



SMALL GROUP OUTLINES



TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

These Small Group Outlines are produced by the Youth and Children's Ministry Unit in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview). They are available every month from our website.

For more information and other resources, visit salvationist.org.uk/resources/youth-ministry-resources

SESSION ONE

'COME, FOLLOW ME' (MATTHEW 4:19)

As the fishermen carried out their duties, Jesus came into their life. After recognising who he was, the disciples answered a call that would transform their lives for ever. Jesus said, 'Come, follow me' (Matthew 4:19), and their lives were never the same. In today's session, we explore how we can be transformed through a life of discipleship and take the time to consider whether we are truly following Jesus in our everyday lives.

SESSION TWO

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS (LUKE 9:23)

Jesus said that if we want to follow him and live a life of discipleship, we should take up our cross. But what does that mean? In Session Two we will explore what it means to give every day of our lives to Jesus and identify the things that stand in the way of us doing that!

SESSION THREE

'PRODUCE MUCH FRUIT' (JOHN 15:8 NLT)

As followers of Jesus, we are called to 'produce much fruit' (John 15:8 NLT). In today's session, we will think about what that means for us and how we can produce the kind of fruit Jesus wants us to. We'll also consider how connected we are to the vine and how this can help us to live our lives for Jesus.

SESSION FOUR

'LOVE ONE ANOTHER' (JOHN 13:34)

In today's session we take time to consider what it means to love one another, and how that love can transform the most challenging relationships. We'll think of ways to show the love of Jesus to everyone we meet and pray for those we find difficult to love.

Any text in italics represents notes for the leader. It gives more context around the Scripture/activity. You may choose to share verbatim, summarise or not share at all.

'COME, FOLLOW ME' (MATTHEW 4:19)

As the fishermen carried out their duties Jesus came into their life. After recognising who he was, the disciples answered a call that would transform their lives for ever. Jesus said, 'Come, follow me' (Matthew 4:19), and their lives were never the same. In today's session, we explore how we can be transformed through a life of discipleship and take the time to consider whether we are truly following Jesus in our everyday lives.

WELCOME

- 💬 What does it mean to follow someone on social media?
- 💬 Who are your favourite people to follow? Why do you like following them?

Find out the answers to the following questions prior to the session and see if the group can guess the answer. Give them additional clues if needed.

- * Who has the most followers on Instagram?
- * Who has the most followers on Twitter?
- * Who has the most followers on Facebook?
- * Who has the most followers on TikTok?
- * Think about all those followers. What difference do you think following people on social media makes to our lives?

On social media, following someone can be done in a second. We may view the odd picture, smile at the odd tweet, but the positive impact on our lives is minimal. Today we will be thinking about what it means to follow someone whose words and deeds are truly transformational.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

- 📺 **Watch: Why people are choosing to quit social media – BBC Ideas (4:08)**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ij_xXZAhJPs

- 💬 How different would your life look if you spent more time following Jesus instead of following social media?

WORD

This month we are exploring the theme of transformational discipleship.

- 💬 What do you think transformational discipleship means?

When we follow Jesus, he transforms our mind, our desire, our will, our relationships, and our ultimate reason for living. In fact, we are transformed to such an extent that we become what we were originally created to be! We were transformed the moment we said yes to Jesus.

'If anyone belongs to Christ, there is a new creation. The old things have gone; everything is made new!'


— (2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 NCV)

- 💬 When did you make the decision to follow Jesus?
- 💬 Did this experience transform your life? If so, how? If not, why do you think that is?
- 💬 What do you believe about the transforming power of following Jesus?

Today's Scripture explores the moment the disciples' lives were transformed.

Watch this clip which depicts the moment Jesus first asked the disciples to follow him.


 **Watch: The Miracle of the Fish (scene from *The Chosen*) 5:18**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWGCKovAUWM>


 What stood out for you in this depiction of Luke 5:1-11?


The same story can also be found in the Gospel of Matthew.


 **Read Matthew 4:18-22 (NIV)**

DISCUSS

 After looking at both accounts of this story, why do you think the disciples were so quick to follow Jesus?

 What do you think it was about Jesus that made these men leave everything and go with him?

 Why do you think Jesus performed a miracle before calling the men to follow him?


 What does Jesus' call to 'follow me' mean for us today?

Jesus walked into the everyday lives of these men, and they began a process of transformation. They were no longer fishermen, they were now fishers of men, and their lives would never be the same again.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY


Read the following scenario to the group:

Imagine you are sitting in your school/college/uni class, daydreaming as usual, and the teacher failing to inspire or motivate you. The classroom door opens, and in walks another teacher, and begins to talk to the class. This teacher is quite new to the school and teaches your favourite subject. You have found his classes lively and stimulating and like him as a person as well as a teacher. You know you could learn much from him. Suddenly this teacher turns to the class and says, 'Come on, everybody, let's go! Come with me on an adventure, a brand-new start to life. Let's get out of this place and go and do some real learning. You'll have to leave your family if you want to come with me but it will definitely be worth it. This is going to be something new, something exciting, a life that you have never believed possible. Who's with me?'

 What would you do?

WORSHIP

The call of Jesus that echoed around the shores of Galilee some 2,000 years ago is still ringing out today. Jesus calls us to be his disciples, to live with him, learn from him and become like him ... to join the greatest adventure of our lives. Of course, there will be challenges, but the rewards in our lives, and in the lives of those we meet, will be immense.

 Who is ready to respond to Jesus' call to discipleship with their whole life? If so, why? If not, what are your reservations?

Give everyone in the group a copy of the following prayer. Allow them some time in quiet to read their prayer and make their responses. Pray the prayer together. Depending on the group, you could either ask each person to pray it out in turn, or read it aloud all together. The following song could be used as part of your reflection time.

 **Watch: Kristene DiMarco – 'I Will Follow You' (Live) – Jesus Culture Music (4:33)**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8Sx_U0Ztr8





It might be good to add this as a handout with space for the young people to write their response.

Lord Jesus,
As I read about the first disciples who left everything to follow you, I am amazed, and I want to be like them. I hear you calling me to a life of discipleship. I hear you calling me to be with you and to live the adventure of a disciple. And I say, 'Yes, please, Lord Jesus.' I want to follow you with all of my heart, my soul, and my life. Help me to put aside all the things that would hinder me from following you with all of my being. I love you, and I want to be with you and be like you. Thank you for choosing me.
Amen.

WITNESS

 **Watch: What is discipleship? – Sunday Bible Study Basics (2:46)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WBKPEtD9E4>

DISCUSS:

-  What were the main points that you took from the clip?
-  How does this impact the way that you view discipleship?
-  Is it possible to live a life of discipleship through our own effort and hard work? If not, why not?
-  The clip talks a lot about the way being a disciple should transform our whole lives. Does it feel that way for you? If not, why do you think that is?

The call to discipleship is a call to live life in all its fullness, a life of adventure and challenge, a life fully dedicated to Jesus. Following Jesus is not a boring existence, living life by a restrictive set of rules, but it is about the greatest adventure ever. To be a disciple is to share life with Jesus Christ, who transforms us, giving us purpose, meaning, identity, hope, and a bright future.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Encourage the group to take home the commitment prayer they have shared together and read it at the start of each day. How do they think their day would be different if they started it with this prayer? You may like to use this prayer to bring the session to a close.

Lord Jesus,
As we read about the first disciples who left everything to follow you, we are amazed, and we want to be like them. We hear you calling us to a life of discipleship. We hear you calling us to be with you and to live the adventure of a disciple. And we say, 'Yes, please, Lord Jesus.' We want to follow you with all of our heart, our soul, and our life. Help us to put aside all the things that would hinder us from following you with all of our being. We love you, and we want to be with you and be like you. Thank you for choosing us.
Amen.

'TAKE UP YOUR CROSS' (LUKE 9:23)

Jesus said that if we want to follow him and live a life of discipleship, we should take up our cross. But what does that mean? In this session we will explore what it means to give every day of our lives to Jesus and identify the things that stand in the way of us doing that!

WELCOME

- 🗨️ What is the highest price you have ever paid for something you really wanted?
- 🗨️ Have you ever paid much more than an item was worth for something that you really desired? If so, what was it?

Antiques Roadshow is a long running Sunday night TV favourite for many people, where people bring their antiques to be valued. Sometimes they are worth nothing, and sometimes people are surprised by the value of their prized or neglected possession.

Watch the following clip with the group pausing it at 4:08 min. Ask them to submit their estimates for how much they think the Faberge flower is worth. You may need to find a way to start the clip without them seeing its title, as it gives the game away!

📺 **Watch: Magical Faberge flower valued at £1 million – Antiques Roadshow – BBC One (4:58)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhafWTKdGmk>

- 🗨️ What is the difference between the monetary value of the Faberge flower and its symbolic value to the regiment?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

- 🗨️ If you were the owner of the Faberge flower, and you'd just discovered it was worth one million pounds, what would you do with it?

WORD

A life of discipleship is costly. It involves handing over what we value the most, our lives, to Jesus.

²³ If any of you want to walk my path, you're going to have to deny yourself. You'll have to take up your cross every day and follow me. ²⁴ If you try to avoid danger and risk, then you'll lose everything. If you let go of your life and risk all for my sake, then your life will be rescued, healed, made whole and full.'

— LUKE 9:23-24 (VOICE)

- 🗨️ How would you summarise the message of these verses?
- 🗨️ Although there is a great cost to following Jesus, what is promised in verse 24?

A word that is often used to describe these verses is 'self-denial'. This means the sacrifice of our desires. We are encouraged to 'say no to self in order to say yes to God'. Self-denial is about removing any obstacle that blocks saying yes to God. When Jesus calls us to be his disciples, he calls us to a life lived with Jesus at the centre.

Allocate parts to members of the group and read Luke 18:18-30 taken from the dramatised Good News Bible.

THE RICH MAN – LUKE 18:18-30

- Narrator** A Jewish leader asked Jesus:
- Leader** Good Teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life?
- Narrator** Jesus asked him:
- Jesus** Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery; do not commit murder; do not steal; do not accuse anyone falsely; respect your father and mother.'
- Leader** Ever since I was young, I have obeyed all these commandments.
- Jesus** There is still one more thing you need to do. Sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me.
- Narrator** But when the man heard this, he became very sad, because he was very rich. (PAUSE)
- Jesus saw that he was sad.
- Jesus** How hard it is for rich people to enter the Kingdom of God! It is much harder for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.
- Narrator** The people who heard him asked:
- Person** Who, then, can be saved?
- Jesus** What is humanly impossible is possible for God.
- Narrator** Then Peter said:
- Peter** Look! We have left our homes to follow you.
- Jesus** Yes, and I assure you that anyone who leaves home or wife or brother or parents or children for the sake of the Kingdom of God will receive much more in this present age and eternal life in the age to come.

Dramatised Good News Bible: Edited by Michael Perry

- 🗨️ How do we know the young man respected Jesus?
- 🗨️ What does his opening question tell us about the way he views a life following God?
- 🗨️ What is the man's response to Jesus' answer?
- 🗨️ Do you think his answer is arrogant, or is he sharing a genuine desire to do the right thing?
- 🗨️ Why do you think Jesus told the young man he needed to sell his possessions and give them to the poor before he could receive eternal life?
- 🗨️ Do you think Jesus expects every follower to do this, or did he choose this command specifically for the rich man? Explain your thoughts.

For this young man, money and possessions were a barrier that came between him and God. When Jesus calls us to a life of discipleship, he calls us to a life of surrender and self-denial in which we must kick out of our lives anything that would take Jesus' place. This may be a relationship, career, money, possessions, a vision or dream or the need for revenge. It means allowing Jesus full control of our lives and trusting he will take us down the best possible path.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

In Romans 12:1 we discover more of what it means to offer ourselves fully to God. Read the different translations below and discuss what this verse means for you personally.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.

— (ROMANS 12:1 NIV)

Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies [dedicating all of yourselves, set apart] as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship.

— (ROMANS 12:1 AMP)

Brothers and sisters, in light of all I have shared with you about God's mercies, I urge you to offer your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice to God, a sacred offering that brings him pleasure; this is your reasonable, essential worship.

— (ROMANS 12:1 VOICE)

Dear friends, God is good. So I beg you to offer your bodies to him as a living sacrifice, pure and pleasing. That's the most sensible way to serve God.

— (ROMANS 12:1 CEV)

WITNESS

It can be challenging to understand what the phrase 'take up your cross' means for us personally on a day-to-day basis. The focus can also be placed totally on the sacrifices that we need to make, rather than the amazing adventure we will experience following Jesus. Earlier we read the words of Jesus, where he described what it takes to lead a life of discipleship.





Then he said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.'

— (LUKE 9:23 NIV)

Watch the clip together to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to 'take up my cross.'

 **Take up my cross daily, Luke 9:23 – Bible Words Explained (Bible Animation) (3:14)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zlwaKgJrbU>


DISCUSS:

-  How did the clip help you to understand what it means to 'take up your cross'?
-  How does the Holy Spirit help us to take up our cross on a daily basis?
-  What changes occur over time when we choose to take up our cross daily?
-  What practical steps do you need to take to make the sacrifices that Jesus is asking of you? Write them down now and act on them before next week.

If you are unsure about this topic, then ask to talk to your group leader or another trusted mature Christian to seek their advice and be accountable.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

 **Read Luke 9:23-27 (MSG)**

-  How does *The Message* translation of Luke 9:23-27 add to your understanding of what it means to take up your cross?

WORSHIP

“ ‘When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.’

— DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

“ ‘When God calls us, he invites us to die. And ironically, we’ll never be more alive.’

— BILL HULL

Take a few minutes in silence to think about the above quotes. Ask each person to write their own thoughts privately on a piece of paper to identify things/people in their lives that may be standing between them and God. What/who may be holding them back from fully embracing Jesus’ discipleship life? If people feel ready, ask them to screw up or tear up their list and place it in a rubbish bin in the middle of the group. Explain that this will act as a sign that they want Jesus as first place in their lives. Assure them that no one will read the notes after the session – perhaps they can be burnt. Explain that they must repent / say sorry for allowing these things to get in the way.

Use the track ‘The Cost’ sung by Rend Collective in a time of worship and commitment. The lyrics are shown on the clip, so if the group knows the song, you could sing it together.

 ‘The Cost’ – Rend Collective – lyric video (2:49)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXfn6gdOJLU>

THE RICH MAN – LUKE 18:18-30

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- Narrator** But when the man heard this, he became very sad, because he was very rich.
(PAUSE)
- Jesus saw that he was sad.
- Jesus** How hard it is for rich people to enter the Kingdom of God! It is much harder for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.
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- Peter** Look! We have left our homes to follow you.
- Jesus** Yes, and I assure you that anyone who leaves home or wife or brother or parents or children for the sake of the Kingdom of God will receive much more in this present age and eternal life in the age to come.

'PRODUCE MUCH FRUIT' (JOHN 15:8)

As followers of Jesus, we are called to 'produce much fruit' (John 15:8 NLT). In today's session we will think about what that means for us and how we can produce the kind of fruit Jesus wants us to. We'll also consider how connected we are to the vine and how this can help us to live our lives for Jesus.

WELCOME

Today's session is all about how followers of Jesus are called to produce much fruit. Before we dive into John 15, let's remind ourselves, in a very light-hearted way, of the kind of fruit we are called to produce.

This is a daft song aimed at a younger age group that will hopefully make the group smile and remind them of the fruit of the spirit.

 **'Fruit of the Spirit' Children's Song (2:45)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rezg4jYFoj0>

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY






Name Paul's list of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

WORD

When we follow Jesus, he transforms our minds, our desires, our wills, our relationships and our ultimate reason for living. We are on a journey, with the Holy Spirit, to become more like Jesus and seek to make him more visible in and through our lives. One of the ways that we begin to show evidence of the transformation that our adventure with Jesus is bringing about in our lives is the 'fruit' that we produce.

 **Read: John 15:1-17 (MSG)**

DISCUSS:

-  What kind of 'fruit' in our lives will show evidence of Jesus?
-  How much fruit are disciples to bear?
-  How do we ensure that we bear fruit in our lives?
-  What happens to disciples who don't produce fruit?
-  What kind of fruit do you produce?

If the group members know each other well, you could ask people to point out characteristics/qualities in each other's lives that show Jesus!

The Bible presents the transformed life in Christ as demonstrated through our 'bearing fruit in every good work (and) growing in the knowledge of God' (Colossians 1:10); and in the passage we read that Paul taught that fruit is a necessity in the believer's life.

Fruit can be shown by a person's actions, or character attributes, or both. It is shown by such things as the way we conduct ourselves, whether we have a Godly influence on others, and whether we properly represent God to others.

The New Testament uses 'fruit' in two main senses: (a) the harvest of souls that we bring to the Lord, and (b) the evidence of a Godly character.

- 🗨️ What do you think 'the harvest of souls that we bring to the Lord' means?
- 🗨️ If you were in a courtroom, what evidence would you present to demonstrate that someone had a 'Godly character'?

When we have the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, we truly have the abundant life. Mankind craves nothing more than love, peace and joy. With those he is fulfilled. He no longer needs to strive for money, fame, status, bigger houses or better jobs. True love, peace that passes understanding and inexpressible joy are found only when the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ indwells those who have received Jesus as Lord.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

- 🗨️ How does this clip help you to understand the importance of bearing fruit?

▶ **Does A Christian Have To Bear Fruit? (2:09)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhrsXZQZgjs>

WITNESS



Give each member of the group a copy of the 'Produce much fruit' handout. Ask them to write their name somewhere on the branch and Jesus' name somewhere on the vine stem.

Then ask each person to consider the following questions, writing their answers on the picture in the appropriate place. Share with each other if appropriate.

- 🗨️ What sort of fruit are you producing? Draw/write it on the branch! (Use the exercise above, where group members can point out to each other the characteristics/qualities in each other's lives that show Jesus, if that would be helpful here.)
- 🗨️ What sort of fruit do you long to produce?
- 🗨️ What changes do you need to make in your life to do this?
- 🗨️ What things/actions/people allow you to stay closely connected to Jesus?
- 🗨️ What practical steps can you take to ensure that you stay connected (or get reconnected) with Jesus?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

💬 What simple fruit does Mother Teresa suggest is available to us all, and how could you share that fruit this week?

“‘Love is a fruit in season at all times, and within reach of every hand.’
— MOTHER TERESA

WORSHIP

One of the ways to stay connected to the vine is to commit God’s word to memory. Our main verse for today is John 15:5.

**‘I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.’
— (JOHN 15:5 NIV)**

Listen to this song together and see if you can recite John 15:5 from memory. The song has a Eurovision feel, so the lyrics should get into your head by the end!

▶ **John 15:5 – ‘I Am The Vine’ / JumpStart 3 / Scripture Memory Song / Worship (4:15)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQF2YPIAqNY>

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Use the following prayer from the apostle Paul to pray for each other in a manner that is most appropriate for your group. You could put one person in the middle of the group, have someone else read the prayer out for them, and ask others to pray aloud as well.

**‘Because of this, since the day we heard about you, we have continued praying for you, asking God that you will know fully what he wants. We pray that you will also have great wisdom and understanding in spiritual things so that you will live the kind of life that honours and pleases the Lord in every way. You will produce fruit in every good work and grow in the knowledge of God. God will strengthen you with his own great power so that you will not give up when troubles come, but you will be patient. And you will joyfully give thanks to the Father who has made you able to have a share in all that he has prepared for his people in the kingdom of light.’
— COLOSSIANS 1:9–12 (NCV)**

PRODUCE MUCH FRUIT

What sort of fruit are you producing? *Draw/write it on the branch!*



What sort of fruit do you long to produce?

What changes do you need to make in your life to do this?

What things/actions/people allow you to stay closely connected to Jesus?

What practical steps can you take to ensure that you stay connected (or get reconnected) with Jesus?

'LOVE ONE ANOTHER' (JOHN 13:34)

In today's session, we take time to consider what it means to love one another, and how that love can transform the most challenging relationships. We'll think of ways to show the love of Jesus to everyone we meet and pray for those we find difficult to love.

WELCOME

NEIGHBOURHOOD CIRCLES

Give out the Neighbourhood Circle handout and allow everyone some time to complete it. The aim of this activity is to show just how many people we rub shoulders with on a day-to-day basis, all of whom could potentially be a 'neighbour in need'!

In circle 1, you write the names of family members.

In circle 2, you write the names of your close friends.

In circle 3, you write the name of your classmates/colleagues. These are the people that you spend the majority of your day with.

In circle 4, you write the names of other people that you see more or less every day, eg teachers, boss, next-door neighbours, bus drivers etc.




In circle 5, you can write the names of anyone else who features in your life, eg football teammates, church youth group, checkout operator at Tesco ...

In circle 6, you can write the names of any enemies ... if you have any! You can put groups of people, eg football teams, as well as individual names.

Give people the chance to discuss their sheets and to be amazed at how many people they see regularly. We will return to this handout later in the session.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Think about where you live.

-  How many of your close neighbours can you name?
-  Out of the group, who knows their neighbours the best?
-  How could you get to know your neighbours better?

WORD

In the last session, we looked at the importance of producing fruit in our lives and read the following quote from Mother Teresa.


“ ‘Love is a fruit in season at all times, and within reach of every hand.’

— MOTHER TERESA

Today our focus will be on Jesus' command for us to love one another. As Mother Teresa suggests, this love is within reach of every one of us.

'A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'

— (JOHN 13:34-35 NIV)

 Does anyone know what has just happened when Jesus says these words?


Read John 13:1-17 (NIV) and discuss what you discover.


 **Watch: John 13 – Washing the Disciples' Feet / Bible Study (3:43)**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_cfgFMmwco

DISCUSS:

 How does Jesus show us how to love one another in this story?


 'We offer Christ-like love, knowing that not all will respond with devotion to Jesus.' What do you find challenging about this quote from the clip?

 How does the way we love others show Jesus to the world?

Most of us have learned how to pretend to love others – how to speak kindly, avoid hurting their feelings, and appear to take an interest in them. We may even be skilled in pretending to feel moved with compassion when we hear of others' needs, or to become indignant when we learn of injustice. But God calls us to real and sincere love that goes beyond pretence and politeness. Sincere love requires concentration and effort. It demands our time, our money, and personal involvement. Love is essentially the choice to value the need of another rather than our own. Love is one trait that Jesus clearly said would distinguish our lives from the rest of the world. This is transformed living at its best!

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Explore the following Scripture verses.

 What do they teach us about loving one another?

The full Scripture verses are shown below, but just give the group the references to find.

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves.

— (ROMANS 12:9-10)

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

— (EPHESIANS 5:1-2)

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

— (ROMANS 12:14-18)

WITNESS

Ask the group to look back at the Neighbourhood Circles handout that they completed at the start of the session. Working from the outer circle inwards, discuss the practical ways that the group could show love to the people within each circle. Jot down the ideas on a group list. As the discussion progresses, ask the group to consider the following question:

Are there specific people that you feel Jesus would like you to show love to this week?

Encourage them to choose seven different people to focus on over the coming week. Take seven different-coloured pens and circle one name in each colour, for every day of the week. Then each day, do one practical thing to show some extravagant love to that person. Make a note of what you do, how you feel, and what that person's reaction is (whether positive or negative).


ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

The command to love one another is all-encompassing: everyone is included, even the people we don't like. We're going to watch a clip that considers how we react to people we don't agree with.

This activity is more suitable for the older age group. It is not a specifically Christian clip and refers to the Dalai Lama, but it provides an interesting starting point to discuss how we should treat those we don't agree with.

 **How to Love Your Enemies – Say no to contempt (5:48)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dv1ORTvm8w>

 Although this is not a Christian clip, how does it link Jesus' command to love one another?

WORSHIP

As a group, take time to pray for the people mentioned on the Neighbourhood Circles handout. Give plenty of time for this moment of prayer, encouraging the group to ask for guidance to follow up on their promise to love others this week.

If you completed the Additional Activity in the Witness section, then give the group an opportunity to ask forgiveness for the way they have treated others with contempt.

After the group has prayed, use the following song as a time of reflection and bring the session to a close with prayer.

 **Israel Houghton – 'Others' Lyric Video (5:13)**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_pCtTTXGYbQ

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