



cell outlines

JULY 2020

SPECIAL ONLINE EDITION

These Cell Outlines are written by Youth and Children's Ministries. They are available every month from our web site. For more information and other Cell resources, visit salvationarmy.org.uk/children-and-youth-resources

NEW ENERGY AND A NEW HOPE

WELCOME

Ask the group: How are your energy levels? Do you have more energy or less when you exercise?

Invite everyone to lead 30 seconds of a fitness exercise (like a keep fit version of 'Simon Says'). This can be anything from star jumps to running on the spot. Encourage people to choose exercises that all can take part in and remind them it is only for fun. Be careful / intervene if someone suggests something that looks too risky. (No accidents allowed; we still need to protect the NHS!)

Ask: Do you love change or hate it? As we approach a new world that will never be the same as it was before COVID-19, there are some things we can influence and others that we can't.

WORD

Display the following Scripture on a whiteboard for all to see, and read it aloud together. (If restrictions have allowed us to meet in person, then read together from Bibles / phone apps.)

'Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighbourhood. Tell them that the kingdom is here. Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables. Kick out the demons. You have been treated generously, so live generously.'

Don't think you have to put on a fund-raising campaign before you start. You don't need a lot of equipment. You are the equipment, and all you need to keep that going is three meals a day. Travel light.'

Matthew 10:6-10 (MSG)

Ask: How would you feel if Jesus sent you out without any food or even a bed to sleep in, as the disciples were? What does the Kingdom of God look like for you at the moment?

If they aren't mentioned, remind the group about people clapping the NHS and key workers, and the volunteers that are helping with food, medicine and other essentials.

Say: Even in terrible hardship the Church can respond in all sorts of ways, and there are so many local heroes making do with what they have to hand. The disciples made do with what they were given and what they had control of, but also relied on others for food and hospitality.

How close does the Kingdom feel to you? Is it closer than you think?

ACTION

In Week One we thought about how we can create a new way of doing things. In a place of less movement, we can discover an inner flow of creativity. It's a challenge, but right now we have the time to meet it. It doesn't have to be perfect – it's allowed to be messy.

Give everyone a piece of paper; or if we're still online, get them to draw on their computer using PowerPoint or the whiteboard.

Draw a large circle in the middle of a piece of paper / the screen.

Inside the circle write down all the things you have the power or ability to change: for example, when we get up, what we eat, if we go outside, how much time we spend watching the news, how thankful we are, the encouragement we give others, etc.

On the outside write down all the things we have no control over: for example, the virus, when we will be able to move

around, importing PPE from factories, how long it will take for a vaccine to be available, etc.

Say: Now focus briefly on those things outside your circle. Commit this week not to allow them to concern you, and instead focus your attention on what you have the power or influence to control. Focus on the inside of your circle.

As we make a new world together and learn to live again while the pandemic still affects us, what will you focus on this week that is inside the circle that you can change? Choose three positive things you will focus on and share in pairs why you have chosen those.

PRAYER

- * Play the Rend Collective – ‘Build your Kingdom here’ (4mins 38secs) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbdJXKqVgtg>
- * Individually, pray that God will allow you to let go of the things outside of your control while still recognising they have not gone away.
- * In your pairs pray about the three things you will focus on, and for strength to see God’s Kingdom revealed in your home, street and community.
- * If time allows, pray together focusing on what God’s new Kingdom might look like in your church and group.



SEASONAL LIVING

Today we are taking a quick tour of Jesus' life and ministry. We will explore what we can learn from how he lived, and how this can impact us in the different seasons of life we move through.

WELCOME

Scavenger Hunt

Say: Go and find something in your house (or surroundings) that represent...

- * You
- * Your youth leader
- * How you are feeling today
- * Each season (spring, summer, autumn and winter)

Keep these last four with you as we will need them for later.

You may want to put a time limit on how long they have to find each item to keep the game moving along.

WORD

As we think about the life of Jesus, it is very easy to remember the joyful times or the exciting times – there are a lot of stories of where Jesus shows us something of himself that is extraordinary. However, Mark's Gospel also documents the times when Jesus encountered challenges, struggles and heartache. He was fully human, after all! It's important to remember this, because so often we may feel that God can't relate to what we are going through. But Jesus went through all the different 'seasons' of life just like us and we can learn a lot from him as we also journey through the seasons in our lives.

Spring – Anticipation and Hope – Mark 1:1-8

We start Mark's Gospel with John the Baptist who is paving the way for Jesus' coming. The Jewish community has been anticipating this Messiah for a VERY long time. The levels of anticipation are high. With anticipation comes hope. Finally the one that has been promised to them will come and save them from their lives of suppression and suffering at the hands of dictators. Jesus is going to come and save them all. Which (as we know) he did, but not in the way they had expected.

Summer – Flourish and Thrive – Mark 11:1-11

This story (Mark 11:1-11) is just one of many that could have been picked. But Palm Sunday really shows us Jesus in this point in his life and ministry. People were lining the streets to worship him and to praise him. It was a moment of glory.

We could have picked any number of stories about Jesus' life to explore. We can see numerous stories of how Jesus brought about healing, joy, amazement and love. Wherever he went, whoever he encountered (and don't forget he intentionally encountered those whom others considered outcasts), he thrived in his ministry. And he gave others the opportunity to thrive and flourish as well. All who encountered him became better versions of themselves. He brought a sense of excitement with him like never before or since.

Autumn – Beauty and Acceptance – Mark 14:12-26

We looked at this passage a number of weeks ago. This occasion in the life of Jesus is a significant one. In this upper room with his friends, Jesus shares a very intimate moment. A moment of beauty where he washes their feet and a moment of acceptance about what is next as he shares in bread and wine with his friends. This upper room is not fraught or dramatic; it is a simple and gentle time where he can dwell in the here and now, finding space in this beautiful time, knowing what is to come but not rushing into it or away from it.

Winter – Sorrow and Stillness – Mark 15

Just before Jesus breathes his last, we hear that ‘darkness came over the whole land’ (v33) and we move into the next season of Jesus’ life and ministry – his death. Jesus dies, and the world is still. It goes through a time of mourning – a time when there is no sign of life or activity. There is a period of waiting for the next sign of spring but feeling sorrow and loss. In this story the waiting is short (but they wouldn’t have known that at the time) but important. In that time of waiting, faith was tested, tears were shed and hope seemed far out of reach. But we know that seasons run in a cycle and there were signs of spring everywhere; they were perhaps just hard to see amongst the bleakness.

We will always find ourselves in places in our lives where it feels like winter – maybe even for very long periods of time. But we can find reassurance from the life and ministry of Jesus that hope is going to break through. We will flourish and thrive again. We will be able to find beauty and acceptance when we are faced with moving into a new season, and there will always be peace and stillness to find in times of sorrow. That is the good news of the gospel. We are never left or forsaken, whatever season we find ourselves in.

ACTION

- * Ask yourself where are you at the moment (spring/summer/autumn/winter?).
- * Using the items you collected earlier, pick up the one that represents where you are at right now (you can change the item to something else if you need to). Spend some time looking at it, investigating it.
- * Notice what thoughts/feelings/reactions you have as you reflect on this item. What is it saying to you right now?
- * If anyone is willing, give some time for individuals to share with the group.

PRAYER

- * If people are comfortable, open up the group to pray out loud for each other, particularly for those that have shared.
- * Finish the time with the breathing prayer (see Appendix 1). You may want to send this breathing prayer around for people to use it as a personal practice.

APPENDIX 1

A Breathing Prayer

(Credit: Christine Sine - <https://godspacelight.com/2009/02/16/a-breathing-prayer/>)

I suggest that people sit with their hands in their laps palm up while they say the first line and take a deep breath, then turn palms down and breathe out as they say the second line. The lines in bold can be recited by the whole group if you like.

Breathe in the breath of God.

Breathe out your cares and concerns.

Breathe in the love of God.

Breathe out your doubts and despairs.

Breathe in the life of God.

Breathe out your fears and frustrations.

We sit quietly before the One who gives life and love to all creation,

We sit in awe of the One who formed us in our mother's wombs,

We sit at peace surrounded by the One who fills every fibre of our being.

Breathe in the breath of God.

Breathe out your tensions and turmoil.

Breathe in the love of God.

Breathe out your haste and hurry.

Breathe in the life of God.

Breathe out your work and worry.

We sit quietly before the One who gives life and love to all creation,

We sit in awe of the One who formed us in our mother's wombs,

We sit at peace surrounded by the One who fills every fibre of our being.

SHARING JOY

WELCOME

Dice roll

Ask each person to choose a number between 1 and 6 by holding up the corresponding number of fingers. Roll a dice in front of the camera or you could use this online dice on a shared screen <https://www.online-stopwatch.com/chance-games/roll-dice-online/full-screen/>.

All those group members who chose the number that the dice lands on must stand up – they are ‘out’ of the game. The remaining group members choose another number, and you roll the dice again. Continue until you have a ‘winner’.

Try not to laugh

Recruit a volunteer who thinks they can keep a straight face. Challenge the rest of the group to try to make the volunteer laugh.

The story of Mr Happy

If you have time you could watch this short video (or you could email this link to your group members and ask them to watch it before the session):

Mr Happy – Books Read Aloud for Kids by Roger Hargreaves (4mins 54secs)

▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTqZ9OCR0Ok>

WORD

Remind your group about the theme of joy and your discussion points in Weeks 3 and 7.

Show the group this short video:

Why Oprah Believes in Sharing Joy – Oprah’s Lifeclass (Oprah Winfrey Network)

▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfWlyBA5lz4> (1min 31secs)

Ask: What experiences can you think of that would be better when shared with others? Can you share with us an experience you have had that became better when you shared it with someone else?

Allow time to discuss.

Say: Joy is something to be shared. A shared joy is a deeper joy. Oprah said that she has so much joy in her own life because she is always giving her joy away. Once you have joy – really have it – you can’t help but share it.

Christians of the New Testament Church were not known for their buildings or denominations or programmes. They were known for their joy.

They ate together in their homes, happy to share their food with joyful hearts. They praised God and were liked by all people.

Acts 2:46-47 (NCV)

These early Christians spread the good news and the love of Jesus wherever they went, and this brought joy to them and to others.

In Acts 13, for example, Paul and Barnabas travelled and ministered to people all over to make sure they understood that true joy could only be found in Jesus, and in doing so they were also filled with joy.

The word of the Lord spread through the whole region... And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 13:49,52

Again in Acts 15, we read that they spread joy with their stories of good news to all the believers they came into contact with.

They were sent on their way by the church; and as they went through Phoenicia and Samaria, they reported how the Gentiles had turned to God; this news brought great joy to all the believers.

Acts 15:3 (GNT)

We were not created to be alone but to be in community with others, and it is in our community and relationships with others that our joy can be deepened. In giving joy away, our own experience of joy increases. We may not be able to physically travel the world at the moment, but we can share the love of Jesus with family and friends right where we are. We share the joy by picking up on the command that Jesus gives: *'My command is this: love each other as I have loved you'* (John 15:12). And we can find joy, as the disciples did, in doing so.

Discuss: the following quote (an older group may be interested in discussing this, which you could screen share).

“ Sharing the joy will stretch any follower of Jesus. To share the joy may take us to unfamiliar places or people. These places or people may challenge our comfort level. We may witness a level of life and need that calls for our time, energy, and patience. There will also be considerable indifference and even hostility when we share the joy.

Yet folks who have taken the steps to share Christ's compassion in faraway places or right at home have no regrets about doing so. They catch the vision of demonstrating the care of Christ, not hesitating to go back to do more of the same. They do so, not because they thrive on inflicting hardship on themselves. Rather they are compelled to share the joy of the new life that Christ brings. They want to share it whatever the results or even the cost. They want to share the joy because Christ shared the joy by laying down his life for you and me, his friends.

Rev Fred Heslinga (<https://www.crcna.org/resources>)

ACTION

Refer back to the Mr Happy video if you have watched it.

Say: Mr Happy invited Mr Miserable into his house and into his life. He shared his joy and happiness with his new friend, and Mr Miserable's life was totally changed as he too experienced previously unknown joy for himself!

Activity: Ask group members to think about one person they could 'invite into their house' to share joy with, someone whom they would like to see experience a moment of joy. This could be someone who is going through a hard time right now, someone who doesn't know about the joy that Jesus brings us, someone who is always giving and serving others who could do with refilling.

Ask them to note down the person they are thinking of. Then encourage them to think of something that they could do for this person to bring them joy. This could be a nice surprise, something to help out, or something to make them laugh!

Get everyone to write down the people they have thought of, what they plan to do and when they will do it, preferably within the next week or two. Share together if appropriate.

Discuss some small practical ways in which you could share joy in your community. Maybe do a brainstorm and make a list together on the whiteboard.

Here are some examples:

- * When you are out walking or exercising, try to make eye contact and smile at everyone you pass. Keep a count of how many people smile back and report back to the group next time.

- * Paint some stones with joyful colours or messages, and then leave them around your community to make others smile.
- * Create a window display for your house to spread joy to all those who walk past – eg, posters, toys, flowers, positive words/phrases etc.
- * Make a short and fun video to share on your social media (is there a community Facebook page you could share it on?). How about creating one of those group videos where everyone throws and catches a paper ball, or dances to the same tune?

Challenge group members to pick one of the listed ideas to put into practice over the next couple of weeks.

PRAYER

- * Read the following Psalms to your group (display on your screen as well if you can).

I'm thanking you, God, from a full heart, I'm writing the book on your wonders. I'm whistling, laughing, and jumping for joy; I'm singing your song, High God.

Psalm 9:1-2 (MSG)

You made me so happy, God, I saw your work and I shouted for joy. How magnificent your work, God!

Psalm 92:4 (MSG)

Ask each group member to write their own sentences like these two taken from the Psalms. They could share it with the group using the chat function. Go around the group and ask each person to pray aloud their sentence. You have created your own psalm of joy!

If you have any artistic people in your group you could ask them to design a poster with their 'psalm of joy' after the session and then email it to everyone. Encourage group members to share the psalm on their social media somehow. If your corps/church is running online services, ask if you could share your psalm at the next meeting – you could even create a group video.

- * Split the group into their pairs and ask them to pray for each other – for increased love and joy, and for opportunities to share joy with others!
- * Pray this final blessing for your group:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

PERSPECTIVE

WELCOME

Ask all the young people to grab one object from their house. Doesn't matter what it is. When they are back, tell them they'll each have 30 seconds to come up with as many theoretical uses of the object as they can. (If you have more time or a smaller group you might want to give them 60 seconds.) Encourage them to be as creative as possible. For example, a tortilla wrap could be a meal, an umbrella, a Captain America shield, a tablecloth, the Earth, etc. The winner is the person who comes up with the most different uses.

Here is a story about how different people see things in a different way.

WORD

Read the following passage to the young people. Where indicated by [PAUSE], pause reading and ask the young people to act out the emotion/feeling that they think the person was experiencing at the time (this could be just using their face or their whole person). Pick one person from the group and ask the others to guess what emotion they think they were trying to act, then ask the actor to describe which emotion they were attempting to act and why they chose it, before you carry on reading.

Luke 7:36-39, 44-47 (CEV)

36 A Pharisee invited Jesus to have dinner with him. So Jesus went to the Pharisee's home and got ready to eat. [PAUSE]

37 When a sinful woman in that town found out that Jesus was there, she bought an expensive bottle of perfume. 38 Then she came and stood behind Jesus. She cried and started washing his feet with her tears and drying them with her hair. The woman kissed his feet and poured the perfume on them. [PAUSE]

39 The Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this and said to himself, 'If this man really were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him! He would know that she is a sinner.' [PAUSE]

...

44 He [Jesus] turned toward the woman and said to Simon, 'Have you noticed this woman? When I came into your home, you didn't give me any water so I could wash my feet. But she has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. 45 You didn't greet me with a kiss, but from the time I came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You didn't even pour olive oil on my head, but she has poured expensive perfume on my feet. 47 So I tell you that all her sins are forgiven, and that is why she has shown great love. But anyone who has been forgiven for only a little will show only a little love.' [PAUSE]

Say: One thing we can learn from this story is how Jesus sees things in a different way from many people. Instead of thinking 'This is awkward' or 'Oh no, if I hang about with her it will make me look bad' or 'That's a waste of perfume', Jesus instead sees the beauty in the situation. He then uses it as an opportunity to praise her for her act of love, and to challenge Simon's way of seeing the world and the people in it.

Discuss:

-  How do you think Jesus' praising the woman for her act of love would have made her feel, and why?
-  How might that have affected the woman's life and actions moving forward?
-  How might this experience have affected Simon's life and actions in the future?

ACTION

Say: Church planter and author Bev Murril would say that Jesus was 'Speaking Life' into the situation. By Jesus speaking words of love and life instead of focusing on the negatives, he changes the spiritual atmosphere in the room! Speaking Life doesn't mean you just ignore the bad stuff (Jesus still challenges Simon on his attitude, for example). It does mean you actively look for opportunities to encourage people, let people know they matter to you and show them they are valued and loved, until it becomes second nature. If you can do this, it can make a dramatic difference to the world around you and the people you spend time with.

Activity: Using the whiteboard function, the chat box (or a bit of paper), ask the young people to write up as many different places, groups of people, communities that they are a part of (eg, home, family, church, Facebook groups, Instagram, friendship groups, etc).

Discuss: What opportunities are there for you to 'Speak Life' into each of these over the next week?

PRAYER

Ask the young people to send a random message of encouragement to one person they know now (by text, Whatsapp, Instagram, Marco Polo... however they choose).

Give the young people a few minutes in silence to pray for that person and their situation, that they may feel loved and valued.