

cell outlines

MAY 2020

SPECIAL ONLINE EDITION

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](https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/children-and-youth-resources)

INTRODUCTION

In these days of physical distancing, we remain committed to connecting with and discipling young people. We have adapted our cell notes for a digital context to fulfil this commitment. We suggest you use 'Zoom' as a platform to connect with your cell group members and keep the routine of your weekly meetings as much as possible.

You can find detailed instructions on using Zoom with a small group, as well as a 'rehearsal' Zoom cell group session just for fun, here: [zoom tutorial](#).

YCMU's All Terrain Podcast explores Alexander Shaia's Quadratos – an ancient, but new to us, way of looking at the Gospels. Written about in 'Heart and Mind,' Shaia suggests that each Gospel is written to a particular question. Matthew asks, how do we face change? Mark, how do we move through suffering? John, how do we receive joy? And finally Luke, how do we mature in service? As we face a global pandemic, we have seen all four questions become significant to us all. Our dedication is to help our young people in how they do discipleship; when everything has changed, when suffering feels all around us, when joy feels far away and when service looks like never before.

Over the next 12 weeks, we will cycle through each question and the Gospels and suggest clear practical actions. Exploring these questions through this lens will help embed mind-expanding, heart-flourishing and life-giving practices that will support our young people through this crisis and beyond.

Before starting we would recommend listening to a few episodes of the All Terrain Podcast to give you a better and deeper understanding of this framework. You can find it on most podcast platforms. Click for direct links on [iTunes](#), [Spotify](#) and [Podbean](#).

The special edition episode with Alexander Shaia would be an excellent listen as you prepare yourself to delve into these questions with your young people, available [here](#).

Reading through each session well in advance will give you time and space to ensure you are comfortable with the technology you choose to use and make sure you and your young people have everything you need to participate.

ALL CHANGE!

WELCOME

Ask the group to be honest and confess if they still have any mountains of unused toilet rolls, foods or other things they or their family may have prepared for the lockdown. (Has anyone been 'choc-piling' on sale Easter eggs?) Ask the group members to share a photo of any stashes they still have in their house, then more seriously to talk about how they as a family prepared for the last few weeks.

Split into pairs using the 'breakout rooms'. Ask the pairs to discuss what they found most useful in their preparation that they have used loads of over the past few weeks, and what they really wish they had done in the limited time to get ready.

When everyone is back together, state that change comes suddenly and unexpectedly, and we are often shocked at the speed at which it can happen.

WORD

Display the following Scripture on a whiteboard for all to see. It is the story of John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus. Read this aloud together.

While Jesus was living in the Galilean hills, John, called 'the Baptiser', was preaching in the desert country of Judea. His message was simple and austere, like his desert surroundings: 'Change your life. God's kingdom is here.'

John and his message were authorised by Isaiah's prophecy:

**Thunder in the desert!
Prepare for God's arrival!
Make the road smooth and straight!**

Matthew 3:1-3 MSG

How we prepared for the lockdown will have affected our experience of it. But making roads smooth and straight is a big job and requires a lot of heavy lifting. Imagine building a motorway through mountains; there are bridges to build and tunnels to dig.

What needs smoothing or preparing for in our own lives to find Jesus' Kingdom in the quiet centre of all that we are currently experiencing?

ACTION

Discuss with the group: How do we face change when everything has changed? There will have been shock/loss and we may even have had denial that it was happening. (When northern Italy closed in February, did we think the UK would be closed within just a few weeks, or did we ignore it?) What has been the hardest thing about the change? What has helped the most to cope with the change?

'So the world has shut down and we have nothing to compare this to. The invitation to change arrived suddenly and unexpectedly right in the middle of our ordinary everyday life.' Alexander John Shaia speaking in the All Terrain Podcast calls this the question of the first spiritual path for all of us. *'Five minutes ago my life had some sort of normalcy and now everything is disrupted.'*

For some people their lives will be turned upside down at the moment as they experience huge grief and loss, while others of us will simply be mildly inconvenienced.

What can you do in this time of huge change that WE have never experienced before to create something new YOU

SESSION
ONE

have never done before? Music / art / a practical way of helping your neighbour? Think about it individually and then all share together and commit to doing at least one thing during the week. (Revisit this next week.)

PRAYER

Find some pictures of rainbows in house windows (or take some photos while you exercise).

Share them with the group, and remind them that in the book of Genesis the rainbow was a symbol of God's promise that he would not destroy the earth again, and now it stands as a sign of hope in this time.

Allow some quiet time to listen to God and reflect on the hope of grace that Jesus brings us as we seek his Kingdom in our communities. After some silence, encourage the group to share their prayers.

If you have time, put the group back into their pairs and ask them to pray a prayer of hope for each other.

MOVING THROUGH SUFFERING

Reading: Mark 14:12-31

Ahead of the session (as we are looking at The Last Supper) encourage everyone to get into their 'posh clothes' and set up a tea party which you can all enjoy together virtually.

WELCOME

Everybody enjoys a tea party together. You could ask people a series of 'would you rather' questions (see Appendix 1). Invite the group to share any new things they have done based on their commitment last week.

WORD

- * Show a picture of 'The Last Supper during Lockdown' (see Appendix 2) using screen share and introduce today's story.
- * Invite someone to read Mark 14:12-31 (you could ask group members to look this up in their Bibles or display the passage on your screen) and show the original artwork whilst reading (see Appendix 3).

In the passage, Jesus is sharing a meal with his friends. It is a beautiful moment where we see Jesus' humanity as he shares in this time with those he is closest to, washing their feet (see John 13:2-11) and then sharing bread and wine with them. It is here that he tells those he loves that he is about to go to the cross and that it is someone in that room who will betray him.

- * Invite the group to write all the words that they think would describe what was going on in the room during this time, in the chat box.

We know how this story ends. We know that the ending is good and we are always keen to get there, to the place where we can celebrate the joy. But there is a lot we can learn from how Jesus moved through the pain that came before, and apply it to our lives during times of suffering.

ACTION

Some people might be feeling pain in these days and may be wondering how to get through it. We can follow Jesus' example:

- * Allow yourself to feel it – Henry Nouwen, in his book *The Living Reminder* says: 'How are we healed of our wounding memories? We are healed first of all by letting them be available, by leading them out of the corner of forgetfulness, and by remembering them as part of our life stories. What is forgotten is unavailable and what is unavailable cannot be healed...' It is important that we acknowledge what we are going through and allow ourselves to feel any feelings that may arise. Even those that are hard. Being angry, sad, worried, frustrated, frightened, in grief... these feelings are all important. We saw Jesus experience all of these and so we must allow ourselves to feel these also. No feelings are bad or sinful. They are all part of what it is to be human.
- * Tell God about it – In *The Message* version of this story, Jesus says to his friends, 'You are all going to feel that your world is falling apart and that it's my fault' (v27). There is no shame or guilt attached to this statement but an invitation to share your pain with him. You may blame God, you may feel like your world is falling apart and you may be having some really complex feelings. You can tell God all of this.
- * Share with friends – Jesus gives us the perfect example of how to live in community. He had a group of friends he deeply trusted (even though he knew that one would betray him) and he shares in all of life with them. In this upper room he demonstrates the ultimate of sharing in the breaking of the bread (his body) and sipping of wine (his blood). They also had each other. And it is the same for us. There is always someone you can talk to about what you are going through and it is really important that you don't suffer alone.

PRAYER

* Listen and watch either video. As you listen, think about something you are holding on to that you want to let go and give to God. You may want to open your hands as a symbol of handing it over.

▶ ['The Garden' – Kari Jobe](#) (5mins 35secs)

Or

▶ ['Remember Me' – Emma Pears](#) (3mins 12secs) (may be more enjoyable/useful for younger people)

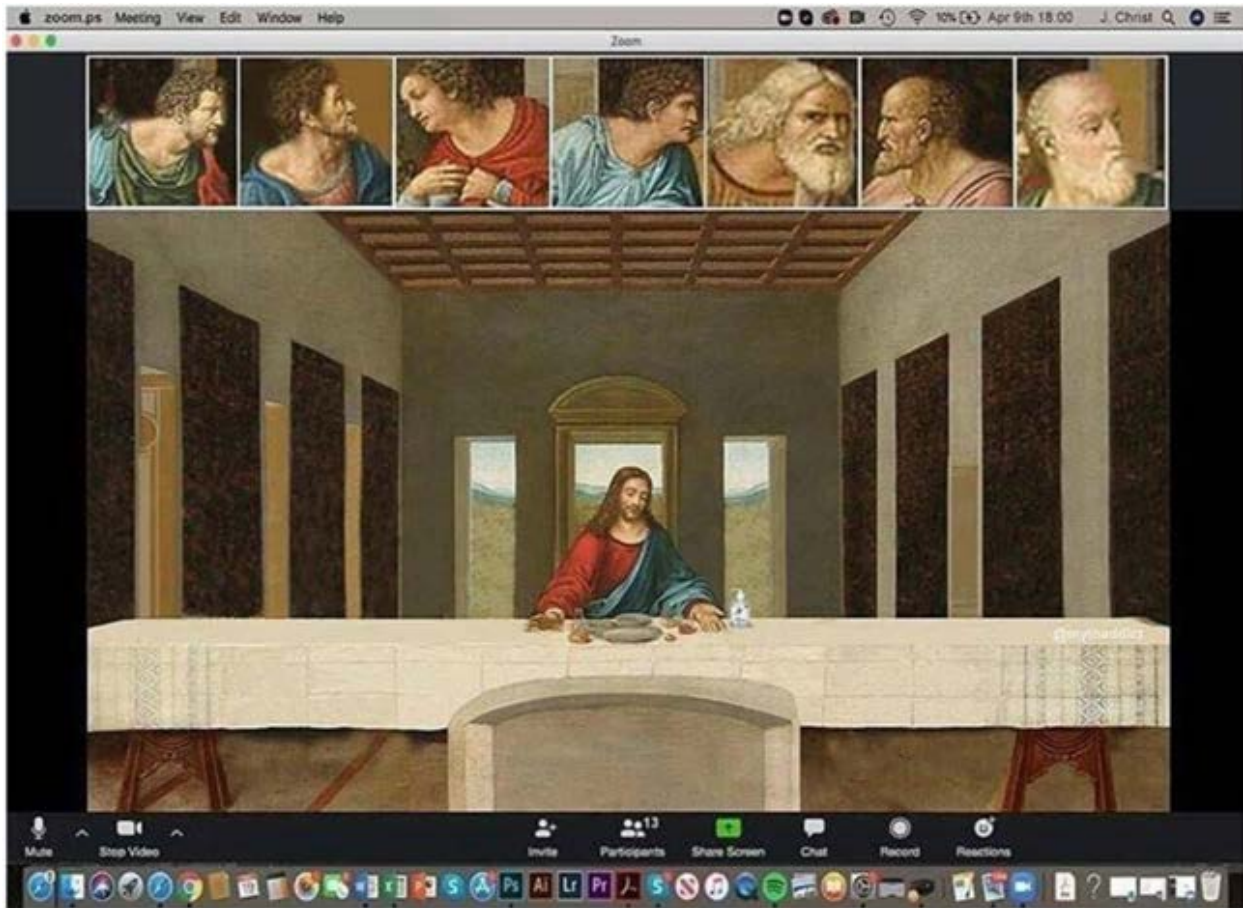
Appendix 1

WOULD YOU RATHER

(Taken from Conversation Starters World)

1. Would you rather always be 10 minutes late or always be 20 minutes early?
2. Would you rather have unlimited international first-class tickets or never have to pay for food at restaurants?
3. Would you rather be forced to dance every time you heard music or be forced to sing along to any song you heard?
4. Would you rather only be able to use a fork (no spoon) or only be able to use a spoon (no fork)?
5. Would you rather be compelled to high-five everyone you meet or be compelled to give wedgies to anyone in a green T-shirt?

Appendix 2
LAST SUPPER LOCKDOWN



Appendix 3

A REALISED VERSION OF 'THE LAST SUPPER' BY LEONARDO DA VINCI



JOY

WELCOME

Ask the group members to go around their house and collect three items that start with the letters J.O.Y (one item for each letter). The first person back with all three items wins!

WORD

- * Ask the group to go and look out of the nearest window for one thing that makes them happy. When everyone returns to their screen have each person share what they saw and why it makes them feel happy.

 Read John 21:1-7

(You could ask group members to look this up in their Bibles or display the passage on your screen.)

Explain: *This takes place in the midst of the roller coaster of emotions that the disciples have all just been through: the grief, confusion and loss of the crucifixion and the shock that Jesus is alive – and, for Peter, the additional guilt of his betrayal. Perhaps returning to fishing, something that was so familiar for them, was a calming and reassuring thing to do in these turbulent times, rather than sitting around feeling anxious or afraid.*

We are going to focus on Peter's reaction when he realises it is Jesus on the shore calling out to them in verse 7.

- * Ask the group to reflect on the emotions that they think Peter was feeling at that moment, the emotions that led him to jump straight into the water when he realised it was Jesus. You can either ask group members to write their words down on a piece of paper and hold it up to the camera, write it all up on the whiteboard or in the chat box, or simply ask each person to share their thoughts. Hopefully you will have some responses such as excited, happy, joyful etc.

Summarise: *After Peter had been through such a tough time, he was so overcome with joy and excitement at seeing Jesus again that he literally jumped out of the boat to get to him as fast as possible!*

Joy

Share your screen and watch this very short video – just for fun.

 [Inside Out – Meet Joy](#) (24 seconds)

What is joy?

Ask the group for some feedback to this question. You could display the word 'Joy' on a whiteboard and ask group members to write their answer on it.

Then watch the following short video.

 [What is Joy?](#) – (2 mins)

Explain: *Joy is a deep-seated sense of happiness in what God has done and what he is doing – like the final line in the video we just watched:*

“ Joy is a way of living, knowing that we are loved by God.’

Joy isn't based upon external circumstances or whether things are going well or not. It is a consistent feeling of wellbeing, coming from the 'inside out'. The joy that the world offers can be a pale imitation of the true joy only God can give us, and not as long lasting.

We can find and experience joy even in difficult times, as joy is not dependent on what is going on around us, but on our faith in Jesus and his love for us. At this time in our lives, a lot of the activities that make us happy may have been taken away from us, but we can still experience joy. Joy transforms our difficult circumstances into times of blessing. Perhaps, like Peter who didn't at first recognise Jesus, we sometimes miss or overlook Jesus' presence of joy in our lives.

SESSION
THREE

- * Ask the group to each say one thing that has brought them joy during this time of social distancing.

We can experience joy from noticing and being thankful for God's love and grace at work in our lives; from noticing beauty and creativity around us; from being in community with each other; and by sticking close to and keeping our focus on Jesus. We will think some more about this next month.

- * Ask for a moment of quiet reflection. What people, places, activities, things do you think can bring you real, lasting joy? Share together if appropriate.

At the time of writing, a new C4 TV show called *Reasons to be Cheerful* is seeking people's videos of the good things going on in their lives during this time of social distancing and how they have been keeping themselves entertained. If, at the time you are running this cell group, this programme is being aired, there may some interesting points to be made – or at least some fun videos to bring us more joy!

More info [here](#).



ACTION

- * Using the chat function, ask everyone to post an emoji that symbolises joy to them. You could challenge them to use this emoji in all their messages this week – to remind them about making a choice to live in joy, to look for the good things around them and to thank Jesus that he is in control.
- * We've seen the word 'joy' in lots of headlines recently, for example: 'Children put rainbows in window to spread joy'. People are doing what they can in their community to 'spread joy' in these difficult times, and this is most often being done by some creative activity, such as rainbows, lights, ribbons, clapping, sharing music etc. People are trying to brighten up their little part of the world to enable other people to smile and feel happy.

Challenge the group to engage in some creative activity this week that will bring them joy, and also spread some joy to others in their community. This could be a piece of art to display in the window; something that they share online – for example, maybe an arrangement of flowers, a piece of music that they have written, a poem etc; or something that they can physically share with others, such as baking a cake!

Ask them to take a photo of their 'joy' creation and share it with the rest of the group some time this week.

PRAYER

- 📖 Read Psalm 100: 1-5; firstly, in the *NIV* and then in *The Message*

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his, we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures for ever;

his faithfulness continues through all generations. (NIV)

On your feet now – applaud God!

Bring a gift of laughter, sing yourselves into his presence.

Know this: God is God, and God, God.

He made us; we didn't make him.

We're his people, his well-tended sheep.

Enter with the password: 'Thank you!'

Make yourselves at home, talking praise.

Thank him. Worship him.

For God is sheer beauty,

all-generous in love,

loyal always and ever. (MSG)

SESSION
THREE

- * Say: *In the last few weeks the whole country has been applauding, giving thanks to our key workers who are keeping the nation running, especially those carers working in the NHS and in social care settings. Together, let's give God a rousing round of applause and a gift of laughter as we thank him for his love and care, and ask him to fill us, key workers, our family and friends with joy even in this difficult season.*

Encourage your group to clap, or bang things together, to make a joyful noise in praise and thanks to God! Keep it going for at least one minute!

- * Gather the group back together, share the text of this prayer on your screen, and pray it aloud together.

Dear Lord Jesus, there are so many sad and troublesome things to face in the world today, which too often cause our hearts to become weighed down with difficulties and doubts. But I pray that your joy would fill our hearts and strengthen our souls... and that times of joyful laughter would replace those feelings of anxiety and anger. I pray that your joy and laughter may flow through us to others who are facing similar difficulties and hardships. Thank you for your never-ending love! Amen.

SERVICE

WELCOME

Icebreaker: Create a group 'virtual handshake':

We've all seen people who have developed a fancy handshake with many complicated fist-bumps, slaps etc. Obviously it's not possible to shake hands across Zoom, but why not try and create a 'virtual handshake'! The group leader starts off by doing an action. This could be as simple as a wave or thumbing your nose or could be as complicated and energetic as doing a burpee or running past the screen screaming! Then the next person in the group copies that and adds a new action to it. Get everyone to try the two actions together. Get the next person to add a third action and so on until everyone has added an action and you have a chain of random actions. Feel free to go around the group several times if you're feeling particularly brave/creative! Congratulations! This is your new group 'virtual handshake'. Can you all remember the whole handshake? Will you remember it next time you meet? Perhaps it could be used every time you meet someone in the group!

Who is the kindest person you have ever met? Why did you choose them?


WORD

- * Share the following text, or ask the young people to look it up on their phones or in a Bible, and ask the young people to read it one verse at a time (or however works for your group).

 Read Luke 10: 1-7 (CEV)

Later the Lord chose seventy-two other followers and sent them out two by two to every town and village where he was about to go. He said to them:

A large crop is in the fields, but there are only a few workers. Ask the Lord in charge of the harvest to send out workers to bring it in. Now go, but remember, I am sending you like lambs into a pack of wolves. Don't take along a moneybag or a travelling bag or sandals. And don't waste time greeting people on the road. As soon as you enter a home, say, 'God bless this home with peace.' If the people living there are peace-loving, your prayer for peace will bless them. But if they are not peace-loving, your prayer will return to you. Stay with the same family, eating and drinking whatever they give you, because workers are worth what they earn. Don't move around from house to house.

-  For the following discussion you might want to share a whiteboard and record suggestions as you go along, or get the group to write in the chat.

Discussion: As a group, come up with what you think the qualities of a peace-loving person should be.

Question: Would you class yourself as a peace-loving person? Why? Why not?

Say: In these verses, Jesus seems to be suggesting that his followers prioritise spending time with peace-loving people. In this story Jesus' followers are travelling to towns Jesus hadn't been to before so these peace-loving people wouldn't have been followers of Jesus - you don't have to be a follower of Jesus to be a hospitable, peace-loving person!

ACTION

- * Make a list of the peace-loving people you know in a notes app on your phone / on a piece of paper. They may be a person from school, your family, someone you met on holiday... anyone! If you feel comfortable to do so, why not share one of these names with the group and why you chose them.
- * How could you team up with the peace-loving people you know to help change your community?
- * This week, get in touch with one or two of the peace-loving people you know from your community (this could

be your physical community or an online community). Have a conversation about which issues that affect your community they feel passionate about. If you have an issue you both feel strongly about, talk about what you might do together that could bring transformation around this issue.

PRAYER

If they don't have it already, ask the young people to download the PrayerMate App (for [Android](#) or on [Apple](#)). Alternatively they could start a paper prayer diary in a notebook or on a sheet of paper. Ask them to create a list for the people in your cell group as well as a second list of the peace-loving people they know.

Open up the app, swipe left and take it in turns to read out the name of the person on the top of your list! You could simply read the name – or if you want to say something more, great! Try to pray for someone from your list every day this week. You could even add new lists of friends and family (or even people you don't get on with!) as well.