

Mission in Community



Matthew 10:42



In this session the young people will pause to reflect on the purpose and heart behind the mission idea they have been developing in response to their local community. Before moving into practical planning, they will explore what following Jesus looks like when responding together to real people in a real place. They will ground their decisions in prayer, Scripture and the Mission Priorities of The Salvation Army.

You will need:

- Paper and pens
- Mission Priorities poster

**Leader's notes:**

Today's Beat activity helps the young people to practise paying attention to a specific place and group of people. While their own communities may include school, family or clubs, this activity focuses on the community around the corps building. Before continuing to think about mission, planning or action, the group is invited to pause and notice this local context. Mission begins by paying attention to real places and real people, rather than assuming we already know what God wants for them.

Divide the group into small teams and explain that you're going to start with a short quiz about the local community. If the group doesn't all live in the same place, focus on the area around your church building. Leaders may want to do a little research in advance to familiarise themselves with the local area and help the group notice details they might otherwise overlook.

Use a few of the questions below or adapt them to suit your context:

- How many charity shops are there nearby?
- Who are the local councillors or MP?

- What primary and secondary schools serve this area?
- What landmarks or well-known places are nearby?
- Roughly how many people live in this area?
- What are the main news stories impacting the people in this community?

Say:

Taking time to answer these questions helps us to notice that the community around the corps is made up of real people, places and stories. As we continue developing our mission project this week, keep noticing the needs of the people we are reaching out to.

**Bridge****Ask:**

What did you discover about the church's local community that you didn't know before?

**Amplify****Say:**

In Session One we explored what it means to live as salt and light in the ordinary places of our everyday lives. In Session Two we spent time noticing where God is already at work in our local area and explored how we might join in with that work together.

Today, before we move into practical planning, we're going to pause and think more deeply about the why behind the mission idea we've chosen. This is about listening and reflecting carefully, rather than rushing ahead with our planning and preparation.

Ask:

- What mission idea did we decide on as a group in the last session?
- What helped us arrive at this idea?
- What did we notice about the people, situations or needs it is responding to?

Say:

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus reminds his followers that God's work doesn't begin with being impressive or doing everything at once. Faithfulness often starts small, with attention to the people right in front of us.

Read:

This is a large work I've called you into, but don't be overwhelmed by it. It's best to start small. Give a cool cup of water to someone who is thirsty, for instance. The smallest act of giving or receiving makes you a true apprentice. You won't lose out on a thing.

– (Matthew 10:42 MSG)

Ask:

- What stands out to you in this reading?
- What does it suggest about how God invites us to respond to the needs around us?

Say:

Before we think about how to organise this mission activity, we're going to take a step back and think about what faithfulness looks like in this situation.

Hopefully you still have the notes gathered in Session Two outlining the mission activity you discussed. Using those notes, take a few moments to reflect together on the questions below.

Ask:

How would you describe the purpose of this mission activity in one sentence?

Leader's notes:

Display the Mission Priorities poster and briefly recap the main points. Remind the young people that these priorities are not a tick list. They help us think about the heart and purpose of The Salvation Army's mission.

Ask:

- Which Salvation Army mission priority does this activity reflect?
- Matthew 10:42 speaks about being a 'true apprentice'. What might being God's apprentice look like in this mission activity?
- What difference do we hope this activity might make for the people involved?
- What Bible verse did we choose last week as the focus for this mission activity? What can we take from it as we move into the planning stage?
- What guidance and wisdom do we need from God as we move forward together?

Leader's notes:

The group has just named the guidance and wisdom they feel is needed. Remind them that prayer is the foundation of mission and keeps us rooted in God as we move forward. Before focusing on practical details, spend time praying together, asking God to guide the next steps.

Say:

Exploring these questions and spending time in prayer reminds us of the focus of our mission. We are responding faithfully to real people in a real place, trusting God to guide us as we take the next steps together.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

Given everything we've noticed and prayed about, what feels most important to hold on to as we move into the planning stage?

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

In Sound Check we're going to focus on the practical details of the mission activity we've been exploring. The aim is not to plan everything perfectly, but to make sure everyone is clear about what needs to happen and who is responsible for each part.

Leader's notes:

How you structure this time will depend on your group. You may choose to use planning sheets, a shared diary or online tool, or simply work through the details together as a group. The steps below are offered as prompts to help guide the planning, rather than as a fixed checklist.

Step 1: What needs to happen?

Spend time identifying the key practical steps needed for the mission activity to take place. This might include preparation, resources, timings, permissions or communication.

Step 2: Who is responsible?

Look at the tasks that have been named and decide who will take responsibility for each part. Encourage shared responsibility and teamwork, rather than one person doing everything.

Step 3: What needs checking or confirming?

Think about anything that still needs to be confirmed before the activity can go ahead, such as safety considerations, access to spaces or availability of resources.

Step 4: How will we stay connected?

Agree on how the group will keep in touch between now and the mission activity, so that everyone knows what is happening and feels supported.

Step 5: How will we follow this up?

Agree a time after the mission activity when the group can come back together to reflect on what happened. This is a chance to share stories, celebrate what went well, notice where God was at work, and give thanks together in prayer.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

What did you notice about working together as a group while planning this activity?

 **Selah****Say:**

We've spent time noticing our local community, reflecting on the purpose of our mission activity, praying together and making practical plans. Before we finish, we're going to pause and reflect on the people we will meet through this activity, and the small differences our presence might make.

We're going to listen to a song that reminds us to notice the importance of the small acts of mission that can make all the difference in the lives of the people we meet.

Watch:

Josh Wilson – 'Dream Small' (Lyric Video) (3:26)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOBaLrltEyc

Ask:

How does the song challenge the idea that mission has to be big or impressive to be faithful?

Say:

Close your eyes and take a moment to think about the week ahead. Jesus speaks about being a 'true apprentice' through small, faithful actions.

- What might being God's true apprentice look like for you this week?
- What small actions could make a difference to the people you meet?
- Where might God be inviting you to act with kindness, care or attention?.

 **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 being part of God's mission in your community?

Leader's notes:

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