



cell outlines
JANUARY 2019

These Cell Outlines are written by Youth and Children's Ministries. They are available every month from our web site. For more information and other Cell resources, visit salvationarmy.org.uk/children-and-youth-resources



INTRODUCTION

Our 2019 cell material will start with the territorial Vision and Commitment focus of Living Fruitfully, we will then go on to unpack this idea further throughout 2019 by looking into the book of Acts. Jesus' parting message to the disciples wasn't what to do, it was where to do it. They'd seen him feed the hungry, give sight to the blind and visit the prisoner, but what next? The first crop of church leaders, those called to carry and reimagine the work and message of Jesus, weren't left with a handbook, but with a map, a list of places to go and worlds to explore. Jesus also made them a promise, that his Spirit would be with them, and enable them to do immeasurably more than they could ever dream of.

This year, we'll follow the story of those first disciples as they seek to discover what it means to carry Jesus' message into Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the Earth. How do we become fruitful disciples of Jesus?

LIVING FRUITFULLY

Key Passage: John 15:1-17

Key Message: To help the young people reflect and be challenged to remain in Jesus, think long term and love one another as effective disciples.

RESOURCES

- * Dessert bowl, flour, plate or tray, Smarties, knife, towel
- * Dice, sticky labels
- * Sheets of paper, pens
- * Worship songs of choice for response time

BACKGROUND

Based on the analogy of the vine found in John 15:1-17, this year's Vision and Commitment focus explores how effectiveness can be seen as 'fruitfulness', encouraging people to 'Live Fruitfully' as followers of Jesus.

Jesus describes himself as the 'true vine', and the disciples as 'branches' are part of him. He is the source of life for them, and to be effective – to 'bear much fruit' – they must be completely dependent on him. Without him they can do nothing and will simply 'wither on the vine'.

At the start of the year there is the opportunity to stop and reflect on what fruitful discipleship might look like in the next year.

WELCOME

If this is your first time together as a group since Christmas and New Year, allow time to share stories, New Year's resolutions or funny Christmas anecdotes. Start off by playing either or both of these games:

Flour/Smartie Cutting

Preparation: Take a dessert bowl and fill it with flour, compacting it as much as you can. Turn it out on to a large plate or tray as a dome in one piece. Tip: Refrigerate it for a few hours before turning it out, and have a couple in reserve just in case.

Place a single Smartie in the centre of the dome. Explain to the players that they will take it in turns to come up and cut away a portion of the flour dome. They can cut away as much or as little as they can separate with a single straight knife cut.

However, if they dislodge the pile so that the Smartie falls into the flour, they lose. Their forfeit is that they have to eat the Smartie, without using their hands. In other words they have to put their face into the flour and try to get the Smartie without coughing or spluttering too much.

Play this as one big group or smaller groups; you could just do one and have everyone take turns, or you could have a number in play simultaneously – about half a dozen players per plate is optimal.

Body Dice / Human Twister

This game is like Twister. You will need two dice and Post-it Notes to write numbers on.

Separate into teams of up to six people and label each person in the group with a number from 1 to 6 (if one group has fewer than six people, give some people two numbers). The leader will role the dice. The first one will represent a person and the second will represent a body part (1=foot, 2=knee, 3=hip, 4=elbow, 5=hand, 6=nose).

SESSION
ONE

You will roll the two dice twice. After the first roll you call out what they represent – for example, ‘Number 5’s nose’. Roll again and call again – ‘Number 2’s knee’. Whatever combination of person and body part is called must then be connected with the two body parts. Each team keeps going until they cannot connect the two parts. The last team standing wins.

The participants then have to hold this position, as well as obeying any further instructions they receive whenever their number is rolled again. Keep on going, identifying pairs of players and which body parts they need to connect, so that each team ends up with a mixture of bizarre and tangled interconnections. It goes without saying that you will need to be careful to keep this appropriate and possibly consider if it is best to have a team of girls and a team of boys.

WORD**Read John 15:1-17 (NIV)**

This can be quite a confusing passage, full of metaphor and imagery. Ask the group what they think the passage might be talking about, letting them know there are no right or wrong answers. Explain that this year the territorial focus is ‘effectiveness’ or ‘fruitfulness’, as Jesus describes here, in the language of ‘bearing fruit’.

Explain that we believe that, as disciples of Jesus, our calling is not just for ourselves, but also for those we meet and the world around us. In our actions and interactions, we are called to ‘bear fruit’, to bring Jesus, in many shapes and forms, to our towns and cities, schools and workplaces. How do we become fruitful disciples? There are three clues in this passage to explore.

📖 ‘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’ (v5).

Like the branches connected to the central vine, Jesus is saying here that our fruitfulness comes from remaining connected to Christ, remaining ‘in’ Christ. Being ‘in Christ’ was the apostle Paul’s favourite way to describe being a disciple. Time and time again the phrase appears in his writing, perhaps most famously in Romans 8:1: ‘There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.’

Paul understood that following Jesus wasn’t something we did from a distance, but that some kind of ‘mystic union’ enabled you to be ‘in’ rather than ‘behind’ Christ, just following along. Clearly, central to being fruitful is maintaining a close relationship to Jesus.

📖 ‘I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last’ (v16).

It’s easy to do things which look and sound impressive in the short term. But Jesus doesn’t call us to bear disposable fruit. He’s looking for fruit that will last, not fruit which will wither and die. Look at the impact Jesus made; the disciples, those who followed him closely, didn’t stop following him once he left them, but went off and changed the world. Now that is fruit which lasts.

📖 ‘This is my command: love each other’ (v17).

Jesus ends this section of the teaching with the part that’s easiest to understand, but hardest to do: love each other. Genuinely love each other. This is the vine’s command to the branches: love each other. As branches, we’re not just connected to the vine, but to each other as well. We’re a church. We’re a community. We’re not in this alone. And so we need to love each other, to have one another’s back. Earlier on in John 13:35, Jesus says: ‘By this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you love one another.’ So we don’t just love each other to support each other, but to show the world a glimpse of who Jesus is and what is it that we’re trying to follow.

So that’s it – Jesus’ three simple commands for effective living are to stay close to him, to think long term, to love one another. But what does that actually mean?

ACTIVITIES

Split the group into three smaller groups and give each group one of the commands talked about above, printed out on paper.

Command 1: Stay close to Jesus

📖 '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' (v5).

Command 2: Think long term

📖 'I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last' (v16).

Command 3: Love one another

📖 'This is my command: love each other' (v17).

While Jesus' three simple rules for effectiveness sound simple, in reality they are anything but. Ask the groups to think about the command they have been given and answer the five questions below. Explain that they'll share with the wider group what they've come up with. You could offer them a number of different ways to express and present their thoughts and conversations – through role plays, art, poetry, music or simply feeding back conversations.

1. What does this command really mean?
2. Can you think of any examples of this command being lived out in the Bible?
3. What makes living out this command tricky?
4. What three things can we do as individuals to live out this command this year?
5. What three things can we do as a group to live out this command this year?

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Once each group has fed back, collate all the ideas from question 5 – to live out these commands this year as a group. Write them on a big sheet of paper and ask the group, if they're willing, to sign the bottom of the paper, indicating that they want to be committed fruitful disciples this year. While individual commitments can be made, doing it collectively allows support for each other over the coming year.

(Be careful that the ideas are achievable and appropriate. Ensure that a culture of shame or guilt isn't built up around them; these are the ideals but we all make mistakes!)

Once you've explained the idea of signing the sheet to show our commitment, give the young people a few moments to consider whether this is something they want to do.

* Play a worship song in the background and invite them to sign the paper. Allow time and space for this to happen and conclude this time by singing a song familiar to the group, firming their commitment.

Challenge the group that in order to be effective, we have to know what we're trying to achieve – how will we know how effective we are if we don't know what we're aiming for?

Hand out pens and paper, and invite the group to write down three or four things they want to achieve, as fruitful disciples, this year. This could be anything from being a role model to someone by what they say and do, to being confident in telling friends about Jesus etc.

Finish by inviting them to pray for one another in small groups for the coming year – that God will sustain them, keeping them close to Jesus and being fruitful in all they do. They can share and pray specifically for the aims they've written down for themselves and share things they are worried about, or things which could be a barrier.

Read this blessing over the group as a way to commission them into 2019:

**May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you,
Wherever he may send you.
May he guide you through the wilderness,
Protect you through the storms.**

**May he bring you home rejoicing
At the wonders he has shown you.
May he bring you home rejoicing,
Once again, into our doors.**

Northumbrian Blessing

It may be helpful to keep the sheet of paper in your meeting space for the whole year, allowing opportunities for those who were not there for this session to decide if they want to commit to it as well.



UNPACKING JESUS' COMMISSION TO THE DISCIPLES (ACTS 1:1-11)

WELCOME

Welcome the group to the session. Ask how their week has been and share highlights and challenges faced throughout the week.

Challenge

You will need spaghetti and marshmallows. (Blu Tack can work as well as an alternative to marshmallows.)

Set the group the challenge to build a tower/structure out of only spaghetti and marshmallows. Make it competitive by splitting the group into teams, and the highest tower wins.

Ask the group whether they found that challenge easy or difficult.

Say: Over the year, we are going to unpack the book of Acts and we'll be learning about the Early Church and how those disciples changed the world with the message of the gospel. The first chapter of Acts, though, does not start with Jesus telling them to do something, but instead Jesus telling them where they need to go.

WORD

Invite the group to read Acts 1: 1-11 together, each individual reading one verse in turn.

Alternatively

For groups that have young people who prefer to learn through listening to something, or a group not strong at reading, Bible Gateway has audio recordings of the Scripture passage:

www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+1%3A11&version=NIV

Read

“¹ In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴ On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.’

Discuss

- 🗨️ Why do you think the book is called ‘The Book of Acts’? (It may be worth explaining that the full name of the book is ‘The Book of the Acts of the Apostles’.)
- 🗨️ In verse 4, Jesus tells the disciples to ‘not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift’ from God. Have you ever had to wait for something? How did it make you feel?
- 🗨️ ‘The **waiting** place isn’t really about our **waiting** for **God** but, rather, about **God waiting** for us.’ – Adam Houge. Do you agree with this quote?
- 🗨️ What do you think the disciples were waiting for?
- 🗨️ Do you think God was waiting for the disciples? Why? What was God waiting for?

Read

“ 6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, ‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’

7 He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’

9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’

- ☞ Put yourself in the disciples’ shoes. How would you be feeling if you were told to go somewhere and do something but not told what to do?
- ☞ How does it feel to not be given proper instructions? Has that ever happened to you?
- ☞ If you were told to go to a foreign country and work for the Church, what ‘power’ would you need?
- ☞ Jesus left the disciples after telling them to ‘be witnesses... to the ends of the earth’. List some words that would describe how you would feel if that happened to you.

Say: Jesus left the disciples to go to be with his Father. It was now down to the disciples to wait for the gift so their mission to be witnesses to the ends of the earth could begin.

WORSHIP

Play some reflective music

Say: God had great things in store for the disciples, and God has great things in store for us all today. However, sometimes God tells us to wait. He tells us to stay where we are, so he can give us all that we need to do his mission.

Place in front of the group the two signs, GO and STOP (Appendix 1).

Say: Look at the two signs, GO and STOP. Ask God to speak to you:

- * Is God telling you to GO and do something?
- * Is God telling you to STOP and wait while he prepares you to do something incredible?

Allow some moments of reflection and then finish with this prayer:

Say: God, you have great things planned for us. You call us to be a part of your mission in the world. Speak to us so that we know what we should do and where we should go. Speak to us so we know when to stop and wait so you can empower us with all we need.

Amen.

WITNESS OR ACTION

Encourage the group throughout the week to use the GO and STOP signs (it might be worth printing out a small GO and STOP sign for each member of the group or ask the group to create their own signs). Ask them to place the GO and STOP signs somewhere in their room/house where they will see them each day (a mirror, the fridge, in their school/work shoes etc...). Encourage the group to think about what God throughout the week may be telling them to GO and do, or to STOP and wait.

WHAT DOES JESUS' COMMISSION TO THE DISCIPLES MEAN FOR US TODAY: 'YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES.'

WELCOME

Ask the group: 'What has been the weirdest/funniest thing you have ever witnessed?'

Encourage the group to share their stories of weird or funny experiences they have witnessed.

Say: When you witness something, be it a funny experience or something weird you have seen, it's harder to explain it to someone who hasn't witnessed it. There is no way of showing people what you witnessed (unless you have filmed it, of course!); you can only tell them of your experience.

This week we are pulling out and exploring five words from the passage in Acts 1:1-11 we spoke about last week: 'You will be my witnesses'.

WORD

Read: Acts 1:8

“ ‘But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’

Discuss: What is a witness?

Read: Some dictionary definitions of 'witness'. For groups with young people that prefer to learn visually, it might be helpful to have these definitions printed/written out.

- * to see, hear, or know by personal presence and perception
- * to be present at (an occurrence) as a formal witness, spectator, bystander
- * a person who gives testimony, as in a court of law

Video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=jx4iLH6cQaA

Watch this video. It proves it's not always easy to witness everything that goes on. In the same way that it's hard to witness everything, so it's not easy being a witness for Jesus.

Discuss

🗣️ How can people be a witness for Jesus?

Here are some ideas if your group cannot think of any:

- ▶ Telling others about him
- ▶ Fighting against the injustices of the world
- ▶ Acts of kindness and love
- ▶ Praying for people
- 🗣️ What challenges do people find when they tell others about Jesus? What challenges have you found when telling people about Jesus?
- 🗣️ Have you ever tried to tell someone about Jesus? What was their reaction?
- 🗣️ Do you think everyone wants to hear about Jesus? Why might people not want to hear about him?
- 🗣️ When do you think it was a harder time to witness for Jesus: today or when the disciples were alive? Why?

WORSHIP

You will need a large piece of paper (A3 or A2) and some newspapers

Ask the group to draw the world. (Do this as a whole group or ask the group members to do one each.)

Once the world has been drawn, ask the group to go through the newspapers – or if they have access to the internet on their phones/tablets, look through what is happening in the world – and ask them the question: ‘Where in the world do people need Jesus?’

Ask the group to colour in or highlight the areas on their pictures they identify as places that need Jesus.

Say: There are so many places in this world that need Jesus. It is through his Church – us – that these places can be transformed by Jesus. We can be witnesses for Jesus and tell people about how he has made a difference in our lives.

Pray: Encourage the group to pray for the parts of the world they have highlighted as needing Jesus.

If the individuals in your group struggle to pray out loud, then help them with this prayer:

Lord, help the people of (insert place). Help the Church to be witnesses for you.

WITNESS OR ACTION

Be a witness for Christ this week. This sounds really scary, but it doesn't have to be. There are three challenges to take up:

*** Stand up for something you know to be right.**

Being a witness for Jesus means standing against injustice and speaking out against the things that are wrong in the world. What do you see in your everyday life that is wrong and unjust? Can you challenge it?

*** Tell someone you will pray for them.**

Sometimes we can't do much to help someone who is struggling or going through a tough time. Sometimes all we can do is offer to pray for them. You can be Jesus to the person by simply saying ‘I'll pray for you’. Who do you know that needs prayer?

*** Tell a friend about your faith and what you have learnt about during this cell group.**

(This might be the hardest challenge, but God will give you all the courage you need and the words you need to say!) Tell a friend that you were at your youth group / youth cell and tell them why you go. It might be easier to say what you spoke about during the youth cell. Saying you go to a youth cell as part of your church because you have faith in Jesus is a huge step. And you never know, your friend may want to know more!

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE: PRAYER

WELCOME

Welcome the group into the session, create time for the young people to share their experiences of the challenges set last week about 'being a witness for Jesus'.

Game: Stare challenge. Set the group the challenge to get into pairs and simply stare into each other's eyes. The first person to blink or look away – or giggle! – loses. For groups that like some competition, create a knockout tournament and see who the stare challenge champion is!

Say: It takes a lot of concentration to keep your eyes fixed on your opponent's eyes. You have to discipline yourself to not look away or blink. It's the same for how we grow in our faith: we have to teach ourselves to do certain things that help our relationship with God develop. These things are called Spiritual Disciplines. One discipline we are thinking about today is prayer.

WORD

Read: Colossians 4:2 (New Living Translation)

“ Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.

Discuss

- 🗣️ If you had to describe to an alien what prayer is, what would you say?
- 🗣️ How is your prayer life?
- 🗣️ Rate your prayer life out of 10. Why did you give yourself that score?
1= I don't pray at all 5= I sometimes pray 10= Totally devoted
- 🗣️ Do you find prayer an easy thing to do?
- 🗣️ Do you think it is a discipline we have to train ourselves in? Why?
- 🗣️ How do you pray?

Say: There are so many different ways you can pray. It doesn't have to be silently and with your eyes and hands closed (though being silent is a good way to pray!)

📺 **Watch:** www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7iq3gCZVII

An example of praying differently can be through prayer walking. What other ways can you pray?

WORSHIP

Go on a prayer walk.

Please note, if you are taking young people outside of the building you may need parental consent. Please see your divisional youth specialist or corps officer if you need support in this.

Try and pray in a new way. Walk around your community with your young people, praying for the local area. Here are some points of prayer when you walk around your community;

- * Pray that God will direct where you will walk.
- * Pray for the people you see on your walk. Ask God to bless them and keep them safe.
- * Pray over the churches you see on the walk. Ask God to bless the Church and increase its mission in the community.

- * Pray over the issues you see on your walk. What do you see that isn't right? Homelessness? Litter? Arguments between people?
- * Pray that God will help you make a difference in the community where you are working. Ask God to make it clear what he wants you to do in this place.

You will know how long the prayer walk should last depending on your group of young people. Bring the group together and finish with a prayer before you head back to the place where you meet.

WITNESS OR ACTION

Keep a prayer diary for the week. Note down the prayers you make this week. In that way you can see what you have prayed for over the week and you can see where God has answered prayer. Here are some ideas of what to pray for over the week:

Monday - Thank God for as many things as possible

Tuesday - Pray for forgiveness for the times where you have messed up

Wednesday - Pray for the people you love

Thursday - Pray for the people you struggle to get on with

Friday - Pray for your church

Saturday - Pray for the issues around the world; ask God to help those people in the world who are suffering



