

Salt and Light



Matthew 5:13-16



In this first session of the Bassline Guide to Mission, the young people are invited to think about what mission really means. Beginning with Jesus' words about being salt and light, the session explores mission as something that flows from who we are, not just what we do. Through reflection, discussion and prayer, the group considers how mission is lived out in ordinary, everyday ways, both personally and together as part of The Salvation Army. The session creates space to notice where God is already at work and to recognise our shared calling to live as salt and light in the world.

You will need:

- Paper and pens
- Mission Priorities handout
- Two large sheets of paper and felt-tips
- Post-it Notes

**Say:**

Divide the group into small teams. Give each team paper and pens.

Ask the teams to spend a minute writing down any words or phrases that come to mind when they hear the word 'mission'. There are no right or wrong answers here.

Once they have shared a few ideas, explain that they will now have a challenge.

Say:

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to create a team definition of 'mission'. You have exactly 51 seconds! That's the length it takes for the *Mission: Impossible* theme tune to play.

Say:

Make sure the groups start at the same time and start the music. When the music stops, ask each team to share their definition.

Say:

Mission: Impossible Theme – (0:51)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBZ6GPCJcxM

Ask:

- How did that feel?
- Did it feel rushed or pressured? Why do you think that was?

Say:

When we're put on the spot to define mission, we often reach for familiar words or phrases we've heard before. Mission can start to sound more complicated than it really is. Before we go any further, we're going to slow things down and listen to how Jesus talks about mission.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

Which parts of your definition came from things you've heard before and which came from your own experience?

 **Amplify****Say:**

Throughout this Bassline Guide to Mission, we are exploring what mission really means. When Jesus talks about mission, he doesn't begin with plans or projects. He uses simple, everyday images to describe what life with God looks like when it is lived out in the world.

Read:

¹³ You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavour? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

¹⁴ You are the light of the world – like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

(Matthew 5:13-16 NLT)

Ask:

- How are Christians described in this passage?
- What do you think it means when Jesus describes his followers as salt and light?

Say:

Jesus does not tell his followers to become salt and light. He tells them that they are salt and light. This suggests that mission is not something added on later, but something that flows from who we already are as followers of Jesus.

Here is the way *The Message* paraphrase describes it.

Read:

¹³ Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavours of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand – shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

(Matthew 5:13-16 MSG)

Ask:

How does this version add to your understanding of what it means to live as salt and light in the world?

Say:

The Message paraphrase emphasises that salt brings out flavour and light brings out colour. Both images point towards a faith that is visible and engaged with the world.

Watch:

What does it mean that believers are to be salt and light? Got Questions Ministries (4:01)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQIPxR-rYPI

Ask:

- What two roles did salt have in the Middle East during the first century?
- How do these roles help us to understand the kind of influence Christians are meant to have?
- How are Christians described as being preservers in the world?
- What might it look like for faith to add flavour to the world around us?

Say:

Salt and light both make a difference simply by being present. They do not draw attention to

themselves, but they do change what surrounds them. Jesus is describing a kind of mission that is visible in everyday life.

Ask:

- Can you think of any examples where you have been salt or light, bringing out the God-flavours or God-colours of the world? Share them with the group.
- What sorts of things hinder or prevent Christians from living as salt and light in the world?

 **Bridge****Ask:**

What is your response to the following quote?

‘We are indeed the light of the world – but only if our switch is turned on.’

– John Hagee

 **Sound Check****Say:**

In Amplify we heard Jesus describe being salt and light in our ordinary, everyday lives. In Sound Check we're going to think about how this is lived out together through The Salvation Army and the part each of us plays in that shared witness.

From its earliest days, The Salvation Army has understood mission as noticing people, staying present and joining in with what God is already doing. One story that captures this comes from the early life of The Salvation Army.

One Sunday evening, William Booth was walking through London with his young son, Bramwell. He took him into a crowded bar filled with people many others ignored or avoided. As Bramwell took in the scene, his father said something that stayed with him for life.

William Booth said, ‘These are our people; these are the people I want you to live for and bring to Christ.’ Years later, Bramwell Booth wrote that ‘the impression never left me’.

This moment reflects a way of understanding mission that continues to shape The Salvation Army today: seeing people as God sees them and responding with love and faithfulness.

Ask:

How would you describe The Salvation Army's mission in a modern-day context?

Say:

Display the five Mission Priorities of The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom.

Say:

The Salvation Army describes its mission through five priorities. They aren't a checklist to complete, but a way of naming how love for God and love for others takes shape in real life. Together they describe what it looks like to live as salt and light in the world.

Our mission:

- To **share** the good news
- To **serve** others without discrimination
- To **nurture** disciples of Jesus
- To **care** for creation
- To **seek** justice and reconciliation

We're going to watch a short clip that shows some of these priorities being lived out in everyday, practical ways.

Watch:

Faith into Action – An introduction to The Salvation Army (4:37)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR-2A6Pl6lc&t=116s

Say:

For this activity, the group will reflect on how mission is already being lived out, by noticing where salt and light are visible in both the wider Salvation Army and their own church. You will need two large sheets of paper and felt-tips. You may want to prepare the sheets in advance.

In the centre of each sheet, write: 'Salt and Light.'

Around the centre, write the five Salvation Army Mission Priorities:

- To share the good news
- To serve others without discrimination
- To nurture disciples of Jesus
- To care for creation
- To seek justice and reconciliation

Say:

We're going to spend some time thinking about the way The Salvation Army and we as its members live as salt and light in the world. This activity is about noticing, not evaluating. We're not trying to assess how well things are done or identify what's missing. Instead we're paying attention to where salt and light are already visible, from small and ordinary acts of faithfulness through to larger programmes and events.

Say:

On the first sheet, invite the group to add words, phrases or drawings showing how they see The Salvation Army being salt and light across the UK within the Mission Priorities.

On the second sheet, ask the group to do the same activity for their own corps. You may find it helpful to divide the group into two teams, with one focusing on the wider Salvation Army and the other on their local corps.

Once both sheets are complete, leave them where everyone can see them. Invite the group to take a moment to look over what has been added as you read the following quote.

Read:

'The Bible unhesitatingly affirms that God is constantly at work in the world in many ways, times, and places. Effective evangelism must start with recognising where God is already at work, and getting alongside God in what is going on there. God's story, not ours, is the authentic starting point.'

– John Drane, *Faith in a Changing Culture*

Ask:

As you look at the ideas you have shared, where do you notice signs that God is already at work?

Say:

Much of what we've noticed today is made up of ordinary, faithful actions. Some of it may be organised programmes or events, but much of it is people choosing to care, to notice, to show up and to act with compassion.

Mission doesn't belong to one role, one activity or one group of people. It grows out of lots of small choices made by many people, over time. Being salt and light isn't something we do alone. It's something we live out together, often in small, ordinary ways.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

Which small or ordinary example of being salt or light feels most meaningful to you right now?



 **Selah****Say:**

In the Sound Check activity, the young people spent time thinking about how their church is salt and light in their community. Place the sheet in the centre of the group so that everyone can see it. You will also need Post-it Notes and pens.

Explain that the group will spend some quiet time responding in prayer to what they have noticed.

Invite the group to use the Post-it Notes to write prayers of thanksgiving for people, situations, or ways they see their corps being salt and light. They can also write prayers for specific people, needs or areas of work.

As the music plays, invite the group to come forward and place their Post-it Notes on the sheet.

When the music finishes, gather the group and offer a short prayer, giving thanks for what has been noticed and entrusting what has been named to God.

Watch:

Lauren Daigle – ‘Salt and Light’ (Audio) (4:01)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZNx5S5zuqs

 **Coda****Say:**

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?

What is the one thing you will take away from this session about the importance of being salt and light in the world?

Say:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.

Mission Priorities

Our mission:

To
share
the good news

To
serve
others without
discrimination

To
care
for creation

To
nurture
disciples of
Jesus

To
seek
justice and
reconciliation