

Connect

January – June 2014

Adult and Family Ministries
Resource Material

Helping-Hand
APPEAL 2014



Human
trafficking
distorts beauty,
snatches away
innocence and
preys on the
vulnerable.



Captivated

Get
captivated by
the injustice
and proclaim
freedom.



'The Lord... has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from
darkness for the prisoners.'

Isaiah 61:1 NIV

START FUNDRAISING NOW:

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/captivated



WOMEN'S MINISTRIES 2014

'You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience'

Colossians 3:12 (GNB)

NEW YEAR 2014



Dear Sisters in Christ

As we move into 2014, I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year and pray God's blessing on the days that lie ahead. Whilst we do not know all that the year ahead will hold, may we, in the words of Corrie ten Boom, 'Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God'. Through the indwelling of God's Spirit we are gifted with all the grace and strength we require for 2014!

'**You are Loved**' is the theme for Women's Ministries this year and was inspired by Colossians 3:12: 'You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.' I was given further confirmation of the theme as I listened to the beautiful words, penned by Yvonne Field, and sung by the songsters at the corps:

*You are loved, child of God, don't you know you are loved?
Will you believe in him, and take him at his word?*

This message of hope is for everyone. Whatever your circumstances accept his immeasurable love, share it with others and demonstrate it in your life. There is only one certainty for 2014 – God loves you!

It is my prayer that women around the world will discover the unconditional love of God.

With my warmest greetings

Silvia Cox
Commissioner
WORLD PRESIDENT OF
WOMEN'S MINISTRIES



The Salvation Army Territorial Headquarters

OFFICE OF THE TERRITORIAL PRESIDENT OF WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

January 2014

To: Adult & Family Ministries Group Leaders

Dear Friends

'Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.'

These words are the opening verse of Psalm 136 and the phrase 'His love endures forever' is repeated in each verse as the psalmist outlines the historical events in the life of the Jewish people. Throughout their history he highlights the fact that God's love is evident in good times as well as in hardship and crisis.

Some years ago I stood next to a non-church goer who had come to see his family take part in a Sunday morning meeting. As the service proceeded with songs and prayers etc, my neighbour burst out, 'I can't believe how much your songs and talks are mentioning the word love. You could just as well have sung some of the love songs that are so popular.' He was right in some ways, but the songs shared during the meeting were directing our thoughts to God's love for people. Someone has described the Bible as God's love letter to human kind as it tells of a God who loves so much, and is keen for us all to know that love for ourselves.

The international theme for 2014 is '**You are loved**'. I am sure this message is close to the heart of all the leaders of our Adult and Family Ministries groups and gatherings, and one which you will share during 2014. Thank you so much for all you have done and for all you will do in the New Year to share God's love with the people in your corps and community.

I believe that this issue of '*Connect*' that has been prepared for you by a great team will be a wonderful resource as you share the message of God's love.

Warm Christian greetings from

Marianne Adams

Commissioner

Territorial President of Women's Ministries

You are loved

Based on Colossians 3:16

C **G/B** **Am**

Moderato ♩ = 80

May the word of Christ, The rich word of Christ Live in your hearts and make you

Em **G** **Am** **Dm**

wise. Speak his words, sing his songs, It's to him all praise be -

G(sus4) **G** **C** **G/B** **Am**

- longs. May the word of Christ, The rich word of Christ Live in your hearts and make you

Em **F** **G** **C** **F/C** **C**

wise. May you know, may you show, you are loved._____

INTRODUCTION

Dear Connectors!

What an absolute privilege to be heading up the Adult and Family Ministries Unit for the UK Territory. Part of my responsibility will be to collate materials and suggestions for the annual production of this wonderful resource. I am pleased to introduce Major Linda Herbert as part of the new Connect Team, and as the Assistant Adult and Family Ministries Officer.

In taking on this role, I have worked with a writing team and we met together to look at the general format, and to articulate the differences between the programmes provided. If you are a new user, it might help for you to have an outline of our criteria so you are able to make best use of the material provided for your area of ministry.

SPECIAL	Linked to the Gregorian Calendar ie Mother's Day, New Year
TOPIC	Justice Issues, Public Awareness, SA/Church ie Alcohol; Homelessness, Media campaigns
FELLOWSHIP	Clubs, Cameos, Relaxed Groups ie Treasure Hunts, Pointless, etc
WORSHIP	Messy Church, Interactive Midweek Worship, ie Easter, Lent, Grace, May it Be ...
MEMBERS	Members involvement, pre-empted bring ins ie Best Gifts, Sisters, Shoes, Books
VISITORS	Suggestions of people/organisations to invite ie RSPCA/local choirs/Gardening Groups
BIBLE STUDY	A monthly Bible study

We are pleased to be able to add the monthly Bible study that is prepared by IHQ for Women's Ministries around the world, in line with the 2014 theme 'You Are Loved' and we have allocated a specific week each month in line with the theme. (There is also a theme chorus in the resource which you are free to use.)

As in previous books, the graphic content can be modified and/or photocopied for use in your group meetings.

There is also a page for your comments, ideas and suggestions for future publications to ensure that we continue to provide current, relevant and helpful material to work towards our key aim of 'introducing people to Jesus'. May your preparation provide as much blessing for you as you provide for other people in your ministry for the Kingdom.

Major Val Mylechreest
Adult & Family Ministries Officer

Abbreviations

SASB	Salvation Army Song Book
AFMSB	Adult and Family Ministries Song Book
SOF	Songs of Praise
SfJ	Sing for Joy (UK YP Song Book)

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CONNECT: YOUR COMMENTS PLEASE

We would really appreciate your comments on this current resource to enable us to provide material which is an aid to your area of ministry. There are just six questions to answer.

Please answer with as much detail as possible, and if you have any suggestions or ideas for programmes you have run or would like us to look at, please add your comments at the end, or send us your programme.

Please return to:

Adult and Family Ministries Unit
Territorial Headquarters
101 Newington Causeway
London SE1 6BN

Tel: 020 7367 4956
Email: afm@salvationarmy.org.uk

1. Which adult and family area of ministry are you responsible for?

☐ Home League

☐ Over-Sixties

☐ Men's Fellowship

☐ Ladies Fellowship

☐ Other
2. How often do you use the *Connect* material?

☐ Weekly

☐ Monthly

☐ Occasionally

☐ Rarely
3. How long have you been using the material?
4. What would you like to see **more** of?
5. What would you like to see **less** of?

Special Weeks	1	2	3	4	5
Unhelpful/very helpful					

Fellowship Weeks	1	2	3	4	5
Unhelpful/very helpful					

Members Weeks	1	2	3	4	5
Unhelpful/very helpful					

You may wish to comment on which aspects are most helpful and which segments you tend to leave out ...

Thanks for your time and for doing what you can, where you are, to introduce people to Jesus!



FREEDOM

PREPARATION

- + You will need either a flip chart or sheets of paper.
- + There is a PowerPoint presentation which could be linked to your local computer system, or the pictures could be printed off for a display. (Ask your corps officer if you need help with this)

INTRODUCTION

Martin Luther King Day is a national holiday held on the third Monday of January (Monday, 20 January 2014) in the USA. It celebrates the life and achievements of Martin Luther King Jr., an influential American civil rights leader. He is most well-known for his campaigns to end racial segregation on public transport and for racial equality in the United States.

This year is the 45th anniversary of this public holiday and Americans are encouraged to give some of their time on this day as volunteers in citizen action groups. This tradition seems to be gaining in momentum in recent years and is now called the 'Martin Luther King Day of Service'.

Dr Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?'"



Martin Luther King Jr. was born on 15 January 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. His family was well off and his childhood was comfortable. However he was black and in America at this time (especially in the Southern states) black people led very different lives to the white people around them. Even though slavery had ended in 1863 they continued to suffer discrimination. Black and white people were still separated in shops, restaurants and on public transport; and some states still denied them the right to vote.

King, both a Baptist minister and civil-rights activist, had a huge impact on race relations in the United States from the 1950s onwards. Through his activism and peaceful protest he played a pivotal role in ending the legal segregation of African-American citizens in the South and other areas of the nation as well as the creation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. King received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, among several other honours. King was assassinated in April 1968, and continues to be remembered as one of the most lauded African-American leaders in history, often referred by his 1963 speech, "I Have a Dream."

I HAVE A DREAM
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
 THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON
 FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM
 AUGUST 28, 1963

Recommended Extra - YouTube: Martin Luther King Jr. Mini-Bio (if you need help with this ask your corps officer/centre manager)

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR'S QUOTES

'Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust.'

'Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.'

'Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.'

'The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.'

'We must all learn to live together as brothers, or we will all perish together as fools.'

'A man who won't die for something is not fit to live.'

'Forgiveness is not an occasional act; it is a permanent attitude.'

'Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.'

'Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.'

INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

Using a flip chart or pieces of paper with the heading 'I have a dream,' Members either contribute or write their own dream for the future (this could be personal, for the community, the fellowship or the world). Guidance could be given depending on the nature of the group. These dreams could then be placed in an envelope (one for each member) with the title '**I have a dream**' on the front. Members could take these envelopes home or they could be collected in to be given out again at the beginning of 2015.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WORDSEARCH

D	A	S	P	I	R	R	U	I	Y
L	M	C	R	E	A	T	B	E	E
H	E	O	E	E	C	F	C	Q	L
C	N	H	A	E	E	R	I	U	E
M	A	R	C	H	A	E	V	A	A
R	I	G	H	T	S	E	I	L	E
A	N	O	E	Z	L	T	L	I	V
V	E	H	R	E	E	K	I	N	G
L	A	W	D	D	O	C	T	O	R
J	U	S	T	I	C	E	G	A	G

Words to be found:

EQUAL	MEN	RACE	KING
JUSTICE	PREACHER	MARCH	DOCTOR
LAW	RIGHTS	FREE	CIVIL

Taken from about.compuzzles.com

Isaiah 65:20-22

The Prophet Isaiah had a vision of how Israel will be restored. There will be no more injustice and people will live their lives to their full potential. He had a dream, a God inspired vision of a future when everything is put right and people live in harmony with God and each other.

Martin Luther King delivered his most famous speech on the 28 August 1963 to over 250,000 civil rights supporters during a march on Washington. The speech became a defining moment for the American Civil Rights Movement. In it he used the phrase 'I have dream' eight times to give motivation and hope to those who were campaigning for racial equality. Perhaps the most quoted phrase is *"I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character."*

It wasn't enough for him to have the dream. He had to stand up and be counted and he encouraged others to stand up with him. His dream only made a difference because he acted on it. (A little like William Booth who said to his son Bramwell, 'Do something!')

Jay-Z, a black American rap artist, famously said "Rosa Parks sat so Martin Luther King could walk. Martin Luther King walked so Obama could run. Obama ran so we can all fly." By acting on our dreams we might just become the stepping stone for others to fulfil theirs.



SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SoF 129 'Freely, freely'
- ♪ AFMSB 6 'Amazing Grace'
- ♪ AFMSB 62 'Make me a channel of Your peace'

CAPTIVATED – HELPING-HAND APPEAL 2014



(A longer meeting suggestion is available on the *Captivated* DVD – available from your corps officer/centre manager.)

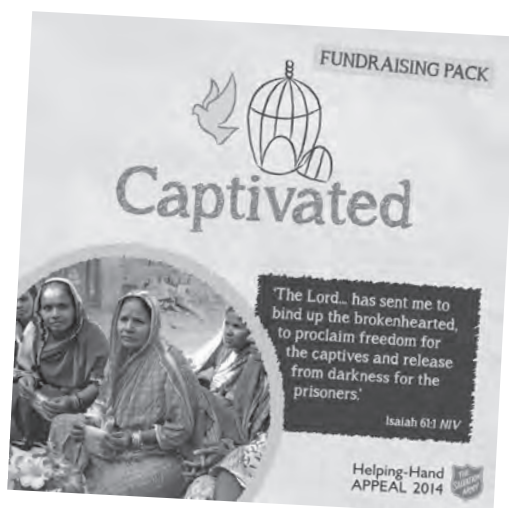
Please prepare the room and relevant equipment in order to show the *Captivated* DVD for the Helping-Hand Appeal. If you do not have this facility, please read through the information pack to be able to share stories relevant to your group.

INTRODUCTION

The trafficking of people is an example of humanity at its worst – distorting beauty, snatching away innocence, preying on the vulnerable. It exploits individuals, breaks apart families and destroys communities, robbing people of their dignity and humanity.

All over the world, hundreds of thousands of people are held captive by a false hope or false promises, by charm or by threat, and drawn into a web of lies. They are then put to work in fields, homes or brothels, where their strength, vulnerability or bodies are exploited for profit.

The Salvation Army is at the forefront of the opposition to the horrendous injustice that is human trafficking, and is in a unique position to tackle it. As an organisation operating in more than 120 countries we have the networks to match those of the traffickers, and we can use these to mount a serious challenge to this illegal trade in human lives. We are tackling a great evil, but we believe that the best way to respond to great evil is with great love – because love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.



Activity – suggested reading and drama on the DVD

THOUGHT

Bible Reading: Isaiah 58:6

Trafficking is today one of the largest global crimes, with an estimated annual profit of around 32 billion dollars. It is an injustice, a binding chain, a yoke and God challenges us to do something about it.

In Isaiah 58 the prophet is shouting, trying to wake people up, trying to make them see that their 'church' attendance and observance of high days and holy days is not enough – even their fasting and praying isn't enough! Their good living doesn't anything to God if it isn't accompanied by some serious social action. Interestingly, in this verse we are told to first loosen, then untie and then break the yoke of oppression. There is a process and we can all be a part of this process until we see the yoke completely broken and unusable.

Video

(At this point – please show *Captivated* DVD and 'Kali's Story')

Kali (story on DVD) is just one of thousands of people that The Salvation Army is supporting through its anti-trafficking work – people whose voices are rarely heard but whose lives are precious. We worked with a group of people from Adult and Family Ministry groups in Kent to produce a video in response to this issue.

Human trafficking is a big problem. It needs a big response. How can you and your group take action to help The Salvation Army continue to bring relief and restoration to those who have been victims of human trafficking and protect those still vulnerable?

There are a number of fundraising ideas in the *Captivated* fundraising pack. Take a few minutes to think and discuss as a group what more you can do to boost your fundraising and engage a wider audience with this issue.



PRAYER

Dear Lord,

We bring before you the thousands and thousands of people who have been trafficked, who feel helpless and alone right now. We pray for those in our very own community who are victims of human trafficking. Open up our hearts for them and open up opportunities for them to be rescued and given the chance to rebuild their lives.

We pray, too, about the huge scale of trafficking around the world and the different ways that The Salvation Army is responding, through prevention work, victim support and rehabilitation. May our eyes be opened to how we can support this valuable work and fight for an end to human trafficking.

Help us to become enslaved by the injustice of trafficking. Compel us to take action in whatever way we can to proclaim freedom for all of those enslaved in our world.

AMEN.

This song has been specially written to highlight the plight of victims of human trafficking, and to encourage a response:

CAPTIVATED

Set to 'Ellan Vannin' – STB 434

Lord, we pray, our hearts make tender,
 Captivated by the need
 To become the strong defenders
 Of the weak and those who plead.
 Christ has need of dauntless soldiers;
 Come and teach us how to fight,
 That the cries of helpless captives
 Spur us on to do the right.

Take our time, take all our talents,
 Captivated by the plight
 Of the ones whose days are ruined,
 So that darkness turns to light.
 Come, inspire us in our thinking,
 Show us ways to intervene,
 That the love of God in Jesus
 By those victims may be seen.

Lord, equip your willing servants,
 Captivated and inspired
 By a burning sense of justice,
 With a righteous passion fired.
 Here we offer our resources,
 All horizons now to scan,
 Not to rest or cease the struggle,
 Keen to know your battle plan.

Mark our lives with deep compassion,
 Captivated, sealed with love,
 Fighting for the kept and wounded,
 Taking orders from above.
 Help us stand in face of danger,
 Facing giants fierce and tall,
 Holy, resolute, undaunted;
 Distant floats the trumpet call.

© STEPHEN POXON 2013



'The Lord... has sent me to
bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim freedom for the
captives and release from
darkness for the prisoners.'

Isaiah 61:1 NIV

SUGGESTED SONGS

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| ♪ SASB 438 | 'Love divine' |
| ♪ Man Mark II Musical | 'They need Christ' |
| ♪ SoF 664 | 'Beauty for Brokenness' |



REVIEW OF 2013

PREPARATION

Invite the members to bring something with them that will remind them of 2013. It might be a photograph, a gift, a newspaper, a birthday card, a message. Display these on a table.

Invite the members to vote as the people's voice on the following subjects. Offer them a choice of three options (that way someone should stand out)

- + The Book of the Year
- + The Film of the Year
- + The Song of the Year
- + The Memory of the Year
- + The Sports Personality of the Year
- + The Celebrity of the Year
- + The Funniest Moment of the Year

Or other topics which relate more to the group/people that attend

OPENING

Start by singing 'Auld Lang Syne' or have the music to the song playing. Use party poppers or similar to welcome everyone to a New Year and outline how this is going to be an afternoon reviewing and thanking God for the past year.



A QUIZ LOOKING BACK AT 2013

As with any year, there is much to look back on and reflect as we think about 2013.

Answer the following questions on some significant events during the year in review:-

1. The Pope was elected on 13 March 2013. Which country does the Pope come from?
Argentina
2. When elected Pope was he the 206, 236 or 266 Pope?
266
3. On 15 April, two bombs exploded at a marathon; where was it?
Boston
4. On 22 July someone very special was born; who was it? **Prince George of Cambridge**
5. In April, a former Prime Minister died; who was this? **Lady Margaret Thatcher**
6. During 2013, General Linda Bond retired. The High Council was called and elected Commissioner André Cox as the new General. What number General is he? **20**
7. 2013 is an interesting year as it is composed of four different digits. When is the last time this happened?
1987
8. Who were the winners of *Britain's Got Talent* in 2013? **Attraction Mime Group**
9. Andy Murray won Wimbledon in 2013. When was the last time a British male won? **1936**
10. Which building built in London that is 310 metres tall, with a total of 82 floors, opened in February 2013?
The Shard



CELEBRATION

If possible and appropriate, show pictures or film clips of events in the past year.

Ask people to share memories of the past year, good or bad – then spend some moments thanking God for them and recognising the amazing presence of God in all these things

There may be people who have lost loved ones in the last year and time to remember those who have been Promoted to Glory might be helpful – maybe the use of music or a favourite song or songs relating to those people might create a helpful time of thanksgiving. It might be helpful to light one or more candles.

The 'Name of Group' Review Awards for 2013

Create a time for review and awards. If appropriate, use music and or dress up smartly when presenting the awards. If the awards are more to do with the group, present certificates (you could include the most regular attender at the group, the smartest dressed member, the person who invited the most people award, the funniest member etc)

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Isaiah 43:18-19

People often encourage us to forget the past and to move on! A New Year does that, because it encourages us to look toward the future. We share with people a greeting that will wish them a happy new year, yet the reality is there will be times in the new year that will challenge us, cause us sadness and even moments of struggle. We do not know what the year ahead holds for us. Today we can look back and we need to say thank you to God, for all the past has held for us. We can reflect on the fact, that once again, God has been faithful and has upheld and strengthened us. His promise to us to be with us always has been something we can testify to. Through all time God has promised to be with us, his people.

Someone once said 'Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift, that's why it's called 'The Present''. We need to be confident that there is something new for us – and that new things come from God. We need to be prepared for it, we need to be expectant and we need to allow God to do something new for us – because God has more and more new things for us to learn from him in the days to come. Thank God that Christianity is not a complete package about which we know everything and that is that. Christianity is a living, moving relationship with a God who is alive and who has more and more of himself to reveal to us.

So, as we move into this new year, we take a moment to remember all that has been. In reflection, we ask God to help us to learn, to celebrate and to gain new experiences as we look forward to the days to come. We ask God to release us from those things which may have disappointed or hurt us. As we move into the future, we ask that God will empower us to face whatever lies ahead.





PRAYER REFLECTION

The Christmas carol outlines this: 'The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight'. Give a card to each member on which to write down some of their hopes and fears for the future; write down, too, those things which (if any) the member is looking forward to. Spend some time sharing these with others, if it is right to do so and certainly to share with God. Give them to God – and use the song, 'Father I place into your Hands', to create a time for response.

Conclude by reading Isaiah 43:1-7

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 18 'Father I place into your hands'
- ♪ SFMSB 26 'God sent His Son (Because He lives)'
- ♪ SOF 892 'Lord, for the years'
- ♪ SASB 552 'Thank you Lord, for all your goodness'

REACHING UP - REACHING OUT

PREPARATION

There will be resource material and possibly a banner with the UKT theme for 2014 of 'Reaching Up - Reaching Out'. You may wish to utilise some of the commitment cards that will be provided for this campaign. (Ask your corps officer for these)

REACHING OUT WITH OUR RESOURCES

You may want to organise an 'unwanted gifts' table. Rather than recycling or leaving gifts unopened, they can be brought to the meeting where they can be purchased as part of a 'Reaching Out' celebration. The money raised could go to the Helping-Hand Appeal *Captivated*.

BACKGROUND

- * In 2012, to link in with the Olympics, we were asked to look at our spiritual fitness by asking the question are we Fit4Life?
- * In 2013 we sought to take this further by inviting people to 'Go Deeper' in their personal spiritual experiences.
- * In 2014 we take this a step further by inviting people to Reach UP and Reach OUT.

Reaching UP - to be true disciples of Jesus Christ and

Reaching OUT - by making more disciples for Jesus Christ.

Our suggested Scripture is:

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:3 (NIV)

REACH TO GOD

Through time spent in praise, prayer and silent reflection to get 'in tune' with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

REACH OUT TO OTHERS

Through time spent in development, sport and service of new and existing relationships in our lives.

Reaching UP and reaching OUT is about getting a 'God perspective' on life. It's not just the simple adage J-O-Y, Jesus first, yourself last and others in between, but it is being wise enough to reach up to God and not too proud to reach out to others, both to offer help and to ask for help.

The six most important words... "I admit I made a mistake."

The five most important words... "I am proud of you."

The four most important words... "What is your opinion?"

The three most important words... "If you please."

The two most important words... "Thank you."

The one most important word... "We."

The least important word... "I."

JOHN ADAIR

Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/1160940>



THOUGHT

What can this mean for us?

What does it mean, Reaching UP, Reaching OUT? Think of the cross. It's where God's work of redemption was accomplished, where Jesus bore our sins. Yet it's emblematic of our faith beyond that. The cross has both the vertical and horizontal elements. It bridges the gap between us and God with the vertical and encourages us to love others with the horizontal. The cross represents Jesus' ministry fully – in fulfillment and in action.

REACHING UP TO GOD

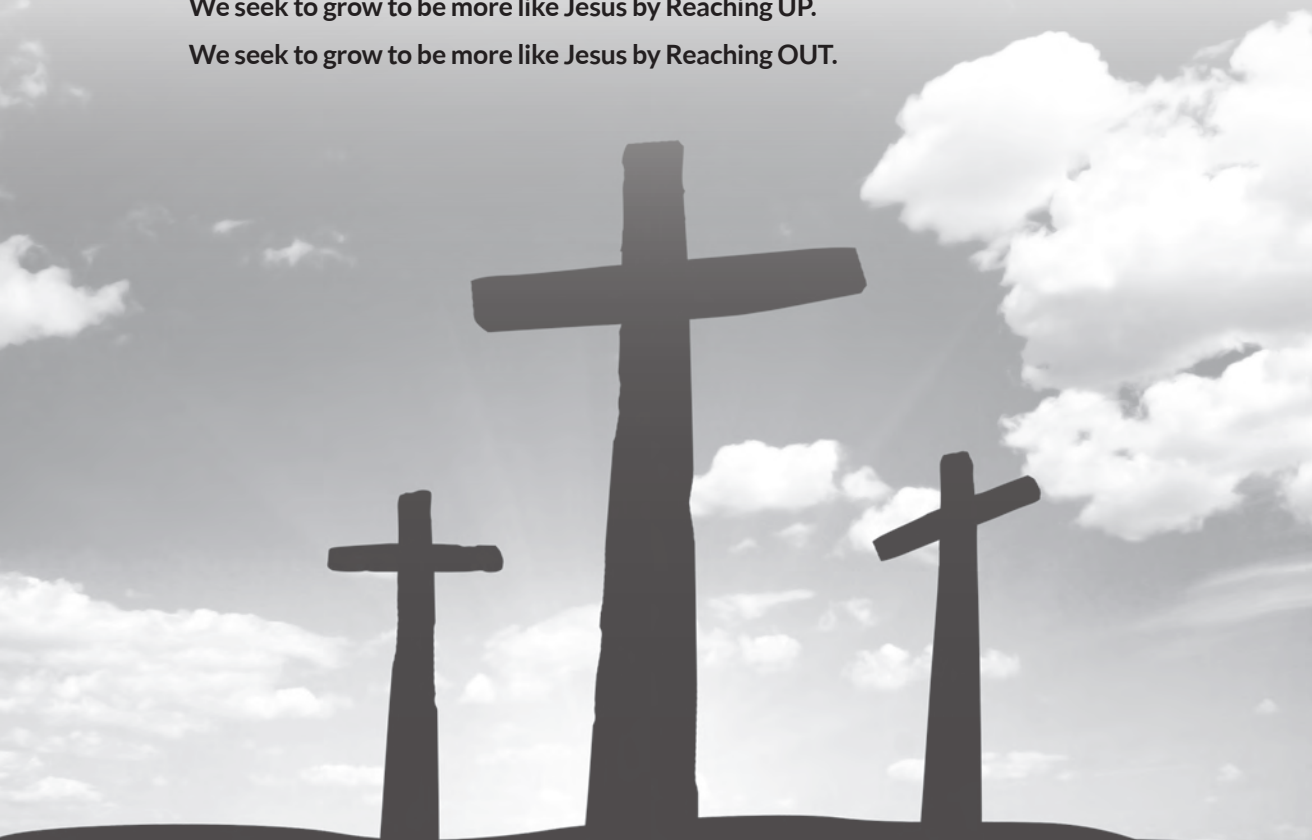
Because of what Jesus has done and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can reach up to God. He fills our lives and empowers us. We reach up through prayer, worship, studying God's word and even interaction with one another. God uses all these to teach us and help us to grow closer to him. In reaching up, we listen for his voice and are better prepared to follow his call.

REACHING OUT TO OTHERS

Jesus calls us not to live for ourselves but to live for others. By reaching up to him and trusting him, he gives us his heart and his compassion for others. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus showed a heart for the outcast and the captive. We have all been both, though we have not always known it. Christ empowers us through his Spirit to go out and not only preach the Gospel but to serve and love others.

We seek to grow to be more like Jesus by Reaching UP.

We seek to grow to be more like Jesus by Reaching OUT.



REACH UP - REACH OUT

Lord, I want to know you truly,
 Standing firm in faith and trust.
 Reaching up for your equipping,
 Reaching out because I must!

Being active in my service,
 Giving friendship, meeting need,
 Praying for the sad, the lonely,
 I'll make time to intercede.

I must daily seek your presence,
 I would know your will, your way,
 In your love I'll find my strength, Lord,
 I'll need guidance ev'ry day.
 Reaching up to seek your Spirit,
 Reaching up to claim your pow'r,
 Reaching up for energising
 That sustains me ev'ry hour.

If I want to stand firm daily,
 Taking action in your name,
 I must follow your example,
 Trace your steps and do the same.
 Reaching out to old folk, young folk,
 Reaching out to offer care,
 Reaching out in selfless giving,
 All my actions backed by prayer.

DENISE BRINE
 (suggested tune South Shields)

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SA Chorus 107 'To be like Jesus'
- ♪ AFMSB 62 'Make me a Channel of your Peace'
- ♪ SASB 49 As High as the Sky/soloist or recording of 'Everywhere'



LIVE, LAUGH, LOVE

PREPARATION

- + There are lots of lovely pictures that contain the words 'Live, Laugh, Love,' on Google images that can be downloaded if you are using PowerPoint. (Ask your corps officer if you do not have use of a computer)
- + Before the day, the group members could be asked to bring a joke in to share with the rest of the group.

INTRODUCTION

The words live, laugh, love, seem to sum up all the things we would ideally like to fill our lives with. We want to live our lives to the full, we want to laugh and be happy and probably the most important of all is that we can love and be loved.

QUOTES

Live as if there is no tomorrow,
Laugh as you did when you were little,
Love as if you have never been hurt.

Live every moment,
Laugh every day,
Love beyond words.

Live without regrets,
Laugh often,
Love to the fullest.

Live life to the fullest,
Laugh as hard as you can,
Love as long as you live.

GIVE AWAY

You could print these quotes out and give them to the group members as part of the meeting.



FILM CLIP

You may want to consider showing a funny clip from *Mr Bean*, *Miranda*, *The Two Ronnies* or *Morecambe and Wise*. You may wish to use the song from the film *Mary Poppins*, 'I love to laugh'.

NATIONAL BELLY LAUGH DAY - 24 JANUARY

What unites everyone across the globe regardless of language? Laughter! Global Belly Laugh Day celebrates this wonderful thing that lifts our spirits, cheers us up and makes us feel better.

Having a good laugh causes the tissue lining our blood vessels to expand, increasing blood flow. This makes us feel more positive, boosts our immune system, increases pain tolerance and generally just makes us feel happier and more energetic! Laughter reduces stress and helps us relax. Laughing 100 times roughly equals 15 minutes on an exercise bike.

Maybe on the 24 January you can watch a funny TV show, email or text a joke to a friend. Whatever you find yourself doing, remember to laugh and enjoy it!



ONE-LINERS BY TIM VINE

I phoned the local gym and I asked if they could teach me how to do the splits. He said, "How flexible are you?" I said, "I can't make Tuesdays."

"He said 'I'm going to chop off the bottom of one of your trouser legs and put it in a library'. I thought 'that's a turn-up for the books.'"

"The back of his anorak was leaping up and down and people were chucking money to him. I said 'Do you earn a living doing that?' He said 'Yes, this is my livelihood.'"

"You know, somebody actually complimented me on my driving today. They left a little note on the windscreen, it said 'Parking Fine.' So that was nice."

"I rang up my local swimming baths. I said 'Is that the local swimming baths?' He said 'It depends where you're calling from.'"

This policeman came up to me with a pencil and a piece of very thin paper. He said, "I want you to trace someone for me."

source: www.jokes4us.com/peoplejokes/comedianjokes/timvinejokes.html



LIVE

Deuteronomy 5:33 Walk in obedience to all that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days...

John 10:10 I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

How easy do you find it to live life to the full? Is it something you can achieve every day, some days, never? How often do things get in our way and prevent us from living life to the fullest? Jesus wants us to enjoy the life we have and make the most of it. He wants us to have a relationship with him and follow his guidance for our lives.

LAUGH

Ecclesiastes 3:4 A time to weep and a time to laugh.

Luke 6:21 Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

These two verses which are very much linked, remind us that there is sadness and laughter in life. How often do you laugh? Can you remember the last time you laughed so much you cried? Or have you laughed so much you couldn't stop? There is most certainly time for laughter. God is the author of humour and laughter and it is a gift that we can all enjoy.



LOVE

Leviticus 19:18 ...love your neighbour as yourself.

Ephesians 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

You may love to laugh, you may love to live life to the full. Being able to love and be loved is one of the greatest needs in us. Have you ever wondered why we are created this way? Our creator is the giver of life and he is life and love itself. We are created to be like him, to love him and to love others.

But of greatest importance is that you know this personally. You are loved. Truly loved. God could not love you any more if he tried and he wants you to know and enjoy all the love he has for you in order that you might show that love to others.

PRAYER

Father God,
Thank you for blessing us with life.
Thank you for the gift of laughter.
Thank you for your wonderful, amazing love.
Help us to enjoy the lives that we have. Help us to laugh often,
and help us to love you and others with our whole hearts.
Amen

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SASB 544 'Life is great! So sing about it'
- ♪ SASB 51 'Love has a language'
- ♪ SASB 491 'I would be true'

BEAT THE BLUES

PREPARATION

(Suggestions)

Invite one of the following people to come and lead an afternoon of fun and activity – laughter, they say, is the best medicine – it lifts the spirits, so in addition to being good for the body, these activities can be good for the mind too:

- a) Someone to lead a keep fit session (if you don't know anyone in your neighbourhood try the Citizens Advice Bureau or your local doctor's surgery) – or you do can do chair exercises to music for the group.
- b) Borrow some hoops from the toddler group or local school and have fun trying to make them stay up - maybe make it into a competition with a prize for the best - you can put the hoop round the waist or a wrist or an ankle or all three!
- c) Invite your timbrel leader to do a practice session with the members
- d) Some of your members may recall musical dumb-bell (club) swinging to 'Ever near to bless and cheer' – ask them to relive their past and all have a go. You can use bottles of water or rolling pins or cartons of juice instead of the clubs – unless you have some hidden away somewhere.



CLOSING THOUGHT

Bible Reading – Psalm 139:1-17a

When God made us we were perfect in his sight. We have done all sorts of things during our lives which help us feel good about ourselves – having our hair done, passing exams, going to a spa, walking, swimming, resting on holidays and so on. But, as God pointed out to Samuel – he is more interested in how we have looked after our hearts, our soul, and our spiritual lives.

It is good for us to try to keep healthy and fit and it is always good to have a laugh, but it is essential that we keep our hearts and minds just as God planned for us. Let the glory get into your soul.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ Chorus: 'Heads, shoulders, knees and toes'
- ♪ Chorus: 'If you're happy and you know it clap your hands'
- ♪ Chorus: 'The Hokey Cokey'
- ♪ Songs for Joy 32 'When the glory gets into your soul'
- ♪ Happiness and Harmony 9 'Clap your hands'

WE ARE LOVED

BIBLE READING

'Therefore, as **God's chosen people**, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.'

COLOSSIANS 3:12-14

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

We are assured of some very important truths within Paul's letter to the Colossians and in chapter 3 he points out that as Christians we are '*God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved*'. God cherishes us – he loves us extravagantly. Isn't that amazing?

Throughout the Bible there is a consciousness of God's love for his people. Deuteronomy 33:3 records '*Surely it is you who love the people; all the holy ones are in your hand*.' And within the Book of Psalms there is a particular ribbon of awareness of God's amazing love. Our spirits are lifted as the psalmist cries out '*How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!*' in Psalm 36:7 and then as we open Psalm 103 the father love of God dominates the text.

The well-known and often quoted verse in John's Gospel draws our attention to the truth that '*God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life*' (3:16). The New Testament constantly confirms that we are precious in God's eyes and that he loves each one of us. As we take the opportunity to read through the Scriptures our understanding of the love of God increases – '*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins*' (1 John 4:10).

When we look at Jesus – his birth, life, death and resurrection – we see a demonstration of God's abundant love for us. Jesus' teaching, particularly in the parable of the prodigal son, also enlightens us to the incomprehensible measure of God's care and compassion. The prodigal does not deserve the love of the father and yet '*while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms round him and kissed him*' (Luke 15:20). This is the kind of love that God has for us! Grace – the undeserved favour of God! As Romans 5:5 says, '*God's love has poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us*'.

To explore this topic further read through Psalms 103 and 100, and 1 John 4.

OUR LIVES TODAY

As we recognise that God's love cannot be deserved or earned, but that it is given freely, we can accept it, and his unconditional love can transform our lives. Accepted in all its fullness, it liberates us! When we realise the breadth and depth of God's love for us and 'abide in his love' it transforms us. When we abide we thrive! What peace accompanies the knowledge that the Lord loves us fully and freely! What joy is ours as we live in the security and certainty of a loving heavenly Father. It gives us a renewed sense of worth. God accepts us – there is no need for pretence in his sight.

The sad reality is that it is possible to be a Christian without fully grasping that God's love

for us is not dependent on our actions, our feelings or our obedience. The good news is that nothing will change God's love towards us. As Romans 8:38-39 reminds us *'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God, that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'* Even when we fail, or have fallen, this will not change God's love toward us. His love is not dependent on our behaviour!

However, when we accept his love in all its fullness, it changes not only our perception of God but also our treatment of those around us. Luke explains that if we wish to enter into the Kingdom of God we need to respond to God's love for us, to confess our sin and also to *'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and, "Love your neighbour as yourself"'* (Luke 10:27).

What a privilege is ours to be the recipients of such inestimable love; and what is our response to such love?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe in your own words God's love for you.
2. What are the consequences in our lives when we accept that we are loved by God?
3. To be a Christian is often seen in terms of obeying commands, about duty, about earning his love. How do we see our service for God?
4. God loves us as we are. Does this mean that our actions and our life choices do not matter?

LIVING AS LOVED

Ask yourself: Have I accepted God's love for me or I am still trying to earn his love?

I have known I am loved just as I am certain of God's love for me. As a consequence, it is a joy and privilege to share this message and experience as I serve women around the world in my role as the World President of Women's Ministries.

COMMISSIONER SILVIA COX



LOVE LETTERS (1)

PREPARATION

- + Buy some Love Hearts sweets and empty them into a bowl ready for sharing. You will need 2 or 3 per person.
- + Ask the members to bring the following – any heart shaped articles they may have at home; a present bought for them by someone they love(d).
- + For the craft you will need: enough breadsticks so that everyone can have a few. Some melted cooking (or diabetic) chocolate (microwave is easiest), some greaseproof or baking paper and one small plastic bag for each member.

SAINT VALENTINE

This saint is a widely recognised third-century Roman saint commemorated on 14 February and associated since the middle ages with a tradition of courtly love. Nothing is reliably known of St. Valentine except his name and the fact that he died on 14 February on Via Flamenia in the north of Rome.

It is uncertain whether St. Valentine is to be identified as one saint or two saints of the same name. St Valentine's church in Rome wasn't built until 1960, for the needs of the Olympic Village, and continues as a modern, well-visited parish church.

Today, St Valentine's Day is also known as the Feast of St Valentine and is an official feast day in the Anglican church, as well as in the Lutheran church. Because of the relative obscurity of this western saint in the East, members of the Greek Orthodox church who are named Valentinus (male) or Valentina (female) may celebrate their name day on the Western ecclesiastical calendar date of 14 February. Apart from this very little is known of this saint of whom everyone has heard!



FROM THE MEMBERS

Share the letters, cards or mementos brought by the members. Give them time to recall and share their memories.

See how many members can remember all or part of the following:

SONNET XVIII, SHALL I COMPARE THEE?

Shall I compare thee to a Summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 And Summer's lease hath all too short a date:
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
 By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd:
 But thy eternal Summer shall not fade
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
 Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

LOVE QUIZ

In the Bible:

1. What is the great 'love chapter'?
2. Three things remain faith, love and what?
3. Who loved David like a brother?
4. Which love had the Ephesian church forsaken?
5. What happens to the man who loves his life?
6. Who marries Rebecca because he loved her?
7. Love is patient and love is.....?
8. Who had died which caused Jesus to weep?
9. Who was Hannah married to?
10. Whoever loves God must also love.....?

1 Corinthians 13

Hope

Jonathan

First

He will lose it

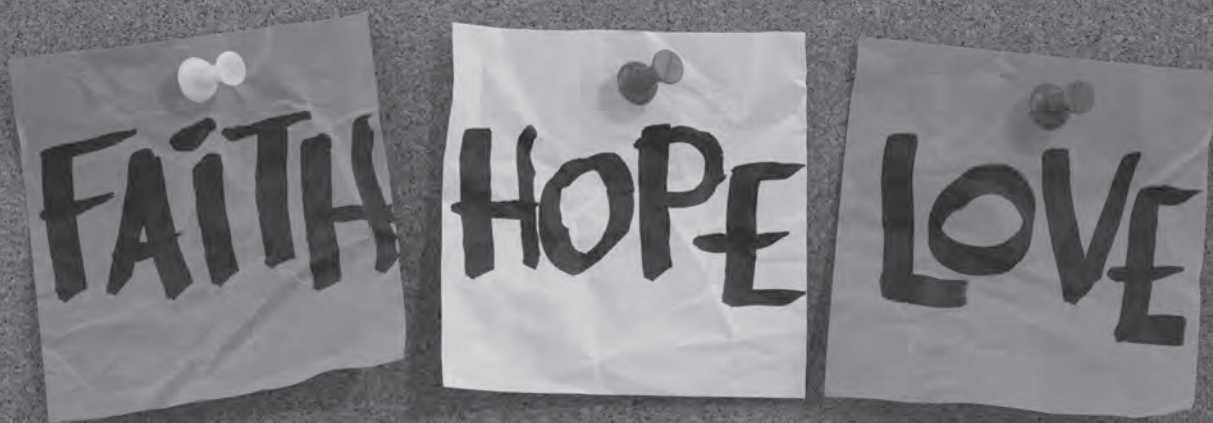
Isaac

Kind

Lazarus

Elkanah

His brother



CRAFT

Take the breadsticks and dip into the chocolate so that half of each one is coated. Lay them on baking or greaseproof paper to dry. The members should take them home and share them with someone they love or with a neighbour the next time they see them.

CLOSING THOUGHT

Read the whole of 1 Corinthians 13

Paul wrote lots of letters, but here we have a love letter if you like.

It tells us how people in love should behave and how they should react to others who say they love them.

Give out the Love Hearts.

Ask the members to read out the sweet messages on their sweets and discuss if that is really love. As Christians we believe that the ultimate show of love was when God allowed his Son to die for people like you and me so that our sins could be forgiven and we could be in direct contact with God our Father again.

Read John 3: 16

The love of God can and never will be topped by anything on this earth. But he does expect us to follow his example and love the people we meet day by day...even the horrid ones!

It's good to have memories of our sweethearts, parents, husbands and wives, but most of all we must never forget that GOD IS LOVE.



SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ Members may like to choose songs they had at their wedding.
- ♪ SASB 33 'Great is thy faithfulness' SATB 657
- ♪ SASB 47 'God's love is as high as the heavens' SATB 738
- ♪ SASB 49 'Have you ever stopped?' SATB 609
- ♪ SASB 51 'Love has a language' SATB 726

FAMILY TIES



PREPARATION

- + This week includes thoughts about adoption and fostering. If you have anyone for whom this may be difficult, please take care how you use the material.
- + You may have someone who fosters children or who has been an adoptive parent or who has been fostered or adopted themselves. They may like to testify as to how it has worked (or not) for them.

ADOPTION OR FOSTERING?

Fostering is a way of providing a family life for children who cannot live with their own parents – for whatever reason.

Emergency fostering is where children need a place to go for a few nights.

Short term fostering is for those children who need a family respite for weeks or months while plans are made for their more permanent future.

Short breaks are for disabled or special needs children to give their permanent carers a break.

Remand fostering is where children are put in the care of a specially trained foster carer while the court reviews their situation. (England and Wales only).



Long term and permanent fostering is for older children who will stay with that family until they reach adulthood and are ready to live independently.

Sometimes family and friends take on the care of a child who is not able to be cared for by their natural parents.

Foster parents become the legal guardians of the children until they move on.

Adoption is different in that it is a way of providing a new family for children who cannot be brought up by their birth parents. It is a legal procedure in which all the parental responsibility is transferred to the adopters. Once an adoption has been granted it cannot be reversed except in very rare circumstances.

An adopted child loses all legal ties with their birth parents and becomes a full member of the new family, usually taking the family's name.

AN EXERCISE

- * Ask the members how far they can go back in their family tree – any skeletons in the closet?
- * Who are they most like in their family?
- * Discuss whether they feel closer to their family members than to their chosen friends.
- * Who would they call their nearest and dearest?

THE SALVATION ARMY VIEW

'The Salvation Army recognises that the best environment for children to develop their life chances is within a stable family environment, either a nuclear or extended family' and recently has set out to further develop its involvement with vulnerable children and families.

William Booth (the Army's founder) was a proponent of caring for children and young people who were orphaned or rejected. In his book *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (still used as a reference book for university students) we read 'our cottage mothers, with two or three children of their own, would readily take in an extra one on the usual terms of boarding out children, and nothing would be more simple ...'.

THE BIBLE VIEW

Adoption and fostering are spoken of favourably in Scripture:

In Exodus 2:1-10 we read the story of the birth of Moses and how Pharaoh's daughter took him into the royal family where he was well educated – eventually he became a faithful and blessed servant of God.

Esther was adopted by her cousin and God used her to bring deliverance to the Jewish people.

Jesus himself was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was adopted by Joseph who took Jesus as his own child.

Once we give our hearts to Jesus, believing and trusting in him alone for salvation, we become part of the family of God – through adoption. 'For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave to fear, but you received the spirit of sonship (adoption), and by him we cry Abba! Father!' (Romans 8:15)

Similarly, bringing a person into a family by means of fostering or adoption is done by choice and out of love. As God adopts those who receive Christ as Saviour into his family, so should we all prayerfully support all those who adopt or foster children into their physical families.

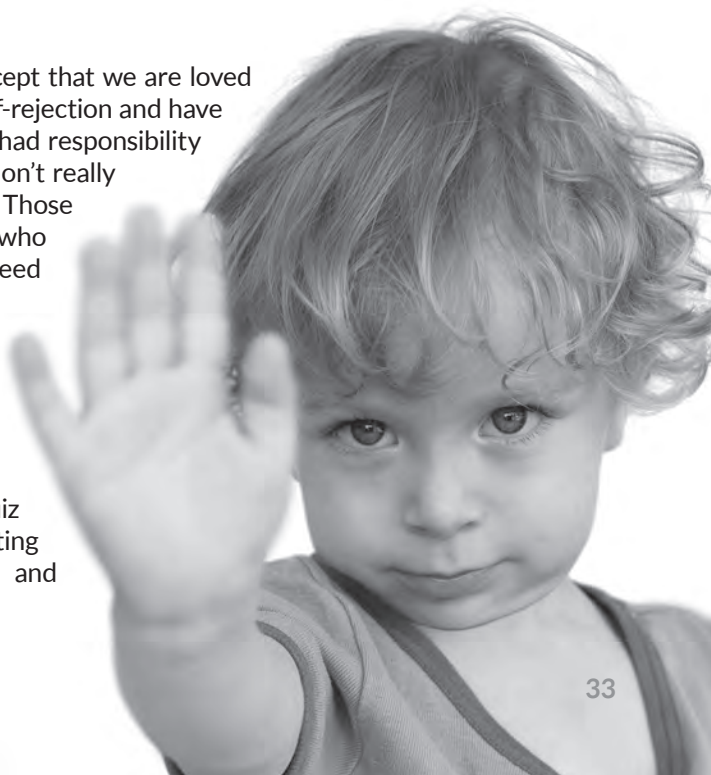
SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Read Psalm 32:8

At times, we may find it hard to accept that we are loved because we have had feelings of self-rejection and have felt unaccepted by those who have had responsibility for our care. We may feel that we don't really matter to anyone, let alone God. Those feelings can be magnified for those who have been fostered or adopted. We need to pray that their prime emotion will be to feel they have been chosen, just as God chooses each one of us to be part of his family.

FAMILIES QUIZ

You may wish to find a family quiz (according to your membership) relating to famous or scriptural adoptive and fostering families.



SCRIPTURE THOUGHT

There are three emotions that adoption and fostering evoke.

They are compassion, love and rejection.

(Ask members to give their own meaning for these words)

These three words – compassion, love and rejection are an integral part of what we have been considering.

Without foster parents and adoptive parents many children would continue to feel rejected. But with the compassion and love of those people there is a future, happiness and a family.

We often say that we want to be like Jesus – or sing the chorus 107 (SASB) 'To be like Jesus' (outline the words or sing together)

Jesus was rejected – by the religious people of his day, by the ordinary people who lived in his time and even by his followers before he was crucified. He is still rejected today by too many people. As his followers we may occasionally feel rejected, but Jesus' life revolved around compassion (remember how he healed people, took hold of their dirty or diseased hands or spoke to them kindly?), and he taught us that we must love, just as he loved. (For God SO loved the world that he gave – John 3:16). We must be like him and show compassion and love to all those we encounter, whatever their status in society.

Adoptive parents have chosen their children, for now and forever. We need to support such people because there will be times when tiredness and doubt set in – they need us, just as their children need them.

Foster parents also need our support. Not all their foster children will want to be with them, not everyone will thank them for what they do, and yet it is often the love and compassion shown to the children in this situation which will set them up for life.

We are required to care, love and pray for all parents who have undertaken to become adopters or foster carers. Their children will also need to feel that people around them care too. We could be the means by which their rejection or uncertainty is dissolved. Pray for them. Let us be faithful in doing that.

Footnote: You can obtain a useful booklet, 'Adoption & Fostering', from Community Services at THQ (much of the above information is taken from this booklet) or find further information from the British Adoption and Fostering Agency.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SOF 92 'Father God I wonder how I managed to exist'
- ♪ AFMSB 50 'Jesus put this song into our hearts'
- ♪ AFMSB 51 'Jesus give me day by day'
- ♪ AFMSB 48 'In heavenly love abiding'
- ♪ AFMSB 17 'Someone Cares'

COOL RUNNINGS (WINTER OLYMPICS)



PREPARATION

Decorate the room with Olympic and Russian flags, pictures of winter sports and any winter sports clothing.

- + Wii – Winter Olympics – downhill skiing (for the more active)
- + Air hockey table
- + Ice Cube Prayers: Give each member an ice cube in a plastic cup or bowl. See under Ice Cube Prayers in programme below.
- + Build a bobsleigh team (version of build a beetle - there is a sample picture at the end of this item to enable you to photocopy for members). Members will each need a dice, pencil and paper.

SUGGESTED DVD:

'Cool Runnings' the story of the Jamaican Bob Sled Team clips available on YouTube. See 'Cool Runnings (The last race)'. (You may need to ask your corps officer/centre manager for help).

'WHERE EAGLES DARE'

The Winter Olympics are taking place over five weeks, starting at the beginning of February. The elite in winter sports will come together in Sochi, Russia to compete in events that will test human bravery to the limits - downhill skiing, snowboarding, the luge (where an individual flings themselves down a sheet of ice on a tea tray!) speed skating, ice hockey and curling – the one with brushes. British Olympians who do compete in the winter games are often remembered: Robin Cousins, Torville and Dean, Amy Williams, Eve Muirhead – illustrious names who have even managed to bring home a few medals.

There is one British Olympian who took part in the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary who will be remembered not for his sporting prowess but for the spirit in which he took part in one of the winter sports most frightening events – ski jumping. Michael Edwards, better known as Eddie 'The Eagle' Edwards, is a British skier who became the first competitor to represent Great Britain in Olympic ski jumping. Finishing last in the 70m and 90m ski jumping events, he became famous as a 'heroic failure.'

Edwards was a good downhill skier and narrowly missed out on qualifying for the GB team for that event in the 1984 Games. To realise his Olympic dream he decided to switch to ski jumping. Totally self-funded, Eddie moved to America to train, borrowing equipment that was too big for him and having to wear six pairs of socks to make the boots fit. Eddie was also 20 lbs heavier than the next heaviest competitor and was very long sighted, requiring him to wear his glasses at all times, even though when skiing they fogged to such an extent that he could not see where he was landing! With all these difficulties he qualified for the 1988 Olympics ranked 55 in the world.

SCRIPTURE - ISAIAH 40:28-31

At times our faith might seem hard going and we want to achieve more than we are able; there are obstacles that might seem impossible and we might feel like giving in. Unlike Eddie, we don't have to do it on our own. We have been promised that we can soar like eagles if we put our hope in God. If we let him be our strength, he will 'help us fly'. Be encouraged by these words from Isaiah today. (Sing together 'Lord, I come to you ...').

PRAYER IDEAS

YouTube: The Prayer - 2002 Winter Olympics closing programme.

Ice Cube Prayers: Give each member an ice cube in a plastic cup or bowl and as it melts sing SOF 433 'O Lord your tenderness' and share the following prayer. 'Come Lord Jesus and melt our hearts, warm us with your spirit from the inside out so we can show your love to others. Amen'.

QUIZ

- How often do the Winter Olympics take place?
Every year; every 2 years; **every 4 years**; every 10 years
- Which of the following is not a sport in the winter Olympics?
Curling; Luge; Figure skating; **Husky Racing**
- Which city/country hosted the 2006 Winter Olympics?
Beijing, China; Sydney, Australia; Vancouver, Canada; **Turin, Italy**
- What is the newest sport added to the Winter Olympics?
Biathlon; **Snowboarding**; Luge; Short Track Speed Skating
- Which city/country hosted the 2010 Winter Olympics?
Sochi, Russia; **Vancouver, Canada**; Dunedin, New Zealand; Oslo, Norway
- Which is not a symbol of the Olympic Games?
Olympic flame; Olympic flag; **Olympic tower**; Olympic rings
- In which year did the Winter Olympics officially begin?
1906; 1896; **1924 (Chamonix, France)**; 1934
- What tragic event interrupted both the Summer and Winter Olympics in the 1940's?
World War 2; The Great Depression; World War 1; Vietnam War
- Which country has most often hosted the Winter Olympics?
France; Canada; **USA**; Japan
- Up the year 2006, which country has won the most gold medals in the Winter Olympics?
Sweden; Austria; **Norway**; USA

BUILD A BOBSLEIGH TEAM (VERSION OF BUILD A BEETLE)

Equipment: a dice, pen and paper for each person.

The aim of the game is to draw a two man bobsleigh team made up of different parts. To do this, each person takes turns rolling the dice. You need to throw a one on the dice to start. Each number on the dice represents a different part of the bobsleigh team: 1 the bobsleigh, 2 a head, 3 the brake, 4 arms, 5 the steering wheel, 6 the track. Some numbers will need to be thrown more than once to complete the team (2 needs to be rolled twice for 2 heads/ 4 needs to be thrown 4 times for 4 arms). The first one to roll enough numbers to complete their drawing is the winner.

Example

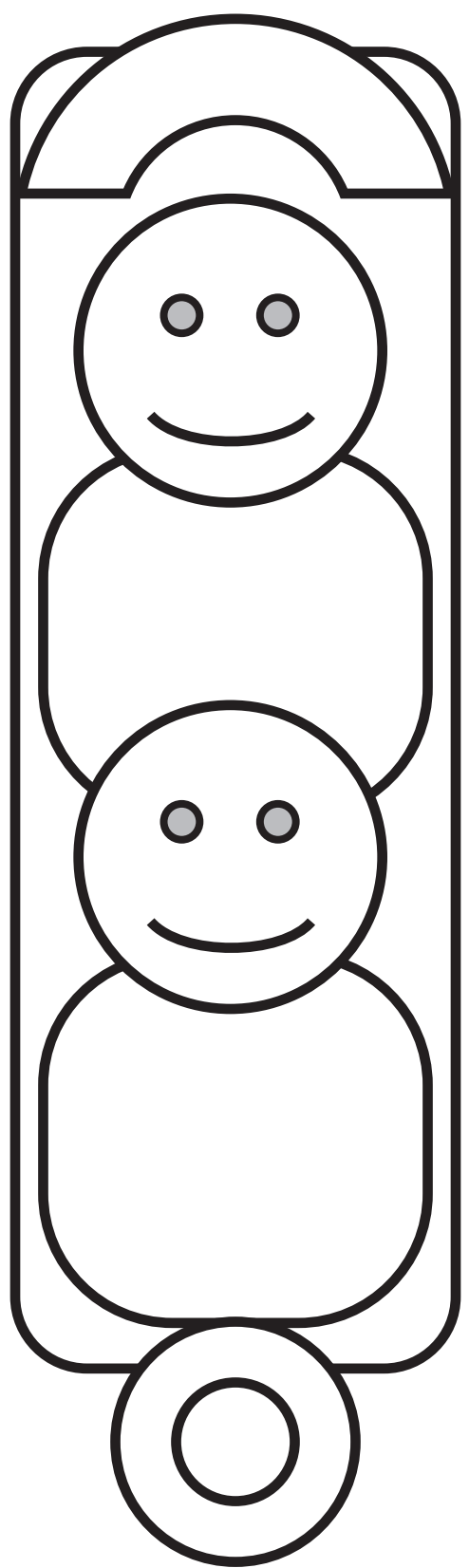
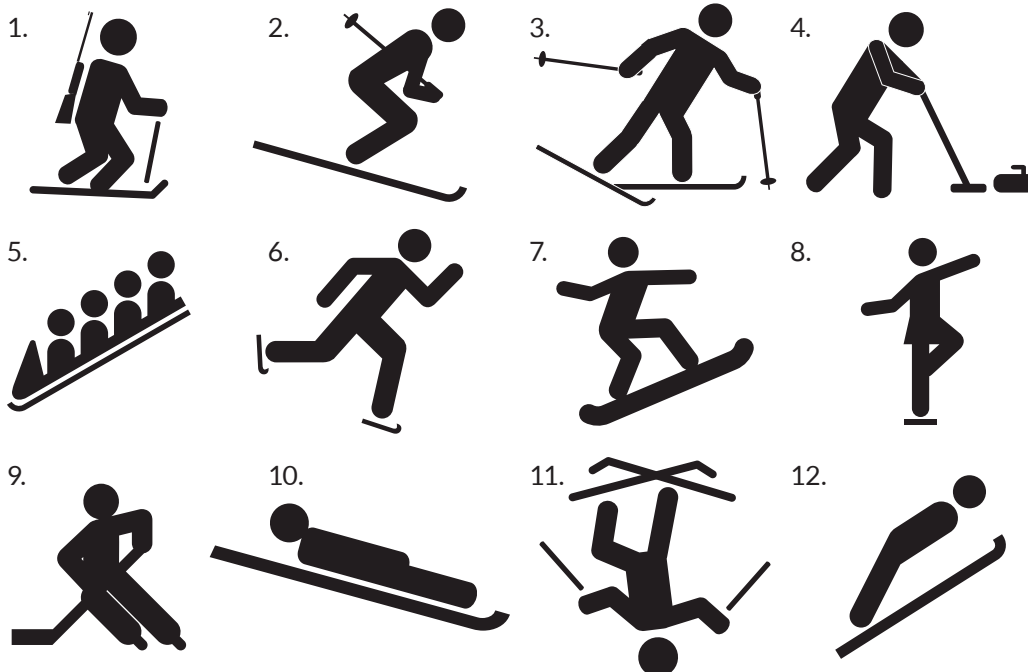


TABLE TOP CURLING (KNOWN AS SHOVE HALFPENNY)

Use coins (large ones are best) to roll or push along on a long table which has areas marked off with tape to designate different scores.

SNOWBALL TARGET PRACTICE

Have a large container at a distance where it is not too difficult to shoot screwed up scrap paper, each person gets 5 shots. Don't forget to have bronze, silver and gold prize for the winners.



These symbols are those used by the Olympic association to represent a particular sport.

They could be used as a matching game: giving the group the answers and matching them with the right symbol. Or two sets could be printed off to play pairs, or four sets printed off to play snap. Or they could be put up around the room to see if people can guess what they represent.

The answers: 1. Biathlon, 2. Alpine skiing, 3. Cross country skiing, 4. Curling, 5. Bobsleigh, 6. Short track speed skating, 7. Snowboarding, 8. Figure skating, 9. Freestyle skiing, 10. Ice hockey, 11. Luge, 12. Ski jumping

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SOF 2034 'Strength will Rise'
- ♪ AFMSB73 'Praise my Soul'
- ♪ SASB 766 'To the hills I lift my eyes'
- ♪ AFMSB 24 'Go tell it on the mountain'

(You could sing a Winter Olympic version of 'We are marching in the light of God.' In each verse replace the word 'marching' for a winter sport, eg skiing, curling. Actions could be decided on by the group)

LOVE LETTERS (2)

PREPARATION

- + Ask members to bring love letters or valentine cards.
- + Prepare some cards to write to home bound members with a scripture verse telling of God's love for them.
- + Obtain a recording of the Military Wives choir singing 'Wherever you are' written by Paul Mealor

Invite members to share when their love letters were written or received. (These might be from spouses, friends, or family members).

i love you

The song is based on the love letters the military wives and their husbands exchanged while serving in Afghanistan; it was sung on Remembrance Day 2012.

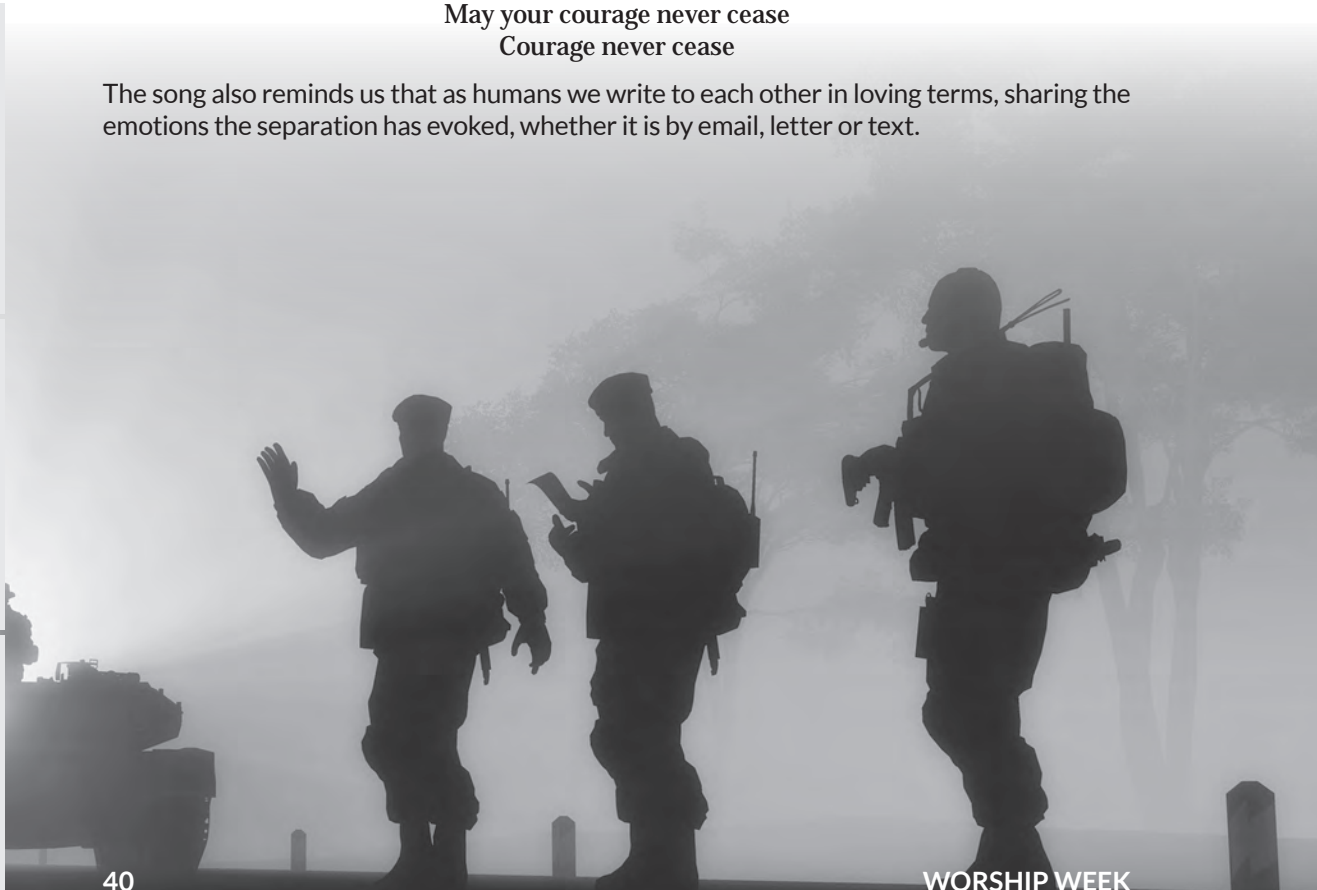
The words of the song describe the love that binds their hearts across the miles that separate them. It tells of longings, prayers and dreams that have been shared, which they hope will come to fruition when the tour of service is over. The song describes the light coming after the darkness of being separated; how the fears and the loneliness will be forgotten when they meet again. The words demonstrate the constant love that neither distance nor time will dispel.

'WHEREVER YOU ARE'

Wherever you are my love will keep you safe
 My heart will build a bridge of love across both time and space
 Wherever you are our hearts still beat as one
 I hold you in my dreams each night until your task is done
 Light after darkness my wondrous star
 Our hopes and dreams, my heart and yours, forever shining far
 Light up the darkness my prince of peace
 May the stars shine all around you
 May your courage never cease

Wherever I am I will hold on through the night
 I will pray each day, a safe return, will look now through the light
 Light after darkness my wondrous star
 Our hopes and dreams, my heart and yours, forever shining far
 Light after darkness my prince of peace
 May the stars shine all around you
 May your courage never cease
 Courage never cease

The song also reminds us that as humans we write to each other in loving terms, sharing the emotions the separation has evoked, whether it is by email, letter or text.





For many of us BTWITIALWY would not seem to be at all romantic even though it means in text language - By The Way I Think I Am in Love with You! Just as AML means All My Love and B4N means Bye for Now.

SUGGESTED BIBLE VERSES

1 John 3:1; Psalm 139; 1 John 4:1-16; 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13

Invite members to share the Bible reading they had at their wedding

Whatever our way of communicating, we all like to know we are loved and to receive cards and letters assuring us of that fact.

God also tells us in the Bible how much he loves us in many different ways. Love is an essential attribute of God, the foundation of his personality. The magnitude of God's love is the only reason we exist. Many of us have favourite verses that remind us of God's love; 1 Corinthians 13 is often described as God's love letter and is frequently used during wedding services.

The poem 'God's love letter' by Thomas Brooks describes how in the Bible God meets everyone's need to be loved; the first verse:

The scriptures are God's love letter to me,

Here the lamb may wade and the elephant may swim!
The blessed scriptures are of infinite worth and value,
Here you may find....
A remedy for every disease, a balm for every wound
A plaster for every sore,
Milk for babes, meat for strong men,
Comfort for the afflicted, support for the tempted,
Solace for the distressed, ease for the wearied,
A staff to support the feeble, a sword to defend the weak.

How incredible it is to know that God loves you, God knows you intimately, God desires to call you his own, and God specifically chose you! The depth of God's infinite love for each of us is beyond our understanding. He has enough love for everyone, perfect love; no favourites, not chosen because we're clever, pretty, can cook, or anything else. He simply loves us without condition; and he wants us to respond and love him in return.

HEART QUIZ

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. To encourage, stimulate , strengthen | Hearten |
| 2. Without courage, or feeling | Heartless |
| 3. Sorrow, anguish | Heartache |
| 4. The pulsation of the heart | Heartbeat |
| 5. Felt deeply, sincerely | Heartfelt |
| 6. To examine one's feelings | Heart searching |
| 7. Someone who is the object of adulation | Heart throb |
| 8. Intimate/candid discussion with another | Heart-to-heart |
| 9. Emotionally moving | Heart warming |
| 10. Learning by memory | By heart |
| 11. To emphasis the truth of a statement | 'Cross my heart' |
| 12. Most sincerely | From the bottom of my heart |
| 13. To show pity or kindness | Have a heart |
| 14. In trepidation | Have one's heart in one's mouth |
| 15. Basically decent and generous | Heart's in right place |
| 16. To fall in love | Lose one's heart |
| 17. To long for sincerely | Set one's heart on |
| 18. To be encouraged | Take heart |

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 28 'God's love to me is wonderful'
- ♪ AFMSB 41 'I am so glad'
- ♪ AFMSB 48 'In heavenly love abiding'

FURRY FRIENDS



PREPARATION

20 February is National Love Your Pet Day!

- + Ask members to bring photos of their pets to display.
- + Download pictures of pets and information from www.rspca.org.uk.
(Ask your corps officer if you need help with this)

NEEDFUL FOR PETS

'Exercise, discipline and then affection,' instructed the television Dog Whisperer to an owner who was over-indulging her pet. 'Although you love him dearly, you must remember that first of all he is an animal, secondly he is a dog, and finally he is Hector your pooch.'

It was obviously hard for that pet owner to accept. Until then she had been mollycoddling little Hector, pampering him, carrying him everywhere, giving endless treats and allowing him to destroy all sorts of things around the house, smiling at his antics and clearing up after his rampages through the rooms.

Taking control didn't come easily, but eventually owner and pet found a much better working arrangement and, to her surprise, both were noticeably enjoying life so much more!

Perhaps in our relationship with our Master, the more we exercise faith, and as disciples discipline our lives, the more we will be aware of the great love of God that surrounds us. In the words of 1 Peter 5:7 (JBP) 'you are God's personal concern.'



RAINING CATS AND DOGS

Many years ago most cottages had thatched roofs with thick straw piled high, sometimes with only a few wood beams underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip off, with nothing to stop them from falling into the house. Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."

FROGS AND SNAILS AND PUPPY-DOG'S TAILS

What are little boys made of?
 What are little boys made of?
 Snips and snails ("frogs" is often used instead of snips)
 And puppy-dogs' tails,
 That's what little boys are made of.

A poem attributed to Robert Southey. In the earliest known versions, the first ingredient for boys is either 'snips' or 'snigs', the latter being a Cumbrian dialect word for a small eel.

The rhyme sometimes appears as part of a larger work called 'What Folks Are Made Of' or 'What All the World Is Made Of'. Other stanzas describe what babies, young men, young women, sailors, soldiers, nurses, fathers, mothers, old men, old women, and all folks are made of.



WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?

'Oh,' he joked, 'now I'm in the dog house!'

'Well, fancy forgetting our anniversary,' she barked.

'Oh she's like a dog with a bone, she won't let it go,' he ventured.

'Well it was the same last year,' she explained to me, looking hang-dog, 'it's a bone of contention.'

'Let sleeping dogs lie,' he retorted.

Feeling slightly embarrassed, and not wanting to witness a cat and dog fight, I thought I'd join in the canine-laced conversation. Could I prevent her being 'dog- in- a-manger' for the evening? 'It's a dog eat dog world', I laughed 'Let loose the dogs of war!'

'I'm beginning to think he has gone to the dogs,' she yelped dogmatically, 'and I'm dog-tired of having to dog-ear his diary to help him remember. I feel like a general dogsbody.'

'Why keep a dog and bark yourself?' he unwisely retorted. 'Seems like the tail wagging the dog to me. And besides, you can't teach an old dog new tricks. Don't give a dog a bad name, I'm not a lame dog,' he growled doggedly.

I thought he was barking mad to say such things, but he obviously felt he was being brought to heel, and was on a short leash. But perhaps I was barking up the wrong tree. Of course he knew her bark was worse than her bite. However, fearing a full scale dog-fight, I interjected, 'Well, every dog has its day. I double-dog-dare you to make up. Here I brought you both a treat.'

And I left them like a dog with two tails.



PUPPY DOGS

Matthew 15:21-28

A Canaanite woman kneels before Jesus with a plea for help for her daughter, and persisted in faith. Her prayer was short, desperate, fervent, respectful, determined, humble, worshipful, rational and full of faith in Christ. She acknowledged that she had no right to be treated as a member of the covenant people, no claim on his time, and no grounds to demand help – but watch what happens. In a moment a remarkable experience of grace is understood and grasped by faith!

First comes the strange account of Jesus using the language currency of the day in describing non-Jews as 'dogs'. But did you see that gentle smile on Jesus' face and the compassion in his eyes. It robbed the expression of any malice, insult or bitterness. And with his disarming smile warmed her heart. She replied '...but if the children had enough bread couldn't you, as a dog, have the crumbs.' The Greek word used here is puppy dog. A faith that grew in contact with Jesus. And Jesus' eyes lit up at such indomitable faith! They still do.



SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 5 'All things bright and beautiful'
- ♪ AFMSB 36 'He's got the whole world in his hands'
- ♪ AFMSB 63 'Morning has broken'

OLD MOTHER HUBBARD



PREPARATION

- + Invite someone from the corps, a local church or the Trussel Trust to talk about the work of food banks.
- + Suggest that the members could bring a packet or tin (with a long shelf life) which can be donated so that someone with little food can be helped.
- + Cut out from national and local newspapers as many stories as you can about people in need and make a display on the table where the donations can be put.

A RECIPE TO HELP THE PENNIES GO FURTHER

Ingredients for one person:

One sausage or a small bit of leftover meat or bacon, one individual size tin of baked beans, one stale slice of bread, some crumbs of cheese.

Method:

Cut up the sausage into really small slices & put in an oven proof dish.

Pour the beans and stir together.

Make bread crumbs of the bread slice and sprinkle over the mixture.

Add the cheese on the top.

Put in an oven heated to approx. 140 degrees C/ gas 1 or 2.

Leave for ½ hour then increase the temperature to high for a few minutes to brown the top.

Eat and enjoy – it's really filling, has few calories and has all the nutrients you need for a meal.



CLOSING THOUGHT

Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard
To fetch her poor dog a bone
When she got there she found it was bare
And so her poor doggy had none.

When we learned this nursery rhyme as children we probably didn't think about the fact that this scenario is all too real for parents and children all around the world and even in our own area.

(Refer to the newspaper cuttings and the talk given).

It hurts to be hungry.



READ 1 KINGS 17: 8-16

In order for this woman to be fed she first had to admit that she was in need. Then Elijah had to decide on a plan which could help her. Next the woman had to do what he had suggested – she had to use the little she had left so that God would be able to do the miracle for her.

- * We can help those around us who are needy in similar ways.
- * We can recognise and admit that it is a problem.
- * We can ask God to show us how we can help.
- * We can have faith enough to give God the little we have so he can perform another miracle.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SASB 512 (TB 135) 'My life must be Christ's broken bread'
- ♪ SASB 552 (TB 430) 'Thank you, Lord, for all your goodness'
- ♪ SASB 30 (TB 306) 'God of concrete, God of steel'

YOU ARE LOVED – AS GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE

BIBLE READING – JOHN 15:9-17

'Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.'

COLOSSIANS 3:12-14 (NIV 1984)

'Jesus...called to him those he wanted, and they came to him'

MARK 3:13

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

The Bible tells us that God has chosen people from different backgrounds to walk with him: from a family of idol makers he chose Abraham; from a family of slaves he chose Esther; from a huge family of strong men he chose the youngest, David; from prostitutes he chose Rahab; from fearful prophets he chose Elijah; from teenagers he chose Mary; from fishermen he chose Peter; from the shy he chose Bartholomew; from the middle class, Matthew; from dishonest tax-collectors he chose Zacchaeus and from the educated and well prepared, Paul. I could go on and on mentioning ordinary, incapable or unprepared people that God has chosen.

But you must have a question mark in your mind: what were they chosen for? 'For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession' (Deuteronomy 7:6).

He chose each one to belong to him as his treasured possession, to be loved by him and be part of his master plan to touch humanity in different ways. As the Creator, God knows everything about everyone and yet he chooses people to be his treasured possessions.



OUR LIVES TODAY

Only God can look at a sinner and see a saint. He embraces us with open arms, knowing how to handle our human frailties, issues and roller-coaster emotions. God sees us at our worst and brings out our best. God can relate to every situation we, as humans, will ever experience. God is able to do that by his awesome and unfailing love for us.

I remember the time my husband asked me to marry him. I was 16 and was already in love with him but we really did not know much about each other. Somewhat unbelieving, I asked him: 'Why do you want to marry me?' He answered 'To love you and make you happy.' I accepted his proposal and I am loved and have been happy for almost 30 years.

In exactly the same way God invites us to be in relationship with him. Why? Because he loves us and wants to make us happy. He expressed and proved his love for us when his precious Son died to save us. Jesus living among us was the voice and presence of God calling us to himself.

Why are the names of the people mentioned previously known to us today? Because they were chosen and they came to God – they accepted God's love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the symbols of being chosen in your society/culture today? How does it affect you personally?
2. How does being chosen by God make a difference in the lives of people?
3. What has changed in your life since you became aware that you are chosen by God?
4. How does the change in your life tell that you are loved by God?

LIVING AS LOVED

Take time to reflect on what the signs are in your daily life that show you and others that you are chosen by God. Enjoy the love of God every minute of your day and be happy.

Today God continues to choose people to love and to make them happy – ordinary as well as prepared ones. It is up to each person to listen, go to him and be in relationship with him.

I have known I am loved as God chose me as a little child around the dinner table at home with my parents in Brazil. His love has embraced me in every area of ministry during more than 22 years serving as an officer in my home country. His presence, comfort, wisdom and strength were some expressions of his love for me and my family when we were sent to work in Mozambique. Now I have the privilege to serve as Zonal Secretary for Women's Ministries in the Americas and Caribbean Zone, at International Headquarters (IHQ) in London, where I can confirm God's love every moment of my days.

COMMISSIONER DEISE ELIASSEN

ST PATRICK'S DAY



PREPARATION

- + Irish flag, green tablecloth, bowl of shamrocks or green plants.
- + Invite members to wear something green (in some places if you don't wear green on St Patrick's Day you get pinched, even if you aren't Irish!)
- + Refreshments could be Irish soda bread/potato bread or green-dyed foods
- + You may want to print off 'The Irish Blessing' as a bookmark.

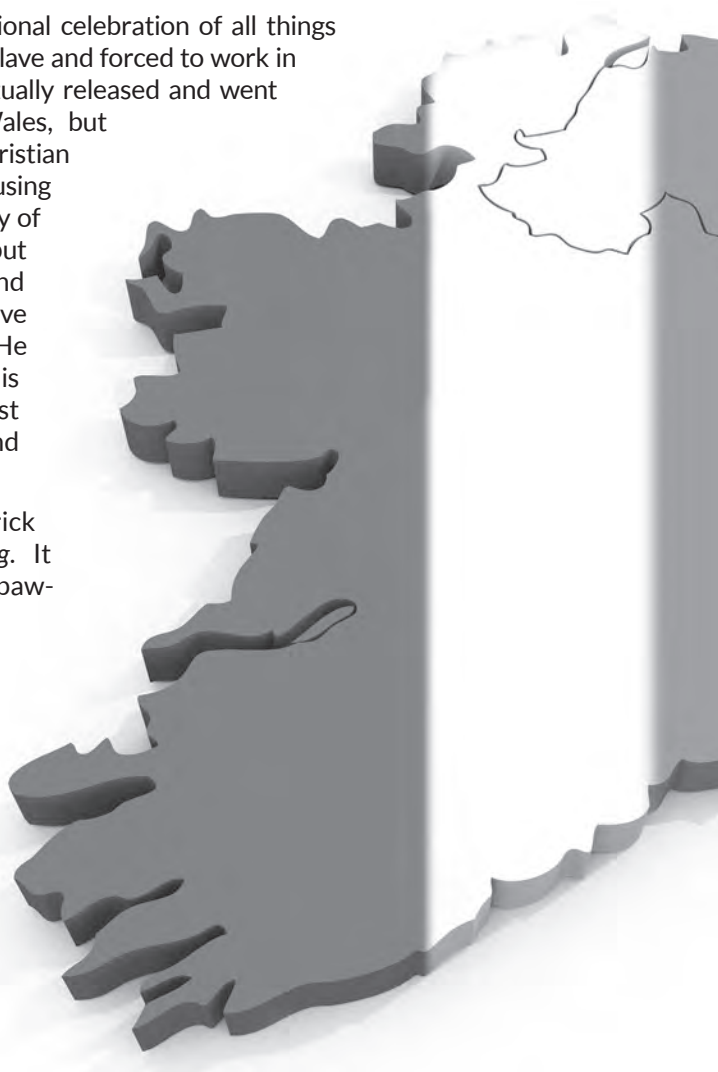
ST PATRICK'S DAY

The 17 March is a day of international celebration of all things Irish. St Patrick was captured as a slave and forced to work in the fields of Ireland. He was eventually released and went back to his home country of Wales, but decided to return to Ireland as a Christian missionary. He is credited with using the three-leaved shamrock as a way of explaining the Trinity – God as one but in three parts, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He is also said to have driven all the snakes out of Ireland. He is now Ireland's patron saint, and his day of celebration is shared amongst Irish people in both Ireland and further afield.

The equivalent of the name Patrick in the Irish language is *Pádraig*. It can be pronounced as either 'paw-rig' or 'pawd-rig'.

(www.irishlanguagetoday.org)

Ireland is one island made up of two countries. The Republic of Ireland is an independent country that was once under British rule, but gained independence in 1922. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom. There are 32 counties in Ireland, six in the North and 26 in the Republic. Ireland is also divided into four provinces: Connacht, Munster, Leinster and Ulster.



QUIZ

1. When is St Patrick's Day celebrated? **17 March**
2. Another Irish saint is Brigid. When is St Brigid's Day celebrated? **1 February**
3. What is the national symbol of Ireland? **Shamrock (or harp)**
4. What sport does Irishman Rory McIlroy play? **Golf**
5. What famous ship, which sank in 1912, was built in Belfast? **The Titanic**
6. What is the capital of the Republic of Ireland? **Dublin**
7. What three colours are in the Irish flag? **Green, white, orange**
8. What currency do they use in the Republic of Ireland? **Euros - before Euros it was punts**
9. Bram Stoker was born in Dublin in 1847. What horror character did he write about? **Dracula**

THE BLARNEY STONE

This stone, built into the battlements of Blarney Castle in County Cork, is said to give the person who kisses it the power of eloquent speech. The legend is that the builder of the castle was involved in a lawsuit and begged a local magic woman for help. She told him to kiss the first stone he saw in the morning – he did, and then went into court and spoke so well he won his case. He then included the stone into the building of a parapet in the castle.

People from around the world travel to Blarney to kiss the stone, but it's no easy task! To reach it, you have to climb to the top of the castle, then lie on your back on a piece of scaffolding and lean over backward to kiss it from an upside down angle. Would you kiss the Blarney stone for 'the gift of the gab?' What other strange things do people do just to keep up traditions or legends?



IRISH BLESSING

May the road
rise to meet
you

May the wind
be always at
your back,

May the sun
shine warm
upon your face,

The rains fall
soft upon your
fields, and,

Until we meet
again,

May God
hold you in
the palm of his
hand.

HOW TO COUNT IN IRISH

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. A haon /ah hay-un/ = One | 6. A sé /ah shay/ = Six |
| 2. A dó /ah doh/ = Two | 7. A seacht /ah shocked/ = Seven |
| 3. A trí /ah tree/ = Three | 8. A hocht /ah hukt/ = Eight |
| 4. A ceathair /ah cah-hir/ = Four | 9. A naoi /ah nay-ee/ = Nine |
| 5. A cúig /ah coo-ig/ = Five | 10. A deich /ah jeh/ = Ten |

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:14-16 and John 8:12

There are many stories associated with Patrick. His captivity as a slave, the shamrock analogy and the snake fable. As fascinating as these stories are, there is none more dramatic than Patrick's defiant stance in the face of the high chieftains of ancient Ireland.

Over the centuries the warring tribes of Ireland fought for prominence in the land. The greatest honour was to be crowned the High King of Ireland. The place of rule was the mystical and sacred hill of Tara, in the centre of the island. To signify the reign of the king and demonstrate who was in charge, a huge fire was lit at the top of this hill. On witnessing these fires, Patrick and his early converts to Christianity boldly climbed the hill of Tara, their backs laden with sticks, branches and logs, and built a magnificent beacon that blazed in the night. In doing so Patrick proclaimed that God was in charge of this land and that Jesus was the Light of the World.

The light of Christ still burns brightly today in many Irish hearts and on occasions such as St Patrick's Day we listen for the echo of Patrick's voice reminding us that God is still in charge no matter what land we live in, and Jesus remains the light of our world.

HAVE AN IRISH SING-SONG!

Suggestions: 'Molly Malone'

'Danny Boy' (Londonderry Air)

'Too ra loo ra loo ra'

'When Irish eyes are smiling'

'It's a long way to Tipperary'

SUGGESTED SONGS

Songs from the AFM Song book that have Irish tunes:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| ♪ AFMSB 12 | 'Be thou my vision' |
| ♪ AFMSB 58 | 'Lord of all hopefulness' |
| ♪ AFMSB 108 | 'He found me with a burden' |
| ♪ AFMSB 120 | 'It's a good time to get acquainted' |

STREAMS IN THE DESERT

(WORLD DAY OF PRAYER – EGYPT)

PREPARATION

- + For information and resources, together with details of services in your area, see www.wwdp.org.uk (Ask your corps officer if you need help)
- + Craft material (see below)

INTRODUCTION

The World Day of Prayer is an international ecumenical Christian women's initiative. It is run under the motto 'Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action', and is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March. The movement aims to bring together people of various races, cultures and traditions in a yearly common Day of Prayer as well as in closer fellowship, understanding and action throughout the year. The focus for this year's prayer is Egypt.





QUIZ

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. What is the river in Egypt called? | The Nile |
| 2. Name an animal that lives in Egypt? | Camel |
| 3. Name the sea in Egypt? | The Red Sea |
| 4. Who was the baby found floating in a basket on the river by an Egyptian Princess? | Moses |
| 5. What were Egyptian Kings called? | Pharaohs |
| 6. Where were Egyptian Kings buried? | Pyramids |

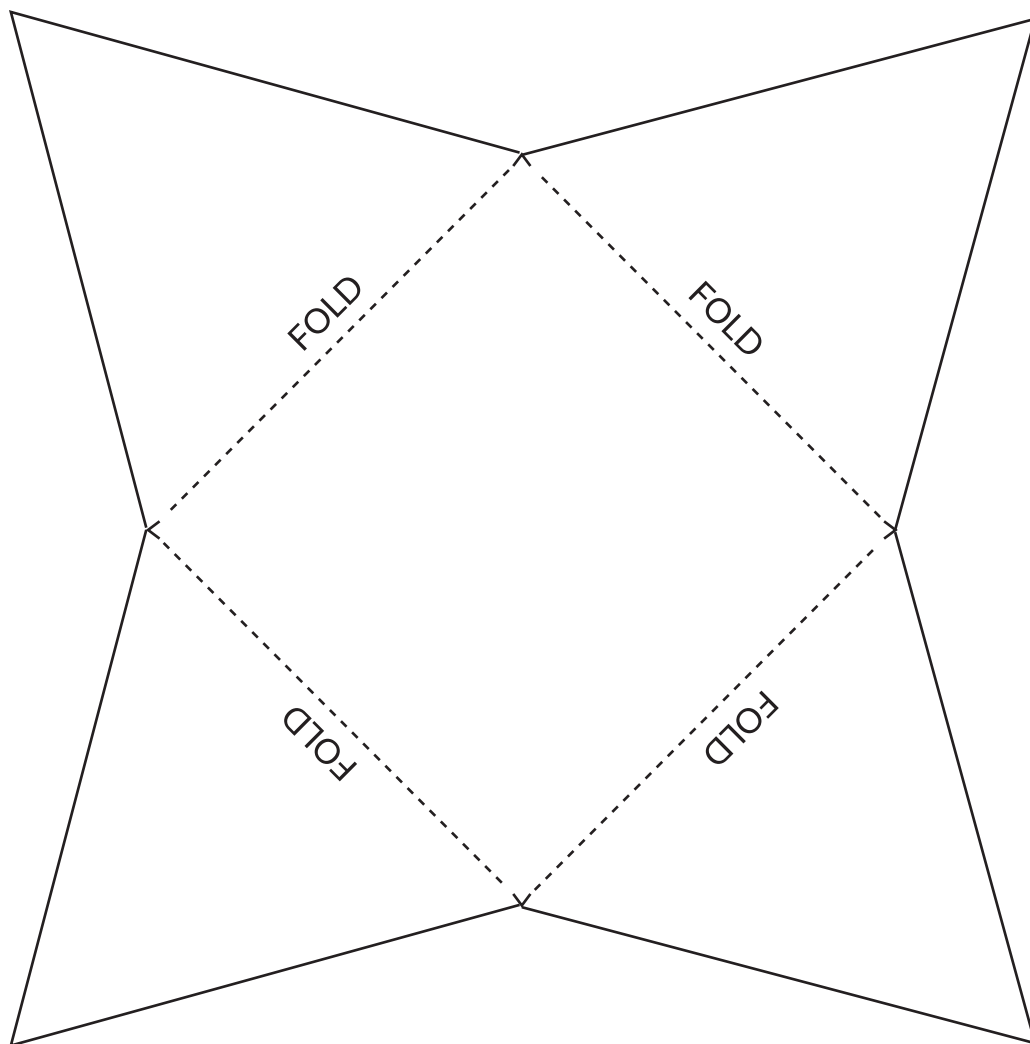
CRAFT

To make a pyramid gift box you will need:

- * Coloured card with the template (see page 57) drawn on it
- * Scissors
- * Hole punch
- * Embellishments or decorations
- * Glue
- * Thin ribbon

1. Cut the template out from the card
2. Punch holes close to each of the 4 points
3. Fold each triangle upwards along the lines to form a pyramid
4. Decorate the outside of your pyramid
5. Thread some ribbons through the holes, tie together and your box is com

You might like to give each lady a wrapped chocolate to put inside for them to give away.



THOUGHTS

Isaiah 44:2-4

Cut out small pieces of paper, possibly in the shape of water droplets, and give one to each member.

Ask your members to:

1. Think of a time when they felt as if they were in a desert or dark place, either spiritually or otherwise. Play some quiet music whilst people think.
2. Think about how God entered this situation bringing light, life and hope. Play some quiet music again.
3. Write on the paper water droplets a word that may help others to experience "streams bringing life in the desert".
4. Collect the water droplets and place them on a table and invite people to take one water droplet away with them as encouragement.

'LORD OF MY LIFE'

I bring before you the desert areas that trouble me
The shifting sands that cause my steps to falter and my mind to wander
The grit in my eyes that blinds me to the needs of others
The dryness in my mouth that prevents me praising you.

Lord of my life
Like water gushing from a rock, you are the source of my life
Like cool water you satisfy my thirst and revive my heart
Like a flowing stream you wash and cleanse me

Lord of my life
May the living water of your Spirit flow through me
May the refreshment of your Spirit cause me to bear fruit for you.
Open my heart, O Lord, to your love and my lips to your praises.

EILEEN RHODES

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SASB 54 'The Lord's my shepherd'
- ♪ SoF 192 'How lovely on the mountains'
- ♪ SASB 157 'Glorious things of thee are spoken'
- ♪ SASB 677 'The Day Thou Gavest'



MR & MRS

PREPARATION

- + Purchase and prepare craft materials
- + Photocopy Famous Couples quiz below for each member
- + Check out *Connect* CD for Pairs quiz
- + This is the perfect week to make the group feel special. Chocolates, heart shaped biscuits and flowers could be put on the tables.
- + Organise a *Mr & Mrs* of 'Friends' questions

INTRODUCTION

'*Mr & Mrs*, be nice to each other, *Mr & Mrs*, we've got to love one another'. These were the catchy words of the game show ***Mr & Mrs***. The aim of the programme was to show how much or how little married couples knew about each other! The show produced a great deal of laughter as couples tried to talk their way out of answers they'd given which they wish they hadn't, or as they confess their worst faults and embarrassing moments. The excitement grew as the more answers on which they agreed, the nearer they got to a big jackpot.

Derek Batey, the long-time presenter, said 'I thought that, after 13 shows, viewers would probably have had enough', he recalls, 'but it went straight to number one in the ratings. From 1973, series after series came and went and the popularity of the show went from strength to strength.'

Now regularly running on ITV1 in the UK and around the world, the programme is now called *All Star Mr & Mrs* and features famous couples trying to prove just how much or how little they really know about each other!

'MR & MRS' FUNNY MOMENTS

A contestant was asked to name his wife's favourite flower. 'Oh Derek, that's easy,' came the reply from the husband as he smiled at his wife. 'It's Homepride.'

A tough lad from Glasgow – 5 feet tall and built like a brick shed – was asked, 'When you're having a meal at home and there's no-one else around, just you and your wife, do you always have serviettes, sometimes have serviettes, or never have serviettes?' He looked at me for about three minutes and then said slowly, 'Do you mean boiled or fried?'

'WONDERFUL STORIES OF LOVE'

Film clips suggestions:

- * *When Harry met Sally* (the last five minutes).
- * *Love Actually* (either the restaurant proposal or the airport dash).
- * *Vicar of Dibley* (episodes where Alice or Geraldine gets married).

(Ask your corps officer if you need help here)

FAMOUS COUPLES

These famous couples have been mixed up using lines match the right partners.

Homer Simpson

Clark Kent

Samson

Fred Astaire

Cleopatra

Napoleon

Victoria

Rhett Butler

Barbie

Shrek

Bonnie

Popeye

Fred

Sandy

Kate

Charles

Laurel

Dennis Menace

Barrack

Mr Darcy

Delilah

Elizabeth Bennett

Clyde

Scarlett O'Hara

Albert

Michelle

Wills

Marge Bouvier

Gnasher

Josephine

Ginger Rogers

Wilma

Camilla

Ken

Anthony

Lois Lane

Danny

Hardy

Olive

Fiona





CRAFT IDEA

Hanging Heart Card Blanks

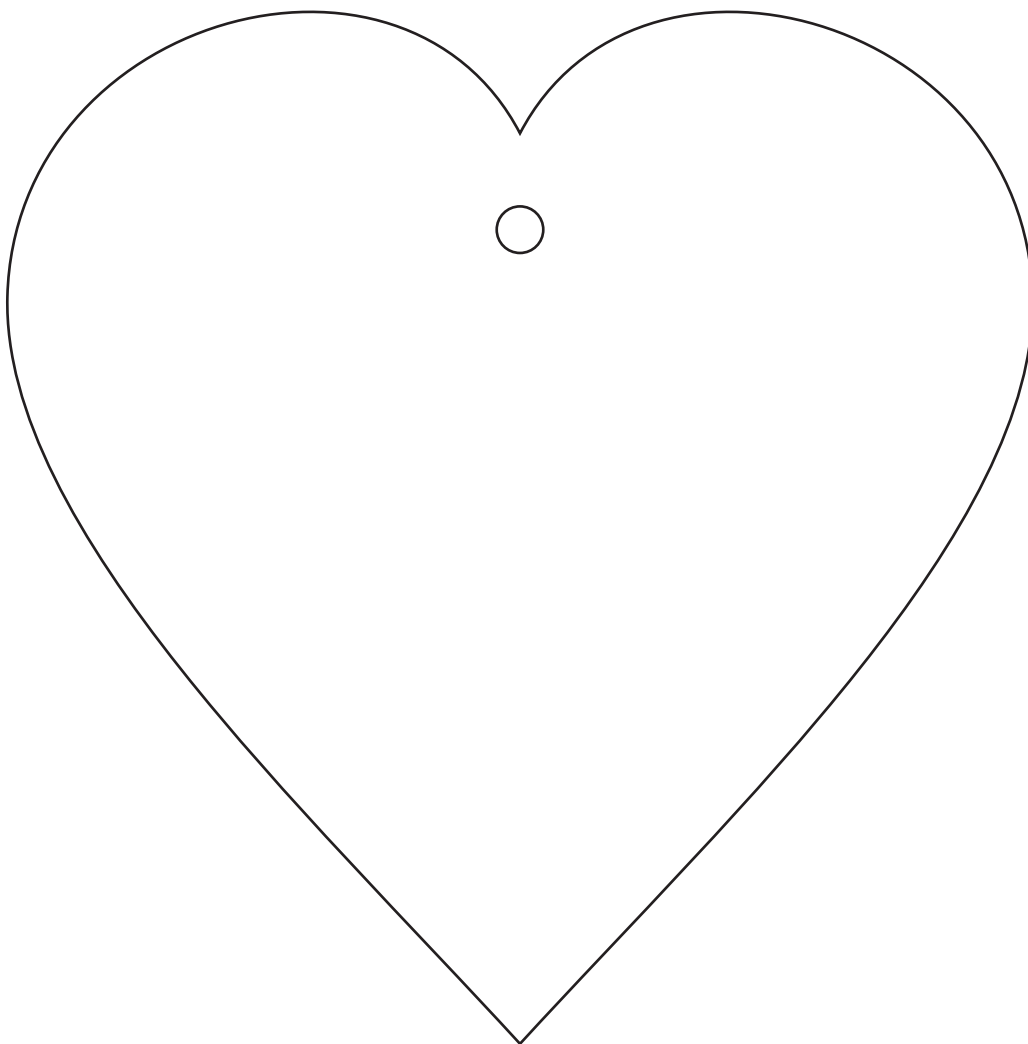
Available from Bakerross.com. (Or make your own)

Decorate one side, suggestions – wrapping paper – material (glue required), sequins, colouring pens

Use the other side to write the names of the people that important to them.

PRAYER SUGGESTION

Use these hearts in your prayers – pray for the names on the hearts. Alternatively you could use heart shaped 'post it' notes



THOUGHT

Romans 8:35-39

Nothing can separate us from the love of God

When the show *Mr & Mrs* was at its height in the 1970's it was also at a time when marriage was going out of fashion (a trend that has continued) and divorce rates were rising. Its popularity bucked the trend as people tuned in to get an insight into how well married couples knew each other or didn't, as the case may be! It promoted the idea that it was good for couples to work at getting to know one another.

In the verses from Romans 8 we are told that God's love for us is stronger than any human love and we can never be separated from it. We may experience worries and doubts, or be overwhelmed by our inadequacies, but we are to be reassured that his love is complete and perfect and is not reliant on the way we feel. We are loved because God is love.

In the song 'For the beauty of the earth' we sing 'For the love which from our birth, over and around us lies.' Our earthly relationships though not perfect have reflected some of God's love into our lives.

This week thank God for those relationships that are important to you and remind you that you are loved. Remember in moments of stillness that you are loved by a God who will never let go.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 20 'For the beauty of the earth'
- ♪ SASB 49 'As high as the sky'
- ♪ AFMSB 14 'Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine'
- ♪ SOF 514 'Such love'

A LAYERED LIFE



PREPARATION

- + Provide a large bowl of onions as a feature and, if helpful to your group, a large bowl of cheese and onion crisps to share during the afternoon.
- + If somebody were able to make some onion soup, this could be put into containers and members could be invited to take a container of soup to one of the shut-in members and share something from the afternoon with them at the same time.

ONIONS TODAY

Imagine a life without onions! Cheese and onion crisps, pizzas topped with onions, liver and onions, hot dogs and onions and a store cupboard addition of dried onions to soups, stews and dishes.

The common cultivated onion is actually an edible, summer-flowering, perennial bulb that grows best in sunny locations, with well drained soil. It is part of the allium plant family and can grow to the height of 12-28 inches. This family includes garlic, leeks and shallots.



ONIONS IN BIBLE TIMES...

We read accounts of onions as far back as 3000BC. History is filled with fascinating facts about the onion.

- * Alexander the Great apparently fed huge quantities to his troops to strengthen them for battle.
- * Egyptian tomb paintings often feature onions and they are depicted more than any other plant.
- * Throughout history, healers have accorded onions near magical powers to cure everything from baldness to infections.
- * They are mentioned in the Bible in Numbers 11:4-9. The Israelites are moaning against God and say: 'We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and melons, and the leeks, and the ONIONS and the garlic. But all we have now is Manna every day.'*

*(They were too busy looking back to appreciate what they had)

ONIONS – MANY LAYERS

A bit like a Babushka Russian doll, an onion has many layers. Just as the doll might have dolls that open up and reveal a smaller doll within them, we are made in a similar way. A parent, a sibling, a son or daughter, a friend, a neighbour, before we get on to professional and social roles.

On a deeper level, we have many layers. There are the parts that people see and there are other parts that probably only our nearest and dearest get to see – and sometimes we wish they didn't. As someone once said,

'There's a bit of good in the worst of us and a bit of bad in the best of us'.





Edward Sandford Martin took the title of his poem from the story in the Bible in which a man was possessed by bad spirits which said, 'my name is Legion, for I am many.'

MY NAME IS LEGION

'Within my earthly temple, there's a crowd;
There's one of us that's humble, one that's proud,
There's one that's broken-hearted for his sins,
There's one that unrepentant sits and grins;
There's one that loves his neighbour as himself,
And one that cares for naught but fame and pelf.
From much corroding care, I should be free
If I could once determine which is me.'

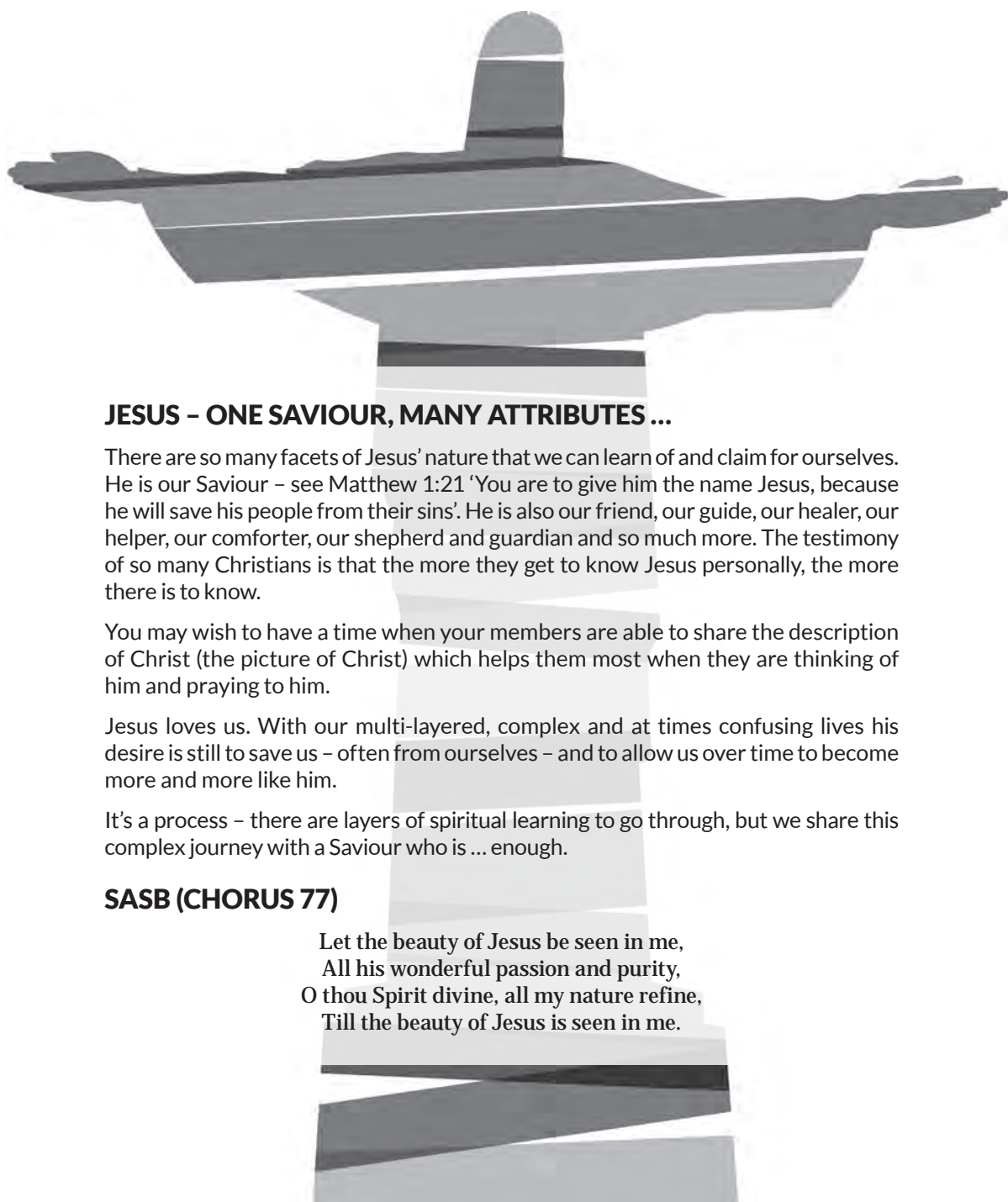
SCRIPTURE

Psalm 139

There are a number of ways in which you might wish to share this psalm, or verses from it, with your group. The message you want them to receive is that they are known by God – every layer – and he loves them unconditionally. The key verses are 139:1-3; 13-16 and verses 23-24:

Search me, O God and know my heart;
Test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me and
Lead me in the way everlasting.

God knows us better than we know ourselves. Having searched and tested and seen he wants to lead us. Will we follow him today?



JESUS – ONE SAVIOUR, MANY ATTRIBUTES ...

There are so many facets of Jesus' nature that we can learn of and claim for ourselves. He is our Saviour – see Matthew 1:21 'You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins'. He is also our friend, our guide, our healer, our helper, our comforter, our shepherd and guardian and so much more. The testimony of so many Christians is that the more they get to know Jesus personally, the more there is to know.

You may wish to have a time when your members are able to share the description of Christ (the picture of Christ) which helps them most when they are thinking of him and praying to him.

Jesus loves us. With our multi-layered, complex and at times confusing lives his desire is still to save us – often from ourselves – and to allow us over time to become more and more like him.

It's a process – there are layers of spiritual learning to go through, but we share this complex journey with a Saviour who is ... enough.

SASB (CHORUS 77)

Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All his wonderful passion and purity,
O thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine,
Till the beauty of Jesus is seen in me.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 5 'All things bright and beautiful'
- ♪ AFMSB 30 'Great is thy faithfulness'
- ♪ SoF 1377 'Jesus be the centre'

WHERE IS MARCH?

PREPARATION

- ✦ Ask members to bring postcards or souvenirs of holidays with place names on them.
- ✦ Ask if any member has a spoon collection.

INTRODUCTION

Before the draining of the Fens, marshlands near The Wash in the East of England, the town of March was an island. There is evidence that the Romans settled at March. During the reign of Elizabeth I, March served as a minor port for barges carrying coal and grain. Now only pleasure boats use the canal that links with the River Nene. Charles II granted March a Royal Charter to hold a weekly market and two fairs annually. It remained the county town of the former Isle of Ely, until administrative changes redrew the map.

FUNNY PLACE NAMES

The name March is presumably a derivation of marsh. Certainly in days gone by no-one would have willingly marched around the low-lying ground that frequently flooded. Britain has more than its share of unusual place names. (Members might like to share examples). Eg Middle Wallop. Street names in London often shed light on what used to happen in that vicinity. Pudding Lane, Mincing Lane, Petticoat Lane, Cold Bath Square and Threadneedle Street. Blow Bladder Street does not sound the best place to reside, but what about Tripe Yard? Would you prefer to live in Do Little Lane or Effort Road in Tooting? Would you choose to live in Melancholy Walk in Southwark? Surely no one would want to live in Addle Street in London. The medieval word 'addle', comes originally from a Dutch word meaning 'manure'!

(Members could be invited to suggest new place names for areas in their locality - funny or serious.)



A MARCH QUIZ

- Who marched who to the top of the hill?
Grand Old Duke of York and ten thousand men.
- What meteorological conditions are said to prevail in March?
March winds
- What are some uniformed U.S.A college musical ensembles called?
Marching bands
- What was the struggle for communism in China known as?
The long march
- What was Julius Caesar warned about?
The Ides of March
- Who did Alice share a tea-party with, other than the Mad Hatter and the Dormouse?
The March Hare
- What normally happens when Mendelssohn's Opus 61 in C major is played?
There's a Wedding March
- What usually has four beats to the bar and is heavily accented?
Military march
- What is a procession of protesters called?
A march
- What is a common order given to soldiers on parade?
Quick March!

EAST, WEST, HOME'S BEST!

Sharing of postcards or spoons

Sing or read - 'There's a place for us' from West Side Story.

MORE STRANGE NAMES

When in 1858 a small settlement in Missouri, U.S.A, was large enough to have a post office, a man seeking to be the first postmaster there wrote to the United States Postal Service requesting that the growing town be called Excelsior. He was notified that there was already a town of that name. He submitted four other titles, all of which were already in use. Finally in frustration he wrote, 'Send any name, so long as it is a little bit peculiar. The result - a town called Peculiar!

Late at night, in the mid 19th century, some miners were sitting around a campfire in Colorado, U.S.A. They had been discussing naming the site. Tired and unable to agree, one of the miners said, 'Let's forget it, let it drop. We'll think about it in the morning when we're all wide awake.' 'That's it!' exclaimed another, 'we'll call it Wide Awake.' And they did. Today Wide Awake is a thriving town east of Denver.



TEETOTAL STREET

THOUGHT AND SCRIPTURE

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

PSALM 90:1

A little research into place names in the Bible can be illuminating. For example, names beginning with Beth refer to a house, as in Bethel, 'house of God'; Bethesda, meaning 'house of mercy and kindness', where Jesus healed a man who had been ill for thirty eight years; and Bethlehem, 'house of bread', where Jesus was born. Bethphage, where Jesus sent two disciples to collect a donkey, means 'house of unripe figs'.

Moses had instructed the Israelites – 'You are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling.' Deuteronomy 12:5. Fortunately, one does not have to move to a place starting with 'Beth' to be aware that God is present. The New Testament tells us that even before Jesus was born he was called 'Immanuel – God with us.' His last words, recorded by Matthew were 'And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.' Matthew 28:20. Surely the best place to be is to be at home in his presence.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SoF 1076 'We are marching in the light of God'
- ♪ SASB 810 'March on salvation soldiers'
- ♪ SASB 817 'Valiant soldier, marching to the fray'

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

PREPARATION

- + You may want to invite a gardener to speak to your group, it could be someone who has a beautiful garden, or has an allotment and will be preparing it for a new season of fruit and vegetables.
- + Perhaps invite a gardening tutor from a local college, or even an outing to the gardens of a stately home.

SHARE

- * Have you ever tried growing fruit or vegetables? Were you successful?
- * How do you deal with slugs and snails?
- * What plant in your garden are you most pleased with?
- * What plant/flower has significance for you?

QUIZ

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. What would a gardener do with a dibber? | Transplant seedlings or small plants |
| 2. The love apple is the original name for what? | Tomato |
| 3. The death cap is the most poisonous variety of what? | Mushroom |
| 4. Which part of a tree is used to make cork? | Bark |
| 5. Which are the largest and tallest trees in the world? | California Redwood |
| 6. Which grain is used to make semolina? | Wheat |
| 7. What name is given to clipping trees and hedges into ornamental shapes? | Topiary |
| 8. Shepherds purse is a type of what? | Weed |
| 9. Which herb is often mentioned with rosemary? | Thyme |
| 10. Is a blue tulip fact or fiction? | True |



Bible reading Genesis 2:9

The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground – trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Bible reading 2 Peter 3:18

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

THOUGHT

Gardening can be physically hard work, from cutting the grass and weeding to dead-heading flowers and pruning shrubs. It sometimes seems to be a never ending task. But how lovely it is when we have tidied up part of the garden and can stand back and enjoy the result of our labour. Seeing things that we have planted grow and blossom is so encouraging.

I wonder if we ever take a few moments to remember and see God's hand working as we look at our gardens coming back to life again after a long winter? Does it make you recall again that God is in control of all things? Are we mindful that God is a bountiful and abundant provider? As we enjoy looking at the plants and flowers in our gardens, let us praise God for the wonderful diversity of his creation.

It gives us pleasure to see our gardens grow and it gives God pleasure to see us as his people grow. We grow when we develop our patience, our love, our faith, our joy and all those other fruits of the spirit that we are given when we accept Jesus into our lives as our Saviour. Keep growing, and know that God delights to see you grow!

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 5 'All things bright and beautiful'
- ♪ SASB 2 'All creatures of our God and King'
- ♪ SASB 552 'Thank you Lord for all your goodness'

LOVED AND HOLY

BIBLE READING

‘Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, the living stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him – you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.’

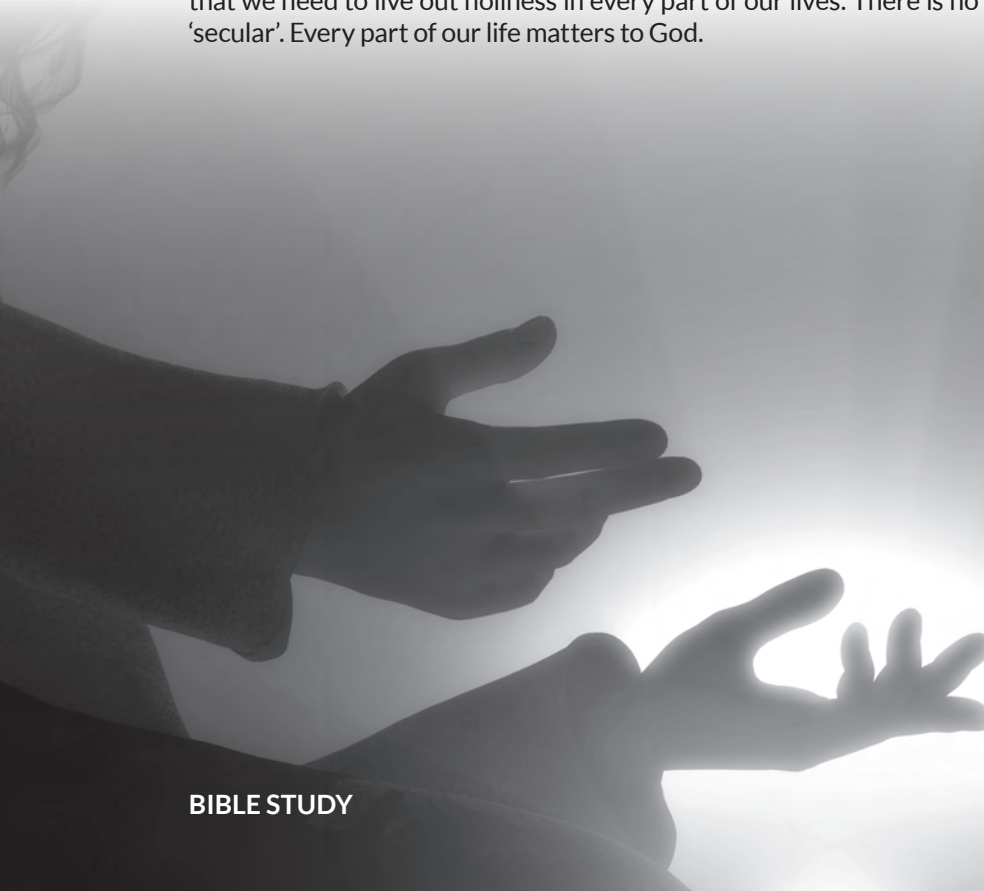
1 PETER 2:1-5,9

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

Peter reminds us that we are called to be holy individuals in order that we might be ‘a holy people’. This is not only a personal choice, but also a command given by God when he says: ‘Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy’ (Leviticus 19:2).

We who claim to be believers need to replicate, to mirror God as we know him, through the things we say and do. ‘Holiness in all things,’ Peter says (in the verses we have shared) that on our part it is a deliberate decision to reject anything unholy and to strive, daily, to ‘grow up in our salvation’ as holy people.

Zechariah – an Old Testament prophet – gives us a lovely picture of holiness when he sees that we need to live out holiness in every part of our lives. There is no divide, no ‘sacred’ or ‘secular’. Every part of our life matters to God.



'On that day 'HOLY TO THE LORD' will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the LORD'S house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar.'

ZECHARIAH 14:20

Isn't that a wonderful picture? The tiny bells decorating the reins on the horses will matter as much as the immaculate golden plates in the temple. Every area of our life holy, as if unto the Lord.

OUR LIVES TODAY

When I first met my husband, I wanted to make sure I made the 'best impression'. I always tried to dress smartly, to look my best, to speak well, to give a 'good impression'. It's often the case that we want to present our 'better self' for those we love, and who love us. (More than 20 years later, I am still doing my best!)

Being loved by God means that I want to do all I can to be my better self: 'To lead a life that is clean in thought, word and deed' (Junior Soldier's Promise). I don't want to disappoint him and I want to live my life in such a way that my everyday holiness will impact upon the lives of others. This takes time, but it matters enough for us to make time. It is not just a matter of the heart ('Set your hearts on things above' (Colossians 3:1)) but also of the mind ('Set your minds on things above' (Colossians 3:2)). Chosen and loved by God, to be holy women, focusing and mirroring our Lord Jesus Christ.

Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in him always, and feed on his word.

WILLIAM DUNN LONGSTAFF
(SASB 458 V 1 – 1986 EDITION)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does 'holy living' look like where you are today?
2. In what ways this week might you make/take time to be holy?
3. In the light of 1 Peter 2:1, what things might you 'take off' in order to live a holy life and, in light of Colossians 3:12, what might you 'put on'?

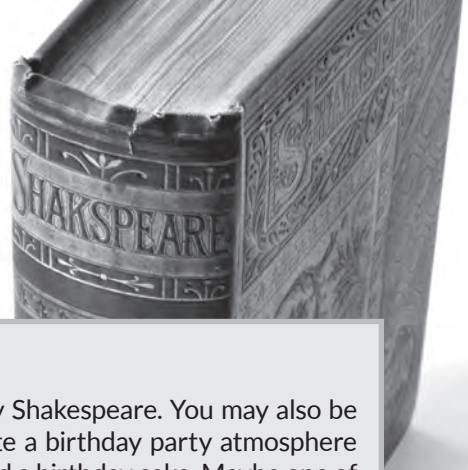
LIVING AS LOVED

Make a list of friends or family members or areas of your community that you can influence by your 'holy living'. The challenge is that this is not only about 'doing' but also about 'being'. In what way(s) will your presence witness to your life of holiness this week?

I have known I am loved as I have been blessed to be brought up in a Christian family and have responded to God's call on my life. My journey as an officer has been an exciting privilege. My appointments have included Faith House (Midnight Patrol) and The Haven Children's Home and corps in the UK and Australia. I now head up the Adult and Family Ministries Unit for the United Kingdom Territory with the Republic of Ireland. I thank God for his unconditional love, plan and provision for me.

MAJOR VAL MYLECHREEST

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SHAKESPEARE!



PREPARATION

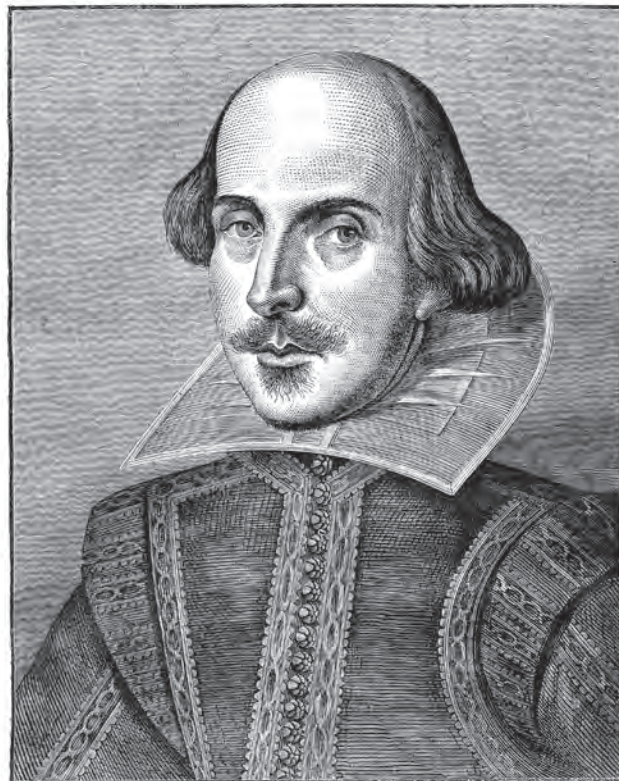
- + You may want to bring in books or plays written by Shakespeare. You may also be able to display advertising posters. You could create a birthday party atmosphere with balloons, bunting, streamers, party poppers and a birthday cake. Maybe one of your members could dress up as Shakespeare. If you are using PowerPoint you can download portraits of him or use book, play jackets and/or posters you could use a DVD clip from a Shakespearean play. (Please ask your corps officer/centre manager if you need some help.)

GIVE AWAY

You could print out a quote or part of a sonnet for your members to take home.

INTRODUCTION

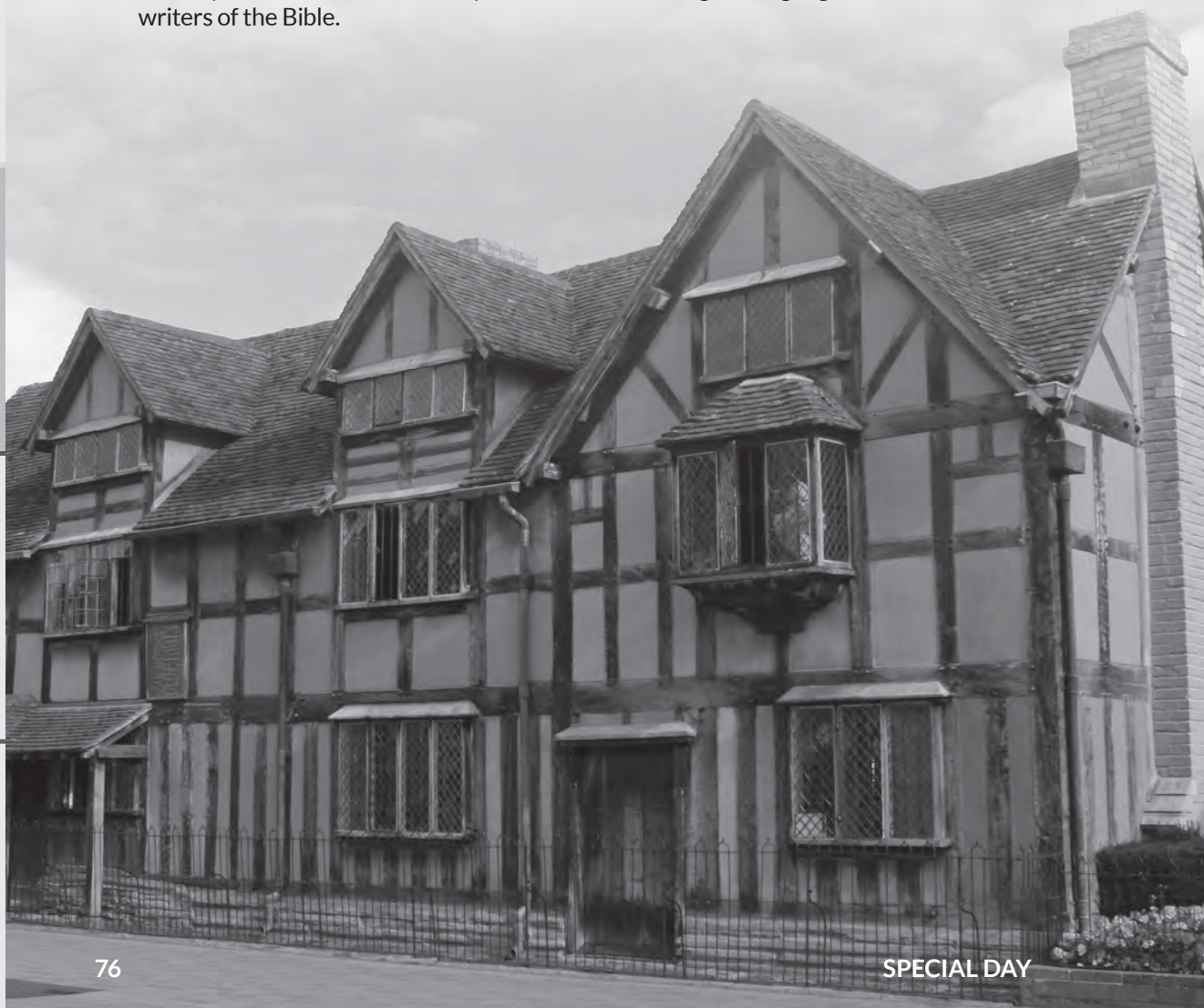
This year we celebrate the 450th birthday of William Shakespeare, known for his play writing, sonnets, acting and his link with the Globe Theatre in London. Today many young people study his work in English classes at school.



FACTS

Shakespeare was born on 23 April 1564 and died on 23 April 1616, on his 52nd birthday, coinciding with St George's Day. How fitting that the great English writer is so closely identified with the patron saint of England!

- * Shakespeare had seven siblings. Joan (1558); Margaret (1562); Gilbert (1566); Joan II (1569); Anne (1571); Richard (1574) and Edmund (1580).
- * Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway when he was 18. She was 26 and she was pregnant when they married. Their first child was born six months after the wedding.
- * Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway had three children together – a son, Hamnet, who died in 1596, and two daughters, Susanna and Judith. His only granddaughter Elizabeth – daughter of Susanna – died childless in 1670. Shakespeare therefore has no descendants.
- * During his life, Shakespeare wrote 37 plays and 154 sonnets! This means an average 1.5 plays a year since he first started writing in 1589.
- * Shakespeare was also an actor who performed many of his own plays as well as those of other playwrights. During his life Shakespeare performed before Queen Elizabeth I and, later, before James I who was an enthusiastic patron of his work.
- * Shakespeare is the second most quoted writer in the English language – after the various writers of the Bible.





QUIZ

- Which London theatre was Shakespeare associated with? **The Globe**
- What happened to the Globe Theatre in 1613? **It burnt down**
- How many words did Shakespeare actually 'invent'? **About 3000**
- From which play does this opening line come: When shall we three meet again in thunder, lightning, or in rain? **Macbeth**
- Complete the following famous line from Hamlet: Something is rotten in the state of... **Denmark**
- In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which character's head is transformed into that of an ass? **Nick Bottom the weaver**
- Which of the following Shakespeare plays was written in collaboration with playwright, John Fletcher? **Two Noble Kinsmen**
- Who said, 'O, Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo'? **Juliet, in Romeo and Juliet**
- Who said, 'To be or not to be'? **Hamlet**
- Name as many works of Shakespeare as you can.

SCRIPTURE

Song of Songs 2:8-13, 2 Corinthians 5:14-20

Romance and Reconciliation

Romeo and Juliet is a romantic tragedy written early in the career of William Shakespeare, about two young star-crossed lovers whose deaths ultimately reconcile their feuding families.

Romance and reconciliation seem to be part of life whichever era you come from; 450 years ago in the time of Shakespeare, 2000 years ago in the time of Jesus living on earth, 3000 years ago when King Solomon was on the throne of Israel and of course today.

Song of Songs, written by King Solomon, is an infrequently read book of the Bible with romance and love oozing out of every beautifully crafted phrase. It shows the love between man and woman, and affirms the sanctity of marriage. It also is a picture of God's deep, strong love for his people.

2 Corinthians, written by Paul, shows us just how amazing God's love is for his people. Jesus gave his life on the cross to reconcile us to God. Never before or since has there been such a phenomenal, wonderful act of love.

Today, there is a great need in people to feel that they are loved. There are many situations that need reconciliation and for love to be brought to those issues so healing can take place. Let us be people who seek reconciliation and love.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE QUOTES

Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none.

If music be the food of love, play on.

God has given you one face, and you make yourself another.

To thine own self be true ...

Better three hours too soon than a minute too late.

The course of true love never did run smooth.

What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.

How far that little candle throws its beams!

So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

Now, God be praised, that to believing souls gives light in darkness, comfort in despair.

Who could refrain that had a heart to love and in that heart courage to make love known?

www.brainyquote.com

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 28 'God's love to me is wonderful'
- ♪ AFMSB 37 'Help us build a loving world'
- ♪ AFMSB 83 'There is a name I love to hear'
- ♪ AFMSB 127 'Let there be love shared among us'

LOVE DIVINE (1) FAIR TRADE



PREPARATION

- + Have a display of fair trade food. If using PowerPoint you could download the fair trade logo. Some towns have a Fairtrade shop which may be able to give you leaflets or brochures about fair trade products or perhaps you can set up a stall.
- + Think about buying a bar of 'Divine' chocolate for each of your group members to take home with them.

INTRODUCTION

Over recent years people have been made very much more aware of how our food is provided. We give more consideration now to farmers in developing countries and we care whether or not they are paid well for the produce they grow. We seem to be less tolerant of unfairness to these farmers and of supermarkets making and keeping most of the money from items sold.



FAIRTRADE ETHOS

www.fairtrade.org.uk

Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. By requiring companies to pay sustainable prices (which must never fall lower than the market price), fair trade addresses the injustices of conventional trade, which traditionally discriminates against the poorest, weakest producers. It enables them to improve their position and have more control over their lives.

Sales of fair trade certified products in the UK (www.fairtrade.org.uk)

Product	2002	2012
Coffee	23.1 million	192.4 million
Tea	7.2 million	79.7 million
Bananas	17.3 million	242.5 million
Chocolate	6.2. million	542.4 million

How much of the price we pay for fair trade products goes back to the producers?

The fair trade price applies at the point where the producer organisation sells to the next person in the supply chain (usually an exporter or importer). It is not calculated as a proportion of the final retail price, which is negotiated between the product manufacturer and the retailer.

Are fair trade certified products also organic?

Not necessarily. Fair trade criteria do require sustainable farming techniques, and require higher prices to be paid for organic products. Moreover, fair trade premiums are often used to train producers in organic and sustainable techniques such as composting and integrating recycled materials, which can help make progress in organic conversion in the future.

Some people say 'buy local' rather than 'buy fair trade'. What is the Fairtrade Foundation's response?

The Fairtrade Foundation recognises that many farmers in the UK face similar issues to farmers elsewhere, not least ensuring that they get a decent return for upholding decent social and environmental standards in their production. We therefore support the promotion of sustainable production for UK farmers but our specific role will continue to be supporting farmers from the developing world. Fairtrade focuses by and large on tropical agricultural products such as coffee and bananas that can't be grown in temperate climates or products that can't be grown in sufficient quantities in the EU.

FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS

Tea, coffee, juice, soft drinks, hot chocolate, fresh fruits, dried fruits, rice, chocolate, cake, cereal bars, biscuits, sweets, spice, sugar, nuts, honey, cotton, flowers, ornamental plants, beauty products, just to name a few.

TASTE TEST

Choose two or three fair trade products and their non-fair trade equals, ie chocolate and bananas. Have enough available for all your group members to try a piece of each to see whether they can tell which one is fair trade and which one isn't.



QUIZ

1. How many bananas consumed in Britain last year were fair trade certified?
1/5 1/4 1/3
2. Which of these product categories is not certified by fair trade? **Milk** Honey Rice
3. How many farmers worldwide benefitted from fair trade sales in 2011?
1.2 million **1.5 million** 1 million
4. How many cups of fair trade tea did Britons drink last year? 1bn 100m **3.2bn**
5. In the 1960s, Sub-Saharan Africa was responsible for what percentage of global peanut exports?
40% 90% **10%**

THE SALVATION ARMY HISTORY

A fair day's work for a fair day's pay. Remember the match factory that General William Booth set up in March 1881? His factory made safety matches, in contrast to other match factories of that time which used dangerous yellow phosphorus which caused a painful disease in many of the workers. Booth paid his workers a fair rate for their day's work. He made sure there was a good working environment and that his staff were cared for.

SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 2:9; Luke 10:27; Colossians 4:1

Have you ever noticed that a recurring theme in the Bible is about how people treat each other? Not only are we meant to treat each other fairly, but we are to love our neighbours as ourselves. The Bible tells us that there should be respect between those who have power over people, and those that work for them.

Jesus said, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; Love your neighbour as yourself.'

Think about why this is so important.

You may come up with several thoughts, for example:

- * Every human being has the right to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect.
- * The love and care we offer to others reflects how we relate to God and what he means to us.
- * People are most content when they are loved and cared for and can love and care for others.
- * We are created by God in love, with a sense of what is right and fair.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 56 'Love divine all loves excelling'
- ♪ SASB 439 'Love divine from Jesus flowing'
- ♪ SASB 218 'Sprit divine, come as of old'



CROSSES

PREPARATION

- + Have pictures of different crosses on view and a small free standing cross if available.
- + Ask the members the previous week to bring a cross they may have, eg cross in the pocket, jewellery, a book mark etc.
- + Invite the members to bring a related to cross(es) poem or reading
- + Have a photocopy of different crosses to see how many members can identify**

SHARING TIME

Invite members to share their verses, or show the cross they have brought. Discuss whether members have seen crosses in unusual places. What does the cross mean to you?

IDENTIFY THE CROSS**

Ask members to identify the different crosses (see page 86):

Answers

1. **Budded Cross**; the Budded Cross is also known as the Apostles cross. The three circles or discs at the ends of each arm in a Christian context represent the Trinity but was probably also copied from earlier Celtic Druidry, where the circles or rings represent the three dominions of earth, sky and sea.
2. **Christian cross**; represents the death of Jesus when he was crucified at Calvary.
3. **Coptic cross**; used by early Gnostic Christians in Egypt.
4. **High cross**; common in churches and graveyards.
5. **Crucifix**; it emphasizes Christ's sacrifice — his death by crucifixion.
6. **Red cross**; sometimes known as the cross of Geneva, which is the Swiss flag with its colours reversed, and indicates the neutrality of hospitals and ambulances.
7. **Orthodox cross**; used in the Eastern Orthodox Church. The top line is said to represent the headboard and the bottom, slanted line represents the footrest.
8. **Papal cross**; represents the Pope's role as Supreme Pontiff.
9. **Celtic cross**; popular in many churches across the country.
10. **Saint Peter's cross**; Tradition holds that Saint Peter was martyred by being crucified upside-down.

QUIZ

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. A symbol we recognise of piracy/death | Skull and Crossbones |
| 2. As archer uses this | Crossbow |
| 3. Part of a bicycle | Cross bar |
| 4. Motor cycle racing/scrambling | Motor cross |
| 5. A time of life to make a decision | Crossroads |
| 6. School children sit like this | Cross legged |
| 7. Pedestrians press a button to stop the traffic | Pelican crossing |
| 8. A dog from two different breeds | Cross breed |
| 9. To fight a duel | Cross swords |
| 10. To pass the equator | Cross the line |
| 11. Fortune tellers ask you to do this | Cross their palm with silver |
| 12. An orb of Royalty - emblem of the empire | Cross and ball |
| 13. Hospitals do this with blood | Cross match |
| 14. To delete or erase | Cross out |
| 15. A road safety exercise | Green cross code |

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE

Luke 23:26-43

The Christian cross is a symbol we are all familiar with; today there are many versions of the cross found in Christian book shops, churches and our homes, made of a variety of materials including fabric, glass, stone, pottery and even paper. When we reflect on the shape of the cross it is amazing how often it is recognised in our everyday activities. Walking the dog through the woods the shape of a cross becomes prominent; or perhaps on the beach an old piece of wood or even the sea weed takes the shape of a cross; taking the children to the park the cross takes shape in the climbing frame, fence or the slide.

The cross upon which Jesus died on wasn't the same beautiful example we often see in our halls and churches, no perfect symmetry with bevelled edges; not polished so that it glowed in the sunlight, it didn't even have wonderful decorations covering it to prove he was a King. No one carried his cross for him in a kingly procession, his cross was so heavy the soldiers had to get another man (Simon of Cyrene) to help Jesus carry it.

Is it possible to realise the depth of love that is revealed by the cross? Yes, but sadly many people do not realise the concept of Jesus sacrificial love for them on the cross. We need to find ways to let people know what the cross really means.

When Dr Grenfell first took the gospel message to Greenland the missionaries thought it better not to tell the story of the cross, thinking it might be misunderstood. They spoke about Jesus' life, teaching and healing but not about his death. No converts were made until one day the missionaries were singing 'When I survey the wondrous cross.' They were questioned by a Greenlander who asked what the words meant. When told of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, he said 'You never told us that before.' By teaching the meaning of the cross the first converts were won.

The cross of Calvary continues to have a message of life, love and forgiveness for all of us as reflected in the following poem.

THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

As I walk I see a shadow – a shadow of a cross;
 For Calvary still casts a shadow for those would suffer loss.
 Near the cross is no place for a name –
 Not prestige or gain; not power or fame.
 The cross is the beginning of freedom; the end of strife.
 It is the death of self; the beginning of life.
 An old rugged cross many have carried –
 They were scorned and mocked; some crucified and buried.
 But only one sinless Lamb gave his life in pure love,
 His name is Jesus, God's gift from above.
 So, it is in the shadow of his cross that I seek to abide;
 To be shaped and formed, not just carry wood by my side.
 It is his message of love that is seen in the cross.
 And that is why I desire to live in the 'Shadow of the Cross'.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 70 'On a hill far away'
- ♪ SASB 363 'On the cross his life did Jesus give'
- ♪ SASB 136 'When I survey the wondrous cross'
- ♪ SASB 119 'Many thoughts stir my heart'



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.



LOVE DIVINE (2) AN EASTER MEDITATION

PREPARATION

- + At the previous week's meeting ask members to bring in a reading, a piece of music or a scripture reading that links to the life of Christ.
- + Copy meditation for each member.

INTRODUCTION

This afternoon is an opportunity to reflect and meditate on the amazing Easter Story. We follow the story of Jesus, from birth through to childhood, ministry and teaching to death and resurrection. Our prayer is that we will find something new that will speak to our own hearts this Easter. Based on Charles Wesley's beautiful hymn 'Love Divine', may we experience the 'change from glory into glory' personally. There are suggested readings and scripture portions for people to read.

If members have brought their contribution at the meeting it should be feasible to add them into the programme under:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| * Love Divine – birth | * Love Divine – death |
| * Love Divine – life | * Love Divine – in us |



Introductory Song

🎵 SASB 104 'Who is He?' – (possibly as a solo)

LOVE DIVINE – BIRTH

**Love Divine, all loves excelling
Joy of Heaven to earth come down**

Oh may we keep and ponder in our mind,
God's wondrous love in saving lost mankind!
Trace we the babe who hath retrieved our loss
From his poor manger to his bitter Cross
Tread in his steps assisted by his grace,
Till man's first heavenly state again takes place.

JOHN BYROM

A Prayer

Father God – we thank you for the safety and security of this group where we share week by week. We thank you for members past and present who have made a difference simply by their attendance.

We share and care together, walk and talk together. It's a place where we can feel safe, share our feelings and be honest with each other.

This Easter Week – we want to think deeply together and allow a very old story to take its place deep within our hearts and lives. Would you bless us with your presence as we share together this Eastertide? Amen

LOVE DIVINE – LIFE

**Fix in us thy humble dwelling
All Thy faithful mercies crown**

🎵 SASB 96 Have you ever heard the story?

An Easter Thought - Happy Every After?

Have you ever heard the story? Usually that starts with 'Once upon a time ...' and finishes with the '... and they all lived happily ever after'. If only life was that simple. There are (on average) 250 pages between the beginning and the end of a story. Most stories – so they say – have a few things in common:

A hero or heroine, a quest, a hindrance, an obstacle to overcome, and eventually a happy ending. (You may wish to discuss how this format fits into the majority of stories or books currently being read). The Easter story may be the 'Greatest Story Ever Told', but it still fits into that format. Based on John 3:16 we see the hero and the quest and the hindrance and the obstacle being turned around to be the happy ending.

The Cross becomes the main feature, and God manages to turn what could have been seen as a very bad ending into the best ending ever.

Of course ... we are part of the sequel. When that story takes hold of our hearts and lives, we become part of the best chapters yet to be read!

Jesus, who lived above the sky,
 Came down to be a man and die;
 And in the Bible we may see
 How very good he used to be.
 He went about—he was so kind—
 To cure poor people who were blind;
 And many who were sick and lame,
 He pitied them and did the same.
 And more than that, he told them too,
 The things that God would have them do;
 And was so gentle and mild,
 He would have listened to a child.
 But such a cruel death he died!
 He was hung up and crucified;
 And those kind hands that did such good,
 They nailed them to a cross of wood.

ANN GILBERT

Scripture: Philippians 2:5-8

LOVE DIVINE - DEATH

**Jesus, thou art all compassion
 Pure, unbounded love thou art**

Scripture Isaiah 53:4-6

♪ AFMSB 70 'The old rugged cross' or

♪ AFMSB 82 'There is a green hill'

The whole life of Christ was a continual Passion; others die martyrs but Christ was born a martyr. He found a Golgotha (where he was crucified), even in Bethlehem where he was born; for his tenderness the straws were almost as sharp as the thorns after, and the manger as uneasy at first as the cross at last. His birth and his death were but one continual act, and his Christmas day and his Good Friday are but evening and morning of one and the same day.

JOHN DONNE

Scripture Philippians 2:8-11

LOVE DIVINE - IN US

**Visit us with thy salvation
 Enter every longing heart**

Scripture John 1:1-5 & 14

The innkeeper decided to leave him outside;
 Herod decided to kill him;
 Peter decided to follow him;
 Mary decided to worship him;
 John decided to love him;
 Judas decided to sell him;
 Pilate decided to wash his hands of him;
 Stephen decided to die for him;
 Paul decided to live for him;
 And you decided ... and you decided?

TONY JASPER

🎵 AFMSB 'A Wonderful Saviour is Jesus my Lord'

Suggested song for closing

🎵 AFMSB 61 'Love Divine'

SUGGESTED SONGS

- 🎵 AFMSB 16 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind'
- 🎵 AFMSB 43 'I know not why'
- 🎵 SOF 480 'Rejoice, rejoice'
- 🎵 AFMSB 73 'Praise, my soul'

A LOVE FEAST

PREPARATION

- + Suggest the week before that each member brings along some food for everyone to share either at the beginning of the meeting, or to conclude after the Love Feast Meditation.
- + Provide a small plain sandwich cake for each member or some plain fairy cakes and materials to decorate.

INTRODUCTION

Sharing a meal together is a special time in every culture giving opportunities to express welcome and develop friendships and relationships. A meal often allows people to relax and share ideas and feelings. It is a valuable experience whether everyday food is shared with just one person on a regular basis, or as a more elaborate menu, with a great crowd for a special celebration.

Talk about occasions when members have shared in special meals with family and friends. What made those times special? What was on the menu? Who came? Was it a special celebration?



RECIPES

Give opportunity for members to share some recipes – perhaps a family favourite or something using local produce. Pick up recipe cards from supermarkets or have recipe books to hand for members to look through and choose something that they might like to make in the future, or have tried before. Find some unusual recipes to share using different or more exotic ingredients. (There are lots of suggestions on the internet). (Ask your corps officer if you need help with this)

CELEBRITY CHEFS TRIVIA

- * James Martin, presenter of *Saturday Kitchen* holds a world record for carrot chopping
- * Clarissa Dickson, one of the *Two Fat Ladies*, used to have a career as barrister
- * The Rolling Stones had a picture of a cake on their album entitled 'Let it bleed'. The cake was made by Delia Smith.
- * Antony Worrall Thompson opened his first restaurant in 1981. The plush restaurant was noted for only serving starters and puddings.
- * Nigella Lawson has a famous Christmas recipe for Ham in Coca Cola.
- * Delia Smith is a shareholder in Norwich City Football Club
- * Gary Rhodes was voted out in the early rounds of *Strictly Come Dancing* in 2008.
- * Gordon Ramsey has two pet pigs named Trinny and Susannah.

THE GREAT BANQUET AND CAKE DECORATING

Luke 14:16-24

Jesus tells us about God's great banquet. This shows us that God will provide for his children in abundance, but that he will also invite, plead and cajole the poor and the stranger to join in.

The early church took communion as part of a weekly common meal at which the congregation enjoyed fellowship and ate well. The meal was called the Agape. We translate this as 'love feast' but the word just means love. Sharing a meal is a natural way of showing love to others and the early church also used the occasion to share with the poor.

Tertullian wrote in 210AD:

Our feast shows its motive by its name. It is called by the Greek word for love.
Whatever the cost, money spent in the name of religion is gain, since with that
refreshment we benefit the needy. As is so with God, there is a greater consideration
for the lowly.

The experience was a taste of the heavenly meal we will all eat with God. And just as God seeks the forgotten, lowly members of society to join in his meal, we must remember our obligation to the needy in our society. We are called to invite others to feast.

Invite members to decorate their cakes with icing sugar and various sweets or decorations. Provide icing sugar 'pens' for messages to be written on them. Encourage members to take their cakes home and pass them on to others – neighbours, friends – even a stranger who they know is lonely. Or take the decorated cakes to a local homeless shelter or project.



SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SASB 10 'Joyful, joyful'
- ♪ SASB 375 'I'm bound for Canaan's shore'
- ♪ SASB 512 'My life must be Christ's broken bread'
- ♪ SOF 329 'Let there be love shared among us'

THE LOVE FEAST MEDITATION

Leader: Dear friends, let us love one another; for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another God lives in us and his love is made complete in us (1 John 4:7, 10-12).

All: Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalms 139:23-24).

Leader: In silence let us ask ourselves some questions:

Reader: Are we willing to know ourselves and accept responsibility for who we are and for what we do – or do we blame others?

Pause

Reader: Are we honest, or do we profess principles in public that we do not practice in private?

Pause

Reader: Are we more severe in our judgement of others than we are with ourselves?

Pause

Reader: Are we making demands upon others which we do not make of ourselves?

Pause

Reader: Are we listening to others so that we may understand them, or do we think only of our own thoughts when others speak?

Pause

Reader: Are we gracious and courteous towards our families, our acquaintances and the strangers we meet?

Pause

All: Father we pray that you will forgive us for any injustice, spite, or hurtful action that has caused pain to others. Make us more aware of our thoughts and words when sharing with others. Fill us with your love, and help us to express that love to those we come into contact with each day. Amen

KEEP ON RUNNING!



PREPARATION

Invite someone to speak to your group who has either participated in the London Marathon, a local marathon, or any other long-distance race, running, walking or cycling. Encourage them to talk about:

- + What was their training programme like? When do they fit in all the running/cycling training?
- + Were there any difficulties or interesting stories to share about the race?
- + How did they feel the morning of the race? What about the day after?
- + Are they still running/cycling?
- + How would they encourage someone else to take up an exercise regime?
- + Did preparing for, and participating in, this challenge teach them anything, about themselves or their faith in God?

You might consider having a sponsored walk with your group! It doesn't have to be a marathon, or even a 5k! Could you do a one mile challenge?

THE HISTORY OF THE MARATHON

A marathon is a long-distance race that officially measures 26 miles and 385 yards (42.195 kilometers). Why such an odd distance? The distance, and the name Marathon, come from a legend about a Greek soldier named Pheidippides. The legend states that he was sent from the battlefield of Marathon to Athens (a distance of 26 miles and 385 yards) to announce that the Persians had been defeated in the Battle of Marathon (in which he had just fought). It is said that he ran the entire distance without stopping and burst into the assembly, exclaiming 'νενίκηκαμεν' (*nenikekamen*), 'We won', before collapsing and dying.

The London Marathon – officially, the Virgin Money London Marathon was first organised in 1981. The founders wanted a celebratory, festival atmosphere for both runners and cheering spectators alike. It is seen as one of the top five marathon races in the world, in part due to its iconic and flat course. In 2013 there were 34,631 people who participated in the race and over £53 million pounds were raised for a variety of charities. Some of the people raising money for charities go the extra mile by dressing in fancy dress, some wearing huge heavy animal costumes, for the whole 26 miles!

This year the 2014 Virgin Money London Marathon is on Sunday 13 April. It is so popular all entries were submitted by 30 April 2013, and then decided by ballot.



THOUGHT

What does the Bible say about running? Here are 10 verses!

Hebrews 12:11-13 - Discipline leads to fruitfulness

Isaiah 40:29-31 - Our strength comes from the Lord!

Philippians 4:13 - Through Jesus comes the strength.

Hebrews 12:1 - Run the race

1 Corinthians 9:25-27 - Self control

2 Timothy 2:5-7 - Follow the rules

Colossians 3:23-24 - Run as if running for the Lord

Galatians 5:7 - Perseverance

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - Glorify God



SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 88 'We are marching in the light of God'
- ♪ AFMSB 51 'Jesus give me day by day'
- ♪ AFMSB 96 'Trust and obey'

LOVED – SHOW COMPASSION

BIBLE READING – LUKE 7:11-17

‘When the Lord saw her, his heart overflowed with compassion. “Don’t cry!” he said.’

V13 (NLT)

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

This story in Luke, in which Jesus raised the widow’s son from the dead, began with an extreme personal tragedy. It paints a picture of what must be considered the worst possible nightmare for anyone. The death of the widow’s only son meant her tragic world was now complete and that all hope was gone. However, Jesus was there for her and became her means of support and hope for the future. She may have felt that no one understood what she was feeling or going through.

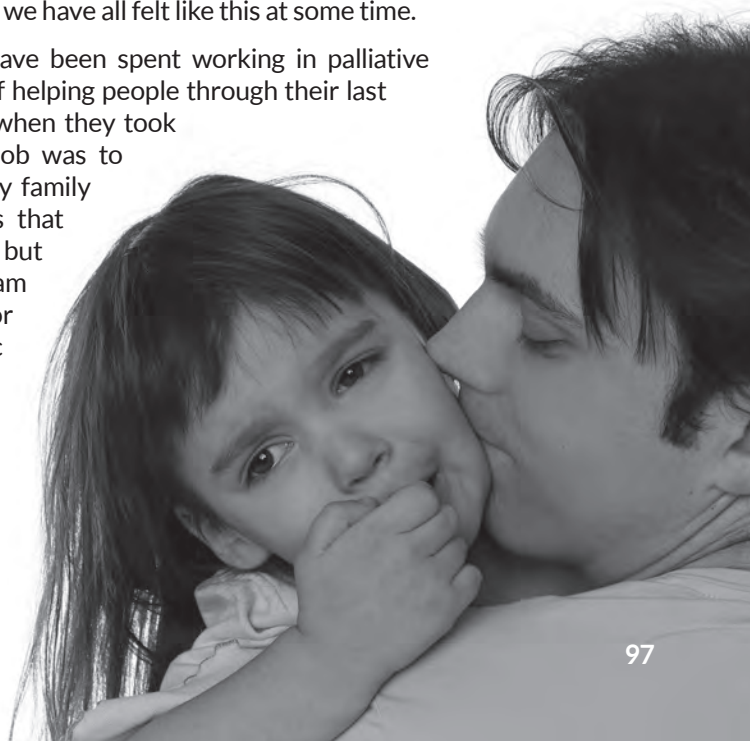
In a place of absolute devastation and hopelessness from her tragedy, Jesus appears and completely turns the situation upside down. ‘When the Lord saw her, his heart overflowed with compassion. “Don’t cry!” he said’ (v 13). But it doesn’t stop there, it gets even better. With a simple but powerful touch to the coffin and a few spoken words from Jesus ‘the dead man sat up and began to talk’ (v 15). His miraculous works are more than anyone would have ever imagined or even asked for. The outcome was a complete reversal of the initial situation and the feelings that the mother was experiencing prior to this.

OUR LIVES TODAY

Jesus was full of compassion and omnipotence in this story and he is unchanging. Thousands of years later he is still all of these things in our lives today – in the situations we face, whether big or small. Although you may not have been through something as serious as the widow who lost her only son, you can probably think of times when you have shared some of her feelings. You may have thought there was no likelihood of anything good coming out of your situation or that no one would understand. Some days we may feel so hopeless in our situations, but we are not alone – we have all felt like this at some time.

Most of my years as a nurse have been spent working in palliative care, where I had the privilege of helping people through their last days and of being by their side when they took their final breath. Part of my job was to pronounce them dead and notify family members. My biggest fear was that one day I might get it wrong, but there comes a point where I am certain that someone has died. For family members in sudden, tragic situations, especially involving younger people, there could be a window of hope that perhaps they haven’t died.

When I read this story in the Bible I thought about the fact



that they were attending the son's funeral. For us this is the stage where we say goodbye, as there's no hope that the person is still alive. It's simply a time for celebrating a life, facing reality and bringing closure.

It might not be a situation of physical death, but maybe there is a situation where all your hope is lost. Our all-powerful God, full of compassion and love, can do more than we would ever dream or imagine. In what we see as a hopeless situation, he brings hope. He shows compassion and understands exactly what we are feeling.

When I cry, you cry.
When I hurt, you hurt.
When I've lost someone,
It takes a piece of you too.
And when I fall on my face
You fill me with grace,
'Cause nothing breaks your heart,
Or tears you apart,
Like when I cry.

Marshall Hall and Benjy Gaither

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a time when you were going through a difficult situation? What were some of your feelings?
2. In what way does this story encourage you? Can you relate to the mother in any way?
3. In what way have you experienced God's compassion or found hope in a hopeless situation?

LIVING AS LOVED

What is our response to our God who shows us unending compassion? How can we thank him for this today? We are to be compassionate to everyone just as our heavenly Father is full of compassion. 'Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble' (1 Peter 3:8).

1. How can you live differently today because of the compassion Jesus has shown you?
2. To whom do you need to show a little more compassion today?

Take some time to pray that God will give you compassion in situations where it is lacking. He will transform you in such a way that you will love people and treat people as he does, if you allow him to.

I have known I am loved as I have served in Australia, mainly in youth ministry and as a nurse. God has recently taken me to London, England, to work as a volunteer at the Centre for Spiritual Life Development (CSLD).

ASHLEE SHEPPARD (AUSTRALIA EASTERN TERRITORY)

'Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, **kindness**, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

COLOSSIANS 3:12-14, NIV 1984

EUROVISION

**PREPARATION**

- + The week before you may want to ask members to bring European memorabilia, souvenirs they have brought back from other countries, postcards or photos. Opportunity could be given to share their experiences.
- + Alternatively you might want to set them the challenge to bring in a food from a particular European country (to share!), a prize for the most exotic.
- + Write the names of European countries on slips of paper.
- + A bowl or collection plate to put slips in.

INTRODUCTION

May is an important month in Europe. This month we will be voting for new members of the European parliament and we also have the annual fun fest - the Eurovision Song Contest! In recent years 'le Royaume-Uni,' the United Kingdom, has not done particularly well in Eurovision but that does not stop us joining in with gusto. This week is a chance to take a closer look at Europe and feel thoroughly prepared for all the excitement ahead!

THE SALVATION ARMY IN EUROPE - A GRAND TOUR!

Denmark

The Salvation Army continues to be the largest provider of Christian aid to disadvantaged families in Denmark. For this they have enjoyed a high profile in the media and public affairs as a voice for the marginalised and the poor. In the 2011 elections The Army published and distributed a newspaper highlighting social issues in Denmark. Politicians from all parties were challenged.

Ukraine

When the European football championship took place in Ukraine in 2012 local Salvationists seized the opportunity to work in partnership with international migration agencies. Salvationists were integral in the development and training of workers to combat human trafficking.

France

In Paris the large scale refurbishment of the Army's 'Palais de la Femme' was completed and opened in June 2011. The social centre has accommodation for 300 women and offers them a new start.

Lithuania

In Klaipėda Corps several new senior soldiers have been enrolled with the average age of just 25 years.

Greece

See Link Video 51 for a focus on the Army's work in Greece. (If your corps does not have a copy of this video it can be obtained from Video Production Unit at THQ).

Czech Republic (Armáda Spásy)

The Army has opened a new hostel for men in the industrial city of Ostrava. Armáda Spásy has also begun the process to become a registered church and people are being motivated to become recognised members of the army's congregation.

Spain

The Salvation Army in Spain is growing despite the economic crisis. Officers have redoubled their efforts to provide daily feeding programmes to serve the largest number of people in need. In one area a large marquee was used to accommodate the expanding congregation.

Switzerland

(see Link Video 54 or YouTube clips – as before please ask your corps officer/centre manager for help)

Switzerland was perhaps the most high profile of all the European territories this year when the music group Takasa a Salvation Army group represented this country in the 2013 Eurovision Song Contest, with their song 'You and Me.'

PRAYER SUGGESTION - 'EUROMILLIONS'

Either put the names of the countries mentioned above or the names of all European countries into a bowl/collection plate. Pass this around the group asking each member to take one and spend some moments praying for that country and the millions of people that are represented. Focus on the issues that face Europe – the economic crisis, community division, human trafficking. Prayer for the church's response for these items.

BOOM BANG-A-BANG!

Fill in the gaps for these famous Eurovision songs:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. 'Just like a on a string' (Sandie Shaw) | PUPPET |
| 2. 'Save all you for me??' (Brotherhood of Man) | KISSES |
| 3. 'Wishing-wells, wedding bells, early morning dew, All kinds of everything of you' (Dana) | REMINDS ME |
| 4. 'Congratulations and ' (Cliff Richard) | CELEBRATIONS |
| 5. What's another For someone who's lost everything that he owns?' (Johnny Logan) | YEAR |
| 6. 'My my, at Waterloo Napoleon, did ' (Abba) | SURRENDER |
| 7. My heart goes when you are near' (Lulu) | BOOM BANG A BANG |
| 8. 'Time for making your ' (Bucks Fizz) | MIND UP |

Alternatively if you don't feel like a quiz, have a Eurovision singalong. Suggestion - 'Waterloo' and 'Congratulations'.



CAPITALS QUIZ

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Lisbon | Portugal |
| 2. Berlin | Germany |
| 3. Vienna | Austria |
| 4. Copenhagen | Denmark |
| 5. Rome | Italy |
| 6. Bern | Switzerland |
| 7. Brussels | Belgium |
| 8. Kiev | Ukraine |
| 9. Prague | Czech Republic |
| 10. Nicosia | Cyprus |
| 11. Budapest | Hungary |
| 12. Reykjavik | Iceland |
| 13. Paris | France |
| 14. Dublin | Republic of Ireland |

SCRIPTURE THOUGHT

Acts 16: 6-10 (whole chapter)

In these verses Paul sees a vision of a man begging him to come and preach the gospel in Macedonia – modern day Greece. He is being guided by the Holy Spirit to move further into Europe. His obedience led him to evangelise to people that in his past life he would never have spoken to or even looked at. Paul would have known the Jewish prayer that was said by Jewish men each morning, in which they thanked God that they were neither born a Gentile, a woman or a slave.

Paul and Silas meet a variety of Macedonians (Greeks):

- * Lydia – A rich woman
- * A save girl
- * Slave masters
- * Magistrates
- * Prison guards

Overnight an earthquake hit the prison, shaking the foundations and loosening the prisoner's chains, giving opportunity for all to escape. Paul and the other prisoners stayed put. The prison guard, who would have suffered greatly if they had escaped, is overwhelmed by Paul's and Silas' actions and asked the question 'What do I need to do to be saved?' In a short space of time a women, a slave and a gentile have their lives changed by the Gospel as Paul ventures into this unknown territory of Europe.

With God and prayers no one is beyond the reach of the Gospel and as The Salvation Army continues its mission in Europe we continue to find ways to minister to the diverse groups of people contained within its borders.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 53 'Joyful, Joyful'
- ♪ AFMSB 50 'Jesus put this song into our hearts'
- ♪ AFMSB 15 'Come let us all unite to sing'
- ♪ SOF 1 'Abba Father'

HAVE YOUR SAY!



PREPARATION

- + Ask two or three people to be prepared to 'have their say' this week on something that they are passionate about.
- + For a lighter introduction, you could start the programme with Just a Minute and ask volunteers to speak on a given subject for sixty seconds 'without repetition, hesitation or deviation'.

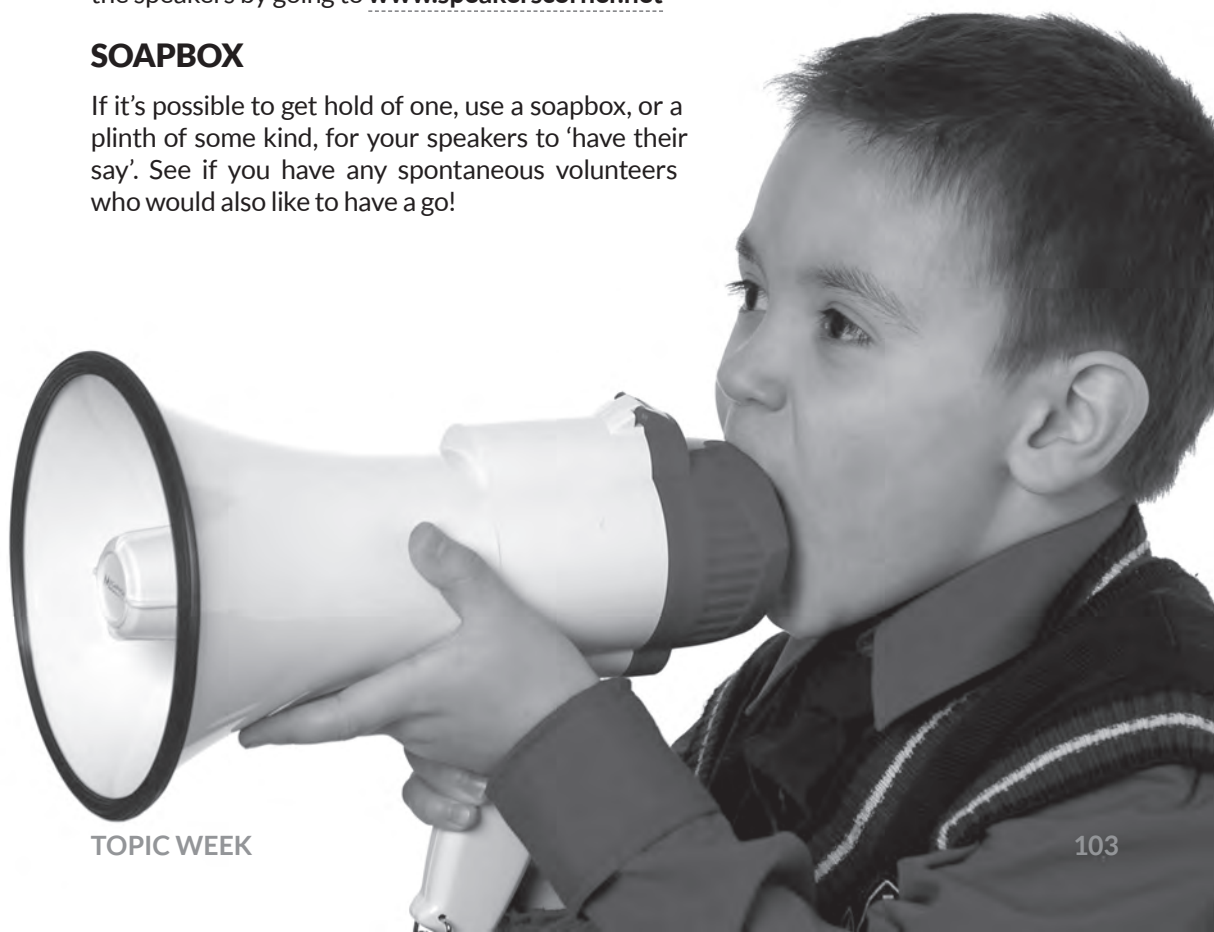
SPEAKERS' CORNER

Located on the corner of Park Lane and Cumberland Gate, opposite Marble Arch tube, Speakers' Corner is the home of soapbox oratory. Every Sunday since the right of free assembly was recognised in 1872 in the Royal Parks and Gardens Act, people from all walks of life have gathered to listen to speeches about anything and everything ... and to heckle. From socialism to Sunday trading, sausages to space invaders, the opinions aired here are varied and fascinating. While Karl Marx, Lenin, George Orwell and William Morris have all used this spot to express their ideas and beliefs, the average speaker isn't quite as high profile. www.londontown.com

For many years cadets training to be Salvation Army Officers were taken to Speakers' Corner and encouraged to give their testimony to the listening crowd – and learning to deal with the heckling. You can listen to some of the speakers by going to www.speakerscorner.net

SOAPBOX

If it's possible to get hold of one, use a soapbox, or a plinth of some kind, for your speakers to 'have their say'. See if you have any spontaneous volunteers who would also like to have a go!



BE A VOICE

There are those who cannot speak up for themselves or who are too frightened to do so, such as victims of child abuse or domestic violence. Information can be gained from various websites on these subjects. We suggest that you find out more information as appropriate for your local area, and the interests of your specific group. Here are some links that might be useful. If you don't have personal use of the internet, please ask your corps officer/centre manager to help.

www.victimsupport.org.uk

www.elderabuse.co.uk

www.childline.org.uk

www.stampoutbullying.co.uk



FAMOUS QUOTES

Discuss the following quotes – do members agree?

Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

If you fell down yesterday, stand up today.

H G WELLS

If you stand up and be counted, from time to time you may get yourself knocked down. But remember this: A man flattened by an opponent can get up again. A man flattened by conformity stays down for good.

THOMAS J WATSON

Motherhood has completely changed me. It's just about like the most completely humbling experience that I've ever had. I think that it puts you in your place because it really forces you to address the issues that you claim to believe in and if you can't stand up to those principles when you're raising a child, forget it.

DIANE KEATON



SCRIPTURE THOUGHT

There are many Bible passages that would encourage us to stand up and have our say. For example:

Ephesians 6:10-17; Galatians 5:1; James 1:1-27;

Daniel 1:8-20; Daniel 6:10; Acts 4:19

It takes courage to stand up for ourselves and others, and to know when to say something, or when to keep quiet. Many of us feel uncomfortable asserting ourselves and we may be shy or feel awkward with people.

Most writers who promote assertiveness have two goals. One is to help individuals to 'own' their own lives – to release them from the control of others' expectations and stay in control of their emotions. The other aim is to encourage individuals to take initiatives to express their convictions and concerns honestly to others. Neither of these goals is incompatible with Paul's instructions to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

Is there something topical in your local area that you, as a group should speak out about? Many voices make a loud noise!

FINAL BENEDICTION

I am only one,
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something;
And because I cannot do everything,
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

THE BOOK OF GOOD CHEER: A LITTLE BUNDLE OF CHEERY THOUGHTS (1909)
BY EDWIN OSGOOD GROVER

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SASB 258 'Wonderful words of Life'
- ♪ SASB 699 'Stand up, stand up for Jesus'
- ♪ SASB 847 'Dare to be a Daniel'

UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS

PREPARATION

- + Download pictures from *Upstairs, Downstairs* and/or *Downton Abbey*. Display them during the quizzes.
- + Download pictures of stately homes from The National Trust and English Heritage.
- + Get *Below Stairs* by Margaret Powell from the library and read an extract.

(Ask your corps officer/center manager if you need help with use of internet for downloading any material)

UPSTAIRS

In the far more class conscious world of yesteryear, in a large house there were distinct boundaries of what was or was not acceptable for different social groups. Upstairs, sometimes called 'above stairs', lived the family or the owner of the house. In the words of Noel Coward:

'The stately homes of England,
How beautiful they stand,
To prove the upper classes
Have still the upper hand.'



Valerie Green, in *Above Stairs*, tells of eight European upper class families taking up residency in Victoria, Australia in the mid nineteenth century. They became the social elite, bringing with them their social distinctions and standards of social acceptability. They built beautiful stately homes that imitated the height of fashion in Europe, holding tea- parties and evening balls. However, the world of master and servants was not sustainable in an emerging nation, and the events of the First World War were to sweep away much, though not all, of class distinction in Australia.

DOWNSTAIRS

Downstairs, sometimes referred to as 'below stairs' the servants lived, ate and worked, though the maids often shared attic bedrooms. The kitchen, scullery and the laundry were located in the basement, along with ancillary rooms for those with particular responsibilities, like the butler, the housekeeper and head gardener.

Read an extract from Margaret Powell's *Below Stairs* which is a classic memoir of her own experience in service as a kitchen maid in the 1920's.

Have any members got relatives from years ago who were in domestic service? Are there any stories that were handed down from Victorian, Edwardian or post-Edwardian times, that members might want to share?

Hyacinth Bucket (from TV series *Keeping Up Appearances*): 'How was I to know that that was his Lordship? He looked like the gardener. He must be very low down on the aristocratic scale if he looks like a gardener.'





QUIZ FOR PEOPLE WITH SHORTER MEMORIES

1. What county is Downton Abbey in? **Yorkshire**
2. What is the surname of the aristocratic family? **Crawley**
3. What are the Christian names of the Lord and Lady? **Robert and Cora**
4. Name the three daughters? **Mary, Edith and Sybil**
5. What is the title of the character played by Maggie Smith? **Dowager Countess Violet**
6. Who is the outspoken Irish chauffeur who married the youngest daughter?
Tom Branson
7. Name the authoritarian butler. **Charles Carson**
8. Name the good hearted housekeeper. **Elsie Hughes**
9. Who was the valet who was imprisoned accused of murder? **John Bates**
10. Whom did he marry following his estranged wife Vera's death?
Anna, the head housemaid, later lady's maid
11. Who were the two schemers, one a lady's maid, the other formerly a footman, then valet, then under-butler?
Sarah O'Brian and Thomas

HEROD'S 'STATELY HOMES'

In a Christmas carol, King Herod the Great is remembered as the king who ordered the slaughter of boys under the age of two. It was an attempt to eliminate Jesus, whom he saw as a rival to his throne. Like all despots Herod was paranoid, arranging the murder of anyone he considered a threat, real or imagined. This included several of his own family but the title 'Great' was not because of his murderous streak, but the ambitious and costly building projects he initiated: the 'stately homes' of the day. One such incredible venture was a winter palace at Masada. Built high on an isolated plateau 2000 feet above the level of the Dead Sea in the Judean desert, it could only be approached by one winding narrow path. It was a master-piece of engineering with a wall 18 foot high and 38 towers, each 75 feet high.

Masada was only one of his extravagant projects. By contrast, when someone said to Jesus that he wanted to follow him, we read -

'Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens, and birds have nests. But the Son of Man doesn't have a place to call his own."'

MATTHEW 8:20 CEV



No earthly stately home for Jesus. Born in poor conditions, brought up in a carpenter's workshop, and then moving to Capernaum. As an itinerant preacher for three years he relied on the hospitality of others or slept outdoors, even in a fishing boat. But who slept more soundly, Herod feeling insecure in his fine palace or Jesus in humble surroundings?

Paul the Apostle, many years later, was to write correcting those who were trying to make a profit out of being Christians:

There is a real profit, of course, but it comes only to those who live contentedly as God would have them live. We brought absolutely nothing with us when we entered the world and we can be sure we shall take absolutely nothing with us when we leave it. Surely then, as far as physical things are concerned, it is sufficient for us to keep our bodies fed and clothed.

1 TIMOTHY 6:6-8 JBP

And that's true, whether we live Upstairs or Downstairs!

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SASB 354 'My Father is rich in houses and lands'
- ♪ SASB 357 'My Jesus, I love thee'
- ♪ SASB 101 'Thou didst leave thy throne'

IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME!



PREPARATION

- + Contact the Candidates Unit for a list of matters to pray for:
 - The names of the current cadets
 - Some promotional material
- + You might even want to prepare something 'Greek'
- + Look up the Greek alphabet and write some of the member's names in Greek.
www.greece.mrdonn.org/alphabet

INTRODUCTION

On the first Sunday of May each year The Salvation Army encourages people to think about Salvation Army officership. We call it Candidates Sunday. In our worship we ask people to consider whether full time ministry is something God has planned for them and we ask our congregations to pray for people to respond if this is what God is asking of them. This year the theme for Candidates Sunday is 'KALEO'. You might take a look at that word and think it is all Greek to me! And you would be right, because it is. It is Greek and it means 'calling' and we will think a little more about that later.

The saying ALL GREEK TO ME – goes back to Shakespeare! The line was first spoken by Casca, one of the conspirators against Caesar in the first act of Julius Caesar. Rather than speaking in English he spoke in Greek, making sure that passers-by wouldn't understand what he was saying. Today the phrase means that something is beyond our understanding. Well, let's sit back and enjoy an afternoon with a Greek flavour and also think a little about calling.





A GREEK QUIZ

Do you know your gods and goddesses?

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Apollo was the Greek god of ... | The sun |
| 2. Chronos was the Greek god of ... | Time |
| 3. Thanatos was the Greek god of ... | Death |
| 4. Hypnos was the Greek god of ... | Sleep |
| 5. Uranus was the Greek god of ... | The heavens |
| 6. Athena was the Greek goddess of ... | War, wisdom and domestic crafts |
| 7. Aphrodite was the Greek goddess of ... | Love and fertility |
| 8. Demeter was the Greek goddess of ... | The harvest |
| 9. Themis was the Greek goddess of ... | Divine justice |
| 10. Iris was the Greek goddess of ... | The rainbow |

GREECE WORD SEARCH

B	M	D	C	A	O	A	O	F	Z	L	D	O	L	S
M	X	N	F	I	T	L	K	L	Y	R	C	N	I	O
A	X	A	K	R	L	E	Y	N	I	T	F	L	W	U
L	M	L	S	V	O	R	F	M	O	V	O	X	S	V
B	A	S	I	L	C	A	A	P	P	P	E	H	D	L
U	I	I	B	S	J	D	U	G	O	I	E	A	P	A
S	N	E	H	T	A	S	X	R	W	E	C	I	L	K
H	G	R	E	E	K	W	C	M	P	A	T	S	A	I
Z	Z	F	R	A	V	A	E	V	O	D	V	U	K	I
E	A	B	S	J	R	Z	R	E	R	X	H	M	A	P

Acropolis

Athens

Basilica

Bread

Dove

FetaPlaka

Garlic

Greek

Island

Lamb

Octopus

Olive

Olympics

Sheep

Souvlaki



SCRIPTURE THOUGHTS

1 Peter 2:9-10

The verses we have just read were written in Greek, as was the whole of the New Testament. And so to the Greek word which started our Greek journey: Kaleo! The Greek lexicon defines the word Kaleo in this way: to call; to call aloud; to utter in a loud voice; to invite.

The question then is: who's calling? From our verses of Scripture the answer is, it's God! He has 'Kaleo'd' you! He has called you out of darkness into his glorious light.

In the Old Testament God says, 'I have called you, you are mine' (Isaiah 43:1). In Matthew 4:19 we read Jesus called them, 'Come follow me ...'.

God calls us each firstly, into a relationship with him. It's what God wants above everything else. An intimate, authentic relationship with his created individuals. You and me! The 'light bulb' moment in our lives is when we accept that call to live in relationship with him. He has called you out of darkness into his glorious light. That's the primary calling on all of our lives. In other words, to live in a way that is different to the rest of the world. Now that's a challenge in itself. isn't it?

Today, we are challenged to remember those who have felt a further call on their lives to become Salvation Army officers. Those who feel called, 'Kaleo'd' into Salvation Army officership, commit their lives to full time ministry which involves them in caring for people's needs and preaching the Word of God, to sharing with others the challenge to follow Jesus, to live in the light, rather than in the dark. The Salvation Army needs more officers. We are invited to ask God to call more people to this work.

Father, we thank you for calling us into a relationship with you.

We thank you for calling us out of the darkness into your wonderful light.

We thank you too for calling people to serve you and the needs of our world as Salvation Army officers. We ask that you will raise up a new generation of people who will give their lives to this ministry. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

SUGGESTED SONGS

♪ SASB 16 (TB531) 'O worship the King all glorious above'

♪ SASB 680 (TB645) 'Follow thou me'

♪ SASB 495 (TB257) 'I'm set apart for Jesus'

♪ SASB 512 (TB 135) 'My life must be Christ's broken bread'

DARLING BUDS OF MAY



PREPARATION

- + Decorate the room with vases or posies of flowers and branches that members have been invited to bring along.
- + DVD of the series *Darling Buds of May*
- + A copy of *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Members could be encouraged to:

- + Make an unusual table decoration with flowers or branches from the garden
- + Make a posy of flowers, using their meanings, to give as a birthday, anniversary or get well gift
- + Bring along tips for garden or plant management they have found helpful
- + Share a favourite place to view flowers, trees or shrubs



INTRODUCTION

May is a busy time of the year in the gardening calendar; we are usually encouraged to watch out for late frosts to protect tender plants, to plant out summer bedding and to start the process of regular weeding. The lawns begin to need mowing weekly and we recognise new life all around us.

The phrase 'the darling buds of May' is thought to refer to the opening buds that point toward the warm summer season ahead and to the freshness and exuberance of youth as it turns toward adult maturity.

It probably refers not to the month of May directly but to the May tree (the common Hawthorn) which flowers in England at that time of year.

The darling buds of May are mentioned in a poem describing country life as the idyll, by H E Bates, who took the title from Shakespeare's Sonnet 18.

'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
 By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
 Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.'



PRAYER TIME

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett, is one of those classic books that, once read remains a favourite. In the beginning of the story the garden has been neglected and run down. Weeds invade the whole area, Mary had to work really hard to clear them all away so that flowers could grow and the garden bloomed and was beautiful again.

The story reminds us of our prayer relationship with God. If we neglect the garden of prayer our relationship suffers and we do not grow because our spiritual life is untended. As soon as the garden of our heart is tended and cared for, so our relationship and understanding of God will bloom and flourish.



FLOWERS AND THEIR MEANINGS

The Victorians were incurably romantic when it came to flowers and used bouquets, vases or posies to send subtle messages; each flower was given a particular significance.

In Victorian times, a man would pick a flower with a specific meaning to convey his feelings for a lady. Then, flower meanings were more commonly understood, as it was sometimes thought improper to always convey your feelings verbally.

Roses are the most popular flower choice for a bride, but different coloured roses convey different meanings:

- * White stands for innocence, purity, beauty and charm;
- * Red stands for passion and fiery love;
- * Pale pink stands for grace and happiness;
- * Dark pink is expressing thankfulness that the couple found each other;
- * Yellow stands for friendship

Other Uses:

- * In the 13th century the Crusaders were stricken with plague, so they mixed the leaves of carnations with wine and drank it to stop the fever.
- * In the 16th century the flowers of carnations mixed with sugar, were used to expel fevers and poison.

<http://www.handsaker.co.uk/flowers-and-meanings>

SCRIPTURE THOUGHT

Matthew 6: 25-34

The Darling Buds of May starring David Jason, Pam Ferris, Catherine Zeta Jones and Philip Franks, became a firm favourite based on the books by H E Bates.

A story of the Larkin family; sometimes loud and brash, but always with a good heart, the family would go from one adventure to another, often doing 'good turns' for their neighbours in the process. Pop Larkin never seemed to let anything worry him, he always said things would work out for the best; he found something in his life every day to be grateful for and would voice his contentment with a loud 'perrrrfec!'

Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount used the theme of nature to remind us to seek his Kingdom and to not worry unnecessarily about our earthly needs. Consider the lilies of the field, he told his listeners.

The lesson was a simple one; those who love and trust God are able to deal with the problems and crisis that life sometimes brings because their strength comes from him, when we meet someone with that kind of faith we are given an insight into a truly contented life that is based on the perfect love of God.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 86 'This is my Father's world'
- ♪ AFMSB 80 'Thank you Lord for all Your goodness'
- ♪ AFMSB 53 'Joyful, Joyful we adore Thee'
- ♪ AFMSB 102 Prayer Chorus: 'Come beautiful Christ'

HEARTS OF GOLD



PREPARATION

- + Identify someone from the community who has done something remarkable. (Local papers, local news, local radio etc). Invite them to come to your gathering and interview them or ask them to talk about the things they have accomplished.
- + Prepare hearts cut out of gold card for each member and find something to acknowledge and celebrate for everyone.

INTRODUCTION

Do you remember *Hearts of Gold*? It was a BBC television programme devised and presented by Esther Rantzen, with Michael Groth and Carol Smilie as co-presenters. It ran for six years in the 1980s and 1990s. The purpose of the programme was to commend members of the public for their good deeds. They would usually be tricked into appearing on the show under false pretenses and once their story told they were presented with gold hearts on blue ribbons.

A BEAUTIFUL PERSON WITH A HEART OF GOLD

She sees things of beauty in all that she sees
And what's beautiful to her seems ugly to me
What to her is a flower to me is a weed
We do seem so different so different indeed.

The window of her soul is open to light
She always seems happy and bubbly and bright
And her type of person's a pleasure to know
For beauty goes with her where-ever she go.

Of those who are different good things she does say
And for to help others she goes out of her way
She helps out the homeless and those in dire poverty
I do not know of anyone as great as she.

And sad to think her type is becoming more rare
For the poor and downtrodden she does genuinely care
To the most worthy causes her work free time she devotes
Yet she is not seen as one worthy of note.

A beautiful person with a heart of gold
And surely her story deserves to be told
Not proud of her beauty and free of conceit
And people like her one does not often meet.

FRANCIS DUGGAN

THOUGHTS AND SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 16:7

‘The Lord doesn’t see things the way you see them.

People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’

The saying goes that beauty is only skin deep, meaning that physical beauty is superficial. Another similar saying is don’t judge a book by its cover. What’s beautiful on the outside may not be on the inside and of course the opposite is also true.

Each year millions of pounds are spent on beauty remedies and even plastic surgery in order to enhance physical appearance, but maybe today we ought to remember that it’s what’s on the inside of a person and not on the outside that really counts. Maybe the challenge to ourselves and others ought to be to spend time on perfecting our inner nature, ‘polishing our hearts’ that they might shine like gold.

How might we do this? A quick glance at some more words of Scripture might just help. In Philippians 4:8 we are encouraged to fix our thoughts on what is true, honourable, right, and pure, lovely, and admirable. If we fill our minds with beautiful thoughts out from our hearts will flow beautiful actions. In Proverbs 23:7 we read: ‘As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he’ (KJV). God wants us each to demonstrate his love, care and compassion to those around us. Let us each endeavour to be beautiful people with hearts of gold.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SASB 704 ‘Wanted hearts baptised with fire’
- ♪ SASB 426 ‘I want, dear Lord, a heart that’s true and clean’
- ♪ SASB 244 ‘In your heart of hearts are you a trifle weary?’

LOVED – ACTS OF KINDNESS

BIBLE READING – LUKE 8:42B-48

‘Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, **kindness**, **humility**, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

COLOSSIANS 3:12-14 (NIV 1984)

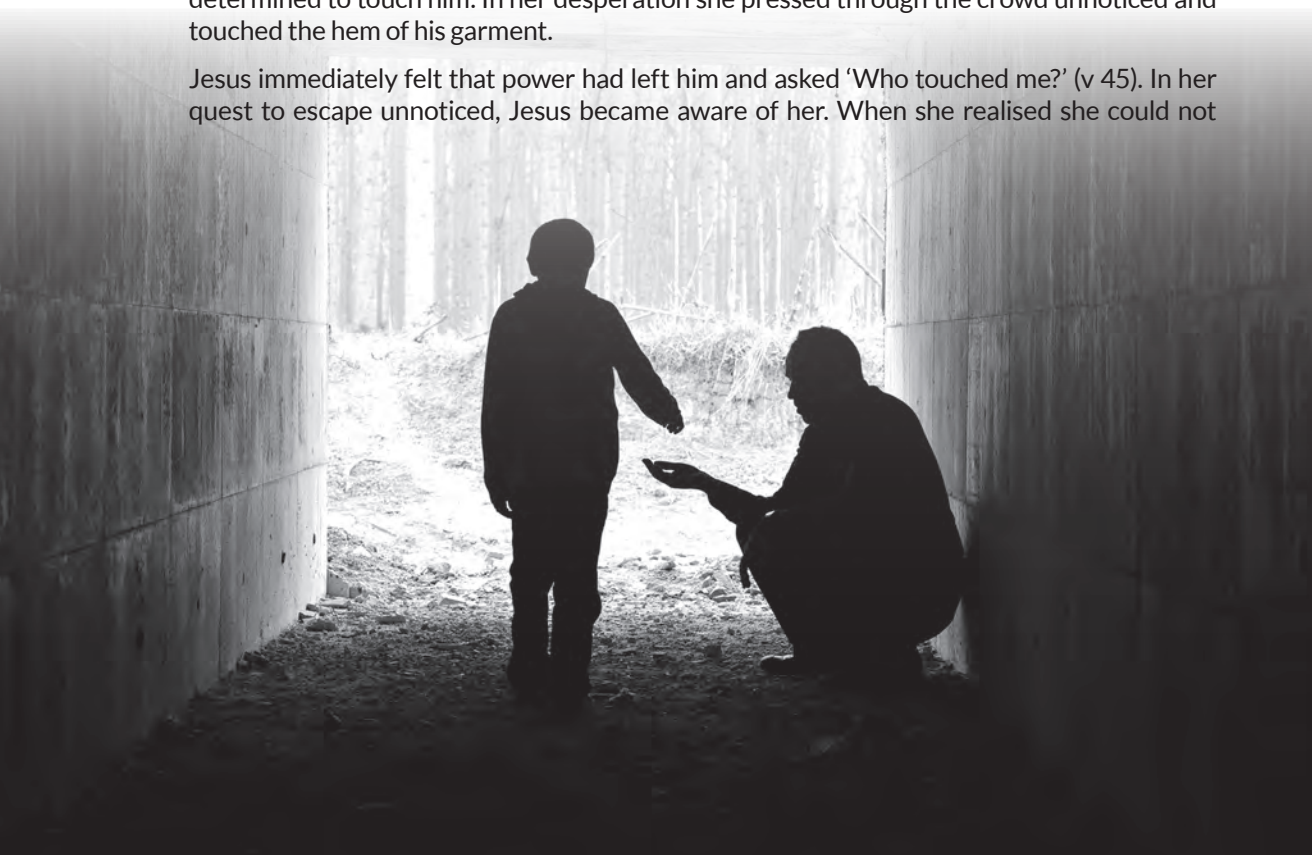
‘Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace”’ (v 48).

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

This incident in Luke speaks about a woman who had been subjected to bleeding for 12 years without any cure. She was shunned by the community and suffered a great deal because she was seen as ceremonially unclean. Anyone or anything she touched became unclean. Read Leviticus 15:25-33.

Can you imagine how she must have felt after spending all she had on doctors and still not experiencing the healing she so desperately needed? When she heard about Jesus she made sure that she was in the crowd following him. Her thoughts were focused on Jesus, believing he could heal her. She probably thought that this was her only chance of healing and was determined to touch him. In her desperation she pressed through the crowd unnoticed and touched the hem of his garment.

Jesus immediately felt that power had left him and asked ‘Who touched me?’ (v 45). In her quest to escape unnoticed, Jesus became aware of her. When she realised she could not



disappear unnoticed, she came trembling with fear and fell at his feet and told him how she was instantly delivered from her bleeding.

Jesus acted in kindness towards her, without rejection, and said 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering' (v 48). She not only experienced healing but also love and acceptance into God's family – he called her 'daughter'.

OUR LIVES TODAY

Place yourself in the shoes of this woman who felt rejection, was discouraged and had feelings of despair for 12 years as no doctor was able to cure her. In her desperate search for healing she followed Jesus and trusted him for her healing. Her faith was rewarded and she left free from condemnation and experienced the healing she was so desperately seeking.

Maybe you are also suffering. Your situation might be different to that of this woman, but here are words of encouragement for you – he is still the same today as yesterday, a God who is aware of you and knows you by name.

I am reminded of the words from the songwriter Paul Baloche that say:

He knows my name
He knows my every thought
He sees each tear that falls
And hears me when I call.

One of the names of God is El Roi – meaning the God who sees. Hagar experienced the God who saw her pain.

'She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her. "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me"' (Genesis 16:13).

He sees our suffering and pain; all we need to do is stretch out in faith towards him and trust him to bring change into our situation. Faith is what allows him to do the impossible, even when your faith is as small as a mustard seed (see Matthew 17:20).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there anything about this woman you can relate to? If so, why?
2. How can her faith help you in your particular situation today?
3. In her suffering Jesus acted in kindness towards her, irrespective of her condition. How does that make you feel?
4. How does this study help you when dealing with others who are shunned in your community?

LIVING AS LOVED

It is good to know we serve a God who acts in kindness and loves us for who we are. How can you show kindness to someone who may need such an act shown towards them this week?

I have known I am loved as, in obedience to God's call, I have experienced the presence of a loving God who faithfully guided me from South Africa to New Zealand – where I served as Divisional Secretary for Personnel – and now in the Africa Zone at IHQ as Assistant Under Secretary.

LIEUT-COLONEL YVONNE CONRAD (SOUTHERN AFRICA TERRITORY)

FOOTBALL CRAZY



PREPARATION

+ A Brazilian celebration of colour, posters, food and mocktails.

WORLD CUP FEVER

Love it or loathe it no one will be able to miss the fact that June 2014 brings us the 20th FIFA World Cup in Brazil. The bunting will be out, the parties planned, the TV schedules drawn up and many desperate wives will be seeking to hide the remote control from football-mad husbands, fathers and sons. The beautiful game is not just for the guys as increasing numbers of girls and women now have a great love for the game.

One thing is for sure we will certainly know it is here and the citizens of Brazil will throw open their doors to the world for a great party to celebrate the World Cup. You are invited today to join in the celebrations in our World Cup and Brazilian themed afternoon of celebration.

BRAZIL FACT FILE

Brazil is the largest country in South America and covers nearly half (47%) of the South American continent. It is currently the fifth largest economy in the world and is home to the Amazon rainforest and is a popular location for tourism. Brazil is rich in natural resources and active in world issues such as climate change, giving it significance on a worldwide scale.

The official language is Portuguese and the country has a population of over 200 million. It shares a border with all South American countries except Chile and Ecuador. The most popular sport is football with the national team consistently amongst the best in the world, winning the World Cup a record five times. They are the only team to have played in every tournament.



One of the most iconic sights in the whole of Brazil is the statue of Jesus which overlooks the large city of Rio de Janeiro. The statue is known as Cristo Redentor.

Sitting atop the Corcovado Mountain, overlooking Rio de Janeiro, Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer) was built exclusively from money donated by the Catholic community of Brazil in 1932. It is the tallest religious statue in the world standing over 40 metres and weighing 635 tons. It is listed amongst the Seven Wonders of the World.

This statue shows Christ with his arms open wide to embrace all. A beautiful picture of this year's AFM theme, 'You Are Loved'.



WORLD CUP FACT FILE

World Cup 2014 will be the twentieth tournament. The previous 19 tournaments have been won by eight different countries, ten times by European countries and 9 times by South American countries.

The tournament which starts on the 12 June in São Paulo will consist of 64 games over 32 days. The Brazil World Cup will consist of 32 participating teams playing in 12 host stadiums, culminating in the final on the 13 July at the world famous Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro which has a capacity of 73,500.

The World Cup Trophy is a gold trophy awarded to the winners of the FIFA World Cup Association football tournament. Since the world cup started in 1930 there have been two trophies. It was the initiative of Jules Rimet that saw the first World Cup in 1930, and was named in his honour from 1930 to 1970 and the FIFA World Cup Trophy from 1974 to present day.

FOOTBALL WORD SEARCH

O	O	U	F	O	T	H	R	B	E	F	G	S
E	U	K	O	O	F	E	C	F	O	D	T	K
S	D	O	O	E	T	F	A	T	H	R	O	W
I	Y	H	P	O	R	T	S	T	A	O	T	S
H	S	A	M	U	E	E	S	I	N	M	R	C
L	N	K	M	M	P	S	O	L	D	S	O	O
M	K	E	C	F	E	N	G	L	B	E	P	R
M	I	D	F	I	E	L	D	A	A	F	P	E
F	S	S	C	C	K	C	A	B	L	L	U	F
E	D	P	S	K	L	E	K	F	L	F	S	E
O	T	Y	T	L	A	N	E	P	U	O	A	R
H	R	E	N	R	O	C	Y	R	O	L	S	E
U	S	P	O	O	G	O	Y	O	F	A	A	E

BALL

SUPPORT

FOUL

FLAGS

FREEKICK

FULLBACK

MATCH

GOALKEEPER

MIDFIELD

OFFSIDE

CORNER

PENALTY

REFEREE

TROPHY

HANDBALL

THROW

SHOOT

SCORE

MISS

LOSE



WORLD CUP & BRAZIL QUIZ

1. Which footballer claimed to have 'the hand of God'? **Diego Maradona**
2. Who was England manager when they won the World Cup in 1966? **Sir Alf Ramsey**
3. In 1966 the Jules Rimet Trophy was stolen, what was the name of the dog which found it? **Pickles**
4. What is the name of the famous beach in Rio of which Barry Manilow sings? **Copacabana**
5. What is the capital of Brazil? **Brasilia**
6. What is the largest city in Brazil? **São Paulo**

THOUGHT

Passionate about Football, Passionate about God?

As we look at the World Cup and football we can find some comparisons between our faith and football. (Scripture 1 Corinthians 10:24-27) I'm still amazed at the frenzied ways we go about supporting our teams. We buy flags that hang outside our windows, on our doors, across our streets from one side of the road to the other. We decorate our cars with flags that fly in the breeze as we drive our cars through the streets showing 'whose side' we're on. We go to the shops and buy our shirts that say we support our team, and we wear them with pride. We want to be part of a nation backing its team.

I wonder if we're as passionate about our faith in God. Do we show people we meet which team, which side we are supporting? Do we wear God on our sleeves? Do we share our love for God openly, with a passion that says, 'I really love you God'. Passion has to be more than an emotion, it has to be an action, it has to be a belief in a truth that is certain. On Christmas day, WW1 – a football match was held between soldiers, on no man's land. For one day the barrier of war was taken down, weapons put aside, hostilities forgotten. Boundaries were overcome and enemies were united and formed friendships if only for a brief while.

Passion for God needs to be seen in our actions, not just our words. Having a real passion for God will guarantee a 'winners medal' for us all if we have that passion, belief, desire, will, love and desperate longing to follow and support Christ as Captain of our lives.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SASB 707 'Who is on the Lord's Side?'
- ♪ AFMSB 36 'He's got the whole word in his hands' (Cristo Redentor)
- ♪ AFMSB 37 'Help us build a better world'
- ♪ AFMSB 4 'All over the world the Spirit is moving'

LOVE THE EARTH

PREPARATION

- + Collect magazines and create a collage of the world – this could be done beforehand or with your group members.



BACKGROUND

Every year on 5 June, World Environment Day is held. The day is organised by the United Nations Environment Programme and seeks to raise global awareness of the need to take positive environmental action.

2014 CELEBRATION

In 2014, World Environment Day will be themed 'Think.Eat.Save'. Think.Eat.Save is an anti-food waste and food loss campaign that encourages us to reduce our food-print. The theme of this year's celebration is aimed at encouraging us to become more aware of the environmental impact of the food choices we make and empower us to make informed decisions. Food waste is an enormous drain on natural resources and a contributor to negative environmental impacts.

FACTS

- * Roughly one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year – approximately 1.3 billion tonnes – gets lost or wasted.
- * The amount of food lost or wasted every year is equivalent to more than half of the world's annual cereals crop (2.3 billion tonnes in 2009/2010).
- * Every year, consumers in rich countries waste almost as much food (222 million tonnes) as the entire net food production of sub-Saharan Africa (230 million tonnes).
- * Food loss and waste also amount to a major squandering of resources, including water, land, energy, labour and capital and needlessly produce greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to global warming and climate change.
- * In the United Kingdom households waste an estimated 6.7 million tonnes of food every year, around one third of the 21.7 million tonnes purchased. This means that approximately 32% of all food purchased per year is not eaten. Most of this (5.9 million tonnes or 88%) is currently collected by local authorities. Most of the food waste (4.1 million tonnes or 61%) is avoidable and could have been eaten had it been better managed

(WRAP, 2008; KNIGHT AND DAVIS, 2007).

Sources:

Global Food Losses and Food Waste – FAO, 2011

The environmental crisis: The environment's role in averting future food crisis – UNEP, 2009





CHILDREN

An estimated 146 million children in developing countries are underweight – the result of acute or chronic hunger (Source: The State of the World's Children, UNICEF, 2009). All too often, child hunger is inherited: up to 17 million children are born underweight annually, the result of inadequate nutrition before and during pregnancy.

GROUP DISCUSSION

- * Why do you think so much food is wasted in today's environment?
- * What do we do to ensure we are not wasting food?
- * What ways do we support our local suppliers?

REFLECTION

Scripture Reading: Psalm 8

This is a beautiful Psalm that reflects our creator God, and his relationship with us, his creation. The Psalmist talks about the Greatness of God, and he talks and reflects on our place within Creation. When God created this world, as outlined in Genesis, He saw that it was good. He gave responsibility to mankind to take care of this earth, to be caretakers, on behalf of God himself, for he has entrusted us. We are called to look after this world, in the best way that we can. Sadly, over the generations, people have failed, people have abused, people have been greedy, and people have failed to take their responsibility for this earth, seriously. The theme for this year's environmental day, reminds us that we need to Think.Eat. Save. We cannot afford for the sake of others, and ourselves, to waste anything. Instead we should value and enjoy all of that which we have been given to enjoy.

CREATIVE

Collect magazines or newspapers with world and food issues – good and bad and create a collage of the world around us. Reflect on what we see in these articles.

RECYCLE

You may wish to talk about ways in which you can recycle food. 'Making Do', and making the most of inexpensive ingredients – and making food go further.

PRAYER

Using SASB 28, spend sometime in prayer and stillness:

V1: We reflect today on the beauty of this earth; on all those things which are good, and indeed that which God created to be good. We thank God for the gift of this world to us, and ask that he would enable us to treat it well, with love and respect

V2: We reflect on those things which sometimes we take for granted – for the environment around us – for the hills, the sky, the sun, moon, light and darkness. We thank God for all his creation around us

V3: We reflect on those things around us which just fill us with joy and delight; for his beauty – his gift to us, his Creation. In this, we raise our praise and thanksgiving to God, from the bottom of our hearts

V4: We reflect on the many gifts that God has given to us, and in this love, that we know in him, and in those around us. We spend moments now, thanking God for family, friends, those God has blessed our lives with

V5: We reflect on all good things around us that are sent from Heaven above. From the bottom of our hearts we thank the Lord, for all his Love.

Lord, it is to you we give the Glory, and it is to you we give the praise. You alone are worthy of our praise and thanksgiving, not just because of all the amazing things you have given us, but because of who you are – God Almighty. But as our creator, we want to say a massive thank you, for the creation we see and enjoy every moment of everyday. We are sorry for the way in which your creation has failed you and disappointed you. Forgive us for the abuse and mess we have made of all things good, sent from you. May we, your creation, bring honour and glory to you, and care well for one another, and care well for all you have entrusted to us. Amen

SUGGESTED MUSIC

- ♪ For the beauty of the Earth - John Rutter
- ♪ All things bright and beautiful - John Rutter
- ♪ The Majesty and Glory of Your Name - Sing for Joy - ISS

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ SASB28 'For the beauty of the earth'
- ♪ SASB 25 'All things bright and beautiful'
- ♪ SASB 33 'Great is thy faithfulness'
- ♪ SASB 32 'God who touchest earth with beauty'
- ♪ SASB 177 'Fairest, Lord Jesus'

TICKLING YOUR TASTE BUDS



PREPARATION

Depending on your group either ask a number of people to bring in their food speciality or ask everyone to bring a sample of their favourite snack food – crisps, cakes, fruit, sweets etc. These can be shared by everyone in the Taste Trials section of the programme.

- + Buy lemons and slice them, enough for each member.
- + Buy marshmallows again enough for each member to have one.

Prepare an invitation card for your members to give to their friends to invite them to your meetings.

INTRODUCTION

Between 19 and 22 June in Regents Park, London, people can visit the UK's biggest open air drink and food festival. Famous chefs from around the world along with chefs from the top London restaurants will serve up their specialities and share their culinary delights with those who attend. This afternoon we are going to share in a food festival of our own.



PRAYER TIME

- * Discuss news items from the week that have been of a sad nature.
- * Ask people to think about things closer to home in terms of family or friends that cause them trouble or concern.

These are the harsh realities of life, the things that are hard to bear. Sucking a lemon may be too much to bear! But, invite everyone to take a slice of lemon, taste it and use it to remember those who are finding life difficult and to ask God to be present in the situation they are thinking about.

- * Talk about some of the good news items of the week, in the world, in your local community or from the group itself.

Ask people to take a marshmallow, something sweet, and as they eat it give thanks to God for the good and pleasant things.



TASTE TRIALS

We have almost 10,000 taste buds inside our mouths; even on the roof of our mouths. Taste buds probably play the most important part in helping us enjoy the many flavours of food. Our taste buds can recognise four basic kinds of tastes: sweet, salty, sour, and bitter. The salty/sweet taste buds are located near the front of your tongue; the sour taste buds line the sides of your tongue; and the bitter taste buds are found at the very back of your tongue. Let's put them into use as we share in food we have brought in.

<http://library.thinkquest.org/3750/taste/taste.html>



FOOD QUIZ

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. The rice dish 'Paella' come from which country? | Spain |
| 2. Meat from deer is known by what name? | Venison |
| 3. Are humans omnivores, herbivores or carnivores? | Omnivores |
| 4. What food is used as the base of guacamole? | Avocado pears |
| 5. True/False? India is the world's largest producer of bananas? | True |
| 6. True/False? McDonalds has restaurants in over 100 countries? | True |
| 7. Foods rich in starch, such as pasta and bread are often known by what word starting with C? | Carbohydrates |
| 8. True/False? Trans fats are good for your health? | False |
| 9. What is another name for maize? | Corn |
| 10. True/False? 'Beefsteak' is a variety of tomato? | True |
| 11. True/False? Cooking food can transform its chemical makeup? | True |
| 12. Chiffon, marble and bundt are types of what? | Cake |

TONGUE TWISTERS

- * Red lorry, yellow lorry
- * Ken Dodd's dads' dog's dead
- * Betty beat a bit of butter for to make a better batter

SCRIPTURE THOUGHTS

Psalm 34 v 8

Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

The Lord is good! Hasn't he blessed us in so many ways! We have shared in the blessing of food today. We've been reminded that we have been created with all those taste buds to enjoy it all the more. We've also shared in fellowship. It's good for us to be together. God has blessed us with each other.

There are probably many other people who would love to share in this blessing. Here's a challenge for you. Can I suggest that you take an invitation that we have prepared and give it to someone to invite them to 'taste and see' what our weekly meeting is like.

The Lord is good! Let's share around the blessing around and not keep it to ourselves.

SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 10 'Be glad in the Lord'
- ♪ AFMSB 80 'Thank you Lord, for all Your goodness'
- ♪ AFMSB 65 'Now thank we all our God'

'TELL ME THE STORIES OF JESUS'



PREPARATION

- + You could provide pictures of the Life of Christ (Christmas/Easter/The Shepherd/Light of the World etc), or ask member to bring in any pictures they may have. They could also be invited to bring in their 'personal' or family bible for a display.
- + You may be in a position to give out a gospel or daily reading book (Commonwealth Games Gospels are available for a penny each from Scottish Bible Society).
- + Verse 3 – The picture depicted on page 136 is on the CD PowerPoint and would make a beautiful bookmark. Please ask your corps officer/centre manager if you need help with this.

SONG 848 (SASB) – 'TELL ME THE STORIES OF JESUS' VERSE 1

The story behind the stories ...

William Henry Parker was born at New Basford, Nottingham, 4 March 1845. Early in life he began to write verses, and having joined a local Baptist church he became interested in Sunday schools. He was led to compose hymns for use at anniversaries. We are going to let his hymn guide us through this afternoon, telling us the stories of Jesus.



VERSE 2

First let me hear how the children stood around his knee

Jesus loved children, let's share in some of their prayers:

‘Thank you for the food we like.
Sweets, chocolate and crisps
But also thank you for healthy foods
Rice, spaghetti, fruit and vegetables. Amen’

ALICE AGE 8

‘Dear God, I don't want to pray for all the usual stuff today. Can we just talk? Amen’

JESSICA AGE 9

‘Dear God, Thank you for helping me feel better when I am sick even though it's
Mummy who empties the bucket. Amen’

NATHAN AGE 7

TAKEN FROM HEY GOD....WOT U UP 2?

VERSE 3

Tales of the sea

Here is a stained glass window depicting the calming of the storm.

Look at the picture and what do you see, how does it describe the story.

Perhaps someone can sing a solo or play a piece of music.

Suggested songs:

‘Part the waters’ (Ballantyne)

‘O Wally Wally’ (a traditional folk song)

SfJ 48 ‘A little ship was on the sea’

(You may wish to refer to the story of Jonah, found in the Old Testament. He was in the ‘belly of the whale’ for three days, and Jesus refers to this to let people know that he, too, would be away for three days between the crucifixion and the resurrection)



VERSE 4

Loudest Hosannas

Reading 1 Luke 19:28-40

Reading 2 Zechariah 9:9-12

The stories of Jesus are not only found in the New Testament but are foretold in the Old. Jesus is the fulfilment of prophecy, the Saviour of the present and the Glory that is to come.

SfJ 22 'Give me joy in my heart'

Adding Give me batteries in my torch keep me shining

Ever ready.....for the King of Kings

VERSE 5**Show me that scene in the garden****Reading Luke 22:39-46**

Responsive prayer:

Not my will but yours be done
 When I'm tired and feeling down
Not my will but yours be done.
 When I'm cross and wear a frown
Not my will but yours be done.
 When I hear some gossip told
Not my will but yours be done.
 When I see the lost and cold
Not my will but yours be done.
 When there are jobs in church to do
Not my will but yours be done.
 When I am so busy too
Not my will but yours be done.
 When I have no time to pray
Not my will but yours be done.
 Jesus, take my every day
Not my will but yours be done.

**SUGGESTED SONGS**

- ♪ SASB 384 'Tell out the wonderful story'
- ♪ SASB 96 'Have you ever heard the story?'
- ♪ SASB 98 'Tell me the old, old story'
- ♪ SASB 99 'Tell me the story of Jesus'



STRAWBERRIES

PREPARATION

- + Ask members to invite their friends for an afternoon 'Strawberry Tea'.
- + Decorate using pretty white tablecloths and fresh flowers, or look out for strawberry print fabric to use.
- + Bring food necessary for the strawberry tea or recipes – strawberries, cream, scones or small sponge cakes, melted chocolate, sprinkles and lolly sticks for the strawberry pops, or balsamic vinegar and black pepper (if you dare!).
- + For the craft project, you will need red material, green wool, needles, cotton thread, cotton stuffing and pins.

STRAWBERRY TEA

This can be a great event for members to invite their friends. Have an afternoon of scones and jam, strawberries and cream. Or perhaps serve Victoria sponge with fresh strawberries on top.



CRAFT

Strawberry Pincushion with pins as seeds

- * To make a paper pattern cut out a circle 6 inches in diameter. Divide circle into thirds. One third of the circle makes the pattern.
- * Place the pattern on red cotton or felt and cut around it.
- * Fold the edges in to make a cone and stitch the edges together.
- * Turn so the seam is inside.
- * Sew a gathering stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the top. Don't tie off yet!
- * Stuff full of cotton.
- * Pull top together. Tuck raw edges of cloth in and fasten thread securely.
- * Make green top with long stitches of green wool. Add pins to look like seeds.

POETRY CORNER

‘The man in the wilderness asked of me,
How many strawberries grew in the sea.
I answered him as I thought good,
As many as red herrings grow in the wood.’

(THE MAN IN THE WILDERNESS NURSERY RHYME)

Encourage members to write then share poems about strawberries! (Hint, strawberry is a difficult word to rhyme, so using additional words like jam, cream and sweet might help).



How many words can you make from the letters in STRAWBERRY JAM?

'Strawberry Fields Forever' is a song by the English rock band The Beatles. The song was written by John Lennon and attributed to the Lennon–McCartney songwriting partnership. It was inspired by Lennon's memories of playing in the garden of 'Strawberry Field', a Salvation Army children's home near where he lived.

Strawberry Shortcake is an American dessert. Shortcake can be small sponges or sweet scones, but the important part is they are topped with fresh strawberries and whipped cream or even ice cream!



Or if you're daring try this recipe for

Strawberries with Black Pepper and Balsamic Vinegar:

- * 450 grams ripe strawberries, rinsed, hulled, and sliced
- * 3 tablespoons sugar
- * 1½ tablespoons good-quality balsamic vinegar
- * Freshly ground coarse black pepper

Sprinkle the berries with the sugar and balsamic vinegar and toss gently to coat. Allow the berries to macerate in the vinegar and sugar mixture for about 15 minutes.

Add 4 to 5 grinds of coarse black pepper to the berries and toss to coat. Allow the flavours to blend for about 5 minutes more before serving.

Serve the berries over salad, ice cream, or toasted pound cake. Or try them in shortcakes, or serve in dishes with a bit of whipped cream or lightly sweetened mascarpone.

Strawberry pops: Insert a lollipop stick into the wide end of the strawberry. Dip into melted chocolate then dip again into hundreds and thousands. A pretty and delicious treat!

STRAWBERRY FACTS:

- * Strawberries are the only fruit with seeds on the outside
- * The average strawberry has over 200 seeds
- * Strawberries were used as medicine for fever, sore throats, and bad breath
- * Strawberries are usually the first fruit to ripen in the spring
- * Strawberry plants are part of the rose family
- * Over 53% of seven to nine year olds claim strawberries are their favourite fruit

SCRIPTURE THOUGHT

Psalm 36:5-7; 10

The beautiful, delicious strawberry – surely one of God's most wonderful creations! It is sweet and refreshing and the prettiest thing- did you ever notice a ripe strawberry looks like a lovely red heart?

God has put so much beauty in the world. I'm reminded of the story of a park keeper, who had the job of picking up litter in a park. Although the lush green grass and gorgeous flower gardens were there before his eyes, all he noticed were the scraps of rubbish.

'What a mess this place is' he would grumble. It wasn't that he missed the forest for the trees – he missed the beauty for the mess.

God has put so much love into the world, too. It's easy enough to grumble, to feel hurt or annoyed with others, to watch the TV news and see only all the bad things in the world. But better still to choose to see the helping hands, the kind words, the generous and tender souls that are all around us. Look for beauty and look for love, as God has placed both in the world in plentiful supply. Look for 'the heart shape'.



SUGGESTED SONGS

- ♪ AFMSB 5 'All things bright and beautiful'
- ♪ AFMSB 20 'For the beauty of the earth'
- ♪ AFMSB 80 'Thank you, Lord for all your goodness'

SSSHHH!



PREPARATION

- + Please invite a speaker from your local library. Libraries offer a lot more than just the lending of books. You will be amazed at the local information and details on offer of courses, groups and services within your community. You might want to discuss how libraries have modernised and changed over the years.
- + It might be that you have a local author or a member of your group who writes short stories, poems or regular articles for the local papers.

BOOKS THAT 'CAPTIVATE'

You might want to invite members to bring in second hand books (preferably those that they have read and would recommend) and make a large bring and buy stall in aid of the 2014 Helping-Hand Appeal 'Captivated'. What a great way to make the words live again!

HOLIDAY READING

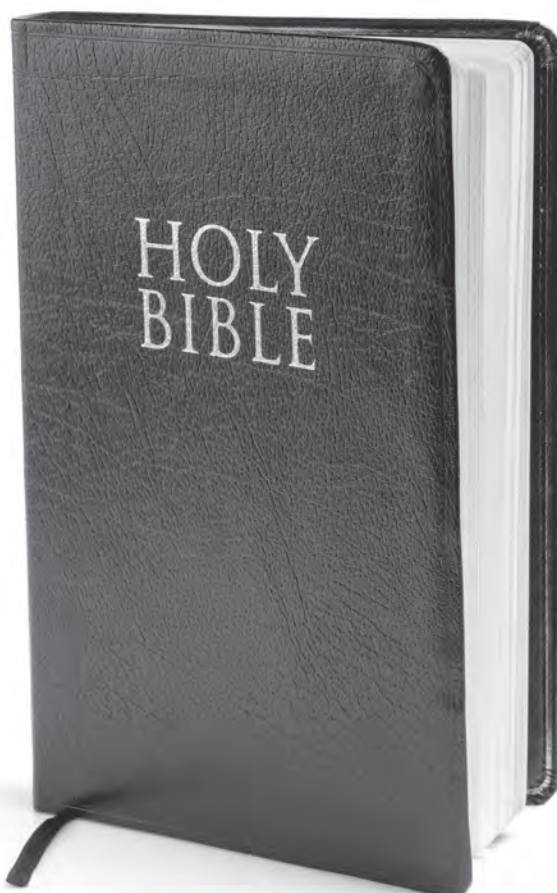
A man went into a bookshop to ask for recommended reading for his holiday. 'What sort of books do you like?' he was asked. 'Oh, I like everything', he replied. 'History, mystery, crimes, novels, biography, autobiography, facts and fiction, atlases, maps, poetry, prose ... oh, I could go on forever, and it would take up so much room in my case!'

The wise book seller handed him one book and said 'I think this just about covers all'. He had given the man a copy of the Bible!

JOEL - AN UNEXPECTED HERO

Jane Butcher is a member of The Salvation Army who has recently had a novel published. 'Joel' is an adventure novel written for children - but adults love it too!! The hero is a little boy with Down's syndrome and this disability which sets him apart from others in the 'real world' ends up making him a hero in the fantasy Kingdom of Aureon. The wonder of this is, that Joel has a true life base in that Jane's son Ben (the real star of the piece) has Down's syndrome.

For more information or to purchase these books visit: joelanunexpectedhero.com



JOEL - IN THE BIBLE

Joel was a minor prophet who (like your librarian visitor today) was someone who wanted to warn, inform and pass on relevant and current messages. These were especially important because they were from God, speaking directly to his people. It was important that people listen and learn and respond and the key verse is in Joel 2:12-13 where he says:

‘Even now’, declares the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart with fasting and weeping and mourning. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love.’

In this busy, technical, fast moving world, it's important to take a few moments to ‘Ssshhh’ and listen to God. If we ‘return on time’ then we will find a God just waiting to welcome us. That's a good read!



Poem by Julia Donaldson, children's laureate and author of many favourite books including *The Gruffalo*

Everyone is welcome to walk through the door.
It really doesn't matter if you're rich or poor.
There are books in boxes and books on shelves.
They're free for you to borrow, so help yourselves.

Come and meet your heroes, old and new,
From William the Conqueror to Winnie the Pooh.
You can look into the Mirror or read *The Times*,
Or bring along a toddler to chant some rhymes.

The librarian's a friend who loves to lend,
So see if there's a book that she can recommend.
Read that book, and if you're bitten
You can borrow all the other ones the author's written.

Are you into battles or biography?
Are you keen on gerbils or geography?
Gardening or ghosts? Sharks or science fiction?
There's something here for everyone, whatever your addiction.

There are students revising, deep in concentration,
And school kids doing projects, finding inspiration.
Over in the corner there's a table with seating,
So come along and join in the Book Club meeting.

Yes, come to the library! Browse and borrow,
And help make sure it'll still be here tomorrow.

SUGGESTED SONGS

♪ SASB 612 'Lord, speak to me'

♪ SASB 258 'Wonderful Words of life'

YOU ARE LOVED – ACT HUMBLY

BIBLE READING – JOHN 13:1-17 AND PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

‘Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, **gentleness** and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

COLOSSIANS 3:12-14 (NIV 1984)

‘Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.’

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-5

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

There are few incidents in the Gospel story that so reveal the character of Jesus and perfectly show his love for his followers as his actions in washing the feet of his disciples just before the Last Supper.

When no servant stepped forward to fulfil the custom of washing the feet of guests at the table, none of the disciples were prepared to volunteer for the task. Luke tells us that they had recently been arguing among themselves as to which of them was the greatest (Luke 22:24-27). Whether it was competitive pride or misguided arrogance that blinded the disciples to the need of the moment, the lowly task of washing dusty feet was left undone. Then Jesus did what none of his own men was prepared to do. He took a bowl of water, wrapped a towel round his waist and knelt in front of his disciples to wash the dirt off their feet.

John explains why. He says that Jesus ‘knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God’ (v 3) and ‘so...he began to wash his disciples’ feet’ (v 3-5). Jesus knew who he was, where he came from and where he was going to. Because he was secure, he was secure enough to serve. The foot washing is a visual parable demonstrating the truth that ‘the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many’ (Matthew 20:28).

Paul captures that underlying principle of Christ’s servant heart in an early hymn quoted in his letter to the church at Philippi. He speaks of Jesus who ‘being in very nature God...made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant...he humbled himself by becoming



obedient to death – even death on a cross!’ (Philippians 2:6-8). Jesus’ life was marked by the total abandonment of any rights. His was a life marked by humility and obedience, a life marked by service.

OUR LIVES TODAY

In my part of the world, if we want to succeed in commerce or business, we are told we must be strong, assertive, powerful and confident of achieving our aims. Humility and servanthood do not appear on any list! Yet these are essential qualities for all who would follow the example of Jesus.

Frederick B. Meyer was a renowned Bible teacher and preacher working in England at the turn of the 20th century. He became a lifelong friend of American evangelist Dwight L. Moody and established one of the first ‘megachurches’ in London. Although a prolific writer (he wrote more than 40 devotional books), Meyer is best remembered for his drive for social reform, tirelessly campaigning against the social and economic ills of his day. This great teacher once said:

‘I used to think that God’s gifts were on shelves one above the other; and that the taller we grew in Christian character the easier we could reach them. I now find that God’s gifts are on shelves one beneath the other; and that it is not a question of growing taller but of stooping lower; and that we have to go down, always down, to get His best gifts.’

We are called to consider others better than ourselves. We are called to follow the example of Jesus. We are called to have the same humble, selfless desire to serve people as Jesus did – but we will not serve people well unless we are confident and secure in our own relationship with Jesus. If we find our security and identity **in him**, we can take the place of the lowest and least of servants, knowing that anything we do for others, we ultimately do **for him** (Matthew 25:31-46).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Jesus’ servanthood originated in his loving relationship with God. How does our love relationship with God shape the kind of ministry we are involved in today?
2. Jesus did not tell us to do **what** he had done, but to do **as** he had done. We are not full-time foot washers, rather full-time servants. What is the difference?
3. We are called to serve others, but there are times when others will serve us. Can you think of a time when someone came alongside and served you in some way? Do you find it hard to let others serve you?
4. What does it mean for us to have the same mindset as Jesus?

LIVING AS LOVED

Reflect on the ways your faith has grown and strengthened in the last year. How have other people served you by encouraging your confidence in Christ and helping you grow as a Christian? Consider how this has impacted on your service for others.

I have known I am loved as God has been alongside me in each and every chapter of my life, nudging, guiding and challenging me in new aspects of service and ministry. He has been with me on a journey that began in Scotland and has taken me as far away as New Zealand working in corps, new planting and divisional roles. I am privileged to now serve as Chaplain at IHQ in London.

MAJOR PAT BROWN

Connect

January – June 2014

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