

We Are Loved

1

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

REMEMBER

Each reflection point must cover at least one key text from 'The Good News' as well as allowing participants time to consider their own experience, so the reflection points have the following sections:

- The Good News (Sacred Scripture)
- Personal Story (The personal reflection of the participants based upon their experience)
- Each Reflection Point must conclude with a liturgy

This session should be a minimum of 60 minutes, but no more than 90 minutes.

An example on how you may want to lead the day as a leader is set out below, identifying the key objectives of the session, Explore, Understand and Reflect.

Time Sample Session Layout

0.00	<p>Group Arrives and Settle Down</p> <p>Icebreaker</p> <p><i>A quick game that will allow the young people to get aware of their surroundings and the individuals who they are going to be spending the next hour in session with. If you do not know any icebreakers there are examples scattered across the internet. Try http://www.thesource4ym.com/ or http://youthgroupgames.com.au/</i></p>
0.10	<p>Introduction of the theme (EXPLORE)</p> <p><i>As a leader it's important to introduce the theme 'Our active love builds the kingdom of God'. During this time it would be ideal to introduce 'The Good News' to explain in a more defined way of what the third reflection point means. The young people can add input on thoughts about the scripture and themes, exploring who is in Gods kingdom and we can build it.</i></p>
0.20	<p>Activity</p> <p><i>An activity to allow the young people to come to recognise the purpose of God's love and how we must take a role in actively building it. This could be delivered in any way you feel fitting as the leader. It might be ideal to allow the young people to move/ interact and have an input in this activity.</i></p>
0.35	<p>Feedback and Explanation (UNDERSTAND)</p> <p><i>As a leader the activity you pick the young people to take part in should have a link into the session's theme. This time now allows the young people to gain an understanding of why they have done the activity and an opportunity arises of discussion.</i></p> <p><i>This is also the time when the leader should try to elicit from the young people what work they have done recently toward the FIA award. For example, have they been taking part in the 'Shoebox appeal' in Advent? The leader can then try to link this activity to the activity the young person has just done. It is vital that the young people reflect on the work they have done in the last few weeks. Why have they done it? What difference could it have made?</i></p>
0.40	<p>Liturgy (REFLECT)</p> <p><i>A time for the young people to welcome God into the session. You may feel the need to do a meditation, prayer stations or creative activity to invite the young people to think more on a personal reflection about the scripture and theme.</i></p>
0.55	<p>Closing Prayer : Faith in Action Prayer</p> <p><i>Invite the young people to participate in saying the prayer.</i></p>
0.60	<p>Session Ends</p>

Below is a sample session which can be used with the young people presenting the 3rd Reflection Point, Our Active Love Builds the Kingdom of God.

Time	Sample Session Layout
0.00	<p>Group Arrives and Settle Down</p> <p>Icebreaker <i>Balloon Bop –</i> <i>The young people stand in a circle and hold hands. The leader drops one balloon into the circle and the goal is to keep the balloon up in the air as long as possible without breaking the circle. The young people can use any part of their body but no feet must be used. In order for this game to work effectively the young people have to all move together, as a circle to make sure they don't lose connection.</i></p> <p><i>If the young people find this activity too hard you can allow them to use their feet.</i> <i>If the young people find this activity too easy you can add more balloons into the middle.</i></p>
0.10	<p>Introduction of the theme (EXPLORE) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLI2zqMU6Ww –The Lost Son</p> <p><i>A slightly different clip portraying an important parable from the bible. Did anyone work out perhaps the parable behind the clip?</i> <i>At the start of a clip it shows the relationship between a son and father, which has perhaps gone a little wrong. The youngest son thinking about himself, wanting to go his own way and taking for granted what the father has given him in his life. Not thanking the Father he leaves and decides to forget about him and starts his own life with his father's money. Yet, in the clip we see things start to take a turn for the worst; at first he seems to be doing okay, but as time goes on he suddenly is left alone realising that he has wasted everything. So what happens next?</i> <i>He recognises that he is wrong and is reminded of how his father cared for him. Although hesitant he returns back to the father and for that split second in the clip we see that the son thinks he has done so much wrong that he won't be accepted back. But the father is waiting to be reunited with him, runs out and greets him. No anger or lecture but only love is shown by his father.</i></p> <p><i>I think this introduces this session very well. As today we will be thinking about 'We love because we are loved'. Although this parable was shown in a cartoon way it isn't too different to our own lives. We can be like that lost son with God our father. Perhaps becoming lost, getting too distracted and not treating others in the correct way... Thinking about ourselves instead of others. Yet just like this clip God is constantly waiting for us, hoping that we will turn back to him. A God who is looking down on us, calling us back when things do go wrong in our lives. He shows us this infinite love and forgiveness and therefore teaches us to do the same to others.</i></p> <p><i>So this is what we will be thinking about today, How God loves us and how we can show that love to others.</i></p>
0.20	<p>Activity <i>Gratitude Box – A box created to hold all the things that you are thankful for in life, whether it is photos, objects or notes and realising that God is love and all these items in the box are given to us from him.</i> <i>You can introduce your own gratitude box, or explain the purpose of one and invite the young people to create their own, decorating it with paint, stickers and other items.</i> <i>To close the activity allow the young people to place their first item into their own boxes and ask them to place this somewhere in their room as a reminder of God's love for us. If you do this activity you will need to tell the young people to bring such an item to the session. Or the young people could draw the item that they have at home on paper and place the paper in the box as a symbolic act.</i></p>
0.35	<p>Feedback and Explanation (UNDERSTAND) <i>Sit the young people down in a circle with their own gratitude box and ask them to feedback on their box or their items which they have placed into it.</i> <i>After doing so, allow the young people to recognise all the different things the Lord gives to each one of us. Realising that sometimes we can be like that lost son and be ungrateful or want more in our lives it's important to recognise the people and things which we already have.</i> <i>Link this to the work the young people have done recently. What have they done? Cafod Family Fast in autumn? Shoebox appeal? How does this work relate to the theme of this reflection point? By recognising the love God has for us we can put that into action and go and help others. And they may then, in their turn, also realise that they are loved by God. Our actions remind others of the love God has for all people.</i></p>
0.40	<p>Liturgy (REFLECT) <i>Thinking about being thankful and Gods love, allow the young people to meditate and reflect by doing</i></p>

a meditation on how they can bring Gods love into their own lives. The meditation is based on 1 Corinthians 12:4-13 and Mentions John15: 12-13

Quiet music can be played during this time.

After the meditation you can lead into the five finger prayer. When this has been completed you can invite the young people to place their five finger prayer into their gratitude box.

0.55 Closing Prayer : Faith in Action Prayer

Bring all the Gratitude boxes to the front.

Invite the young people to participate in saying the prayer.

0.60 Session Ends

Meditation on We Are Loved

Find a space in the room and make yourselves comfortable. Close your eyes and listen to the music which is being played in the background.

Take a slow breath in and now breathe out. Repeat a few times.

Now your breathing is relaxed, tense all the muscles in your face; really screw them up as if you're angry and now relax and let all the tension slip away.

Now, focus on your arms, tense your arms, ball up your fists. Now let go of anything you are holding onto.

Same with legs ... then wait a few moments before beginning the meditation.

Try and listen and concentrate on my voice.

Imagine that you are in your room. As you enter you realise something has changed and has been added. As you look around you realise that your gratitude box has been placed on your bed. You pick up your box and place it in a safe place... Where have you placed it?

You take a moment to think about what's already in it... What things did you say you were thankful for?

Your Family? Your best friend? Was it a place? A memory? Why was that item so important to you?

You realise the item you're thinking about has been given to you for a reason, to make you happy, to make you feel safe. The person who has given you these things to be grateful for is God. You know this because you know he is there for you and wants you to be happy. What else do you know about God? What does he teach you?

Did you know that God is patient? He tries to teach us to be more patient with others. How patient are you? Do you get annoyed easily? Do you perhaps expect a lot of others? How can you be more patient?

God shows us kindness. How do you show kindness to others? Are you helpful? Do you care for your friends? Do you help others when they are struggling? How can you be kinder to others?

God asks us to not be jealous. Yet do you find it difficult to not be jealous of others? Do you sometimes want to be better than others around you? Do you sometimes say mean comments? Do you laugh at others around you? How can you learn to not show jealousy towards others?

God tells us to treat others as we would wish to be treated. How many times do you think about yourself? What you want and need? Do you look after others around you? Do you listen to your friends? Do you help other individuals? Take a moment to think about how you can treat others better.

God trusts us and forgives us... Yet how many times do we forgive others? Do you find it hard to forgive? Do you find it easy to fall out with others? Do you shut people out? Do you get annoyed or angry? How can you forgive others more?

God shows us love by caring and protecting us. Think about the people who you care for in your own lives. Now think about the individuals you find it hard to get along with, who perhaps you have fallen out with... How can you care for them more?

God says the greatest commandment, the greatest teaching is 'Love one another, as I have loved you. No one can have a greater love than to lay down his life for his friends'.

Think about these words, 'Love one another, as I have loved you. No one can have a greater love than to lay down his life for his friends'.

Think about what God may be asking you to do, how can you love your neighbour?

You take one last glance at your gratitude box and you think about how you can be that little bit better. (Pause)

And you carry on your journey...

Now ask the young people to sit up and grab a pen and paper.

Lead into the five finger prayer.

5 finger prayer reflection

(Parts in italic may be excluded.)

Taking the pen and paper, draw around your hand.

Using the fingers on your hand, you will be thinking about and praying for different people in your life. *Later on in our time of prayer, these hands will be seen by others so perhaps you may wish to simply put initials rather than full names at the different stages.*

Starting with the thumb, it is the closest finger to you. So start praying for those who are closest to you. They are the persons easiest to remember. To pray for our dear ones is a "Sweet Obligation." This might be your friends, family members, people who you can turn to when you are in need... Write some of those people on the thumb.

The next finger is the index. Pray for those who teach you, instruct you and heal you. They need the support and wisdom to show direction to others. Always keep them in your prayers. This may be teachers in school, or in groups outside of school – sports teams, guides/scouts, youth groups, music or sports instructors. Write down those that come to mind.

The following finger is the tallest. It reminds us of our leaders, the governors and those who have authority. They need God's guidance. This could be your local MP, the Government, maybe even your church leaders. Write and pray for a leader in your life.

The fourth finger is the ring finger. Even though it may surprise you, it is our weakest finger. It should remind us to pray for the weakest, the sick or those plagued by problems. They need your prayers. Perhaps you know someone who is ill at the moment, or someone going through a rough time. Think of those people and write them down.

And finally we have our smallest finger, the smallest of all. Your little finger should remind you to pray for yourself. When you are done praying for the other four groups, you will be able to see your own needs but in the proper perspective, and also you will be able to pray for your own needs in a better way. In order to remind you of that, write your name here.

In a moment we will move around the room to another person's hand where you will pray for that person and their intentions.

If there is something that you would like other people to pray for, please take this time to write it in the palm of your hand. This may be for yourself – perhaps praying for you for an upcoming exam, or something happening in your life. It could be for someone who is close to you. Or you could simply write 'Please pray for me'.

Keeping this atmosphere, I invite you to find someone else's paper hand and place your hand on top, praying for that person and their intentions. Once you have prayed for that person, you may wish to find another person and do the same.

Invite them to go back to their own hand and place it into their gratitude box.