



CHANGE

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



INTRODUCTION

YCMU's All Terrain Podcast explores Alexander Shaia's Quadratos – an ancient, but new to us, way of looking at the Gospels. Written about in 'Heart and Mind,' Shaia suggests that each Gospel is written to a particular question. Matthew asks, how do we face change? Mark, how do we move through suffering? John, how do we receive joy? And finally Luke, how do we mature in service? As we face a global pandemic, we have seen all four questions become significant to us all. Our dedication is to help our young people in how they do discipleship; when everything has changed, when suffering feels all around us, when joy feels far away and when service looks like never before.

Before starting we would recommend listening to a few episodes of the All Terrain Podcast to give you a better and deeper understanding of this framework. You can find it on most podcast platforms. Click for direct links on [iTunes](#), [Spotify](#) and [Podbean](#).

The special edition episode with Alexander Shaia would be an excellent listen as you prepare yourself to delve into these questions with your young people, available [here](#).

Reading through each session well in advance will give you time and space to ensure you are comfortable with the technology you choose to use and make sure you and your young people have everything you need to participate.



ALL CHANGE!

WELCOME

Ask the group to be honest and confess if they still have any mountains of unused toilet rolls, foods or other things they or their family may have prepared for the lockdown. (Has anyone been 'choc-piling' on sale Easter eggs?) Ask the group members to share a photo of any stashes they still have in their house, then more seriously to talk about how they as a family prepared for the last few weeks.

Split into pairs using the 'breakout rooms'. Ask the pairs to discuss what they found most useful in their preparation that they have used loads of over the past few weeks, and what they really wish they had done in the limited time to get ready.

When everyone is back together, state that change comes suddenly and unexpectedly, and we are often shocked at the speed at which it can happen.

WORD

Display the following Scripture on a whiteboard for all to see. It is the story of John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus. Read this aloud together.

While Jesus was living in the Galilean hills, John, called 'the Baptiser', was preaching in the desert country of Judea. His message was simple and austere, like his desert surroundings: 'Change your life. God's kingdom is here.'

John and his message were authorised by Isaiah's prophecy:

**Thunder in the desert!
Prepare for God's arrival!
Make the road smooth and straight!**

Matthew 3:1-3 MSG

How we prepared for the lockdown will have affected our experience of it. But making roads smooth and straight is a big job and requires a lot of heavy lifting. Imagine building a motorway through mountains; there are bridges to build and tunnels to dig.

What needs smoothing or preparing for in our own lives to find Jesus' Kingdom in the quiet centre of all that we are currently experiencing?

ACTION

Discuss with the group: How do we face change when everything has changed? There will have been shock/loss and we may even have had denial that it was happening. (When northern Italy closed in February, did we think the UK would be closed within just a few weeks, or did we ignore it?) What has been the hardest thing about the change? What has helped the most to cope with the change?

'So the world has shut down and we have nothing to compare this to. The invitation to change arrived suddenly and unexpectedly right in the middle of our ordinary everyday life.' Alexander John Shaia speaking in the All Terrain Podcast calls this the question of the first spiritual path for all of us. *'Five minutes ago my life had some sort of normalcy and now everything is disrupted.'*

For some people their lives will be turned upside down at the moment as they experience huge grief and loss, while others of us will simply be mildly inconvenienced.

What can you do in this time of huge change that WE have never experienced before to create something new YOU

SESSION ONE

have never done before? Music / art / a practical way of helping your neighbour? Think about it individually and then all share together and commit to doing at least one thing during the week. (Revisit this next week.)

PRAYER

Find some pictures of rainbows in house windows (or take some photos while you exercise).

Share them with the group, and remind them that in the book of Genesis the rainbow was a symbol of God's promise that he would not destroy the earth again, and now it stands as a sign of hope in this time.

Allow some quiet time to listen to God and reflect on the hope of grace that Jesus brings us as we seek his Kingdom in our communities. After some silence, encourage the group to share their prayers.

If you have time, put the group back into their pairs and ask them to pray a prayer of hope for each other.

FINDING A NEW RHYTHM

WELCOME

Funky Changing Room (for example see Appendix 1)

Using Zoom, position the windows of the group's webcams so that you capture a different person's head, body and legs vertically like in the children's books that mix up head, body and legs. (Do this by challenging the young people to stand/sit so only their head/body/legs are visible on the camera.) Hats and fun costumes are optional. Direct them so you get a mixed-up picture of the group with as many side by side as you can and screen capture it for them and share. (Nine people will give you three mixed-up people, but you can do it with as few as two or three if you change the shape of the window to vertical and replace the head on a body or use different feet.)

Do ensure you observe standard safeguarding practices, eg make sure participants are fully clothed.

Say: Sometimes we just want to change our look. You may get a new haircut (or a lockdown shaved head!) or try different styles of clothes. When we change something, the old look is gone; we've lost something but the new has come.

WORD

Display the following Scripture on a whiteboard/screenshare for all to see, and ask for a volunteer to read.

Jesus arrested

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: 'The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.' Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him.

Jesus replied, 'Do what you came for, friend.'

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

Matthew 26:47-50

Say: This is a key verse for us in the Gospel of Matthew, but doesn't it seem strange?

Jesus has just called the person who is betraying him a 'friend'! Could you do the same? Have friends ever let you down? Have you ever been betrayed or denied but then you've made up / forgiven them? How does that change your relationship with each other?

Often we make up and our friendship is deeper, stronger. The issue showed us that our friendships can withstand challenges.

Although the coronavirus has brought terrible suffering and disruption, how do we come to terms with the world as it is now? What do we think Jesus would be saying about the current crisis?

We can get an idea from the passage above. Jesus accepted the nature of his betrayal that came from a friend, so he could reveal the Father's glory.

“ ‘we don't have to treat the virus as a friend. However, the change that it has brought is something we can accept or even embrace. We can learn to live in a new rhythm for this short time of our lives. It will only be a small fraction of our lives even if it seems a long time at the moment.’

Alexander Shaia

ACTION

Over the past few weeks we have all experienced loss in different ways. We will consider how to create new rhythms in these times of change, as we adjust to what we are familiar with, and with all the uncertainty in the future.

Say: What actions and routines have you adopted? Have you been doing daily Joe Wicks workouts? Or other exercise such as walking / cycling / running outside? Maybe seeing places on foot you normally only rush past in the car or on the bus? Many people find that exercise has helped to protect their wellbeing.

By tuning into the deeper rhythms, we have seen progress as spring turns into summer and we are aware of how the world continues to change and thrive even while we may feel that our lives are on pause. As we notice and are aware of these, our thankfulness helps to drive out fear. You can't have both emotions of thankfulness and fear at the same time.

Show the group some pictures you have taken of things you are thankful for from this week, using screen share.

Ask: What are you going to do this week as part of your routine to help you take notice and be thankful?

Challenge the group to take one picture each day of something or someone they are thankful for and share on their social media every day this week.

Say: Commit to taking time outside every day if you can (following the NHS guidelines around exercise and distancing). Looking, listening and feeling the changes we and our world are experiencing can help us process what is going on from a different perspective which can be very powerful in our relationship with God.

PRAYER

We don't know when we are going to return to 'normal'. There is no way we can plan for the future as we don't know when that will be. While continued distancing measures mean we are unable to be fully sociable as we may desire, 'are we going to treat social isolating as a prison or a monastery?' (Alexander Shaia)

As a group share a few quick prayers of thanks that are evidence that God has not forgotten us.

In a monastery there is a regular form (rule) of prayer, three or more times a day. (Benedictine monks have eight times of prayer a day.) Pray in groups of three using breakout rooms and agree at least one time you will pray for each other every day this week. Share your prayer requests for the future and set an alarm on your phone with the other two people's prayer requests. Pray them now.

IDEA OF FUNKY CHANGING ROOM



729 Merry Mix-ups by Helen Oxenbury (1980)

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

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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.