



cell outlines
AUGUST 2020

SPECIAL ONLINE EDITION

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SERVE

Introduction

It's often noted that Jesus wasn't necessarily the type of Messiah that people were hoping for. For those who wanted war, his talk of 'peacemakers' was disappointing. For those who valued purity, his choice of dinner buddies left a lot to be desired. For those who hoped for victory, his execution was a crushing blow. They wanted a saviour – he came as a servant.

Today, we can sometimes still find ourselves with the same dilemma. We want a Jesus who can show us how to kick down walls and take over the world. And yet we find him with a towel around his waist washing the feet of those who are meant to be following him, those he is meant to be leading, even those who will betray and deny him. Time and time again we encounter a Jesus who 'did not come to be served, but to serve' (Mark 10:45).

Through these cell notes, we will explore what this looks like for young people in their homes and communities. What can we learn from Jesus and those who have gone before? What does it look like to live right, treat others right and make the world right, as it changes around us and as we seek to serve in it? How do we, as young people trying to follow Jesus, serve?

The following five weeks take young people on a journey through these themes, looking at themselves, their communities and the wider world.

The sessions include ideas for a pick-and-mix approach to activities, allowing your session length to be adaptable for a 30-minute Zoom meeting, or longer face-to-face discussions. In addition there are a couple of suggestions for Outdoor Activities that you can use as the pandemic restrictions lift.

Please note, before meeting in person, you will need to complete a [risk assessment](#) form. We also recommend you read the [guidance document](#) provided by Safe Mission. Please consult your corps officer or DHQ for further info.

LUCKY

This week we look at where young people can serve. We consider how it feels being a young person in the Church, and understand that God calls us to serve both when faith feels like an adventure and when it feels like you're bored out of your skull.

WELCOME

- 1. Famous Names:** ask your group to grab a piece of paper and pen. Explain that you'll give them a particular category and they'll have 30 seconds to write down the names of as many famous people as possible within that category. When everyone is ready, tell them the first category is 'people who have acted in a film in the last 10 years' and start the timer. When the time is up, ask how many names they wrote down. Do this activity again with the category: 'people who are named in the New Testament of the Bible'. Again, count up and check for accuracy. Ask the group which category they found more difficult. If your group found it easier to name modern-day film actors, ask them why they think this is the case.
- 2. 'Bored to death':** ask the group to identify any specific times in their lives when they were 'bored to death' – a time when they wished they could have been somewhere else, doing literally anything else, but were stuck where they were. It's better if they can think of a specific moment rather than just saying 'being at school'. What were they doing? Why was it so boring? Why did they have to stay there? Were there a lot of recent examples, eg from a moment during the pandemic?

WORD

(choose from the numbered activities)

As a group, read Acts 20:7-12 (GNT)

⁷ On Saturday evening we gathered together for the fellowship meal. Paul spoke to the people and kept on speaking until midnight, since he was going to leave the next day. ⁸ Many lamps were burning in the upstairs room where we were meeting. ⁹ A young man named Eutychus was sitting in the window, and as Paul kept on talking, Eutychus got sleepier and sleepier, until he finally went sound asleep and fell from the third storey to the ground. When they picked him up, he was dead. ¹⁰ But Paul went down and threw himself on him and hugged him. 'Don't worry,' he said, 'he is still alive!' ¹¹ Then he went back upstairs, broke bread, and ate. After talking with them for a long time, even until sunrise, Paul left. ¹² They took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

1. Bored to death

Ask: Which part of the story stood out for you?

Say: While Paul was great at writing letters, he was apparently a poor speaker¹; and the fact it was late at night makes it no surprise that this young person fell asleep - and then fell out of a window. It wasn't the young person's fault - Paul had literally bored him to death! And Paul doesn't get the hint either; after he resurrects the young man, the passage says he went on speaking from midnight till sunrise!

Discuss the following questions:

- As a young person in the church, do you relate to Eutychus's experience in the story?
- Have you had similar feelings of boredom or tiredness while we've been in lockdown? What strategies have you found that work for you to relieve that boredom and exhaustion?

2. Lucky Lad

Say: The passage doesn't tell us much about the young man, but we can work out a few important things from his name:

1. The name 'Eutyclus' means 'Lucky' or 'Fortunate'.
2. The fact that he is named in the passage means that the original hearers of Luke's account of the Acts of the Apostles would have KNOWN who he was. The only people named in the New Testament are either non-Christian characters that were publicly known (eg Herod, Caiaphas or Pilate) or key leaders in the Early Church. This story mentions Eutyclus because he went on to live out his faith in ways that made him recognisable to the Early Church. His appearance by name was included by Luke to give credibility to his account.²

Discuss the following questions:

- Do you know what your name means? If you could change the meaning of your name, what would it become?
- Imagine that in 20 years, you are someone whose name is recognised to Christians in the UK. What is it you're known for? What things have you done in the name of Jesus?

3. Keep Showing Up

Say: A key point in this story is simply the fact that Eutyclus was there. Yes, he was a young person who couldn't focus on Paul's droning voice, but he was present.

Maybe he was there out of duty, because his parents (or masters) were there. Maybe he was there out of choice, because he was a passionate follower of Jesus and wanted to know more. Maybe he'd heard about some of the amazing things that Paul had seen happen in the name of Jesus and wanted to hear the stories, and instead felt like he had been tricked into hours and hours of Bible study.

Whatever the truth, we can probably agree that his intentions were good, and that he went on to become someone whose name was still recognised and respected 20 or so years later.

Discuss the following questions:

- What have you found yourself doing out of duty or because you were passionate about it, but then ended up being bored, exhausted or disappointed? How did those feelings impact you?
- Have you ever felt undervalued, or as if people don't notice you because you're young? How have you dealt with this successfully in the past?
- Does your faith feel like a big adventure? Why or why not? How might you serve in a way that feels like an exciting adventure?

WITNESS

(choose from the numbered activities)

1. Circle of influence

Author Stephen Covey says that rather than letting things we have no influence over bother us, we should concentrate only on the things we can control – the things in our 'circle of influence'. For example, we might be upset at the words someone uses to speak to us, but we can decide how we let them affect us.

² In his book *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (2006), theologian Richard Bauckham says: 'There is one phenomenon in the Gospels that has never been satisfactorily explained. It concerns names. Many characters in the Gospels are unnamed, but others are named. I want to suggest now the possibility that many of these named characters were eyewitnesses who not only originated the traditions to which their names are attached but also continued to tell these stories as authoritative guarantors of their traditions. In some cases the Evangelists may well have known them... Public persons – that is, those who would have been known apart from the story of Jesus (John the Baptist, Herod, Herodias, Caiaphas, Pilate, presumably Barabbas) – are usually named. The beneficiaries in stories of Jesus' healings and exorcisms are usually unnamed. Persons who encounter Jesus on one occasion and do not become disciples are usually unnamed.'

Similarly, we might not be given an official opportunity to serve, but we can still choose to work in our circle of influence by being proactive about serving people anyway.

Using the whiteboard function on Zoom or a large sheet of paper, ask the group to brainstorm ways they could serve proactively. Ensure the ideas focus around things that they have a genuine opportunity to do – things in their circle of influence.

2. Volunteering

Ask the young people for ideas on how you might volunteer as a group. Could you do it regularly in place of one of your social gatherings? Get in touch with a local volunteer centre and ask them to advise you.

WORSHIP

If you are using Zoom, explain you are going to do a guided meditation and ask everyone to turn off both the microphone and video to limit distractions while you speak this out. You'll also turn off your video feed so it will just be your voice they hear. (Make sure they don't click 'Leave / End call'!)

If you are meeting in person, ask the young people to find a space on the floor and to lie down, relax and close their eyes. Everything you are going to ask them to do, they just need to think about – no need to talk.

When everyone is ready, say:

'The young man Eutychus was lucky, fortunate, blessed. Like him, we wish to have an experience so powerful that we feel fully alive. Lord, resurrect us.'

Eutychus was there even though he was bored, exhausted, fed up, or all of those things. And while those feelings are part of life, you never intended that following you would bore us to death. You offer life in all its fullness. You call us to a great adventure where we can serve in your Kingdom. Let us never stop striving for a life that is marked by passion, faith and adventure.

It's likely that that bored young person went on to become someone whose name was recognised by other Christians, someone whose name added credibility to the words in the Acts of the Apostles. Help us learn to serve you in ways that please you and bring many to know Jesus.

Help us see the joy and the beauty in serving others.'

Within a sensible timeframe, end the meditation by praying a short prayer for the group and close with 'Amen'. Then invite the young people to switch their mics and videos back on.

OPTIONAL OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

Mini Olympics

Be as creative as you like – but here are a few suggestions for different events:

- 1. Standing Long Jump** – mark a starting line. Participants stand with their toes just behind it and jump forward as far as they can. They must land steadily with both feet together. Mark each jumper with a different twig to declare Gold, Silver and Bronze.
- 2. 50m Quadruped Sprint** – Measure out approximately 50 paces to mark a starting and finishing line. Participants must sprint with all four limbs on the ground, like a gorilla or another quadruped.
- 3. Sock Shotput** – Mark a throwing line. Participants take off one of their own socks and roll it into a ball. They project it as far as possible using normal shot-put throw from the neck (not an underarm or overarm throw).
- 4. Twig Javelin/Archery** – Everyone picks a twig, which they throw as far as possible (in the case of javelin) or to hit a circular target (for archery).

SMALL

This week we look at when young people can learn to serve. We consider the characteristics which are most important to a leader, and understand that God is more likely to trust us with the big once we've proved ourselves in the small.

WELCOME

1. **Bottom of the pile:** ask everyone to get hold of a piece of paper and a pen. Explain that you're going to read out some questions and they will have 10 seconds to write down the name of the young person in the group who is the correct answer.

Questions could include:

- * Who is the youngest of the group?
- * Whose surname appears last when placed in alphabetical order?
- * Which person is the shortest by height?
- * Whose birthday comes last in the year?
- * Who has the least amount of cousins?
- * Who is the person most likely to become a political leader?
- * Who is the person most likely to become a shepherd?

(As the last two questions are a matter of opinion, you'll have to gauge the 'correct' answer based on the most popular choice.)

2. **FOMO:** ask the group whether they can remember a time when they were left out – a time when they felt overlooked, uninvited or even forgotten about. It would be a good idea if you could start off the sharing with a personal story of your own. How did it feel at the time? Why do you think it happened? Does it still impact you now?

The aim of this discussion is to point out that no one likes being left out – we even have an acronym for it: FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) – as a starting point for how David might have felt in the passage.

WORD

(choose from the numbered activities)

Explain you'll be looking at an important passage in the life of King David, and you want them to use some clues to guess which story it is.

You will need a number of props – either physical objects or pictures representing these clues:

- * A picture of Samuel L. Jackson (or any other famous Samuel)
- * A picture of Bethlehem (with the star above it)
- * A crown, or a picture of the Queen
- * A knife and fork (representing a meal)
- * 'I come in peace' / a dove
- * Brothers / picture of a rugby team
- * A heart
- * Sheep
- * A bottle of olive oil or vegetable oil

Even if they guess incorrectly, the clues should get them engaged and intrigued enough to participate in the discussion of the passage.

Get members of the group to read the following passage aloud:

¹ The Lord said to Samuel, ‘How long will you go on grieving over Saul? I have rejected him as king over Israel. But now get some olive oil and go to Bethlehem, to a man named Jesse, because I have chosen one of his sons to be king.’ ² ‘How can I do that?’ Samuel asked. ‘If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.’ The Lord answered, ‘Take a calf with you and say that you are there to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. ³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will tell you what to do. You will anoint as king the man I tell you to.’

⁴ Samuel did what the Lord told him to do and went to Bethlehem, where the city leaders came trembling to meet him and asked, ‘Is this a peaceful visit, seer?’ ⁵ ‘Yes,’ he answered. ‘I have come to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. Purify yourselves and come with me.’ He also told Jesse and his sons to purify themselves, and he invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Jesse’s son Eliab and said to himself, ‘This man standing here in the Lord’s presence is surely the one he has chosen.’ ⁷ But the Lord said to him, ‘Pay no attention to how tall and handsome he is. I have rejected him, because I do not judge as people judge. They look at the outward appearance, but I look at the heart.’

⁸ Then Jesse called his son Abinadab and brought him to Samuel. But Samuel said, ‘No, the Lord hasn’t chosen him either.’ ⁹ Jesse then brought Shammah. ‘No, the Lord hasn’t chosen him either,’ Samuel said. ¹⁰ In this way Jesse brought seven of his sons to Samuel. And Samuel said to him, ‘No, the Lord hasn’t chosen any of these.’ ¹¹ Then he asked him, ‘Have you any more sons?’ Jesse answered, ‘There is still the youngest, but he is out taking care of the sheep.’

‘Tell him to come here,’ Samuel said. ‘We won’t offer the sacrifice until he comes.’ ¹² So Jesse sent for him. He was a handsome, healthy young man, and his eyes sparkled. The Lord said to Samuel, ‘This is the one – anoint him!’ ¹³ Samuel took the olive oil and anointed David in front of his brothers. Immediately the spirit of the Lord took control of David and was with him from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.

1 Samuel 16:1-13 (GNT)

1. Misleading

Discuss the following questions:

- 🗨️ What do bad leaders that you hear about in the media have in common?
- 🗨️ Can you think of any examples of good leaders in the world today? What makes them a good leader?

2. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

Say: The text doesn’t actually tell us what anyone felt about the fact that David was left out of a special dinner invitation with the nation’s priest.

All of David’s older brothers had been invited, but he had been left to look after the sheep. So it would be understandable if David had felt overlooked, forgotten, even unimportant.

Perhaps he was so used to being the youngest and the last thing on anyone’s mind that he had accepted his position and become numb to those feelings.

Or maybe he was desperate to be there – and his dad Jesse wanted them there, too – but David thought it was more important for him to serve his family by tending to the sheep, the family’s source of income.

Discuss the following questions:

- 🗨️ How would you have felt if you were David, absent from the meeting with the nation’s prophet?
- 🗨️ Whatever the truth is, the thought may have never occurred to David that the nation’s prophet might have come to town to anoint him as king.

3. Serve in the Small Things

What was different about David, compared to his brothers? He served in the small things. And because of that, because he had learned to be committed, loyal and reliable in serving when no one was noticing, God trusted him in the important task of serving the whole nation as its king.

In the passage, Samuel anoints David with oil, meaning that he poured oil over his head in a ceremony. In the Bible, this was how people were given a blessing: for example, guests were anointed as they visited a home and children were anointed when they received a blessing or were chosen for a special task.

Discuss the following questions:

- How do you think David felt when Samuel anointed him? How would you feel if someone did that to you today?
- How do you think the rest of his family reacted to David being chosen by God?
- How might God show you what he has chosen you to do?
- What might be the best things we can do to serve in small, everyday, seemingly insignificant ways?

WITNESS

(choose from the numbered activities)

1. Acts of Slightly-Less-Random Kindness

The usual idea behind Acts of Random Kindness is to be nice in an anonymous way to strangers. But why not be slightly less random about it and try and do as many acts of kindness to people you actually know? Suggest that the young people confuse their families with how well they can serve them simply by being kind, and see what happens.

2. Maps Spam

Tell the young people that you're going to use their phone's Maps app (Google/Apple etc) to 'spam' themselves with reminders to serve when they use the app to get directions.

Ask them to open up their preferred navigation app and find their Home location. Then ask them to set up several new Dropped Pins close to their Home location and save them as 'Stay and Serve', 'Serve Jesus here', 'Serve in the small things' etc. This way, when they are searching for Saved Locations they will be 'spammed' with these messages to remind them to serve.

You could also set up the same for other locations they regularly visit – school, church, their friends' houses.

If members of the group don't have a smartphone, you could ask them to print out or draw a basic map of their area and mark on it places they go to regularly, and then use Post-it Notes to write down ways they can serve their family, friends and church family in the locations on the map.

3. Helping the Homeless

Many communities in the UK have seen a rise in the number of people who have been made homeless. The Government has promised to end rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament; but since 2010 there has been a 165 per cent increase in the numbers of people on the streets.

Could you facilitate a discussion around how young people can safely support those who are homeless? Or share an email template with the group and ask them to add a few of their own thoughts and feelings on the matter before sending it to your local MP, individually or as a group?

WORSHIP

Ask young people to take a sheet of paper and divide it into four quarters. In each they should write (or draw icons representing) Home/Family, School/Work, Community/Friends, and Church/Other.

In each box, ask them to write or draw one small thing they can do to serve in each of those locations.

If they are comfortable sharing what they've written, have a short time of sharing. Then ask whether anyone would be comfortable praying a short prayer for the group to have the compassion and courage to serve in those ways.

OPTIONAL OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

Hidden Messages

You will need pens and small pieces of paper.

As a group, come up with some short messages, like 'Jesus loves you', 'You are special', 'God notices you', or other positive and affirming messages.

Either write these messages on small pieces of paper and hide them well in places around the location you're using today – around a park, in holes in a wall, under a stone – places that aren't so obvious that people will find them easily, but where someone who is observant might find it.

Or, if you are in a wood, you could collect lots of little twigs and then use them to write out your message on the floor.

Finally, pray that the right people find those messages and that they will bring comfort and encouragement to them.



POWER

This week we look at who we are called to serve. We consider the idea of privilege and understand that God calls us to serve not only people we like or understand, but also people very different from us, and even those who oppress us.

WELCOME

(choose from the numbered activities)

- 1. Rock Paper Scissors – Commander edition:** you will need an even number of players, so include yourself in the game if needed. Designate one player as ‘The Commander’ and explain that the object of the game is for one or more of the ‘normal’ players to beat The Commander to a score of 10 points (or a lower number if you want a quicker game).

The Commander says ‘1,2,3’ and on 3 everyone clearly displays one of the three symbols (a closed fist for Rock, a flat horizontal hand for Paper, or first two fingers open for Scissors). Normal players win one point if their symbol has beaten The Commander. The Commander wins one point if they have beaten OR drawn with more people than they lost to.

Keep playing until someone reaches 10 points.

As the odds are in their favour, it is likely that The Commander will win. Some of the young people may work this out and suggest the game is unfair. Explain that this was the purpose of the game – to illustrate that life is often not fair and in fact favours those who already have power.

- 2. The Balloon Debate:** explain to your group that they will have to choose which young person gets to join the political leaders of the USA, UK, Germany and Japan in a hot air balloon for the day to make the maximum impact on the world.

The young people you have to choose from:

1. Greta Thunberg, 17, Swedish environmental activist
2. Malala Yousafzai, 23, Pakistani activist for female education and youngest ever winner of the Nobel Peace Prize
3. William Kamkwamba, 32, Malawian inventor. When he was 14 he built a wind turbine from scraps to power his family’s house. Subject of the movie, *The Boy who Harnessed the Wind*
4. Maya Penn, 20, American entrepreneur, animator and artist who started her company aged 8

WORD

(choose from the numbered activities)

Split 2 Kings 5:1-19 (GNT) into sections for members of the group to read aloud

¹ Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, was highly respected and esteemed by the king of Syria, because through Naaman the Lord had given victory to the Syrian forces. He was a great soldier, but he suffered from a dreaded skin disease. ² In one of their raids against Israel, the Syrians had carried off a little Israelite girl, who became a servant of Naaman’s wife. ³ One day she said to her mistress, ‘I wish that my master could go to the prophet who lives in Samaria! He would cure him of his disease.’ ⁴ When Naaman heard of this, he went to the king and told him what the girl had said. ⁵ The king said, ‘Go to the king of Israel and take this letter to him.’

So Naaman set out, taking 30,000 pieces of silver, 6,000 pieces of gold, and ten changes of fine clothes. ⁶ The letter that he took read: ‘This letter will introduce my officer Naaman. I want you to cure him of his disease.’

⁷ When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in dismay and exclaimed, ‘How can the king of Syria expect me to cure this man? Does he think that I am God, with the power of life and death? It’s plain that he is trying to start a quarrel with me!’

⁸ When the prophet Elisha heard what had happened, he sent word to the king: ‘Why are you so upset? Send the man to me, and I’ll show him that there is a prophet in Israel!’

⁹ So Naaman went with his horses and chariot and stopped at the entrance to Elisha’s house. ¹⁰ Elisha sent a servant out to tell him to go and wash himself seven times in the Jordan River, and he would be completely cured of his disease. ¹¹ But Naaman left in a rage, saying, ‘I thought that he would at least come out to me, pray to the Lord his God, wave his hand over the diseased spot, and cure me!’ ¹² Besides, aren’t the rivers Abana and Pharpar, back in Damascus, better than any river in Israel? I could have washed in them and been cured!’

¹³ His servants went up to him and said, ‘Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something difficult, you would have done it. Now why can’t you just wash yourself, as he said, and be cured?’ ¹⁴ So Naaman went down to the Jordan, dipped himself in it seven times, as Elisha had instructed, and he was completely cured. His flesh became firm and healthy like that of a child. ¹⁵ He returned to Elisha with all his men and said, ‘Now I know that there is no god but the God of Israel; so please, sir, accept a gift from me.’

¹⁶ Elisha answered, ‘By the living Lord, whom I serve, I swear that I will not accept a gift.’

Naaman insisted that he accept it, but he would not. ¹⁷ So Naaman said, ‘If you won’t accept my gift, then let me have two mule-loads of earth to take home with me, because from now on I will not offer sacrifices or burnt offerings to any god except the Lord. ¹⁸ So I hope that the Lord will forgive me when I accompany my king to the temple of Rimmon, the god of Syria, and worship him. Surely the Lord will forgive me!’

¹⁹ ‘Go in peace,’ Elisha said. And Naaman left.

1. Privilege and Pride

Say: You can see just what level of privilege Naaman is used to when he turns up at Elisha’s house in his horse and chariot. But Elisha ignores the spectacle completely. He doesn’t come out to speak with Naaman himself, he just passes a message on to him through a servant. Naaman is furious and lashes out; but then he follows Elisha’s advice and is healed. It’s such a transformative experience for him that he offers Elisha gifts and promises to only offer sacrifices to the God of Israel from now on. He experiences salvation.

Discuss the following questions:

- 🗨️ Why do you think Elisha didn’t go out to meet Naaman face to face?
- 🗨️ Why do you think God healed Naaman?
- 🗨️ Naaman says he will only make sacrifices from now on to the God of Israel, but then asks Elisha that he be excused when he accompanies his boss to worship the Syrian god Rimmon. Why do you think Elisha simply said, ‘Go in peace,’ and didn’t insist that Naaman stop doing this too?

2. Risking Discomfort

Say: It’s easy to forget that this entire story would never have happened without the faith of a nameless Jewish servant girl.

Despite being trafficked to another land and forced to be a slave to a powerful man, she still chose to have compassion on her oppressor. There were also many risks she took in speaking up – the risk of offending and being punished by Naaman’s wife, or by Naaman, or by the King of Aram, and the risk of Naaman visiting Elisha and not being healed. But she chose to serve her God by risking considerable discomfort, in the faith that her God would heal her oppressor.

Discuss the following questions:

- 🗨️ Would you have taken that risk?
- 🗨️ Have you ever spoken up about something or for someone?
- 🗨️ Have you ever helped someone you felt didn’t deserve to be helped? What happened?

WITNESS

(choose from the numbered activities)

1. Black Lives Matter

The death of George Floyd, and other black people in America, has renewed efforts towards the #BlackLivesMatter campaign, which highlights the unequal and racist treatment of black and brown people.

Some white people have struggled to understand the concept, because they do not see their own privilege.

If you are white, what could you do to better understand the experience of people of colour in your community and recognise your own privilege? If you're not white, what helpful and unhelpful things do you see white allies doing in addressing racism?

How could you work together as a team to challenge everyday racism? And what level of discomfort are you prepared to face to do the right thing?

2. Speaking Up For Injustices

You will need a range of pictures or newspaper cuttings from the internet/newspapers representing injustice, eg people who have been trafficked, disease, poverty, famine, lack of clean water to drink, homelessness, bullying, abuse, climate change, child labour, deforestation, pollution, plastic in oceans, war, crime, lack of NHS hospital beds, animal cruelty...

Have a discussion with the group about injustices that exist in the world, their neighbourhood or school, then show the pictures that represent injustice.

Ask:

- What is the injustice you see in the picture?
- Who needs help?
- What needs to change to make things right again?

Discuss what they could do to help stop injustice happening. If you feel that the group are getting particularly passionate about a certain issue, suggest that together you write a letter to an MP, the PM, their headteacher or a newspaper. The letter should say what the issue is, what harm this is causing, how they feel about it, and what you want them to do about it.

3. True Story

Get hold of the 'True Story' resource produced by the Youth and Children's Ministry team. It will give you practical ideas for tackling human trafficking.

WORSHIP

Each of the young people mentioned in the Balloon Debate (Welcome Activity 2) are doing amazing things that can change many people's lives, and the planet, for the better.

Invite the group to make a list or a spider diagram of famous people who have changed the world by going against what society says is normal (eg Greta Thunberg, William Wilberforce, Malala Yousafzai, Anne Frank, Louis Braille).

Ask your group how they might make a difference by being themselves – what are they passionate about? Where might you be able to make a difference?

Finish off by praying for the continued influence of the young people that you've listed, and then praying for the influence that your group will have as you step up and serve by fighting injustice.

OPTIONAL OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

1. Triangular Rounders

Rounders is usually played with a diamond of four bases where everyone runs anti-clockwise round the pitch.

But in the current pandemic we've become used to doing normal things in unusual ways.

So why not play a game of rounders with a triangle of three bases, and the batting team can run in either direction round the bases. Play it so that the fielding team always throws the ball back to the bowler, and when the bowler has the ball, batters must stop at the next base. They score 3 points for getting round the triangle on their batting turn, and 1 point just for getting home at some point.

2. Press-up competition

You may have seen a '25 press-ups in 25 days' challenge on social media during lockdown. This campaign has emphasised the need for people to talk about their mental health.

But why not do a press-up competition of your own? Ask everyone to say how many press-ups they think they can do, and then test it out.

Some young people may find physical challenges like this uncomfortable to do as an individual with everybody else watching, so try to eliminate any embarrassment by getting everyone to do their press-ups at the same time.

EARTH

This week we look at how much we are called to serve. We consider the idea that God calls us to serve not only people, but also the planet, and understand that small changes can have a big impact.

WELCOME

1. **I'm Going on a Trip:** explain that you're all going on an imaginary trip but they can only travel in certain ways. Any form of transport they use must meet a specific criterion and their goal is to figure out what that is.

For example, say, 'I'm going to Hawaii, and I'm travelling by skateboard.' Then the children take turns saying what they are going to bring – 'I'm going to Germany, and I'm travelling by plane.' Based on your criteria, after each statement, respond 'Yes, you are.' or 'No, you're not.'

Play it twice, with one of these criteria each time:

1. The location must be somewhere that can be realistically reached by walking or swimming (eg, UK/Ireland/France) – regardless of the mode of transport.
 2. The mode of transport must be one that doesn't use fossil fuels (it can include animals) – regardless of whether that mode of transport could actually reach that location.
2. **Guess the Animal:** give everyone a turn at thinking of an animal. The rest of the group then take it in turns to ask questions that can only be answered yes or no, so they work out which animal it is. Give everyone a turn.

WORD

(choose from the numbered activities)

Read Genesis 2:4-9, 15-22 (GNT) together:

⁴ When the Lord God made the universe, ⁵ there were no plants on the earth and no seeds had sprouted, because he had not sent any rain, and there was no one to cultivate the land; ⁶ but water would come up from beneath the surface and water the ground.

⁷ Then the Lord God took some soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live.

⁸ Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹ He made all kinds of beautiful trees grow there and produce good fruit. In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad...

¹⁵ Then the Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it. ¹⁶ He told him, 'You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, ¹⁷ except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day.'

¹⁸ Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him.' ¹⁹ So he took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds. Then he brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and that is how they all got their names. ²⁰ So the man named all the birds and all the animals; but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him.

²¹ Then the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh. ²² He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him.

1. Serve the Planet

Say: God gave humans the task of looking after his creation. He created humans because there was no one to cultivate the land; he put them in a beautiful garden, gave them some simple rules for how things would work, and put them in charge of naming the animals.

Discuss the following questions:

- 🗨️ Have you ever planted anything and looked after it? How would you have done if you'd been the first human in the Garden?
- 🗨️ Do you think it's significant that the first thing that God gave humans to do – before he told them to look after each other – was to serve the planet?

2. Team Earth!

Say: This passage uses poetic language to make the point that humans need companionship. We're not designed to be loners. Like many other species, we're social animals: neuroscientists tell us that there are huge portions of the human brain that are devoted to recognising human faces and expressions.

We can feel paralysed when we think of how insignificant our impact will be as an individual. But together, we might be able to save our planet.

Discuss the following questions:

- 🗨️ Why do you think as humans we need other humans?
- 🗨️ Have you ever felt so overwhelmed at how huge issues like climate change are, that you have struggled to take action?
- 🗨️ How might having others alongside help you to serve the planet?

3. Knowledge of Good and Evil

Say: Why would God ban humans from eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil? Surely knowing what's good and what's evil is helpful for serving the planet?

Some people suggest that the core problem caused by Adam and Eve eating from the fruit of that particular tree was that it made us capable of judging. Think about how often you look at a stranger and think, 'What on earth is she wearing?', 'Man, he is overweight!' 'He looks scary – I'll avoid walking that way.' We're judging people on limited external information. We know nothing about them and yet we've made an ugly judgment about them.

God calls us instead to the godly alternative of spiritual discernment – to see things with his eyes as the beautiful creations he looks at and says, 'That's good!'

While this pandemic has disrupted life as we know it in lots of negative ways, it actually has been pretty good for the environment. Carbon emissions, for example, dropped worldwide by 17% in April, and by 31% in the UK. We need godly discernment to evaluate the impact of our lifestyles and start to serve, rather than use, the planet.

Discuss the following questions:

- 🗨️ Do you find yourself judging strangers when you're going about your day?
- 🗨️ In what ways has the pandemic changed your lifestyle in a way that has benefited the planet?
- 🗨️ In the book *Our House is on Fire*, teen environmental activist Greta Thunberg and her family say there are three things that if every human stopped doing, would immediately avert Earth's course from a climate catastrophe. What do you think those three things are?

WITNESS

There are three things that humans can do to radically alter Earth's course to a climate catastrophe.

* **'Stop flying'**

This industry contributes a significant proportion of global carbon emissions each year. It's unlikely that your young people will have much of a say in where they are taken on holiday, but it's worth mentioning, particularly if they are fortunate enough to be part of a family that goes abroad on holidays more than once a year or whose

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parents travel internationally on business – because they may be able to have an impact. They are likely to have more influence over the other two actions, though:

* **Stop eating meat**

The meat and dairy industries produce significantly higher carbon emissions than farming that supports a plant-based diet.

Explain that the carnivores of the group may have a hard time giving up meat entirely, but they could start small by:

- ▶ Eating one more entirely plant-based meal a week
- ▶ Giving up eating one meat only – beef – which is by far the worst meat in terms of carbon emissions
- ▶ Halving the size of the portion of meat they normally eat in a meal

If the group contains any vegans or vegetarians, ask them to scan or find links to five of their favourite recipes and share them with the group, to help those who believe that vegetables can't taste as good as meat.

Ask the group what they think about this. Could they challenge themselves to try it? Can they think of any other ideas that could help them eat less meat?

* **Stop buying stuff**

We live in a world where we can buy new clothes, devices or plastic products whenever we feel like it. But the retail industry depends on factories that make these products; if no one bought them, the factories would close.

Discuss what individuals could do to buy less 'stuff'.

Suggestions could include:

- ▶ Swapping clothes with others when your wardrobe needs a refresh
- ▶ Buying from charity shops
- ▶ Learning to sew and upcycle clothing
- ▶ Stopping buying single-use disposable plastic products
- ▶ Reducing your clothing/entertainment/snack budget, then taking this budget out in cash and leaving your debit card at home, so you can't overspend
- ▶ Not upgrading your phone as soon as the contract ends

WORSHIP

There are a couple of videos you can find on YouTube that you could play to the group:

- * **'Lockdown animals'**: search 'wild animals during lockdown' to find an appropriate video. Discuss as a group the thoughts and feelings you have watching the footage.
- * **'Wonderful world'**: search 'What a wonderful world BBC' which shows some of the best footage of God's creation.

Discuss what thoughts and feelings the group had watching them. Pray for the ability to take care of God's wonderful world.

OPTIONAL OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

1. Litterpick and Play

Some of you may have seen or even completed the Run5: donate5: nominate5 challenge on social media. The idea is that you're doing something that benefits both you and other people.

As we have considered our planet in this session, a similar idea would be to go to a local park armed with bin bags, gloves and sports equipment and then:

- ▶ litter pick for 15 minutes – or in general tidy up this shared part of God's creation
- ▶ play for 45 minutes – and enjoy the beauty of your surroundings, and each other!

2. Prayer walk

As a group, prayer walk the perimeter of your city/town/village – or just the city centre.

Prayer walking doesn't mean praying the whole time you're walking; it just means being open to hearing what God wants to say, sharing in good conversation with each other, and trying to respond to the Holy Spirit as you feel he leads.

You could work out approximately where the four compass points lie on your trip – North, South, East and West – and stop at those points to pray for specific things and/or perform a simple spiritual ritual at each point like:

- ▶ lighting a candle to represent God's light breaking through (remember to blow it out before you move on)
- ▶ eating something sweet and something sour in each place, savouring the tastes of these things and praying for the joys (sweet) and challenges (sour) of life in your neighbourhood.
- ▶ a minute's silent reflection at each compass point

CHILD

This week we look at how we are called to serve. We consider the example of Jesus, who said 'Let the little children come to me' and understand that as young people we already have all it takes to serve and be an example to others.

A passage that talks about children might seem like a poor choice for a cell session with adolescents, but the fact remains that Jesus speaks glowingly about little children, and says we should be like them. There must be some characteristics found in children – a sense of wonder, not taking ourselves too seriously, openness, adaptability, creativity, innocence, trust? – that we can apply to believers of all ages as we consider HOW we are supposed to serve.

WELCOME

- Nostalgia:** spend some time reminiscing about the best things about being a kid for your group:
 - ▶ What was your favourite treat as a child?
 - ▶ What toy did you most like playing with?
 - ▶ What's your earliest happy memory?
 - ▶ What's the funniest thing you remember about your time at primary school?
 - ▶ What do you miss most about being a little child?
- Two Truths and a Lie:** childhood edition: a couple of days before your cell meeting, ask everyone to get ready two truths and one lie about when they were a child (under 10).
Let each young person say their three statements and get everyone to vote on which they think is the lie.

WORD

Read the following passages: Matthew 19:13-15 and Matthew 18:1-6 (*GNT*):

¹³ Some people brought children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and to pray for them, but the disciples scolded the people. ¹⁴ Jesus said, 'Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'

¹⁵ He placed his hands on them and then went away.

...

¹ At that time the disciples came to Jesus, asking, 'Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?'

² So Jesus called a child to come and stand in front of them, ³ and said, 'I assure you that unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven. ⁴ The greatest in the Kingdom of heaven is the one who humbles himself and becomes like this child. ⁵ And whoever welcomes in my name one such child as this, welcomes me.'

⁶ 'If anyone should cause one of these little ones to lose his faith in me, it would be better for that person to have a large millstone tied around his neck and be drowned in the deep sea.'

Say: The fact that the disciples turned children away wouldn't have seemed cruel in biblical times. In Jewish culture, children weren't considered important or even to have a place in society. The disciples would have presumed that Jesus didn't want to see the children and were showing respect to his position as a teacher. This was the norm in society.

Discuss the following questions:

- 🗨️ Do you feel that modern society values the importance and place of children in society? Why or why not?
- 🗨️ Why do you think Jesus invited the children to go to him?

Jesus wanted the adults around him to know how important it is to be like a child. He used the qualities children have to show the adults around him what they should be like.

As he did with many of his actions, Jesus turned 'normal' on its head. He welcomed the children, blessed them and used them to teach his disciples a better way: he told his disciples to be like children. He was not telling them to be childish but childlike.

Discuss the following questions:

- 🗨️ What qualities that children have do you think Jesus was trying to emphasise?
- 🗨️ How should disciples of Jesus serve?
- 🗨️ In what ways can young people serve?

WITNESS

Look at 1 Timothy 4:12 together. Discuss why people might want to look down on young people.

- * Come up with a list of ideas of how young people can set an example to older people. Put these under the five headings of 'speech', 'conduct', 'love', 'faith' and 'purity'.
- * Play a worship song that the group know, or just some relaxing instrumental music, and ask the young people to design a piece of paper with this verse written on it and doodle on it or draw any images that come to mind, relating to the verse, as the music plays.
- * Challenge the young people to memorise the verse, and to display their piece of artwork somewhere prominent in their room where they'll see it often.

WORSHIP

1. Encourage your role models

Ask the group to consider which older Christians they know who demonstrate this quality of being 'childlike'. Discuss what it is about these people that is so inspiring.

Challenge the group to let these older role models know that they have inspired their younger friends. They could write them a note or speak to them about this cell meeting, or you as leader could get in contact to pass on the group's encouragements.

2. Benediction

As this session ends, the young people should be sent out feeling empowered, assured that God loves them and capable of serving others around them. In this response time, read the memory verse and remind them that even though they are young, they can still serve God.

Have a time of reflection where the young people consider which elements of the cell content most resonated with them, and why.

Ask the young people what they plan to do differently to serve people and the planet from now on.

Finish by praying for them. Mention each of them by name. Ask God's Holy Spirit to empower them to serve in the coming days.

OPTIONAL OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

Walk

Captain Tom Moore made headlines during the pandemic when he raised over £30 million for the NHS by his 100th birthday (and became an honorary Colonel as a result). What did he do to raise so much cash? He walked.

It seems a very simple, ordinary, unimpressive thing to do, but people were captured by his willingness to do it in support of the NHS, despite his age and frailty.

But it's also a very childlike thing to do, something we congratulate toddlers for doing. So why not pick a scenic route through some woods or up a mountain and go on a walk together?