

cell outlines

JUNE 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)

FINDING A NEW RHYTHM

WELCOME

Funky Changing Room (for example see Appendix 1)

Using Zoom, position the windows of the group's webcams so that you capture a different person's head, body and legs vertically like in the children's books that mix up head, body and legs. (Do this by challenging the young people to stand/sit so only their head/body/legs are visible on the camera.) Hats and fun costumes are optional. Direct them so you get a mixed-up picture of the group with as many side by side as you can and screen capture it for them and share. (Nine people will give you three mixed-up people, but you can do it with as few as two or three if you change the shape of the window to vertical and replace the head on a body or use different feet.)

Do ensure you observe standard safeguarding practices, eg make sure participants are fully clothed.

Say: Sometimes we just want to change our look. You may get a new haircut (or a lockdown shaved head!) or try different styles of clothes. When we change something, the old look is gone; we've lost something but the new has come.

WORD

Display the following Scripture on a whiteboard/screenshare for all to see, and ask for a volunteer to read.

Jesus arrested

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: 'The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.' Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him.

Jesus replied, 'Do what you came for, friend.'

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

Matthew 26:47-50

Say: This is a key verse for us in the Gospel of Matthew, but doesn't it seem strange?

Jesus has just called the person who is betraying him a 'friend'! Could you do the same? Have friends ever let you down? Have you ever been betrayed or denied but then you've made up / forgiven them? How does that change your relationship with each other?

Often we make up and our friendship is deeper, stronger. The issue showed us that our friendships can withstand challenges.

Although the coronavirus has brought terrible suffering and disruption, how do we come to terms with the world as it is now? What do we think Jesus would be saying about the current crisis?

We can get an idea from the passage above. Jesus accepted the nature of his betrayal that came from a friend, so he could reveal the Father's glory.

“ ‘we don't have to treat the virus as a friend. However, the change that it has brought is something we can accept or even embrace. We can learn to live in a new rhythm for this short time of our lives. It will only be a small fraction of our lives even if it seems a long time at the moment.’

Alexander Shaia

ACTION

Over the past few weeks we have all experienced loss in different ways. We will consider how to create new rhythms in these times of change, as we adjust to what we are familiar with, and with all the uncertainty in the future.

Say: What actions and routines have you adopted? Have you been doing daily Joe Wicks workouts? Or other exercise such as walking / cycling / running outside? Maybe seeing places on foot you normally only rush past in the car or on the bus? Many people find that exercise has helped to protect their wellbeing.

By tuning into the deeper rhythms, we have seen progress as spring turns into summer and we are aware of how the world continues to change and thrive even while we may feel that our lives are on pause. As we notice and are aware of these, our thankfulness helps to drive out fear. You can't have both emotions of thankfulness and fear at the same time.

Show the group some pictures you have taken of things you are thankful for from this week, using screen share.

Ask: What are you going to do this week as part of your routine to help you take notice and be thankful?

Challenge the group to take one picture each day of something or someone they are thankful for and share on their social media every day this week.

Say: Commit to taking time outside every day if you can (following the NHS guidelines around exercise and distancing). Looking, listening and feeling the changes we and our world are experiencing can help us process what is going on from a different perspective which can be very powerful in our relationship with God.

PRAYER

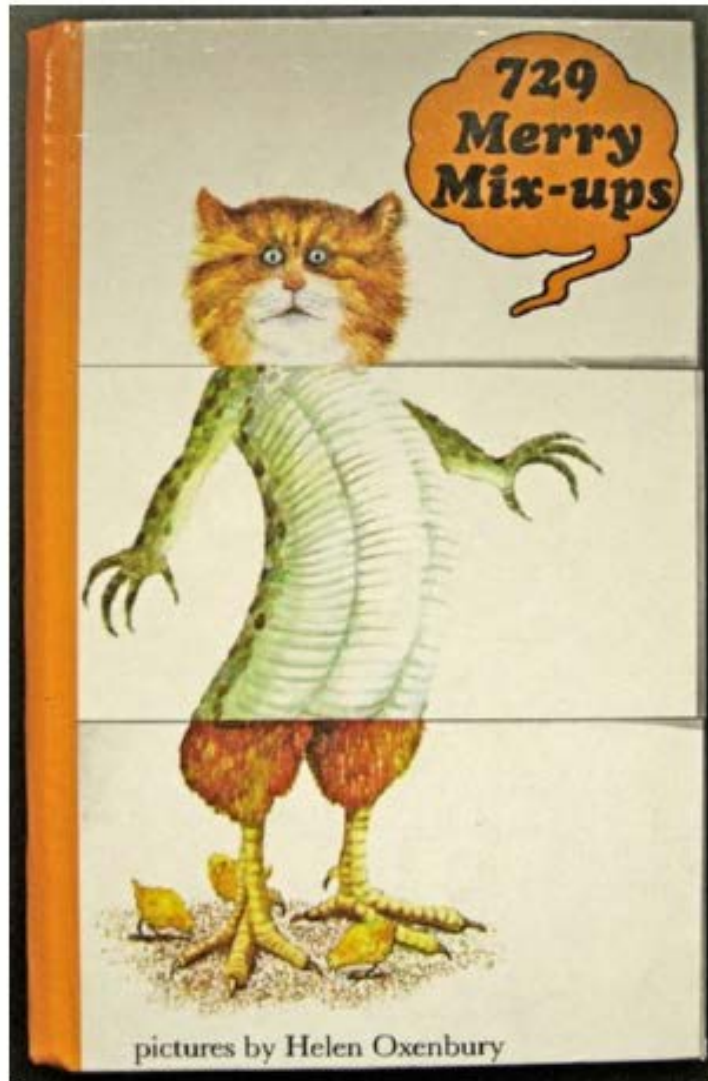
We don't know when we are going to return to 'normal'. There is no way we can plan for the future as we don't know when that will be. While continued distancing measures mean we are unable to be fully sociable as we may desire, 'are we going to treat social isolating as a prison or a monastery?' (Alexander Shaia)

As a group share a few quick prayers of thanks that are evidence that God has not forgotten us.

In a monastery there is a regular form (rule) of prayer, three or more times a day. (Benedictine monks have eight times of prayer a day.) Pray in groups of three using breakout rooms and agree at least one time you will pray for each other every day this week. Share your prayer requests for the future and set an alarm on your phone with the other two people's prayer requests. Pray them now.

Appendix 1

IDEA OF FUNKY CHANGING ROOM



729 Merry Mix-ups by Helen Oxenbury (1980)


LOVE LANGUAGE

This session focuses on the greatest commandment Jesus gives us: to love God, love others and love ourselves. We will look at how easy or painful we find these relationships and how speaking love into these relationships nurtures peace.

WELCOME

Get everybody to think of a celebrity the majority of the group will know and have the others guess who it is by asking yes/no questions.

WORD

 Read Mark 12:28-31, a really well-known passage.


We may have seen it on mission statements in churches – ‘Love God, Love others’ – but this misses the third part of the commandment: ‘as you love yourself’. These three relationships are all of equal importance and all three relationships need our investment. Show Appendix 2 using the share screen function.

When we last looked at Mark’s Gospel and what it says to us about moving through suffering, we looked at these relationships (with God, others and our own self) and how focusing on them can help to move us through our suffering. But sometimes it is these relationships that can be the cause of our suffering. As we start or grow our relationships (with God, others and/or ourselves), we may encounter some pain, hurt, confusion, fear or worry. It is important to speak these out and name them. And it is important to do that with kindness and compassion.


Speaking with compassion doesn’t mean that we don’t have hard or challenging conversations – if we feel that someone is treating us badly, we are frustrated with God or there is something about ourselves that feels hard to overcome, we are compelled to speak that out (we have examples of when Jesus does all of this throughout Mark’s Gospel); but HOW you say it matters. The posture you take and the words you speak can have a powerful impact. So first, before any word is uttered, we must find our compassion.

It is, however, hard to find compassion in how we speak to others or how we speak to God if we don’t first speak to ourselves with compassion. For some of us, our relationship with ourselves can be the hardest relationship we have. We may have absorbed messages which have led us into speaking words over ourselves that are unkind and untrue. This is not God’s heart for us.

ACTION

 Read Sarah Bessy’s ‘You’re already so loved’ (Appendix 3).

Whilst somebody is reading, invite the group to write down the phrases that stand out to them – maybe new messages that they need to absorb – either in the chat box or on a whiteboard.

 **Group discussion:** What phrases were written down and why?

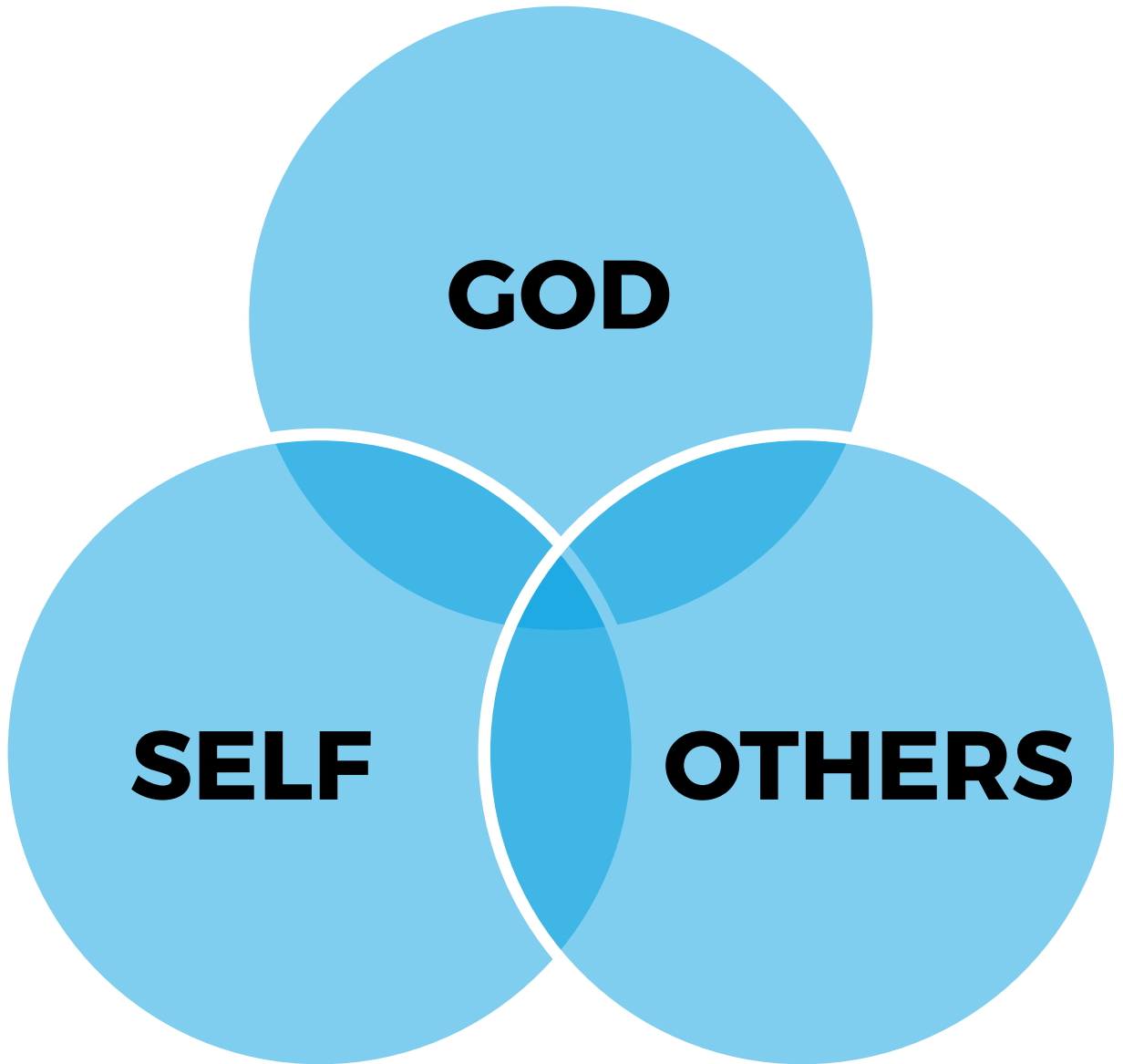
PRAYER

Email ‘wrist bands’ to the group – you may want to use some from Appendix 4, make your own or get them to make their own.

Have each person pick three words:

1. One for themselves that they will wear – a word they speak over their life.
2. One for someone else – they can pray that word over them.
3. One word that they want to claim for who God is – they can put it somewhere where they can be reminded of the nature of God on a daily basis and offer up a prayer of gratitude.

Appendix 2



Appendix 3

YOU'RE ALREADY SO LOVED

(Sarah Bessey – <https://sarahbessey.com/already-so-loved>)

You don't have to be productive and you don't have to change the world. You're already so loved.

You don't have to be smart. You don't have to be simple. You don't have to read all the right books by the right people. You're already so loved.

You don't have to be beautiful and thin with an articulated and ironic fashion sense, not at all. But if you're into that kind of thing, well, that's OK, too, darling. You don't have to be healthy in your mind or in your body. You don't have to be in full-time vocational ministry. You can watch horrible television or you can be proud of your television-less home. You can be artistic or scientific. You can spend your life travelling to meet beautiful people or you can live and die in the town where you were born.

You don't have to be straight or white or powerful. You can be from the wrong side of the tracks or the gated community, suburbs or urban or rural. You can work with your hands and your mind, your back and your brain. You don't have to be educated, not at all. You don't have to have a degree or letters after your name. You don't have to know the right people and boast a carefully curated Instagram feed with the famous and the beautiful and the influential. You don't have to be conservative and you don't have to be liberal. You don't have to identify with certain political persuasions or ideology on sexuality or science or socio-economics or foreign policy. You can be a social justice warrior or, you know, not.

None of that moves the metre of your belovedness. God won't say, OK, now I love her just a bit more because, look, she is finally out of debt or thin or powerful or influential or tireless.

Your family story can be beautiful or terrible or, like most of us, it's likely a bit of both. Perhaps you're famous or well-known or influential, that's

OK. Perhaps you are quiet and unknown – maybe you hate that, maybe you love it. You don't have to be a mother or a father, you don't have to be married, you don't have to be single, you don't have to want children or raise children. You don't have to be sober or clean. You don't have to give away everything you own and take a vow of poverty, you don't have to be prosperous either. Church or no church or a certain kind of church only – whatever.

You have nothing to prove. You have nothing to earn.

Sure, any one of those things might change because you are loved. You may know already where God wants to breathe change and wholeness into you, bringing your life more into line with the person you were meant to be all along.

Love can and does and will transform us in every way – our ideology, our opinions, our habits, our values, our priorities, our very names. But it's not a prerequisite or a requirement, it's not behaviour modification, it never is, not for love.

Love has happened and it is happening and it will happen. It is kind and patient towards you.

You're already so loved – you aren't earning a breath of love or tenderness more than what you already have just by breathing, just by existing, just by being here in the wonder. Your name is already written in the lines of the hands of the universe, you're star-breath-of-dust and you are beloved, intimately, faithfully, wholly. It's your lifelong rock – you are known. You are loved with delight and abundance, with choice and desire, with covenantal love.

And watch now – the places of weakness will become places of strength. Your desert will bloom with flowers. The well will never run dry. Everything will be redeemed.

You are so loved. You are so loved. You are so loved.

Appendix 4

Credit: GoZen.com [NB 'Humor' is the American spelling!]



I CHOOSE JOY!

WELCOME

Try to create a happy story together. Decide on an order and then take it turns to add to the story – but each person can say only four words at a time! You could start your story with ‘It was a joyful experience when...’

WORD

Watch the following music video together:

▶ For KING & COUNTRY – ‘Joy’. (Official Music Video) (5mins 08secs)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=IA7n7TwPDmw

The video is five minutes long but is a perfect watch for this subject. This could be emailed to the group before your meeting, so they have had a chance to preview it.

The lyrics begin:

**Lately, I’ve been reeling, watching the nightly news
Don’t seem to find the rhythm, just wanna sing the blues
Feels like a song that never stops...**

The refrain...

**The time has come to make a choice
And I choose joy
Let it move you, let it move, let it move you
Yeah, I choose joy**

Remind the group that back in Week Three we were thinking about joy, and we discussed how we can experience joy, not based on our circumstances, but based on our relationship with Jesus. Like it says right at the end of the music video:

“ ‘Whilst our circumstances haven’t changed, our perspective can!’

Ask the group if they have been more aware of moments of joy in their daily lives over these last few weeks. How has their perspective changed?

Display the following Scriptures on your shared screen. (You will need to create a word document that you can share – or use the one provided in the ‘June downloads’ pdf.)

Ask individual members to read a Scripture aloud to the rest of the group.

Show the group how to use the stamp setting in the ‘annotate’ function (make sure that the annotation setting is enabled for the group for this part – more info here: [annotation tutorial](#)).

Ask them to use the ‘stamp’ function and then to stamp around any of the Scriptures in places where the words stand out to them. (You may need to do this one at a time.)

- * **Star:** This made me smile
- * **Tick:** I totally agree with this
- * **Question mark:** Don’t get it
- * **Heart:** Love this

Discuss as appropriate and learn from each other.

Say: One common theme that we see through these Scriptures is that we are active participants in joy. We don’t just sit back and wait to feel joyful.

Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. A fruit has to be nurtured and cultivated. Joy requires attention, it needs an environment in which it can grow. Like a plant – if you ignore a plant in your house it will eventually wither and die; but if you feed it, water it, care for it, the plant will grow and bloom as it was intended to do.

To find joy we sometimes need to stop and find the quiet space within ourselves. To take a moment of reflection. To be aware of our thoughts and emotions, and to actively look for the good stuff.

One way of cultivating joy is with gratitude.

Split the group into pairs using the breakout rooms function and ask each pair to brainstorm as many things as possible that they are grateful for. Which pair can come up with the most things? They will each need a pen and paper to write down their ideas.

Summarise: One well-known phrase says: 'It's not joy that makes us grateful; it's gratitude that makes us joyful!'

A host of recent studies have revealed that the practice of gratitude has dramatic, lasting and positive results – every time. Gratitude is related to a 23% lower level of stress hormones and 19% lower depression level. Gratitude has been found to increase self-esteem, enhance will-power, strengthen relationships, deepen spirituality, boost creativity, and improve athletic and academic performance.¹

Being joyful and thankful are characteristics of the life of disciples; this is how God wants us to live. This doesn't mean that we are to paste a fake smile on our faces no matter what is going on in our lives or the lives of those we love. It means that we are to remain strong in our knowledge that God is our strength and comfort, no matter in what circumstances we find ourselves.

ACTION

Email your group members the weekly 'gratitude diary' and challenge them to complete it every day for at least a week.

You could also email your group a 'Joy' colouring image if you think they enjoy this, something they can fill with lots of different colours to remind them of the joy in their lives. (Simply do an internet image search for 'joy colouring'.) For example:



PRAYER

Finish with the song by For KING and COUNTRY that you played at the beginning, as the refrain – 'I choose joy' – is simple enough to sing along to.

Ask the group as they watch/sing the song to write out on a piece of paper 'I choose joy'. Then to write around these words all the areas of their life in which they will decide to choose joy or will look at things from a different perspective. At the end of the song ask everyone to hold up their piece of paper. Take a few moments to pray for everyone in the group or split into breakout groups and pray for each other.

¹ *The Little Book of Gratitude*. Dr Robert A. Emmons

Scriptures to display

I loved you as the Father loved me.
Now remain in my love.

I have obeyed my Father's
commands, and I remain in his love.
In the same way, if you obey my
commands, you will remain in my
love.

I have told you these things so that
you can have the same joy I have and
so that your joy will be the fullest
possible joy.

John 15:9-11 (NCV)

Why is everyone hungry for more?
'More, more,' they say. 'More, more.'

I have God's more-than-enough,
More joy in one ordinary day
than they get in all their shopping
sprees.

At day's end I'm ready for sound
sleep,

For you, God, have put my life back
together.

Psalm 4:6-8 (MSG)

Be cheerful no matter what; pray all the time; thank
God no matter what happens. This is the way God
wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (MSG)

This is what I want you to do:

Ask the Father for whatever is in
keeping with the things I've revealed
to you. Ask in my name, according
to my will, and he'll most certainly
give it to you. Your joy will be a river
overflowing its banks!

John 16:23-24 (MSG)

God's kingdom isn't a matter of
what you put in your stomach, for
goodness' sake. It's what God does
with your life as he sets it right, puts
it together, and completes it with joy.
Your task is to single-mindedly serve
Christ.

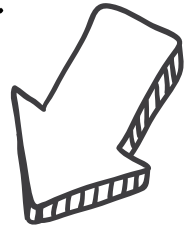
Romans 14:17-18 (MSG)

GRATITUDE DIARY

Each day write three things you are grateful for from that day.

THIS WEEK

There is something good in every day



MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY



Thank God no matter what happens...

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16 (MSG)

RISKY BUSINESS

WELCOME

This session we'll be thinking about taking risks. So during the session the young people are going to have to take a risk! Tell them that they're each going to get given a secret phrase to sneak into the conversation during the session. Using the private message function of the text chat feature, send each member of the group a phrase to try and sneak into the conversation during the session. If someone in the group thinks the person has just said their secret phrase, they should wave like crazy and see if they managed to catch them out! At the end of the session, see who managed to sneak their phrase in without the group noticing. Make sure you have some appropriate phrases ready before the session (ideally in a document you can copy and paste them from to save time) and that your group monitor also knows what phrases you will be using. Try and make the phrases at least possible to sneak in. Examples might be:

- * I just can't stand cappuccino.
- * It was at a circus in Belgium.
- * Pepparami – it's a bit of an animal.
- * It just popped out of my nostril.
- * I once met a dolphin trainer.
- * Donald Trump is a hero of mine.

If you **really** trust your group, you might get them to give each other phrases instead!

WORD

Say: Jesus was very controversial. He was well known for spending time with people such as the sick, the poor, cheats, rebels and even collaborators with the Roman invaders – all people that (most) respectable Jewish people would have done their best to avoid. He even went as far as inviting them to follow him and become his disciples. One example is when he calls Levi to follow him.

Practise some Lectio Divina using the following passage. You might want to share these on the screen. The stages are:

- * **Read** – Read the passage slowly, really focusing on it and imagining the original writer reading it to you. Look for words or phrases that jump out at you. Then read it again, even more slowly and focusing on the words that stood out to you.
- * **Meditate** – Think about the phrase that really stood out to you and imagine yourself in the situation of the passage you read. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you. Does the passage resonate with a situation you're facing at the moment?
- * **Pray** – Take all those thoughts and feelings and offer them to God in prayer. It might be something you want to thank God for, or perhaps something to ask him for strength to deal with.
- * **Contemplate** – Just take some time to be silent with God. This stage is often overlooked but is important for building your relationship with God.

Read Luke 5:27-31 (CEV)

²⁷ Later, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the place for paying taxes. Jesus said to him, 'Come with me.' ²⁸ Levi left everything and went with Jesus.

²⁹ In his home Levi gave a big dinner for Jesus. Many tax collectors and other guests were also there.

³⁰ The Pharisees and some of their teachers of the Law of Moses grumbled to Jesus' disciples, 'Why do you eat and drink with those tax collectors and other sinners?'

³¹ Jesus answered, 'Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. ³² I didn't come to invite good people to turn to God. I came to invite sinners.'

Feedback: Does anyone have anything they might want to share from their experience?

Discussion: How might it have felt for those people who were known as 'sinners' to be looked down upon by the other people from their community?

ACTION

With our recent experience of social distancing and self-isolation, people who don't have a lot of friends could be feeling particularly vulnerable. Invite the group to think about the people they know at school, college, local areas or church who might be feeling the most isolated. This may be because they are people who have few close friends at school, either because they are shy or different in some way, or perhaps because they feel they need to bully others and so people don't want to be their friend.

Question: What might you do to help them feel less isolated?

Question: Are you brave enough to reach out in kindness to those people who may have been a bully to you or your friends and family in the past? How might you do this safely, and who will you talk to about it if you don't get a kind response?

PRAYER

If you use the Prayer Mate App, add a list of those people you have identified as people who may be feeling isolated.

Find an object from around your room that makes you think about one of the people you identified as potentially feeling isolated. Explain why you chose that object and say a single sentence prayer for that person.

Try and remember to pray for that person each time you see that object over the next week.

WRAP-UP

Don't forget to review who managed to sneak their phrases in during the session!