

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



JUSTICE: MY LOCAL COMMUNITY

James 2:14-17 Faith and Deeds

Read the 'Autumn Overview' leader's notes for more info.

This session aims to provide an opportunity for young people to learn how The Salvation Army in the UK works alongside communities to support and empower people. It is anticipated that the group leader will prepare some significant parts of this session to make it relevant to their own local community.

Each child will need:

→ Pens and paper

Start It

Here are a few ways you can start the session.

Prepare a quiz about your local area and play it with your group. For example, this could include statistics, photographs, people, the history...

Or you could set the children a 'treasure hunt' around your community that they should aim to have completed (with an adult) before your session starts. Talk through the answers with them and say who completed the treasure hunt correctly.

Alternatively, or additionally, ask the children to bring a photo of their favourite place in your community. Each child can show the rest of the group and share why they have chosen that place.

Sing It

Choose a favourite song from your community, or use the song from Sessions One and Two again.

'Make a Difference' by Jane Alayra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2eQlabUY68>

Tell It

Share a whiteboard and ask your group what they can tell you about The Salvation Army. Note down what they say on the whiteboard, or show them how to use the annotate function so they can put up their own answers.

Specifically ask what The Salvation Army does to help others in the UK and in your local community.

When the children run out of ideas you can add in anything they may have missed. For example: homelessness, hunger, loneliness, child socialisation and development, young people's wellbeing, emergency response, tracing missing people, modern slavery.

Share screen and read James 2:14-17

'My brothers and sisters, if people say they have faith, but do nothing, their faith is worth nothing. Can faith like that save them? A brother or sister in Christ might need clothes or food. If you say to that person, "God be with you! I hope you stay warm and get plenty to eat," but you do not give what that person needs, your words are worth nothing. In the same way, faith by itself - that does nothing - is dead.' (NCV)

Ask the children what they think this Scripture means. Allow time for response and discussion.

🗨 **Say:** This Scripture tells us that our faith and our actions go hand in hand. Our faith in God, and our knowledge about how much he loves everyone, should inspire us to help others in the way that we know that he would want us to. The Scripture says that because we believe in a kind and loving God, when someone asks us for help or we see someone in need, we spring into action and allow God's love to shine through us as we try to do something to make things better.

Show the group a tin of soup, a bar of soap and a cross (or a picture of a cross). Ask them if they know what these items represent.

🗨 **Say:** In The Salvation Army's early days William and Catherine Booth put their faith into action. They realised that there was no point telling people about God's love for them if they were poor, hungry, and cold - if they were facing injustice. They realised that their words needed to be backed up with actions. They needed to demonstrate God's love for others in practical ways, such as providing food for people who were hungry and housing for people who were homeless. This is why we hear about the 'three S's' of The Salvation Army: 'soup, soap, and salvation'. This is how The Salvation Army still works today.

This is a short animation that gives an overview of The Salvation Army.

Salvation Army 101 by Salvation Army USA East
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_AwnF8uiEA

Choose a local Salvation Army project to tell the children about, including some personal stories of service users if you can.

You may also like to show the children some of The Salvation Army's websites and highlight some particular projects of interest to your group. Or show them some photos of The Salvation Army in action in your local community.

The Salvation Army YouTube channel also has a wide variety of short videos highlighting many different projects helping people in need both in the UK and in other countries, including personal stories.

Action It

Take some time to discuss the needs of your local community.

You can design the best way to do this with your group, but here are a few ideas.

- ➔ Show the group a map of the local area and ask them to point out places that they recognise, for example schools, GP surgery, care home, church, shopping mall, McDonalds, their own home... As you point out each place discuss the needs that the people there may have or any injustices they may be facing.
- ➔ Show the group photographs of places in your community and ask them if they recognise the places from the photos. Again, discuss what needs the people in those places may have or any injustices they may be facing.
- ➔ Cut or print out snippets from any local press or social media where local people are struggling or facing needs, or where local people are getting involved making a difference.
- ➔ Ask someone who has been a beneficiary of one of the services from your local Salvation Army projects to come along to your group. Or invite a project worker or staff member that runs a service in your local community. (Be sure to follow safeguarding procedures.) The children could ask questions to find out about the project and that person's story. Perhaps you could write an article together for your church newsletter or even local press, or make a video.

→ Continue your focus on the project/campaign that you may have started discussing/ actioning in Session One this month.

How can you get involved?

Ask the children to share anything they have been doing to help others in their community, especially during lockdown. For example, donating to a food bank, shopping for neighbours. Collate all the answers on a whiteboard.

If possible, you could discuss a local project that you could all do together to help the community, like a foodbank collection or a litter pick. Perhaps you could link up with another local children's or youth cell group to do this.

Challenge the group to 'see the need' over the coming week - even if they are not able to act on it. Opening their eyes, and their hearts, to the needs that they see around them is a first step to putting their faith into action.

Pray It

Could you write and film a prayer with your group, similar to 'The UK Blessing', saying a prayer for your local community. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtI13mNj5U>

It doesn't have to be a song - unless you want to, of course! Perhaps you could join up with another local children's or youth cell group to do this.

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.