

cell outlines

DOING WHAT
GOD WANTS

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

MATTHEW 6:25-34 – DOING WHAT GOD WANTS

In this session we will be talking through our wants and God’s wants and how we need to give all our worries to God.

WELCOME

Tell your group to imagine they have one day when they could do whatever they want with unlimited money.

Ask: What would you do? Think through the following aspects of your day:

- * Where would you go?
- * Who would you spend the day with?
- * What activities would you do during the day?
- * What would you eat?
- * What would you buy?

Remember you only have 24 hours, so spend it well.

Additional activity: Show the following list using either the whiteboard function or a sheet of paper.

FAMILY	EDUCATION	COMPUTER
FRIENDSHIPS	FOOD	PET
MONEY	PHONE	YOUR FAITH

Ask your group to look at the following list of things and put them in order of importance in their life. Discuss the group’s orders.

WORD

1. Read Matthew 6:25-34 as a group.
2. Here are two ways you can think about worry in your own life and the lives of people around you:
 - ▶ Take a look at the image together and ask the group – what would you put into the thought bubbles as the things you have most worried about in the last year?
 - ▶ Have a quick read of the following BBC article which suggests that young people’s anxiety dropped because they were not in school.

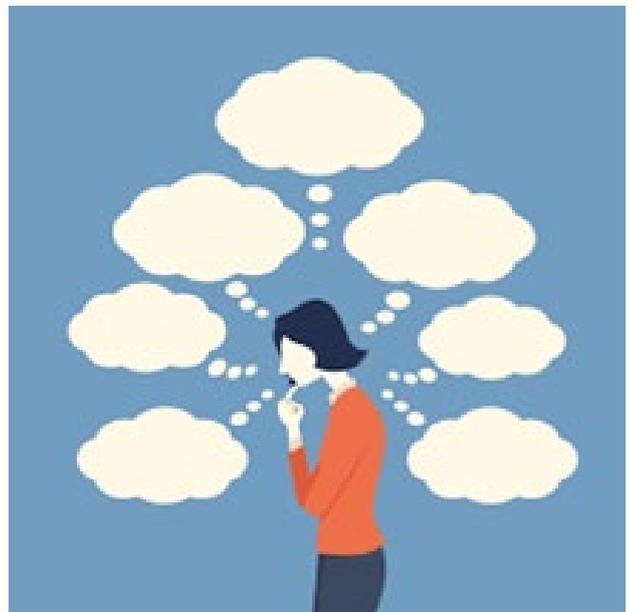
Ask: Why do you think that could be? What do you think contributes to anxiety at school?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53884401>

3. Group Discussion

Leaders notes:

- ▶ *Worry is such a common part of life, and in this past year as we have faced a ‘very worrying’ pandemic, things have become more difficult for people. Worry has taken an even bigger place in people’s lives.*
- ▶ *When Jesus uses the word ‘worry’ it means ‘anxiety’ or ‘being distracted’ or ‘caring about things’. Maybe when it means ‘caring for things’ it is suggesting that we are placing too much care over things that we do not need to worry about.*



SESSION ONE

- ▶ *Jesus speaks right into our lives by telling us that we do not need to worry. He reminds us that God is big enough to care of the entire world, using the example of him even caring about birds – and there are so many! Did you know there are 10,000 different species of birds? That doesn't even give us the total amount of birds in the world. In fact one scientist believes there are between 200 and 400 billion individual birds in the world! God tells us that they are valuable to him, and so imagine how much more valuable we are to him. That is a mind-boggling thought!*
- ▶ *Jesus mentions three things that people might be worried about - what they eat, what they drink and what they wear. Jesus is telling us that in the basic things of life that we need to survive, he will provide for us. One way to counteract worry is to be thankful; and one thing that we can be thankful for today is the fact that we probably do have enough to eat, drink and wear.*
- ▶ *The pandemic of the last year probably gave us a bit of a shock, as at times food items or other necessities ran out quickly in the shops. In our western world this was not something we are used to and so at times it caused 'panic buying' and fear for people that they would not have enough. Maybe this gave us a tiny hint of how many people around the world have to live, and hopefully that will encourage us to be thankful for what we have.*
- ▶ *Jesus teaches us in this passage that the most important thing in life is to seek after him and to seek righteousness which can be described as 'right living'. If we do that, Jesus says he will provide all the other things that we need.*

You may want to reread the passage with your group and use any of the following questions to discuss the Bible passage:

- 🗨️ In the passage that you read, choose one line that stands out to you. What is it about it that stands out?
- 🗨️ Would you describe yourself as a 'worrier'? Why, or why not?
- 🗨️ What sort of things do you tend to worry about?
- 🗨️ Why do you think it's so easy to fall into the trap of worry?
- 🗨️ How do you think you can ensure that worry doesn't become a large part of your life?
- 🗨️ What do you think it means to 'seek first God's Kingdom and righteousness' – what practical things do you think you could do to ensure you are doing that?

Additional activity: So much of our worries are connected to our thought life. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says:

'...we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.'

Encourage the young people to think about how they can 'take thoughts captive' in practical ways. Here are some ways they could do this:

- * Keep a 'thought' log – encourage young people to use a journal to write down what they are thinking about during the day – review at the end of the week. How positive or negative were their thoughts? How many of their thoughts were about worry?
- * Find some encouraging Bible passages that speak about trusting in God; print them off and put them somewhere in your bedroom where you see them every day.
- * Every time you find yourself worrying, stop yourself and choose to think about why you do not need to worry about that thing.

WORSHIP

Listen to the following song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUn76R_OFuM (8mins 56secs)

- * While you are listening, write down on a bit of paper or on your phone ten things you are thankful for.
- * Reflect on the words of the song (below). What stands out to you and why does it mean something to you personally?

In the morning you sing over me
 And I receive your mercy
 Your faithfulness is clear to see
 It's constant every day

In the morning you sing over me
 I receive your mercy
 Your faithfulness is clear to see
 It's like the sunrise
 Constant every day

Every breath I breathe an invitation
 To believe you are creating
 Something good
 Though this season doesn't tell my story
 I know you'll move mountains for me
 You're just that good

So I'll give thanks to God
 When I don't have enough
 'Cause he's more than enough
 And he knows what I need

In the silence, I choose to believe
 You're working in the waiting
 Though the future isn't clear to me, no,
 I trust you anyway

So why do I worry?
 Why do I worry?
 Why do I worry?
 God knows what I need

© Jonathan Jay, Kirby Kaple, Tony Brown (Housefires - 'I'll give thanks')

Additional activity: Take some time to write a letter to God expressing what you are grateful for. Try to think of as many things as possible, being very specific about your gratitude. You might like to each share your letters, reading them aloud as a prayer to God.

ACTION

Each person will need:

- * sticky note
- * a pen
- * two jars (or any similar receptacle)

Label one jar 'worry jar' and the other 'gratitude jar'. Throughout the week, reflect on what you are worrying about and write each worry on a sticky note. Fold up the note and put it in the worry jar. Whenever you put a worry in the worry jar, make sure you write on separate sticky notes TWO things you are thankful for. Fold them up and put them in the gratitude jar. At the end of the week, empty the worry jar into the bin. Over the coming weeks you should build up lots of sticky notes in your gratitude jar. From time to time, take a look at what you wrote in the gratitude jar to encourage you.

Additional activity: Consider how you can help your friends when it comes to worry. As a group share some of your biggest worries and take time praying for each other. Encourage the group to think through how they could help each other and also other friends in the area of worry.

LUKE 22:39-46 – BE WILLING

In this session we will talk through how important our relationship with God is especially when things get tough around us and how we can better understand what God is saying to us through his word.

WELCOME

Tell your group: You are going on a long holiday in a beautiful location, but you are only allowed to take ten items with you in your suitcase. What would they be and why?

Link this to how there are so many things that often become important to us, but the thing that should have a huge place in our lives is the Bible.

Additional activity: Have five different random objects, eg a saucepan, a wooden spoon, a pillow, a shoe etc. Show one at a time and get everyone in the group to come up with a different use for it. For example, a wooden spoon could be a baby's guitar or a fly swatter.

Tell the group that you will be speaking about the Bible today and how it has many different uses that it facilitates. For example, the Bible has poems or songs in it to encourage us when we are down, it gives instruction to show us how to live, or it guides us when we don't know which way to go.

WORD

1. Read Luke 22:39-46 as a group

Leader's notes:

- ▶ *Jesus was in the middle of a very difficult time in his life. He knew he was soon to be crucified. You can only imagine how painful a thought that would be! So Jesus takes his closest friends, some of his disciples, and goes to the Mount of Olives. This place is mentioned a number of times in the Gospels so was clearly a regular place Jesus went to.*
- ▶ *Often when we are going through difficult times, the place we want to be is somewhere that is 'comfortable' or feels like home. Jesus went to this place with those closest to him. Again, when we are facing tough stuff we want to be around people we trust and are close to.*
- ▶ *Jesus withdrew so that he could have some time alone, although not too far from his friends. He begins to speak to his Father God. We can tell how painful this time was for Jesus from words like 'anguish' in the passage.*
- ▶ *There is a key phrase in the midst of this very painful time that Jesus uses to say to God. He says, 'Yet not my will, but yours be done.' Even though Jesus' human nature does not want to go through this painful time, he makes it clear that ultimately he wants to do what God wants. What a fantastic attitude!*

Say: Jesus was in perfect union with his Father God, and although times were difficult he chose to live close to God's heart and to do what God wanted. One of the ways we can stay close to God other than prayer is through reading his word in order for us to find strength and hope in him. The Bible is vital to our relationship with God as it is full of his words to us. It's the way we can hear his voice and understand what he wants for us. Psalm 119:105 says, 'Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.'

2. To help you get started on reading the Bible or digging deeper, watch the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ak06MSETeo4> (5mins 47secs)

Discuss the following questions:

- 🗣️ What do you think are some of the barriers to reading the Bible?
- 🗣️ Why do you think reading the Bible when you are going through difficult times is a good thing to do?
- 🗣️ What do you personally find difficult about reading the Bible?
- 🗣️ What does reading the Bible look like for you?

Additional activity: How much do you know about the Bible?

Quiz your group to see how many of the following questions they could answer ...

- Q1: How many books are in the whole Bible? (A: 66)
- Q2: What languages was the Bible originally written in? (A: Hebrew, Greek and small part in Aramaic)
- Q3: How many authors wrote the Bible? (A: At least 40)
- Q4: What is the shortest verse in the Bible? (A: 'Jesus wept' – John 11:35)
- Q5: What are the first four words in the Bible? (A: 'In the beginning God')
- Q6: How many languages has the full Bible been translated into? (A: 704 as of 2020)
- Q7: What is the longest book in the Bible? (A: Jeremiah)
- Q8: What book of the Bible does not mention God? (A: Esther)
- Q9: How many copies of the Bible are sold each year? (A: 100 million)
- Q10: What are the names of the four Gospels? (A: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)

WORSHIP

Play some music in the background while your group works through the following five questions to come up with a plan for getting into the Bible. You can guide them with the responses below:

1. **WHERE** would be a good place for you to spend time with God, especially reading the Bible?
Think of a place where you won't be disturbed and where you feel comfortable.
2. **WHEN** would be a regular time in the day that you could read the Bible?
Think about the type of person you are. Do you like early mornings? Or are you a 'night owl'? Pick a time that works best for you!
3. **HOW LONG** should you spend reading the Bible each day?
This is entirely up to you, but try to plan this and build it up. If you are not used to spending time with God, start small, maybe for ten minutes, and build it up each day.
4. **WHAT** should I start by reading?
There are so many options here, but if you are new to Bible reading, start with the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John) or the Psalms. There are tons of great Bible plans on the YouVersion Bible app.
5. **HELP!** I don't understand what I'm reading!!
Is there a youth leader, parent or friend who might be able to help you? Don't be afraid to ask questions! As a side note, the BibleProject has loads of videos that you can check out about the different books in the Bible. They are helpful and easy to understand.

Additional activity: Ask your group to take one verse from the Bible that means something to them. If they are struggling, they could use Psalm 27:1. Using the verse, they can create one of the following:

- * A picture board to represent the word. For example, if using Psalm 27:1 you might have a picture of a bright light or a castle to represent a 'stronghold'.
- * Draw what comes to mind to do with this verse.
- * Create a mind map of what comes to mind when you think about this verse - for example, when it describes God as 'light' it may make you think of a bright sunny day or a lamp that lights up your room.
- * Try to write the verse in emoticons or emojis!

Encourage young people through doing this to consider how imagining the verse in picture form helps us to understand better what God may be saying to us through his word.

ACTION

Get each member of the group to come up with a plan for reading their Bible this week and share with the group so that they can check in on each other. Here are a few suggestions:

- * Download the YouVersion app, choose a plan and read it each day.
- * Set a reminder on your phone for every day this week to spend ten minutes with the Bible.
- * Pick a theme and spend this week finding out what the Bible says about it. It could be something you are struggling with or just a topic you have an interest in.
- * Set up a Whatsapp/messaging group with a few friends and agree to text in each day what you have read and one thing that has stood out to you.
- * Contact Youth and Children's ministries to get free copies of [Inside Out](#), a guide to understanding the Bible.

Additional activity: Using a program on your computer, an app on your phone or a piece of paper, create some artwork using a favourite Bible verse or a verse that you think could bring encouragement to others. Either frame it and give to someone as an encouragement, send a picture of it to someone or post it on your social media outlets.

N.B

Within The Salvation Army, today is Candidates Sunday. For a specific youth resource written for this day please follow this link [Candidates Sunday](#)

ACTS 1:1-14 – GOD IS WORKING IN THE WAITING

WELCOME

The talking challenge (like radio's Just a Minute) – give someone from the group a random topic that they have to talk about continuously for one minute. If there are any gaps in their talking they are 'out' and the topic moves on to the next person. Some examples of 'talking topics' could be: 'a tree', 'toilet roll', 'pizza', 'guinea pigs'. The idea of the game is to get young people talking creatively.

This week we are talking about prayer and the importance of talking to God. Sometimes we may talk to God and wonder if he can hear us or is answering us. Whether or not we feel we have an immediate answer to our prayers, it's important to keep bringing our requests and feelings to him.

Additional activity: Watch the below video about prayer:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVHUx_EjnUs (2mins 18secs)

WORD

1. Read Acts 1:1-14

Leaders notes:

- ▶ *In this passage we see Jesus' last moments with his disciples before he goes back to Heaven. It must have been amazing to have Jesus with you in person all the time. If you needed to ask him something he was right there to answer. The disciples were with him every day, learning from him, asking questions and seeing him do miracles. It must have been difficult as they realised he would not be with them in person any longer as he was going back to Heaven. The exciting thing was that he promised to leave help! Although a lot of our help comes through the Bible, Jesus promises us the Holy Spirit to help guide us as well.*
- ▶ *Jesus tells the disciples that they must wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit. Waiting can be difficult! In these past months we have had to do a lot of waiting – waiting in line at the supermarket, for example. Waiting when it is sunny is not too bad, but waiting outside in the wind and rain is not fun. We have also had to wait for announcements to know when we can come out of lockdown and see people again. Waiting for this has not been easy because we are made to be in community. Sometimes when it comes to praying, waiting is something we have to learn. We may bring prayer requests before God and he doesn't answer straight away.*
- ▶ *Acts 1:14 says, 'They all joined together constantly in prayer ...' Prayer was important in the waiting as we can see from the disciples. Jesus may not have been in person with them any more but they were able to speak to him through prayer while they were waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit. The great thing about the Holy Spirit is that he helps us to pray. Romans 8:26 says, 'In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.' This is telling us that sometimes we may not know what to pray or how to pray but the Holy Spirit is there to help us. What a great promise!*

2. Here are a few questions to discuss around the above passage:

- 🗣️ Jesus told the disciples to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit. What are some things you have been praying for that you are waiting for an answer to?
- 🗣️ How easy or hard do you find it to pray?
- 🗣️ When you pray, what do you normally pray about?
- 🗣️ Do you ever pray in a group of people? If yes, who with? What does praying with people look like for you?

3. There are lots of different types of praying or ways to pray. Look at the following ways of praying ...

- * **WORSHIP** – this is the way we give praise to God for who he is. Sometimes our praying can be bogged down in just asking for what we want, but a great way to ensure that doesn't happen is to pray by worshipping. This could simply be saying back to God something about who he is – 'God, you are my provider! God you are amazing! God,

SESSION
THREE

you are powerful.' This helps to take the focus off our own wants and needs and put them on to God.

- * **THANKFULNESS** - This is another way we can take our eyes off our problems and focus on God. It may be good to do this at the beginning of praying so that it doesn't put undue focus on our wants.
- * **CONFESSION** - this is saying sorry. You may want to think through your week. What things do you need to bring before God to say sorry for – maybe wrong attitudes or thinking, or ways you have treated people that has not been in line with the way Jesus would treat people?
- * **INTERCESSION** - this is praying for others. Maybe you can think of friends or family members who need specific prayer at the moment. Pray to God for them.
- * **PETITION** - bringing your own prayers before God. What are some things in your own life that you can ask God's help for?

Additional activity: Jesus teaches us how to pray by using what we call 'The Lord's Prayer' which can be found in Matthew 6:9-13. Take a look at it and look for the different types of prayer:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For yours is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
for ever. Amen.**

Using either the whiteboard function or a large printed copy, the group could highlight in different colours where you find worship, thankfulness, confession, intercession and petition.

WORSHIP

We can sometimes find praying hard. So it is helpful to use practical things to help us pray. There are so many ways you can do this. If you are meeting your group, here is one idea:

Use a football (maybe an old one that you don't want any more). Have everyone in the group write on the football using a Sharpie. They need to each write two things they are praying for: maybe a petition and an intercession - ie a prayer for themselves and a prayer for someone they know. It could be something like a friend who is sick or a family member who is looking for a job. Make sure you put the name of the person and the need. For yourself it could be something that you are struggling with, eg 'Please help me not to live with fear' or 'Please help me with my upcoming exams'. Again, be sure to put your name. Stand in a circle and throw the ball to each other. The one who catches it looks at the first request in front of them and prays out loud for that person and their request.

Additional activity: On your phone, have somewhere where you can 'text' God. This could be in your notes app or something similar. Type out prayers using the different types of prayer as a guide - worship, thankfulness, confession, intercession, petition. Or you could write a prayer on paper or card. Sometimes we think we need to use special language to talk to God but talking to him is just like talking to a friend. When you write your letter or text, try to use normal language to help it be more real.

ACTION

Create a prayer wall in your bedroom, perhaps inside your wardrobe door. Ideally have different coloured paper or sticky notes that you could use for the different types of prayer. You may not want to include 'confession' as that may be very personal between you and God, but use the other types of prayer. Once a week, write out a prayer for worship, thankfulness, intercession and petition on a different colour for each. Put it into your wardrobe. Every time you go to get clothes out take a few moments to pray for the things you have written down. You could even create a section called 'answered prayers' where you can move those sticky notes where God has answered. This will create even more 'thankfulness' prayers!

Additional activity: Playing card prayers. This can be done online or in person. Each person will need coloured pens and an old deck of cards. Or you can buy a cheap deck of cards. If you have a small group you may choose to give each member a set of cards. Each deck has 52 cards. Take some different coloured Sharpie pens and write on the cards the following:

- * On five cards, write five things you are thankful for.
- * On ten cards, write the names of ten family members.
- * On ten cards, write the names of ten friends.
- * On five cards, write the word 'sorry'.
- * On five cards, write five words of worship. You could say, 'Jesus, you are my _____' and fill in the blank with things like 'friend' 'provider' 'help' etc.
- * On five cards, write names of five world issues that are a problem right now, eg racism, sexism, climate etc.
- * On ten cards, write personal prayers – things that you are personally asking God for.
- * The final two cards are random. You could even write 'random' on them and when you pick them you can choose anything to pray for.

Shuffle the cards, and every day pick a few and take a few minutes to pray for the ones you have picked.

ACTS 2:43-47 - TRUST IN CHRIST

WELCOME

Today is all about community and the importance of this for Christians. In the early Church the followers of Jesus would often gather around a table to eat together. Hospitality was important. This has evolved into the communion service or 'Lord's Table' practised by many churches today.

Today you are encouraged to share a meal together. This may mean bringing your own food or bringing a takeaway (to keep in with COVID guidelines). Or if you are online, you may want to bake a cake and show it on screen. The meal table is an important place for family and friends to gather, so try to find a way to do this even if it is virtual. When you look through the Gospels, Jesus can often be found sharing a meal with people while asking or answering questions.

As you have a meal together, use a 'random question jar' to help with conversation. Prepare 20 to 30 random questions on pieces of paper folded into the jar. They can range from being very random like 'Your favourite chocolate bar?' or 'If you could be any animal what would you be and why?' Or they can go a little deeper asking questions like 'What have you found the hardest in this past year?' See below for 20 questions you could use – but feel free to come up with your own. You could also encourage the young people to put in their own questions.

1. If you could go to any country in the world right now, what would it be?
2. What is your favourite meal?
3. What is your most embarrassing moment?
4. If you could have anyone from history to your house for dinner, who would it be?
5. Who is your best friend and what is special about them?
6. What is your favourite subject at school?
7. If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
8. If you could have any job in the world, what would it be?
9. If you had to change your name, what would you change it to?
10. What the your favourite thing that you own?
11. What has been the hardest thing about being in lockdown?
12. Who in your family do you get on with the most?
13. If you had to change one thing about your character, what would it be?
14. When was the last time you cried?
15. If you were stuck on a desert island with five other people, who would they be?
16. Where is one place in the world you'd like to visit in the future?
17. What do you find hardest about being a Christian?
18. What are you scared of?
19. Who do you trust the most?
20. What are your biggest worries?

Additional activity: As a group, take it in turns to share the story of how you became a Christian. Think through the following questions as you discuss:

- 🗣️ Who had an impact on your decision to become a Christian?
- 🗣️ When did you first realise you believed in God?
- 🗣️ What brought you to the point of deciding to follow Jesus?
- 🗣️ How did your life change after becoming a Christian?

WORD

1. Read Acts 2:42-47

Leaders notes:

- ▶ *We see in this passage the start of the early Church and particularly the importance of community. It uses key words:*
 - *'they devoted themselves' (v42) - this wasn't just an individual but a group activity.*
 - *fellowship - which could be understood as meaning 'all the fellows in the ship!' The word actually means friendly association of people with common interests.*
 - *'Everyone was filled with awe.' Again this wasn't one person's story but a whole group of people.*
 - *The key verse is verse 44 when it says, 'All the believers were together and had everything in common.'*
- ▶ *Community is so important for us as human beings. We find community in all sorts of different ways. In one sense, family is a community of people who have a common background. Your friendships make up an important community in your life. The place you live in is a community of people. Your corps is a community of people with common interests and beliefs. Community is a vital part of life.*
- ▶ *What has been especially difficult in this last year has been not being able to meet people. Although we are extremely grateful for technology so that we can still FaceTime or other video calls, it is not the same as sitting around a table with people, enjoying their company. When it comes to us as Christians, community is vital as it can help us grow in faith and remain encouraged. This was as important in the early Church as it is right now. Verse 46 tells us that people 'continued to meet together'. The result of this was 'glad and sincere hearts' that praised God.*
- ▶ *The last verse in the passage tells us that more and more people were added to this community. When a community is good and healthy, people want to join it because everyone wants good community. Sometimes it can feel easier to try to isolate ourselves and hide away from people when we are going through difficult times, but this isn't the best thing to do. We need others in both the good and bad times of life.*

Use these questions to discuss the Bible passage that you read today:

- 🗨 Verse 44 says the believers 'had everything in common'. What do you think this was referring to? What were the things they now had in common?
- 🗨 What do you have in common with other Christian friends that might be different from your non-Christian friends?
- 🗨 Verse 45 tells us that they shared with people in need. What can this look like for you in your context? How do you or can you share with people in need?
- 🗨 Why do you think it is so important to meet together as Christians?

Additional activity: Look at the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. In this story Jesus talks around the question of 'Who is my neighbour?' and encourages us to think beyond those who are similar to us. In the text we see a Jew helping a Samaritan. This might be hard for us to fully understand in our culture today, but in the times that this was set there was huge hatred between Jews and Samaritans. They had differing beliefs on their history and this had caused huge tension between them. Jesus broke down these tensions by sharing this story. When it comes to community we can be tempted to be friends only with those who are similar to us. But the Kingdom of God is made up of every kind of person. Consider the following questions to think through the communities you are part of:

- 🗨 How could you bridge the gap to people of other ethnicities from yourself?
- 🗨 How can you bridge the gap to people who are poorer than you are?
- 🗨 How can you bridge the gap to people of other faiths without compromising your own faith?
- 🗨 How can you show kindness and love to people who are different from you?
- 🗨 How can you build community towards people who have a different background or different life experiences from you?

Consider the power of asking questions. Questions that are asked with the right heart can break down barriers and build bridges towards people who are different from you.

WORSHIP

Listen to the following song 'This is our story' and consider the words. They are talking of a shared story we all have of Jesus saving us. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_1C06hwEGwk (5mins 45secs)

Vous Worship This is our story - lyrics

The Word, the Word became flesh
 Traded Heaven's glory, Messiah of the mess
 He is hope and forgiveness
 Shepherd of the restless, heals our brokenness

I, surrender all I am to you
 God, forever I am yours

The wonder of the cross holds the power of our peace
 The Father's heart revealed on Calvary
 Emmanuel, forever God with us
 The world has never seen a greater love

Life, given to us
 Grace that never ends, oh, truth that never bends
 He is light in the darkness
 For the lonely and the lost, he will always be enough
 For the lonely and the lost, he will always be enough

Sing it out now, this is our story
 Sing it out now, this is our reason why
 King Jesus, our Saviour
 The way, the truth, the life
 Sing it loud now, give him all glory
 Sing it loud now, this is our freedom cry
 Forever, our Saviour

Practise sharing your story of how you came to faith with someone else in the group. Remember, community is important, but we should always ensure others can join that community. One way this can happen is by sharing your story with others. Consider when sharing this that you are making sense to someone who may not have a Christian background. Consider what words you are using and how it relates to them.

Additional activity: Consider your own community. Who fits into the following categories? Do you have enough people in each category?

CLOSE FRIENDS – Consider those who are really close to you, who know you really well. These people will know when you have great things happening in your life and when you are going through a tough time. They will always come to your birthday party or will always text to check you are OK. Who would be in this group of friends? Are you being a good friend to them as they are to you? Do you have enough people in this group? It can be easy to isolate ourselves rather than let others in. You should have at least three friends in this group.

MEDIUM TO CLOSE FRIENDS - Consider those who are not really close but whom you may see quite often. Who would sit in this group? How can you become closer to them? How can you show kindness to people in this group?

ON THE FRINGE FRIENDS - Consider people who are not close to you at all but who are simply your acquaintances. What influence do these people have on your life, if any? Sometimes those we are not close to can nevertheless have an undue influence on us. Are there any people in this group whom it would be good to build towards?

WITNESS OR ACTION

Think about the people who help you grow in your faith ...

Youth Leader / Mentor / Someone older than you

Think about three people who help you grow in your faith. If you don't have anybody, come up with three people this week who are further on in their faith than you, and ask them some questions to help you grow:

1. What do you do to get closer to Jesus?
2. What one tip would you give on reading the Bible?
3. What one tip would you give on praying?

Ask these people to look out for you and help you become a better Christian. It may feel strange asking someone to do this, but more experienced Christians will be happy to help you.

Close Friends

Think about two close friends who believe the same as you. Together think about how you can encourage each other in your faith this week. Here are a few ideas:

- * Message each other every day letting each other know what you are reading in the Bible.
- * Ask your friends what you can be praying for them about.
- * Ensure you are there for your friends when things are hard – send them an encouraging message or call.

Additional activity: Encouragement cards. If you are meeting in person, give everyone in the group some paper. On the top of the paper in the middle ask them to write their name. Then they need to pass the paper to the person next to them. That person needs to write something encouraging about the person whose name is at the top of the paper. Once they have written something, fold the paper so that no one can see what is written and pass on to the next person. They then too write something encouraging. This is passed round the whole group until everyone has written something and the papers have returned to the original writers.

Ask someone to read out what has been written. Everyone should come away encouraged, and everyone can keep their papers. You can also do this activity using the Whiteboard function on Zoom, having everyone type their message – it will just take a lot longer as you'll go person by person.