

Summer Overview

Leaders Notes

Themes for May and June. (More months coming soon)

Please note Bible stories and themes may occasionally differ from this overview.

May – Creation Champions

Please note that this theme starts on 8 May. Guidance for 1 May is part of April's theme.

The aims of the sessions are:

- To consider why God has asked us to care for our planet
- To explore ways we can make a difference
- To empower children to be good stewards of God's creation

Mission Priority: Care for Creation

'The Salvation Army is committed to helping change attitudes, resulting in a more responsible use of our planet. We seek to provide practical care and advocacy for people affected by damage to the environment. People will not experience fullness of life unless God's creation is protected and cared for.'

This month's theme is caring for creation. Exploring environmental issues with children enables them to learn about how the way we live can have an impact on the world around us. Exploring this in a faith context makes the connection that what we believe about God also prompts us to live in a way that shows great care for his creation and everything and everyone in it. We need to take good care of all the things God created and entrusted to us.

Through the sessions the children will hopefully be inspired to become Creation Rangers - to learn why it is important to take care of God's Earth and how to do it, and that, even though they are young, they can still make a difference. We will also look at how The Salvation Army works with those most adversely affected by climate change.

You can read The Salvation Army's full environment positional statement here: [environment.pdf \(salvationarmy.org.uk\)](#)

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'The Salvation Army is compelled by love for God and for humanity and is concerned about the implications of environmental damage on future generations as well as the present. It speaks out for social justice and for poor and oppressed people; also, for responsible management of the Earth's resources which sustains the environment while protecting and improving the quality of human life. As an organisation it has in place a policy of good environmental practice. Individually, everyone is encouraged to take small but far-reaching steps which any individual can take to help care for, protect and repair the environment. This begins with changed priorities and a simpler lifestyle. Practical actions may include reducing consumption, use of environmentally friendly products, waste reduction and recycling, energy conservation, ethical purchasing and ethical investment. In these and other environmentally sustainable ways, we can show our love for God and for his world.'

There is also a good resource here: [Teaching Resource.pdf \(salvationarmy.org.uk\)](https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/teaching-resource.pdf)

Key Scriptures

'Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!'

Genesis 1:31 (NLT)

'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.'

Genesis 2:15

'Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'

Genesis 1:26-27

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Date	Title	Bible Reference	Content
<p>Session 1 8 May</p>	<p>It's very good!</p>	<p>Genesis 1:31 (NLT) Psalm 19: 1-3 (ICB)</p>	<p>Take a good look at this marvellous world that God has created and that he loves! Fill the children with awe, wonder, respect for this amazing planet that we live on.</p> <p>What are your favourite parts of God's creation and why? What can we learn from the nature about who God is and how much he cares for us?</p>
<p>Session 2 15 May</p>	<p>Calling all creation champions!</p>	<p>Genesis 2:15 (NIV) Genesis 1:26-27 (NIV)</p>	<p>Humans have a special place in God's creation. He made us in his own image and asked us to love and care for his creation as he does. Since God has entrusted the Earth to us, it is right for us to take care of the planet and do what we can to help the Earth. When we do that well, we are honouring him. We can make changes in our everyday life to show God we are being good stewards of what he has given us.</p> <p>Do you think we're doing a good job taking care of God's creation? Why or why not? Are there things that cause us to feel sad when we think about what's happening to God's creation?</p> <p>How are we reflecting God's nature in the way that we take care of the world around us? What are some ways we can take care of the Earth this week?</p>
<p>Session 3 22 May</p>	<p>Small actions can make a big difference</p>	<p>Genesis 2:15 (NIV) 1 Timothy 4:12 (ICB)</p>	<p>Lots of things that humans do are having a negative impact on the planet. Use this session to explore some different practical elements of creation care. For example, recycling, litter, global warming, plastic pollution, reusable products, conserving energy.</p> <p>Perhaps you could even ask some of our participants to bring a little presentation on any of these topics.</p> <p>Children have powerful voices and can make big things</p>

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			<p>happen. You could talk to the children about Felix Finkbeiner, who was only nine years old when he started a tree-planting campaign at his school in Germany.</p> <p>Today, aged 24, his organisation plants trees all over the world and educates young people about climate change.</p>
<p>Session 4 29 May</p>	<p>Climate change</p>	<p>Matthew 25:35-40 (ICB)</p>	<p>What is climate change and why does it matter?</p> <p>Think about the impact that climate change has on some of the world's most vulnerable people. Often the people most affected by climate change tend not to be those most responsible for causing it. Most affected are some of the people who grow the food we eat every day.</p> <p>Explore how The Salvation Army is working with people affected by climate change to help overcome some of the challenges they are facing.</p> <p>Looking back at some of the actions you discussed in the last session, consider how these small changes will help climate change and therefore will impact people in other parts of the world.</p> <p>One of the most important things humans can do is to reduce the amount of CO2 in the atmosphere. This means making changes to the way we all live.</p> <p>Children have powerful voices and can make big things happen.</p> <p>You could talk to the children about Greta Thunberg, who was just 15 when she went on strike from school and urged politicians do more to fight climate change. Her protest made the news and went on to inspire a worldwide wave of action, with millions of children and adults joining protests across the world.</p>

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June – Agents of Change

The aims of the sessions are:

- To examine how Jesus sought justice for people who were treated unfairly
- To discover how others, inspired by Jesus, have fought injustice
- To explore what injustices each child is being called to challenge
- To learn some of the ways The Salvation Army is seeking justice

Mission Priority: Seek Justice and Reconciliation

'People can experience a fuller life while we are on Earth - we don't have to wait until we die. God longs for justice for all people. Therefore, The Salvation Army will speak out against injustice. We fight not simply the effects of injustice but also the systems and structures that enable injustice. Seeking reconciliation is also an essential part of Salvation Army life. Justice and reconciliation are vital activities to achieving "Our Vision" of "fullness of life for all with Jesus".'

As Agents of Change our mission, should we choose to accept it, is to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves: to use our voices and our actions to bring about change into the lives of others where it is most needed. It doesn't matter how small our contribution; we can all do something!

The text below summarises well what we will be discussing this month:

'The Bible says each person is made in the image of God, and because God made us, we're all equally valuable, special and loved by God. But that doesn't mean we're all exactly the same ... We're all different ... And that's exactly how God wanted it. We're all different reflections of God's image. The problem is we don't always act like every other person is made in God's image ... Injustice is whenever someone is not treated like a human being made in God's image ... Sometimes it's easy to find injustice and fix it ... Sometimes injustice is harder to fix, like for example when a whole group of people are being untreated unfairly due to the colour of their skin ... The Bible says people who follow God should act with justice, by standing up for those who have been treated badly ... The best example of someone fighting for justice was Jesus. Jesus said, "Anything you do for one of the least important of these brothers and sisters you do for me." ... Jesus taught his followers to feed people who are hungry, take care of people who are sick and include people who are ignored ... Jesus stood up for those who didn't have any power. Jesus stood up for people who were being mistreated ... When he saw powerful leaders hurt people, Jesus spoke up about it. He told his followers to stand up for the people who didn't receive justice. Jesus not only showed us that it is possible to fight for justice, he also showed us that it's what we're supposed to do.'

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Justice is not an add-on for the super-keen, but the heartbeat of God in love with his creation. Jesus came to Earth to demonstrate love in action. Love must be our motivation for seeking to look out for those in need (1 Corinthians 13:3): "As we have been touched by the amazing love of God and allow this love to overflow to others."

[Justice - What's That Word?](#) by Crossroads Kids' Club.

Key Scriptures

'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. Defend the rights of all those who have nothing. Speak up and judge fairly. Defend the rights of the poor and needy.' Proverbs 31:8-9 (ICB)

'I will tell you the kind of special day I want.

I want you to free the people you have put in prison unfairly.
Undo their chains.

Free those to whom you are unfair.

Free them from their hard labour.

I want you to share your food with hungry people.

I want you to bring poor, homeless people into your own homes.

When you see someone who has no clothes, give him yours.

Don't refuse to help your own relatives.

If you do these things, your light will shine like the dawn.

Then your wounds will quickly heal.

Your God will walk before you, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind.' Isaiah 58:6-8 (ICB)

'Then the King will say to the good people on his right, "Come. My Father has given you his blessing. Come and receive the kingdom God has prepared for you since the world was made. I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you invited me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me."

Then the good people will answer, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food? When did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you alone and away from home and invite you into our house? When did we see you without clothes and give you something to wear? When did we see you sick or in prison and care for you?" Then the King will answer, "I tell you the truth. Anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me."

Then the King will say to those on his left, "Go away from me. God has said that you will be punished. Go into the fire that burns forever. That fire was prepared for the devil and his helpers. I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat. I was

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thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you did not invite me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me nothing to wear. I was sick and in prison, and you did not care for me.”

Then those people will answer, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty? When did we see you alone and away from home? Or when did we see you without clothes or sick or in prison? When did we see these things and not help you?”

Then the King will answer, “I tell you the truth. Anything you refused to do for any of my people here, you refused to do for me.”
Matthew 25:34-45 (ICB)

Date	Title	Bible Reference	Content
Session 1 5 June	Jesus and Justice	Luke 4:18-21 Matthew 25:34-45	<p>The Bible says that people who follow God should act with justice, and Jesus showed his followers how to do it.</p> <p>In this session we look at some examples of how Jesus stood up for people who were often disregarded or outcast, or people who were treated unfairly by the people/leaders of the day, eg women, children, people with leprosy, people with disabilities/illness. How did Jesus treat these people?</p> <p>Luke 4:18-21 tells about Jesus’ reason for being on earth - he came for everyone but especially for society’s rejected people, the poor, prisoners, the oppressed. Matthew 25:34-45 encourages us, as disciples of Jesus, to take up that same call and continue with his mission.</p>
Session 2 12 June	Speak Up	Proverbs 31:8-9 Isaiah 58:6-8 Micah 6:8	<p>God’s heart breaks when he sees injustice. The Bible tells us over and over, that God asks us to get involved, to seek justice - to speak up for others; to look after those who are in need; to challenge people and systems that are unfair - to do all we can to ensure that others get treated properly.</p> <p>This is part of our worship to God and how we show him our love. We can be good news to a broken world. Use this session to look at some examples of</p>

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			<p>inspirational people who fought for justice on behalf of others - for example, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, even William and Catherine Booth!</p> <p>Also use this session to help the children get inspired about their own lives and how they can 'act justly'. How can they live out the commands in these Scriptures? Try to keep the focus on the local, the people/situations around them in their own homes, schools, communities etc. (There will be time to think about global issues in the last session.)</p> <p>Do you think we're doing a good job taking care of God's creation? Why or why not? Are there things that cause us to feel sad when we think about what's happening to God's creation? How are we reflecting God's nature in the way that we take care of the world around us? What are some ways we can take care of the Earth this week?</p>
<p>Session 3 19 June</p>	<p>Brave Esther</p>	<p>Esther</p>	<p>God uses his followers to bring justice for other people. The book of Esther tells the fantastic story of two people, Esther and Mordecai, who were willing to stand up for people who needed help and whose lives brought God's justice to them.</p> <p>Through this story we can explore the idea that taking a stand is not an easy option. It often requires great courage, strength, commitment or significant impact on our own lives.</p> <p>Who do we feel called to make a stand for? Maybe for one friend treated unfairly by others, or it could be for a whole sector of society, oppressed by circumstances they are unable to change. Pray together for the strength and courage to be part of bringing God's justice into these situations.</p>

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<p>Session 4 28 June</p>	<p>Global change</p>	<p>Matthew 25:34-45 Leviticus 19:33-34</p>	<p>Use this session to look specifically at a global issue of injustice.</p> <p>The Salvation Army supports many such global responses. The session guide could include either a specific issue to focus on (see example of refugees below) or allow group leaders to choose their own, perhaps something that is relevant in their own community or an issue that their corps is actively supporting.</p> <p>Point group leaders to different resources that are available. The Mission Service resources are here.</p> <p>Discuss why people become refugees. Of course, it may be hard to see what difference we can make in the face of huge global issues like war or famine, but we can all play our part and do something to help those who find themselves in need as a result, such as refugees. Think back to the Scripture in the first session, when Jesus said, 'Whatever you do for the least important person, you are doing for me.'</p> <p>If children feel overwhelmed by the scale of such global issues, we can remember that helping just one person is valuable.</p> <p>Have a look at some of the ways that The Salvation Army is helping refugees, either locally or nationally, such as the community sponsorship. Discuss ways that the children could offer practical support.</p> <p>Local community groups/organisations working with refugees may have more details or programmes that the group could get involved in.</p>
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July – Daniel

The aims of the sessions are:

- To be inspired by the story of Daniel
- To understand that our unique identity comes from Jesus
- To explore the power of prayer especially during tough times
- To consider different ways we can worship God

This month we are going to dip into the life of Daniel. Daniel was in exile, away from all that he knew. He had to learn to live out his faith in a strange land, and be the person that God needed him to be in each context. Throughout this month there will be space for the children to explore that they are free to be the people that God has created them to be, in whatever context they are in.

Date	Title	Bible Reference	Content
Session 1 3 July	Identity	Daniel 1:1-21	<p>Modern-day society goes out of its way to convince us to change ourselves. Our children face the pressure of fitting in and may even feel they live two lives - what happens on Sunday compared to the rest of the week. Daniel faced similar pressures.</p> <p>But his story is there to inspire us; we see Daniel refusing to compromise. Instead, he remains quietly faithful to God.</p> <p>In this session we will look at our identity as a Christian. We take space to think how we equip our children to live out their love for Jesus in different places. We affirm that by knowing our true identity comes from Jesus, and by knowing him, we can have confidence to be the person he needs us to be.</p>
Session 2 10 July	Influence	Daniel 2	<p>It seems unbelievable that God would use a young man like Daniel to speak out in a place of exile and oppression. It seems even more unlikely that King Nebuchadnezzar would not only listen to Daniel's opinion but also intentionally seek out his assistance.</p> <p>In this chapter we see Daniel's influence increasing. This is not because he is wise in the world's eyes, but because his trust is firmly fixed in the God of Heaven</p>

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			<p>and earth.</p> <p>In this session we think about the influence that our children can have, both within their school and within their corps. It may be that they can encourage others to speak out who might not have a voice and have been marginalised.</p> <p>We look at how children can have an active part to play in their corps/church - perhaps by setting up a children's advisory group. Let the children come up with ideas as to how they can have an influence, and encourage those who currently might not have a voice.</p>
<p>Session 3 17 July</p>	<p>Worship</p>	<p>Daniel 2:17-23</p>	<p>These verses in Daniel are just a short snippet but they show us that Daniel was a passionate worshipper. His communication with God sustained him in Babylon and was a constant source of strength. Worship is not about which songs we choose to sing; it is an attitude we choose to adopt. We see a clear example of this in the life of Daniel and his exploits in captivity. We see Daniel declaring who God is and celebrating what he has done.</p> <p>This is real worship, coming from Daniel's heart, thanking God for intervening and revealing the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. There is a massive difference in the way we worship when we are really thankful for something, rather than just joining in because it is expected of us or part of a church service.</p> <p>In this session it would be good to explore with the children what worship is, and how we can worship Jesus throughout the week. We can explore different types of worship - not just songs of worship, but art, poetry, dance ... and how our whole lives can be an act of worship.</p>

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<p>Session 4 24 July</p>	<p>Security</p>	<p>Daniel 6</p>	<p>Tricked by those he worked with, betrayed and thrown into a lions' den - surely this was the end of the road for Daniel. Where would all his prayers and faithfulness get him, now he was faced with snarling beasts and certain death? What difference would his obedience and refusal to compromise make, now he was trapped and alone? For Daniel, the place of certain death turns into the place of greatest victory. There was no human way to escape from the lions' den, yet he emerges unharmed and praising God for his delivery (vv21-22).</p> <p>When we feel the most frightened and alone, our natural response is to decide that God has abandoned us. Sometimes we feel such despair that it seems God could never bring good out of the situation; we feel confusion and fear when we find ourselves, like Daniel, trapped in a dark place confronting angry lions.</p> <p>This session helps us to think about our security and how we respond when our world has been turned upside down. Reference could be made to all that has happened in Ukraine and to think about the persecuted Church.</p>
<p>Session 5 31 July</p>	<p>Prayer</p>	<p>Daniel 9</p>	<p>How do you feel when you think about the situations you hear about on the news or in your classroom? Does all the bad news sometimes seem overwhelming? Do you ever feel helpless to make a difference? Daniel looked back through the Scriptures and saw that God's prophecy had come true in his time (v2). Instead of this driving him to despair and discouragement, Daniel uses it to inspire his prayers and he pleads with God to change the situation for his people.</p> <p>What situations drive you to prayer and which do you find it hard to believe that God could act in? Why is this? What different methods of prayer have you tried? Which do you like and dislike? Do you find it easy to hear God's voice? How could you make more space for this in your prayer times?</p>