

cell outlines
OCTOBER 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

OVERVIEW

FOLLOWING THROUGH OPPOSITION

Opposition was a reality for the early Christians, and in the New Testament we can read lots of stories of the hardships they faced as they bravely lived for Jesus and boldly shared his message. After the disciples had been filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, there was no stopping them! Signs and wonders accompanied their preaching of the word, and no one could deny that God was at work in a new way. But not everyone was happy. The 'religious establishment' that had opposed the ministry of Jesus, and then crucified him, took the same hostile approach towards the early Christians.

The death of Stephen was the signal for an outbreak of persecution which compelled the Christians to scatter and to seek safety in the remoter districts of the country. They were beaten, slandered, and even spent time in prison, but they stood fast in their faith. They remained passionate about sharing how Jesus had transformed their lives. And they were even able to feel joy at being counted 'worthy of suffering' for Jesus!

The apostle Paul said: *'Anyone who wants to live all out for Christ is in for a lot of trouble; there's no getting around it'* (2 Timothy 3:12 MSG). We may not get beaten or put into jail as some of the first Christians were, but we can't expect everyone to react favourably when we share our faith in Jesus; some people may be jealous, afraid or threatened. We can't pretend to our young people that the Christian life is all love, joy and peace – in the happy, bubbly kind of way. We need them to know that in every Christian life there will be suffering and opposition, but that they will be given the strength to stand firm despite difficult circumstances.

In Session Four we will spend some time thinking about Christians around the world who experience devastating and overwhelming persecution because of their faith in Jesus. It is suggested that before this session you spend some time looking at the Open Doors Youth website which has a load of excellent youth resources on this topic. You can order some free resources for your group members or download from the website. See the session outline for more info.

THE FIRST BELIEVERS: FOLLOWING THROUGH OPPOSITION

“ ‘...the Holy Spirit has let me know repeatedly and clearly that there are hard times and imprisonment ahead. But that matters little. What matters most to me is to finish what God started: the job the Master Jesus gave me of letting everyone I meet know all about this incredibly extravagant generosity of God.’

Acts 20:23-24 MSG

Key Learning Point:

- * Jesus said that we're bound to face opposition (Matthew 5:11,12). For Christians in the New Testament, opposition – and even persecution – was normal, and it will still be a reality for us today.

WELCOME

Ask everyone to get into pairs to hold a pillow-duelling competition!

Each pair in turn stands on a bench or block, and each person tries to hit their opponent off the bench with their pillow. Before you begin, agree on some ground rules, eg no hitting above the shoulders (ensure proper health and safety measures are employed).

Ask the group how easy it was for them to stand their ground when being hit with a pillow.

(www.energize.uk.net/meeting-plans/534)

WORD

1. Continue from the above game and ask the group how easy it is to stand up for the things they believe in. Ask the group to put their hands up if they find standing up for their faith hard, or ask them to shout out things they find particularly tough. Ask if anyone can give an example of when they have stood firm and defended a belief. For Christians in the New Testament, opposition – and even persecution – was normal, and it is still a reality for Christians today.

In the Bible there are many verses which talk about believers being persecuted, and the New Testament tells us that to choose to follow Jesus is not the easy option. Jesus actually said that we're bound to face opposition for following him but that we should be pleased because of it (Matthew 5). He said that if people persecuted him, they will also persecute his followers (John 15:20). The apostle Paul said that *Anyone who wants to live all out for Christ is in for a lot of trouble; there's no getting around it'* (2 Timothy 3:12 MSG). We may not get beaten or put into jail as some of the first Christians were, but we can't expect everyone to react favourably when we share our faith in Jesus; some people may be jealous, afraid or threatened. We can expect some negative reactions, but remember Paul's words to a young Timothy... God's Spirit is not one of fear, but of strength and boldness and confidence (slightly paraphrased from 2 Timothy 1:7!).

2. Split into pairs / smaller groups and divide some/all of the following Bible passages between the pairs.

Acts 4:1-4	Peter and John are arrested
Acts 5:17-21	The apostles are arrested
Acts 6:8-15; 7:54-60	The stoning of Stephen
Acts 8:1-3	Saul persecutes the Christians
Acts 12:1-5	James is killed, Peter imprisoned
Acts 13:44-52	Paul and Barnabas are kicked out of town

SESSION
ONE

Acts 14:19-20 Paul is stoned and nearly killed
 Acts 21:27-36 Paul is nearly killed again...
 Acts 23:12-16 ...and again

Ask each pair to read the passage(s) and discuss what difficulties the believers in Acts faced living as Christians and telling others about Jesus, and then feed back to the rest of the group. Discuss:

- 🗨️ Who were opposing the believers in Acts?
- 🗨️ Why do the believers experience this opposition?
- 🗨️ How do the believers respond to the opposition and persecution?
- 🗨️ What do you think gets them through the hard times?

ACTION

1. Then ask the pairs to discuss: What difficulties and challenges do we face following Jesus today? Use similar questions to those above:

- 🗨️ Who do you feel 'opposes' you as a Christian?
- 🗨️ Why do you think you/Christians today experience opposition?
- 🗨️ How do you / should you respond to opposition and persecution?
- 🗨️ What gets you through the hard times?

If your group prefer to see something visual as you discuss, create four boxes on two separate large pieces of flipchart paper. In the boxes write Who? Why? How? and What? Use one sheet of paper to jot down notes from your feedback about the believers in Acts, and the other sheet to answer the questions about you personally and/or Christians today.

2. Response to opposition.

Print/write out the following Scriptures on to small cards / strips of paper. (You can add your own Scriptures too.) Lay out the cards face down in the centre of the group. In turn, ask each person to pick up a card and read it aloud, then place it down again face up. After all the cards have been read and turned over, allow the group a few minutes to reflect on the Scriptures.

Discuss with the group how these Scriptures can/should inform the way we respond to opposition in our Christian lives. Often what we are told to do in the Bible seems to contradict what the world tells us - 'Every man for himself', 'If someone fights you, fight back', 'Look after number one' etc.

Discuss with the young people what they think and feel about what these Bible verses are advising, where we should find our courage and strength, and what we can put into action in our own lives.

“ **People will insult you and hurt you. They will lie and say all kinds of evil things about you because you follow me. But when they do, you will be blessed. Rejoice and be glad, because you have a great reward waiting for you in heaven.**

Matthew 5:11-12 NCV

“ **There is a saying, 'Love your friends and hate your enemies.' But I say: Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven.**

Matthew 5:43-45 TLB

“ **If someone mistreats you because you are a Christian, don't curse him; pray that God will bless him.**

Romans 12:14 TLB

SESSION
ONE

“ Yes, I am glad to be weak or insulted or mistreated or to have troubles and sufferings, if it is for Christ. Because when I am weak, I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:10 CEV

“ Last of all I want to remind you that your strength must come from the Lord’s mighty power within you.

Ephesians 6:10 TLB

“ God’s Spirit doesn’t make cowards out of us. The Spirit gives us power, love, and self-control.

2 Timothy 1:7 CEV

“ My friends, consider yourselves fortunate when all kinds of trials come your way, for you know that when your faith succeeds in facing such trials, the result is the ability to endure. Make sure that your endurance carries you all the way without failing, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

James 1:2-4 GNT

“ 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.

Matthew 5:11-12 GNT

“ Let us be bold, then, and say, “The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?”

Hebrews 13:6 GNT

3. Split into two groups and ask each group to choose one of the scenarios that you have read about the believers in Acts and rework it into a modern setting; or use a situation that you have discussed that is taking place in your own lives. Role-play this story to the rest of the group, trying to put some of the biblical responses into action. Discuss what you have learnt from this exercise.

4. Ask anyone who wants to, to tell of a time when they have been brave and stood up for the Christian faith, or been open about being a Christian.

PRAYER

1. Look again at the Scripture cards. Ask each person to pick out the Scripture that they feel is the most applicable to them at this time. You could ask each person to share why they have chosen a particular Scripture and pray for each other, or use this as a time of private reflection and prayer. Challenge each person to memorise the Scripture they have chosen by the next session.

2. Read the following passage from *The Message* paraphrase, then ask each person to rewrite it in their own words as a prayer of commitment to stand strong for Jesus in the face of opposition. Pray for each other to be filled with the strength and courage and boldness of the Holy Spirit.

“ We’ve been surrounded and battered by troubles, but we’re not demoralised; we’re not sure what to do, but we know that God knows what to do; we’ve been spiritually terrorised, but God hasn’t left our side; we’ve been thrown down, but we haven’t broken. What they did to Jesus, they do to us – trial and torture, mockery and murder; what Jesus did among them, he does in us – he lives! Our lives are at constant risk for Jesus’ sake, which makes Jesus’ life all the more evident in us. While we’re going through the worst, you’re getting in on the best!

2 Corinthians 4:8-12 MSG

THE BLIND MAN HEALED BY JESUS – FOLLOWING THROUGH OPPOSITION

Key Learning Points

- * You will experience opposition from people when you say you know Jesus, but your real experiences of Jesus in your life will be what keep you strong.
- * You do not need to have all the answers to share your own story; your personal experience and relationship with Jesus can be enough.

WELCOME

Ask each person to think of two real-life experiences that they have had that they can tell the group about. In addition, they must make up one experience that isn't true, but sounds plausible. Take it in turns for each person to tell the rest of the group about their three experiences. The group must try to guess which one is the lie.

If you have a confident group you could allow group members to question the person about their experiences to help them decide which is the lie (in the style of the TV programme *Would I Lie to You*).

WORD

1. John 9

Read all of John chapter 9 together. As this is quite a long passage, choose carefully the version that you use, and perhaps get each person involved in reading aloud a small portion of it. It may be helpful to have printed copies of this passage for each person in the version that you choose.




2. Healing the Blind Man

This fun video on YouTube gives a good overview of this story.

Waste Watchers Part 3 – Healing the Blind Man

 www.youtube.com/watch?v=jisWoFBlqhE

3. Ask the group to identify the three main groups of people in this passage, in addition to the blind man himself (see discussion notes below). Split your group into pairs and allocate one of these groups to each pair. Ask each pair to consider:

-  What were their reactions to the miraculous healing that had happened?
-  What were their attitudes towards Jesus?
-  What primary emotion do you think motivated their responses, eg fear, jealousy, confusion?

Give them some flipchart paper / wallpaper so they can jot down their thoughts ready to share with the rest of the group.

4. Split the group into pairs. Ask each person in the pair to choose one of their true experiences as discussed in the welcome game. One person should tell their partner about their experience in more detail. The partner must then start to question them as if they don't believe what they are telling them.

After this exercise ask the group: How did it feel not to be believed when you were telling about a true event that happened in your life? Did it bother you? Did it make you doubt your own experience? Were you able to prove that it was true? Did your partner's questioning make it any less true?

5. Discuss: What kind of questions do you get asked about your faith that you find it difficult to answer? What things to

do people say to you to try to disprove Jesus? Do people mock you, laugh at you, bully you, leave you out? How can you stand firm when people behave like this towards you because of your faith in Jesus?

6. Can you identify an experience of Jesus that you have had? Not just 'head knowledge' about Jesus, but 'heart' knowledge of how he has touched your life in some way. (This could be an answer to prayer, hearing Jesus speak to you, witnessing someone being healed, feeling joy or love or peace in the midst of darkness.) Share these experiences with each other and discuss how you could also share this with your non-Christian friends.

Use the following thoughts in your discussions as you find appropriate.

In John 9 we see four different reactions to Jesus. The neighbours revealed surprise and scepticism; the Pharisees showed disbelief and prejudice; the parents believed but kept quiet for fear of excommunication; and the healed man showed consistent growing faith.

By the end of this story the man who had been blind had heard the same questions over and over. He did not know how or why he was healed, but he knew that his life had been miraculously changed, and he was not afraid to tell the truth. Even though many people questioned him about what had happened in an antagonistic fashion, and even though it resulted in him being kicked out of the synagogue, he spoke about Jesus clearly, confidently, passionately and honestly. His new faith was severely tested, but the longer this man experienced his new life through Jesus the more confident he became in the one who had healed him. He didn't have all the answers, but his faith and personal experience was strong. He didn't know everything about Jesus, but he did know how Jesus had touched his life. At that moment it was an irrefutable argument. No one could argue against what Jesus had done in this man's life.

PRAYER

For something different, try modelling your prayers out of clay. (Plasticine will do if the budget won't stretch to real air-drying clay.)

Play the track 'Who am I living for?' by Katy Perry.

Encourage group members to listen to the music and lyrics whilst crafting something out of the clay in their hands that expresses something of their desire and determination to stand firm and share their own experiences of Jesus. Ask them to settle the question in their hearts 'Who am I living for?'

If possible, ask your group to pray out loud, one at a time, short prayers based on their clay models.

Other worship songs on this theme include:

'What the world will never take' – Hillsong United

'Revolution' – Hillsong United

NEHEMIAH: FOLLOWING THROUGH OPPOSITION

Key Learning Point:

- * It is likely that whenever you try to accomplish anything significant for God, you will face strong opposition.

WELCOME

Split your group into smaller teams and give each team a stack of newspapers and some sticky tape. Set a short time limit and challenge the teams to build a structure out of the newspapers. Award a prize for the best build!

WORD

1. Introduce your group to Nehemiah. Find out what they already know about him.

Nehemiah had a vision from God, and he shared it with enthusiasm, inspiring Jerusalem's leaders to rebuild its walls. But even though it was God's will for the walls to be rebuilt, Nehemiah still endured a lot of opposition on this huge task. But, from beginning to end, Nehemiah prayed for God's help, and the project was a success – the walls around Jerusalem were rebuilt in record time.

Watch either of the following two YouTube videos which give a good overview of Nehemiah's story and outline the opposition he faced whilst trying to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem:

▶ Nehemiah and the wall – www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6d-eAw_VeU

▶ God's Story: Nehemiah – www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdDvqWtVkro

(If you want to go back before this story starts, watch this short video clip that outlines the history of the broken walls. Bible History: Nehemiah www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1bueK3KgKg)

2. Read Nehemiah 4 and Nehemiah 6:1–16

Nehemiah 4 (CEV)

“ When Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, heard that we were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, he became angry and started insulting our people. ² In front of his friends and the Samaritan army he said, ‘What is this feeble bunch of Jews trying to do? Are they going to rebuild the wall and offer sacrifices all in one day? Do they think they can make something out of this pile of scorched stones?’

³ Tobiah from Ammon was standing beside Sanballat and said, ‘Look at the wall they are building! Why, even a fox could knock over this pile of stones.’

⁴ But I prayed, ‘Our God, these people hate us and have wished horrible things for us. Please answer our prayers and make their insults fall on them! Let them be the ones to be dragged away as prisoners of war. ⁵ Don’t forgive the mean and evil way they have insulted the builders.’

⁶ The people worked hard, and we built the walls of Jerusalem halfway up again. ⁷ But Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the people from the city of Ashdod saw the walls going up and the holes being repaired. So they became angry ⁸ and decided to stir up trouble, and to fight against the people of Jerusalem. ⁹ But we kept on praying to our God, and we also stationed guards day and night.

¹⁰ Meanwhile, the people of Judah were singing a sorrowful song:

‘So much rubble for us to haul! Worn out and weary, will we ever finish this wall?’

¹¹ Our enemies were saying, ‘Before those Jews know what has happened, we will sneak up and kill them and put an end to their work.’

¹² On at least ten different occasions, the Jews living near our enemies warned us against attacks from every side, ¹³ and so I sent people to guard the wall at its lowest places and where there were still holes in it. I placed them according to families, and they stood guard with swords and spears and with bows and arrows. ¹⁴ Then I looked things over and told the leaders, the officials, and the rest of the people, ‘Don’t be afraid of your enemies! The Lord is great and fearsome. So think of him and fight for your relatives and children, your wives and homes!’

¹⁵ Our enemies found out that we knew about their plot against us, but God kept them from doing what they had planned. So we went back to work on the wall.

Nehemiah 6: 1-16 NCV

“ Then Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and our other enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall and that there was not one gap in it. But I had not yet set the doors in the gates. ² So Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: ‘Come, Nehemiah, let’s meet together in Kephirim on the plain of Ono.’

But they were planning to harm me. ³ So I sent messengers to them with this answer: ‘I am doing a great work, and I can’t come down. I don’t want the work to stop while I leave to meet you.’ ⁴ Sanballat and Geshem sent the same message to me four times, and each time I sent back the same answer.

⁵ The fifth time Sanballat sent his helper to me with the message, and in his hand was an unsealed letter. ⁶ This is what was written:

A report is going around to all the nations, and Geshem says it is true, that you and the Jewish people are planning to turn against the king and that you are rebuilding the wall. They say you are going to be their king ⁷ and that you have appointed prophets to announce in Jerusalem: ‘There is a king of Judah!’ The king will hear about this. So come, let’s discuss this together.

⁸ So I sent him back this answer: ‘Nothing you are saying is really happening. You are just making it up in your own mind.’

⁹ Our enemies were trying to scare us, thinking, ‘They will get too weak to work. Then the wall will not be finished.’

But I prayed, ‘God, make me strong.’

¹⁰ One day I went to the house of Shemaiah son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel. Shemaiah had to stay at home. He said, ‘Nehemiah, let’s meet in the Temple of God. Let’s go inside the Temple and close the doors, because men are coming at night to kill you.’

¹¹ But I said, ‘Should a man like me run away? Should I run for my life into the Temple? I will not go.’ ¹² I knew that God had not sent him but that Tobiah and Sanballat had paid him to prophesy against me. ¹³ They paid him to frighten me so I would do this and sin. Then they could give me a bad name to shame me.

¹⁴ I prayed, ‘My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat and what they have done. Also remember the prophetess Noadiah and the other prophets who have been trying to frighten me.’

THE WALL IS FINISHED

¹⁵ The wall of Jerusalem was completed on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Elul. It took fifty-two days to rebuild. ¹⁶ When all our enemies heard about it and all the nations around us saw it, they were shamed. They then understood that the work had been done with the help of our God.

Discuss:

- a. What types of opposition did Nehemiah face, and how might we face something similar?

SESSION THREE

Roll out an extra-large piece of paper on the floor (try taping together long strips of wallpaper) – large enough for the group to crawl on top of it to write/draw!

Draw a picture of Nehemiah in the middle and then create a spider diagram / mind map around him looking at the opposition he faced. Draw some speech bubbles and use some of the words from the Bible text of the things that other people said to him. (It may aid your discussion if you look at the Bible text in a few different translations. This is easily done on Biblegateway.com.)

Here are some points you can use in your discussion (taken from the article *Lesson 4: Responding to Opposition (Nehemiah 4:1-23)* by Steven J. Cole).

Nehemiah faced:




- * Anger (4: 1,7)
- * Mockery and sarcasm (4:2)
- * Threats and intimidation (4:8,11)
- * Discouragement and exhaustion (4:10)
- * Negativism (4:12)
- * Fear (4:14)¹

b. Then consider how we face similar types of opposition. Have your group members ever met resistance when they have shared something they dream of doing for God – perhaps words like 'It can never be done', or 'Why on earth would you want to do that?' or 'You're not good enough / clever enough / determined enough / spiritual enough for God to use you that way'.

Discuss and jot down some of these things on to your diagram.

c. How did Nehemiah react to the opposition?

Split into three smaller groups and ask each group to read the following Scriptures and find three ways that Nehemiah responded to the opposition. Share your answers with each other and discuss how you can apply these responses in your own lives.

-  Nehemiah 4:9
-  Nehemiah 4:6 & 15
-  Nehemiah 4:14

Here are some notes taken from the article 'Facing Opposition Like Nehemiah' by Monica Paterson on three ways that Nehemiah responded to the opposition:

- * **Prayer:** Chapter 4:9 says, 'And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.' His first response was prayer. One commentator says, 'God's people should always regard prayer not as a last resort but our first weapon against opposition.'
- * **Work:** Nehemiah's second response was to continue the work as we read in verse 6, 'So we built the wall,' and in verse 15, 'And we all returned to the wall.'
- * **Focus:** His third response was to remind the people about the God who is behind this building project. He said in verse 14, 'Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your homes.' Nehemiah focused their attention on God and on their duty to protect their families and property.²

¹ bible.org/seriespage/lesson-4-responding-opposition-nehemiah-41-23

² www.uccdubai.com/ladies-ministry/post/facing-opposition-like-nehemiah

PRAYER

God is in the business of working through people to accomplish seemingly impossible tasks. Has he given you a dream or a vision of something you want to accomplish in your life for him? The first step is to pray, share your dreams with God and ask for direction. Next share your vision with others, then put your faith into action.

Give each person a small brick of some sort. This could be something like a Jenga block, a Lego/Duplo/MegaBlok brick, or simply a small cardboard box. In a moment of quiet reflection ask each person to write on their brick the words 'Prayer', 'Work' and 'Focus'. If they have a dream or vision of something that they want to achieve they could write this on the brick too. As they reflect, ask each person to consider what 'Prayer', 'Work' and 'Focus' mean to them and how they can put these things into action in their own lives and in facing their own tasks.

Pray together, that you would all have the strength to face any opposition that comes your way and that you will continue to stand strong and firm in what God has called you to do.

To finish you could watch / sing along to this fun video: a parody of Maroon 5's 'This Love', with lyrics about Nehemiah's story!

 www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=74&v=8X3GV0UTj1I

Further reading

Lesson 4: 'Responding to Opposition (Nehemiah 4:1-23)' by Steven J. Cole,
[bible.org/seriespage/lesson-4-responding-opposition-nehemiah-41-23](https://www.bible.org/seriespage/lesson-4-responding-opposition-nehemiah-41-23)

'Facing Opposition Like Nehemiah' by Monica Paterson
www.uccdubai.com/ladies-ministry/post/facing-opposition-like-nehemiah

CHRISTIAN AROUND THE WORLD: FOLLOWING THROUGH OPPOSITION

Key Learning Point:

All across the world Christians are living in horrifically hostile places. They are beaten, abused, tortured, victimised and accused just because of their faith. They have no voice. We don't always hear their stories. They are hidden. Forgotten. Ignored.

For us in the West, church is very different. We don't gather in secret. We don't fear that our attendance at a worship night might put us on a government blacklist.

We can openly talk about God and meet with others.

But our relationship with Jesus connects us to secret believers around the world. We share the same heartbeat. Together, we are God's Church.

Brothers and sisters – part of the same body, all seeking to show the love we've received to the world around us.

And when one part of the body suffers, we all do.³

1. Flags quiz

Print out the attached flags quiz and allow some time for group members to write down how many of the flags they know. Perhaps have a small prize for the person who gets the most correct.

(Answers – from left to right:

1. UK, 2. South Africa, 3. Germany, 4. Spain, 5. Sudan, 6. Belgium, 7. China, 8. North Korea, 9. Norway, 10. France, 11. Iran, 12. Somalia, 13. Afghanistan, 14. Canada, 15. Pakistan)

2. Explain that around the world people are suffering because they follow Jesus. They risk their lives to meet together, often having to worship in whispers. Globally, over 200 million Christians experience high levels of persecution because of their faith in Jesus. That works out to roughly one in every twelve Christians on the planet. In 2017, over 3,000 Christians were killed because of their beliefs. For some, owning a Bible could mean imprisonment, and sharing faith could result in torture. But despite the threats and pressure, Christians around the world continue to shine God's light and hope in the darkest of situations. They show us that following Jesus takes guts, courage and determination. They show us that true, radical, world-changing faith comes at a cost.⁴

Look back at your flags quiz. Ask group members to pick out the flags that represent the countries where they think Christians are the most persecuted and experience the most opposition.⁵

According to the Open Doors World Watch list, the top five worst places for Christians to live are: North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan and Pakistan.

3. Watch the video 'Open Doors World Watch List 2018: The Top Five'. – opendoorsyouth.org/the-problem/

Ask the group what they remember about the video. Can they recall a fact about each country? Was there something that particularly shocked or surprised them? What did they think of the end, and the fact that, even in the darkest of places, the Church is still active and alive?⁶

4. Show your group the World Watch map, either that you have ordered or downloaded from the website, and discuss. opendoorsyouth.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/WWMap_Youth2018vWebMap_Only.pdf

³ opendoorsyouth.org/the-problem/

⁴ opendoorsyouth.org.uk

⁵ opendoorsyouth.org/the-problem/

⁶ Open Doors Youth World Watch List 2018 youth session

SESSION
FOUR

5. Look together at the Open Doors youth website opendoorsyouth.org.

There are many stories of young people and adults who have suffered due to their faith in Jesus. Read a few together and discuss.

Or you could give each person the 'Guts and Courage' booklet (order from Open Doors Youth) and ask each person to read one of the stories in the booklet, and then feed back to the group.

You can also download this publication (opendoorsyouth.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/GutsCouragevFINAL_Web.pdf).

6. Send hope: Write a letter.

“ We all need encouragement now and then. And followers of Jesus who are suffering for their faith need encouragement more than most. They need our prayers and words of hope to help get them through, and for the past few decades Open Doors has been helping people in the UK send letters, thoughts and prayers to Christians who face persecution all round the world.⁷

In response to what you have discussed in this session, your group members might like to write a letter of encouragement to someone facing persecution, or even in prison, for their faith. Follow the Open Doors guidelines, and see sample letters, here: opendoorsyouth.org/do-something/send-hope-write-a-letter

PRAYER

“ Never stop praying, especially for others. Always pray by the power of the Spirit. Stay alert and keep praying for God's people. Pray that I will be given the message to speak and that I may fearlessly explain the mystery about the good news. I was sent to do this work, and that's the reason I am in jail. So pray that I will be brave and will speak as I should.

Ephesians 6:18-20 CEV

1. Lay out your World Watch map or a normal large world map.

In turn, each light a tea light candle and place it on the area of the map you want to pray for.

Ask each person to pray aloud for the Christians in the country they chose (there are helpful prayer suggestions on the Open Doors Youth website).

Challenge everyone to find out more about their chosen area, especially about the Christians living there.

2. Look at opendoorsyouth.org/article/where-a-tattoo-can-cost-your-life

Pray together in pairs, that you would have guts and courage to stand for Jesus.

Draw a temporary tattoo on each other as a symbol of your response.

⁷ opendoorsyouth.org/do-something/send-hope-write-a-letter

FLAGS QUIZ

