

Is the desire for evidence the same thing as doubt?

Was Thomas' response any less worthy than the other disciples when they too first heard unsupported assertions of Jesus' resurrection? Read these verses:

- i. Mark 16:13; where **all** doubted.
- ii. Luke 24:11; where **all** disbelieved.
- iii. Luke 24:36 - 41; when confronted with Jesus in person, the disciples still have trouble believing, certainly more than Thomas had when confronted with identical evidence!

Where does this leave Thomas? More or less a doubter than the rest?

How then do you feel about Thomas? It is believed that following the coming of the Holy Spirit, Thomas went to India to preach the gospel. The Christian church in western India claims St Thomas as its founder.

The man who was not afraid to ask when he needed to know and who finally declared that Jesus was indeed his Lord, served Him faithfully. Working through his fears and doubts he became a faithful apostle, proclaiming the gospel message.

2. Look at doubts that are common to us all

Teenage years are a time of great change. Not only do we go through

great physical changes but it is also a time of change in our style of faith.

We must take time to consider what we actually believe. The time for simply accepting our parents' beliefs is discarded as we form our own personal relationship with God.

This doesn't mean that we discard all we have been taught, but that we must be honest before God about what we believe.

There are bound to be times when matters we thought were quite settled, suddenly seem to be filled with problems. Lack of certainty in some areas will be matched by confidence in others. And next year (or after an important 'house party' or music camp) light may shine where all was darkness before.

This experience can often worry us, but it is one of the surest signs that we are leaving the stage of 'hand-me-down faith' and moving into a faith-style that is truly our own.

Look now at your work sheet. It contains a 'Faith Checklist' which will help to put us in touch with 'where we're at' at this present moment. If you were to do it again in four or five years time, it would probably show a quite different result.

Give the young people time to complete the questionnaire and follow it by discussion if you have decided this is the best plan for your group.

3. **A look at Job's great battle with faith/doubt**

In Job's day many people believed that those whose lives were pleasing to God were rewarded with prosperity and that those whose lives were not, were punished in some way. So, if things were going well, business prospering, family in good health and so on, one could assume that God was pleased with the quality of one's life; and if things were not going well, then ...

There are still believers in this concept. Is it right, wrong or partly right?

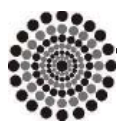
- a. Quickly tell your group the account of the devil's conversation with God about His servant, Job, especially using Job 1:8 - 12. Explain how his children and wealth were destroyed (Job 1:13 - 22) and how he became seriously ill (Job 2:3 - 10).
- b. The book of Job then records for us the dialogue between Job and his 'friends' who, following the traditional faith of the day, tried to convince him that he must have committed some dreadful secret sin to deserve such suffering.

Read the following passages with your group.

They are parts of the arguments presented by Job's friends and Job's responses. Consider whether they are expressing sentiments with which God would agree, disagree or which would disappoint Him in some way. What feelings do the passages spoken by Job reveal? (Doubt, anger, frustration, bewilderment, disappointment.)

Job could not accept the all-too-simple faith of his friends. He knew he was a child of God yet he felt he had been treated unfairly and he was forced to work through many 'conventional' arguments as his friends spoke to him.

Job 4:7 - 9 (Eliphaz says wicked people harvest wickedness.)



LEADER TIP

Use the questionnaire that is on both junior and senior work sheets. Make sure that each young person can be completely honest without fear of peer pressure or concern that there is a right or wrong answer.



LEADER TIP

You may need to select just a few if time is short, but read the passages beforehand so you can explain the ongoing thought processes that brought Job through from doubt to faith.

Job 7:11 - 16 (Job feels that God is treating him unfairly.)
 Job 8:20 - 22 (Bildad tells Job not to abandon his faith – to hang in there!)
 Job 9:19 - 22 (Job asks if he should try to take God to court for unfair treatment.)
 Job 10:1 - 4 (Job asks God why He is punishing him – a good man.)
 Job 11:10 - 14 (Zophar hints that Job should not be doubting and complaining – instead he should admit his wrong doing.)
 Job 20 :4 - 7 (Zophar tells Job that wicked people always suffer.)
 Job 23:1 - 4 (Job longs to put his case before God.)
 Job 30:20 - 21 (Job pleads with God to listen to him.)

God did answer Job

Job 38:1 - 4; 40:7 - 9 give us a little glimpse of God’s response to Job and we see that as Job acknowledges God’s wisdom, power and majesty, his doubting changes to a stronger faith and he confesses that he is sorry for all he said. (Job 42:6.) The good man has become a better man by working through the honest questions he had about the tragedy that struck him.

Read Job 42:7. Even though Job felt he must say he was sorry for what he had said about God, we see in this verse that God was not angry with Job but with the false words of advice his friends had spoken. In their undeveloped faith they ‘did not speak the truth about’ Him. Because Job was not prepared to deny the evidence of his own experience and take easy short-cuts to truth, he spoke TRUTH even as he honestly expressed his DOUBTS.

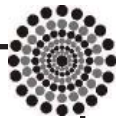
4. How then should we tackle our doubt?

- i. Be honest enough to admit that we have feelings of doubt.
- ii. Examine these to see what caused them.
- iii. Discuss them with a wise, experienced Christian friend.
- iv. Believe that God is all-wise and knows what can come out of hardships.
- v. Hang on to the faith we have and keep praying.
- vi. Learn from others who have gone through similar circumstances.
- vii. Follow God’s leading, knowing that doubting can lead us on to firmer faith.
- viii. Recognise that we would be God if we knew and understood everything and so there are times when we must exercise faith.
- ix. Read God’s word.

TAKING IT HOME

Doubt is only an enemy of faith when we allow it to be. It may well be a God sent opportunity for spiritual growth.

Everything depends on how well founded our beliefs are, and how honestly we examine our doubts.



LEADER TIP

The young people may like to help make a list to be written up.

FOLLOW-THRU

Encourage your young people to prepare and give their testimony on how God has helped them in a period of doubt or hardship.

Or

To write a report on how a worship service helped them. Be sure to make time for them to present the testimony or report publicly.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

DAVIDSON, Robert, *Courage to Doubt*, SCM, 1983.

FOWLER, James, *Stages of Faith*, Collins/Dove, 1981

R U SURE?

'FAITH CHECKLIST'

Which of the following do you sometimes have doubts about?

- The existence of God
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ
- The story of Jonah and the whale
- Going to heaven when I die
- The truth of the Bible
- God really cares about me as an individual
- God hears and answers my prayers
- The virgin birth of Christ
- The possibility of miracles today
- Jesus walked on water and turned water into wine
- God created the world
- Some people are going to hell
- Jesus is God
- The Holy Spirit gives power in times of crisis
- God has a purpose for everyone's life

HIGHLIGHTS

- It is very normal to have times of doubts and uncertainties.
- We should talk about such feelings to older Christians.
- We can work through our doubts to a stronger faith.
- We don't need to feel guilty when we doubt.



What sort of a man was Thomas 'the twin'?

John 11:16 tells us that _____

John 14:5 tells us that _____

John 20:19 - 29 tells us that _____

So – is it 'Thomas the Doubter' or
'Thomas the Believer' or
'Thomas the?'

I think Thomas _____



Hebrews 11 is called the great Faith Chapter of the Bible. It tells us of men of old who hung on to their faith in hard times. Write out one verse e.g., 1, 2, 3, 6, 39 - 40.

When you have doubts about your faith, which of the following reactions would you have?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feel guilty | <input type="checkbox"/> Get others to doubt the same way |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share my doubts with another Christian | <input type="checkbox"/> Assume I am too ignorant to understand everything |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blame them on the devil | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to God about them |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ignore them | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask honest and sincere questions, searching for answers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share them with a non-Christian friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to my leader / discipleship partner / officer |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |



Three important actions I can take when I have to face doubts:

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

RU SURE?

'FAITH CHECKLIST'

My beliefs	I have thought about this but I'm not sure	I have not really thought about this so I don't know	Yes, I believe this	No, I don't believe this
------------	--	--	---------------------	--------------------------

1. I believe there is a God. _____
2. I believe God cares about each individual. _____
3. I believe that God is all-powerful and loving. _____
4. I believe that God hears and answers all prayers. _____
5. I believe God created the world. _____
6. I believe that the Bible has the answer to all of life's problems. _____
7. I believe that Jesus is truly God. _____
8. I believe that Jesus had no human father. _____
9. I believe that Jesus performed miracles – that He not only cured illnesses but He walked on water. _____
10. I believe that Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. _____
11. I believe that those who live as God requires are always rewarded with prosperity in this life. _____
12. I believe that a good Christian will never be depressed or suffer mental illness and ought always to be joyful. _____
13. I believe that there is life after death. _____
14. I believe that all people will have tragedies to face no matter what they believe. _____
15. I believe that a Christian can call upon the Holy Spirit's power in times of crisis. _____

Beliefs I have to think about more: Numbers _____

Beliefs I need more information on: Numbers _____



The fact that the following passages were written by people of considerable learning does not in itself make them true.

Read them carefully.

If you agree with the sentiment expressed, you simply place a tick beside it. If you disagree, or think that the statement should be modified in some way, write your own thoughts in the space beneath each quote.

Words from faithful doubters



'I feel like I'm a believer in a more profound way now; but I feel I'm a greater doubter than I ever was before. Doubting and questioning is the only way you'll ever grow. You will not shift from where you are unless you doubt the position you now sit in.'
(Rev. John Smith, founder of 'God's Squad')



'Little faith sees the difficulties and often accepts defeat without a fight. Great faith sees God and fights manfully against all odds.'
(Samuel Brengle)



'Doubt is the skeleton in the closet of faith and I know no better way to treat a skeleton than to bring it into the open and expose it for what it is: not something to hide or fear, but a hard structure on which living tissue may grow.'

Philip Yancey

'Faith has to emerge out of doubt'.
(Rev. Edward Carpenter)

A Bible in the hand is worth two in the bookcase.



'Put all things to the test: keep what is good.' (Paul in I Thessalonians 5:21)

To worry about what we can't help is useless; to worry about what we can help is stupid.

SESSION 4

JESUS' "HAPPY" MEAL

FROM THE BIBLE

Matthew 5:3 - 12.

AIM

To show the young people that in the Beatitudes Jesus presents a positive, practical lifestyle for all believers to follow.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will understand that:

- ❖ happiness is often found in unexpected places;
- ❖ we don't just pick and choose some of the Beatitudes, they all need to be practised;
- ❖ living by the Beatitudes will give us a positive attitude to life;
- ❖ the Beatitudes are standards set for Christ's followers.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

This is the first of four sessions based on the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5 - 7) with an emphasis on the Christian lifestyle.

The title 'Sermon on the Mount' was first used to describe this teaching in 400 AD by St Augustine and it is still used today.

Men of other faiths (like Gandhi) have praised the Sermon on the Mount. Others (like the nineteenth century German philosopher, Nietzsche) have cursed it. Certainly no one can ignore it. The Sermon on the Mount is not just one single sermon delivered by Jesus on one particular occasion during His earthly ministry. Matthew has combined the teaching given by our Lord on many occasions during His earthly ministry.

Interpreting the Sermon on the Mount

It must be remembered that the Sermon is a pattern of the kind of conduct and behaviour expected in all who have committed their lives to Christ. Is it too hard? God makes it possible.

Christ calls us to love our enemies, but behind this command lies the dynamic boundless love of God demonstrated to us in Jesus.

If Christ calls us to be the light in the world, it is because we have already found Him to be the light of the world.

Is the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount intended for the church or for the world at large?

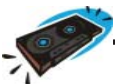
Categorically, from the context of Matthew's gospel it is clear that the teaching is for those who have entered the Kingdom of God. It is discipleship teaching.

✓ CHECKLIST

There are two suggested Getting Started activities. If you are going to use the first one, see that you gather enough pictures and have them placed around the room before the session begins.

There are four teaching approaches altogether. The first three are an introduction to the discussion of the Beatitudes and should be done quickly. In approach 4 there are two alternate suggestions as to how the discussion could take place. These suggest using the work sheet activity as you work through the Beatitudes. Using either of these would possibly give you more time in the teaching of the session. A solution table is shown at the end of the session.

The translation used is the GNB.



VIDEO CLIP

If possible, use the *Jesus* video to show the scene of Jesus preaching to the crowd. The *Matthew* video series is also an excellent version to show.

What is the place of the Sermon on the Mount in the overall Christian scheme of things?

It is not the gospel, but it is the outcome of the gospel. The Good News is something God has done for us in Christ, His life, death and resurrection.

The Sermon on the Mount is teaching on how we ought to live having experienced the transforming power of the gospel. The proclamation of the Good News is directed outward, the teaching of what it means to conduct ourselves in the Kingdom of God is directed inward.

How relevant is the Sermon on the Mount for today? Can it be related to this computerized/technological/space-age?

Through this series of four sessions it is hoped that the young people will soon see that Jesus' teaching provides direction and guidance for the formulating of a pattern of Christian life style that they can enthusiastically embrace in their formative teen years.

This study on the Sermon on the Mount should help each of us to continue learning more about who He is.

Notes on the Beatitudes

The Sermon on the Mount begins with the Beatitudes of Jesus. The word Beatitude is used for a form of writing which is best translated as 'Oh, the blessedness of ...' or 'Oh, the happiness of ...' or 'How happy are those who ...'

This style can be found in the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms e.g. Psalm 1:1 'Happy/blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked.' Jesus' listeners would have been familiar with it and we need to impress upon our young people that it is teaching us how to have an inner peace no matter where we are.

The Sermon on the Mount contains the most famous of all scriptural Beatitudes.

The purpose of Jesus' Beatitudes

The Beatitudes were taught by Jesus to give His followers a clear picture of the character of the person who has by God's grace entered the Kingdom of Heaven. Such people have their values and ideas of happiness turned around to be God-centered and the Beatitudes are the Christian's pattern of how every Christian should live.

They paint a comprehensive picture of a Christian disciple. And the painting is not done in insipid colours. They are strong, rich colours and the Christian who takes them on board has a rich, happy life.

The absence of any one Beatitude is as vital a loss as the removal of any one colour from the rainbow.

Many sermons are preached on just one Beatitude. We are attempting a huge task in trying to think about all of them in one session.

You will need to allocate your time firmly so that you do not get 'stuck' on one Beatitude and suddenly find there is no time to mention the remainder. Rather, go through each Beatitude in a concise format and promise that you will return to some for discussion once that is done.

GETTING STARTED

POINT

It is very natural to want the best out of life – to be happy. Jesus made a point of teaching what He knew would make His followers happy. His ideas make a lot of people raise their eyebrows in surprise – but they work! These teachings are called the Beatitudes and we want to look at them in this session.

1. Look at advertising

Have a series of advertisements placed around the room. These should be ones that claim that their product will make people happy or successful.

Have the young people walk around looking at them and writing down what the ad is trying to sell and how the manufacturer claims that the purchase of these products will make the buyer happy and satisfied. Is this true?

Or

2. List

Have the young people make a list of what would make them really happy. Make a composite list and have them count the 'material' products that are in the list. How many were to do with things that money can't buy?

GOING DEEPER

1. Make a list

There are some things that make us feel really miserable, hurt or unhappy and we tend to think – 'If only I had ... I'd be happy.' (Reference could be made to the starting activity.)

Make a list of the things the young people feel they'd rather not be: e.g. poor, lonely, hungry, sad, persecuted, unable to cope, a 'doormat' for others.

How would you feel if people said, 'Ah, but they are the very things that make you happy'?

2. Defining a Beatitude

Jesus often gathered His disciples around Him to teach them. On many occasions, after He had heard people making comments or discussing some of life's problems, He would tell a parable or give definite teaching. The book of Matthew joined a lot of this teaching together in chapters 5 - 7 and this is known as the Sermon on the Mount.

Chapter 5 begins with Jesus' teaching on true happiness. We call this teaching the Beatitudes. Jesus began each of the statements He made about true happiness by a word that fully translated means 'Oh, the bliss, joy or happiness of people who ...' We're going to translate it simply as 'Happy are those who'.

Jesus' intention was to shock His followers. He was assuring them that some of the very things we'd rather not have occur in our lives, are the very things that God uses to help us experience real happiness. He wanted to make them consider the source of true happiness, and He expects each of His followers to consider them too.

3. Look together at Matthew 5:3 - 12 (see work sheet)

4. Discussing the Beatitudes

a. You could use side 1 of the work sheet during the discussion. After each Beatitude is discussed, the seniors write the Beatitude and its result in the correct boxes. Note that the Beatitudes have been jumbled on their sheet. The juniors choose the best explanation and what Jesus was warning us against in each Beatitude and write

them into the correct boxes.

Or

- b. You could use side 2 of the work sheet during the discussion. In this activity the young people examine and indicate their reaction to each Beatitude.

Or

- c. You can have straight discussion asking the group what each Beatitude means as you look at them together.

i. **Beatitude 1 – The spiritually poor**

Read verse 3. (If using side 2 of the work sheet also read it from this.)

This does not refer to money or possessions. Jesus is talking about the spiritual sins of pride, jealousy, covetousness, uncharitable judgement of others that can eat away our souls. This is what this Beatitude is attacking.

We can be competent, independent, self assured and feel we have no need of God. This can lead to spiritual pride. When we become self-sufficient, it makes it impossible for God to meet our needs.

Unless we acknowledge our needs, God cannot meet them.

This does not mean that God wants us to be timid or lacking in courage. It means He wants us to be aware of our dependency on Him.

Discussion

Why is it hard for us to admit we need help?

ii. **Beatitude 2 – Those who mourn**

Read verse 4 (from Bible or work sheet.)

What a puzzling statement. Happy are the unhappy!

Jesus is not just referring to the sorrow of bereavement. He is referring to those who, having seen sin in the light of God's purity, feel sad at how it grieves God. Knowing that their own sins are forgiven, they also grieve over the evil and indifference of the world.

Discussion

Isn't it a bit much to expect me to be concerned about the evil of the world when I'm still fighting my own battles against sin?

Have there been news reports lately that have caused you to think about and even feel sad about the evil in the world?

iii. **Beatitude 3 – The humble**

Read verse 5.

The meek, humble person is one who is prepared to let God control him/her.

The Greek word is PRAUS which combines the ideas of strength and gentleness. The Greeks used it to describe a war horse. It was strong yet sensitive to its rider's command. There is no suggestion of being a weak wimp! The truly meek people are not only self-controlled – they are God-controlled.

This characteristic is an essential part of Christianity but is often ignored. The world is big on teaching us to be aggressive, to stick up for our rights. 'Do not let anyone walk over you!' 'Don't become a doormat!' Yet the truly meek, humble

DEFINITION

Mourn: To feel or express sorrow or grief.

person has an inner strength and power unknown to the bad-tempered, arrogant person.

Discussion

When do you think Jesus showed the power of meekness? (e.g. At His trial, on the cross.)

iv. **Beatitude 4 – The starving spirit**

Read verse 6.

Most young people will be able to describe the effort of a hungry baby to attract attention. For something so tiny a mighty effort is made!

Jesus is pointing out that we need to have a strong determination to do what God requires. Just as our physical body will eventually perish without sustaining food, so will our spiritual life die if we do not feed it.

God will supply and feed the soul that genuinely seeks His will.

We may not always achieve all we feel we should do, but we will have a sense of satisfaction because we have made a big effort to be and do what God requires.

Discussion

Do I long to do what God requires?

v. **Beatitude 5 – The merciful**

Read verse 7.

Jesus makes it clear that having accepted God's unlimited forgiveness, we must extend such forgiveness to others.

We must make an effort to try to understand the viewpoint of others. We must forgive those who hurt us and help those in need. Jesus taught us this over and over again. He reminded Peter that he should forgive 70 times 7, not just 7.

He told the story of the Unforgiving Servant who was forgiven a huge debt by the king but refused to show mercy to the man who owed him very little.

Discussion

What opportunities has God given you to show mercy?

Is it harder to be merciful than it is to be just?

vi. **Beatitude 6 – The pure in heart**

Those who are sincere and have made goodness their ambition in life have a pure or clean heart.

Pure in heart does not mean absolutely sinless. It means a passionate desire to grow more like Jesus. All thoughts and motives are completely honest and true.

This may seem an impossibly high standard but God will continue to work on the Christian who wants to have a clean heart.

The result of this Beatitude is that the believer will see God. This means now, not just after death.

The pure in heart have an honest heart and are true to their promises. They aim in every area of their lives to please God

and do His will.

Discussion

Can you think of any songs we sing about growing more like Jesus and living to do His will?

vii. **Beatitude 7 – The peacemakers**

Read verse 9.

Jesus speaks not of the peacekeepers, but rather the peacemakers.

The Jewish rabbis taught that the highest task which a person can perform is to be a peacemaker – to establish right relationships with people. Ours is the task of establishing right relationships in our home, our corps, our place of employment, our school.

Discussion

How can I actively create peace at home, at school, in sport?

viii. **Beatitude 8 – Those persecuted for doing what God requires**

Read verse 10 - 12.

Can a suffering Christian be happy? None of us wants to be hated by others. We long to be accepted and part of the group, yet Jesus took three verses to talk about rejection by the world if we truly follow Him.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was executed just before the end of World War II because of his stand against Hitler, once wrote: 'Suffering is the badge of true Christian discipleship.'

Most of us may never know the persecution that Christians suffer. We read of early Christians being burned at the stake and thrown to the lions and we know of people who have suffered under Hitler and in communist countries because they would not renounce their faith. Our own early day Salvationists were persecuted and suffered. We need to remember that Jesus is not talking about persecution because we have broken some rule or law. E.g. If I get into trouble for failing to do a homework assignment, this is not persecution for being a Christian. It is not even talking about good works. The world applauds the Army's efforts to help others. **But**, speaking out against some evil is another matter!

Discussion

Can you think of people in the world today who have been persecuted for their Christian stand?

How 'happy' do you think they felt when this happened?

How did Jesus, Himself, act in the face of persecution, insults and lies told about Him?

TAKING IT HOME

In the Beatitudes Jesus turns ordinary human ideas of happiness upside down. The values of the Kingdom are different to the world's ideas. Happiness is not dependent upon material success, position or power; it is determined by an inner openness to God and a loving response

to others. Notice that it is not a future reward that is offered to those living by these standards – the experience of joy is here and now! The Beatitudes are written in the present tense – ‘Happy **are** those who ...’

Jesus has given us a picture of eight character traits that are part of the Christian’s make-up. How many of them are part of **my** life?

Have a time of silent prayer when the young people pray about the Beatitude that challenged them most. Ask them to acknowledge that they need to think about it and seek God’s help to apply it to their lives.

FOLLOW-THRU

Ask your group to choose one Beatitude to link to a challenge in Get Involved and Grow in Mission that they could do, e.g. care for others, be a friend, or share a Christian book.

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FURTHER READING

LUCADO, M., *The Applause of Heaven*, Word Books, 1999.

SCHULLER, R., *The Be Happy Attitudes*, Bantam Books, 1999.

Solution to worksheets:

BEATITUDE	EXPLANATION	OPPOSITE ATTITUDE
The spiritually poor (verse 3).	Those who know they need to rely on God.	Those who have no time for God.
The mourners (verse 4).	Those who are sorry for their wrongdoing and sad for the wrong in the world.	Those who couldn’t care less.
The humble (verse 5).	Those who are without pride.	Those who are arrogant and bigheaded.
Those who hunger after God’s ways (verse 6).	Those who want to put what is right first in their lives.	Those who are only interested in what they want.
The merciful (verse 7).	Those who show kindness in action.	Those who don’t care if they hurt others.
The pure in heart (verse 8).	Those who are completely good.	Those who have no conscience.
The peacemakers (verse 9).	Those who seek to bring people together.	Those who are troublemakers.
The persecuted (verse 10 - 12).	Those who suffer because they love God.	Those who are afraid to stand up for right.



Jesus' 'Happy' Meal

Read Matthew 5:3 - 12 verse by verse.

Stop and choose the correct meaning and warning for each Beatitude and write them in the boxes.

- Those who are arrogant and bigheaded.
- Those who don't care if they hurt others.

- Those who seek to bring people together.
- Those who are completely good.

- Those who have no conscience.
- Those who are only interested in what they want.

- Those who are sorry for their own wrongdoing and sad for the wrong in the world.
- Those who are troublemakers.

- Those who are afraid to stand up for right.
- Those who know they need to rely on God.

- Those who suffer because they love God.
- Those who are without pride.

- Those who have no time for God.
- Those who want to put what is right first in their lives.

- Those who show kindness in action.
- Those who couldn't care less.

This means

Jesus said

He was warning against

Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor.

Happy are those who mourn.

Happy are those who are humble.

Happy are those who hunger after God's ways.

Happy are those who are merciful.

Happy are the pure in heart.

Happy are those who work for peace.

Happy are those who are persecuted because they serve me.

HIGHLIGHTS

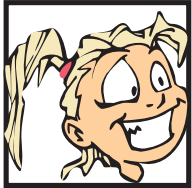
- Jesus set out a recipe for happiness in the Beatitudes - a 'Happy' Meal.
- Jesus' idea of happiness is very different from what the world presents to us.
- Happiness comes from within us.
- Living by the Beatitudes gives us a positive attitude to life.

What do you think?

Having read through a Beatitude decide what reaction you feel about it.

Match your feeling to one of the four around the page. (Colour the verse the same.) You may like to put a marker in your Bible near the one you want to think about so you remember to do the thinking!

YELLOW

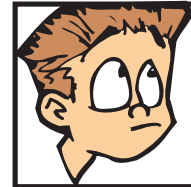


I can see how this would make me happy

5:3 Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

5:4 Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them!

GREEN



I'll have to think about this & ask for power to be like this.

5:5 Happy are those who are humble; they will receive what God has promised!

5:6 Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully!

5.8 Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God!

5.7 Happy are those who are merciful to others; God will be merciful to them!

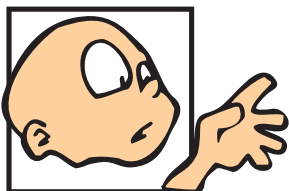
5.9 Happy are those who work for peace; God will call them his children!

RED



This is an impossibly high standard

BLUE



This idea really stuns me!

5:10 - 12 Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

Happy are you when people insult you and persecute you and tell all kinds of evil lies against you because you are my followers.

Be happy and glad, for a great reward is kept for you in heaven. This is how the prophets who lived before you were persecuted.



Jesus' 'Happy' Meal

Read Matthew 5:3 - 12 verse by verse.
Write the Beatitude in the correct boxes.

The man who slaps you on the back may be trying to get you to cough up something.

BEATITUDE	EXPLANATION	OPPOSITE ATTITUDE	THE RESULT PROMISED BY JESUS
	Those who know they need to rely on God.	Those who have no time for God.	
	Those who show kindness in action.	Those who don't care if they hurt others.	
	Those who suffer because they love God.	Those who are afraid to stand up for right.	
	Those who want to put what is right first in their lives.	Those who are only interested in what they want.	
	Those who are completely good.	Those who have no conscience.	
	Those who are without pride.	Those who are arrogant and bigheaded.	
	Those who are sorry for their own wrongdoing and sad for the wrong in the world.	Those who couldn't care less.	
	Those who seek to bring people together.	Those who are troublemakers.	

If you enjoy what you are doing, you can always find time for whatever you want to do.

A fool says, 'I can't; a wise man says, 'I'll try.'

Children aren't happy with nothing to ignore. And that's what parents were created for. Ogden Nash.

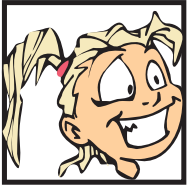
Blessed are the pure in heart for they have so much more to talk about.

Here are the Beatitudes that Jesus taught His followers.

People have called them the greatest paradoxes ever presented because they seem to contain such contradictions.

Having discussed them with your group, match each verse with one of the four reactions shown.

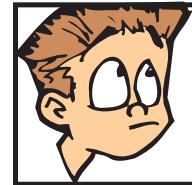
1.



I can see how this would make me happy

5:3 Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

5:4 Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them!



I'll have to think about this & ask for power to be like this.

5:5 Happy are those who are humble; they will receive what God has promised!

5:6 Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully!

5:8 Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God!

5:7 Happy are those who are merciful to others; God will be merciful to them!

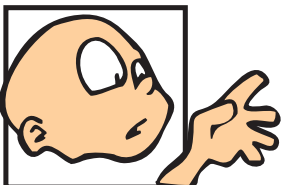
5:9 Happy are those who work for peace; God will call them his children!

3.



This is an impossibly high standard

4.



This idea really stuns me!

5:10 - 12 Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!

Happy are you when people insult you and persecute you and tell all kinds of evil lies against you because you are my followers.

Be happy and glad, for a great reward is kept for you in heaven. This is how the prophets who lived before you were persecuted.



SALT AND LIGHT

Aim

To help the young people understand Jesus' teaching that we are to be both the salt and the light of the world.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will understand better that as Christians:

- ❖ our behaviour should draw others to God;
- ❖ we should make the world a brighter, happier place;
- ❖ we get the power to do this from the Holy Spirit.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

This is part 2 in the series on The Sermon on the Mount.

The Beatitudes gave us a portrait of the character of the Christian disciple. The salt and light metaphors describe the influence the disciple should be in the world.

Christians are called to live in the secular world. The Christian 'salt' works in a practical way to improve the community.

Dr John Stott said: 'Salt has no business to remain snugly in elegant little ecclesiastical salt cellars; our place is to be rubbed into the secular community as salt is rubbed into meat to stop it going bad.' How often the Christian has tended to reproach and condemn the non-Christian world because of its corruptness when the real question to ask is: 'Where is the salt?'

All too often the Christian community has tended to separate the two vocations of Christian influence. Jesus clearly stated we are to be both salt and light; we have no right to consider that one can be ignored.

The addition of salt and light makes a big, positive difference to the world. In Jesus' time it was even more so.

To people in hot climates, salt was necessary to maintain the body's chemical balance after excessive perspiration.

A gift of salt was a sign of genuine friendship. Salt could be used to heal infections and most importantly, in those days of non-refrigeration, salt prevented decay in meat and so allowed people to store up provisions. Even today, in our society of 'no-salt' or much less salt, we still have some foods where it is needed or the food is bland. Place the emphasis on salt as preventing deterioration and acting like a spice, giving the food a tangy taste that makes it more inviting.

SESSION 5

FROM THE BIBLE

Matthew 5:13 - 16.

CHECKLIST ✓

There are two suggested Getting Started activities. One deals with the lack of salt and one with the lack of light. Use of both of them would be beneficial provided everything is well prepared and a time limit is set and kept.

There are three approaches for this session. Approach 1 deals with the function of salt and light and the implication of this to a Christian.

Approach 2 is a review on the Beatitudes and approach 3 is an activity making acrostics on the words salt and light. (Either of these can be looked upon as an extra if time is a problem.)

If making the 'Christingle' on the junior work sheet, come prepared for this.

Light is still just as useful. The darker it is the more light is needed. Green growth cannot take place without light. Shadows can be threatening until light identifies them clearly. Light today is being tapped as a tremendous source of heat and power. Laser light beams cut steel, are used in surgery on human bodies and are used more and more in technology.

Salt and light have one thing in common. They give and expend themselves and so Jesus is instructing us to be the same. Self-centred religiosity can have no place in our lives.

Jesus expects His followers to prevent decay and to illuminate darkness. Matthew 5:16 summarises this aspect of the disciple's influence. The disciples are to shine by their behaviour which must be astonishingly good, so good that others will see the disciples as living examples of God's power and grace and praise Him, who can so transform a human life.

GETTING STARTED

1. Have a tasting time in the dark (if possible). Bring along saucers containing such foods as:
 - i. spaghetti without any salt or sauce;
 - ii. rice cakes;
 - iii. a hard boiled egg without salt;
 - iv. paste of cornflour;
 - v. paste of custard powder.i.e. they are to be **bland** without any sign of flavour or spice. Ask the young people to taste each food, identify it and explain what is wrong with it.

And/or

2. Have secure blindfolds (so they cannot peep at all). Ask the young people to identify the colours in a picture by feeling it, or to feel a jacket and say what colour it is.

It is impossible! Light is needed to see colour.

Have them decide by feeling whether a person looks 'ill', 'tired' or 'worried'. This is very hard to do.

We can hear if they talk and get clues from that, we can feel and know if things are rough or smooth, made of metal or wood but 'light' makes a difference.

GOING DEEPER

1. What is salt and light?

- a. List suggestions that the young people make about the function of salt. (If they can only think of the bad effects it has on some elderly people, get them to consider it more as a spice.)

Read together Matthew 5:13.

- What are some practical ways we can function as salt in every area of our life?

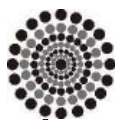
Write up their ideas. (e.g. I can take a stand against cheating at school, good sportsmanship, respecting and treating family members well.)

- What might cause me to lose my saltiness? (I start to please myself rather than God and my behaviour and actions show it.)

POINT

Enjoyable food has a spice or flavouring that makes all the difference to a meal.

Light makes all the difference to how we perceive things. Threatening shapes disappear when a light shines on them and we can see what it is. Jesus instructed His followers to become the 'salt' and the 'light' of the world. We want to consider in this session what Jesus meant by this and what He expects His followers to do when they try to be the 'salt' and the 'light'.



LEADER TIP

Activity 1 on both work sheets can be completed as you work through this approach.

- b. Consider the function of light in the same way.
Make a list of what light does. (e.g. Shows me the mess in my room, helps me to find my way in the dark!) Light reveals negatives as well as positives.

Read Matthew 5:14 - 16.

- How can we be a light? (Try to tie the ideas into the first list of what light does.)

In times of darkness – whether caused by evil or tough times, the Christian should be there to help make things clearer and brighter.

- Why might I be tempted to hide my light?
- Am I more likely to hide it if I feel it is not very bright?
- What can I do about that?

- c. Explain how we see the moon. (One young person may well like to do this.) The moon has no light of its own. It can only reflect the light that it absorbs from the sun. The side of the moon that is never exposed to the sun is extremely dark and cold. We cannot even see it. When we see the half or new moon, we can just make out where the dark side of the moon is.

- How can I link myself and Jesus to this fact?
(I must absorb His love and spirit and reflect it.)
- How does this idea relate to Jesus saying that our good works should cause people to praise our Father in Heaven?
(I can do nothing without Christ's power.)

2. Review Matthew 5:3 - 12

This passage of Scripture immediately follows the Beatitudes. (We studied them in the previous session on the Beatitudes, 'Jesus' Happy Meal'.)

How is the teaching about being salt and light reinforcing the Beatitudes?

(Some of the Beatitudes deal with reflecting God to others e.g. humility v.5, the merciful v.7, the pure in heart v.8 and peacemakers v.9.)

What is one way you can have a stronger influence as salt and light?

(Being more patient at home, not giving in to negative peer pressure at school, sport, work etc. and standing for the right.)

3. Making an acrostic

Divide your group into two teams.

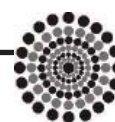
Ask them to compose acrostics on the words salt and light.

Team 1 will think of words to say what Christ the LIGHT does.

Team 2 will think of words that show what the light **sheds** on us. Then repeat with the word SALT.

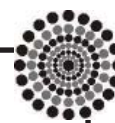
e.g. Team 1
Christ the Light
L (leads)
I (indwells)
G (guides)
H (helps)
T (transforms)

Team 2
The Light sheds
L (love)
I (illumination)
G (grace)
H (hope)
T (truth)



LEADER TIP

Try and make the bullet points meaningful discussions with your group.



LEADER TIP

This is activity 4 on junior and activity 2 on senior work sheets.

e.g. Team 2
Christ as Salt
S (Saves)
A (Adds spice)
L (Lifts us out of ourselves)
T (Transforms)

Team 1
The effect of Salt
S (Saves or preserves)
A (Adds flavour)
L (Lifts bland food)
T (Tastes better)

TAKING IT HOME

After Jesus had taught that we must be the salt and the light of the world, He gave us some very straight teaching about how to live our lives. Salt without its saltiness is worthless. It is thrown out and trampled on.

Just as a dirty light can only give a very ineffective light and is utterly useless if covered up or hidden so the Christian who does not live according to God's laws is ineffective and useless in extending God's kingdom.

FOLLOW-THRU

Giving the Christingle (see instructions on the junior work sheet) to someone in need of encouragement can fulfil the challenge to be an encourager. Completing any of the ideas to make the world brighter can be a 'your choice' in Get Involved and Grow in Mission.

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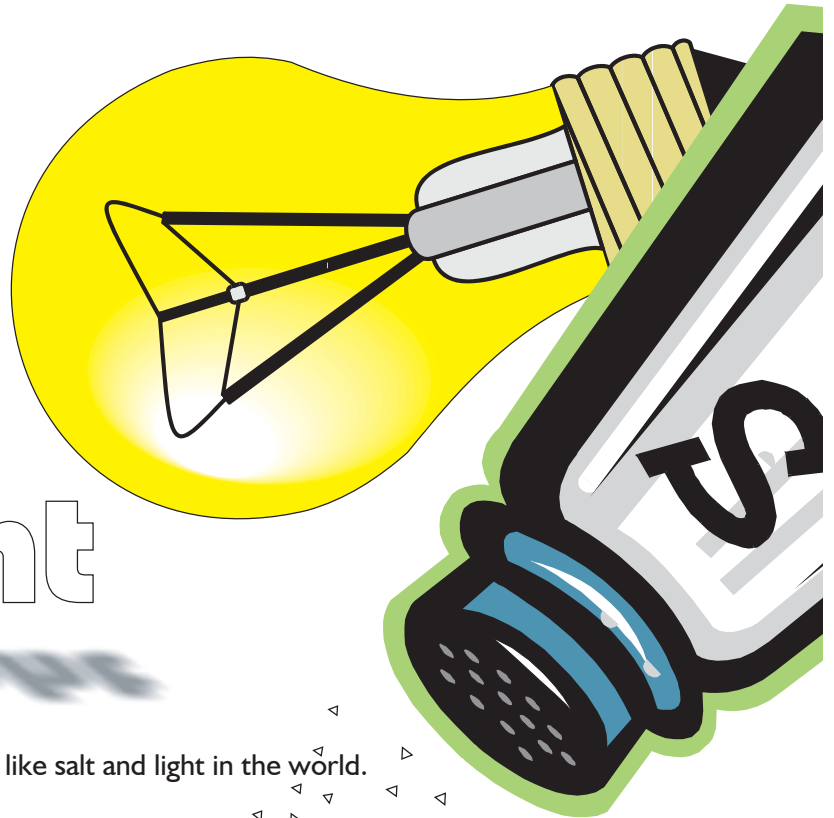
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salt

&

light



1.

Jesus said that His followers should be like salt and light in the world.

Write down

3 things light does

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

This means I should try to

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

3 things salt does

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

This means I should try to

- i. _____
- ii. _____

2.

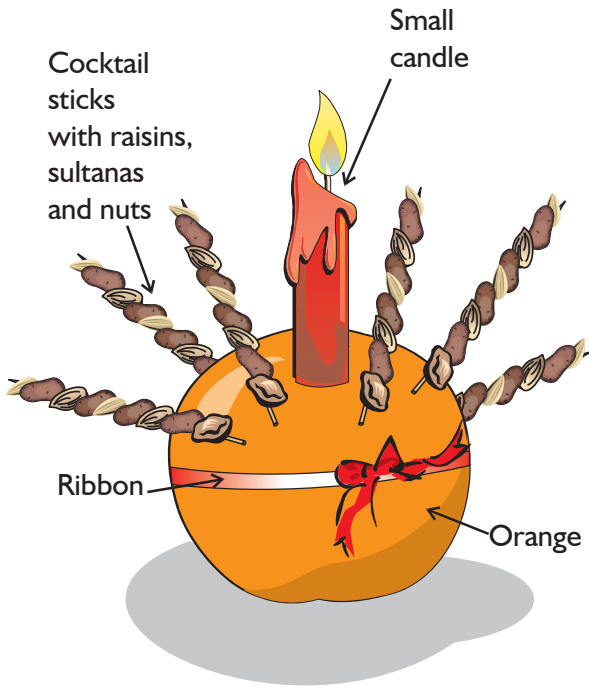
Have a discussion with your group and decide what you could do to make the world a better, brighter place.

Write down your best idea here. Check if it fulfils a task in the Get Involved and Grow challenges and carry it through.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Jesus is the Light of the world.
- Once His light shines in our lives, He expects us to shine for Him.
- There are many ways I can make the world a happier, brighter place.
- Christians add the spice to life that makes it meaningful and better.

3. Make a Christingle



A Christingle is a Christmas light with a special and rather complicated meaning. It originated among the Moravian community of North Germany in the eighteenth century. To make one you need:

- an orange
- a small candle
- four to six cocktail sticks
- nuts, raisins, dates or sultanas (a mixture if possible)
- a short length of red ribbon or thread

At the flower end of the orange make a cross-shaped cut and push the candle firmly in the fruit. Load the cocktail sticks with fruit and nuts and skewer them in round the candle. Tie the ribbon round the orange.

The symbolism of the Christingle is this: The orange represents the _____ (dwolr).

The nuts and raisins represent the good _____ (trufi) the earth yields.

But the world isn't full of _____ (snewetses) and _____ (thigl) at all.

The candle represents the _____ (mingoc) of Jesus to bring light to the world. The red ribbon encircles the orange just as His _____ (vole) surrounds us.

By giving it to somebody and explaining its message, I am being a 'light' in the world. Although this is really a Christmas decoration, you could make one now to give to somebody. Decide whether you will give it to someone lonely to brighten their day or someone who has helped you understand things more clearly (i.e. they have helped make things 'light' for you) or keep it where you can see it to remind you that you are to be a light for Jesus.

4. Acrostics Christ the Light

L _____
 I _____
 G _____
 H _____
 T _____

Christ the Salt

S _____
 A _____
 L _____
 T _____

The Light sheds

L _____
 I _____
 G _____
 H _____
 T _____

The effect of Salt

S _____
 A _____
 L _____
 T _____

salt

&

light



1.

Jesus said that His followers should be like salt and light in the world.

Write down

3 things light does

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

This means I should try to

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

3 things salt does

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

This means I should try to

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

2.

Acrostics

Christ the Light

L _____
I _____
G _____
H _____
T _____

Christ the Salt

S _____
A _____
L _____
T _____

The Light sheds

L _____
I _____
G _____
H _____
T _____

The effect of Salt

S _____
A _____
L _____
T _____

3.

Matthew 5:16 says: _____

Who is to be praised when a Christian does good works?

4.

Form a brain storming panel and write down ideas of how your group can make your community a happier, brighter place because of your presence.

Highlight the ones you will do. Use them as a 'Your Choice' challenge in 'Get Involved and Grow in Mission.'

1. **Cheering up the young people's hall itself.** Does it look like a focus of light and joy for the neighbourhood? Outside and in? What are the grounds (if any) like? What can we do to brighten it?

2. *Tackling any rubbish-ridden waste ground in the area.* Approach the local authority for information about such eyesores, with a view to helping clean it up, planting seeds etc.

3. *'Good neighbour' schemes.* Form yourselves into a 'bank' of voluntary help which can be used by local welfare workers (including your leader if available) to do jobs like shopping, visiting and decorating for elderly or handicapped people.

4. *Shedding light farther afield.* 'Adopt' a missionary project and plan ways of raising money or offering other kinds of support for it. (Think of The Salvation Army's medical, educational and social work in missionary lands – all part of our outreach with the gospel.)

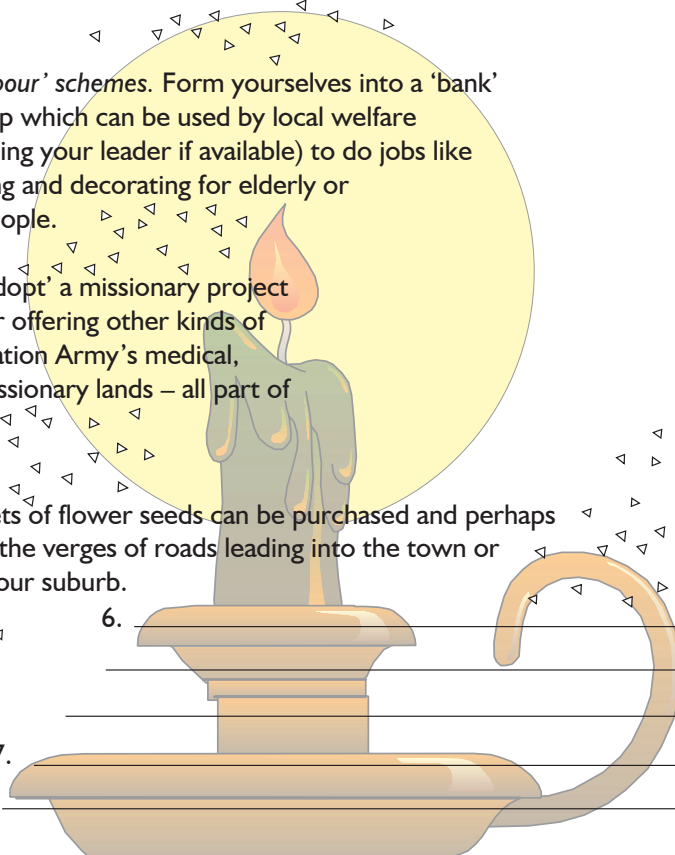
5. *Packets of flower seeds* can be purchased and perhaps sown on the verges of roads leading into the town or around your suburb.

6.

7.

I can only be a light if I am reflecting Jesus' pure light.

All light has to have some power to give out light.





YES! BUT THERE'S MORE

AIM

Through the study of the Sermon of the Mount to help the young people see that Jesus expects us to go the extra mile in keeping the law.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will understand better that as Christians:

- ❖ Jesus gives us a true understanding of the law.
- ❖ others should be able to depend on us to keep our word;
- ❖ we can love our enemies and do good to those who seek to hurt us.
- ❖ we get the power to do all of this from the Holy Spirit.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

This is the third session in the series on the Sermon on the Mount.

The teaching in the remainder of Matthew chapter 5 is the result of the life described in the Beatitudes (this follows on from session 5).

In *The Teaching of Jesus*, Norman Anderson says:

Jesus certainly did not start his own work and teaching from a vacuum. On the contrary, he had pondered the Law and the Prophets long, deeply and radically. He gave full recognition to their divine authority and was at considerable pains to make a sharp distinction between them and the rabbinical accretions, and even subtractions, which had become attached to them. He did not simply confirm the continued authority even of the Old Testament revelation itself, for he saw clearly that both Law and Prophets had been pointing forward to him, to the New Covenant he was to inaugurate and to the Kingdom he himself personified and would one day bring to consummation. So we must note throughout this chapter the balance, which could so easily have been a tension, between what was recognized as originally authoritative but shown to be transient, on the one hand, and his own words which would never pass away, on the other. (p.79)

Again Jesus astonishes His followers with strong words. 'The old law said ... but now I am telling you to go a step further.'

So six new ideas or contrasts were presented. Whereas the Pharisees emphasized the external interpretation of the law, Jesus was saying that our actions are controlled by our inward thoughts.

In the 'you have heard ... but I tell you ...' pattern of these verses, Jesus is clearly explaining that He did not come to destroy the law but to help people apply it to their daily lives.

SESSION 6

FROM THE BIBLE

Matthew 5:17 - 48

CHECKLIST ✓

There are 2 Getting Started activities. If you use the first one, make sure you bring all the ingredients.

There are 4 teaching approaches. It is highly recommended that you use either the Matthew series videos or the *Jesus* video.

Make sure you use approaches 1, 2 and 3.

Approach 4 is a drama presentation and you will need to prepare this in advance.

DEFINITION

Accretions: additions. The Pharisees added to the Laws as they explained them to the people so some of the Laws kept growing.

1. **Murder**
The old law said: 'No murder'
I say: 'No anger.' Matthew 5:21 - 26
2. **Adultery**
The old law said: 'No adultery.'
I say: 'No lustful thought.' 27 - 30
3. **Divorce**
The old law said: 'Divorce on condition.'
I say: 'No divorce.' 31 - 32
4. **Oaths / Promises**
The Old law said: 'No false swearing.'
I say: 'No swearing at all.' 33 - 37
5. **Retribution / Revenge**
The old law said: 'Eye for eye.'
I say: 'No retaliation at all.' 38 - 42
6. **Love for others**
The old law said: 'Love your friends.'
I say: 'Love your enemy.' 43 - 48

In this session we will examine just two of these interpretations – promises and revenge.

Other *TRIBE* sessions go into detail with the other four contrasts.

GETTING STARTED

1. Have ready enough plain cookies/cake and choc chips cookies/cake to feed the group.

POINT

The plain cookies tasted good and helped us to stop feeling hungry. The choc chip cookies (for those who were expecting to eat them) tasted even better. In a similar way Jesus' teaching added to the life of the law.

Say to the young people, 'I have something special for you today. Who's feeling hungry?' (Build up their expectations.)

Announce that you have choc chip cookies and then hand out the plain cookies.

(Wait to see their response.)

Then hand out the real choc chip cookies.

(If you're able to make the cookies with your group, this would be a fun activity.)

Or Discussion

In your opinion, what are some of the difficulties of reading the first five books in the Old Testament (the law)?

(Answer might be: hard to understand, makes no sense, too many rules.)

POINT

This session looks at how Jesus' teaching can give extra meaning and understanding to certain parts of God's laws.

GOING DEEPER

1. **Video**
Watch the video segment of this passage from Matthew's gospel.

Jesus' teaching here was controversial because He compared the old teaching of the law with His new teaching about the Kingdom of God living in and through His people.



VIDEO CLIP

Use either the Matthew series video or the *Jesus* video. Make sure you have cued the video beforehand to the teaching from Matthew 5:17 - 48.

Jesus is not speaking about observing all of the details of the law as the Pharisees insisted. On the other hand neither is He throwing out the old law – rather He is emphasising the change in a person’s life that follows on from sincere faith in Him.

(Turn to your Bibles and ask the young people to read out the six headings and write these up. Different versions have different headings so be flexible with your descriptions.)

- i. Teaching about anger.
- ii. Teaching about faithfulness in marriage.
- iii. Teaching about divorce.
- iv. Teaching about vows and promises.
- v. Teaching about revenge.
- vi. Love for enemies.

Jesus gives a clear picture of how Christians should live.

We are going to look at two of them in this session: vows (promises) and revenge.

2. Teaching about promises (or vows)

Read Matthew 5:33 - 37. Jesus is talking about honesty in speech – something that God had set out in His laws.

Different young people or leaders read:

Leviticus 19:12; Deuteronomy 23:31; Numbers 30:2; Exodus 20:7.

The implication of the law is that we must keep our promises and be people of our word. Promises and oaths become unnecessary when our word is given honourably.

Jesus is saying that honest people do not have to resort to oaths to convince others that they mean what they say.

Discuss: ‘Oaths are only needed because people are so often liars.’

James 5:12 says: ‘It is of the highest importance, my brothers, that your speech should be free from oaths (whether they are ‘by’ heaven or earth or anything else). Your yes should be a plain yes, and your no a plain no, and then you cannot go wrong in the matter.’ (J.B. Phillips)

Finally, the ideal situation is that a person should never require an oath to guarantee the truth of anything one says.

What a person says and promises should be obvious in the very quality of one’s life and character.

Clement of Alexandria insisted that Christians must lead such a life and demonstrate such a character that no one will ever dream of asking an oath from them.

Consider whether you know such people – whether you are one yourself.

3. Teaching about revenge

Read Matthew 5:38 - 42.

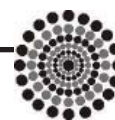
In this session Jesus presents three vivid little pictures. Jesus is saying we should not retaliate – in contrast to the old law of measure for measure or pay back exactly.

Have different young people read:

Exodus 21:22 - 25; Leviticus 24:19 - 20; Deuteronomy 19:21.

LEADER TIP

Have these verses marked in Bibles ready to read out.

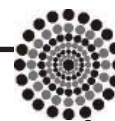


DEFINITION

Clement of Alexandria: An important second century theologian and educator.

LEADER TIP

Have these verses marked in Bibles ready to read out.



We could call this the law of tit-for-tat. But it was really meant to be a law to limit vengeance. If a person poked your right eye out, you could not poke both of theirs out. The injury inflicted was to be equal, not greater than the one inflicted.

But Jesus shocks our human desire to pay back by giving two striking pictures.

a. **Turn the other cheek**

According to the Jewish rabbis, a blow with the back of the hand which would normally land on your opponent's right cheek, was twice as bad as hitting him with the flat of your hand.

What Jesus is saying is that even if a person should direct at you the most calculated and cruel insult, you must under no circumstances retaliate or show resentment and seek revenge.

Is this easy to do? Of course not! Nobody likes to be so insulted. How did Jesus react to insults at His trial? (Luke 22:50 - 51; Matthew 27:11 - 14.)

How can we live like this?

There is only one way – and that is with the power the Holy Spirit gives us so that the desire for revenge disappears.

b. **Carry an enforced load double the distance!**

Read Matthew 5:41.

In Christ's time the people were under the bondage of the Roman Empire and a Roman soldier could simply conscript a person into service whenever he wanted to.

The Jews absolutely hated this sign of their bondage. A soldier could call out, 'Here! Shoulder this baggage and carry it two kilometres and make sure you get moving with it', and the Jew had to comply or be beaten. Jesus says that the Christian will do more than this! The Christian will go with a spirit of cheerfulness and good grace.

That's some challenge!

As T.W. Manson once said: 'The first mile renders to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; the second mile, by meeting oppression with kindness, renders to God the things that are God's.'

What is accomplished by turning the other cheek or going a second mile?

Does it mean that somebody who set out to insult and hurt us will be forced to wonder why we didn't retaliate?

Does it mean that we could then have the chance to explain why we didn't pay them back and so let our light shine in a very real way?

Will they feel badly that I reacted in such a way?

However, keep in mind what Jesus said in v.17: 'Do not think that I have come to do away with the law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets.' (GNB) Read this passage (Matthew 5:17 - 20) carefully.

Jesus was not contradicting the law, He was endorsing it, insisting on its authority and supporting its true interpretation.



**LEADER
TIP**

Read the story from the worksheet about the private going the extra mile in responding to persecution.

4. Drama presentation

Gather the young people at one end of the room, and have them sit down. Have the two volunteers read the 'Prison' script and follow its instructions.

If you have more than ten young people in your group, you may want to have the Jailers 'lock up' two of them at a time. If your Jailers are creative, they may want to make up their own lines to accommodate more prisoners.

At the end of the drama, ask:

- What happens when we refuse to forgive those who have wronged us?
- Who is hurt by our unwillingness to forgive?
- Is it possible to forgive someone who is not sorry for what he or she has done to hurt you?

LEADER TIP

You will need a Bible and you'll also need to make copies of the 'Prison' script to give to two volunteers a week before you meet. Be sure to clue them in on any changes they'll need to make in order to accommodate the size of your group.

THE PRISON

Jailer 1: *(Pointing to someone in the group.)* You! I can't believe you said those horrible things about me in front of everyone! I'll never forgive you for that! *(Pulls person up and leads him or her to centre of the room. Have the person stand in one place with hands on imaginary 'prison bars.' Jailer 2 may speak while Jailer 1 is doing this.)*

Jailer 2: *(Pointing to someone in the group.)* Some friend you are! Stealing my boyfriend (or girlfriend) and then begging for forgiveness! Yeah, right! *(Pulls person up and leads him or her to stand next to the first person, in the same position. The 'prisoners' will gradually form a circle, facing in. Jailer 1 speaks while Jailer 2 is busy.)*

Jailer 1: *(Point to someone in the group.)* There you are! You thought I'd forget that you told my parents I went to that party. Well, I'll never forget and I'll never forgive you! *(Pulls this person up and 'imprison' him or her.)*

Jailer 2: *(Grabbing another person from the group.)* Oh, it's you! Yeah, I thought you were my friend until you got the part I wanted in the musical. What a show off! *(Takes person to jail.)*

Jailer 1: *(Pulling someone up.)* And I'll never forgive you for not giving me the answers to that geometry test! *(Jailers speed up their accusations and motions.)*

Jailer 2: *(Pulling someone up.)* You hurt my feelings!

Jailer 1: *(Pulling someone up and imprisoning him or her.)* You embarrassed me! *(Jailer 1 stays in the middle of the circle this time.)*

Jailer 2: *(Pulling up last person.)* You betrayed me! *(Puts person in jail and stays in middle of the circle.)*

Jailer 1 and Jailer 2:

(To prisoners, in unison.) I'll never forgive you! *(They suddenly realise that they're trapped inside the prison. The prisoners are looking at them. The Jailers gently shake the prisoners, trying to get out.)*

Jailer 1: *(Confused)* Wait! I didn't know ...

Jailer 2: *(Desperate)* Help!

(Both jailers drop to their knees and freeze as you read Matthew 18:21 – 35 aloud.)

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TAKING IT HOME

We have some great teaching set out for us in the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus' teaching was very controversial in His day, and is still just as challenging for us today. With greater understanding of the law, comes greater responsibility.

Jesus comes alongside us by His Spirit and gives us the power to live our life as He wants us to.

Take this opportunity to ask the Spirit's help in areas you find difficult.

FOLLOW-THRU

If the drama is presented, the two jailers will have completed the Get Involved and Grow in Worship challenge of taking part in a small group.

REFERENCES

MANSON, T.W., *The Sayings of Jesus*, SCM.

McMAHAN, C., (Editor), *Worship Ideas For Youth Ministry*, Group Publishing, 1997.



yes! But there's more

Jesus helps us understand the law more clearly.
(Unscramble what Jesus said.)

DON Otth ink I k a v eCO meT to a boi is hth eLA wort hePROp hets; i
havEno to O rE to a BO Iisht Hemb u7to Fulfilth eM.

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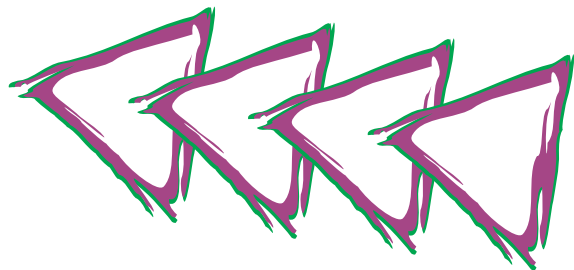


Which of the following people are easy to forgive? Which are difficult?
Write E (easy) and D (difficult)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your mother | <input type="checkbox"/> A teacher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A close friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Your father |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yourself | <input type="checkbox"/> God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Someone who really hurt you | <input type="checkbox"/> Someone who stole your girl/boy friend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparents | <input type="checkbox"/> Terrorists |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your next door neighbour | <input type="checkbox"/> Someone who is more popular than you |

HIGHLIGHTS

- Jesus helps us understand more clearly the difficult laws.
- We should mean what we say.
- We should try to love and accept those who are hard to love.
- We should be prepared to go the extra mile.





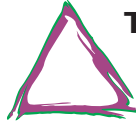
I keep my promise when



Everything is going my way



I know this is what God wants



There isn't a better option



I will benefit from it



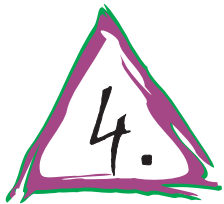
I won't be hurt



I'd be embarrassed if I'm found out



I have said I would



**Read this testimony
and explain how it describes
"turning the other cheek".**



Others are counting on me

Sarah Kistan and her husband Tony sat down at the Broad Arrow Café, Port Arthur, Tasmania, to enjoy a meal together. Before long the sound of gun shots rang out through the air. Tony grabbed his wife and tried to get her out the door as he shielded her from gunman Martin Bryant. Tony however was shot and later died in hospital.

For Sarah the pain of losing her husband was great. She could not forgive Martin for what he had done or forget the pain he had caused not only to her, but also to her family. Bitterness took control of her life, bitterness towards everyone around her, towards the gunman and towards the Lord.

One night, months after the death of her husband, Sarah couldn't sleep. She could hear someone saying, "Sarah, forgive and forget. Let go of Martin." But Sarah couldn't. How could she forgive the man who had destroyed her life?

That night she wrestled with the Holy Spirit. The question came, "What would you do if it was one of your sons?"

At 2:00am, she got on her knees and prayed, "Lord if it is your will that I must forgive and forget, grant this will within me and give me the spirit of forgiveness." At the very moment her soul was lifted, peace came over her and Martin became as good as one of her own sons.

Yes! But there's more



Read Matthew 5:33 - 37

Jesus provided some good instruction on keeping promises. How does this teaching line up with our society today?



I keep my promise when



Everything is going my way



I know this is what God wants



There isn't a better option



I will benefit from it



I won't be hurt



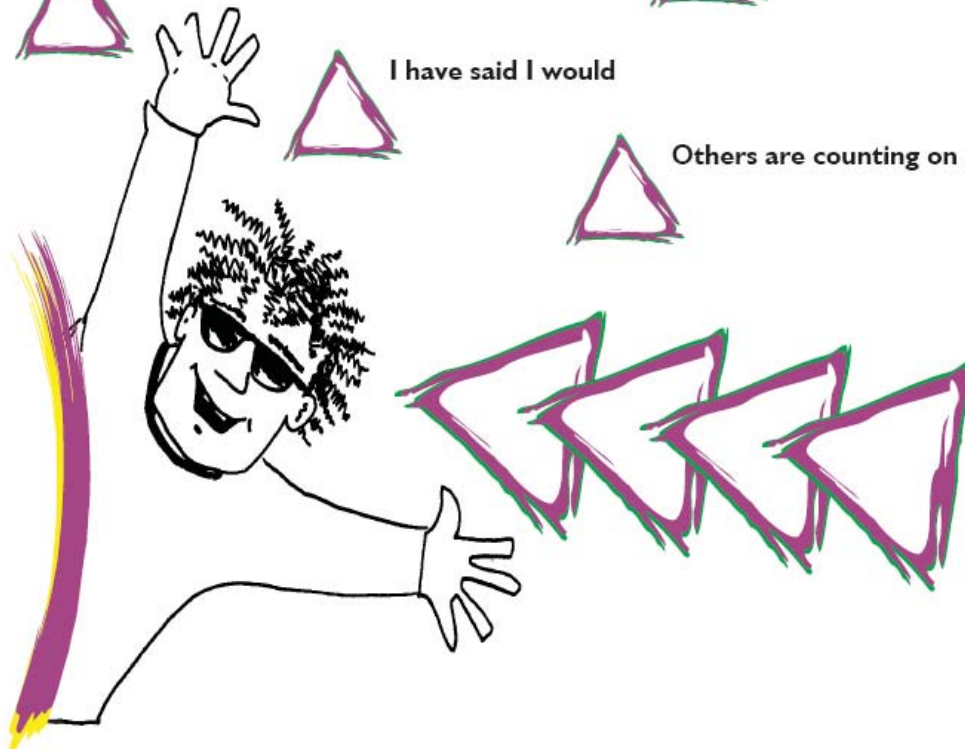
I'd be embarrassed if I'm found out



I have said I would



Others are counting on me



If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything. (Mark Twain)



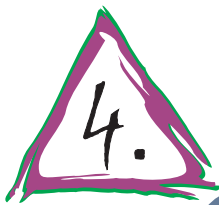
Going the second mile

Consider this testimony given by a private in World War II: 'In our hut there was a private who accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour in one of the chapel meetings. When the others in the company learned this fact, we gave that boy an awful time. We sneered at him; we made him do the dirtiest and hardest work in the barracks; we made fun of his religion; and when he tried to read his Bible or pray, we made as much noise as we could.

One evening he had been on guard duty, so most of the company were in the barracks when this boy came in. When he was ready for bed, he knelt to pray. I picked up my muddy boots and threw them at the boy, and one struck him on the side of the head. But he did not stop praying.

The next morning I found my boots beautifully polished and placed beside my bed. That was his reply to me. His gentleness, his genuine goodness, his loyalty to Christ in the face of our persecution broke my heart. I asked the Lord to forgive me and cleanse my heart from sin. And that's just what He did!

What is accomplished by turning the other cheek or going a second mile?



Read this testimony and discuss the different effects of revenge versus forgiveness on victims such as Sarah.

Sarah Kistan and her husband Tony sat down at the Broad Arrow Café, Port Arthur, Tasmania, to enjoy a meal together. Before long the sound of gun shots rang out through the air. Tony grabbed his wife and tried to get her out the door as he shielded her from gunman Martin Bryant. Tony however was shot and later died in hospital.

For Sarah the pain of losing her husband was great. She could not forgive Martin for what he had done or forget the pain he had caused not only to her, but also to her family. Bitterness took control of her life, bitterness towards everyone around her, towards the gunman and towards the Lord.

One night, months after the death of her husband, Sarah couldn't sleep. She could hear someone saying, "Sarah, forgive and forget. Let go of Martin." But Sarah couldn't. How could she forgive the man who had destroyed her life?

That night she wrestled with the Holy Spirit. The question came, "What would you do if it was one of your sons?"

At 2:00am, she got on her knees and prayed, "Lord if it is your will that I must forgive and forget, grant this will within me and give me the spirit of forgiveness." At the very moment her soul was lifted, peace came over her and Martin became as good as one of her own sons.



COMING TO A KING

AIM

To show the young people through a study of the Lord's Prayer that true prayer begins with God, not ourselves, at the centre of the prayer

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will:

- ❖ understand better how much our heavenly Father loves us;
- ❖ realise that we must take time to come into God's presence;
- ❖ acknowledge God's majesty and glory;
- ❖ want to pattern their praying on this model prayer that the Lord gave us.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Although this session continues the teaching given in the Sermon on the Mount, it is more specifically the first of two sessions on the teachings Jesus gave to us in the Lord's Prayer.

It did not take the disciples long to realise that prayer played a very significant role in their Lord's life. They had seen Him slip away from the crowd to prayer (Luke 6:12, Matthew 14:23); they had seen Him get up even before dawn and go off quietly to pray (Mark 1:35) and they sensed that it was from such times that Jesus drew His strength.

It was not surprising then that the disciples, conscious of their ignorance about prayer, said to Jesus, 'Lord, teach us to pray.' (Luke 11:1).

Jesus prefaced His teaching with the words, 'This, then, is how you should pray.' (Matthew 6:9). This would suggest that He was giving us an outline of prayer on which we could base our prayers. We see then, that the Lord's Prayer gives us a general pattern that we can follow. The prayer naturally falls into two sections. After the acknowledgement, 'Our Father in heaven' there are six petitions. These fall into two main groups:

1. There are three petitions for God's glory.

In praying for God's greater glory we are to consider and pray for:

- i. the honouring of His name – i.e. the **majesty of God**;
- ii. the coming of His reign – i.e. the **purpose of God**;
- iii. the doing of His will – the **will of God**.

2. There are three petitions for our needs. (These are dealt with in the next session.)

When we pray for our human wants and needs, we are told to ask for:

- i. provision;
- ii. pardon;
- iii. protection.

SESSION 7

FROM THE BIBLE

Matthew 6:9 - 13; Luke 11:1 - 4.

CHECKLIST ✓

There are three Getting Started activities suggested. If you decide to do Getting Started 1 you will need paper and pens for the young people and a board or chart and pens for yourself.

Getting Started 2 again requires writing materials for the young people and the leader. Getting Started 3 is especially for juniors and their answers to the quiz, 'What makes a good father?' can be written on the work sheet in activity 2 and should be discussed together.

There are three approaches: Approach 1 considers how to prepare for prayer. Approach 2 considers how we address God. Both of these are introductions to the main point of the session. Use them both but do not spend too long on them.

Approach 3 is headed 'Deciding what we pray for' and deals with the three prayers about God:

May your holy name be honoured,
May your Kingdom come
May your will be done.

Be sure to **allocate your time** so that you have time to work through each petition and what it says to us about our prayers.

How do we approach God and how do we teach our young people to approach Him?

Jesus began His prayer in a way that the disciples could scarcely comprehend.

NOTE

For these session on the Lord's Prayer the Good News Bible version of the prayer is used:

Our Father in heaven:
May your holy name be honoured;
May your kingdom come,
May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today the food we need.
Forgive us the wrongs we have done, as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us.
Do not bring us to hard testing,
But keep us safe from the Evil One.

(Matthew 6:9 - 13, GNB)

The other familiar wording of the prayer that is used in these two sessions is:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, power
and glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

They were to call God: 'Our Father in heaven'.

This title means that God is not a cosmic principle, but a living, loving, caring person. When calling upon God, Jesus used the affectionate word 'ABBA.' In the colloquial speech of the time this meant 'Daddy.' Jesus taught His followers to do likewise. This is an indication of the depth and intensity of His realisation of the fatherhood of God, a realisation He wanted His disciples to share.

Most of our young people should have begun to realise at this stage of their spiritual understanding that prayer centres around God and our desire to please him.

It is natural and right that we run to God in times of crises and pour out our needs and our desperate pleas for His help. But to grow as Christians, we must establish a pattern for our daily prayer time.

We must, of course, be prepared to stand by our prayers, and a delayed answer might provide the opportunity to rethink them. We may even find that we are trying to use a means of grace in order to get our own way, instead of seeking to discover and then fulfill God's will.

We sometimes say 'Prayer changes things', but this is not always true. 'Prayer changes people' is perhaps a truer statement, for then, 'People can begin to change things!'

People of prayer are powerful people, and God makes them more usable in His service.

We want to help the young people understand that the God who loves each individual as His precious child is also the sovereign Lord and Ruler of the world. A loving Father must also have from us a recognition of His majesty and His purpose and see that our desire is to know and do His will.

N.B. If you have a young person with a home life where Dad has not been a loving father, then, for them, the concept of God treating us as a father treats us, can be terrifying or incomprehensible. Such young people need to be asked to consider the loving feelings they have personally experienced as they held a puppy, much loved toy etc. in their arms. God loves us like that.

GETTING STARTED

1. Divide the young people into small groups/pairs and get them to write down as many words as they can think of to describe what God is like.

Then compile them into one common list by writing them onto a chart or board. Ask them to identify the words in the list that are mentioned in the Lord's Prayer, e.g. – His fatherhood; He is the Father of all; He has a Kingdom; His Name is holy. As the young people work through this exercise, more words could possibly be added to the list.

Or

2. Ask the young people to work in pairs to write a definition of prayer.

All of these ideas can be read out, written on the board etc. and discussed until one definition is reached that includes everyone's ideas. (There is room on the work sheet for this definition to be written down.)

Or

3. Complete activity 2 on the junior work sheet on the attributes of a good father.

GOING DEEPER

1. Considering preparation for prayer

It is true that we can come to God at any time and in any place and this is especially important to remember in times of temptation and difficulties.

Discuss

- Is it just as true that we need to set aside time to pray when we won't be interrupted?
- If we don't find time to come to God in a quiet prayer time, we are not tapping into the power source of prayer. Jesus' disciples observed Jesus at prayer and were probably surprised at the time He spent in prayer. Read Matthew 14:23; and Mark 1:35. What do these verses tell us about Jesus and prayer?

It was not surprising that the disciples, having seen the importance of prayer to Jesus, asked Him to teach them to pray.

Jesus gave them a prayer on which they could model their prayers to God and it has been repeated for centuries as people gather to worship God. It's important to think about the words rather than just repeat them for we are making some remarkable requests when we pray the Lord's Prayer.

In our time of quiet devotions it is good to keep this prayer before us as a model of how we ought to pray.

2. Considering how we address God

There are many ways we can begin our prayers to God. Young people might like to call some of these out and they can be listed if you wish.

How did Jesus say we ought to begin our prayer time?


He said that we ought to say '**Our Father**'.

You have probably heard people call God 'Our Father' or 'Loving Father', but to the people of that time this was an amazing revelation.

God dwelt in the 'Holy of Holies'. He was so holy that the priest had to spend a long time to make himself ritually clean before entering the sanctuary. Yet, now Jesus was saying to begin your prayer with 'Our Father'.

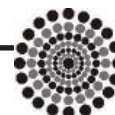
What a wonderful concept of God this brings to our mind as we come into God's presence.

And Jesus wasn't giving us a picture of a stern, unapproachable father. Rather, he used the word 'Abba' when talking about God's fatherhood. This word 'Abba' is best translated by using the word a young child might use as he/she rushes to greet a father who is greatly loved and who loves and cares tenderly for the child. Therefore the word 'Daddy' has been suggested as a good translation. God, said Jesus,



POINT

Jesus taught us a great deal about prayer. He did this in the two best ways of teaching – He showed us by His own example and He explained how to pray using examples from everyday life. In this session we are going to look at what He taught us about prayer by studying the Lord's Prayer.



LEADER TIP

Watch the segment from the Matthew video or the Jesus video. Or read the Lord's Prayer from the junior work sheet. Or read Matthew 6:9 - 13..

cares for each of His individual children so much that ‘the hairs of our head are all numbered’.

Not only did Jesus say we should address God as Father, but what was the word preceding Father? (Our.)

What should this word make me realise? (That God belongs to everyone else – not just me and mine!)

Jesus included everyone, so no one should be omitted because I don’t get on very well with them. Therefore I begin my prayer with ‘Our’.

It is good to keep this in mind when I begin to pray.

We need not come before God in fear and trembling but in confidence and trust.

Read together Galatians 3:26. How did we become God’s children? We need to remember that it is a great privilege to approach God in a wonderful way.

3. Deciding what we pray for

Jesus then made it very clear that we do not rush straight into telling God all about our needs.

Have the young people recite the first three petitions of the Lord’s Prayer. (Use the wording on the junior work sheet.)

We see that, having been privileged to call upon God as our loving Father, we must begin our prayer in a way that shows we are aware of His majesty and glory.

Stopping to consider what these three petitions say, helps us to realise what true prayer does. As we consider God’s majesty and glory, He becomes the centre of our prayer.

a. We ask that God’s holy name be honoured

God’s name is holy and in this prayer we are asking that all people will come to acknowledge God as holy, worship Him as God and keep His name sacred.

In biblical times a ‘name’ involved much more than what we call another person. To the Hebrews, a name also meant the person’s character, representing his inmost self or identity. This is why in the Bible we see people’s names being changed by God.

The one outstanding name for God used throughout the Old Testament is YAHWEH (we translate it as Jehovah or Lord).

Consider what God reveals about His name in these verses.

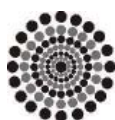
- Genesis 17:1. We use the word ‘Almighty’ for the Hebrew word ‘El Shaddai’ which means a mountain God or ‘strong-enough-to-overcome’ God.
- Exodus 6:2 - 4. This is the occasion where God revealed His name as ‘Yahweh’, or the Lord. Such a name was to remind us that the mind of God is too wonderful for us to understand and we must approach Him with respect and wonder.
- Exodus 20:7. In the Ten Commandments God clearly states that His name is special. We are not to call upon God to be our witness when ratifying a ‘suspect deal’ or speaking the ‘truth loosely’ and yet this has happened to God’s name in all countries and in every age.

DEFINITION

Petition: a formal request.

DEFINITION

Honoured: treated with respect and dignity..



LEADER TIP

Activity 3 could be done as this part of the approach is worked through. Discuss each statement as a group before the boxes are marked.

- Psalm 99:3; Psalm 96:8. These are verses used in worship where we are reminded to honour God's name and acknowledge His sovereign power.

When we pray, 'May your holy name be honoured', we pray that God Himself will enable us to give Him the unique place which His nature, character and personality as revealed in Jesus Christ demand and deserve.

b. We ask that God's Kingdom will come

'The Kingdom of God' was a phrase constantly being mentioned by Jesus. But Jesus' picture of God's Kingdom was very different from the one the Jewish people held.

The Jews looked back on David's reign as an ideal period of history and they dreamed that one day they would be independent and strong and lead the world in the worship and service of the one true God. Material prosperity and political domination would be their lot when God's Kingdom was established.

When Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God, He was not thinking of political and religious supremacy for the Jewish nation, but the creation of a new community by the rebirth of individual men and women. The enemy was not Caesar, but sin, and the Jew was as far from the Kingdom as was the Gentile. This teaching was in no way popular with the religious leaders or the people.

Read these verses to see what Jesus meant when He referred to the Kingdom of God.

Luke 6:20; Luke 9:62; Matthew 6:33; John 18:36. (Help your group to understand that the Kingdom of God is within those who promise to do His will. Refer especially to John 3:3).

When we pray 'Your Kingdom come', we are not praying for something to happen in a world where we just sit as spectators. We cannot pray this prayer if we are not prepared to hand ourselves over to God to be made anew. It is not a prayer for those who desire to stay the way they are.

c. May your will be done

The third petition of the Lord's Prayer asks that what God wants for this world and for those who live in it, will come to pass.

It is not a flippant acceptance of 'what will be, will be'. It is the result of a happy walk with God, believing that life will be lived to the full when we allow God to work His will and purpose in our lives.

This petition is linked with 'May your Kingdom come' because we cannot have the one without the other.

The Kingdom of God can only be set up in the human heart with our consent! When we want God to rule our lives then we will want His will to be done.

Read these verses and discuss what they tell us about God's will (or what He wants). Matthew 7:21; Matthew 18:14; John 5:30.

Jesus gave us a perfect example of this particular way to pray as He prayed in Gethsemane. Read together Mark 14:32 - 36. Jesus knew what was before Him – His earthly body shrank with horror from such pain, yet Jesus also knew that our salvation depended upon His willingness to



LEADER TIP

Activity 4 can be completed here.



WEBQUEST

The UK Christian web site www.ship-of-fools.com ran a competition asking entrants to re-write the Lord's Prayer as a mobile phone text message.

The winning entrant read:

dad@hvn,ur spshl.we want wot u want&urth2b like hven.giv us food&4giv r sins lyk we 4giv uvaz.don't test us!save us!bcos we kno ur boss,ur tuf&ur cool 4 eva!ok?

go through with God's plan. It makes what He asks of us seem the least we can do!

TAKING IT HOME

In teaching His disciples this model of how to pray, Jesus reminds us of four important truths about God that we must keep before us when we pray.

(Have the young people call the four parts out while you list them on a chart or board.)

- i. God can be approached in prayer as the heavenly Father of us all.
- ii. God's name is holy – we remember His majesty and power as we come to Him.
- iii. The coming of God's Kingdom begins in our hearts.
- iv. God's will can only be done on earth as people determine to do what He wants them to do.

Have each young person in your group pray a sentence prayer based on one of these petitions from the Lord's Prayer.

FOLLOW-THRU

This session's teaching ties in well with the challenge in Get Involved and Grow in Worship to pray publicly in a meeting.

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My definition of prayer is:



SMS prayer
 dad@hvn,ur spshl.we want
 wot u want&urth2b like
 hvn.giv us food&4giv r sins
 lyk we 4giv uvaz.don't test
 us!save us!bcos we kno ur
 boss, ur tuf&ur cool 4
 eva!ok?

The Lord's Prayer

'Our Father in Heaven:
 May your holy name be honoured;
 may your Kingdom come;
 may your will be done on
 earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us today the food we need
 Forgive us the wrongs we have done,
 as we forgive the wrongs
 that others have done to us.
 Do not bring us to hard testing,
 but keep us safe from the Evil One.'
 (GNB Matthew 6:9 - 13)

What makes a good father?

A good father would:

- help me with my homework if necessary
- be very handsome
- be very concerned about what people think about him.
- not be irritable.
- do all my homework for me.
- let me do what I like.
- have two jobs so we can buy everything I want.
- have time to spend with his family.
- talk to me about decisions I have to make.
- love every member of his family

As my heavenly Father, God _____

HIGHLIGHTS

- It is important to make time to pray regularly.
- We can approach God as our loving Father who knows and cares for us.
- My actions must glorify, not discredit God.
- God will rule over me if I allow Him to do so.
- True prayer centres around wanting God's will to be done.



3.

When I pray 'May your holy name be honoured', I mean that:

- I want everyone to stop using God's name to swear.
- I know I must be reverent before God.
- God's name must not be said out loud.
- all people should remember that God is holy.
- my life should glorify God's name.
- I know that when I do wrong I bring discredit on God's name.
- the God who is my Father is also to be honoured and respected.

Read and discuss all of these statements with your group.

Tick the ones you all decide are correct.

4.

True or False?

When I pray 'May your Kingdom come', I mean that:

- I want God to be our prime minister.
- I long for the day when God will fully rule over all people everywhere.
- God can only rule our lives as much as we allow Him to.
- I cannot pray for God's Kingdom to come if I'm not committed to serving Him myself.
- in God's Kingdom there will be no selfishness or suffering.
- I can help God's Kingdom to come by influencing others.
- 'grace' not 'race' brings a person into God's Kingdom.
- Jesus constantly taught that the Kingdom of God is within us.



5.

When I pray 'Your will be done', I am asking that:

COMING TO A KING

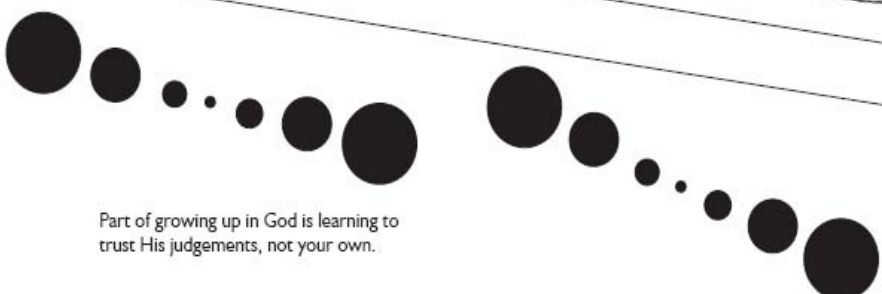
a. Jesus taught His disciples a _____ prayer because they _____

 We call it _____ and we can
 use it to _____

1.

b. My definition of prayer

Only .0001% of fatal accidents occur at church!



Part of growing up in God is learning to trust His judgements, not your own.

When I begin to pray by saying **Our Father** I am acknowledging that

a. _____

2.

b. _____

Having discussed all of these statements with your group put ticks in the boxes of the correct statements.

In very early days no seating was provided in churches.

When I pray 'May your holy name be honoured' I mean that:

- I want everyone to stop using God's name to swear.
- I know I must be reverent before God.
- God's name must never be spoken.
- all people should acknowledge that God is holy.
- my life should glorify God's name.
- I am aware that when I act wrongly, I bring discredit to God's name.
- the God who is my Father is also to be honoured and respected.



3.

It's good to have the things that money can buy but better to have the things that money can't buy.

Consider these statements and write true (T) or false (F) in the circles.

4.

May your Kingdom come means:

- I want God to be our prime minister.
- I long for the day to come when God will fully rule over all people everywhere.
- I cannot pray this section of the Lord's Prayer if I'm not committed to serving Him myself.
- there will be no suffering or selfishness in God's Kingdom.
- I can help this prayer to come true by influencing others.
- it is 'grace' not 'race' that brings a person into God's Kingdom.
- Jesus constantly taught us that the Kingdom of God is within us.



SMS prayer
 dad@hvn,ur spshl.we want
 wot u want&urth2b like
 hvn.giv us food&4giv r sins
 lyk we 4giv uvaz.don't test
 us!save us!bcos we kno ur
 boss, ur tuf&ur cool 4
 eva.ok?

5.

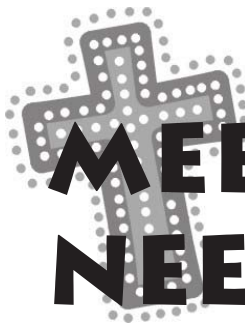
a. YOUR WILL BE DONE

When I prayer this prayer I am asking:

b. Highlight which of these you need to work on:

- a) desiring to spend more time with God.
- b) keeping my thoughts centred on God.
- c) knowing more about God's will.
- d) living my whole life as a prayer.
- e) really believing God.





MEET MY NEEDS, LORD

AIM

To show the young people that acknowledging God's majesty, purpose and will, better enables us to present to Him our own needs and requests.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will:

- ❖ understand that we can ask God to supply our material needs;
- ❖ recognise the importance of seeking forgiveness of our sins;
- ❖ believe that God is ready to help us in our fight against evil.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

In this session we consider the final three petitions of the Lord's Prayer.

They cover all our human needs:

1. our material needs – asking for our daily bread;
2. our spiritual needs – seeking forgiveness of our sins;
3. our moral needs – asking for deliverance and protection from evil.

1. Our material needs

Many of the early Church Fathers took this as a petition for spiritual or sacramental bread. However, Jesus was most definitely referring to bread for our day to day physical provisions. We will consider what implications such a prayer has for us. The food is not going to appear all ready-made on our tables. 'Prayer is never the easy way to get God to do for us what we can well do, and must certainly do for ourselves.' (William Barclay)

The word 'daily' in this prayer presents some difficulty in translation. It has been suggested that it was an Aramaic word coming from the equivalent Latin word 'diaria', meaning the daily rations issued to slaves, soldiers and workmen.

Disciples are God's servants and so they were to ask for sufficient food from day to day to enable them to perform the tasks God appoints them to do. He can be asked to supply enough today for tomorrow's duties.

Jesus frequently taught the disciples that worrying about food and clothing was dishonouring to God. He was not encouraging laziness or making light of planning. He was reminding us that our Heavenly Father knows what we need and our first priority must be God's cause.

2. Our spiritual needs

This is the only petition in the Lord's Prayer that has a condition attached to it. And what a condition it is!

SESSION 8

FROM THE BIBLE

Matthew 6:7 - 15 and other selected passages.

CHECKLIST

For Getting Started activity 1 you will need three large sheets of paper, three textas and one further texta of a different colour. For Getting Started 2 you will need a Mars Bar and a large block of chocolate.

There are four teaching approaches and they all need to be presented. Approach 1 introduces the young people to the petitions for our own needs and these petitions (from 'Give us today ...') should be written up beforehand. They can then have the key words written beside them as suggested in the approach.

The following three approaches consider each of the petitions. They include a study of other Bible passages that help us to understand Jesus' teaching more clearly.

Allocate your time to allow an equal amount of time for each approach. If you feel there are too many verses of Scripture, select those that will be best understood by your group.

The plea for forgiveness does not rest on an apology to God and a promise to Him that we will not sin again. It rests on our attitude towards His other children. He cannot restore us to the freedom and intimacy of family life if we refuse to be friendly to our brothers and sisters.

When we pray this prayer, we are accepting the fact that only the forgiving can be forgiven.

Jesus' supreme example of how to forgive others was demonstrated as He prayed for those who were nailing Him to a cross. He who forgives, will find for Himself the forgiveness of God. There can be no place in the Christian heart for the holding of grudges, thoughts of revenge or an unforgiving spirit.

3. Our moral needs

This third petition is a prayer for divine protection in time of spiritual danger.

'Lead us not into temptation' can puzzle us, for we know that God does not tempt (James 1:14) so why would He lead us into temptation?

The explanation as to how the word temptation is used in the Bible makes the matter clearer.

The word may mean 'trial' in the sense of suffering or persecution or it may mean the enticement or seduction of sin.

Surely this petition is not asking for deliverance from suffering and persecution but for deliverance from the arch-enemy of God and us and his subtle seduction of people. We might say: 'Help us to resist temptation', and surely this is a prayer that needs to be constantly on all our lips.

The prayer then concludes with a doxology. When praying this doxology, we are reminded to conclude our prayer as it began – with our thoughts on the sovereignty and glory of God.

DEFINITION

Doxology: a declaration of praise to God acknowledging His power and glory.

GETTING STARTED

1. Have the young people work in three different groups to write down what foods they (and anyone else they know!) eat for:

- i. breakfast
- ii. lunch
- iii. dinner.

(If a felt tip and a large sheet of paper are used, then the lists can be hung up for everyone to read.)

Supply a different coloured pen and ask the young people to take turns in crossing out foods that we could well live without – i.e. foods that we don't think we'd be justified in putting on a prayer request for our daily provision to God.

How many foods are left? Probably if we'd included snack times a lot more 'foods' would have been crossed out!

Or

2. Plant a Mars Bar somewhere outside the room (close enough so it can be seen) and give someone very clear instructions on how to retrieve it so they can keep it for themselves. Once they leave the room then send a leader to 'tempt' them to bring back a large block of chocolate

POINT

Some of your young people can no doubt say that food is so plentiful at their home, they have never had the need to ask God to supply it. Does this mean we must make sure we thank God for such provision?

In this session we are going to continue our study of the Lord's Prayer. We will see how Jesus showed us to divide our personal needs into three groups and remember to bring them before Him.

that has also been planted nearby instead of the Mars bar. The tempter could use the line that the block of chocolate is bigger and so on.

Depending on what they bring back, talk about giving into and resisting temptation.

GOING DEEPER

1. Introduction to the second part of the Lord's Prayer

Have the young people repeat the Lord's Prayer. In our study of the first part of the prayer we saw that Jesus expects us to keep in our minds God's majesty, purpose and will as we pray to Him. Having done that, we can then present our own needs and requests.

These three petitions ask God to meet all areas of human need.

- a. In asking for our daily bread, we are broadly asking for the supply of our **material** needs.
- b. In asking for the forgiveness of our sins, we are asking for our **spiritual** needs to be met.
- c. And asking to be kept safe in temptation and delivered from evil is asking for our **moral** needs to be met.

Then we conclude the prayer in the same way we began – acknowledging God's sovereignty and giving Him our praise.

2. Considering prayer for our material needs

Jesus often used the word 'bread' to encompass all our food, even all our material needs. This petition gives us an assurance that God is concerned about our physical needs.

You may have heard it said that we should not bring trivial matters before God, especially when we can handle them ourselves.

Jesus' actions and teaching show us that God does want to help supply our material needs, but He also reminds us to keep them in priority.

Bible study

Read the following verses and discuss how they fit into this petition about our material needs.

Matthew 4:2 - 4 – Jesus' temptation to use His miraculous powers to fulfil His own physical needs.

Matthew 6:31 - 33 – Jesus' positive assurance that God knows about our needs.


Matthew 14:15 - 20 – Jesus' practical way of dealing with a hungry crowd.

Luke 24:28 - 31 – Jesus' way of thanking God for daily provision was how His followers recognised Him.

Proverbs 21:13 – a reminder of our need to help those who are less fortunate than we are.


Sometimes the person who has worked hard in the kitchen to prepare a great meal may jokingly point out that she/he ought to be thanked rather than God for the meal.

Yet, even the cook had to depend upon many other people to supply the food – the shopkeeper, the factory worker, the carriers, the farmers all had an important part to play and without their help and hard work God would not answer this prayer in the way we expect.




POINT

Temptation is not a sin, but giving into it is. In this session we look at our petition to God in the Lord's Prayer to help us to resist temptation.




LEADER TIP

This is on the work sheets. It would be helpful to have it written up so you can refer to each petition through the session.



LEADER TIP

Write the underlined word beside the appropriate petitions as you mention them.



LEADER TIP

Have different leaders or young people ready to read these verses. There are three Bible studies in this session so allocate an equal amount of time for each one and select the passages most appropriate for your group.

This type of request emphasises that people cannot make a living thing. God alone has the secret of life and so when we pray this prayer, we are acknowledging our dependence on God for food and our debt to Him for supplying it.

Although Jesus was frequently encouraging His followers to trust in a Father who could supply His children's needs, He was not offering us an excuse for laziness.

To pray, 'Give us today the food we need' is to express our dependence on God, our trust in God, and to challenge ourselves to the effort and work which will bring the gifts of God to ourselves, and through us to others.

We can share God's gifts with others so that their prayer for help may be answered from our plenty.

3. **Looking at how to pray for forgiveness**

Read/say the petition in the Lord's Prayer about receiving forgiveness. This is the only petition in the Lord's Prayer with a condition attached to it.

Jesus is telling us to pray for forgiveness of our sins. We know that to be spiritually whole, we must receive the healing that comes through knowing that God has forgiven our sins.

Jesus also knew that we would never be spiritually whole if we held in our heart a feeling of resentment or a grudge against another person. Such feelings destroy our peace with God. This is why in giving us a model of how to pray, Jesus dealt with these two issues when thinking of our spiritual need.

How easy it is to ask God to forgive us and give us another chance. How wonderful that His love and mercy allow Him to be so patient and forgiving.

How difficult it is sometimes to forgive others, and how necessary it is to remember this prayer and the strong warning it is giving to us.

Bible study

Consider these passages of Scripture and what they say about forgiveness:

Matthew 5:23 - 24 – Don't try to offer a gift to God while you are not at peace with another person.

Matthew 6:14 - 15 – A follow-up emphasis by Jesus on what He had just said in the Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 18:21 - 35 – (Tell this parable rather than reading it.) Any hurt another person has caused us is nothing compared to how we have sinned against God.

Luke 23:34 – Jesus left us an awesome example of how to pray for those who hurt us.

It isn't natural to have a forgiving spirit. The natural law says 'pay back', 'get even', but Jesus gave us this very solemn warning and backed it up with strong teaching.

If we want God's forgiveness, we must forgive those who have hurt us.

4. Considering the final petition of the Lord's Prayer

In this prayer we are asking for moral protection and power to do right. We can be sure that God is always ready to help us in our fight against evil. The word 'temptation', has two meanings, it can also mean testing.

In modern language we make the distinction that Satan tempts, but God allows temptation so that the quality of our spiritual experience may be tested and strengthened. We can be sure that God would never 'lead us into evil' so we do not need to pray that He won't. Rather we are praying that our power to resist temptation may be strengthened by Him, so that we are never led into giving into temptation.

In praying, 'Do not bring us to hard testing, but keep us safe from the Evil One', we do three things:

- i. we face how easy it is to go astray and fall into sin;
- ii. we acknowledge that as humans, we cannot deal with the problem;
- iii. we place the danger and the weakness under God's protecting power.

Bible study

Read and discuss these verses as you think about this petition.

Matthew 4:10 – Shows us how Jesus handled temptation by quoting Scripture.

I Corinthians 10:12, 13 – When we are feeling most confident about spiritual strength, we are more vulnerable to temptation. We must always look to God to give us strength at such times.

Ephesians 6: 6 and 18 – These verses remind us to know our enemy and make sure we are properly equipped so we can remain faithful.

I Peter 5:8 - 9 – A warning that reminds us of the real need for this part of the Lord's Prayer to be regularly prayed.

It is important to pray for this daily protection from God so that we can stand secure and safe.

Having asked God for all our needs to be met, we conclude the prayer by again acknowledging God's power and majesty. This is a final reminder to ourselves that 'our God reigns' and is the Lord of our lives.

TAKING IT HOME

When we come to God in prayer, we need to remember this teaching in the Lord's Prayer.

God wants us to talk to Him and ask Him for our material needs.

God wants us to be spiritually whole, so He expects us to forgive those who have hurt us, as freely as He forgives us.

God is there to keep us strong in times of temptation and to protect us from the powers of evil when we ask Him to do just that.

And our God is able to do what He has promised He will do.

Pray the Lord's Prayer together in a thoughtful manner asking the young people to remember something they have learned about every petition as they repeat it.

FOLLOW-THRU

This session ties in well with the Get Involved and Grow in Mission Challenge – help with other appeals. In a country where our material needs are in abundant supply, we must reach out to help those in poor countries. Helping raise money for another welfare group reminds our young people of the tremendous needs that are all around us.

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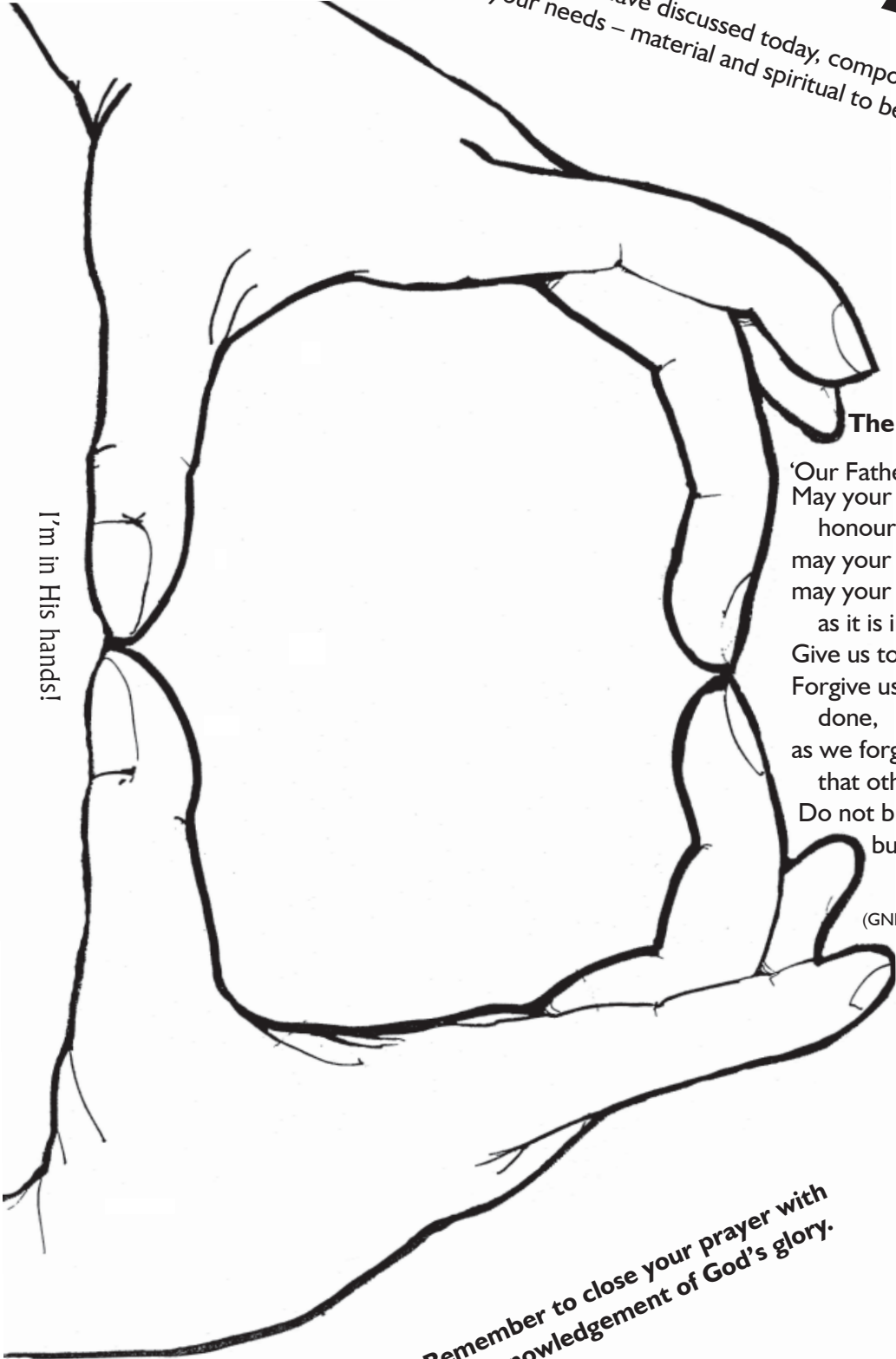
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Meet my needs, LORD!

Keeping in mind the petitions you have discussed today, compose inside the hands a prayer asking God for your needs – material and spiritual to be met. Ask for His protection.



I'm in His hands!

The Lord's Prayer

'Our Father in heaven:
May your holy name be
honoured;
may your Kingdom come;
may your will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us today the food we need.
Forgive us the wrongs we have
done,
as we forgive the wrongs
that others have done to us.
Do not bring us to hard testing,
but keep us safe from
the Evil One.'

(GNB Matthew 6:9 - 13)

Remember to close your prayer with
an acknowledgement of God's glory.

2.

The Bible teaches that we should not worry about our material needs. Help me to remember what Matthew 6:31 - 32 (GNB) says,

'So do not start _____ :
 'Where _____ my _____ come from? or
 my _____ ? or my _____ ?'
 Your _____ in heaven knows that you
 _____ all these _____ .'



dofu

roryginw

liwl

nirdk

telsoch

eathrf

edne

singth

Lord help me to forgive those who hurt me. Help me to remember this verse. (Ephesians 4:32.)

Lord – give me power to say NO!

Ways I can be tempted:	Not at all	Very little	Some	Very much
1. To cheat in school.				
2. To be jealous of others.				
3. To be proud.				
4. To feel superior to others.				
5. To conform to the crowd.				
6. To doubt God and the Bible.				
7. To be attached to my possessions.				
8. To be involved in any things harmful to me.				

HIGHLIGHTS

- God will supply our material needs.
- We must forgive others if we want God to forgive us.
- God will give us the power to fight temptation.
- We need to ask God to protect us from evil.
- Our God reigns.

Meet my needs, LORD!

1.

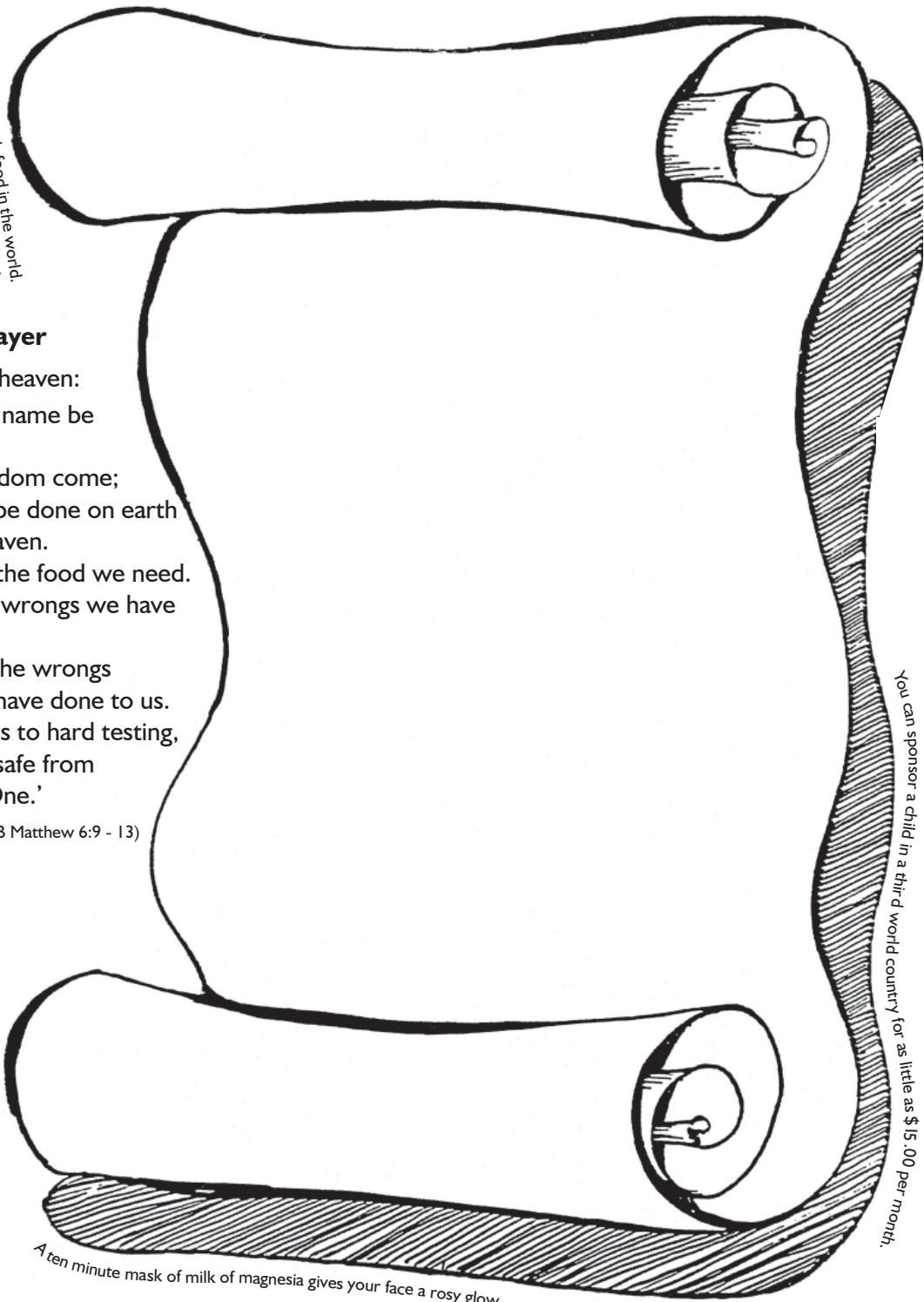
Keeping in mind the petitions you discussed in this session, compose a prayer asking God to supply your material and spiritual needs. Ask for His protection in temptation. Close your prayer with an acknowledgment of God's glory.

There is really enough food in the world. It's just that the have's store up so much.

The Lord's Prayer

'Our Father in heaven:
 May your holy name be
 honoured;
 may your Kingdom come;
 may your will be done on earth
 as it is in heaven.
 Give us today the food we need.
 Forgive us the wrongs we have
 done,
 as we forgive the wrongs
 that others have done to us.
 Do not bring us to hard testing,
 but keep us safe from
 the Evil One.'

(GNB Matthew 6:9 - 13)



You can sponsor a child in a third world country for as little as \$15.00 per month.

A ten minute mask of milk of magnesia gives your face a rosy glow.

2.

Matthew 6:25 - 33; Proverbs 21:13

Choose a verse from these passages that you feel demonstrates that God cares about our material needs. Write it into the loaf of bread.



What do you consider are our responsibilities when:

a. We have enjoyed a good meal?

b. We have more than we need?

Jesus' teaching about the need to forgive others is very strong. Having read these passages, write in the heart why you think He was so emphatic.
Matthew 5:23 - 24; Matthew 6:14 - 15; Matthew 18:21 - 35.

A large, simple outline of a heart. Inside the heart, there are five horizontal lines spaced evenly, intended for writing.

'Unless we learn to call upon God for help in times of temptation, we find ourselves living a defeated life!' Comment on this statement after reading these references.
1 Corinthians 10:12, 13;
Ephesians 6:16 & 18;
1 Peter 5:8 - 9.

SESSION 9

THREE-IN-ONE



FROM THE BIBLE

Matthew 3:16 - 17; 28:19;
2 Corinthians 13:13 - 14;
John 15:26; Deuteronomy 6:4;
Mark 12:32; James 2:19;
Colossians 2:9.

✓ CHECKLIST

Select the Getting Started activity you are going to use. Getting Started 2 requires inviting a visitor the young people will recognise as fitting into the three categories. For Getting Started 3 you need ice, water and equipment to make steam.

A copy of Doctrine 3 should be prepared for the session. Try to use all four approaches.

Approach 1 simply explains the word 'trinity'. It is essential that the young people understand this.

Approach 2 is a Bible search and has room for the answers to be written on the work sheets. (Question vii is only for the seniors.)

Approach 3 looks at mistaken beliefs about the Trinity. The young people use Doctrine 3 and Bible references to work out their responses to such beliefs. (It is suggested that the mistaken beliefs are printed out for easy reference.)

Approach 4 is for seniors only. Have a leader read this information to the group.

AIM

To emphasise that the three Persons in the Godhead are 'undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory'.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people should understand that:

- ❖ we worship one God;
- ❖ there are three Persons in the Godhead;
- ❖ each Person in the Godhead is fully God.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Doctrine 3 says:

'We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.'

The belief that there is **one God**, Creator of the universe and Lord of all, is common to Judaism, Islam and Christianity. It is a basic principle of the Old Testament and is spelt out in what the Jews call the shema: 'The Lord our God is one Lord and you shall love Him with all your heart, soul and strength.' This truth is affirmed by Jesus and His apostles throughout the New Testament. So, where did we get the idea of a 'threefold' God? It came as a result of two things:

1. responding to the person and teaching of Jesus, particularly His claims of divinity;
2. experiencing fellowship with God, through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples began to know God as the Father. They lived with God the Son, who taught them very clearly that the Holy Spirit would come from the Father to be with them. His presence would be just as real and powerful to them as Jesus' physical presence had been.

They began to realise the impact of Jesus' claim, 'The Father and I are one' (John 10:30) and the statement He made to the Jews, 'Before Abraham was born, 'I Am'.' (John 8:58)

So Christian thinking had to take these revelations and come to a complete doctrine about God.

Such a doctrine took centuries to formulate and caused divisions in the early church.

Some people today say it is unintelligible and should be dropped. This is foolishness. By definition the doctrine is impossible to understand totally

because it is revealed doctrine. It is most important that we believe rightly about God. We cannot discover all we need to know about Him, so God has revealed truths about Himself which are beyond the reasoning of our finite minds.

The chief of these revealed truths is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Scriptures are the record of God's revelation to us. There are many Scriptures that record this revelation. Don't worry if you do not fully understand the doctrine. It is not necessary to fully understand in order to believe. From the Scriptures we learn that there is one God; that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all God; that they are separate from each other, that they are all personal, and that the three are one.

Salvation Story in chapter 2 says: (pages 14 - 16)

We believe in one God who is at the same time three.

Belief in one God is known as monotheism. Christians worship this one God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the doctrine of the Trinity, which is essential to an understanding of God as revealed in the Bible, and is basic to the Christian faith...

A God in fellowship

God is never alone. Within himself he enjoys perfect and full fellowship. Although he is always three, he is not three individuals who could be in competition or opposition. He is three persons, always united in being, attitude and action, a threefold God of love.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit represent a dynamic circulation of life among equal persons without any authority or superiority of one over another. Any attempt to develop a false hierarchy of power and glory within the Trinity is to weaken the integrity of the Godhead and to undermine the complete unity of the persons.

The three-in-one definition attempts to describe a God who as Father creates, governs and sustains; as Son redeems, befriends and disciples; and as Holy Spirit sanctifies, counsels and empowers. In persons and work he is three: in personality and love he is one.

The three persons of the Trinity are continually revealing one another to us. The New Testament tells us that the Spirit bears witness to Jesus, Jesus Christ reveals the Father and testifies to the Spirit, the Father testifies to the Son.

When we speak of the triune God as one, it is in the sense of his wholeness and togetherness, and when we speak of God as three, it is in the sense of his threefold nature.

The phrase to be avoided at all cost is 'part(s) of God'. It is not true that 'the Holy Spirit is that part of God which ...'. Doctrine 3 asserts that the three Persons are 'undivided'. There are no 'parts' to the one God.

As you and your young people study this doctrine you may find that the concept of the Trinity is difficult to understand. This may worry some of the young people who are at an age when they seek clear answers. Help them to realise that it is inevitable that mere humans will never fully understand the nature of God. If we could do so, we would be greater than He is and that is unthinkable.

GETTING STARTED

1. This riddle may provoke discussion which will lead to the idea of many/one persons:

'A car held a maximum of three persons. As I watched, two sons and two fathers got out. How could this be?'

[Answer: The people were Glen Smith (aged 13) and his father John Smith (aged 40). John's father, William Smith (aged 68) was the third person. So there were two sons and two fathers. John was both a son and a father.]

Or

2. Have a visitor (well known to the young people) introduced by three different people. A leader might say, 'Meet my husband (or neighbour or cousin), Ray'.

A young person might say, 'This is my father (or soccer coach or uncle), Mr. Thompson.'

The corps officer might say, 'I introduce you to the Bandmaster (or CSM or Treasurer) a Senior Local Officer.'

You will need to adapt this idea to suit the person being introduced. The introductions should make the differences and distinctions clear. Discussion should highlight the fact that there is only one character being introduced.

Or

3. Have available solid water (ice cubes from a refrigerator), liquid water and vaporised water (steam from a kettle).

Discuss the distinctions and unity.

GOING DEEPER

1. **Define 'trinity'**

Ask the young people to write down their definition of the word 'trinity'. See that they understand that it is made up from two words tri = three, unity = joined as one. Tri-unity became trinity, meaning three-in-one.

2. **A Bible search**

- i. What do Jewish people believe about the nature of God, according to Deuteronomy 6:4?

ANSWER: THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD.

- ii. Does Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit get a mention in the Genesis account of the beginning? If so, quote the verse.

ANSWER: GENESIS 1:2 REFERS TO 'THE SPIRIT OF GOD'.

(The Good News Bible, translates the Hebrew word '**ruach**' as 'power' but refers to the 'spirit of God' or 'the mighty wind' in the footnotes.)

- iii. Who is John referring to in chapter 1:14 of his gospel when he talks about 'the Word'?

ANSWER: JESUS CHRIST.

- iv. What two things do we learn from John 1:1 about Christ?

ANSWER: HE IS GOD AND WAS WITH GOD IN THE BEGINNING.



POINT

There is no perfect way to explain the concept of the triune God we worship. It is really too hard for our human minds to understand. However, these examples are among the best we can use. We do not worship three gods, but there are three persons in the Godhead, 'undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.' We are going to think about this in this session.



LEADER TIP

These questions are on the work sheets as activity 1. Question vii is not on the junior work sheet.

- v. What does John 8:58 tell us about Jesus' existence?
ANSWER: JESUS IS THE 'I AM' AND WAS PRESENT BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS BORN.
- vi. Do these answers make it clear that all three Persons in the Godhead have been in existence from the beginning?
ANSWER: YES.
- vii. What can we learn about the Person of God from Colossians 2:9?
ANSWER: IN THE PERSON OF JESUS ALL OF THE GODHEAD'S NATURE WAS REVEALED IN A HUMAN FORM.
- viii. How are the three Persons of the Godhead mentioned in Matthew 3:16 - 17?
ANSWER: JESUS – THE DEAR SON; THE SPIRIT OF GOD APPEARING AS A DOVE AND GOD – SPEAKING ABOUT HIS SON – WHICH REVEALS HE IS THE FATHER.
- ix. How does the Christian Church use 2 Corinthians 13:13? (Some translations call this v.14.)
ANSWER: AS A BENEDICTION OR PRAYER.

3. Looking at some common mistaken beliefs

In the days when the Christian Church first began, there were three common misunderstandings held by some believers about the person of God. Read these from the work sheet.

Place your young people into three groups and give each group one of the mistaken ideas (heresies). Ask them to use the doctrine and Bible verses to point out the errors in the beliefs.

Discuss

Which of these three mistaken beliefs is most common amongst young people today?

4. How did this doctrine come about?

The year was 325 AD, the place was Nicaea (modern day Turkey). Constantine, the first Christian emperor, was presiding over a meeting of all the bishops.

Constantine had inherited a divided empire. Even the Christians were divided. The majority of Christians wanted Jesus to be acknowledged as God. Others were saying that Jesus was not divine.

At the council of Bishops, both sides of the argument were stated.

The church knew what it did *not* believe. The trouble began when the church tried to find out what it *did* believe.

It was the divinity of Jesus that was being disputed. How could they put that beyond doubt forever?

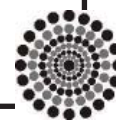
'Why not say', suggested Constantine, 'that the Son is *of one essence with the Father?*'

That was unexpected. No one thought the emperor would say something along these lines. After all, this was a matter for theologians. A phrase like that would certainly put the question of Christ's divinity beyond doubt. They wrote it into the creed, passed it round for all to sign, some refused and were expelled from the Church.

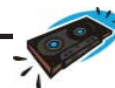
All thought the matter was solved once and for all.

In actual fact, the bishops after some time had second thoughts.

FOR SENIORS

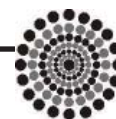


VIDEO CLIP



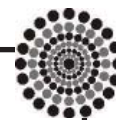
You may want to show the scene from the *Jesus* video which shows the Spirit coming upon Jesus as a dove and then God speaking. This is found at the beginning of the tape.

LEADER TIP



This is activity 2 on the work sheet.

FOR SENIORS



'Of one essence ... that's not in the Bible,' they said to one another. Gradually people began discovering other faults in the phrase and before long, the battle was on again.

This time it was done quietly – nobody wanted to offend the emperor. It was obvious that his great plan for uniting the empire was balancing on just one little phrase.

The battle continued over the next sixty years. After Constantine's death the argument started up again.

Historians are still trying to make sense of all the complicated events of this period. And when it was all over, Constantine's phrase remained.

The Church had committed itself completely to believe in Christ's divinity by saying that the Father and the Son are 'undivided in essence'. But, what about the Holy Spirit?

The Church found its answer in the doctrine of the Trinity: an ingenious solution which settled the argument and yet allowed room for further thought. This is summed up in the doctrine we have today.

TAKING IT HOME

Our minds can never fully understand everything about God. We would be equal with God if we did!

What we can understand is that we do worship one God and that He is our Father and the Creator of this world. He is also our Saviour who gave His life to redeem us. God the Holy Spirit gives us power to live a life that is victorious over temptations.

One God – yet three – He is wonderful indeed!

Read through the doctrine together.

FOLLOW-THRU

Some of the young people may like to prepare a testimony about how God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit helps them to live a life that is pleasing to Him.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Doctrine We Adorn, chapter 2, International Headquarters, London, 1982.

Salvation Story, MPG Books, 1998.

LARSSON, John, *Doctrine Without Tears*, The Salvation Army, London, 1974, chapter 3.

DOWLEY, T., *Lion Handbook - The History of Christianity* (revised), Lion Publishing, 1997.

Solution to activity 3 for seniors:

THE NICENE CREED

I believe in one God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made...

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified ...

THREE - IN - ONE



HIGHLIGHTS

- We worship only one God.
- We can know God in three ways.
- God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit are one.
- Each person in the Godhead is truly God.

1. What does the Bible say?

i. What do Jewish people believe about the nature of God, according to Deuteronomy 6:4? _____

ii. Does Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit get a mention in the Genesis account of the beginning?
 If so, quote the verse. _____

iii. Who is John referring to in chapter 1:14 of his gospel when he talks about 'the Word'? _____

iv. What two things do we learn from John 1:1 about Christ? _____

v. What does John 8:58 tell us about Jesus' existence? _____

vi. Do these answers make it clear that all three Persons in the Godhead have been in existence from the beginning? _____

vii. How are the three Persons of the Godhead mentioned in Matthew 3:16 - 17?

viii. How does the Christian Church use 2 Corinthians 13:13 (will be v.14 in some translations)? _____

2. Doctrine 3 says: _____

Choose ONE of the three common misunderstandings held by some believers about the person of God and use the doctrine and the Bible verses to point out the errors in the beliefs:

1. There is no distinction of persons but God appears SOMETIMES as the Father, SOMETIMES as Jesus Christ (the Son) and still OTHER TIMES as the Holy Spirit.

The oneness of God.
Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:32; James 2:19.

2. We worship not one but THREE SEPARATE GODS ... God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

The three persons in the Godhead:
Matthew 3:16, 17; Matthew 28:19;
John 15:26; 2 Corinthians 13:13 (or 14)

3. There is NO TRINITY because neither Jesus Christ nor the Holy Spirit is truly divine.

3.

St. Patrick used a clover leaf to try to help the Irish converts to Christianity understand the Doctrine of the Trinity. Write one sentence about each of the three Persons in the Godhead in each space.



THREE - IN - ONE



1. What does the Bible say?

i. What do Jewish people believe about the nature of God, according to Deuteronomy 6:4? _____

ii. Does Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit get a mention in the Genesis account of the beginning? If so, quote the verse. _____

iii. Who is John referring to in chapter 1:14 of his gospel when he talks about 'the Word'? _____

iv. What two things do we learn from John 1:1 about Christ? _____

v. What does John 8:58 tell us about Jesus' existence? _____

vi. Do these answers make it clear that all three Persons in the Godhead have been in existence from the beginning? _____

vii. What can we learn about the Person of God from Colossians 2:9? _____

viii. How are the three Persons of the Godhead mentioned in Matthew 3:16 - 17? _____

ix. How does the Christian Church use 2 Corinthians 13:13 (will be v.14 in some translations)? _____

'The three Persons in the Godhead are three in one sense and one in another. We cannot tell how and that is the mystery.' Samuel Johnson.

If you can explain why three candles give only one light, you can explain the Trinity.



2. Doctrine 3 says: _____

Choose ONE of the three common misunderstandings held by some believers about the person of God and use the doctrine and the Bible verses to point out the errors in the beliefs:

1. There is no distinction of persons but God appears SOMETIMES as the Father, SOMETIMES as Jesus Christ (the Son) and still OTHER TIMES as the Holy Spirit.

2. We worship not one but THREE SEPARATE GODS ... God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

3. There is NO TRINITY because neither Jesus Christ nor the Holy Spirit is truly divine.

The oneness of God.
Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:32; James 2:19.

The three persons in the Godhead:
Matthew 3:16, 17; Matthew 28:19;
John 15:26; 2 Corinthians 13:13 (or 14)

3. Use these words to complete the passage from the creed agreed to at the Council of Nicaea.

■ Son ■ only ■ almighty ■ Father ■ worlds ■ glorified ■ Lord
 ■ made ■ substance ■ Lord ■ invisible ■ one ■ together

I believe in _____ God the Father _____, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and _____:

And in one _____ Jesus Christ, the _____ begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all _____, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not _____, being of one _____ with the Father, by whom all things were made:

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the _____ and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the _____ and the _____, who with the Father and the Son _____ is worshipped and _____.



AIM

SESSION 10

FROM THE BIBLE

Exodus chapters 3 to 12.

To show the young people through a study of the life of Moses that God uses all circumstances to accomplish His plan.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will understand that:

- ❖ God cares for His people in all circumstances;
- ❖ God's plan for my life is the best plan;
- ❖ God uses most unlikely people and situations to accomplish His will;
- ❖ God's people must be obedient to fulfil His plan.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

As we begin this series of three sessions on Moses, we must first understand that the Old Testament still has something to teach us today.

God's preparation of the right man for the huge job of leading the people of Israel out of Egypt was thorough and perfectly timed and is a lesson in patience for us all.

The story of the Exodus of God's people from Egypt into the Promised Land is a story of God's love and care, His guidance and provision and His forgiveness.

The lesson for us is that God still loves and cares for His people today and has a plan for their lives.

The chapters relating to the Exodus of God's people need to be seen, not just as history, but rather as the unfolding drama between two opposing powers. On the one side 'the God of the Hebrews' is represented by Moses and Aaron, whilst on the other side is stubborn Pharaoh with all his imperial power and crafty magicians.

The drama unfolds as Moses, empowered by a divine commission, challenges Pharaoh in the name of 'the God of our Fathers' to let His people go.

The suspense heightens as each visit to Pharaoh accentuates the crisis and each plague increases the gravity of the situation in Egypt. Finally, in a moment of weakness, Pharaoh permits the Hebrews to leave, only to change his mind and send his warriors in hot pursuit.

The climax is reached when the Israelites, trapped between the Egyptian forces and the Red Sea are marvellously delivered.

Here is a story filled with powerful dramatic qualities that have stirred

CHECKLIST

Try to read this exciting story from the 9 chapters in Exodus so it is clear in your mind.

For the first Getting Started activity you need to prepare two lots of papers. One with the names and one with their action. Decide whether you will use the team system or put them around the wall and prepare accordingly.

For Getting Started 2 prepare the treasure hunt according to your group size and building access.

There are four teaching approaches and they should all be used so allocate your time.

The first approach fills in the background and can be treated according to how well your young people know the Bible. This is on both work sheets.

Approach 2 is only on the senior work sheet, but all should look at this strategy – God's preparation over many years of a man to work for Him.

Approach 3 is important as we consider that God will be with everyone who works for Him.

Approach 4 considers the plagues and again the work sheets can be used at the same time.



VIDEO CLIP

Show parts of the movie 'Prince of Egypt' beginning with the plagues. The 'Testament' series also has a video 'Moses' that you could use over this three week series.

the imagination down through the centuries. This exciting exodus drama is not told to celebrate the heroic accomplishments of Moses as the liberator of his people. Rather, the major purpose is to glorify the God of Israel who reached out and won the victory over the adversaries of His people, the God who uses all circumstances to accomplish His plan.

There will not be time to go into the details of this exciting story. This session is not a study of the life and call of Moses, nor is it a discussion centred on the plagues. The main points that must be highlighted are that God was always there with His people, that He chose to intervene and liberate them, and that God was the victor despite all the circumstances.

GETTING STARTED

1. Divide the young people into two teams. Give out slips of paper with the following names and actions written on them.

The young people then find their partner to join the name to the correct action and write their completed statement onto a large sheet of paper, board etc. so that everyone can read all of them.

Have a heading ready for the list:

'GOD'S 'MAN' IN THE CRISIS'

Team A	Team B
Moses	was to lead the Children of Israel out of slavery.
Joseph	was to build up the food supply for the severe famine.
Gideon	was to lead the nation to win freedom from their oppressors.
Paul	was to take the good news of the coming of Jesus to the Gentiles.
Martin Luther	was to begin the reforming of the Christian Church.
John Wesley	was to awaken the English people to a more personal faith in God.
David Livingstone	was to open up the way for missionaries to work in Africa.
William Booth	was to wake up the conscience of British people about the terrible poverty of the working people.
Kate Sheppard	led the cause of the right for women to vote in New Zealand.
Martin Luther-King	was to lead the African-Americans into peacefully obtaining civil rights.
Winston Churchill	was to encourage the British to keep fighting against Hitler's evil plans when all seemed lost.

POINT

God knows when mankind has times of crisis to face. At such times He has His people prepared and ready. His calling of such people is varied. Their willingness to obey God's leading is crucial to helping fulfil God's plan.

In this session we are going to consider one of these men and the part he played in God's plan for his oppressed people living in slavery in Egypt.

Or if your group is small, have the wording under Team B already written up and the names spread out on a table. As you read the actions described in Team B, ask the young people to bring out the name of the person who fits the action and place it near the description.

2. For a small group, plan individual treasure hunts around the room.

For larger groups plan 2 or 3 different treasure hunts and send them out in groups.

There should be a different finishing point for each hunt.

GOING DEEPER

1. Setting the background

If your young people know Bible stories reasonably well, you can use this question/answer method. Otherwise you will need to tell the story quickly to fill in the missing details.

- Who was the first Israelite to stay in Egypt? (Genesis 39:1)
- How many Israelites went to live in Egypt twenty years later? (Genesis 46:26 - 27)
- Why did they go? (Genesis 45:10 - 11)
- If they were honoured guests, how did their descendants become slaves? (Exodus 1:6 - 11)
- What were they made to do? (Exodus 1:14)
- How long were they living in Egypt? (Exodus 12:40)

We can see how people's circumstances can alter very quickly. The honoured guests suddenly became slaves and a hopelessness about their situation filled their whole thinking. Yet God could see and was preparing the man who would lead them out of Egypt.

2. God prepares His man

When the Pharaoh became desperate about the ever increasing numbers of Israelites, what order did he make? (Exodus 1:22)


How do you think the Israelites felt? Would they feel God's loving concern for them in this act?

Yet God was planning for a way of escape and He needed a man with the right qualifications.

Write these qualifications up, one at a time and discuss how Moses' training qualified him.


God's man for the Israelites' escape from Egypt needed to be:

- trained in knowing and trusting God. (Saved from death by a princess, Moses' own mother cared for him and taught him to know and trust God.)
- well educated, understanding Egyptian customs and etiquette. (Moses received the fine education of Egyptian royalty which prepared him to know how to act and speak to the Pharaoh.)
- understanding of the suffering of the Israelite slaves. (God had helped Moses to know and understand the suffering of his own people before he had to flee from Egypt.)
- trained in desert life and living under harsh conditions. (In Midian Moses was prepared for life in the wilderness through his work as a shepherd.)
- willing to follow God's instructions even when things looked black and impossible. (Moses was very afraid. He felt he was most unworthy and a poor speaker but he finally took God at His word and obeyed.)




POINT

We don't always know what the plan for our life is or where we will go but we can be assured that if we stick to the plan, there is a prize at the end. Sometimes we just need to proceed one step at a time.



LEADER TIP

Space for these questions to be answered is on the work sheet as activity 1 and it can be used concurrently with the presentation.



LEADER TIP

Senior work sheet activity 2 fits into here.

3. **God's assurance to Moses**

Moses knew that when he returned to the Israelites he would need proof that God had indeed sent him. He knew, too, that Pharaoh would ask for proof.

- a. 'When the Israelites ask, "What is his name?" What can I tell them?' Find the answer in Exodus 3:13 - 14.
- b. What assurance did God give Moses about His presence? Read Exodus 3:12.

This message was given to reassure them that God was with His people. 'I AM. . .' This revelation brought hope and strength, filling the present with God's presence and promise. It assured them that God cares.

The special phrase 'I am who I am' conveys a sense of unlimited resources. The main point for Moses and Israel in the name 'I am' was that God was sufficient for their present need and for anything the unseen future could bring.

- c. God also assured Moses that He did know what was happening to His people and was planning a way of escape from such oppression. Read Exodus 3:7.

Yet things did not happen straight away – indeed they got worse.

After Moses approached Pharaoh, he was horrified to find that Pharaoh thought up a crueler plan. Briefly outline Exodus 5.

Read what the foreman said to Moses and Aaron in verse 21.

How do you think Moses felt when he was told off like this? Yet, there were many more days to go before the escape took place. Often we expect an answer to a prayer **right now** and feel that God has rejected us or no longer cares for us when nothing seems to change. What does this story about God's plan and action tell us?

4. **Plagues and more plagues!**

When Moses heard God's calling, he acknowledged that it was God and although he was fearful about his ability to tackle the task, he obeyed God.

Pharaoh, however, refused to acknowledge God let alone obey Him. Read Exodus 5:2.

WHAT ABOUT ME? Do I acknowledge God? Do I obey His voice?

Moses had been warned that Pharaoh's heart would be hardened. The Hebrews of those days described all events as coming directly from God. So this hardening is attributed to God. The early Hebrew historian would not mean to infer that Pharaoh was not responsible for his actions, or that he could not have done otherwise. God was responsible for Pharaoh's free will, but Pharaoh was responsible for his misuse of it.

Read Exodus 6:1.

The Lord is not slack. He was moving to keep His covenant with His people. It took many signs before both Pharaoh and the Israelites were convinced that God's word would be fulfilled to the last letter.

There is not time to do anything more than look through the **headings** about the plagues. (Exodus 7 - 11.) However, point out how Pharaoh would promise to let the Israelites go if the plague would stop and then change his mind. (e.g. Exodus 8:30 - 32; 9:27 - 28 and 34 - 35.)

The activity on the work sheets can be done here. It gives room for the young people to write down the names of the plagues:

- i. Rivers turn to blood.
- ii. Frogs.
- iii. Gnats.
- iv. Flies.
- v. Death of the animals.
- vi. Boils.
- vii. Hail.
- viii. Locusts.
- ix. Darkness.
- x. Death of the first-born son.

What was the purpose of the plagues? Read and discuss Exodus 9:15 - 16.

What was God's promise for His people? Read Exodus 6:6 - 8.

Who was victorious? Read Exodus 14:30 - 31.

TAKING IT HOME

Moses' life was not an easy one. As a baby he almost lost his life; as a young man he had to flee from Egypt; and although, trained and educated as a prince, he had to serve as a shepherd. Moses must have asked himself many times, 'Why?'

The important truth is that God is with His people in despair and failure as well as in joy and success. God was working out His plan for Moses to become the leader of the Israelites.

Pray, asking God to help us remember that, when our circumstances seem to be bleak and we are full of despair, He still cares for us and has promised He will never leave us to face life by ourselves.

FOLLOW-THRU

This session dealt with leadership and how God fits us to do the tasks He calls us to do.

Suggest to your group that they select a challenge from Get Involved and Grow in Training for Leadership.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALEXANDER, D. and P., *The New Lion Handbook to the Bible*, Lion Publishing, England, 1999.



LEADER TIP

This is activity 2 on the junior and activity 3 on the senior work sheet.



LET MY PEOPLE GO



Tick the correct answer

a. Who was the first Israelite to stay in Egypt?
(Genesis 39:1)

- Mary Abraham Joseph

b. How many Israelites went to live in Egypt 20 years later? (Genesis 46:26 - 27)

- 96 + Joseph & his daughters.
 66 not including his son's wives.
 84 + Joseph and his wife's dog 'Spot'.

c. Why did they go? (Genesis 45:10 - 11)

- cucumbers and leaks were exquisite.
 to be where Joseph could care for them.
 holiday to see the pyramids.

d. If they were honoured guests, how did their descendants become slaves? (Exodus 1:6 - 11)

- they formed gangs.
 they wanted to be slaves.
 a king was worried about their number and thought they might rise up against the Egyptians.

e. What were they made to do? (Exodus 1:14)

- work on their building sites and land.
 clean their windows.
 manage their shops and markets.

f. How long were they living in Egypt? (Exodus 12:40)

- 360 years
 430 years
 615 years

HIGHLIGHTS

- God cares for His people in all circumstances.
- God fits people to carry out the tasks He calls them to do.
- We often become impatient when we think God is not moving quickly enough.
- Sometimes it is only when we look back that we see God was at work in a difficult situation.
- God has promised that we do not have to face life by ourselves.



2.

The plagues sent on Egypt were: (Exodus 7 - 11)

- i. _____ vi. _____
- ii. _____ vii. _____
- iii. _____ viii. _____
- iv. _____ ix. _____
- v. _____ x. _____

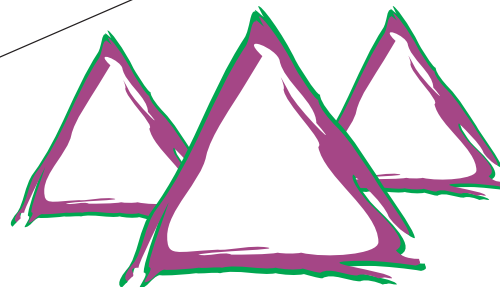
Exodus 9:16 tells us that the plagues were sent so that:

What happened to the slaves when Moses asked Pharaoh to allow them to go to worship God? (Exodus 5:6 - 9).

3.

God made many promises to the Israelites in Exodus. Which one do you like best?

4.





LET MY PEOPLE GO

1.

a. Who was the first Israelite to stay in Egypt? (Genesis 39:1)

b. How many Israelites went to live in Egypt 20 years later? (Genesis 46:26 - 27)

c. Why did they go? (Genesis 45:10 - 11)

d. If they were honoured guests, how did their descendants become slaves? (Exodus 1:6 - 11)

e. What were they made to do? (Exodus 1:14)

2.

The Lord does not want mock humility. If He calls us to do a task, He will fit us to carry it through.

f. How long were they living in Egypt? (Exodus 12:40)

God had a specific task for Moses to do. How did He fit Moses for his work?

What promise did Moses have in Exodus 3:12?

Faith is believing in the face of disaster and pain.

Cats can't taste sugar.

Moses told the slaves all that God had promised to do but all they could see was the mud.

In order to approach the Pharaoh a person had to kneel and kiss the ground. Specially favoured people could kiss his foot.



3.

The plagues sent on Egypt were: (Exodus 7 - 11)

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| i. _____ | vi. _____ |
| ii. _____ | vii. _____ |
| iii. _____ | viii. _____ |
| iv. _____ | ix. _____ |
| v. _____ | x. _____ |

Why were the plagues sent? (Exodus 9:16)

Portrait statues such as the Sphinx were images of the dead Pharaohs to aid their move on to the next life.

God made five announcements to Moses. Read them and write them here.

a. His resolve (Exodus 6:1).

b. His name (Exodus 6:3).

c. His covenant (Exodus 6:4).

d. His sympathy (Exodus 6:5).

e. His salvation (Exodus 6:6).

4.



SESSION 11

PACK OF WHINGERS!

FROM THE BIBLE

Exodus chapters 13, 16 and 17 and selected passages from Numbers.

✓ CHECKLIST

For the Getting Started activities you need to organise somebody well beforehand to come as the 'whinger'. Choose someone who will do it so loudly and so long that everyone will be aware of the complaints and hopefully someone will have even told them to quit whingeing!

If you decide to have the whinge session, choose young people who will not need most of the minute allowed to be persuaded to speak!

To use Getting Started 2, be ready with some examples of God's provision to begin the starter.

There are only two Going Deeper approaches suggested. Approach 1 looks at the people's complaints and involves dividing the young people into groups of three to look at nine Bible passages. You will need to have written the nine complaints set out in this approach beforehand and be aware of each Bible passage.

Approach 2 looks at God's care and provision. There are three examples of this to be studied. Make sure that you are familiar with these stories and able to fill in the background or answer any questions that may arise.

AIM

To show the young people through a study of the wilderness wanderings that despite the whingeing and failings of His people, God never let them down.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, the young people will:

- ❖ be reminded that God is very patient with people;
- ❖ know that God does not give up on those who give up on Him;
- ❖ be aware that God's presence, His protection and provision are always with His people, even in the most difficult situations.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

This is the second session in a series on Moses.

It is very easy to become critical of the people of Israel as we concentrate in this session on the difference between their complaining and God's faithfulness.

But these were a people who for hundreds of years had had everything supplied for them, even if they were slaves. Suddenly they found themselves alone in the desert and it was a frightening experience. Many of them knew little about the God of Israel.

It was a difficult journey! There were many hardships and uncertainties. Who was this God of Moses? Where was He taking them? What did He plan to do with them? Why was it taking so long?

For most of these pilgrims, freedom in the desert was a poor substitute for slavery in Egypt. Food and water were both scarce, compared to life in Egypt and as if the harshness of the natural environment wasn't bad enough, there were hostile desert tribes who roamed the area and resented the intrusion of these runaway slaves.

The whole story of the Exodus wanderings with the complaining Israelites is far too long to read during the session. What is planned is to look at some of the recurring complaints of the people and then to emphasise God's faithfulness in all situations.

Today we often complain to God and about God! Maybe not about food and water but so often our jealousy, our pride, our envy of others' possessions lead us to whinge and grumble and sometimes feel as if God doesn't care about us.

The young people need to be reminded that God never deserts us. We

walk away! He never lets us down even if so often we give up on Him.

GETTING STARTED

1. Arrange with one of the young people or leaders to be in a complaining mood before and at the start of the session. Complaints should be loud and long enough so that everyone in the group is aware that it is happening.

Discuss how others react to a 'whinger.'

Do they get tired of hearing complainers?

Or

Have a 'whinge!'

Give several young people one minute to complain about something. (eg. school, TV programs at Christmas, homework assignments, the greenhouse effect.)

2. Discuss some modern day examples of how God provides for His people when they are in need. The young people may have experienced God's faithfulness in desperate circumstances and can tell about them.

GOING DEEPER

1. **A look at the people's complaints**

The story of the people of Israel might aptly be titled 'A nation of whingers!'. It is one long, sad story of complaining and discontent.

These people, as we learned from the last session, had been dramatically set free after 430 years in a foreign land. They had lived harsh, oppressed lives as slaves who had to be subdued! Their God had freed them from this oppression. They had seen His power in the plagues that had smitten Egypt. They knew that God had spared their children when all the other first-born in the country were smitten by the angel of death.

We would expect that people in such a situation would have been eternally grateful to their God and feel they could trust Him with their lives.


But not the Israelites! They seemed to delight in complaining and grumbling amongst themselves. Maybe they'd been slaves so long they didn't know how to do anything else.

They really were a pack of 'whingers' who always felt sorry for themselves and were continually questioning God from whom Moses was receiving his instructions.

In the stories dealing with the wilderness, Israel's whingeing happens time after time, and even seems to increase in intensity, as can be seen in the books of Exodus and Numbers.

Here are nine examples of their complaints: Exodus 15:22 - 26; Exodus 16:2 - 3; Exodus 17:2 - 7; Numbers 11:4 - 6; Numbers 12:1 - 2; Numbers 14:2 - 3; Numbers 16:41; Numbers 20:2 - 5, 13; Numbers 21:4 - 5.

Once the Scripture passages have been read, allow each group to read the statements and to indicate whether their passage was about that particular statement. The bracketed references are to help you



POINT

Does whingeing make you feel any better? Or does it just stir you up so that you feel worse?

Does God still care about us when we feel we are in a hopeless situation? This is what we want to talk about in this session for God is faithful to His promises.

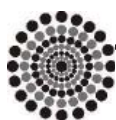


LEADER TIP

Divide your young people into three groups and give each group three references. If your group is small, they can work individually or in pairs. Have the nine statements on page 98 already written on a chart ready to show once the groups have read their passages.

check the correct passage has been used. The young people should summarise what the passage said so that they all understand.

- i. They complained when there was no food and they thought they might starve. (Exodus 16:2-3; in the desert of Sin.)
- ii. They complained because the food God provided for them was 'boring'. (Numbers 11:4 - 6; they longed for the cucumbers, watermelons, leeks and onions of Egypt.)
- iii. They complained about a lack of drinking water. (Exodus 15:22 - 26; at Marah.)
- iv. They complained about the hardships facing them in the wilderness. (Numbers 20:2 - 5, 13.)
- v. They complained about Moses. (Numbers 12: 1 - 2; Moses' choice of a wife.)
- vi. They complained that they would all be killed if they tried to take the Promised Land. (Numbers 14:2 - 3.)
- vii. It almost seemed as if there was no pleasing this unhappy, faithless people who were born whingers.
Despite all that had happened, including the awesome crossing of the Red Sea, the people still complained, questioning the very presence of God as they cried out 'Is God with us or not?' (Exodus 17:2 - 7; at Massah and Meribah.)
- viii. They complained that Moses and Aaron had too much power. (Numbers 16:41.)
- ix. They complained when they had to go around the Edomite territory. (Numbers 21:4 - 5.)



LEADER TIP

Having looked at these passages, give the young people time to do activity 1 on the work sheets.

2. A look at Gods' care and provision

Anyone less than the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would have given up on this complaining, ungrateful people and told them to do it by themselves.

But the very positive theme of the Exodus story is the continual presence of Yahweh. He provided for all their needs and He protected His people in the face of danger.

GOD NEVER ABANDONED HIS PEOPLE! He never left them to face the wilderness by themselves. He was with them all the way.

Let's look at just three examples of God's graciousness in responding to the whingeing of these people.

i. God's presence

Read together Exodus 13:21 -22.

Right at the start of their journey into the unknown, God's guiding presence was with them 24 hours a day.

During the day, there was a thick cloud for them to follow. At night, God appeared as a flaming fire, not just to show the way but also as a light for His people.

Verse 22 of Exodus 13 stresses that at no time did God's presence, as expressed by cloud and by fire, desert His people. At no time, even when they complained the most, did God leave His people alone to face life by themselves.

ii. God's provision

Read together Exodus 16:11 - 17.

Not only does God promise to be with His people, but He also provides for them the basic necessities of life – food and water.

DEFINITION

Yahweh: the Hebrew name for God.

It was in response to their whingeing about being hungry and thirsty that God provided manna and quail for food as well as water which flowed when Moses struck the rock as commanded by the Lord.

The graciousness of God meant that the people did not even have to go looking and hunting for their food. God provided it for them right where they were, just when they needed it.

iii. **God's protection**

Read Exodus 17:8 - 16.

Divine guidance and protection was given to this disorganised, 'pack of whingers' in their fierce struggle for survival against the hostile desert tribes. The worst were the Amalekites who roamed the desert oases in the southern wilderness of Canaan.

By themselves, the people of Israel had very little hope of victory over fierce, warlike people such as the Amalekites. But God, who had cared for His people throughout their wanderings despite their whingeing, was not about to leave His people to fight their own battles!

He was 'their God' and they were 'His people' and that meant His protection was over His people and He would continue to look after them.

TAKING IT HOME

It would seem as if the Israelites spent the whole 40 years of wandering in the desert complaining about one thing or another.

Sometimes it was justified, but so often it was simply a reflection of their lack of faith and uncertainty about God's dealing with them.

But what comes through clearly is God's faithfulness to His people. Despite their continual whingeing, God never let His people go. He never gave up on them and the God who never changes is still faithful and will not give up on us either. We can trust Him to be with us today. God is faithful ... how about you?

Take time to think about something you constantly whinge about.

Have a moment of silent prayer asking God to help you change your attitude.

FOLLOW-THRU

As this session talks about people whingeing, it would be good to suggest that they accept a challenge from Get Involved and Grow in Mission. Have them think about one where they could reach out to help someone who is less fortunate than themselves. e.g. Help at a community welfare centre or accompany a Community Care Ministries worker.

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PACK OF WHINGERS



HIGHLIGHTS

- God is very patient with people.
- God cannot break His promises.
- It is very easy to forget God's goodness when things go wrong.
- A thankful heart is better than a complaining tongue.
- God's provision and protection are always with us.



Report on one of the incidences you discussed in this session.
(Exodus 16:2 - 3; Exodus 15:22 - 26; Exodus 17:2 - 7; Numbers 14:2 - 3; Numbers 20:2 - 5.)

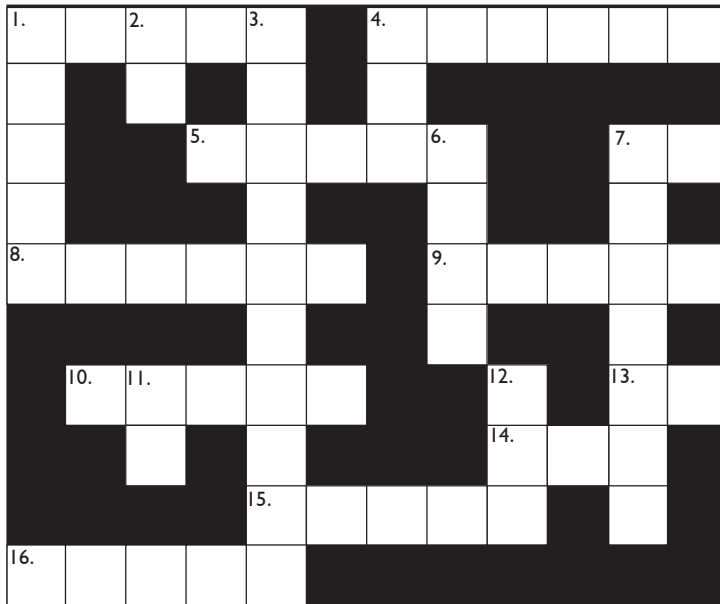
a. The people complained because:

b. They quite forgot _____

c. God was patient and showed His care by _____

Next time I feel God has left me alone I will _____





2

Fill in the missing words in the story and then use the words to complete the crossword.



The Children of Israel were _____ in Egypt and were harshly oppressed.

God sent _____ to lead them to the Promised Land.

God promised He would show them the way to _____.

He led them by a _____ during the day.

God promised He would _____ their God if they would put _____ their trust in Him and obey His laws.

But life in the _____ was hard and the people soon forgot all God had done and began to _____.

God supplied _____ for them to eat. It tasted like honeyed bread.

Many times He led them to _____. Once Moses had to strike a _____ so that water gushed out.

When they wanted meat, He sent flocks of _____.

Yet still they longed to go back to _____ as they forgot about the harsh times and thought of all the food they'd had to _____ when they were there. 'God doesn't care for us, He will let us _____,' they complained.

But God did care for them. He said they should remember to celebrate the night the angel of death passed over them and to eat what they had eaten that night—unleavened bread and bitter _____ to remind them that there was _____ way He would forget them.

When they were fighting the _____ (Exodus 17) God promised to give them the victory. Moses had to pray with his arms _____ as the battle raged. 'Hold high the banner of the Lord,' cried Moses. We must do this too, believing that God is with us.





Have a whinge!

Using one or more of these Scripture passages finish these sentences.
(Exodus 16:2 - 3; Exodus 15:22 - 26; Exodus 17:2 - 7; Numbers 14:2 - 3; Numbers 20:2 - 5.)

It takes many more muscles to frown than it does to smile.

a. The Children of Israel constantly _____

b. They quite forgot _____

The word 'Manna' means 'What is it?'

c. God constantly _____

Moses constantly pleaded with God to forgive the people when they complained and disobeyed.

d. I find it easy to _____

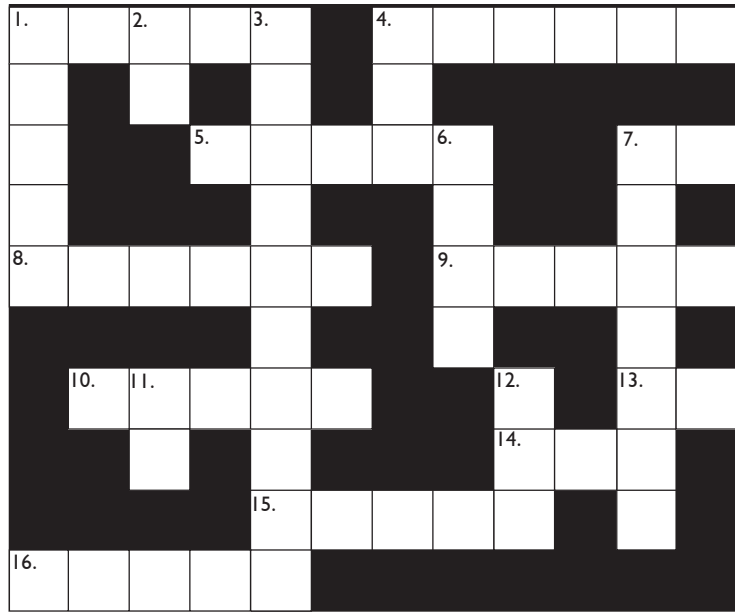
but I will try harder to remember _____

The quail is a small brown bird about 180 mm long. It is the smallest of the game bird family and still eaten by Egyptians.



The first playing of a tambourine in praise of God was by Miriam after they had safely crossed the Red Sea.

Use the Bible reference to complete the crossword



Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, gave him some good advice.

CLUES ACROSS

1. A small white seed that tasted like thin honey cakes. (Exodus 16:31.)
4. They walked through this after crossing the Red Sea. (Exodus 15:22.)
5. They found none of this in the desert. (Exodus 15:22.)
7. What the king of Egypt finally let the people do. (Exodus 13:17.)
8. The Children of Israel thought it would be better to be these than die in the desert. (Exodus 14:12.)
9. In the daytime God led them with this. (Exodus 13:21.)
10. The name of the birds that flew into the camp. (Exodus 16:13.)
13. Moses sang, 'You, Lord, will ___ king, forever.' (Exodus 15:18. GNB)
14. How many of the people complained to Moses. (Exodus 16:2. GNB)
15. The people wished the Lord had killed them there. (Exodus 16:3.)
16. At the celebration of the Passover the people ate unleavened bread and bitter _____ . (Numbers (9:11.)



CLUES DOWN

1. He cried to the Lord for help. (Exodus 14:15.)
2. ___ one was to store any manna. (Exodus 16:19.)
3. These people attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. (Exodus 17:8.)
4. The people thought they would do this in the desert. (Exodus 14:11.)
6. God ordered Moses to strike this. (Exodus 17:6.)
7. Another word for what the people did. (Numbers 14:2.)
11. Moses had to hold his arms in this position as the battle against the Amalekites was fought. (Exodus 17:11.)
12. God sent the people meat to ___ . (Exodus 16:12.)

Any excess manna picked up on 5 days of the week always went rotten, yet the double portion stayed fresh for the Sabbath.

SESSION 12

GOD RULES, OK!

FROM THE BIBLE

Exodus 19:3 - 8; 20:1 - 17;
Matthew 22:36 - 40.

AIM

To help the young people see that the Ten Commandments are God's rules for loving Him and our neighbour.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, the young people will:

- ❖ understand that the Ten Commandments are relevant for today;
- ❖ be aware that Jesus' commands to love God and love our neighbours sum up the teaching of the Ten Commandments;
- ❖ understand that we are to obey these commands, not because we must, but as a loving response to a loving God.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

This is the third session on God's dealings with the Children of Israel.

In Jewish thought the first five books of the Old Testament are referred to as the 'Law'. To us that suggests a list of things that we may or may not do, but in the Bible the Law is much more practical than that.

It sets the boundaries of what God regards as acceptable ways of behaving. It is more like an instruction manual, the rules of the game or the Highway Code, than an abstract set of principles. Follow the directions and life will go reasonably smoothly – ignore them and chaos and disaster result.

Law is relationship

The great moment of the Law-giving was at Sinai. It took place in the context of the formation of a relationship between God and His people – almost like a wedding. God commits Himself to love, care for, protect and rule His people. For their part they undertake to live in loving obedience. That obedience becomes the mark of their relationship. Our obedience, too, is a sign of our love for God.

Law also affects our relationship with others. Only by living in accordance with God's instructions can we expect to live together in harmony and with justice.

Law is about attitudes

By the time of Jesus the keeping of the Law had been reduced to a hard, rigid system which demanded obedience in every detail. Love, justice, and the concern for others which lay at the heart of God's intention, were all being ignored.

Obedience had become a matter of duty rather than a loving response. Jesus' great contribution was to demonstrate that the Law speaks not to

✓ CHECKLIST

The work sheets are needed for the whole of the session. They are used for the first Getting Started activity and in Going Deeper where there is a Bible study with questions to be answered.

There are 9 questions on the senior sheet, 8 on the junior. You should be able to work through all of the approaches if you allocate your teaching time and keep to it.

Remember to emphasise that Christians are expected to obey all of these Commandments but that they do so out of a spirit of love for God.

the minute details of everyday behaviour but to the attitudes which control our lives. Correct behaviour is only of value when it flows from loving attitudes.

GETTING STARTED

1. Hand out the work sheets and work through the four parts of the first activity. Allow time for the young people to write their answers before moving on.
 - a. Briefly discuss the rules at home, school, sport, on the road, etc. Are they necessary?
 - b. Consider what would happen in any of these situations discussed if there were no rules and describe the resulting chaos.
 - c. We have all had times when we have broken a rule of some kind (even if it was done in ignorance or when we were very young). Join in the discussion of the thoughts that run through our mind and the very human feelings that cause them.
 - d. You may find you have a range of answers for the question 'How do rules affect you?' Your more rebellious adolescents will feel very differently to the more quiet, conservative young people. Don't become involved in heated arguments about which feelings are 'right or wrong', simply point out that rules do arouse feelings in everyone.

Or

2. Select five young people to role play a mother and father and three children. Ask them to work out and write down five family rules. Discuss the difference between what the 'parents' thought the rules should be and what the 'children' wanted.

GOING DEEPER

1. Explaining the background to the giving of the Ten Commandments


Briefly refer the young people to the two previous sessions about the Israelites. Recall with them how the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, how oppressed they were, of God's concern for them and His desire to lead them to a land of their own. Because they were slaves, they had done things purely to survive. They had no choice about their jobs, homes and all the other things we take for granted. Recall how they whinged about their situation and hardships in the desert, wanting to go back to Egypt.

They needed to be reminded that God had made a covenant with Abraham that required Abraham's trust and obedience. Read Genesis 12:2 - 3.

Now God wanted to continue that covenant with Abraham's descendants, so they needed to be reminded about the need for their obedience.


Read Exodus 19:3 - 8.

Stress verse 5 - 'Now, if you obey me ...' and verse 8 - 'We will do everything that the Lord has said ...' (GNB)



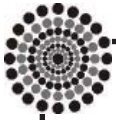
POINT

If we are to live in harmony in a community then we must agree to abide by certain rules. God has given us ten very simple rules that help us to live in harmony with Him and with our neighbours. They are what we want to look at in this session.



LEADER TIP

Use questioning to involve the young people.



LEADER TIP

As this is a long reading, have fluent readers selected to read the longer verses. If you have access to dramatised audio readings of the Bible, this could be helpful.

2. A look at the Commandments

The Ten Commandments were rules given for a reason. They were not imposed on the people as a punishment, nor as laws to trip the people into making mistakes.

Rather, they were given by God to help His people learn how they should love God and their fellow human beings.

- Begin activity 2 on the work sheet. Read each statement together and have the young people write true or false beside them.

Read together Exodus 20: 1 - 17.

Because God was setting out standards for our relationship with God and others, the Ten Commandments can be divided into two sections. The first section talks about our relationship with God and how we show our love for Him. The second has to do with our living with other people and loving them.

- Complete activities 3 and 4 on the work sheets. Encourage the young people to write an abbreviated form of each command – the first four going into activity 3 and the other six into activity 4.

In these 'instructions' on how to love God and others, God is not setting out to restrict His people.

He does not go into long intricate details in the Ten Commandments on 'How to' love. What God is really doing is setting the boundaries for what He regards as acceptable behaviour.

Why do the commandments about God come first?

- Have the young people complete activity 5. (Only 'C' is wrong.) God must have pre-eminence in our lives because He is the creator and controller (i.e. the boss) of our lives.
- Complete activity 6. Some of your young people may have had dealings with enough people to realise that it is easier to love God because He is unchanging and faithful.

3. Considering the relevance of the Commandments

There are some Christians who would suggest that the teaching of the Old Testament is not really important and therefore the Ten Commandments can be ignored. But Jesus made it clear that He came to fulfil the Law, not to destroy it.

Obedience to these rules of God must never become a matter of duty! We do not obey these laws about loving just because God said so, as if we do not have a choice.

Our acceptance of and obedience to these rules must come as a response to the love that God has shown to us. He first loves us and so we seek to love Him and live the life that He wants of us.

When Jesus was asked about the Commandments He said there were two great commands – namely 'you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind' and 'love your neighbour as you love yourself.' (Matthew 22:37 - 39) Read Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19: 18b.

4. Discuss and answer question 7 on the senior work sheet. Remind them that human nature has remained the same through the ages. People today are still basically selfish.



FOR SENIORS

5. Relating the Ten Commandments to my life style

Get the young people to compare which of the Ten Commandments are part of our legal system. e.g, do not steal, do not kill, murder and so on. Our system of justice is based on the Ten Commandments.

Have the young people discuss and answer the last two questions on the work sheets.

Try to get them to come up with some practical ideas about what they can actually do right now.

TAKING IT HOME

Every day we are faced with issues – whether it is at home or school or world conflicts and situations. Through all of these, we need some clear guidelines for our Christian duty. They are still there for us in the Ten Commandments and summarised in ‘the two greatest commandments’.

Read Matthew 22:36 - 40.

Have different young people pray that our daily living will show that this is what we are trying to do.

FOLLOW-THRU

This session has dealt with loving God and our neighbour. Have your group consider a challenge in Get Involved and Grow in Worship. Remind them that the way we conduct ourselves in worship is a sign of how much we love God.

They could memorise Matthew 22:36 - 40 as the memorise Scripture challenge.

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GOD rules O.K.!



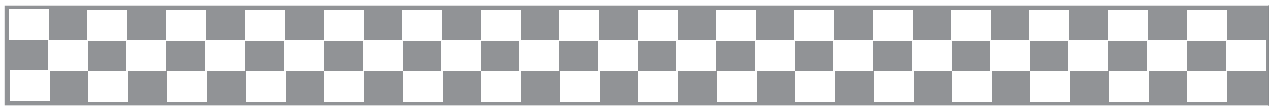
1. a. Are rules necessary? Yes / No
Why? _____

b. Could we live without rules? Yes / No
Why? _____

c. Think of an occasion when you had a 'brush with the law'. It could have been with anyone in authority over you – parents, teachers, police. Read through the thoughts that can run through our minds on such occasions. Tick or highlight the ones you have had yourself. Such thoughts come because of feelings or emotions we are experiencing. Draw a line from these feelings to the thoughts they fit with best.

FEAR **INSECURITY**
ANGER
POWERLESSNESS
DEFENSIVENESS **SHAME**

'How will I ever face my friends / parents?'
'Who do they think they are?'
'Where can I run to / where can I hide?'
'What should I say / do?'
'I give up!'
'It wasn't my fault!'



HIGHLIGHTS

- The Ten Commandments are God's laws for all His people.
- They teach us our duty to God and to people.
- Jesus said we will keep them if we truly love God and others.
- We obey God's laws because we love Him.

d. How do rules affect you?
Underline or highlight the feelings you have about rules.

They rob me of my right to choose. **They are good.**
They give me security. **They make me feel threatened.**
They make me want to break them. **They are for my protection.**

2. Write true (T) or false (F) in the boxes.
God gave the Ten Commandments to His people:

- a. because He enjoyed the power.
- b. to make them feel afraid.
- c. to show them how to get the best out of life.
- d. to rob them of their freedom.
- e. to show them what God wanted of them.
- f. to test their love for Him.

3. Which commands talk about loving God?

4. Which commands deal with loving people?

5. Why do the Commandments about God come first?
Choose the right answers. Cross out any wrong ones and tick the right ones.

- a. He is the boss!
- b. It is because we love God that we are able to love other people.
- c. 'God' comes before 'others' in the dictionary.
- d. God helps us to love other people.
- e. We can't treat our neighbours right if we don't love God.

6. Is it easier to love God or love other people?

Why?

7. What are some ways I can show that I love God with all my heart and soul and mind?

8. Is there more to 'loving my neighbour' than just not murdering, not stealing etc.?



GOD rules O.K.!



1. a. Are rules necessary? Yes / No
Why? _____

b. Could we live without rule? Yes / No
Why? _____

c. Think of an occasion when you had a 'brush with the law'. It could have been with anyone in authority over you – parents, teachers, police. Read through the thoughts that can run through our minds on such occasions. Tick or highlight the ones you have had yourself. Such thoughts come because of feelings or emotions we are experiencing. Draw a line from these feelings to the thoughts they fit with best.

- FEAR
- ANGER
- INSECURITY
- POWERLESSNESS
- DEFENSIVENESS
- SHAME

- 'How will I ever face my friends / parents?'
- 'Who do they think they are?'
- 'Where can I run to / where can I hide?'
- 'What should I say / do?'
- 'I give up!'
- 'It wasn't my fault!'

2. Write true (T) or false (F) in the boxes.
God gave the Ten Commandments to His people:

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- e. to show them what God wanted of them.
- f. to test their love for Him.

d. How do rules affect you?
Underline or highlight the feelings you have about rules.

They are good.
They rob me of my right to choose.

They make me feel threatened.

They make me want to break them.

They are for my protection.

They give me security.

3. Which commands talk about loving God?

Many of the laws God gave, were for the protection of the poor and weak in a rural community.

4. Which commands deal with loving people?

God requires His people to reflect His character in worship and in behaviour.

5. Why do the Commandments about God come first? Choose the right answers. Cross out any wrong ones and tick the right ones.

- a. He is the boss!
- b. It is because we love God that we are able to love other people.
- c. 'God' comes before 'others' in the dictionary.
- d. God helps us to love other people.
- e. We can't treat our neighbours right if we don't love God.

6. Is it easier to love God or love other people?

Why?

7. Are these 'rules' about loving God and loving others still necessary in our modern, scientific, sophisticated world? Yes / No

Why?

Christ did not destroy the Law – He fulfilled and enlarged it.

8. What are some ways I can show that I love God with all my heart and soul and mind?

9. Is there more to 'loving my neighbour' than just not murdering, not stealing etc.?



SESSION 13

YOU'RE A LEGEND

FROM THE BIBLE

Luke 22:27; Colossians 3:17,
23 - 24.

AIM

To inspire the young people to follow the example of sacrificial service as seen in the lives of Walter Lucas, Mother Teresa and Stella Bywaters.

OBJECTIVES

The young people should come to understand that:

- ❖ Christian service demands the best we can offer – total commitment;
- ❖ humility is a characteristic of great people;
- ❖ God can take ordinary people and make them special.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

The life stories of three people are presented in this session. You could choose to focus on one of them – particularly if you or someone else in the corps is familiar with their biography. Or you could briefly tell all three stories.

Further information is available from the books mentioned in the reference list.

WALTER LUCAS

Walter Lucas was born the son of officer parents on May 20, 1939 in the small rural township of Parkes, NSW. From the start, Walter showed a love for life and adventure. He packed a lot into everyday – early morning devotions, then into the park for exercises as a long distance runner, educational demands and corps responsibilities. He loved to indulge in healthy past-times but his success throughout school was the outcome of diligent study and a determination to excel.

From childhood, Walter had a desire to become a missionary. He was eager to use his skills where under-privileged millions were suffering and dying. So after completing high school, he enrolled at Sydney University and began working towards a degree in medicine.

During this time, Walter had met an attractive young schoolteacher from Grafton named Olive James. They were married in 1964, not long after Walter had graduated and taken up the position of senior resident medical officer at Sydney Hospital. Their first child, Helen, was born a few years later.

Walter's desire to be a missionary was still strong, but he knew that once on the mission field there would be no time or opportunity for post-graduate study. He also knew that the more highly qualified he was, the greater his service to the people and the greater the influence and authority of the Army hospital in the nation. Finances were a problem,



CHECKLIST

There are two Getting Started activities suggested so choose what you will use and prepare accordingly.

Choose which of the people you will describe and become familiar with the background information.

If there is someone who knows more about the people mentioned or the countries they worked in, you could invite them to come and present the material.

Prepare what you will need to tell the legend's story.

but with the help of family and friends and with what they themselves had saved, Walter, with Olive and Helen, left for Great Britain to take post-graduate studies at the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. After much work and study, he was ready to fulfil his ambition to serve on the mission field. While in Edinburgh a son, David, was added to the Lucas family.

While preparing to return to Australia, Walter contacted the Army's International Headquarters in London and offered to do some medical service wherever needed on his way back to Sydney. The offer was gladly accepted and Walter was asked to give oversight to the MacRobert Hospital at Dhariwal, in Punjab, Northern India. So in August 1968, not long after his 29th birthday, Walter and his family arrived in India. Walter had two objectives in mind: one was to minister to the sick and to make them well; the second more important to him, was where possible to prevent people from getting sick. The most common cause of all notified deaths in Punjab was tetanus, a preventable disease, which claimed 10% of all births.

The hospital was dusty, dirty and in need of repair. The Lucas's saw the three-fold need – material, physical and spiritual – waiting to be met. For the staff the new doctor's enthusiasm generated confidence and for the patients his compassion gave them hope. Walter quickly became familiar with the daily routine and began dealing with the stream of people coming in from the mud huts in the surrounding villages.

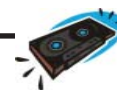
At home Walter spent much of his time working out plans, estimating costs and setting out details of projects he hoped would interest overseas groups and bring in funds for renovations, new buildings and equipment. That year, Elizabeth, their third child, was born.

After completion of temporary service in India, the Lucas family returned to Sydney planning to enter the Officer Training College. Walter knew that his ministry to the body could not be separated from his ministry to the soul of the patient and he wanted to be well equipped for both. Walter and Olive entered the Undaunted session in 1970 but instead of the regular two year training term, he was a cadet for only seven weeks. He was commissioned as captain on November 25 and appointed to India, where he took up his appointment as chief medical officer of the MacRobert Hospital in northern India.

By the end of 1971, Walter's first full year as chief medical officer, the hospital was able to report a 40% increase in outpatients, a 50% increase in patients admitted and a 500% increase in surgical operations. In addition, hospital finances reached record levels. In the following year as many as 300 outpatients were being seen daily and the bed occupancy was 100% with many people on the waiting list. A public health department was established with emphasis on preventive medicine and maternal and child welfare. An eye department, ear, nose and throat department, an infertility clinic and a nurses school were also opened. A family planning camp, the largest ever to be run at a mission hospital in India, was held in conjunction with Punjab health authorities.

In the years that followed several projects were launched including a nurses' hostel, an outreach program, and a mobile eye service which visited villages. The hospital's community health program was extended to villages and developed to include schools and home visitation in its scheme of maternal and child health clinics, sickness prevention, health and nutrition education, family planning and mother-child consultations. On top of this the spiritual needs of the people were of deep concern.

VIDEO CLIP



You could get the group to watch 'Mother Teresa the movie' or watch a video based on her life.

The soul saving successes delighted Walter the most.

Every hour was over-full with action, the pressures were exhausting, the difficulties formidable and the drain on Walter's physical and spiritual resources tremendous indeed. 'The work is hard, the hours long and the frustrations many, but there is a satisfaction that I did not find in Australia or England,' said Walter.

The pressures of work had caused Walter to spend 18 hours each day at the hospital, leaving restricted time for prayer, study of the Word and meeting preparation. One night the Holy Spirit convicted him about this and he rededicated his life and work to God. Everyone saw a change in Walter. His daily program changed. At 5:00am each morning he was in his office at prayer. All parts of the hospital and home became places of meeting with the Lord and people commented on his new spirituality.

In August 1973, Walter's doctor brother Graeme and his wife who were on their way to give service at a Salvation Army hospital in Africa, had arranged to visit. The day previous to his brother's visit Walter had spoken of pain in the stomach region, but in a land where stomach pains are a part of life, no serious thought had been given to the matter. But by late afternoon the pain was intense. Walter was diagnosed with appendectomy and an immediate operation arranged. The operation was successful, but Walter's heart suddenly stopped beating. Urgent arrangements were made to take Walter to the Christian Mission hospital at Ludhiana 100 kilometres away. No ambulance was available so the team of people crammed into the back of a jeep. Walter's condition seemed to improve a little but three days later his life and work ended.

The news of Walter's death quickly spread and thousands came to pay their respects to a man who had given so much. And there in the land where he had accomplished so much so quickly, too busy to bother about his own comfort, Walter was laid to rest. Like his Master, within three short years of his commissioning, he had finished the work God gave him to do.

Walter's ministry could be summed up in the words of three people. An Indian woman at the cemetery service said, 'I was blind and Walter gave me sight.' A young man through a translator said, 'I was in a serious accident and Walter saved my life.' And a doctor told of receiving a letter from Walter in which he had spoken of the wonder of God's forgiveness.

MOTHER TERESA

When the name of Mother Teresa is mentioned most people think of India and a little, old nun dressed in a sari caring for the sick and dying. Her name brings to mind all that is meant by the words 'compassion' and 'kindness'. She travelled the world, meeting with publicity wherever she went and preaching the message: 'Do something beautiful for God.'

Mother Teresa was born in Yugoslavia in 1910. She was one of three children brought up in a Christian home. Her name was Agnes and while at school she heard about a teaching order of nuns, the Loreto nuns, working in Calcutta, India. When she was 17 she asked to join the order and went to Dublin in Ireland to the Loreto Abbey and from there to India.

After undergoing training as a nun and as a teacher Agnes took her vows and was given the name Teresa. She taught in a convent in Calcutta for almost 20 years and although the school is situated in a poor part of town,



WEBQUEST

The Nobel Prize web site has a feature on Mother Teresa. She was the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize recipient. www.almaz.com.

The CNN newpage has a feature on Mother Teresa: www.asia.cnn.com./WORLD/9709/mother.teresa/

it is for wealthy families and Mother Teresa stayed inside the high walls of the convent and away from the poverty outside.

The school girls from the convent, in their smart, clean uniforms would walk down crowded, noisy streets past starving, filthy beggars to buy books and sweets from the street stalls. Crows would fly overhead, cawing and swooping down on the garbage heaps which could be found every few steps. Sleeping bodies lined the footpaths at night because not everyone had shelter.

The contrast of rich and poor did not bother Mother Teresa at first because part of her vows meant that she lived her life inside the high walls of the convent. But after a visit to the very poor part of the city, she was particularly worried by the people she saw – some of them sick, but not cared for, and starving, but without the energy to even beg for food. She finally decided to give up her life at the convent and go to work in the slums.

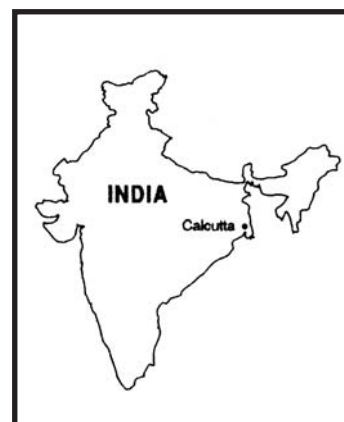
In 1948 she gave up teaching, did some basic training in nursing and set out alone to help the poor and sick of the overpopulated Calcutta. She knew that God wanted her to do this work and so she cleaned the dirty, dying people in the streets. She helped set up a school for the street children and with help from her old convent school established a few more schools for the outcast children.

Mother Teresa finally got a building from the city council to use as a house for the dying because even the hospitals are so crowded and medicine often unattainable that people are left to die where they are – at home or on the street. No matter what the religion – Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs or Muslims – Mother Teresa would take them in and give them dignity and love in their last days. Part of the work of the Sisters of Charity, who help her, is to pick up the dying from the streets of Calcutta, and bring them into the building that was given to Mother Teresa for the purpose, there, as she put it, to die within sight of a loving face. Some do die; others survive and are cared for.

Her helpers, or Sisters, grew in number as other Indian women, rich and poor, followed Mother Teresa's example and cared for the people off the streets. Volunteers come from many countries to give service at the Missionaries of Charity – doctors, nurses and people with no skills other than a desire to love the unlovely.

Although Mother Teresa died in 1997, the work is still ongoing. If helpers wanted to join her, Mother Teresa made sure they understood the hard life they would live. The training is difficult but it gives the girls time to decide if it really is the sort of work they want to do. The novices live like the poor they serve – they eat simple food and wear plain white saris bordered with blue. They do not even have a fan to keep cool in the long, hot, summer months. They are taught that the secret to happiness is in serving others.

The day begins for the Sisters with prayers and meditation at 4.30 am, followed by Mass. After the Mass they do their washing and other chores with great vigour. Everything is done vigorously. They each have a shining bucket, which is pretty well their only possession, apart from their habits and devotional books. Then comes breakfast, after which they go off to their various outside duties – some to the Home for the Dying, some to schools and dispensaries, some to the lepers, and some to look after the unwanted babies and children who come into their charge in increasing numbers as it becomes known that, however overworked they may be,



VIDEO CLIP



You could get the group to watch 'Mother Teresa the movie' or watch a video based on her life.

and however overcrowded the available accommodation, none will ever be refused.

The babies come from midwives, or, as sometimes happens, are picked out of dustbins. Middle-class Indian girls and youths, copying the life style of the West, are beginning to be promiscuous, and are liable to produce unwanted children, some of them quite extraordinarily tiny because their birth has been prematurely induced. These, in the Sisters' charge, soon become hearty infants. Others at a later stage, come to the Sisters suffering from acute malnutrition, and are likewise soon restored to health. Among the lepers, in the Home for the Dying, or wherever their work leads them, the Sisters bring healing and help.

Their life style is tough and basic by worldly standards, certainly; yet, they are happy women, giving out an atmosphere of joy. Mother Teresa, as she was fond of explaining, attached the utmost importance to this joyousness. The poor deserve not just service and dedication, but also the joy that belongs to human love. This is what the Sisters give them abundantly.

Mother Teresa has opened many homes for children who have no family to look after them and clinics for leprosy patients. She began work among boys and young men which has become the Missionary Brothers for Charity. Her work has spread to other countries – South America, Africa, the Middle East and even among the homeless in Australia. A centre for aborigines was opened in outback NSW at Bourke.

Because of her persistence in making the condition of poor and unloved people known to the world, Mother Teresa has been recognised by the presentation of many awards – among them the Nobel Peace Prize. Her funeral service was televised worldwide so that all who wanted, could pause and consider what one person dedicated to God can do.

STELLA BYWATERS

Stella Bywaters was born and raised in the farming area of Wimmera in Victoria. She was the second of six children and at the age of 14 she left school to help at home. Her mother was not well so Stella helped with cooking and housework. When her mother died, Stella became the 'little mother of the family'. Her father resisted offers to adopt out the younger children and with Stella's help kept the family together.

Not long before she died, Stella's mother had said to her, 'If ever God calls you to be a Salvation Army officer, you be one.' God had definitely spoken to Stella in youth councils, but she had hidden the secret in her heart. She knew that when the right time came, the Lord would open the way and she would obey.

One night Stella had a dream. A circle of black people were standing looking at a picture of Christ. In the circle was an empty space. Stella felt it was her duty to step into that empty space. She knew God was calling her to serve Him wherever He called her.

Stella's sister Marjorie was now 18, and well able to take care of the family. So in 1941, Stella and her brother Ron became cadets in the Crusaders session at the Melbourne training college. All six of the Bywaters children in turn became Salvation Army officers.

Stella served in five corps appointments in Victoria and Tasmania as well as at a men's eventide home in South Australia and boys' homes in Victoria and Western Australia. This all proved excellent training for the work she would be doing in later years for Stella still felt that God had a

place for her overseas and finally in 1953 she was appointed to Kenya in East Africa.

The Salvation Army work in this part of the African continent included corps as well as primary schools, a home for orphans, medical clinics, homes for the aged and destitute and a school for the blind. The neighbouring countries of Uganda and Tanganyika (now Tanzania) also had corps and a growing network of similar facilities. As Stella settled in to her new surroundings, she took on study of the Kiswahili language and customs. She had to cope with many dangerous situations as it was not safe to go to some parts of the country while there was an uprising.

Stella worked firstly at Kabeti, not far from Nairobi, at a centre for aged missionaries and then in another part of Nairobi at a childrens' home.

Terrified of being alone at night, Stella locked all her doors. But she felt challenged about her lack of faith. The Lord had protected her for three years; why doubt Him now? If she was needed in the dormitory at night, how would her helpers wake her? There were 28 children, including several babies. So with her assistant Stella cared for the babies, most of whom were orphans. There were three children, whose parents had been killed by terrorists. They had hidden in a tank partly filled with water for three days until found by their uncle. Now they were in Stella's care.

During her second time in Africa she went to Dar es Salaam, the capital city of Tanganyika. Stella got her driver's licence so that she was now able to drive and deliver people and goods as required.

There was trouble in many parts of Africa at this time as many of the countries gained their independence. In Zaire many hundreds of people were killed and many more sought escape through Dar es Salaam. These events made Stella realise that white people were looked upon with suspicion and one day she might have to face rejection by those she was trying to help.

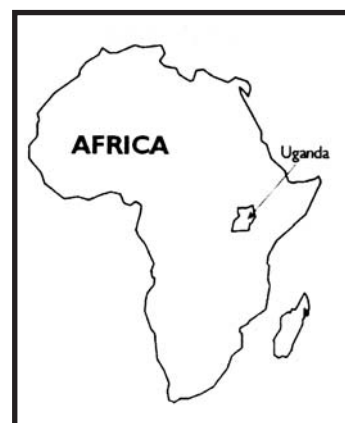
Independence came peacefully to Tanganyika and Zanzibar as they united to form Tanzania. Once more Stella received farewell orders – this time to Kampala in Uganda for a 'temporary' appointment at Friendship House, a home for patients who needed temporary accommodation while being treated at the hospital.

For eight years Stella worked amongst a diversity of people – the physically and mentally handicapped, village Africans, the European and Asian missionaries and businessmen. When Uganda achieved independence, Muslim and Christian differences caused tribal problems to develop.

Returning from homeland furlough in 1971 Stella continued on with her work. A military coup occurred and President Idi Amin came to power and at first things appeared normal. But over the next few years the Christians in Uganda met many difficulties and suffered great persecution as Amin decided to 'Muslimise Uganda'. Eventually in 1977 The Salvation Army, along with the other churches, was banned.

The Divisional Commander and the corps officers left Uganda and were found new appointments in Kenya, but Stella, together with Lieutenant and Mrs Albert Ireri stayed at the Tororo children's home to look after the residents in their care until the situation became clearer. They could not wear uniform, nor could they conduct any kind of Army meeting.

Life now drastically changed. The very fact of being an officer of a banned organisation in itself created severe tensions. Stella had always enjoyed



good relations with government departments, and these continued, but the officials themselves were as uncertain of the situation as the officers were.

As the months passed the security situation steadily deteriorated and life in Uganda became increasingly dangerous. No longer would anybody dare to travel or be on the streets after dark. The oppression of the people reached even more horrific levels. People would disappear without trace. It was not unusual to speak with a friend on one visit but to find on the next visit that he had disappeared, and must be presumed dead. Nobody knew how, or where, or why, and nobody dared to ask.

A subtle change came over the appearance of things. The ever present military soldiers became less obvious and the dangers became less evident but more sinister. Every night after dark there was the sound of shooting and explosions, lasting far into the night. Stella's reaction to these sounds was interesting. Not a sign of fear or surprise but instead a prayer, 'Lord, I hope nobody stopped that bullet'.

Eventually the government took over the social centres being run by the Army and Stella and the Lieutenants left Uganda for Kenya. Here they took on new appointments and waited for the time when they would be able to return as Salvation Army officers to the country they loved.

In 1978 Stella was told to go to London for the International Centenary Congress and at an officers' meeting she was presented with the Order of the Founder for service described as 'beyond the call of duty' and 'such as would have earned the approval of William Booth himself', Stella did not know where to look and stared at the floor while the General pinned the insignia of the Order of the Founder on her uniform. As he presented her to the congregation, the 7,000 officers rose in a standing ovation. The clapping continued so long that Stella turned to General Brown and murmured, 'Can't they sit down now?'

DEFINITION

The Order of the Founder is the Army's highest merit order awarded to Salvationists whose service would, in spirit, or achievement, have specially commended itself to the Founder.

Women missionaries with 20 years of service in the tropics may retire at the age of 55; but Stella celebrated her 60th birthday in 1979 in Africa and continued on active service.

She was to spend about 18 months in Kenya before a return to Uganda would be possible, and during that period she had two appointments. Firstly in Mombasa at a home for the elderly and then to a girls' hostel in Nairobi. Meanwhile Uganda was undergoing civil war, adding new suffering to the pain that the country had endured for such a long time.

Idi Amin and his forces were overthrown and in February 1980 Stella returned to Uganda in her official capacity. But even amid the lawlessness and desperate need, a new spirit of hope was abroad. Not only would The Salvation Army recommence, restore and rebuild; it would expand with the blessing of the Ugandan government. So many of the Salvationists had stood firm in persecution and now they were able to dig up their buried uniforms, flags and Articles of War and once more march proudly behind their flag.

Stella was able to serve for a while at the childrens' home before eventually leaving Africa after 42 years of service as a Salvation Army officer both in Australia and her beloved Africa. She now lives in Perth and is still involved in her corps and a 'special' speaker at meetings. She was awarded high honours in the Order of Australia in 2005 in recognition of her contribution to the people of Uganda.

GETTING STARTED

1. Have a display of pictures around the room of the current rock stars or soapie stars, young people can quickly have a look at the picture and come to some conclusions about what makes a person famous or great.

Is it their looks, or fashion, or what they do best, or what they do for society, or a combination of these? What is meant by being 'famous' or the 'greatest'?

Or

2. Come with boiled rice already prepared. Have young people sit on the floor and eat plain rice out of a bowl with their fingers.

How would you feel eating this way and just this food every night?

GOING DEEPER

1. **Present the story of one of today's legends**

- a. Mother Teresa – use the information presented in Insights for the Leader to tell this story. Check the internet for pictures of Mother Teresa and her work to share during this presentation.
- b. Brigadier Stella Bywaters – use the information presented in Insights for the Leader to tell this story. You may be able to obtain pictures and information on some of the Army places mentioned from the international website at www.salvationarmy.org to display while you tell this story.

Or

Set up three interest centres and have a leader at each centre ready to present the story of the 'legend'. Divide your young people into three groups and allow 10 minutes at each centre for the leader to talk about the 'legend'.

Rotate groups.

TAKING IT HOME


It is important that young people express their love for God in service for others through the corps. Often the tasks we can do will be simple. However our attitudes are just as important as our actions, especially in the face of opposition.

Such commitment is seen in Jesus and the examples of the legends we've looked at today.


Have a time for short prayers asking for courage in service and also for our 'legend' modern missionaries.

FOLLOW-THRU

Talk to the group about doing one of the Get Involved and Grow challenges that takes some effort over a period of time such as being a helpful member of the family or helping with street ministry.



While society measures greatness by money, power and looks – God's idea of greatness includes humility, service and obedience to him. We will be looking at a few such people today.



Sitting on the floor and eating plain rice may be a different experience every once in a while. The people we will hear about today had to make sacrificial changes to their lives but were happy to live simply because they were serving God.

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You're a Legend



Walter Lucas



Stella Bywaters



Mother Teresa

HIGHLIGHTS

- Being a legend is more than money, power and appearance.
- Love, service and humility are characteristics of legendary people.
- There are things I can do now to serve God.
- God's legends trust Him and obey His leadings.

1.

What challenges me most about the legend I learnt about today?

Handwriting practice lines consisting of three parallel lines.

2.



Circle those words below that describe the legends you learnt about today.

persevering

brave

called

Godly

bossy

serene

practical

humble

cowardly

loving



What opposition did these 'legends' face?

Handwriting practice lines consisting of three parallel lines.

3.

Write out and memorise Colossians 3:17.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of three parallel lines.



You're a Legend

Something To Think About ...

Service Is Our Business

1. Read this extract from 'Battle Orders' (Leaders' Manual for Salvation Army Soldiership by Chick Yuill).

'We seek to introduce men and women to Jesus who alone can transform their lives.

However, The Salvation Army has always believed that we must present Jesus Christ as Lord over every area of life, not just as the Saviour of individuals.

We seek to meet the needs of our fellow-men. There is no point in telling people that God loves them if their circumstances make it all but impossible for them to experience his love.'



Mother Teresa

Walter Lucas

Stella Bywaters

2. What are 'cultural barriers' to service, both here in New Zealand and overseas?



3.

Read Mother Teresa's philosophy of service:

Mother Teresa's first operation was a success – but both she and the patient fainted!



The Lord is full of mercy and compassion. (James 5:11)

'Let there be no pride or vanity in the work. The work is God's work. The poor are God's poor. Put yourself completely under the influence of Jesus so that He may think His thought in your minds. Do His work through your hands, for you will be all powerful with Him who strengthens you.'

Write down your 'philosophy of service'. Include those kinds of service you help with in your corps and list those you would like to try.

Four horizontal lines for writing.



4.

Stella Bywaters was born near Nhill – which proves that you can get something for nothing!

Stella Bywaters was a 'Star in a Dark Sky'. Explain this in relation to her missionary service in Uganda. This quote may help you.

'So The Salvation Army in Uganda appeared to be dead, as a daffodil bulb may appear to be dead. But the life hidden inside the dry shell will suddenly burst forth into glorious flowering. This faith was firmly embedded not only in Stella's heart but in the hearts of those who remained in Uganda.'

Seven horizontal lines for writing.

Some of the richest people in the world live in India.



SESSION 14

ONE BODY – MANY PARTS

FROM THE BIBLE

1 Corinthians 12:12 - 27;
Ephesians chapters 1 to 3 and
4:13 - 16.

✓ CHECKLIST

There are three Getting Started activities suggested. Choose the one most suited for your group and prepare accordingly.

Approach 1 includes Bible readings, discussions and completion of the questions that are on the work sheet so have these and writing equipment available. Approach 1 has three sub-headings:

- (a) We are all part of Christ's body,
- (b) God's secret plan,
- (c) The need for unity.

Activities 1 to 3 may be completed along with the work under these headings.

Approach 2 looks at the situation in our corps and how each person has a part to play as we work together in unity. Check the list of job descriptions so you are ready to answer any questions. If you are using the panel, brief them so they are ready to reply to the questions.

If you plan to interview various local officers about their role in the corps, you may need to make the suggested video. So plan accordingly.

AIM

To show the young people that everyone is an important part of the body of Christ.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people should:

- ❖ understand that they are important members of the body of Christ;
- ❖ understand that there is a place in the body of Christ for people who are very different from each other in every way – race, colour, personality, body build, natural abilities, and in a variety of other ways;
- ❖ take a fresh look at the people who make up their corps and appreciate the uniqueness of each person and the importance of individuality.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

This is the first of three sessions in this unit on Paul's teaching. It is not absolutely necessary to keep them together as a series but it may be helpful to link them.

Much teaching about the body of Christ – the Church – concentrates on the spiritual gifts of the members of the body of Christ and how these help the Church to fulfil its purpose to present the ministry of Christ visibly to the world. This is very important teaching and will be covered in a later unit. But spiritual gifts are not the subject of this session.

This is a study about belonging to the body of Christ and about our important place in the body irrespective of the gifts we do or do not have. The letter to the Ephesians is the basis of the teaching in this session.

The letter to the Ephesians was possibly written as a circular letter to all the churches Paul had contact with, rather than to a specific church, to deal with specific problems.

We need to understand the diverse nature of the readers of this letter to appreciate fully what is being said about our place in the 'body of Christ'. Some of Paul's early converts were Jews who clearly put their faith in Christ as Messiah. But the majority were Gentiles – non-Jews – few of whom would have any knowledge of Judaism and Jewish traditions. Could they be accepted amongst the people of God? Did they really have a place in God's plan? Many Jews denied the acceptance of Gentiles into the family of God but Paul argues passionately that this is not the case.

In Ephesians 1 and 2 Paul writes to explain that salvation is God's initiative, made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus, and embracing all peoples of the world whether they be Jew or Gentile. All who accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord are joined together 'with all the others into a place where God lives through his Spirit.' (Ephesians 2:22, GNB)

Paul goes on to explain the mystery or secret that God had planned from the beginning and was only now revealing. Salvation was for everyone. We could all become heirs whether Abraham was our natural father or not.

'The secret is that by means of the gospel the Gentiles have a part with the Jews in God's blessings; they are members of the same body and share in the promise that God made through Christ Jesus.' (Ephesians 3:6, GNB. See also Ephesians 1:10.)

Thus in this circular letter to all Christians, whether they be Jewish or Gentile, of any nationality or gender, Paul teaches that all Christians are one body. This is because they share together in all the promises God gives to those who put their faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Further into the letter to the Ephesians (chapter 4) Paul introduces us to the important contribution that our individuality makes to the healthy functioning of the whole body. It is here that Paul begins to develop the analogy of the human body to explain our place in the body of Christ. It is here, too, that he makes it clear that the Church is one body with Christ as the Head.

'Instead, by speaking the truth in a spirit of love, we must grow up in every way to Christ, who is the Head. Under his control all the different parts of the body fit together, and the whole body is held together by every joint with which it is provided. So when each separate part works as it should, the whole body grows and builds itself up through love.' (Ephesians 4:15 - 16, GNB)

This analogy is further used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:12 - 27. In this passage Paul points out that every part of the body is needed and the success of the body depends upon each of these parts working together – getting on with the job without allowing feelings of envy or jealousy creeping in. Rather, in loving concern, the whole body must care for each part.

This message is just as relevant to all who are part of the Christian Church today. We must constantly remind ourselves and the young people that we all have a part to play to make our corps a better place, how we co-operate with others really does affect our corps.

GETTING STARTED

1. Have the young people in pairs link one arm around each other and try to wrap and then tie a parcel together.
(The need for communication and co-operation is vital!)

Or

2. Divide the group into equal teams or no more than 10 per team.
Object: First team to draw a complete body wins.

Provide paper, marking pens and a die for each team. Assign body parts to each number and put up where all can see.

- 1 = Head (eyes, ears, nose, mouth and hair – all to be added as a further '1' is thrown).
- 2 = Trunk/chest.
- 3 = One arm.
- 4 = One hand.
- 5 = One leg.
- 6 = One foot.

POINT

The design of the human body relies on every part functioning properly for the good of the whole body. In the same way, the body of Christ, the Church, functions according to God's design only when all members play their part for the good of the whole body.

Place materials on a table at one end of the room. Have teams line up at the other end. One person from each team runs to the drawing table, rolls the die and draws the corresponding body part. The player returns to the team once the part is drawn and the game continues in relay fashion until all teams finish. (Note: If a body part is already drawn for the number rolled on the die, the player rolls until another part is available.)

Taken from *Quick Crowd breakers and Games for Youth Groups*, Group Publishing 1992.

Or

3. Divide your group into threes. Loosely join their inside legs together with old stockings. Blindfold one; use ear-plugs for the second and put masking tape on the third person's mouth. Have them walk around a simple obstacle course.

When they return, talk about the need to co-operate and depend on each other.

GOING DEEPER

I. Bible reading and discussion

a. We are all part of Christ's body

Have the passage from 1 Corinthians 12: 12 - 27 read. Then work through the six questions on the work sheet.

It is then suggested that verse 27 be written up for all to see, ready for the 'Taking it Home'.

b. God's secret plan

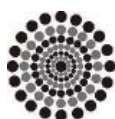
There were some people amongst the new Christians at Ephesus who thought they had a superior or secret faith to others. They bragged about revelations and spiritual visits to higher levels of heaven than any one else had.

Naturally this caused a lot of ill feeling and division and so Paul wanted to put a stop to it. 'Yes, God's plan can be a mystery or secret,' he declared, 'but He has now made it clear! His salvation is for the whole world!'

The church had to bond together and work as one to proclaim the gospel. So Paul wrote that they needed to work together just like our body does.

Read Ephesians 1:9 - 10 to find out what it was.

Some writers think that verse 10 is the main reason why Paul wrote this letter to the Christians who lived in the area around Ephesus. Read verse 10 together once again. Paul was excited when he realised that God was indeed concerned for the whole world. Although He was the Father of Abraham and the Jews were His people – it was through them that His secret plans were to be



LEADER TIP

Some translations will say 'mystery' rather than 'secret plan'.

worked out for **all** people. Sadly, not only did some of the Jews feel that they were better than the Gentiles but now some of the Gentiles were starting to consider that they had the privileged place.

'This disunity is harming the church,' said Paul.

'You Gentiles must remember that it is through Christ that you come to God.'

Read Ephesians 2:13 - 14 together.

Discuss: Why should the Gentiles and Jews feel that they are one people?

Read verse 19. What wonderful assurance is being given to the Gentiles in this verse?

Paul continues to talk more about God's secret plan.

Read together Ephesians 3: 5 - 6.

Because of what Christ has done for us, we all share in the same promise. Because we share, we must all act as one people – for we are members of the same body.

c. **The need for unity**

How do your parents react when you stir other family members?

List ideas – e.g.

- they tell us to grow up;
- tells us families should love each other;
- expect the older ones to help the younger ones.

Leaders of the Church react similarly when the Church starts having disagreements.

Read together Ephesians 4:3. How is Paul asking the Christian to act?

Read verses 13 - 16 together.

2. **A look at our corps**

With all of these verses in mind, what should be happening in our corps?

Should we be working together as a team with every corps member doing his/her part?

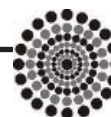
Does this already happen? Have the young people think about as many people as they can in your corps and make a list of the various jobs they do.

e.g The Corps Sergeant Major
The Young Peoples' Sergeant Major
The Home League Secretary
The Bandmaster
The Corps Cadet Counsellor
Youth Discipleship Leader

Do all of these jobs have a common purpose? What is it?

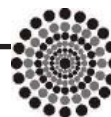
Consider the first description we read of how believers are different parts of the body of Christ.

What part would you say these people were?



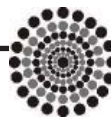
LEADER TIP

Group members could now complete activity 2 'Crack the Code' on their work sheets.



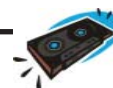
LEADER TIP

The four questions in activity 3 could be answered now.



LEADER TIP

It may be helpful to have a panel of 3 or 4 local officers or members of the corps leadership team to briefly state their role and how it contributes to the 'whole body of the corps'. You may want to have some questions prepared for the young people to ask.



VIDEO CLIP

If it is difficult to get a panel together, video some members of the corps and leadership team answering key questions such as: What is your role in the corps? How do you work together with others in the corps? What jobs are done by people on a roster system?

(This can be answered by using activity 4. Be careful that this remains a helpful activity – disparaging remarks are not necessary or helpful. They may well want to write more than one person under one part and this is acceptable.)

TAKING IT HOME

Gods' plan for all believers is that we worship and work for Him in unity. Because of what Jesus has done for us, we are bound together by love. We must not be envious of those who seem to do jobs 'more important' than others, for God has made it clear that we are all loved by Him and we are **all** needed to make His body, the Church, complete.

What part am I? Can I be a part right now? This is really up to me and the attitude I have to a task that I'm asked to do!

Read together I Corinthians 12:27. Pray asking that God will help each one of us to do our part well.

FOLLOW-THRU

This session naturally leads into the young people accepting the challenge to Get Involved and Grow in Leadership.

e.g. They could report on the role and responsibility of a local officer or assist with the setting up or packing up.

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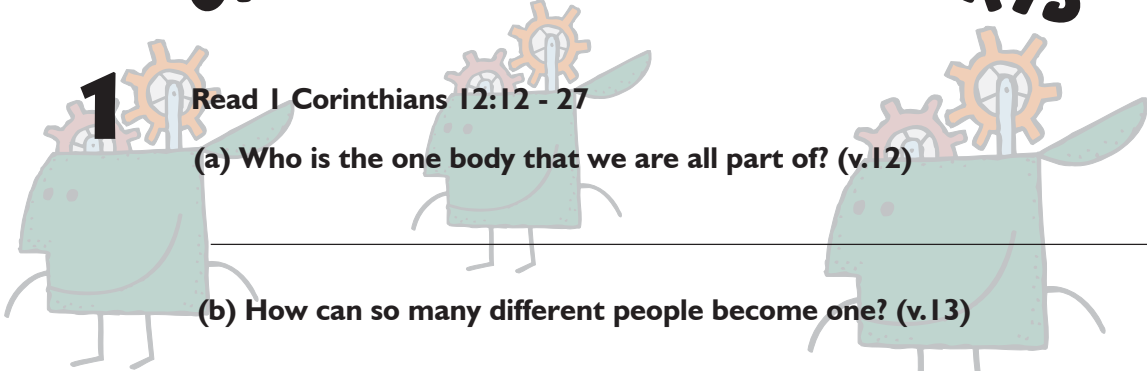
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ONE BODY - MANY PARTS

1

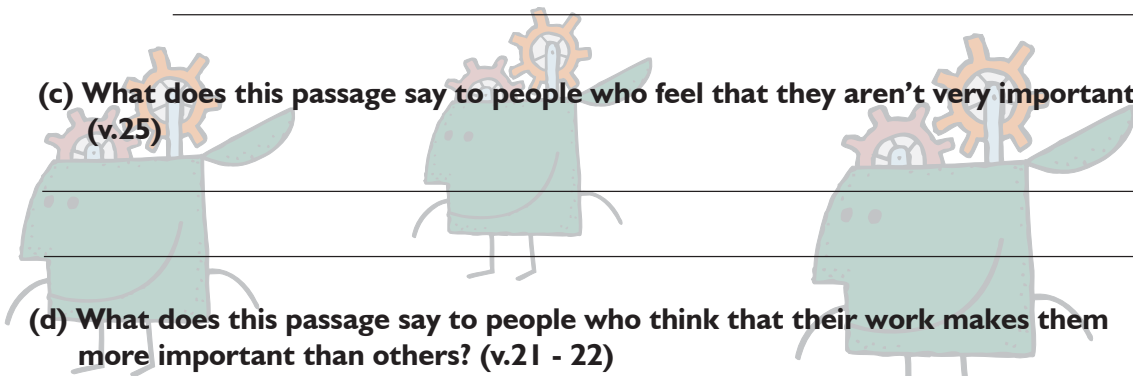
Read I Corinthians 12:12 - 27

(a) Who is the one body that we are all part of? (v.12)



(b) How can so many different people become one? (v.13)

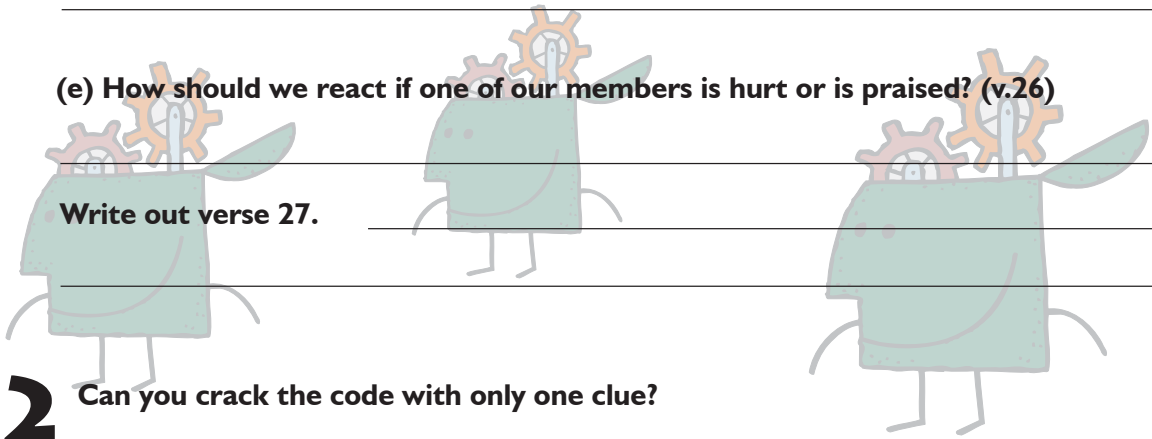
(c) What does this passage say to people who feel that they aren't very important? (v.25)



(d) What does this passage say to people who think that their work makes them more important than others? (v.21 - 22)

(e) How should we react if one of our members is hurt or is praised? (v.26)

Write out verse 27.



2

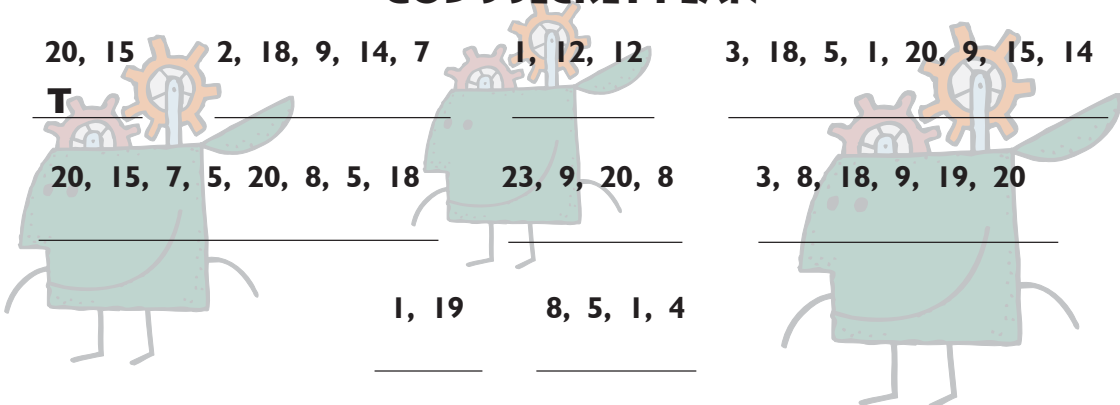
Can you crack the code with only one clue?

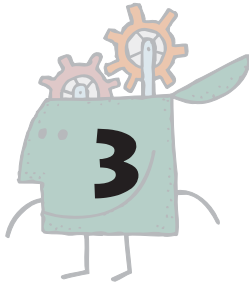
GOD'S SECRET PLAN

20, 15 2, 18, 9, 14, 7 1, 12, 12 3, 18, 5, 1, 20, 9, 15, 14

T
20, 15, 7, 5, 20, 8, 5, 18 23, 9, 20, 8 3, 8, 18, 9, 19, 20

1, 19 8, 5, 1, 4





Read Ephesians 4:11 - 16.

(a) Why did God give people different jobs to do in His service? (v.12)

(b) What brings us all together? (v.13)

(c) What will stop happening once we are one in our faith? (v.14)

(d) What wonderful thing happens when the Church is united? (v.16)



(a) Think about jobs done in your corps. Write them beside the part of the body you think best describes them.

The eyes

The ears

The mouth

The heart

The hands

The knees

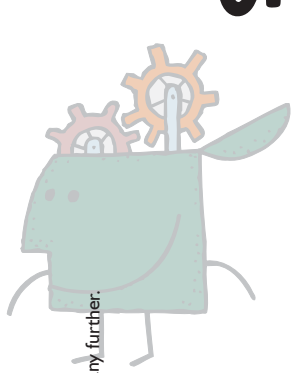
The feet

(b) What about me? Highlight or underline the part you would like to represent. Write under it what you could do to earn this description.

HIGHLIGHTS

- All believers are part of the body of the Church.
- Every believer is important to God.
- God has jobs for all of us to do to help His Church run smoothly.
- How I do the jobs I'm asked to do affects our corps.

ONE BODY - MANY PARTS



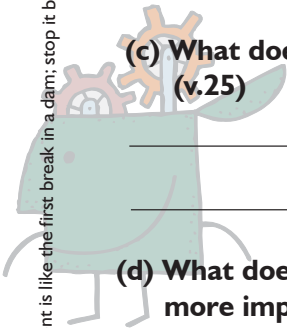
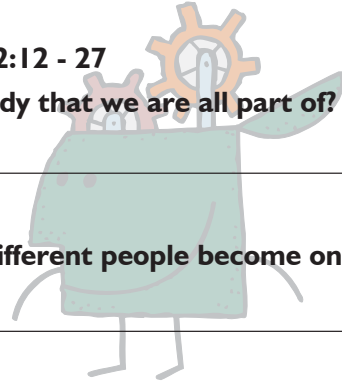
© The start of an argument is like the first break in a dam; stop it before it goes any further.



1 Read 1 Corinthians 12:12 - 27

(a) Who is the one body that we are all part of? (v.12)

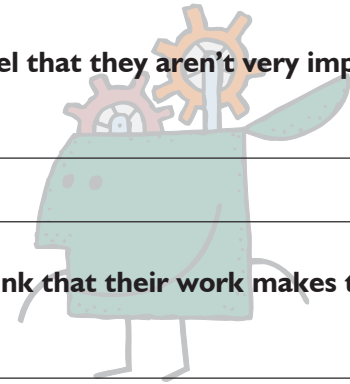
(b) How can so many different people become one? (v.13)



(c) What does this passage say to people who feel that they aren't very important? (v.25)



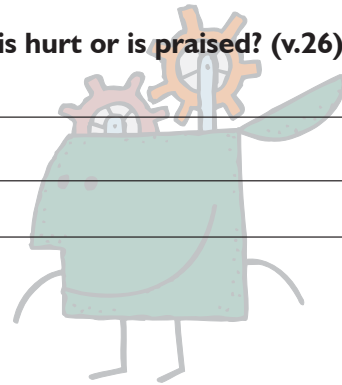
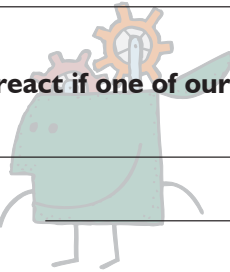
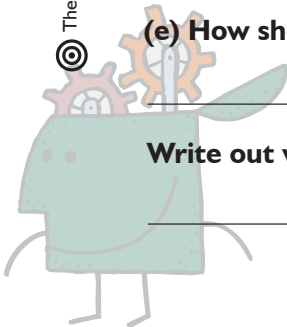
(d) What does this passage say to people who think that their work makes them more important than others? (v.21 - 22)



©

(e) How should we react if one of our members is hurt or is praised? (v.26)

Write out verse 27.



2

Can you crack the code with only one clue?

GOD'S SECRET PLAN

© There are 26 bones in the human foot.

20, 15

2, 18, 9, 14, 7

1, 12, 12

3, 18, 5, 1, 20, 9, 15, 14

T

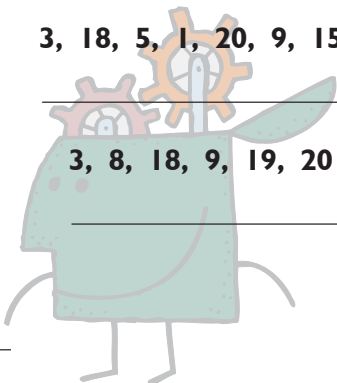
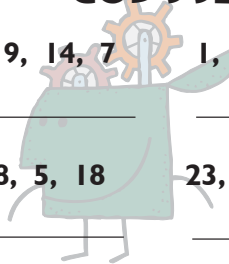
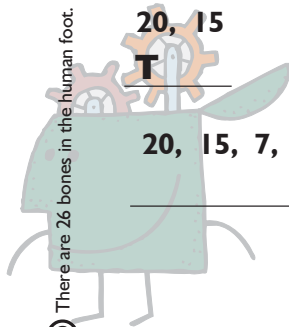
20, 15, 7, 5, 20, 8, 5, 18

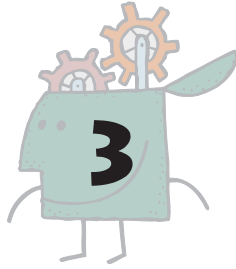
23, 9, 20, 8

3, 8, 18, 9, 19, 20

1, 19

8, 5, 1, 4





Read Ephesians 4:11 - 16.

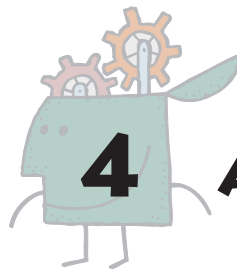
(a) Why did God give people different jobs to do in His service? (v.12)

(b) What brings us all together? (v.13)

(c) What will stop happening once we are one in our faith? (v.14)

(d) What wonderful thing happens when the Church is united? (v.16)

© Corps Cadet Brigades were begun in 1896.



IN OUR CORPS

B

What about me?
Jobs I can do right now:

I would like to be thought of as

being the _____

because _____

- ◎
- ◎
- ◎
- ◎
- ◎
- ◎
- ◎
- ◎
- ◎

A The eyes could be _____

The feet could be _____

The hands could be _____

The heart could be _____

The mouth could be _____

C

My prayer for our corps is

© The Salvation Army school for the physically disabled in Das 'es Salaam, Tanzania accommodates 175 children.

© The heart of a 3 year old child beats 129,600 times in one day



GROWING THE CHURCH

AIM

To show the young people how Paul the pastor ministered to the enthusiastic, but sometimes misguided, new converts in his first letter to the Corinthians.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people should:

- ❖ understand how hard Paul and his helpers worked to establish the church at Corinth;
- ❖ understand that all churches must be nurtured with loving care so that growth takes place;
- ❖ understand that as Christians we must help others to grow as we grow ourselves;
- ❖ appreciate the value of learning from the wisdom and experience of our Christian leaders;
- ❖ realise that we all need loving correction to help us grow in the Christian faith.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Paul visited Corinth on his second missionary journey, immediately following his seemingly unfruitful time in Athens (see Acts 17:16 - 34). He arrived in Corinth, according to his own testimony, 'in weakness and fear, and with much trembling' and stayed and found work with Aquila and Priscilla. This couple were to become great friends with Paul. He would visit with them again in other cities, including Rome.

It had become Paul's pattern to seek out the Jewish synagogue in the city he was visiting and endeavour to teach the Jews about Christ as the fulfilment of their Messianic hopes. In Corinth he met strong opposition from the Jews and determined to concentrate his ministry amongst the Gentiles. Both letters to the Corinthians contain passages where Paul defends this decision and, indeed, his right to offer ministry in Christ's name.

There was an openness to the gospel amongst the Corinthians but, even though the ruler of the synagogue came to faith in Christ, most of his converts were 'raw recruits'. They did not have the Jewish moral codes as part of their background. Rather, they were very much products of their promiscuous society – tolerant of immoral cults and the trappings of idolatry, even of sexual freedom within the church. They were also inclined to form cliques and factions, to enter into lawsuits against each other, and to need considerable guidance about marriage, especially marriage between Christians and non-Christians.

SESSION 15

FROM THE BIBLE

Acts 18:1 - 17; 1 Corinthians 2:1 - 5; 1 Corinthians 3:1 - 23; 1 Corinthians 13:1 - 13.

CHECKLIST

There are two suggested Getting Started activities. Decide which one will best suit your group and prepare accordingly. If you decide to play the game, be sure to brief those involved well beforehand.

Getting Started 2 may better suit the older ones and can be of benefit to adolescents who so often resent being spoken to about problems. It would be an advantage if you are open about your own feelings.

For approach 1 you will need to write up ideas the young people have about caring for plants. Try to write the ideas down into correct time sequence so that the headings can be followed in approach 2.

Approach 2 compares church growth to the growth of a plant. Paul's care of the church at Corinth is used, questions are asked that apply the happenings at Corinth to life in our own corps.

The work sheet can be used as the lesson is presented or as a means of revision following the session.

As part of the Taking it Home you could give each young person a small pot and some seeds to plant and nurture as a reminder of God's care for His church.

Most notable about this church, however, was the richness of spiritual gifts in evidence. But this was one of their greatest difficulties and led to impropriety in worship. They were gifted but they were very immature.

It seems, therefore, that Paul's personal ministry underwent some degree of change. The great evangelist and teacher and apostle to the Gentiles needed to develop the skills of the pastor, caring for the people of God, guiding, correcting, disciplining, and nurturing his flock. The two letters to the Corinthians are straight from the heart of the pastor – they may, in fact, have been compiled from four letters from Paul to Corinth.

The first letter was written because of the reports that came to Paul after he had left the city. A believer named Apollos had some ministry amongst the Corinthians, but any beneficial results of his instruction were largely lost because of the factionalism that followed.

'Several people from Chloe's family have already reported to me that you keep arguing with each other. They have said that some of you claim to follow me, while others claim to follow Apollos or Peter or Christ.' (1 Corinthians 1:11 - 12, CEV)

Subsequently, these reports were confirmed by others who had been to Corinth and returned with personal insights and a letter from Corinth seeking answers about specific matters.

'I was glad to see Stephanus and Fortunatus and Achaicus. Having them here was like having you. They made me feel better, just as they made you feel better. You should appreciate people like them.' (1 Corinthians 16:17 - 18, CEV)

The letter we know as Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians is right from the heart of the apostle and includes hints of personal heartache as well as loving instruction, cautious correction, and outright rebuke. Understand the emotion behind Paul's writing and you will more fully appreciate the teaching.

GETTING STARTED

1. Play a game to show how frustrating it can be to join a well-established group and feel left out. Explain the rules well beforehand to three-quarters of the players and tell them they must not help anyone. Invite them and several others to come and play a game.

The game should require several actions. e.g. Place 6 - 8 saucers (one for each player) in a large circle with 10 smarties or jelly beans on each saucer. Each player must lift with the spoon only (no fingers to be used) one lolly at a time and put it in someone else's saucer. The one with the least lollies in the saucer when the whistle blows is the winner.

Say: 'We're going to play 'The Hunting Game'. Line up – take a spoon each, ready, go!'

Ignore all questions or pleas from the uninformed players but pull them up if they break the rules. e.g. 'No touching with the other hand; only one lolly at a time; no eating them!' Keep this up so they feel uncomfortable and annoyed.

Have these young people then explain how they felt about this treatment. (Make sure you apologise to them for this bad treatment.)

POINT

Newcomers to our corps can sometimes feel that the Army is a bit like a different culture and can struggle with our way of doing things and with our standards. There is a danger that we criticise them for not doing things right rather than helping them to understand and learn from us.

How do we receive new people into our corps? Are you helpful or critical?

Or

Read out a portion of an email from a Christian friend who is rebuking you for some fault in your life, e.g. You spoke unkindly, lost your temper, took a 'sickie' off work. (Make the email up if necessary.)

Explain that this is from a Christian friend – ask the young people how you should react.

Should I delete it? Never speak to the writer again? Read it several times? Pray about it? Be honest with myself? Decide it was really written in love?

GOING DEEPER

1. Brainstorming

Have the young people call out all the steps that need to be taken before a plant grows to full bloom.

List them. Remember the list should include the following headings because they are the sub-headings in Going Deeper 2:

- prepare the ground
- plant the seed
- water and feed it
- protect it from pests that would destroy it
- straighten it or prune it if it grows the wrong way.

How committed must the gardener be?

2. Considering how a church is like a plant

Side one of the work sheet has problems the young people could meet today. Juniors could match each problem with the scriptural advice as they work through this approach.

Is a church like a plant? The way a church grows is a lot like a plant and so we can look at the growing of our early Christian church under these headings.

Paul did a lot of planting of new Christian churches as he travelled from town to town on his missionary journeys. He soon realised that if these young 'shoots' were to grow into strong plants that he would have to see they were nurtured. His second or third visits to towns were done to further nourish the plants. He was totally committed to caring for these young churches and whenever he spoke to them, it was to help them grow into strong, straight plants that would be used by God to bring others to him.


• Preparing the ground

Paul found that in many towns the ground had been prepared because Jews met at the synagogues or by the riverside for worship on the Sabbath day and he would be invited to speak.

Read Acts 13:14 - 15 and Acts 16:13 - 14.

How had the ground been prepared for Paul's preaching? Should I ask God to 'prepare the ground' when I feel He wants me to talk about His love to my friends?

Some of you may well say, 'But I'm scared'. Read what Paul said about his feelings in I Corinthians 2:3 - 5. We don't often imagine the man, who went through so much physical hardship for the sake of preaching Christ, as being scared – so we can take heart from this.



It's never easy to accept correction and guidance even when we know deep down that we were wrong. If we are to grow into better Christians, we need to learn how to handle constructive criticism.

The Christians at Corinth were immature in many ways and needed guidance and correction from Paul. His first letter, although written out of love, was apparently misunderstood and caused hurt. Most Christians need guidance and correction at some time. If they are to grow in Christ, they need to be open to the loving guidance of mature leaders.



LEADER TIP

When a new corps is started we actually call it a plant!

What is his answer to people who say, 'I don't know what to say?' In whose power must we trust?

- **Planting the seed**

Wherever Paul and his fellow missionaries went, they clearly explained to the believers that the promised Messiah had come and they would show them in Scripture how Jesus was God's Son, chosen to be our Saviour. As has always happened, some people believed and became Christians, others walked away disinterested, and still others were so angry about such teaching they did their best to get rid of the preachers by stirring up trouble.

Fill in the background of Acts 18 verses 1 - 17, then have the young people read verses 4, 8, 9 - 11.

These verses are typical of what happened in many places:

- i. they faithfully preached (i.e. planted the seeds);
- ii. some received the word and believed (i.e. the seed began to grow in good soil);
- iii. Paul received encouragement and guidance from God;
- iv. the 'hard ground' rejected the seed and tried to trample on the plants that were growing (verses 12 - 17).

- **Watering and feeding the seed**

It was perfectly clear that Paul could not stay in one place if he were to keep planting the seed in other towns and so he would move on.

Other believers – sometimes the apostle Peter, or new Christians, would visit the newly planted churches to encourage them and to preach to them.

Imagine Paul's distress when he heard that such visits were causing splits rather than unifying the young church.

So, the first letter to the Corinthians was written to this church, which Paul had established, to try to help them grow together.

Read I Corinthians 1:11 - 13 and 3:4 - 9.

Discuss

What were the Corinthians arguing about? (ch 3:4)

Why did it distress Paul? (v.5)

What did he say really mattered? (v.7)

Do such petty arguments go on in the church/our corps today?

If so, what must we do about them?

- **Protecting the plant from pests that would destroy it**

Have you ever noticed that the pests that come into a garden only seem to attack the plants we want to see flourish and grow? They seem to ignore the tougher weeds! Satan is like this. He knows he already has some people in his grasp, so he constantly attacks the tender plants that are growing as Christians.

The gardener must protect the plants from such attacks. Paul had to set a few rules – some very basic moral rules had to be put down in writing. Corinth was a very pagan city. Immorality was practised in heathen religious services and many of the new Christians had no idea that Christianity should affect the way they lived their daily life. Such practices would destroy the young church if they were not stopped.

Paul had to write in his letter about the need to deal with:

immorality within the church,

Christians taking a fellow-Christian to court,

marriage with unbelievers,
food that had been offered to idols,
helping weaker Christians,
giving to help others.

If these things were not dealt with, Paul knew that the young church would shrivel and die.

If the rules were kept, then the church could do what God meant it to do – it would attract others and grow stronger.

Read Acts 16:4 - 5.

What do these verses say to us and our corps?

- **Straightening or pruning the plant**

People don't like to be told they are wrong and need to make some alterations to their lives. This is even more so, if we are consciously trying to live lives that are pleasing to God. Yet, there are times when we all need to be 'pruned' or 'straightened' in the way a young plant does. Just as the gardener must do this so that a plant will eventually flourish and bear fruit, so God deals with the growing Christian.

Paul was unpopular with the Corinthian church for speaking to them so honestly. Have there been times when you felt someone was telling you off and they told you, 'I'm only doing this for your own good.' Did you believe them?

We can get angry and refuse to listen when somebody speaks to us about things in our life that need correcting – or we can wonder if the person who spoke or wrote to us feels anxious about our reaction.

Did they hesitate about raising the matter because they knew we'd be upset?

Read 1 Corinthians 4:14 and 2 Corinthians 2:4.

What do these verses tell you about Paul?

It had not been an easy task for Paul to deal with the problems in the young church that he had nurtured for so long. But he knew that the corrections had to be made and so he wrote honestly to them. It was inevitable that some people would be upset. He knew how some of them would react. But the encouraging thing for Paul was that the church as a whole did accept his rebukes and tried to follow his advice.

What do I do in similar situations?

When some of the young Christians were acting in a superior way because they thought God had given them gifts that made them more important than their fellow Christians, Paul wrote to the church the wonderful message found in what we call the great 'love chapter'. All service, preaching or teaching is useless if it is not done from a loving heart.

The most important thing to help a young church grow is a loving, caring concern for each other. Just as the garden that is looked after with tender, loving care flourishes, so too, will the church or corps where these words of advice from Paul are listened to carefully and followed faithfully.

Read together 1 Corinthians 13:1 - 7.



LEADER TIP

If you used the Getting Started activity with the email, relate it to this point.



LEADER TIP

Side 2 of the work sheets contains a summary of the session. This can be completed as you come to each verse or complete it at the end of the session.

If time allows, go through each verse from 4 - 7 considering how living by those standards would affect us all and make a difference to the whole corps.

TAKING IT HOME

1. Give the group a small pot with the steps to growing a church on the side. Have them plant some seeds and take the pot home. Follow the group up every couple of weeks to see if they have continued to nurture their plants.

Or

2. Wrong attitudes and actions must be challenged and corrected if a corps or church is to remain spiritually healthy.

Leaders must offer guidance, correction and discipline where necessary if they are to fulfil their leadership role within the Body of Christ. They must correct in a loving way, and we must accept advice and correction in love.

Pray that our corps may grow because we are bound together in love and caring concern for one another.

FOLLOW-THRU

This is a good session to tie into the Get Involved and Grow in mission challenges of caring for others, praying for your friends and in the training for leadership segment of being involved in some form of youth outreach. Point out to your group that getting involved in mission, worship and leadership helps us to grow in our spiritual life.

GROWING THE CHURCH

1 It's very important to use God's word when we try to help our Christian friends grow. Link these Bible passages to the person you think they would best help.



I don't go to church anymore because everyone was always arguing.



2 Corinthians 2:4



Nobody I know ever seems to want to know about Jesus.



1 Corinthians 2:3 - 5



The bandmaster had the nerve to tell me I look untidy in my uniform so I fixed him! I handed my instrument to him! Why should I care about rules?



Acts 18:9 - 10



I hate older people telling me what I should be doing! They don't care about me! They just like pulling me to pieces.



Acts 16:4 - 5



I can't really talk to my friends about Jesus. I'm too scared and I don't know what to say.



1 Corinthians 3:3, 7

HIGHLIGHTS

- Paul and his helpers worked hard to establish many new Christian churches.
- Growth takes place when tender, loving care is given.
- We must all help each other to grow.
- Loving rebukes or advice should be acted on if we want to keep growing.
- When arguments or disagreements arise, we should look to God's word for solutions.

2 How did Paul see to it that the ground was prepared for the sowing of the gospel seeds? (Acts 13:14 - 15; Acts 16:13 - 14)

3 How successful was the planting of the seed at Corinth? (Acts 18:4, 8, 9 - 11)

4 a. What sad thing had occurred when the watering took place? (1 Corinthians 1:11 - 12)

b. Who really makes the plant grow? (1 Corinthians 3:6)

5 a. How did Paul try to protect the young plants from those who would destroy them? (Acts 16:4)

b. What effects did willingness to listen to advice have on the churches? (v.5)

6 Paul knew that his words would seem harsh and upset some of his readers. How did he try to prevent this happening? (1 Corinthians 4:14)


7 Love helps things grow! Write out some of the verses describing true love. (1 Corinthians 13:4 - 7)


GROWING THE CHURCH


1 It's very important to use God's word to give advice or help to growing Christians. Read these problems and the Scripture suggested to help sort them out. Then in a few sentences write down what you could say.



_____ Acts 16:4 - 5

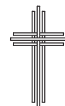
 The bandmaster had the nerve to tell me I look untidy in my uniform so I fixed him! I handed my instrument to him! Why should I care about rules?


 I can't really talk to my friends about Jesus. I'm too scared and I don't know what to say.

 The Christian message would quickly spread to other centres from Corinth.

_____ 1 Corinthians 2:3 - 5

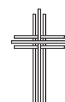
_____ 2 Corinthians 2:4

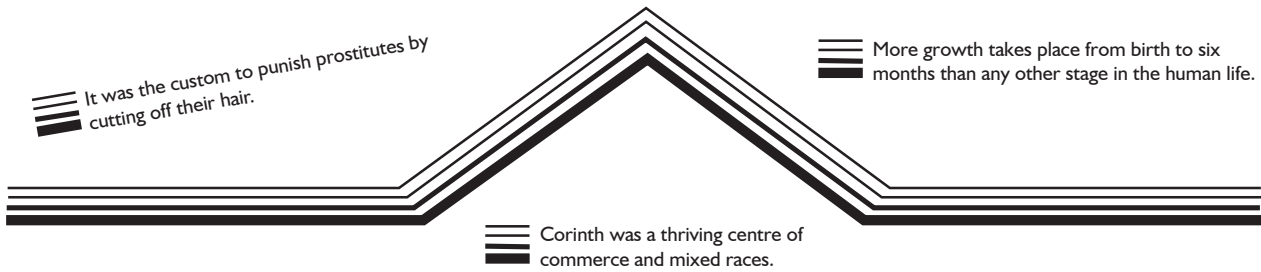
 I hate older people telling me what I should be doing! They don't care about me! They just like pulling me to pieces.

 I don't go to church anymore because everyone was always arguing.

_____ 1 Corinthians 3:3, 7

_____ Acts 18:9 - 10

 Nobody I know ever seems to want to know about Jesus.



2

How did Paul see to it that the ground was prepared for the sowing of the gospel seeds? (Acts 13:14 - 15; Acts 16:13 - 14)

3

How successful was the planting of the seed at Corinth? (Acts 18:4, 8, 9 - 11)

4

a. What sad thing had occurred when the watering took place? (1 Corinthians 1:11 - 12)

b. Who really makes the plant grow? (1 Corinthians 3:6)

5

a. How did Paul try to protect the young plants from those who would destroy them? (Acts 16:4)

b. What effects did willingness to listen to advice have on the churches? (v.5)

6

Paul knew that his words would seem harsh and upset some of his readers. How did he try to prevent this happening? (1 Corinthians 4:14)

7

Love helps things grow! Write out some of the verses describing true love. (1 Corinthians 13:4 - 7)



GROWING UP INTO CHRIST

AIM

To help the young people realise through a study of how Paul nurtured the young Timothy, we all have a part to play in caring for each other.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people should:

- ❖ understand the value of having a mature Christian as a special mentor and spiritual counsellor;
- ❖ become more open to the guidance and advice of older Christians;
- ❖ appreciate more fully the value of their spiritual heritage if they come from families where Christ has been loved and served for many generations.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Read Acts 15:36 to Acts 16:6.

Paul's second missionary journey had an unhappy beginning as a result of an incident during his first journey. Barnabas and John Mark completed the group which set out from Antioch on the first trip but part way through Mark left the team at Perga. This had evidently caused some distress to Paul, so when preparations were begun for the second journey Paul was unwilling to include Mark. Barnabas felt that Mark should be invited. The disagreement caused Paul and Barnabas to go their separate ways. The good thing about the disagreement was that there were now two missionary groups going out. Barnabas set off with Mark and Paul with Silas.

Whilst at Lystra during this second journey, Paul and Silas met a young man named Timothy. Both by nationality and in religious terms Timothy was the child of a mixed marriage. His mother was a Jewess and his father was a Greek.

Timothy was brought up in the Jewish faith, although he was never circumcised. Paul made arrangements for Timothy's circumcision because he believed that this would ensure a wider acceptance for the ministry which he was confident Timothy would have in the future.

This hope for the future was realised. When Paul wrote to the Philippians he said of Timothy:

'He is the only one who shares my feelings and who really cares about you. . . And you yourselves know how he has proved his worth, how he and I, like a son and his father, have worked together for the sake of the gospel.' (Philippians 2:20, 22, GNB)

SESSION 16

FROM THE BIBLE

Acts 15:36 - 16:6; Philippians 2:19 - 23; 2 Timothy 1:1 - 14.

CHECKLIST ✓

There are three Getting Started activities. The first one is a fun activity of working in pairs to create a famous ancestor. You will need paper and pens for your group to do this. Getting Started 2 suggests having someone who is preparing a family tree come to talk. If you decide to use Getting Started 3, invite parents and grandparents. Plan for a cup of tea with them at the end of the session and work as an open group so that the visitors can observe the meeting.

Prepare for approach 1 by writing the Scripture references for the 'Data File' onto slips of paper. This is activity 1 on the work sheet.

Approach 2 suggests the participation of one family, along with the discipleship partners for interviewing. These people should be briefed beforehand so that they can consider the answers they will want to give. Set a time limit and keep to it.

Approach 3 is a Bible search with questions to be answered about what the verses tell us. (These will be used in activity 3 on the work sheet.)

Approach 4 is a discussion that will be especially valuable for the older ones. If time does not allow for this to take place, use at least one of the questions in Taking it Home.

That was high praise indeed. But it was not without good reason. Paul had really taken Timothy 'under his wing'. Today we would say that Paul carefully disciplined and nurtured Timothy. In a similar way in which Jesus made the twelve disciples the focal point of His personal instruction and nurture, Paul concentrated a considerable amount of time and energy on building Timothy up in the faith and in developing his leadership potential. This care for Timothy followed him wherever Paul sent him.

When Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, he indicated that he was sending Timothy to them as a personal representative. (See 1 Corinthians 4: 1-7.) Nevertheless, he knew the Corinthians and he knew Timothy and he asked the Corinthians:

'If Timothy comes your way, be sure to make him feel welcome among you, because he is working for the Lord, just as I am. No one should look down on him, but you must help him continue his trip in peace...' (1 Corinthians 16:10-11, GNB)

Paul was preparing the way for his young friend who was still in the process of discovering himself and his leadership role. There is some thought that Timothy's natural personality may have caused him to withdraw should there be any suggestion that Paul's problems with the Corinthians would be projected on to him. It was part of Paul's caring, nurturing role to ask the Corinthians to show courtesy to Timothy, to accept him and his ministry to them and to see that they did not 'despise his youth' by looking down on him.

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul encourages his friend not to let others put him down because of his youthfulness.

'Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example for the believers in your speech, your conduct, your love, faith and purity.' (1 Timothy 4:12, GNB)

Writing his second letter to Timothy, Paul addresses the matter of his young friend's natural reticence and timidity.

'For this reason I remind you to keep alive the gift that God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For the Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead, his Spirit fills us with power, love and self-control.' (2 Timothy 1:6-7, GNB)

In the same letter Paul expresses his genuine appreciation of the value of spiritual heritage. Paul writes warmly of the 'sincere faith' of Timothy's 'grandmother Lois and mother Eunice'. This is a timely message for many young people who wonder whether their Christian upbringing has meant that they have lived too sheltered a life and have not been sufficiently exposed to the pressures of life 'in the world'.

Further understanding of how Paul nurtured and encouraged Timothy can be gained by noting the number of times Paul links Timothy with his own ministry and in co-authorship of several of his letters. Some references of note are Romans 16:21; 2 Corinthians 1:1 and 1:19; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:2; Philemon 1:1.

This friendship is a tremendous example of how we should take every opportunity to build each other up. We can help each other overcome nervousness and develop leadership skills. We can encourage spiritual growth. We can share opportunities for ministry. We can help each other value our Christian heritage.

Young people can build each other up. Older folk can help young folk realise their potential. May this session do just that.

GETTING STARTED

1. Form pairs of group members not related to each other. Then have each pair create a fictional family tree that shows how the partners really are long-lost relatives descended from a famous ancestor (real or fictional). Have the young people tell the entire group about their famous ancestors.

(Adapted from *No supplies required* by Dan McGill, Group Publishing, 1995.)

Or

2. Is somebody in the corps actively preparing a family tree? Invite them to the group to display the results of their research, especially if they can identify those who were believers and active church members.

Or

3. (This starter might be more of a 'finisher' depending on the time your group is held.)

Invite the young people's parents, grandparents, great grandparents for morning tea, afternoon tea or supper (whichever is appropriate). Ask them to bring as many generations as possible. See who can bring the most generations. Whose family has a Christian heritage going back the most generations?

GOING DEEPER

1. **Finding the facts about Timothy**

Give each young person in your group a slip of paper indicating which of these different references you want them to read.

Acts 16:1 - 2; Acts 19:22; Romans 16:21; 1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:5.

Have them read their passage to the group and then fill in the data file on the work sheet. (Activity 1.)

Data File on Timothy

Mother's name and nationality: _____

Father's nationality: _____

Standing in the Christian community: _____

Paul looked upon him as a _____ and _____

a _____ - _____

Paul was his spiritual father for he called Timothy 'my own _____'

Timothy was a _____ of Christ Jesus.

Paul wrote to Timothy and called him " _____"


2. **A look at a Christian heritage**

Read again 2 Timothy 1:5.

Timothy was well nurtured in the Christian faith.

Discuss: Is this a help or a hindrance?

If you have invited parents, grandparents to join your group, then see if you can set up a family situation like Timothy's. i.e. A young person,



POINT

You've probably heard many people testify that they were blessed by being born into a Christian home. You've also heard it said many times that there must come a time when we exercise our own faith and ask Jesus to be our Saviour and Lord. Having done this, we need a special person who can act as our spiritual guardian helping us to grow and develop as a Christian.

In this session we are going to look at how all this happened for a young man called Timothy and how it can help us, too.

mother, grandmother and perhaps a discipleship partner. (Prepare them beforehand as to what kind of questions they can expect.)

Young people could interview this group with relevant questions e.g.
To mother – How do you encourage _____ to be a Christian?

To grandmother – Does _____ ever talk to you about your faith?

To discipleship partner – What do you do to encourage _____?

To young person – Do you think people expect more from you when you've got all this help?

To mother – Would you be worried if _____'s discipleship partner suggested your child work overseas for God?

3. **Looking at the help and encouragement given to Timothy – the young Christian worker**

Paul had been really disappointed when John Mark had left him and Barnabas to return home from their first missionary journey. He didn't feel he wanted to be let down again, so Barnabas took John Mark with him and Paul set off with Silas. At Lystra he met the young man, Timothy, and couldn't help but be impressed by him.

Here was a young man waiting to be asked to do something for the Lord, so Paul invited Timothy to join their group.

He then took a very active interest in Timothy, constantly encouraging him and preparing the way with letters of introduction whenever he sent him on a message to any of the churches.

He also wrote to Timothy himself, giving him advice and showing he believed in him.

We'll look at some of the ways Paul did this.

- a. Read Philippians 2:19 - 23; 1 Thessalonians 3:2 and 6. What do these verses tell you about Paul and about Timothy?
- b. Read these verses and ask the following three questions after each reading.

1 Timothy 1:2; 1 Timothy 4:12 - 13, 16; 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:8; 2 Timothy 2:1 - 2; 2 Timothy 2:15.

- What do these verses tell you about Timothy and Paul?
- Would Timothy feel that Paul was encouraging or nagging him?
- Would these words make Timothy feel better or worse?

4. **Discussion**

How do you react when older Christians give you advice?

Discuss whether it is wiser to seek advice from our friends or from older Christians.

How can I help a younger Christian who is finding the going a bit tough?

Does it help me to grow as a Christian when I talk spiritual matters over with other Christians?



**FOR
SENIORS**

TAKING IT HOME

Everyone has a part to play in caring for others.

Are you as young people encouraging each other to grow and mature in your Christian faith? Does meeting as a group foster growth or are there peer pressures holding you back? Do you feel that the older folk of the corps encourage the young people? What more could they do? Do you ever approach them yourself?

Caring for each other is everyone's concern.

This session could see the beginning of young people really caring about each other. It might be a good time to think about other young people who have drifted away from the corps in recent months or years. Was lack of care part of the reason for losing them? Could genuine care be the means of bringing them back?

Challenge them to make a phone call, drop a note or visit one such person just to say, 'We miss you and care about you.'

FOLLOW-THRU

Link this session with a challenge from the leadership segment of the Get Involved and Grow strand. Assisting a local officer for a month or helping the Junior Soldier Sergeant both need the respective leaders apprenticing the young people to their respective roles.

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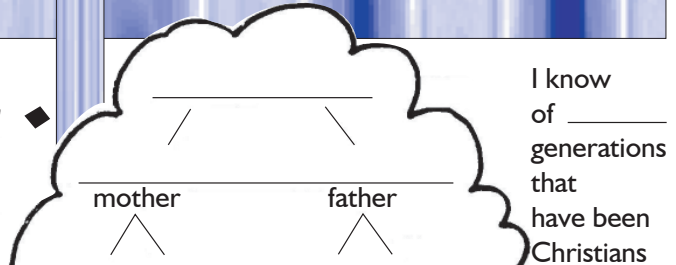
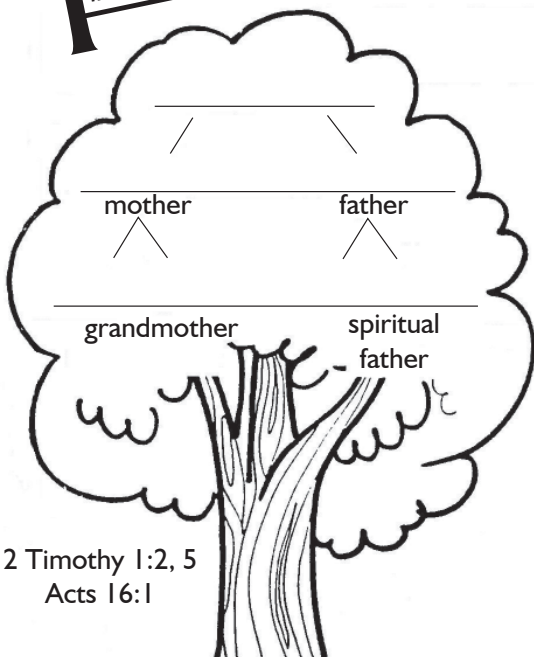
1. Growing Up Into Christ

Timothy

Me

<p style="text-align: right;">(Acts 16:1 - 2)</p> <p>Timothy was a _____</p> <p>He lived at _____</p> <p>His mother was _____</p> <p>His father was _____</p> <p>All the believers _____ of Timothy.</p> <p>Timothy was one of Paul's _____ (Acts 19:22)</p> <p>He was also Paul's _____ (Romans 16:21)</p> <p>Paul also thought Timothy was his _____ (1 Corinthians 4:17)</p> <p>Paul described Timothy as a _____ (Philippians 1:1)</p>	<p>I am _____</p> <p>I live at _____</p> <p>My mother is _____</p> <p>My father is _____</p> <p>The members of this Corps _____ of me.</p> <p>I am _____</p> <p>and _____</p> <p>_____ looks upon me</p> <p>as _____</p> <p>I would like to be described as _____</p>
--	---

2. Timothy's family tree



M y family tree

3.

Read these verses from Timothy. They are part of Paul's advice and encouragement to Timothy. Write out the verse you would find encouraging.

(1 Timothy 1:2; 1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 1:8; 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 2:1.)

HIGHLIGHTS

- We can all help to care for each other.
- Older Christians can give us wise advice.
- We should seek out someone to help us when we have problems.
- Paul constantly encouraged and cared for Timothy as he grew up into Christ.
- Restrictions can be put on us by our parents because they care for us.

4.

Sometimes we feel we're surrounded by advice and we wish people would just let us be! Yet, if we take it in the right spirit, it can really help us to think problems through. Write how you respond to the advice given to young Tim.

My Discipleship Partner says:
'Don't be nervous about tackling new jobs. You'll never know you can do them if you don't try!'

Mum says, 'I'm only talking to you like this because I love you and don't want you to make a mess of your life.'

Grandma says:
'I pray for you every day that you will continue to love and serve God.'

I think:
'How can I learn if I don't try everything out?'



1. Growing Up Into Christ

Data File on Timothy

Name _____

Town _____

Mother's name and nationality _____

Father's nationality _____

Standing in the Christian community _____

Paul looked upon him as a _____ and a _____

Paul was his spiritual father for he called Timothy 'his _____'

Timothy was a _____ of Christ Jesus.

Paul writing to Timothy called him _____

File on Me

Make up a similar file for yourself.

Children are the church of tomorrow and must be taught and encouraged.

2.

Timothy's family tree

mother father

grandmother spiritual father

2 Timothy 1:2, 5
Acts 16:1

mother father

grandparents grandparents

I know of _____ generations that have been Christians

My family tree

Hair clippings make good compost.

3.

Read these verses from Timothy. Write out the verse that encourages you most.

Timothy's father was Greek.

(1 Timothy 1:2; 1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 1:8; 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 2:1.)

4.

Around young Tim are all kinds of advice. Decide whether parents, grandparents, spiritual adviser or Tim, himself said them. Write their name under them. Highlight with blue the ones that would encourage you; highlight with yellow the ones that would aggravate you but you know are right, anyway.

I'm only talking to you like this because I love you and am trying to protect you from the consequences of some awful mistake.

You will look back on your life and be so glad that you began to serve God at an early age.

I reckon others would say, 'Who does he think he is?' if I tried to give a talk.

It's hard to listen to advice when you want to do your own thing.

God will give you the strength you need to do His work.

Keep going! It's easy to be discouraged and give up but it's worth hanging in there!

How can I learn if I don't try everything out?

More than anything else, I want to see you loving and serving God.

I pray for you everyday that God will be your friend and guide.

We dedicated you to God, but the final choice as to what you do with your life is yours

Don't be nervous about tackling new jobs. You'll never know what you can do if you don't try.

SESSION 17

THE WISE CHOICE

FROM THE BIBLE

Selected Scripture passages.

AIM

To help the young people understand better how to make wise decisions in accordance with God's will.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will understand that when we are seeking to do God's will we can:

- ❖ be more aware of the confidence God has in His children;
- ❖ see more clearly the steps a Christian can take to ensure they make good decisions;
- ❖ make wiser decisions.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

It is natural for teenagers who have made a commitment to God to want to be sure that the major decisions they make are part of His plan. They want positive signs that what they are doing is right. They are looking for God's approval and assurance on steps they have taken and they often want a dramatic sign that this is so.

For some people this does happen, for many it is a quiet conviction growing in their mind. For others it is only as they look back that they see that God was firmly in control.

We need to remember as we treat such a subject that:

- a. teenagers are impressionable;
- b. teenagers are very much working on a 'feeling' level;
- c. they are impulsive by nature – sometimes irrationally so;
- d. they are facing a time when some of the biggest decisions in their lives will have to be made.

If they do not 'feel' good and confident then they can wrongly decide that they are not really pleasing God. We must teach them the importance of knowing God's Word and the availability of wise counsel from older Christians, and that relying on feelings alone is not the way to make wise decisions.

They hear people who have been on the Christian road for many years speak of being in tune with God's leading and may enviously say He never really speaks to them.

That God is willing and able to guide His people is a fact. We know this from Scripture – from its promises (e.g. Proverbs 3:6 (GNB), 'he will show you the right way'), from its commands (e.g. Ephesians 5:17 (GNB), 'Don't be fools, then, but try to find out what the Lord wants you to do') and from its prayers (e.g. Colossians 4:12 (GNB), 'asking God to make

✓ CHECKLIST

There are three suggested Getting Started activities so choose which one you will use.

There are four teaching approaches. In approach 1 we consider God, the wise father, shepherd and king guiding His people.

Approach 2 considers why people can know and choose between right and wrong.

Approach 3 points out the Christian's aims when making choices.

Approach 4 gives positive ways of seeing that we are in God's will.

Try to use all of these. Shorten some of them if necessary or choose between approaches 2 and 3 having done 1 and then complete 4.

you stand firm as mature and fully convinced Christians in complete obedience to God's will').

Most Christians on occasions throughout their lives have become aware of the promptings of the Holy Spirit to do or not to do something. There have also been occasions when in retrospect the Christian sees that God has guided them in some miraculous way. e.g. Praying for someone at a moment when their name unexpectedly comes to mind, and discovering later that at that point in time they particularly needed God's help.

Others tell of prompting they had to act in a certain situation. They tell how they ignored these promptings only to find out later that it was God's guidance. Other sincere followers will also say that as they travelled through life, they never received a single supernatural message. Rather, they learned to obey God's general will for us. We need to know what the Bible does and does not say. Fanciful interpretations will lead to wrong decisions.

God's particular will for us is not necessarily found in the Bible, for it may be different for different members of His family. e.g. He does not set down in the Bible the names of the person we should marry but He sets down the basic rules for marriage. There can be no doubt that in such choices, having considered what the Bible says and asked the advice of Christians we know and trust, God expects us to use the common sense He has given us.

Don't let the world say of us that 'Christianity is just an easy option on making up your mind!' God helps us to choose wisely.

It is through the use of our own understanding, enlightenment by Scripture and prayer and the counsel of friends that God will lead us into a knowledge of His particular will for us.

We can be confident that God, whose children we are, will guide us through the decisions and choices we have to make.

GETTING STARTED

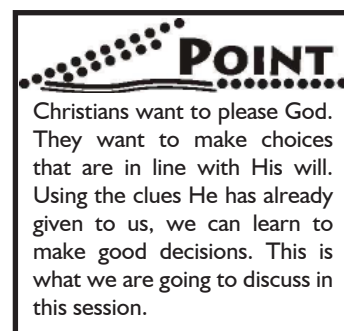
1. Quiz

Use activity I on the work sheet and ask the young people which of the things would be most helpful for them in making a big decision.

Or

2. Discussion

- a. You have received an invitation to two parties both of which are on at precisely the same time. You are equally friendly with both organisers. How would you determine which one to attend? Is there a right and a wrong choice?
- b. High school has offered a very interesting choice of five electives and it is difficult to choose two. Would you find an answer in the Bible for this?
- c. You have been given sufficient money to buy one pair of shoes. You find it is impossible to choose between the two pairs you like the most. Is God concerned about your choice?
- d. You have applied for, and actually been accepted for, two jobs of equal appeal. How would you choose between the two? Is one God's will for you and the other not?



Or

3. Discuss

How would you answer someone of a religious group who, because they cannot find any proof for it in the Bible, sincerely:

- a. refuses to join in a particular activity;
e.g. they will not participate in a church disco;
- b. will not utilize modern human inventions;
e.g. an aeroplane, 'God would have given people wings if He wanted them to fly'; television, 'It's a tool of the devil'.

GOING DEEPER

1. Bible search and discussion

How does God act as our Guide?

- a. Refer to Matthew 7:9 - 11.

What imagery of God is shown in this? (God is a good father.)

Does the wise father guide his child by formulating a plan that covers every detail of the child's life? Then does he reveal that plan step by step as each decision must be made?

No! A wise father teaches his child the basic principles of life, what is right and wrong, what is wise and foolish, then trains the child to make his own decisions making proper use of those guidelines.

Is this how God guides us?

- b. Refer to Psalm 23:1.

What imagery is used of God in this reference? (God is our shepherd.)

The good shepherd sets boundaries for his sheep, but allows freedom of movement within those boundaries. He does not point out the best spot from which to drink or the best tufts of grass. But he is there when the sheep gets into trouble.

- c. Refer to Psalm 97:1 - 2.

What imagery of God is used in this reference? (God is our king or ruler.)

A wise king or ruler does not act like a dictator. He establishes good laws and sees that penalties are in place for those who break the laws. He wants his people to respect him as a wise protector not a slave-driver to be feared.

God has given us **freedom of choice within His moral will.**

We see then that God does guide us as **a good father, a caring shepherd and a wise king.** He has set down basic principles of life and wants us to apply them in the choices we make.

2. Considering people's ability to choose

Extreme animal liberationists would say that people have no more right to existence than have some of the 'higher' or even 'lower' forms of life. However, people, so the Bible tells us, 'were created in the image of God' with powers and abilities distinct from the animal world.

Ask the young people to identify them. (List them on board.)

A moral sense,
a freedom to choose
and above all spiritual qualities (i.e. we have a soul).

Discuss what each of these enables people to do.

- a. **Moral sense** is the ability to discern between good and evil. We can understand what God sets down as right and wrong and that when we disobey His laws, we are sinning. i.e. we know if we steal or lie we have done wrong.
- b. **Freedom to choose** is the gift God gave to us so that each of us can choose to obey or disobey God's law.
We are all able to make choices and so order our own life and actions.
We will be influenced by our environment, by our personal traits and instincts for self-preservation but as humans, we have the capacity to organise and control these if we so desire. We can develop abilities and personal character if we persevere.
In times of great conflict or crises many people have performed great heroic acts at great cost to themselves because they chose to forget about themselves for the sake of an ideal or cause.
- c. **Spiritual qualities** are the desire to seek and worship God and the capacity to respond to the spiritual revelation He gives. Made in the 'image of God' means that humans can stand in a special relationship with God and with God's help want to obey Him.

Living with a high moral code and aiming to be like our Creator God, revealed supremely through Jesus Christ, is a matter of choice.

God wants us to decide to serve Him. Having determined that we will serve God, it is only natural that we will want to serve Him in the best way possible. We want to be **where** He wants us to be and **what** He wants us to be.

We want to become 'all that God has in mind for us to be'.

Read together Colossians 1:9 - 12.

What a powerful, positive picture Paul gives us of a person who is living as the Lord wants. God's ultimate will for people is that they **be like Jesus**.

As we grow more like Jesus, so we become more confident about the decisions we make.

3. Teaching about the Christian's aim

In all of life's decisions the Christian's aim should be:

- a. TO GLORIFY GOD (i.e. to please God).
Look again at Getting Started 2c. If either of two possible alternatives will glorify and please God, then He will be happy with your choice.
Would God want us to purchase the pair of shoes which looked the best on us? Or, to help our character, would he want us to choose the pair which were not as nice? Or for our health's sake would He want us to choose the pair that won't damage our feet? Or does He expect us to choose for ourselves on such issues?
- b. TO DECIDE WISELY.
Take a look at Psalm 32:8, 9. These two verses need to be read together.
Verse 8 contains a pledge of divine guidance: (Write it up.)
'I will **teach** you the way you should go;
I will **instruct** you and **advise** you.' (GNB)
God is not saying I'm going to lead you around by the nose so that you never have to think for yourself.

What are the three verbs? Underline or highlight them.
God's guidance is by teaching, instructing and advising.

Verse 9 continues:

'Don't be stupid like a horse or a mule, which must be controlled with a bit and bridle to make it submit.' (GNB)

We must not expect God to guide our every movement the way a rider guides a horse. Instead, as we learn more about the Christian life, we can decide if our actions are pleasing to God.

For example, friends at a party suddenly confront you with pills and want you to 'pop' a few. Do you know a Scripture verse that will help you to decide your actions? (Look at 1 Corinthians 6:19.) What does this tell me? What would my parents or Christian friends advise me to do? If my friends laugh and say they've been doing it for 12 months and I can see it isn't harming them and I think, 'I'm just a chicken', what then?

I need to remind myself that pleasing God is my primary aim and make a wise, not a pressured choice.

How can I learn how to be wise? The Bible says a great deal about wisdom. Look at these verses:

Romans 16:27; James 1:5; Proverbs 2:2 - 6.

As I go through life, I will find that past experiences help me to make wiser choices.

c. **TO RELY ON FAITH NOT FEELINGS.**

It is very dangerous to make choices based on whether or not you feel good. The world's motto is, 'if it feels good – do it!' A Christian living by this motto can end up in big trouble. Feelings, alone, cannot guide the Christian.

For the seniors

Ask the young people to give some examples of situations where it would be dangerous to rely on feelings to make a decision.

All groups consider this statement

Although we need to beware of making decisions to do something because it makes us feel good, we do have every right to feel good about making a wise decision.

Can they see the difference? Good feelings can come from good decisions but good decisions do not necessarily come from good feelings.

4. **Ways to be sure we are doing what God wants us to do**

a. **Knowing the Bible so that we know what His moral or general will for us is.**

We have already seen that God instructs us on how to find wisdom.

b. **Remembering He has given Christians a new nature which makes obedience to His moral will possible.**

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

When I am joined to Christ, my chief desire is to please Him rather than myself. So I will consider whether my decision will please Him rather than myself.

c. **Being positive that He is at work in us.**

Read Philippians 2:13.

'God is always at work in you to make you willing and able to obey His own purpose.' (GNB)

God doesn't leave us to struggle to obey Him. By His Spirit He provides the power we need and He gives us the desire to obey His will.

d. **Recognising that He opens doors of opportunity**

As we weigh up all the possibilities, think wisely and receive answers to our prayers, we can safely and confidently walk through the doors of opportunity to follow His plan for our life.

e. **Taking notice of convictions or inner impressions**

Give the young people opportunity to give examples of experiences they have had or stories they have heard of miraculous or unusual leadings of the Holy Spirit in some particular way. Have some occasions from your own life ready to tell. (e.g. To phone a person who was in real need, to go by a different route somewhere and realise afterwards that there was a purpose for this.)

It is important the young people are warned to be careful of:

- following impressions which do not conform to the moral will of God; i.e. He will not tell me to thump my brother because he took my bike without permission.
- always expecting God to lead in this kind of miraculous way. Sometimes He leads us to make the decision on what we know.

f. **Remembering that God at times prompts Christians to do things which defy human logic but His usual way of working is to use what He has given people – the powers of reason and logic, counsel of mature Christians and common sense.**

However, the basic rule must always be: **decisions must conform to the moral will of God.**

God will never tell me to do anything that is contrary to His law as set out in the Bible.

How I know it is what God wants me to do

Have the young people list three big decisions they must make in their lives (activity 3 on the work sheet).

Prior to making specific decisions ask yourself:

1. will this please God?
2. have I exercised wisdom?
3. am I relying on faith or feelings?

(This is activity 4 on the junior work sheet and activity 6 on the senior.)

TAKING IT HOME

The decisions/choices you make establish whether or not you are living in the will of God. i.e. doing what God wants.

God has given us freedom to choose anything within His revealed moral will. When we exercise wisdom and faith, our big decisions will be good for us and good for God and we can be assured of a wise decision.

There is no better way of living than knowing that you are doing what God wants you to do.

Pray especially for your young people asking that God will help them to make wise choices.

FOLLOW-THRU

Maybe there is a challenge in Get Involved and Grow that your young people have avoided but they 'feel' they ought to do. Encourage them to pray about such a challenge and use the points they have learned today to decide whether God would be pleased if they attempted such a task for Him.

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THE WISE CHOICE

1.

How do I decide?

Which of the following things would be most helpful in making a big decision?

- a. ___ asking your parent’s advice
- b. ___ praying about it
- c. ___ waiting a few days before deciding
- d. ___ reading a horoscope
- e. ___ asking a friend
- f. ___ looking at the possible consequences of the decision
- g. ___ making a decision as quickly as possible
- h. ___ flipping a coin
- i. ___ doing what everyone else does (going with the crowd)
- j. ___ letting someone else decide for you
- k. ___ finding Scripture that gives direction
- l. ___ going with what “feels right”
- m. ___ other: _____

HIGHLIGHTS

- God’s children want to please Him in all they do.
- God gave us rules to apply when making choices.
- God gives us wise friends and leaders who can counsel us when we’re not sure.
- God is pleased when we make wise choices.

2.

What choices are so important that you want to be sure they please God?

3.

List three BIG decisions (I mean BIG!) you must make for your life in the future. After each, write the date you hope to have decided.

DECISION	DATE
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

l i w l t i l e s p e a G d o ?

l i w l t i t h u r t h r o e s ?

s l t i a b s e d n o b l i c a b i l

i c h e t a n g ?

4.

The test to make:

5.

Find these words in the wonderword.

T	N	E	I	D	E	B	O	G	A
I	N	S	T	R	U	C	T	S	D
G	O	E	D	I	L	D	N	H	V
H	N	C	Y	A	W	O	S	E	I
O	A	I	R	L	I	O	W	P	S
R	W	O	K	S	L	R	A	H	E
S	M	H	I	P	L	A	N	E	A
E	Y	C	S	A	T	W	T	R	O
R	E	H	T	A	F	R	S	D	K
D	W	I	S	D	O	M	G	O	D

- DECISIONS INSTRUCT
- CHOICES ADVISE
- WILL HORSE
- PLAN MORAL
- OBEDIENT DOOR
- FATHER WANTS
- KING WAY
- SHEPHERD GOD
- WISDOM

Write out the letters not used to complete this verse

‘ _____ in you to make you willing
and able to obey his own purpose.’ (Philippians 2:13, GNB)

6.

Take at least five words from the wonderword and use them to write a summary of what you learned in this session.

THE WISE CHOICE

Don't do that!
 I shouldn't have done that!
 Decisions
 Make up your mind
 That's O.K.!
 Decisions
 choices
 Whoops!
 choices
 Make up your mind
 choices

LORD WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?

Lobsters have blue blood.

1.

How do I decide?
Which of the following things would be most helpful in making a big decision?

- a. ___ asking your parent's advice
- b. ___ praying about it
- c. ___ waiting a few days before deciding
- d. ___ reading a horoscope
- e. ___ asking a friend
- f. ___ looking at the possible consequences of the decision
- g. ___ making a decision as quickly as possible
- h. ___ flipping a coin
- i. ___ doing what everyone else does (going with the crowd)
- j. ___ letting someone else decide for you
- k. ___ finding Scripture that gives direction
- l. ___ going with what "feels right"
- m. ___ other: _____

Indecision means less and less action.

2.

What response would you give to someone who made this statement?
 'If it feels good it must be right.'

Joshua stood up and told the Children of Israel they had to make up their mind who they would serve.

If you sit on the fence for too long, you're sure to fall off.

3.

List three BIG decisions (I mean BIG!) you must make for your life in the future. After each, write the date you hope to have decided.

DECISION	DATE
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

God always opens another door when He closes one.

Some choices vitally affect the rest of our life.

4.

Find these words in the wonderword.

T	N	E	I	D	E	B	O	G	A
I	N	S	T	R	U	C	T	S	D
G	O	E	D	I	L	D	N	H	V
H	N	C	Y	A	W	O	S	E	I
O	A	I	R	L	I	O	W	P	S
R	W	O	K	S	L	R	A	H	E
S	M	H	I	P	L	A	N	E	A
E	Y	C	S	A	T	W	T	R	O
R	E	H	T	A	F	R	S	D	K
D	W	I	S	D	O	M	G	O	D

- DECISIONS INSTRUCT
- CHOICES ADVISE
- WILL HORSE
- PLAN MORAL
- OBEDIENT DOOR
- FATHER WANTS
- KING WAY
- SHEPHERD GOD
- WISDOM

5.

Write out the letters not used to complete this verse

‘_____ in you to make you willing

and able to obey his own purpose.’ (Philippians 2:13, GNB)

Take at least five words from the wonderword and use them to write a summary of what you learned in this session.

6.

Rules to apply when I am facing an important choice.

SESSION 18

HINDUISM BUDDHISM ISLAM??

FROM THE BIBLE

Exodus 20:3; Romans 10:9 - 15;
John 14:6.

✓ CHECKLIST

Find out any information about the nearest mosque/temple.

You may be able to invite an active Christian who has worked in a country where Christianity is not the major religion to come as a guest to this session. He/she could relate this to how that religion is practised in New Zealand.

While you are teaching about the religion, your young people could be sampling some of the food from countries where it is practised. Organise some of the parents or discipleship partners to cook a dish or two from the appropriate countries listed in the notes.

Extra notes are provided in the session to be photocopied and given to group members.

AIM

To give the young people a basic understanding of the major non-Christian religions in New Zealand and to clarify our attitudes to such non-Christians.

OBJECTIVES

Through this session the young people will:

- ❖ have a basic understanding of three of the major non-Christian religions;
- ❖ realise that many non-Christian religions are practised in New Zealand;
- ❖ be better equipped to communicate with followers of such non-Christian religions;
- ❖ be challenged to consider the reality of their own faith and how well they understand it.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

How should a Christian treat the fact that there are so many different faiths in the world? For centuries the Church as a whole had one answer to that question – ignore the fact! The other religions were there, certainly, but only to be preached at and rescued from – they had no worth in themselves.

During the last century, Christians in general have abandoned this rigid view of other religions. Modern communications have brought people much closer together. Even world wars have helped this closeness to come about, and people have been forced to look at other people and acknowledge both their merits and their faults. Few people in the modern world can now live their day-to-day lives without meeting people of other beliefs (either in the flesh or through newspapers and television) and observing how they go about their personal life, their recreation, and so on. When we take time to look at others in this way, we realise that we have more in common than we thought. In recent decades, we have gone on to study and observe other religions. This study includes such things as the way people worship, what they believe about immortality, the kind of religious dress that they wear, whether or not they have special days and ceremonies, what kind of religious buildings they erect, etc.

Some misunderstanding would disappear if every young Christian knew some things about the major religions.

In presenting this session from a biblical point of view we can draw on one of Paul's arguments, used when he was trying to get the Christian Jews to accept the fact that Gentiles could also share the gospel.

We accept that God is the God 'of Gentiles ... God is one' (Romans 3:29 - 30). Paul goes on: 'he will put the Jews right with himself on the basis of their faith, and will put the Gentiles right through their faith' (GNB). This means, among other things, that God is the God of the Hindus and the Muslims and the Jews, and of every religion that looks to divinity as its basis. He is as concerned with their world as with ours, because He is the Father of all people.

So Christians are advised to learn about people of other faiths. By observing their customs and comparing them with our own; appreciating their hold on some truths, and learning from their devotion and sincerity; we can then grow stronger in our own faith.

Such tolerance and respect will not mean that the Christian will stop evangelising, and will be content to let others keep their ideas of God, right or wrong. Basing itself on commands to spread the message, Christianity has from the very beginning accepted this duty. This command sent Paul on journeys. It was the cause of Philip's compulsion to speak to a North African (Acts 8:26 - 40). Because of it millions of personal contacts are made by Christians including Paul's attempt to argue the Athenians out of their classical paganism (Acts 17:22 - 31).

An evangelism which includes understanding and respect will be different from one which arrogantly assumes that everything the Church does is right and everything any other religion does is wrong. This kind of evangelism will try to force on to other cultures all the trappings, rituals, mistakes, misunderstandings, false traditions, etc, of Western culture simply because they are a part of visible Christianity, even if such things are expressly condemned in Scripture. Jesus had a very harsh word for such evangelists, though we do not always take His warning because it was directed at proselytizing Pharisees: 'How terrible for you ... hypocrites! You sail the seas and cross whole countries to win one convert; and when you succeed, you make him twice as deserving of going to hell as you yourselves are' (Matthew 23:15, GNB).

No, we evangelise because we believe that Jesus gave us a greater insight into God than did any of the teachers and leaders revered by other faiths. When we think wrongly about God, our life loses a certain quality. Wrong ideas of God have led to human sacrifice, inflicting self-punishment on the body, holy wars, poverty or crippling superstitions. A study of the New Testament will show that every one of those ideas, and many more besides, must disappear when we really understand what God is like. The revelation of Jesus Christ, is the message we must take to other faiths.

DEFINITION

Proselytizing: Endeavouring to make converts from one faith to another.

GETTING STARTED

Either

If you have travelled and experienced sights, sounds and smells from other countries, describe these and then get your group to tell their experiences.

It would be helpful if you had some pictures or travel brochures to pass around.

Today we don't have to travel – other cultures have come to our land and

brought with them their way of life, including their religious beliefs.

Or

Perhaps the young people have school friends or you may even have people in the corps from another country.

They could talk about the differences in general:

- language;
- clothing;
- eating habits;
- attitudes (for example to education or to work);
- beliefs.

Or

Your special guest could describe the country in which they worked including the points mentioned above.

POINT

Many nationalities make up our society and we have adopted some of the food and attitudes from other cultures. Today we are going to think about the beliefs of other cultures and what our response should be to the religious side of multiculturalism.

GOING DEEPER

I. Form the young people into small groups or pairs. Ask them to brainstorm in their groups what they know about the following three religions: Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.

After a few minutes, hand to each group the following cut up descriptions of the different religions. Around the wall have ready displayed four sheets of paper, each headed with one of the following religions – Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.

With tape or blu-tac have them attach the descriptions to where they feel they best belong.

Jesus is one of many incarnates of god.	Rig Veda – Holy Scriptures	Three ways to attain salvation – works, knowledge and devotion.
No personal God.	No acknowledgement of Jesus.	Salvation – to attain Nirvana – the highest spiritual plane.
Koran (Qur'an) – Holy Scriptures.	Jesus was a great prophet but not the son of God.	Salvation is gained by submission to the will of Allah.
Loving Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things. Three persons in the Godhead.	Jesus is God's only begotten Son, truly God and truly man. Belief in His death on the cross is the way to salvation.	Believe in heaven and hell. Jesus will return one day to judge the world.

The key to these descriptions are as follows:

(H – Hinduism, B – Buddhism, I – Islam, C – Christianity)

- H – Jesus is one of many incarnates of god.
- H – Rig Veda – Holy Scriptures.
- H – Three ways to attain salvation – works, knowledge and devotion.

- B – No personal God.
- B – No acknowledgement of Jesus.
- B – Salvation – to attain Nirvana – the highest spiritual

plane.

- I — Koran (Qur'an) — Holy Scriptures.
- I — Jesus was a great prophet but not the son of God.
- I — Salvation is gained by submission to the will of Allah.

- C — Loving Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things.
Three person in the Godhead.
- C — Jesus is God's only Son, truly God and truly man.
Belief in his death on the cross is the way to salvation.
- C — Believe in heaven and hell.
Jesus will return one day to judge the world.

2. There are many beliefs in our culture today. In an effort to be tolerant some people say, it doesn't matter what you believe so long as you are sincere.

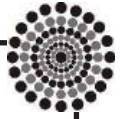
Do you agree with this?

Does the Bible agree with this?

Read and discuss Romans 10:10 - 13 and John 14:6.

There were a few facts that we weren't quite sure about as we looked at other faiths so now we will spend some time in looking more closely at them. Divide your young people into three groups. (These can be as small as pairs or individuals). Give each group one of the photocopies that you have made of pages 166 to 168. Allow them a few minutes to read through the material and highlight the parts that they see as important to report to the whole group. Then come back together to listen to these reports.

3. Turn to the work sheet for the comparison chart of the three religions. Use this basic comparison to help with discussion for this session.



LEADER TIP

Offer copies of the resource pages to those who would like to take them home for further reading.

HINDUISM

'Hindu' is the Persian word for 'Indian' and so 'Hinduism' is the religion of the peoples of India. Hinduism is a vast subject for it has no founder and no creed. But it does possess scripture, and the most ancient of these, the *Rig Veda*, help us to understand Hinduism as a whole.

The *Rig Veda* consists of hymns to their gods to be used at sacrifices and are the world's oldest living religious literature and Hinduism's most sacred book.

The religion develops

Hinduism is like a great, deep river into which over more than 3,000 years, many streams have flowed. The streams are the beliefs and practices of the numerous races, ethnic groups and cultures of the Indian subcontinent. This means that there are almost as many versions of Hinduism as there are villages or groups of Hindus!

The underlying current providing unity is the religion which grew out of the *Rig Veda* and later Vedic writings. It has certain discernible features. One of these is the doctrine of reincarnation: the belief that at death the soul always passes into another body until it is released from this continuous wheel of rebirth.

The many ways of salvation

Hindus number about 700 million. They are mostly to be found in India, but also in other parts of the world. Hinduism offers three ways of salvation from the wheel of rebirth. These are: philosophy or knowledge, works of religious observance, and devotion.

So existing side by side in Hinduism we find:

- philosophical reasoning concerning Ultimate Reality
- the most patient discipline of concentrated meditation or religious observance;
- and the dedicated devotion of image-worship associated with countless popular gods.

Since the early nineteenth century, various reform movements have also arisen as Indians have come into contact with Western culture.

Essentially, to be a Hindu today is to believe in the Hindu way of life and to follow it to the best of one's ability.

Beliefs

Hindus are monotheists at heart; they believe in one High God – Brahman, 'the Absolute' – who rules over the world with the aid of many lesser gods. To the educated Hindu the lesser gods have a status similar to that of saints and angels in certain branches of Christianity. To the ordinary believer or 'village Hindu', however, they are considerably more important.

The religion of these people – popular Hinduism – may be divided into three branches or sects, each with its own view of the nature and name of the High God: Vishnu, Shiva or Shakti. Families, by long tradition, support one branch or another. All branches are to be found in every part of India. The three sects continue together more or less in harmony, with devotees of one god occasionally worshipping at the shrine of another. Educated Hindus believe that the three gods are merely differing ways of looking at the same High God or Ultimate Reality.

Hinduism in the home

All the most important Hindu rites are performed in the home. Hindus worship as individuals and families, not as congregations. Most houses have either a room or a corner in which there is a family shrine. The shrine contains an image or emblem of the deity. There are brightly-coloured pictures illustrating Hindu mythology or depicting the exploits of the gods. First the worshipper anoints the god, while reciting texts. Then he/she sits down in front of it to meditate. Incense or joss sticks are lit and flowers and food are placed in front of the shrine. Worship in the temple follows a similar pattern.

The path of duty is the way to salvation. Duty well done will obtain the release of the soul from the continuous cycle of life, death and rebirth.

A way of living

Hinduism is a way of life. It is a path of duty to be followed within a divinely ordered society. The basic unit of society is the family. And so an individual's life is marked at every stage by domestic ritual. Birth, initiation, marriage and death – each has its ritual, as well as rites of daily worship and annual festivals. The individual is reminded that he is part of a family. He is also made aware that the family is part of a caste and the caste part of a social class.

There are four great classes: the priests (*brahmins*), the nobles (*kshatriyas*), the merchants and peasants (*vaishyas*), and the manual labourers (*shudras*). There are also outcasts and unclassified peoples. All are divided into several castes or sub-classes, each with its appropriate duty. Traditionally, the four classes were looked on as totally separate species. A member of one class would not marry a member of another class – nor even eat a meal with him.

Nowadays, at least theoretically, such distinctions have been abolished. We can see from this belief why Christianity appeals to the lower caste and outcast Indians but not to those who feel they are far superior to others.

BUDDHISM

The two Buddhisms

There are two distinct types of Buddhism, Theravada and Mahayana, springing from a common root. Theravada is often called the 'Little Vehicle' and Mahayana the 'Great Vehicle', since the Buddhist doctrine is pictured as a vehicle, a raft or ship, which carries believers across the ocean of the world of suffering to a 'Beyond' – to salvation, to bliss.

Theravada is the earliest form of Buddhism. Its teaching is based on a collection of doctrines. Mahayana belongs to the second phase of Buddhist thought.

The vast majority of Buddhists adhere to Mahayana and live in the northern countries of Nepal, Tibet, Vietnam, China, Korea and Japan. Theravada is dominant in the south-east Asian countries of Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Kampuchea. In India, land of its birth, Buddhism is a minority religion currently undergoing revival. In China, Tibet, Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, Buddhism is under threat and its survival uncertain. Buddhism is enjoying increasing acceptance in the West. Estimates of the extent of Buddhism vary from 200 million to one third of the world's population.

Gautama the Buddha

The founder of Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama, lived from 563 to 483 BC (approximately). What is known of his life and teachings is based on the scriptures of Theravada Buddhism. These were written in the ancient Pali language about 400 years after Gautama's death. For early Buddhism it was the work of its founder, rather than his life, which was of greatest importance.

Gautama was born and brought up in a little town in the foothills of the Himalayas in what is now Nepal. He was reared in delightful palaces, schooled in the princely arts and married to a beautiful princess who bore him a son. However, while his son was still an infant, Gautama began to be disturbed by the problem of suffering.

Renunciation and enlightenment

Then came **the great renunciation**. Gautama left his wife and infant son to live the life of a severely disciplined monk. For six years, with five companions, he strove to find release from the weariness of existence. By the end he was reduced to skin and bones; yet he had not attained his goal. He therefore left his companions and went to meditate under a Bo-tree by the Riva Gaya. It was there that he received **the great enlightenment**. He discerned that desire was the cause of suffering and at the root of trouble. Moreover, desire could be stopped by following the Middle Way between the extreme of sensuousness and self discipline.

The way to release

Buddhism's Middle Way appears to be a religion of self-effort without reference to the gods. The self or soul is made up of five elements or skandhas – body, feelings, perception, impulses and consciousness – and it is constantly changing. It is not a 'permanent self' which connects a person's new life to the life of their former existence. Rather it is the 'deeds' of karma (the law of cause and effect) which link one existence to another. The goal of human existence is nirvana, the state of bliss arrived at when desire ceases and karma is no more. Nirvana is not annihilation, not nothingness, and yet it is formless and uncreated.

The layman and the monk

For the lay pilgrim, worship (puja) is a way of earning merit, and consists of offering gifts and services to the Three Jewels (Buddha, his doctrine and the order of monks). The worshipper places a large vase of flowers in front of an image of the Buddha. He joins his hands in front of his face, bows, kneels and prostrates himself. He chants the liturgy and passages of scripture from the Tripitaka, performs ritual acts of reverence and burns incense. In an offering of inner worship, he contemplates an image of the Buddha.

Outside the pagoda, at the foot of one of the giant guardian lions, is a young monk, or **bhikku**, chanting the liturgy as he counts the beads of a rosary. For him, as for the pilgrim, worship is individual, not communal. Moreover, acts of worship are performed by monks, not by lay people because the monk is Buddhism's norm, perhaps the only true Buddhist. It is said that if a layman gains the Buddhist bliss (**nirvana**) it is because he has been a monk in a previous existence.

The monk is marked out by his yellow or saffron robes (consisting of three garments), his shaven head, and beard. His only possessions are his robes, an alms bowl, a razor, a needle and a water-strainer. He begs for his food. In the Buddhist lands of south-east Asia, every morning monks are to be seen on their begging-round, holding their alms bowls in outstretched hands.

Monks enter the order (**sangha**) by means of special ordination ceremonies. They are not however, bound to the monastic life for ever, they may leave whenever they wish. In certain countries, all boys spend some time, perhaps as little as a week, in a monastery as part of their religious education.

It was inevitable that Buddhism should develop a doctrine of salvation attainable by all, not just by the monks. It demands discipline in meditation, in study and in the ordering of life according to the set principles of Buddhism. God's grace plays no part in a Buddhist's life.

WHAT ARE THE ORIGINS OF ISLAM?

The following extract is from *Answers to Tough Questions* by Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, 1980, published by Here's Life Publishers and used with permission.

'Approximately 500 million people, about one-seventh of the world's population, are Muslims.

The founder of the religion is Muhammad, who, according to Muslims, was the greatest of all the prophets.

Muhammad was born in AD 570 in Mecca. One evening in a cave on Mt. Hira, where he often went to pray, he is said to have heard a loud voice telling him to 'read'.

Protesting that he could not read, he heard the voice command him again. He was then shown a scroll on which words were emblazoned with fire. Although he had never previously read a word, Muhammad miraculously read the scroll.

Muhammad saw in human form the angel Gabriel, who said to him, 'Oh Muhammad! You are Allah's messenger, and I am Gabriel.'

His mission as an apostle of God was to proclaim to his idolatrous people a pure monotheism.

At the outset, his message met with great resistance, which included persecution and exile from his own people. He claimed to receive further revelations from Allah, which proclaimed himself as successor of the prophets, including Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Muhammad eventually viewed himself as the final messenger Allah would send to the world, making him **the** prophet.

Because of opposition Muhammad and his followers moved from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD. This date provides the commencement of the Islamic calendar.

At 60 years of age, Muhammad and his army marched upon Mecca in an attempt to claim this as the Holy City of Islam, eventually conquering it against overwhelming odds. Two years later the prophet of Allah died (AD 632).

The pattern was set for the followers of Muhammad. The enemies of Allah must be overthrown. Islam quickly spread beyond the Arabian borders, capturing Jerusalem by AD 636.

By 715, the empire had spread from the Chinese frontier westward to the Atlantic Ocean. Thus Islam began its quest to follow the principles of Allah, and has subsequently grown into one of the world's major religions.'

The Muslims accept that Jesus was a great prophet but to say He was God, to them is blasphemous for there is only one God. The Muslim creed says there is **no God but Allah** and **Muhammad** is His prophet.

He taught that man must submit to Allah. **'Islam'** means **submission** and **'Muslim'** means **slave of God**.

God was said to save whom He wills and lead astray others. The Kingdom of God would come by submission to Allah (God). Muhammad's messages were compiled into what is now known as the Qur'an (commonly called the Koran).

Muhammad knew about Jesus and admired Him but became mixed up about the Trinity, and stated God is only ONE person. They (Muslims) also believe Jesus was never crucified but Judas was. When Jesus spoke of sending the Holy Spirit as the Comforter – these people believe He was referring to Muhammad. They wrongly believe that Christians include Mary in the Trinity.

You can see there are similarities but then the truth as we understand it in Jesus becomes distorted.

There are several groups within Islam but all hold to the FIVE PILLARS OF FAITH.

a. **Confession of faith**

There is NO God but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet. The Trinity is not to be considered.

b. **Daily prayers**

Faithful Muslims are required to recite prayers five times a day, at dawn, midday, mid-afternoon, sunset and bedtime. They have a public meeting at the mosque on Friday.

c. **Fasting** (Ramadan)

There is a special month set aside for fasting (they fast from dawn till dusk every day in this month). The fasting is meant to bring about complete reformation.

d. **Almsgiving**

It is treated as a duty to give money to charity.

e. **Pilgrimage**

The greatest event in the life of a Muslim is to visit Mecca. Having been to Mecca, they receive a title to signify they have made the pilgrimage.

Some say there is a sixth pillar of faith – 'holy wars' or jihad. On the one hand, the Qur'an calls believers to 'fight in the way of God' against those who fight against them – though it forbids them to commit aggression. On the other hand, it also recommends that those who 'ascribe partners to God' (so denying the unity of God) are infidels and should be killed. Jews and Christians would be made to pay tribute, unless they submit. A Muslim believes he will go straight to heaven if killed in a 'holy war'.

TAKING IT HOME

Other major world religions have a very different view of God from Christians (leaving aside Judaism). If the Christian message is true, other religions have got it seriously wrong.

Christians are called to show what God is like by living (with God's help) in a righteous, just and loving way. The call for others of different faiths to repentance and faith in Christ, and to turn aside from any form of idolatry is no less a call for us within the Christian faith to put aside anything which stands in the way of a full experience of the lordship of Christ.

Our lives need to show that God's way is better and right. I Peter 3:15 - 16 is a useful guide: 'Honour Christ and let him be the Lord of your life. Always be ready to give an answer when someone asks you about your hope. Give a kind and respectful answer and keep your conscience clear.' (CEV)

FOLLOW-THRU

The 'Be a friend' or 'Pray for your friends' challenges in the Get Involved and Grow could be placed before your group members as they consider their acquaintances who may be from other faiths.

FURTHER READING

McDowell, Josh; Stewart, Don. *Concise Guide to Today's Religions*, Scripture Press, 1988.

Mather, George; Nichols, Larry; *Dictionary of Cults, Sects, Religions and the Occult*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1993.

Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam??



	Jesus	God	Holy Book	Salvation	Other
<p>Hinduism</p> <p>Originated around 1500 B.C.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One of many incarnates of god. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An undefinable impersonal god. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rig Veda. <p>1028 hymns to their gods to be used at sacrifices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Salvation is a release from rebirth. ● There are three ways that lead to salvation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - works, - knowledge, - devotion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Believe in reincarnation - at death the soul passes into another body and is rebirthed. ● Meditation is important. ● Hinduism is tolerant of other religions. ● It has many similarities to the new age movement.
<p>Buddhism</p> <p>Founded by Siddhartha Gautama 563 - 483 B.C.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No acknowledgment of Jesus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No personal god. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tripitaka – three collections of scripture dealing with discipline, teaching and theology. ● Dhammapada – the oldest Buddhist text deals with morality and self discipline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Salvation is a state of mind called 'Nirvana'. This is a higher spiritual plane and is reached by the blowing out of the flame of desire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any and all desire results in sin.
<p>Islam</p> <p>Founded by Muhammad 570 - 632 A.D.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jesus was a great prophet but is no way the Son of God. ● Jesus' special powers came from Allah. ● Jesus was not crucified, it was Judas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet. ● Allah is a supreme, impersonal God who is very deficient in the attributes of love, holiness and grace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Qur'an – commonly known as the Koran. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Muslim escapes the anger of Allah by obeying the "5 Pillars of Faith". ● Confession of faith. ● Daily prayer. ● Fasting. ● Giving of alms. ● Pilgrimage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The word Islam means – submission to the will of Allah. ● They believe all Christians are infidels who go to a special hell. ● Holy Spirit is a divine instrument of Allah.
<p>Christianity</p> <p>Developed from Judaism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jesus is God's only Son. ● Truly God and truly man. ● Faith in Jesus is the only means of salvation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A loving creator, preserver and governor of all things. ● There are three persons in the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Salvation is God's gift when we repent of sins and through faith accept that Jesus died in our place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Believe in heaven and hell. ● Jesus will return again to judge the world.

2

What should my attitude be to someone who believes differently to me?

Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam??

3

Should I invite them to read my Bible?

Should I read some of their religious books?

HIGHLIGHTS

- Many non-Christian religions are practised in New Zealand
- It is important to know about some of these other religions so we can understand the actions of followers of other faiths.
- I need to distinguish what it means to be faithful to Christ in this culture, and not to confuse culture and Christ.

Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam??

2

● Mahatma Gandhi is often described as a non-Christian Christian.

Divide into pairs – one will act as a person from a non-Christian religion and the other a Christian. Now see if you can convince the other person about what you believe. Try and use some Scripture verses you know to show your point of view. Write out one of the verses you used:

● Christianity has reached only about 25% of the world's population in just under 2,000 years.

3

Is it a good thing for people to discuss their beliefs or should we let others believe what they will even though we believe Jesus is the only way? **Discuss.**

● Saladin, leader of the Muslims at the time of the Crusades, was called 'the greatest Christian of them all', because of his chivalry in battle and his respect for the rules of war.

4

Do you think the way we live will help to convince any non-Christian that the answer is found in the Christian faith? On the other hand, do many nominal Christians do damage to the Christian faith? **Discuss.**

5

'We should continue to love those of other faiths just as we love the sinner to try and bring them into the Kingdom.' **Discuss.**

● The 1981 census revealed that Australia has 373 Chinese who call themselves Jewish and 29 Buddhists from Israel.



WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?

AIM

To give the young people some skills and understanding to help them cope with the inevitable changes in themselves and their friends.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people should realise that:

- ❖ we live in an ever-changing natural and social world;
- ❖ change is a common process in life and it need not be feared;
- ❖ as individuals we can help bring about positive change;
- ❖ we can use spiritual resources to help us cope with and understand change.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Someone has said 'we live in a world of permanent change'. Attitudes change, climate changes, fashions change, technology changes.

In multicultural New Zealand racial groups are contributing to further changes in our life style.

The older we get, the more we resist and dislike change. We actually work for stability and security.

Mostly, when adults think of change they think of negatives – e.g. work redundancy, sudden disability, children leaving 'the nest', divorce, bereavement, retirement, etc.

For all of us, physical change is inevitable and sometimes depressing – wrinkles, grey hair, overweight, declining physique, but with this maturation, hopefully, comes wisdom, knowledge and character development.

For the teenager, change after the virtual stability of slow, almost unnoticed growth in the 7 - 10 years age group, can be overwhelming. We need to remember to teach them that change can be productive and positive even if it does mean moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar, from certainty to uncertainty, from security to insecurity.

Keep in mind that the young people are in the age group that experiences dramatic changes over which they have no control. These changes take place for 6 - 7 years:

In early adolescence (12 - 14 years) the physical changes are dominant.

SESSION 19

FROM THE BIBLE

Luke 15:11 - 32; John 6:16 - 21.

CHECKLIST ✓

There are three suggested Getting Started activities to choose from. Prepare what you will need.

The second Getting Started activity is an introduction to the idea of change. Either display material from natural history illustrating metamorphosis (cocoon, caterpillar, butterfly or silkworm, cocoon, moth, eggs) and/or illustrations of history of costume or development and progress of motor vehicles to present day.

There are four teaching approaches. Try to cover the first three.

Approach 1 applies the idea of change to the young people's own experiences. You will need a board to list the young people's responses.

Approach 2 suggests ways in which the young people can cope with change and goes through activity 1 on the work sheets.

Approach 3 traces change faced by those in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Read this parable carefully considering the emotions felt by all of the characters as their circumstances altered.

Approach 4 is a further Scripture search if you feel the seniors need extra references. Be familiar with these.

In middle adolescence (14 - 17 years) the emotions become dominant.

In late adolescence (above 17 years) the independent identity emerges.

GETTING STARTED

1. In pairs:

- a. study your partner carefully for two minutes;
- b. turn back to back and make five changes to yourself (e.g. hair style, tuck in collar, cross your eyes);
- c. face your partner – identify the changes your partner made.

Have the young people who made the most dramatic changes show everyone else.

Have them call out what reaction they had to the changes and list them.

This could include:

frustration	panic
disbelief	resistance
mirth	disgust
bewilderment	

These are some of the reactions to change. How many were negative?

Or

2. **Display and discuss**

Have the young people walk around and look at the diagrams you have displayed, e.g. metamorphosis diagrams, the development in fashions and/or vehicles. Discuss briefly giving emphasis to the process of change. e.g. Have the changes been necessary, were they improvements, have they made life simpler or more complicated?

Or

3. Lead the group in a fun game of machines. Have the group stand in a circle. Someone stands in the centre and starts doing an action with a noise.

One by one the young people join together with the one already there, working off them but bring their own noise and action.

The game ends when everyone has joined together to make a new machine with all its different noises and movements.

POINT

From the Getting Started activities, stress how changes occur all the time both in our situation or personal appearance. As we grow, we change. Learning how to accept these changes and cope with altered situations is part of our daily living.

GOING DEEPER

1. **Listing changes that happen to us all**

a. **Moving to high school**

Ask the group to consider the transition to high school. What changes did they have to make? List these as the young people call them out. They should include:

- suddenly being one of a huge crowd of students;
- getting used to a separate teacher for each subject;
- wider competition in academic work, sport and leadership;
- exposure to various ethnic groups and 'foreign' ways of thinking;
- need to make responsible decisions concerning courses, study patterns, possible career;

- not knowing where rooms are when new to the school;
- being the youngest rather than the oldest;
- pressure to experiment, e.g. with drugs, sex, alcohol and cigarettes;
- less protected environment;
- responsible for own travel to school;
- a broadening of education, new ideas and philosophies;
- greater independence;
- new experiences at parties and other social functions;
- more homework, requiring later nights.

b. Physical changes

Added to the adjustment to high school are the confusing and occasionally miserable experiences which go with adolescence.

Again the group may like to suggest these changes and you could remind them of any listed here that they left out.

Physical changes take place as the child moves to adulthood. Sometimes these are embarrassing – ‘broken’ voice, overweight, acne, suddenly very tall, big feet, awkwardness, skinny, feelings of tiredness, sluggishness, moodiness, aches and pains. The body is constantly changing, replacing cells, skin, hair. Puberty changes the shape of the body. Sexual maturity prepares the body for reproduction. This growth is God’s gift to us; it’s involuntary but necessary.

c. Emotional changes

It is impossible to go through such great changes without having our emotions deeply affected. Discuss the various feelings that arise and are perfectly normal.

i. Discontent with personal appearance

Often there is discontent about appearance, fear of not being attractive to the opposite sex, being socially inadequate or unacceptable, having low self-esteem. The drive to conform, to be in the ‘in group’ is very strong. Young people are often in conflict with parents because of trendy clothing, hair styles, jewellery, social behaviour, attitudes, friendships and a drive for independence.

ii. Desire to be accepted by peers

Peer pressure is very powerful. The clashing of home values and parental expectations with school and social influences together with a desire to be accepted, can make a young person totally miserable.

Rebellion and unwillingness to take advice commonly result. Violent mood swings can be felt. Many experiences can be very painful because of the changes they make e.g., being dropped by a girl or boy friend, failure to make the sports team, an alarming drop in school grades, not being made a school prefect, being ‘unsuccessful’ in attracting the opposite sex.

iii. Being treated like a child

Teenagers feel they know best and find it hard to take advice. Christians have to live in two worlds – home and church, school and secular. Arguments at home are very distressing. As the adolescent moves towards independence, he or she may experience great misery, depression, confusion and/or bewilderment. ALL THIS IS FAIRLY NORMAL!

2. Ways to cope

a. What I can do

Nine positive ideas are set out as activity I on both work sheets. Ask the young people to read them through, after reading discuss each one. They can then do as the work sheet suggests.

b. What God will do

DOES GOD KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? Often we feel disappointed in our spiritual performance and the way our spirit seems to change when we're having a hard time. Sometimes our loyalty to Jesus is shaky, we're embarrassed about being a Christian. Emerging independence seems to be self-centred. God knows and He cares about our circumstances.

We can tell from Jesus' concern for His disciples that He cares for us. Jesus knew about the unexpected and changing weather conditions when the disciples were out on the lake. Their experience was frightening but His coming brought peace, calm and confidence. (Read together John 6: 16 - 21.)

3. Scripture study

Read or tell the story of Luke 15:11 -32.

This is a parable you probably know well. But right now we want to consider how each of the main characters in this parable faced change.

- a. **The Younger Son** chose change but did not have the strength and security to cope. Things went wrong. His life seemed wrecked until he begged his father's forgiveness. He rediscovered love and acceptance – and saw his own weakness. A further change gave him a new start.
- b. **The Elder Son** built security around himself – a proud workman, son and heir. His brother's return made him bitter, he'd been faithful and hadn't left the family in the lurch. Even though his position in the family and his father's love did not change, he felt angry that a great party was going on for 'this waster'.
- c. **The Father** responded with joy to his younger son's repentance. For the whole time the son was away, even though the father was hurt and disappointed he had continued to love his boy. Now his patient love was rewarded. That same patience and love was offered to the elder son who seemed to be unable to understand his father and why he was so happy when the 'lost' son returned.

4. Further verses for seniors

As each verse is read, discuss with your group how the verse can encourage them in times of difficult changes.

Luke 1:80 Ephesians 4: 13 - 14

1 Corinthians 13: 11 Hebrews 13:8

2 Corinthians 3:18 2 Peter 3:18

TAKING IT HOME

FOLLOW-THRU

Urge your young people to consider a Get Involved and Grow challenge that would help them face change. (i.e. a challenge that would 'stretch' them or help them learn something new.) The leadership tasks may be the best ones to tie into this session.

The future will be much like the past – there will be many changes to face, good and bad. They will relate to family life, profession, disappointments, bereavement, hurts, sickness. The coping skills you learn now will help you to become stronger, wiser and better equipped for a constantly changing world.

God has a purpose for your life. Ask Him to show you. Pray the prayer that is in the song 'All that I am'. (Words of the full song are on the junior work sheet and the chorus only on the senior.)

What's happening to me?



These are some strategies for coping. Tick the ones you already use, cross the ones you will try to use in the future.

- _____ Accept that change is necessary and inevitable.
- _____ Approach change positively. It can be used creatively. We can become a better person through social hurts and disappointments. Personal growth can take place.
- _____ Find a friend you trust and admire and share your anxiety.
- _____ Try to keep lines of communication open with your parents, to talk quietly and calmly.
- _____ Remember that parents too have been 'victims' of change and can give you advice from their experiences – and mistakes! Be patient with your parents!
- _____ Be sensitive to the changes occurring in the lives of your friends. Try to understand and help them.
- _____ Be patient with yourself. Look back and see how you've managed in the past. Practise endurance – 'hang in there'.
- _____ Some change can be planned, eg., moving away from company that is not helpful or desirable. Seek activities which keep your mind healthy and stimulated. Don't allow peer pressure to force you into making wrong decisions. Think out issues for yourself. Don't worry about not conforming.
- _____ Set goals and discipline yourself to work towards these – study, vocational, physical, spiritual, financial.



All that I am, all I can be, All that I have, all that is me,
 Accept and use, Lord, as you would choose, Lord,
 right now, today.
 Take every passion, every skill, take all my dreams
 and bend them to your will.
 My all I give, Lord, for you I'll live, Lord, come what
 may.

Often I come with my problems and cares,
 Running to you when distressed;
 But I must bring you the whole of my life, Lord, I
 must give you my best.

Life has no purpose unless it is yours,
 Life without you has no goal;
 All that fulfils me is doing your will, Lord, I must give
 you my best.

All that I am, all I can be, All that I have, all that is me,
 Accept and use, Lord, as you would choose Lord,
 right now today.
 Take every passion, every skill, take all my dreams
 and bend them to your will;
 My all I give, Lord, for you I'll live Lord, come what
 may.

(Sing to the Lord, Part I, Vol. 2)



HIGHLIGHTS

- The body is changing all the time.
- There are many changes around me, good and bad.
- Every change can be turned into something that is helpful for me.
- Jesus will help me to cope with different changes.
- Jesus never changes. (Hebrews 13:8)



How would you cope with these changes?

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (not good at all) to 6 (very well).

Being left off the school sports team.

All the in-group are going but you've not been invited to the party.

Your best friend has become friendly with someone else and no longer wants your company.

A rise in pocket money.

Your role model has let you down.

A dishwasher has just been installed in your family kitchen.

You were challenged about your faith and your witness was pathetic.

The 'bread-winner' in your family loses his/her job.



a. If I could change the world I would like to see:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

b. I would like to see these changes in me:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Compose a prayer asking God for His help to make these changes.



What's happening to me?



STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH CHANGE

Tick the ones you already use. Cross the ones you will try to use in the future.

- _____ Accept that change is necessary and inevitable.
- _____ Approach change positively. It can be used creatively. We can become a better person through social hurts and disappointments. Personal growth can take place.
- _____ Find a friend you trust and admire and share your anxiety.
- _____ Try to keep lines of communication open with your parents, to talk quietly and calmly.
- _____ Remember that parents too have been 'victims' of change and can give you advice from their experiences – and mistakes! Be patient with your parents!
- _____ Be sensitive to the changes occurring in the lives of your friends. Try to understand and help them.
- _____ Be patient with yourself. Look back and see how you've managed in the past. Practise endurance – 'hang in there'.
- _____ Some change can be planned, eg., moving away from company that may not be helpful or desirable. Seek activities which keep your mind healthy and stimulated. Don't allow peer pressure to force you into making wrong decisions. Think out issues for yourself. Don't worry about not conforming.
- _____ Set goals and discipline yourself to work towards these – study, vocational, physical, spiritual, financial.



Teenagers can maintain respect for their parents even if they don't agree with all of their beliefs.



There have probably been dramatic changes in your own lifetime in these areas. Choose one and comment on the changes you have seen.



The Environment



The Church



Social Behaviour



The International Political Scene



Health Services

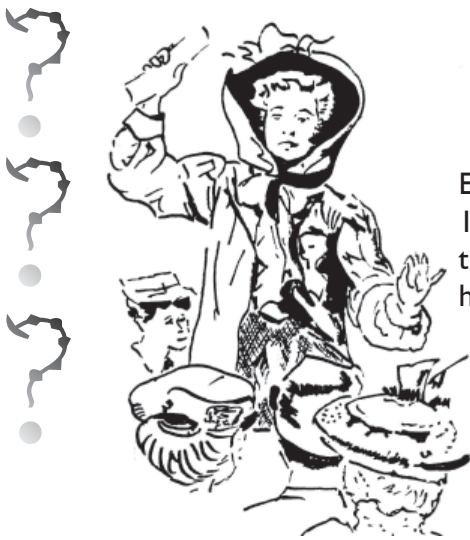


William Wilberforce, 1759 - 1833, helped to do away with slavery.



Many people have devoted years of their lives to bring about changes. Here are a few of them.

Who would you add to the list?



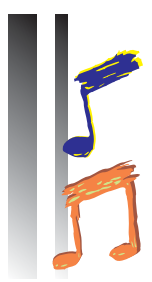
Emmeline Pankhurst, 1858 - 1928, urged that women should have the vote.

What reforms or changes would you be prepared to work for?



All that I am, all I can be, All that I have, all that is me, Accept and use, Lord, as you would choose, Lord, right now, today. Take every passion, every skill, take all my dreams and bend them to your will. My all I give, Lord, for you I'll live, Lord, come what may.

(Sing to the Lord, Part 1, Vol. 2)



Complete this verse: I Corinthians 13:11 says, 'When I was a child

Which of these childish things can you honestly say you have no more use for?

Expecting things to be ready for me exactly when I want them.

Refusing to eat foods that are 'good' for me.

Making fun of other people's handicaps or faults.

Throwing tantrums if I don't get my way.

Believing leaders and parents make rules just to spoil my fun.

Sneaking off to do things behind my parent's back



I'M HURTING LORD

AIM

To give the young people skills and understanding to help them cope with pain, grief and death.

OBJECTIVES

As a result of this session the young people will:

- ❖ have some understanding of the biblical approach to suffering and death;
- ❖ have a basic understanding of how grief affects people;
- ❖ know that it is necessary to grieve about a loss.

INSIGHTS FOR THE LEADER

Most of us will experience grief at some stage of our lives. Although we usually associate grief with the loss of someone close to us through death, grief is also experienced in other losses – e.g. retrenchment, marriage breakdown, severe health problems, etc.

There has been a lot of work and research done in the last decade to help people realise that grieving is a normal process that must be worked through after a severe loss. The feelings that many people thought were maybe theirs alone and which they described as frightening, painful, odd and even bizarre were found to be a very normal part of the process of working through and resolving grief.

Many books have now been written about dealing with grief and how people are affected if they try to block out the feelings they are having.

Bereaved people can be best healed if they are allowed to grieve in their own way.

Grieving is often highly individualistic and grieving people are very susceptible to comments made by others which they often see as critical and judgemental.

This can be particularly so for Christians who may be made to feel guilty because of the anger they feel towards God for 'allowing it to happen'.

We must also get rid of the feeling in our society that 'big boys don't cry' and that weeping is somehow a sign of weakness. Tears are very much a part of the healing process and should never be repressed.

For most grieving people a sympathetic ear is most important, others wish to be left alone.

SESSION 20

FROM THE BIBLE

Romans 5:12; 6:23; Luke 13:1 - 5; 1 Corinthians 15:20 - 22, 26; 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14; Revelation 21:1 - 4.

CHECKLIST

For the Getting Started activity you will need writing equipment and the work sheets.

Approach 1 suggests using a segment from Edge TV edition 9. This is an excellent video for this subject so make sure you arrange to borrow it.

Approach 2 is an important look at Bible verses and activity 2 on the work sheets may be completed as these verses are studied.

Approach 3 has stories about how God uses tragedies to come close to His people.

Approach 4 includes teaching on the problem of pain and should be dealt with – even if it can only be a very brief look.

Approach 5 is an important part of the session because it suggests practical ways to handle grief. These suggestions are printed on the work sheet and can be read from this if you prefer. If your group is large, you may wish to use an overhead projector transparency instead. Prepare this beforehand.

In *Coping with Grief* Mal McKissock writes this about children and grief:

‘With children, as with adults, an understanding and acceptance of death can best begin in the absence of family sorrow. Parents should help their children to become familiar with the world of nature, of which we are a part.

Through the woods and fields and keeping pets, children can have first-hand contact with birth and death, and with parental encouragement, learn to accept and have reverence for the whole process of life. Don’t discourage children from touching dead things.

Apart from the very young, children can learn as adults do that we are all part of one another, and that when one of us dies, it is the responsibility of the rest of us to carry on his life and ideals. That is how we can express our love. This concept can be a great source of comfort and inspiration for children and adults alike, and can infuse their lives with fresh meaning and purpose. Then, too, death is an occasion for drawing the family together in closer affection. The child should be involved in this as fully as possible; it will strengthen his family feeling and contribute to his development, even if he doesn’t understand everything that is happening.’

Indeed, we can often learn a great deal from children about how to accept the inevitable and be open and frank about it. A dying child has often accepted the fact that he/she is dying long before the parents do and often carries the burden of trying to protect these hurting loved ones rather than having their support.

In this session we want to help the young people understand that death is inevitable and that knowing how to cope with grief can make it a little less painful.

GETTING STARTED

1. Have the young people recall the most painful experience they have ever suffered. This can be compiled in a list headed ‘**Painful Experiences**’.

You could ask them to add to the list from the experiences of others.

The list should finally include such things as:
a broken home; death of a beloved pet; a severe illness; a bad fracture; death of a relation; death of a friend; a broken relationship; failure at school etc.

Now ask the young people to consider what emotions they felt as they found out about their loss. Make a list. The young people could then be asked to fill in activity I on the work sheet.

Or

2. **Discuss**

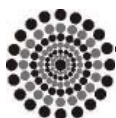
What is the only fact all humans can be certain about from the day they are born?

Why then do we try to pretend death isn’t really a part of life?



LEADER TIP

If the issue of depression arises, be aware that this is dealt with in a later *TRIBE* unit. Focus on the aim and objectives of this session.



LEADER TIP

This could be an emotional and tender time for some young people who have experienced the pain of loss. Be sensitive to their needs and prepared to follow them up afterwards if necessary.

Be careful not to encourage the comparison of various types of loss which could range from a family death to a friend moving away.

POINT

Young people are increasingly preoccupied with loss and suffering – in their music, through the suicide of a class mate, family situations or in the contemplation of the meaning and purpose of life.

Everybody, sooner or later, faces a time of great loss or hurt. This causes us to grieve. In this session we want to consider how we can cope with such feelings and how we can help others who are grieving.

GOING DEEPER

1. Experiencing loss

Show the first segment from the video which shows several young people talking about their loss and how they handled it. (15 minutes.)

The notes that accompany the video give different ideas on discussion and Bible verses that show God's presence with those who grieve.

2. What does the Bible say about grieving?

Grief is one of the hardest things a person ever has to cope with. When people lose someone they love, they hurt incredibly. One teenager whose brother had been killed in a car accident said, 'I hurt so much I couldn't enjoy **anything** anymore. I just cried all the time. All of a sudden, I would burst out crying.'

It's not surprising that when they hurt like that, people want God to comfort them.

But sometimes the idea of God they have in their head isn't very helpful. So what does God **really** think about death?

Read the following passages together and comment on what they teach about death: Romans 5:12 and Romans 6:23.

So death, at least as we know it, was not part of God's plan. It is not His idea. It came into the world because of sin. Make sure that your young people realise that the Bible is not teaching here that a person dies because they are being punished for a particular sin. Jesus made that quite clear.

Read and discuss John 9:1 -3, Luke 13:1 - 5 and I Corinthians 15:26 where death is referred to as 'the enemy' and I Corinthians 15:20 - 22.

3. Does God plan tragedies?

a. (Taken from *When bad things happen – Where's God?* by Luis Palau in *The Way Cry*, Special Edition from America, 2001.)

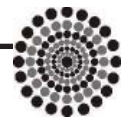
'On Tuesday, September 11, citizens of the United States of America wept – and continue to weep. We truly live in a tragic world.

How does the God of the Bible relate to these tragedies? Where is He when they occur? Can we continue to believe in a loving God who would permit such terrible things to happen?

God has a purpose in what He allows, even if we don't know what it is.

From our perspective, tragedies look meaningless and senseless and chaotic, but God knows how to take tragedies and bring good out of them. I do not believe that God causes all tragedies. The Bible says God is incapable of sin. But I believe He has a purpose in allowing painful events to occur. Nothing that happens is an accident. We may not understand what His purposes are, but we can take comfort in the fact that they exist. God specializes in taking evil and bringing good out of it.

Does the Lord cause some to die so others could be spared and the souls of still others might be better? No. God is not a murderer. But He does know how to take tragedy and bring good out of it. When we get to heaven, we will finally see His purposes even in



LEADER TIP

This is activity 2 on the work sheet.

the tragedies of life. Meanwhile, we must continue to believe that He does have a purpose in everything that happens, even if right now we are unable to see a shadow of what that might be.'

- b. A family lost a son on a wintry, stormy night when his car ended in the harbour.

The father, a minister, felt so strongly that people had wrong ideas about God's part in this tragedy that he preached a sermon ten days later.

Discuss this part of his story with your group.

'One lady coming into his home carrying a pile of quiches she had made shook her head and sadly said, 'I just don't understand the will of God.'

The father remembers: 'Instantly, I was up and in hot pursuit, swarming all over her. 'I'll say you don't, lady!' I said. (I knew the anger would do me good, and the instruction to her was long overdue.)

I continued, 'Do you think it was the will of God that Alex never fixed that lousy windshield wiper of his, that he was probably driving too fast in such a storm, that he probably had had a couple of 'frosties' too many? Do you think it is God's will that there are no street lights along the stretch of road, and no guardrail separating the road and Boston Harbour?'

Nothing so infuriates me as the incapacity of seemingly intelligent people to get it through their heads that God doesn't go around this world with his finger on triggers, his fist around knives, his hands on steering wheels. God is against all unnatural deaths. And Christ spent an inordinate amount of time delivering people from paralysis, insanity, leprosy, and muteness.'

He went on to say: 'My consolation lies in knowing that it was not the will of God that Alex die; that when the waves closed over the sinking car, God's was the first of all our hearts to break.'

4. The problem of pain

Suffering of one kind or another is one of the most universal of human experiences, though we do not like to see it like that. Life invariably begins in pain, and mostly ends that way. Growth and development involve various forms of suffering (babies teething; adolescents enduring agonies of uncertainty and insecurity), and advancing years also bring their own forms of distress and pain. Nobody is exempt from this mysterious element found in all of life.

Suffering can be either:

- i. physical pain;
- ii. mental or emotional anguish.

Suffering can also be:

- i. caused by foolishness or sin;
- ii. apparently quite undeserved.

Do you agree that people's ignorance, selfishness or wickedness can cause suffering to themselves and to others? Can you think of some examples? (Over-indulgent parents having difficulty later with a 'spoilt' child; a heavy smoker dying of lung cancer years later. Life is full of such situations.)

How does suffering affect the human spirit? Let your group offer opinions. Inevitably this depends upon the level of pain, and also upon the degree of sensitivity of the sufferer. Up to a point most people can tolerate pain or distress, but everyone has their own 'breaking-point' – though this is often much higher than most of us imagine.

(Athletes, breaking through the 'pain barrier', are an interesting example of this.) Generally speaking, physical pain reduces capacity for thought and concentration, because the mind tends to be centred upon the area of hurt.

Discuss

Is it true that suffering, accepted in a positive way, can actually help someone to become a better person?

Do you know someone you thought was a really 'good' person, almost a saint, who suffered a great deal?

Do you think that they might say that handing their suffering over to God meant that they grew in character and in spirit? Think about Job – who went through great periods of **anger, despair, self pity and doubt** as he, a righteous man, suffered 'malignant ulcers from the sole of his foot to the top of his head' (Job 2:7 Jerusalem Bible). Job finally accepted that he could never fathom the mystery of God and was sorry for his outbursts.

The important thing to remember is that God was not angry with Job. As Job worked through his different feelings, God was there until Job finally reached the point of acceptance.

When people who are suffering and grieving finally accept what has happened, they will then be able to overcome bitterness, despair and ultimate breakdown.

5. Strategies for coping with grief

Maybe, as we've discussed some of these great hurts, you have thought that you haven't really suffered much at all. Maybe the opposite is true.

But for all hurts, be they now, or in the future, there are ways to deal with them that will help us to cope.

Have the young people look at their work sheets and, if there is time, discuss each point, or see that they understand them.



LEADER TIP

Refer to side two of the work sheets.

TAKING IT HOME

Everyone suffers loss and this causes great hurt. As Christians, we can know that God will be with us in these bad times and we must also hold out loving hands to help others in their times of hurt.

People grieve in their own way, and no two people are exactly alike. However, we can say that when a person loses a loved one, their grief might take them through feelings of sadness, depression, loneliness, panic, hopelessness, guilt, and anger over a period of years. All of these feelings are normal.

The Bible does remind us however, that Christians need not grieve in quite the same way a non-Christian does, because we have the certain hope that our loved one is alive again – with God, in Heaven.

Pray for all who are grieving that they will find their comfort is in God.

FOLLOW-THRU

One of the best ways to cope with grief is having a friend who will listen or just be there for us.

Ask your young people if they know of someone they could encourage and so complete the challenge in *Get Involved and Grow in Mission* to be an encourager.

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I'm HURTING Lord



Highlight or underline the feelings you felt at your time of great hurt.

I'm hurting because

Blaming God

- Numbness
- Bewilderment
- Want to hit somebody
- Shocked disbelief
- Resentment
- Wanting to scream

- Frustration
- Asking why it happened
- Anger
- Inability to get on with work
- Deep sorrow
- Wondering if life is worthwhile



Romans 5:12 teaches us that



Romans 6:23 reminds us that

Jesus told us in Luke 13:1 - 5 that _____

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:26 that death was _____

What does he tell us is our guarantee that death is 'not the end'? (1 Corinthians 15:20 - 22)

- ✍ Remember that grief follows all hurts.
- ✍ Remember that it's normal to go through a wide range of emotions as you hurt.
- ✍ Don't be afraid to talk about your anger and frustration.
- ✍ It's OK – even important, to cry when you're hurting.
- ✍ Let other people do some of your jobs when they offer.
- ✍ Yell or scream or just be quiet if that helps you best.
- ✍ If you're facing the death of someone you love, make sure you tell them all the things you need to say.
- ✍ Remember that God is with you, sharing your pain and it is not His punishment.
- ✍ Allow 'time' for God to heal you.
- ✍ Remember that death is not the end – but the beginning of a wonderful experience for all who believe in Christ.

What
to
do
when
I'm
really
hurting

Friends and family can really help when I'm hurting. Here are three practical ways I could help a friend who is hurting.

- ✍ _____
- ✍ _____
- ✍ _____

HIGHLIGHTS

- After a hurt or loss we need to grieve.
- It is important to talk to understanding wise friends about how we feel.
- We can help others who are hurting.
- Christians know that God shares in their grief and pain.
- Christians rejoice that death is not the end.

I'm HURTING Lord



Highlight or underline the feelings you felt at your time of great hurt.

One Hindu sect had a custom called 'suttee'. The wife of the dead man was burned on his funeral pyre.

I'm hurting Lord because

Numbness

Bewilderment

Wanting to hit somebody

Shocked disbelief

Resentment

Wanting to scream

Blaming God

Frustration

Asking why it happened

Anger

Inability to get on with work

Deep sorrow

Wondering if life is worthwhile

A Maori 'Wake' is called a Tangi and is held in the Meeting House.



Romans 5:12 teaches us that



Romans 6:23 reminds us that

'When pain is to be borne, a little courage helps more than much knowledge, a little human sympathy more than courage, and the least tincture of the love of God more than all.'

There was a church member who regularly prayed for those who are sick of our 'fellowship.'

Jesus told us in Luke 13:1 - 5 that

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:26 that death was

What does he tell us is our guarantee that death is 'not the end'? (1 Corinthians 15:20 - 22)

What do you think?

Imagine that you died, but you were restored to life.

How would it affect how you lived the rest of your life?

Someone you know has only been given a year to live. How will you react?

Would you like to know exactly when you are going to die? Why?

- ✍ Remember that grief follows all hurts.
- ✍ Remember that it's normal to go through a wide range of emotions as you hurt.
- ✍ Don't be afraid to talk about your anger and frustration.
- ✍ It's OK – even important, to cry when you're hurting.
- ✍ Let other people do some of your jobs when they offer.
- ✍ Yell or scream or just be quiet if that helps you best.
- ✍ If you're facing the death of someone you love, make sure you tell them all the things you need to say.
- ✍ Remember that God is with you, sharing your pain and it is not His punishment.
- ✍ Allow 'time' for God to heal you.
- ✍ Remember that death is not the end – but the beginning of a wonderful experience for all who believe in Christ.

What
to
do
when
I'm
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hurting

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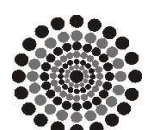
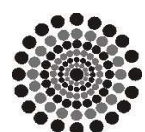
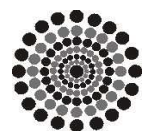
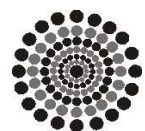
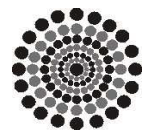
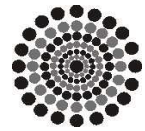
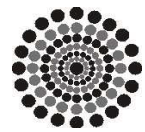
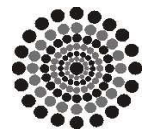
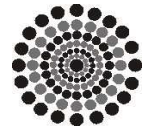
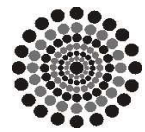
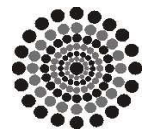
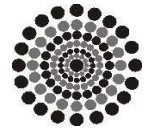
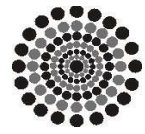
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A SIMPLIFIED FORM OF THE DOCTRINES OF THE SALVATION ARMY

We believe that

1. God helped good men to speak and write what is in the Bible, so that from it we may learn the way God means us to live.
2. There is only one God, and He is altogether perfect in every way. He is the Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things. We should not worship anything or anyone else.
3. God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God.
4. Jesus is both truly God and truly human: He has both God's nature and our nature.
5. Our first parents, by their disobedience, lost their sense of God's favour, and came under the power of sin; and because of this we are all inclined to do wrong.
6. On the Cross Jesus suffered and died for the sins of everyone, so that whoever wants to may be saved.
7. To be saved we must be truly sorry for doing wrong and trust in Jesus, then the Holy Spirit will make us new people.
8. Salvation is a free gift from God. It is received when we believe in Jesus; and when we are saved we know it.
9. To keep good we must trust in Jesus to help us, and we must go on doing as He wants us to do.
10. Saved people are given the chance to be used by God to help Him. When they have given themselves to Him fully, they can be given power to serve Him, and be kept from sinning.
11. When our bodies die we ourselves go on living in a new and different way. At the end of time Jesus will judge all people. Those who have chosen Him to be their Saviour will be happy to live with Him as their King, forever. Those who have not done so will always be unhappy because they chose what separates them from all that is good and lovely.

My Discipleship Record

(To be sent to Divisional Headquarters by the 10th of the following month)

Month: _____

Name: _____

Corps: _____

Form/Age: _____

Date received by Tribe Leader _____

What's the most important thing you have learned this month, and how will this be applied to your life? _____

TRIBE

Tribe Leader's Comments:

Attendance: Week

1

2

3

4

Divisional Youth Secretary/Officer's Comments:
