



cell outlines
NOVEMBER 2018

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

PETER'S REDEMPTION

WELCOME

When we think of all those prophets and amazing people in the Bible, or all those 'perfect Christians' in your church – I wonder, what do they have in common?

What makes the perfect follower of God?

Spilt your group into pairs and give them pens and some paper and 10 minutes to draw and describe the perfect Christian.

- * What would they look like?
- * What would they wear?
- * What would their personality traits be?

Follow up with the group and get them to share their ideas, then ask them these two questions:

- * Do you know anyone like the person you have drawn and described?
- * Do you think you are like this person?

WORD

Out of all the disciples, Peter was definitely one of the most confident. He was regularly at the forefront of Jesus' work and was never afraid to be a role model to the other disciples.

In fact, before Jesus' arrest, Peter is bragging that he will never leave Jesus' side, even if every other disciple deserted him.

But just hours later, when Jesus was being tortured and questioned, Peter was denying Jesus to those around him. He in fact denied him three times! Let's look at his third denial by reading Mark 14:70-72 (NIV):

70 Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, 'Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.' 71 He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, 'I don't know this man you're talking about.' 72 Immediately the cock crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: 'Before the cock crows twice you will disown me three times.' And he broke down and wept.

Explain:

This is one of the few stories told in all four Gospels. This 'perfect' follower of Jesus denied his friend right when Jesus needed him most.

He, like the rest of us, was NOT perfect.

But today we are looking at Jesus' love for us despite our imperfections. We meet Peter again while he is sat on the beach having breakfast with Jesus and the disciples. Jesus had been killed, then raised to life, and this was his third visit to the disciples.

📺 Watch YouTube: The Skit Guys - Grace [skitguys.com/videos/item/grace](https://www.skitguys.com/videos/item/grace)

In this conversation between Jesus and Peter, grace is illustrated when Jesus forgives the unforgivable.

Questions for after the clip:

- 💬 Why does Jesus ask, 'Do you love me more than these?'
- 💬 Who are 'these'?
- 💬 How do you think Peter feels being asked 'Do you love me?' by Jesus?

SESSION
ONE

- 🗣️ Why would you ask someone the same question three times?
- 🗣️ Why did Jesus ask Peter three times?
- 🗣️ Who does Jesus mean when he says, 'Feed my lambs' or 'sheep'?
- 🗣️ Who are the 'lambs' or 'sheep' in your life?

As a group list the lambs (people who do not know God) we have contact with.

Then list the sheep (people we know to have a faith).

Come up with a plan or an understanding of how we can better support each other in our journey with God.

WORSHIP

A perfect Christian! Simply there is no such thing. If God only used perfect people, then he would never get anything done.

God wants to use you. He knows you are not perfect, he knows there will be times when you will let him down. But he knows his way for you is so much more than you know for yourself.

Here is a list of some people God used:

Jacob was a cheater,
 Peter was a tempter,
 David had an affair,
 Noah got drunk,
 Jonah ran from God,
 Paul was a murderer,
 Gideon was insecure,
 Miriam was a gossip,
 Martha was a worrier,
 Thomas was a doubter,
 Sara was impatient,
 Elijah was moody,
 Abraham was old...
 Lazarus was dead!

Jesus made you as you are. He knows you are a work in progress, and he wants to walk alongside you, to guide you.

Listen to the song 'He knows my name' by Tommy Walker (SoF 795), sung by Paul Baloche:

📺 YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXsiWoyjw60

Lyrics:

**I have a Maker, he formed my heart
 Before even time began my life was in his hands.**

**He knows my name
 He knows my every thought
 He sees each tear that falls
 And he hears me when I call.**

SESSION
ONE

I have a Father, he calls me his own,
He'll never leave me no matter where I roam.

He knows my name
He knows my every thought
He sees each tear that falls
And he hears me when I call.

WITNESS/ACTION

Leader to read:

- “ But now, this is what the Lord says – he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: ‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.’

Isaiah 43:1 *NIV*

RAHAB

WELCOME

Start the session with a game of Empire to get everyone's brains working.

Instructions for Empire:

Ask each member of the group to think of a famous person or character to represent, and one at a time secretly tell the leader.

The leader will write down the names of these characters, and add on three new names of his/her own to make it more difficult.

The leader will then read out the names in a different order. The aim of the game is for people to guess which person has chosen each character on the list.

They guess who someone is by simply asking, 'Jonathan, are you Michael Jackson?'

If the reply is no, then it is his turn to guess.

If the reply is yes, he will join your empire.

If Jonathan already has people in his own empire, they will join your empire as well.

Whenever anyone joins your empire, make sure you know which characters they chose, to work out who is left.

The person who collects all the people becomes leader of the empire.

WORD

Explain to the group that today we are looking at Rahab the prostitute, an example of a woman who went from a harlot to a heroine.

Rahab's context

After they had escaped Egypt through the parted Red Sea, and after 40 years of struggle, it was time for God to give his people access to the Promised Land.

This was not empty land, but land that had been lived in for a long time by many different tribes and cities.

One of the biggest and most corrupt of the cities in that land was Jericho. Jericho was surrounded by huge walls (32-41 feet high), which were so big that families built houses into them.

At this time it was ruled by a king, and its people worshipped idols, many giving gifts and sacrifices to different gods. A favourite was Ashtaroth, the goddess of the moon. They were a corrupt and terrible nation.

God told Joshua that the city would be theirs, so Joshua sent out two spies into the city to gather information.

Look up the following verses: Joshua 2:1-7 (NIV)

¹ Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. 'Go, look over the land,' he said, 'especially Jericho.' So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.

² The king of Jericho was told, 'Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.' ³ So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: 'Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land.'

⁴ But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, 'Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from.' ⁵ At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with

SESSION
TWO

them.’⁶ (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.)⁷ So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

Discussion questions:

- 🗨️ Why do you think Joshua sent out the spies?
- 🗨️ Why do you think Rahab chose to hide the men?
- 🗨️ What is flax?
 - ▶ In those days flax was one of the most important crops they grew since it would be made into linen. Flax would be cut, cleaned and then bleached in the sun.
- 🗨️ Why did the guards take Rahab's word for it?

In groups of three/four read through Joshua 2:8-24 and create a storyboard to explain what happened next in the story. This can be done with pictures on your phone, drawings or quick descriptive sentences

⁸ Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof⁹ and said to them, ‘I know that the Lord has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.¹⁰ We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.¹¹ When we heard of it, our hearts sank and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

¹² ‘Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign¹³ that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them – and that you will save us from death.’

¹⁴ ‘Our lives for your lives!’ the men assured her. ‘If you don’t tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land.’

¹⁵ So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall.¹⁶ She said to them, ‘Go to the hills so that the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there for three days until they return, and then go on your way.’

¹⁷ Now the men had said to her, ‘This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us¹⁸ unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house.¹⁹ If any of them go outside your house into the street, their blood will be on their own heads; we will not be responsible. As for those who are in the house with you, their blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on them.²⁰ But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear.’

²¹ ‘Agreed,’ she replied. ‘Let it be as you say.’

So she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

²² When they left, they went into the hills and stayed there three days, until the pursuers had searched all along the road and returned without finding them.²³ Then the two men started back. They went down out of the hills, forded the river and came to Joshua son of Nun and told him everything that had happened to them.²⁴ They said to Joshua, ‘The Lord has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us.’

- 🗨️ Where did Rahab's faith come from?
- 🗨️ Why do you think she was so courageous?
- 🗨️ What do you think the scarlet cord could represent?

Explain:

Rahab and her family were saved from the destruction of the city and lived the rest of their days with the Israelites. In fact Rahab married an Israelite man and had a child called Boaz, who later married Ruth. Rahab became King David's great-great-grandmother and therefore part of the bloodline of Jesus himself, honoured in the genealogy in Matthew's Gospel (1:5).

WORSHIP

Explain that Rahab had faults. She was a prostitute, she lived in a pagan city, she was dwelling in a city which was going to be destroyed – and yet she hoped. She found faith in God and wanted to protect her family.

Like many people in our lives, Rahab was not a church person. She was not a recognised believer. Yet she took a decision for God, protected his men and saved her family.

Two things we can learn from Rahab:

1. Your past does not determine your future.
2. Your response to God is everything.

We can easily find ourselves looking down on others for living a life different from what we believe is right. However, it is important that we don't look down on people when they have issues, because all of us need to experience grace.

Listen to: 'Here is love' by William Rees, recorded by Matt Redman:

 www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTOP304FOG0

Take time to think of those people in our lives but not known to the rest of the group, who do not know God – people who need God and need grace and love.

WITNESS/ACTION

Write the names of the people who you have been thinking of in the worship session on strips of paper and place them in the middle.

Mix them up and ask everyone to pick one of those names.

Challenge each other to pray for that person in the coming week. They may not know them, but God does.

OTHER PEOPLE'S 'NO MATTER WHAT'

WELCOME

So far this month we have looked at two different characters from the Bible with two very different stories. We have considered the challenges, the fears, the failures, the difficulties, the required faith and the blessings when you live your life following God. We now want to take some time to look at our own individual stories, the challenges we face, what makes it difficult for us to be a Christian in 2018, or to discuss the things that maybe stop us from believing. We can also think about what might make it easy for us to be Christians and the things that give us hope. This session is going to be all about discussion, which is a step away from the usual Cell structure. We hope that by doing this your group will be able to engage in a different sort of conversation that will allow them the freedom and space to discuss some of the things that are on their hearts.

To enable this session to be as effective as possible, we suggest creating an open, relaxed and comfortable space.

Explain:

- * This session is an opportunity for us to really think about what it means to be a Christian in 2018.
- * This is a chance for us to think about what we believe and why and how the church supports us.
- * As leaders we promise to be open and honest with you. We are 100 per cent willing to be vulnerable, and we want you to know that there are no judgments from us about anything you wish to say or what you believe.
- * We are all here to have an open discussion.

Leader:

We expect some difficult topics to come up in this session. Do not be afraid to speak to your groups about sexuality, gender, social media, traditional church, etc.

Be prepared to share your own experiences, and make sure that at no point there are people in the group who feel alienated by what is being discussed and that the environment remains positive, inclusive and honest. Please also don't be afraid to say that you don't know the answer to certain questions but that you will try to find out.

WORD

Guidance questions:

- * Do you think it is difficult to be a Christian in 2018?
- * What is it about the world around you that makes it a challenge?
- * Do you feel the Church is relatable to young people? Why, or why not?
- * Is there something you wish your church was doing to engage with youth more?
- * How do you feel being a Christian is viewed in society?
- * How do you feel Christians are viewed by your friends?
- * Do your friends know you go to church?
- * Who is your best support in your Christian faith?
- * Do you have a mentor (someone in the church who you can speak to and rely on for prayer)? If not, would you like one; or would you be interested in being one for a younger member of the church?

As leaders it is important we know our youth are supported, and this sometimes means allowing them to be led and supported by people outside the youth group.

Would a mentor programme work within your corps?

WORSHIP AND WITNESS/ACTION

Leader to pray:

Father God,

We thank you that you are a God who allows us to ask questions. You are a God who wants a relationship with us, and you know that means we sometimes doubt, we sometimes get angry, we sometimes do not understand. Yet you want to help us through it.

Lord, we live in a world so different from the one you created, so different from the one Jesus walked, and so different even from the one our parents walked. It can be easy to think that no one understands how it feels to be a Christian these days. But Lord, we must trust in you, that you know what is best for us.

We pray, Lord, that you will not be a silent God. Do not keep quiet, but guide us, challenge us, protect us; and above all, God, allow some of our questions to be answered.

Give us the courage to speak about our faith in you, no matter how big or small that is. Help us to see you in all we do and see and experience.

Amen.

DEALING WITH FAILURE

WELCOME

Game: split the group into teams of six or fewer.

Get the young people to form a circle within their small group and tell them to start their circle close together.

Give a ball to one person in each group to start the game.

Explain that they will toss the ball to the player next to them – underhand, not overhand.

After everyone in the group has caught the ball, they all have to take a step backwards, making the circle wider, and repeat the process. If one of them drops the ball then that person has to put one hand behind their back. If they drop it again, they have to kneel and still only use one hand. If they drop it again, they have to sit on the floor. If they drop it again, they have to lie on their stomach!

WORD

As a group take it in turns to read John 15: 1-6

1⁵ 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

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. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.'

💬 What does Jesus mean when he says 'Abide in me'?

💬 What happens to those who do not 'abide' in him?

Read on to verses 7-11 to see what happens when we do abide in Jesus.

⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹ 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

The game we played at the start got harder as it went on; the more times we failed, the more challenging it became. What can we take away from that? Each of us fail, some more than others, but we all fail. We have all sinned. But the really amazing thing is that God loves us each.

Life can get harder, but having a God who loves us, no matter what we do, can really help us understand that struggling, and know that failing is not the end.

We also need to think about how we can support each other in how we are feeling. If someone is struggling and feels like things are going really wrong for them, or that they have messed up and let down those around them, what can we do to help build them back up and support them through their tough times?

💬 How can we 'abide in God' in our daily lives?

SESSION
FOUR

- 🗣️ What practical things can we do?
- 🗣️ How can we help those around us know that God loves them?
- 🗣️ What practical things can we do?
- 📺 Watch Rob Bell's Nooma, 'Lump' - www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WC-70-Otk8
- 🗣️ Have you ever got busted for something you'd done? Can you confess it?
- 🗣️ Do you think it is possible to keep something secret and never let anyone know that you had done it?
- 🗣️ What does it feel like to keep a secret from people?
- 🗣️ What are the ways you avoid dealing with mistakes, issues or problems in your life?
- 🗣️ Do you have people in your life who are struggling? Why do you think people do not share the bad things they have done?
- 🗣️ Who are some of the people in your life that couldn't do anything to make you love them less?
- 🗣️ Do you feel this way about all people? Why/why not?

Do you believe and feel deep down that God loves you no matter what you do? If yes, how did you reach this feeling? If no, what's stopping you from believing this?

WORSHIP

Invite your group to spend some time reflecting on what you have been talking about in this session.

- 📺 Listen to Rend Collective's song 'Rescuer': www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAg7rn7fH3Q

Lyrics:

**He's our rescuer
 He's our rescuer
 We are free from sin for evermore
 Oh how sweet the sound
 Oh how grace abounds
 We will praise the Lord, our rescuer.**

**There is good news for the captive
 Good news for the shamed
 There is good news for the one who
 walked away**

**There is good news for the doubter
 The one religion failed
 For the good Lord has come to seek
 and save.**

**So come and be chainless
 Come and be fearless
 Come to the foot of Calvary
 For there is redemption
 For every affliction
 Here at the foot of Calvary.**

WITNESS / ACTION

As a blessing, ask one of the group to read the following:

Nothing can separate you from the love of God.
 May you stop hiding under the covers from him.
 May you let God come close to you.
 May you embrace him,
 Hear the truth.
 May you know deep in the depths of your soul,
 There is nothing you could ever do to make him love you less.
 Amen.