

**LIFE
LABS**

We love because God first loved us.

1 JOHN 4:19

WHEN I AM
ALL OF US ALL OF US ALL OF
THE RE

LEADERS MATERIAL

ALL^{OF} US

LIFE LABS 2025 | TERM 4
SALVOS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS



TOPIC OUTLINE:

In the first half of the term, we will explore our purpose and the difference we can make in the world. In the second half of the term, we will reflect on our year, and celebrate what God has done in and through our lives.

LIFE LABS

In the first half of the term, we will explore our purpose and the difference we can make in the world.

LIFE LAB 1: Why am I here? (page 4)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people understand that their life has value and purpose.

Scripture: The Scripture (Ephesians 2:8-10) explores the Good News that we are God's handiwork, created by God to do good things.

LIFE LAB 2: What is God doing in the world? (page 8)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people identify where God is at work in the world.

Scripture: The Scriptures (Luke 4:18-19 and John 3:16-17) explore the Good News that God is at work in our world and Jesus has given us a description of what that looks like.

LIFE LAB 3: How can I make a difference? (page 12)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people understand that they can make a difference in the world.

Scripture: The Scriptures (Matthew 5:14-16 and Micah 6:8) explore the Good News that God can do significant things through everyday people.

LIFE LAB 4: What difference can we make when we work together? (page 16)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people identify the benefit of working with others to make a difference.

Scripture: The Scripture (Mark 2:1-12) explores the Good News that when we work together God can make a difference.

In the second half of the term, we will reflect on our year and celebrate what God has done in and through our lives.

LIFE LAB 5: What happened this year? (page 21)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people look back on significant moments from the past year and reflect on how God was at work.

Scripture: The Scripture (Luke 24:13-31a) explores the Good News that God is sometimes at work in ways we don't recognise until we look back.

LIFE LAB 6: Who encouraged us this year? (page 25)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people identify who has encouraged them this year.

Scripture: The Scriptures (Hebrews 10:24-25 and Romans 12:15) explore the Good News that God puts people in our lives to encourage us, and we can encourage them too.

LIFE LAB 7: What have we achieved this year? (page 28)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people reflect on what they have achieved this year and how they have grown.

Scripture: The Scripture (2 Peter 1:5-8) explores the Good News that God's Holy Spirit helps us grow more like Jesus.

LIFE LAB 8: What do we want next year to be like? (page 32)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people explore their hopes for next year and to support them in setting achievable goals.

Scripture: The Scripture (Proverbs 3:5-6) explores the Good News that God promises to guide us and keep us on the right path.

APPENDIX – ACTIVITY SESSIONS

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY SESSION (page 35)

For the first session of the term, you can take the opportunity to welcome the young people back and introduce them to the theme. Rather than a structured Life Lab session, the material explores some activities you could do that are fun, will connect the young people, and help introduce the ideas we'll look at in Life Labs. For example, in this session, you can help young people explore why we are here, what God is doing in our world, and the difference we can make – as individuals and by working together – through activities like a scavenger hunt, *'the Purpose Café'* and *'Roll the Dice'*.

REFLECTION ACTIVITY SESSION (page 36)

The reflection session provides an opportunity to reflect on the topic idea in a session that is less structured than a Life Lab. You can use the ideas to create a fun and social session that will help develop the topics. For example, you can help young people reflect on the year, celebrate what God has done, and set goals for the year to come through activities like a photo reflection, testimony night and 'Reflection Stations'.

SPEAKER BRIEF (page 37)

The speaker brief provides the outline of a short Good News message to share with young people. The message will connect with young people's experiences, wondering if they can make a difference in the world. Using the Scriptures (Matthew 5:14-16 and Micah 6:8) we explore the Good News that God can do significant things through everyday people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

At the start of each session, acknowledge the Country and Traditional Owners of the land your group is gathering on. Below is a template you could use.

"Today we meet on _____ Country.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters from which we've all come or crossed over to arrive here today. We commit ourselves to being voices of reconciliation."

WHY AM I HERE?

HOW TO RUN A SESSION:

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session

Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

SESSION OUTLINE

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people understand that their life has value and purpose, and to reflect on the Good News that we are God's handiwork, created by God to do good things.

Game: The *Chair* game gets young people to experience trying to find where they fit.

Activity: The *Purpose Triangle* activity helps young people to reflect on their purpose, and how it ties in with who they are and what they love doing.

Scripture: The Scripture (Ephesians 2:8-10) explores the Good News that God has created us on purpose with a purpose, to do good things.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Chairs – one per person
- ☐ Pens

READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

Sometimes life feels a bit pointless. We do the same stuff every day and it can be difficult to see what it's all for. We can feel small, and we might even question why we are here.

Hearing other people talk about their 'purpose' can be inspiring – they seem to know why they're here, and they're making a difference.

People say that knowing our purpose can help us feel valued and carry us through the most difficult times. But what if we're still figuring ours out?

We can distract ourselves with quick highs or we can just switch off from everything. But deep down, we still wonder – how do I go from just getting through the day to living life with purpose?

Why am I here?

As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the 'Chair' game.

PLAY THE 'CHAIR' GAME

EQUIPMENT:

☐ Chairs (one per person)

- Place all the chairs in a circle, facing in.
- One person is chosen to stand in the middle of the circle.
- The person standing must try and sit down in an empty chair.
- All the other players must prevent the standing player from sitting down by filling the empty seat.
- If the person standing sits in an empty seat, the person closest to them is in.

How did you go with the game? How did it feel when you didn't have anywhere to sit?

In life, when have you felt unsure of where you are supposed to 'sit'?



DO ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTIONS

LEADERS, WATCH THE PARTICIPANTS FOR:

- What they say to each other
- What they find hard
- What they find easy
- What worked
- What caused conflict

HOW TO DO THE 'PURPOSE TRIANGLE' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Pens

- Give each young person a pen.
- Say, "Your purpose often sits where three things meet: what you love, what you're good at, and what the world needs."
- In the relevant corner, ask them to list:
 1. Three things they love to do (e.g. looking after animals, playing sport, making people laugh)
 2. Three things they're good at (e.g. hobbies, people skills, problem solving, school subjects, etc.)

3. Three things they see around them that need fixing/help (e.g. rubbish in parks, kids struggling at school, lonely people)

- Once they have finished writing their lists, say: "If something appears in more than one corner, that's a possible purpose area. For example:

- "What I love" = playing guitar
- "What I'm good at" = music
- "What the world needs" = people need encouragement

Possible purpose area: Playing music at youth events, aged care homes or at church.

- Encourage them: "Purpose isn't always one big thing you find once – it grows as you use your passions and skills to help others."

DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

How did you go with the activity?

Were you surprised by anything?

Did anything appear in more than one corner? What do you think that says about your purpose in life?

If you had a whole day to do something from your lists, what would you choose and why?

How do you think something you love doing could help people or make the world better?

In the group material (page 3): The Purpose Triangle template

READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

GOD HAS MADE US

EPHESIANS 2:8-10

⁸I mean that you have been saved by grace because you believed. You did not save yourselves; it was a gift from God. ⁹You are not saved by the things you have done, so there is nothing to boast about. ¹⁰God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us new people so that we would spend our lives doing the good things he had already planned for us to do.

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

*What do you think about what we just read?
How do you think it might relate to the question,
‘Why am I here?’*

*This Scripture says, “God made us what we are”.
Other translations of the Bible say we are ‘God’s
handiwork’. How does it feel to think that God made
us himself, with care and attention to detail?*

*If God made you for a reason, what do you think
some of that reason could be?*

*Paul says that there are “good things” that God has
planned for us to do. How can we figure out what
some of those good things are in our everyday lives?*

NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:

- Paul says life and being saved are gifts from God. God loves us so much that he saved us and gave us a fresh start.
- We can’t save ourselves by anything we do. Who we are and what our life is about comes from God and his plan for us.
- Verse 10 says, “God made us what we are”. Another version says, “we are his workmanship”, which comes from a Greek word that means we are like God’s poem.¹ Another translation says we are God’s “work of art”. Both of these ideas tell us that God carefully crafted us and loves us as we are.
- Verse 10 also says we were “created in Christ Jesus for good works”. That means God made us to live in a way that does good and helps others. Doing good doesn’t save us, but it’s proof that we are living as a person who loves and follows God.

¹ <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/ephesians-2/>

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

Sometimes life can feel pointless. We can question why we are here. Having a purpose in life – and making a difference – is inspiring, but if we don’t feel like we’ve found ours yet, we might think we’re falling behind. We can wonder, how do I go from just getting through the day to living life with a sense of purpose?

The Good News is that God has created us on purpose with a purpose, and he has prepared good things for us to do. We can use what we love doing and what we’re good at to make a difference to the people around us.

ASK THE GROUP:

- Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.
- Ask if anybody would like prayer for this topic or would like to pray. Then lead the group in prayer.
- Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.
- Remind them when the next session is.

CLOSE THE SESSION



WHAT IS GOD DOING IN THE WORLD?

HOW TO RUN A SESSION:

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session

Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

SESSION OUTLINE

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people identify where God is at work in the world and to reflect on the Good News that God is working, and Jesus has given us a description of what that looks like.

Game: The *Goggle Boggle* game gets young people to experience trying to find an object with unclear vision.

Activity: The *Who God Is, What God Does* activity helps young people to reflect on names and descriptions of God that help us notice what he is doing in the world.

Scripture: The Scriptures (Luke 4:18-19 and John 3:16-17) explore the Good News that God is at work in our world, and he has a plan to reach out to people.

Equipment needed for the session:

- ☐ Cheap goggles (\$2.50 from Kmart) for each player
- ☐ Vaseline or clingwrap to cover the goggles
- ☐ Pens/markers (different colours if possible)
- ☐ Butcher's paper or whiteboard and whiteboard marker
- ☐ An object to hide for group members to find



READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

Sometimes it can seem like God is far away. The world can feel messy, unfair, or out of control, and we can wonder what God is doing about it.

We might question, what is God's plan for the world? And what does it have to do with me?

We may get the feeling that God is working when we're at a big worship night, on camp or with friends who believe the same things as us. Those moments can feel powerful. But we might wonder if he is at work outside these times.

In our everyday lives it's not always clear where God is at work. We might catch glimpses, or we might not see much that feels like him. It can leave us unsure about how God fits into what's happening around us, or whether he's moving in ways we just don't notice yet.

What is God doing in the world?

As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the 'Goggle Boggle' game.

PLAY THE 'GOGGLE BOGGLE' GAME

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Cheap goggles (\$2.50 from Kmart) for each player
- ☐ Vaseline or clingwrap to cover the goggles and distort the player's view
- ☐ An object to hide for group members to find

- Show the players the object to find.
- Place the goggles on the players and ask them to close their eyes.
- Hide the object somewhere around the room.
- Players open their eyes (with distorted-view goggles still on) and find the object.
- First to find the object wins.

How did you go with the game?

How easy/difficult was it to see?

When do we find it easy/difficult to see God at work in the world?

DO ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTIONS

LEADERS, WATCH THE PARTICIPANTS FOR:

- What they say to each other
- What they find hard
- What they find easy
- What worked
- What caused conflict

HOW TO DO THE 'WHO GOD IS, WHAT GOD DOES' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Pens/markers (different colours if possible)
- ☐ Butcher's paper with the start of the 'Names of God' spider diagram drawn

- Draw a spider diagram on a sheet of butcher's paper. Write the different names and descriptions of God on it: Provider, Guide, Healer, Prince of Peace, Comforter, Saviour, Forgiver. (See example)
- The group will write and/or draw, next to each of the names, some examples of something they've seen or heard about that shows God at work in that way, e.g. for Prince of Peace, someone might write about when God has given them peace, or they might draw a picture of what peace means to them.
- If group members prefer, they can share their ideas out loud.

DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

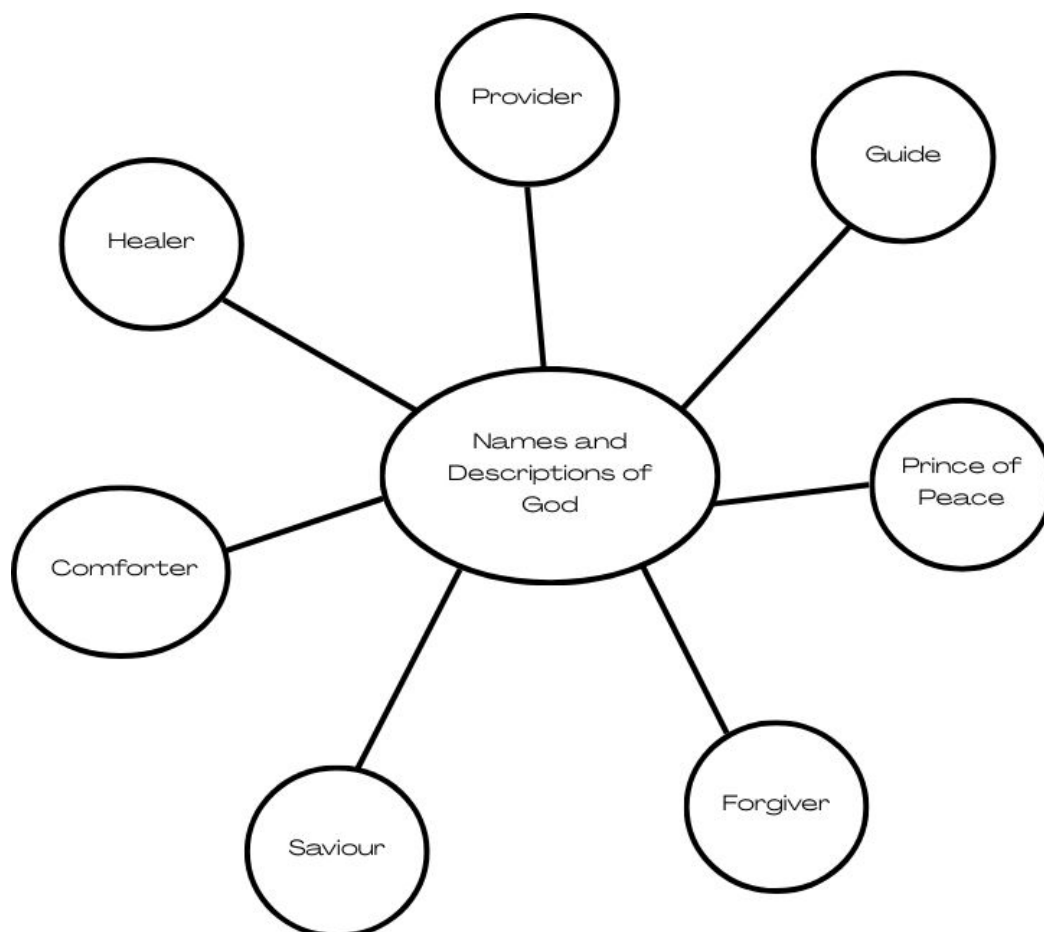
How did you go with the activity?

Was there anything that surprised you?

What is one name or description of God that means something to you? What does it mean to you?

Which name or description of God would you say is most noticeable in the people directly around you, such as your family, friends, peers, neighbours, etc?

Which name or description of God would you like to see more of in the wider world? Why?



READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

GOD'S PLAN FOR THE WORLD

LUKE 4:18-19 AND JOHN 3:16-17

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me. He has chosen me to tell good news to the poor. He sent me to tell prisoners that they are free and to tell the blind that they can see again. He sent me to free those who have been treated badly ¹⁹ and to announce that the time has come for the Lord to show his kindness." Luke 4:18-19

¹⁶ "Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him would not be lost but have eternal life. ¹⁷ God sent his Son into the world. He did not send him to judge the world guilty, but to save the world through him." John 3:16-17

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

*What do you think about what we just read?
How do you think it might relate to the question,
'What is God doing in the world?'*

*What do you think these verses show about what
God does – and wants to do – for people who are
struggling, hurting or left out?*

*Jesus talks about bringing freedom and kindness.
What could that look like in our world today?
Where do you see God bringing these things?*

*John 3:17 says God sent Jesus to save, not to judge.
How does that change the way we think about God
and his plans for our world?*

NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:

- In Luke 4:18 Jesus is reading from a passage in Isaiah that is a prophecy about the Messiah. Verse 18 starts, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me": This shows the one speaking is the Anointed One, who came to Earth to do God's work of bringing all people back to him.
- In this prophecy, the Messiah announced that he came to heal the fivefold damage that sin brings: he brings good news to the poor, he heals the brokenhearted, he sets people free, he heals our spiritual and moral blindness, and he brings liberty to the oppressed. God sent Jesus to be our deliverance and give us a new start (refer to Verse 19).
- John 3:16 is known as a key verse/a linchpin for what God has done and is doing in the world. "He gave His only Son" describes both the expression and the gift of God's love. God's love didn't just feel sorry for the plight of a fallen world. God did something about it, and he gave the most precious thing to give: His only Son.
- John 3:17 shows what God's plan is **not**, i.e. not to condemn the world (judge us guilty). Jesus revealed the heart of God the Father. God sent him to bring salvation – rescue, hope, healing – to the world.

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

Sometimes it can seem like God is far away. The world can feel messy, unfair, or out of control, and we can wonder what God is doing about it. There are times when we catch glimpses of him at work, but it's not always clear. It can leave us unsure about how God fits into what's happening around us, or whether he's moving in ways we just don't notice yet.

The Good News is that God has a plan for the world, and he is at work in people's lives. We can be part of his plan by speaking words of hope and kindness, praying for our friends, being involved in bringing justice, and getting to know God better at youth group and church.

ASK THE GROUP:

- Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.
- Ask if anybody would like prayer for this topic or would like to pray. Then lead the group in prayer.
- Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.
- Remind them when the next session is.

CLOSE THE SESSION

HOW CAN I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

HOW TO RUN A SESSION:

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session

Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

SESSION OUTLINE

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people understand that they can make a difference in the world and to reflect on the Good News that God can do significant things through everyday people.

Game: The *Domino Effect* game gets young people to experience one small thing having a big impact.

Activity: The *Act it Out* activity helps young people to reflect on everyday scenarios where they could make a big difference in someone's life.

Scripture: The Scriptures (Matthew 5:14-16 and Micah 6:8) explore the Good News that God wants to use us to bring light, justice and kindness to the world.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ One or more sets of dominoes



READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

Sometimes we feel pretty powerless. Big decisions about our lives can get made by other people, and we may not have much money or experience. It can leave us feeling small or like we don't have much control over things.

Some of us have been put down by others – told we are too young or too stupid to achieve anything worthwhile. Words like this can crush our confidence and intensify the feeling of powerlessness.

Even if we haven't had those experiences, we can wonder whether one person can really make a difference. After all, we are just one person in a world of eight billion people.

How can I make a difference?

As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the 'Domino Effect' game.

PLAY THE 'DOMINO EFFECT' GAME

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ One or more sets of dominoes

- Divide into two teams – giving half the dominoes to each team
- Each team works together to set up a domino run
- One person from each team knocks a domino over, causing a chain reaction, with other dominoes falling down
- The team with the most impressive and successful domino run wins

How did you go with the game? How did it feel to see one domino affecting so many others?

How easy or difficult do you think it is for one person to make a difference in the world?

DO ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTIONS

LEADERS, WATCH THE PARTICIPANTS FOR:

- What they say to each other
- What they find hard
- What they find easy
- What worked
- What caused conflict

HOW TO DO THE 'ACT IT OUT' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ No equipment required

- Divide into two groups.
- Each group should make up a role play about a regular young person making a difference while going about their everyday life.
- The groups will choose one of six prompts to base their role play on:
 - Worst day ever
 - Not what I expected
 - That was a surprise!
 - Broken heart
 - Speak up!
 - Picking up the pieces
- If groups get stuck, prompt them with questions like, "Who are the characters?" "What problem or need are they facing?" "Who will make a difference and how will they do it?"
- Groups will have six minutes to prepare, and will then present their role play to the group.

DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

How did you go with the activity? How easy was it to come up with an everyday scenario to act out?

Have you ever felt like you made a difference in someone else's life or helped changed a situation for the better? What happened? How did that feel?

Have you ever felt like you had an opportunity to make a difference but didn't? What sorts of things hold us back?

In your own life, where could you make a difference? (Think about people, places and needs). What small things could you do to make a big difference to someone else?

In the group material (page 9): Write down two small things you can do this week that will make a difference to someone.



READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

HOW WE LIVE IN THE WORLD

MATTHEW 5:14-16

¹⁴ You are the light that shines for the world to see. You are like a city built on a hill that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ People don't hide a lamp under a bowl. They put it on a lampstand. Then the light shines for everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven."

WHAT IS GOOD

MICAH 6:8

Human, the Lord has told you what goodness is. This is what he wants from you: Be fair to other people. Love kindness and loyalty, and humbly obey your God.

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

What do you think about what we just read? How do you think it might relate to the question, 'How can I make a difference?'

Jesus says we should be like a light, that shines brightly in the darkness of the world. What parts of the world would you describe as dark? How could the light of Jesus make a difference in those places?

What might it look like for you to 'shine your light' in ordinary, everyday situations?

Read Micah 6:8 again. Are you surprised that this is what God wants from us? How can one person live these things out in a way that makes a difference?

NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:

- Verse 14 says, “You are the light.” Jesus didn’t challenge us to *become* the light – he simply said that we *are*. God doesn’t want us to live just for ourselves – he wants us to shine light for others.
- “A city built on a hill... cannot be hidden”: If you see a lit-up city from a distance, it’s difficult to take your eyes off it. In the same way, Jesus wants us to live ‘lit-up’ lives that attract attention to the beauty of God’s work in and through us.
- The world is in darkness, and people need light. If we just copy the darkness, we’ve got nothing different to show. To make a real difference for Jesus, we need to live in a way that’s clearly His way – not just becoming like the world and its ways.
- Micah 6:8 – God says he wants us to do three things: ‘Act justly’, i.e. treat people with fairness and equity, ‘Love mercy’, i.e. let compassion and kindness guide us, and ‘Walk humbly with God’, i.e. humbly depend on God and try to align our lives with what he wants.

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

Sometimes we can feel powerless. We may have been put down, with no control and not many options. We may not have the resources, money or experience to do what we’d like to do.

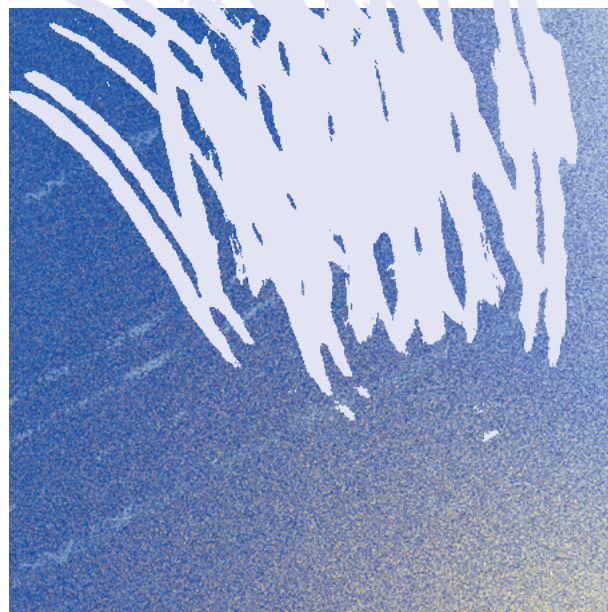
Even if we haven’t had those experiences, we can wonder whether one person can really make a difference in this world.

The Good News is that God can do significant things through everyday people like us. He empowers us to bring light, justice and kindness to the people in our world, one small act at a time.

ASK THE GROUP:

- Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.
- Ask if anybody would like prayer for this topic or would like to pray. Then lead the group in prayer.
- Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.
- Remind them when the next session is.

CLOSE THE SESSION



Session 4

WHAT DIFFERENCE CAN WE MAKE WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER?

HOW TO RUN A SESSION:

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session

Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

SESSION OUTLINE

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people identify the benefit of working with others and to reflect on the Good News that when we work together God can make a difference.

Game: The *Tarp Flip Challenge* game gets young people to experience working together to achieve something.

Activity: The *Plan an Event* activity helps young people to reflect what goes into planning an event that can make a difference in the local community. It also helps young people to understand that different people have skills and talents in different areas, and we can use those skills to make a difference.

Scripture: The Scripture (Mark 2:1-12) explores the Good News that when people work together God can make a difference.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ One large tarp
- ☐ Butcher's paper
- ☐ Markers



READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

Our world is getting more and more self-focused. Social media, streaming platforms and Uber Eats make it easy for us to get exactly what we want, when we want it. We pride ourselves on being independent, with terms like 'self-made' and 'self-sufficient' thrown around like compliments. There are benefits to being independent, but too much focus on the 'self' moves us away from a sense of community and working together.

Working together is part of life. At school, we often have to work together – like when we are put into groups to work on a project or assessment. We may not like working with other people, it may seem like too much effort, and we might think it's easier to go it alone. But when it comes to problems in life and society, we may find that we need to work with others. Some challenges are too big to face alone.

What difference can we make when we work together?

As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the 'Tarp Flip Game' game.

PLAY THE 'TARP FLIP' GAME

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ One large tarp

- Everyone stands on the tarp.
- Everyone must work together to flip it over, while standing on it.
- You cannot touch the ground or use any other object to help.

How did you go with the game?

How did you work out how to flip the tarp?

How does it feel when we accomplish something together?





DO ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTIONS

LEADERS, WATCH THE PARTICIPANTS FOR:

- What they say to each other
- What they find hard
- What they find easy
- What worked
- What caused conflict

HOW TO DO THE 'PLAN AN EVENT' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Butcher's paper
- ☐ Markers

Choose one of the following to do together as a group (or come up with something else).

- Car wash fundraiser
- Movie night fundraiser
- Church busy bee/working bee
- Neighbourhood clean up

- Op shop ball fundraiser
- Canned food drive (partner with a local organisation)

Use butcher's paper to plan how you will do it. You will need to consider questions like:

- Who are the people we are helping with this idea?
- When will we do it?
- Who do we need to contact for permission and approvals?
- What will the steps be?
- What roles will each of us do?
- How can we advertise it?
- [Add in more questions related to your specific task].

DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

*How did you go with the activity?
Which part of the planning was the easiest?
Which was the most difficult?*

What would it be like to try to do this project on your own? How could you expand the project and goal if you had 100 skilled volunteers ready to help?

How can our capacity to make a difference grow when we join up with friends, community groups or big organisations?

What are some ways we can team up with others to make a difference?

READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

PEOPLE BRING THEIR FRIEND TO JESUS THROUGH A ROOF

MARK 2:1-12

A few days later, Jesus came back to Capernaum. The news spread that he was back home. ² A large crowd gathered to hear him speak. The house was so full that there was no place to stand, not even outside the door. While Jesus was teaching, ³ some people brought a paralyzed man to see him. He was being carried by four of them. ⁴ But they could not get the man inside to Jesus because the house was so full of people. So they went to the roof above Jesus and made a hole in it. Then they lowered the mat with the paralyzed man on it. ⁵ When Jesus saw how much faith they had, he said to the paralyzed man, “Young man, your sins are forgiven.”

⁶ Some of the teachers of the law were sitting there. They saw what Jesus did, and they said to themselves, ⁷ “Why does this man say things like that? What an insult to God! No one but God can forgive sins.”

⁸ Jesus knew immediately what these teachers of the law were thinking. So he said to them, “Why do you have these questions in your minds? ⁹⁻¹⁰ The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. But how can I prove this to you? Maybe you are thinking it was easy for me to say to the crippled man, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ There’s no proof it really happened. But what if I say to the man, ‘Stand up. Take your mat and walk’? Then you will be able to see if I really have this power or not.” So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, ¹¹ “I tell you, stand up. Take your mat and go home.”

¹² Immediately the paralyzed man stood up. He picked up his mat and walked out of the room. Everyone could see him. They were amazed and praised God. They said, “This is the most amazing thing we have ever seen!”

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

What do you think about what we just read? How do you think it might relate to the question, ‘What difference can we make when we work together?’

How do you think the outcome of this story might be different if the paralysed man only had one friend helping him, rather than the group?

The paralysed man had friends who were determined to see him healed. They ended up making a huge difference to his life by working together and putting him in the presence of Jesus. Where have you seen faith move people to work together?

Have you ever been part of a group that has come together to make a difference? How did it feel? What did you achieve together?

NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:

- At this point in Jesus’ ministry, he attracted crowds wherever he went, because of all the miracles he was performing around Galilee. Getting someone in front of Jesus was a very difficult thing to accomplish!
- The roof was usually accessible by means of an outside stairway and was made of thatch, dirt or tile laid over beams. It could be taken apart, and the friends of the paralysed man lowered their friend down to Jesus. However, one commentary explains the force of the word used in this Scripture shows that they “broke up the roof of the house, tearing up the fabric, in order to lower the man down on his pallet into the presence of Jesus.”
- The way the friends got the man into the room demonstrates their faith. They counted on Jesus healing their friend, because it would be a lot more difficult to bring him back up through the roof than lowering him down. They counted on him *walking* out of the room.²
- In Verse 5 Jesus responds to the faith of the man’s friends by forgiving the man’s sins. They were expecting Jesus to heal their friend! But Jesus knew what the man’s greatest need was. Jesus first forgave his sins, then healed him.

2 <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/mark-2/>

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

Our world is getting more and more self-focused. We pride ourselves on being independent, with words like 'self-made' and self-sufficient thrown around like compliments. There are benefits to being independent, but too much focus on the 'self' moves us away from a sense of community.

Working with others involves compromise and effort – sometimes we might think it's just easier to go it alone, but the Good News is that when we work together, God can use us make a significant difference.

ASK THE GROUP:

- Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.
- Ask if anybody would like prayer for this topic or would like to pray. Then lead the group in prayer.
- Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.
- Remind them when the next session is.



CLOSE THE SESSION



WHAT HAPPENED THIS YEAR?

HOW TO RUN A SESSION:

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session

Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

SESSION OUTLINE

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people look back on significant moments from the past year, to reflect on how God was at work, and to explore the Good News that God is sometimes at work in ways we don't recognise until we look back.

Game: The *This Year IRL* game gets young people to reflect on the past year.

Activity: The *Timeline* activity helps young people to reflect on moments in the past year that were significant for them.

Scripture: The Scripture (Luke 24:13-31a) explores the Good News that Jesus is with us even when we can't see it at the time.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Download and prepare the *This Year IRL* PowerPoint [here](#). Before the session, you will need to customise some of the slides.
- ☐ Screen to show PowerPoint on
- ☐ Pens/pencils

READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

Sometimes life feels like a rollercoaster, with unexpected highs and lows. We can be so caught up in the moment that there isn't a lot of time to process what has happened. When we've faced intense lows or epic highs, it's important for us to be able to process them. If we don't unpack what has happened, we might feel anything from numbness to anger or anxiety.

At other times, there can be long stretches that feel like they go on forever, with nothing of note happening at all. Even in those times, we are changing – being shaped by the people we connect with and the experiences we have. When we take time to look back, we can be surprised by the things we notice – the way we were shaped, the memories we feel grateful for, the way God was working.

It's helpful to create space to look back and ask ourselves,

What happened this year?

As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the 'This Year IRL' game.

PLAY THE 'THIS YEAR IRL' GAME

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Download the *This Year IRL* PPT
- ☐ Screen to show PPT on

Before the game fill out the answers that are relevant for your group of young people.

How did you go with the game?

What was the most surprising answer?

What did you most enjoy at youth group this year?

What did you least enjoy?

DO ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTIONS

LEADERS, WATCH THE PARTICIPANTS FOR:

- What they say to each other
- What they find hard
- What they find easy
- What worked
- What caused conflict

HOW TO DO THE 'TIMELINE' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Timeline in Group Material (page 16)
- ☐ Pens/pencils

- On the timeline from January to December, group members will plot some big events that have happened for them this year.
- After they have mapped out the big events, group members will try to identify moments during the year when God was at work.

DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

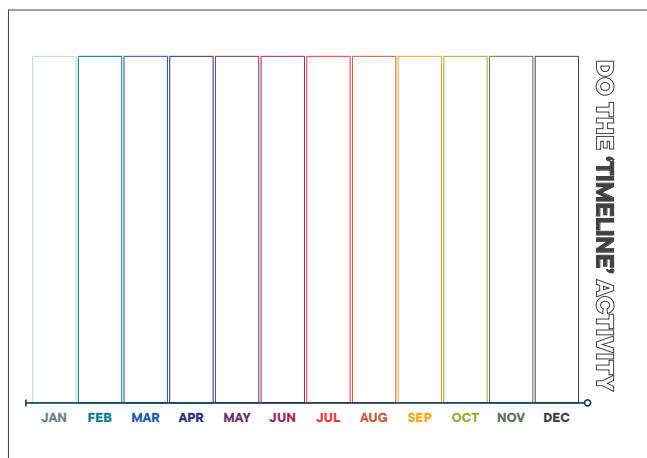
How did you go with the activity? What was memorable for you about this year?

What was fun/rewarding about this year?

What was hard about this year? How did you cope with change and respond to challenges?

As you look back on the year, what do you notice about how God was working?

In the group material (page 16): Timeline.



READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

JESUS AND TWO DISCIPLES TALK ABOUT HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

LUKE 24:13-31A

¹³ That same day two of Jesus' followers were going to a town named Emmaus. It is about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking, discussing these things, Jesus himself came near and walked with them. ¹⁶ (But the two men were not allowed to recognize Jesus.) ¹⁷ He asked them, "What's this I hear you discussing with each other as you walk?"

The two men stopped, their faces looking very sad.

¹⁸ The one named Cleopas said, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who doesn't know what has just happened there."

¹⁹ Jesus said, "What are you talking about?"

They said, "It's about Jesus, the one from Nazareth. To God and to all the people he was a great prophet. He said and did many powerful things. ²⁰ But our leaders and the leading priests handed him over to be judged and killed. They nailed him to a cross. ²¹ We were hoping that he would be the one to free Israel. But then all this happened.

"And now something else: It has been three days since he was killed, ²² but today some of our women told us an amazing thing. Early this morning they went to the tomb where the body of Jesus was laid. ²³ But they did not find his body there. They came and told us they had seen some angels in a vision. The angels told them Jesus was alive! ²⁴ So some of our group went to the tomb too.

It was just as the women said. They saw the tomb, but they did not see Jesus."

²⁵ Then Jesus said to the two men, "You are foolish and slow to realize what is true. You should believe everything the prophets said. ²⁶ The prophets said the Messiah must suffer these things before he begins his time of glory." ²⁷ Then he began to explain everything that had been written about himself in the Scriptures. He started with the books of Moses and then he talked about what the prophets had said about him.

²⁸ They came near the town of Emmaus, and Jesus acted as if he did not plan to stop there. ²⁹ But they wanted him to stay. They begged him, "Stay with us. It's almost night. There's hardly any daylight left." So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰ Joining them at the supper table, Jesus took some bread and gave thanks. Then he broke some off and gave it to them. ³¹ Just then the men were allowed to recognize him.

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

What do you think about what we just read?

How do you think it might relate to the question, 'What happened this year?'

In Verse 21, the disciples are sad because the thing they hoped for doesn't seem to have happened, but Jesus explains that it just didn't happen how they expected. Have you ever experienced something like this?

The disciples didn't realise they had been with Jesus until they looked back later on. Can you think of a time when you looked back on an experience and realised Jesus was at work? Why do you think it is sometime difficult to recognise at the time?

How can the practice of looking back strengthen our faith or give us insight?

NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:

- Scholars believe this story is based on the eye-witness testimony of one the disciples.
- This account shows us that Jesus chooses to walk and talk with everyday people.
- The road to Emmaus story gives us a picture of how Jesus walks with us and opens our eyes, pointing us to the Word and revealing himself to us.
- “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked?” they ask each other (Verse 32). Their physical eyes were blinded to the identity of Jesus, but their eyes of faith were being opened (see Verses 25-27). As we read and reflect on Scripture, we also begin to understand how God is working in our lives.

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

Sometimes life feels like a rollercoaster, with unexpected highs and lows. At other times, there can be long stretches that feel like they go on forever, with nothing of note happening at all. Even when life feels uneventful, we are changing – being shaped by the people we connect with and the experiences we have. When we take time to look back and reflect, we can notice how God was shaping us.

The Good News is even if we didn’t know it at the time, God is always with us and is working in our lives.

ASK THE GROUP:

- Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.
- Ask if anybody would like prayer for this topic or would like to pray. Then lead the group in prayer.
- Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.
- Remind them when the next session is.

CLOSE THE SESSION



Session 6

WHO ENCOURAGED US THIS YEAR?

HOW TO RUN A SESSION:

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session

Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

SESSION OUTLINE

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people explore and identify who encouraged them this year, and to acknowledge the Good News that God wants us to support and build each other up.

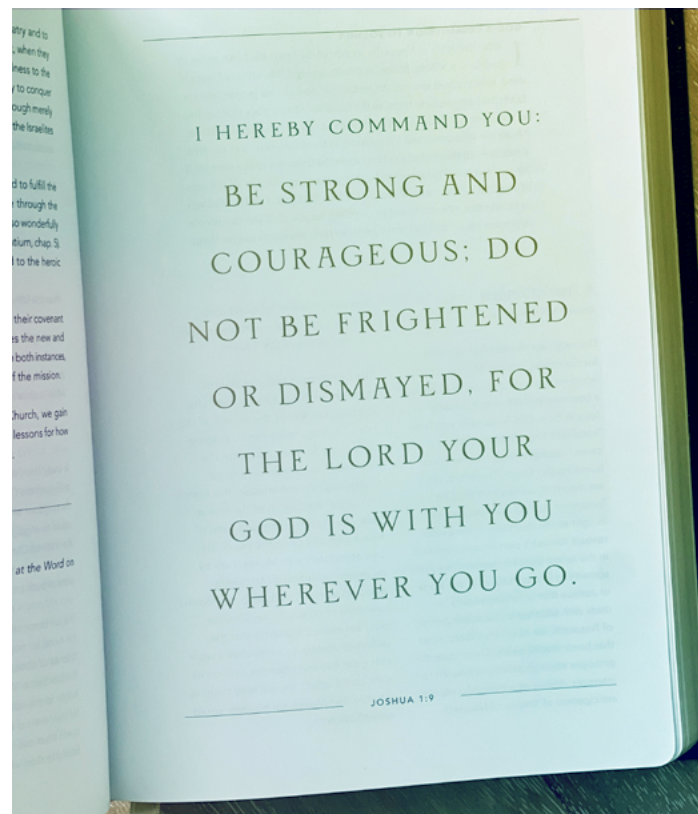
Game: The *Thumb Wars – champions and cheer squads* game gets young people to experience being encouraged in a challenge.

Activity: The *Words of Thanks* activity helps young people to give thanks to those who have encouraged them.

Scripture: The Scriptures (Hebrews 10:24–25 and Romans 12:15) explore the Good News that God puts people in our lives who encourage us and we can encourage them too.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Cardboard
- ☐ Various craft materials
- ☐ Markers, pens, etc.



READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

We all know that relationships are important. Our friends, our family, the people that we rely on for fun, help, love and care.

Our friends might change over time, and we might notice that some of them come and go over the years. The friends who are most important in our lives right now might have less influence next year.

When things begin to go wrong in our lives and we face challenges, we often become more aware of our relationships. We notice the people who stick by us in the tough times and build us back up again.

But when life is cruising along normally, we might not notice and appreciate these people and the role they play in our lives. It's helpful to pause and ask:

Who encouraged us this year?

As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the 'Thumb Wars – champions and cheer squads' game.

PLAY THE 'THUMB WARS – CHAMPIONS AND CHEER SQUADS' GAME

- Choose two people to compete in a thumb war.
- Ask everyone else to gather around, then play three rounds.
 - Round 1 – ask the onlookers to be silent
 - Round 2 – choose one participant and ask everyone to cheer for that person only.
 - Round 3 – assign people to cheer for each participant.

How did you go with the game?

How did it feel to have people cheering you on?

What difference does it make to have a cheer squad (in life)?

DO ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTIONS

LEADERS, WATCH THE PARTICIPANTS FOR:

- What they say to each other
- What they find hard
- What they find easy
- What worked
- What caused conflict

HOW TO DO THE 'WORDS OF THANKS' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Cardboard
 - ☐ Various craft materials
 - ☐ Markers, pens, etc.
- Option 1: Provide cardboard and craft resources and allow time for group members to make cards for people who have encouraged them this year.
 - Option 2: Create space for group members to send 3-4 text messages to people who have encouraged them this year.

Let group members know that there are some sentence-starters in their group material that might help.

DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

How did you go with the activity?

How easy or difficult did you find it to think of people who have encouraged you?

What are some examples of things that people did or said that encouraged you?

What was the most encouraging thing someone said or did? Why was this so significant?

How does this inspire or challenge you to encourage someone else?

In the group material (page 20): Sentence starters for Words of Thanks.

READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER

HEBREWS 10:24-25

²⁴ We should think about each other to see how we can encourage each other to show love and do good works. ²⁵ We must not quit meeting together, as some are doing. No, we need to keep on encouraging each other. This becomes more and more important as you see the Day getting closer.

ROMANS 12:15

When others are happy, you should be happy with them. And when others are sad, you should be sad too.

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

*What do you think about what we just read?
How do you think it might relate to the question,
‘Who encouraged us this year?’*

Hebrews 10 is all about how God wants us to relate to each other. What do you think it would feel like if everyone helped and loved each other?

Have you ever felt encouraged by meeting together with other Christians? What did that feel like?

Why do you think this verse suggests that we express joy when our friends are joyful or sadness when they are sad? How do you think this might encourage someone?

NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:

- Both Scripture references are drawn from chapters that are focused on practical application of our faith – how do we live out what we believe as followers of Jesus?
- God created people to live in community with each other. As Christians, meeting together helps us to remain steady in our faith, to stand strong in the fight and to persevere through challenges and disappointment.

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

We all need people in our lives who will support and encourage us.

When things begin to go wrong and we face challenges, we often become more aware of our relationships. We notice the people who stick by us in the tough times and build us back up again.

But when life is cruising along normally, we might not notice and appreciate these people and the role they play in our lives.

The Good News is that we don’t have to do life alone. We can support each other through the good times and the tough times. God puts people in our lives who encourage us, and we can encourage them too.

ASK THE GROUP:

- Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.
- Ask if anybody would like prayer for this topic or would like to pray. Then lead the group in prayer.
- Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.
- Remind them when the next session is.

CLOSE THE SESSION

Session 7

WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED THIS YEAR?

How to run a session:

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session

Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

SESSION OUTLINE

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people reflect on what they have achieved and how they have grown this year, and to reflect on the Good News that God is working in our lives to help us grow.

Game: The *Minute-to-improve* game gets young people to experience growth and improvement.

Activity: The *You have grown* activity helps young people to reflect on how other people have seen them grow in the past year.

Scripture: The Scripture (2 Peter 1:5-8) explores the Good News that God's Holy Spirit helps us to grow more like Jesus.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Table(s)
- ☐ Bucket(s) of ping pong balls (or scrunched up pieces of paper)
- ☐ Plastic cups
- ☐ Timer set for one minute
- ☐ Optional: small prize



READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

We all want to feel like we are doing well in life – growing and accomplishing things.

But at the end of the year, as report cards come home and other students are celebrated at presentation nights, we can begin to wonder just how well we are doing. If we haven't achieved anything spectacular, if we are not winning the academic or sporting awards, we can begin to feel down about ourselves.

We might begin to wonder what achievement really means. Are we doing enough? Are we good enough? How have we learnt and grown over the past year – spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, physically?

We are often tempted to measure our achievements against the achievements of other people, but how have we personally improved?

What have we achieved this year?

As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the 'Minute to improve' game.

PLAY THE 'MINUTE TO IMPROVE' GAME

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Table(s)
 - ☐ Bucket(s) of ping pong balls (or scrunched up pieces of paper)
 - ☐ Plastic cups
 - ☐ Timer set for one minute
 - ☐ Optional: small prize
- Note: if you have enough space, set up several stations so that multiple people can play at once.

- This is a 'minute-to-win-it' style game that is focused on personal improvement. Use the activity outlined below or choose a similar activity that allows the young people to measure their growth.

- Each person has to compete against themselves for three rounds.
- Set up a number of plastic cups on a table.
- Give the player a bucket of ping pong balls (or scrunched up pieces of paper). They must stand back from the table and throw as many balls into cups as possible in one minute.
- **The winner is the person who improves the most over the three rounds.**
- Optional: Give a small prize to the person who has improved the most.

How did you go with the game?

What did you do to improve your results?

How does it feel when we get better at something?

DO ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTIONS

LEADERS, WATCH THE PARTICIPANTS FOR:

- What they say to each other
- What they find hard
- What they find easy
- What worked
- What caused conflict

HOW TO DO THE 'YOU HAVE GROWN' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Printed outlines of award ribbons
 - ☐ Pens or markers
- Give each group member a printed outline of an award ribbon with prompts on it.
 - Ask everyone to write their name in the centre
 - Ask everyone to pass their ribbon to the next person around the circle and ask them to write down a response to one of the prompts.
 - Continue passing them around the circle until everyone has their own back again.

DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

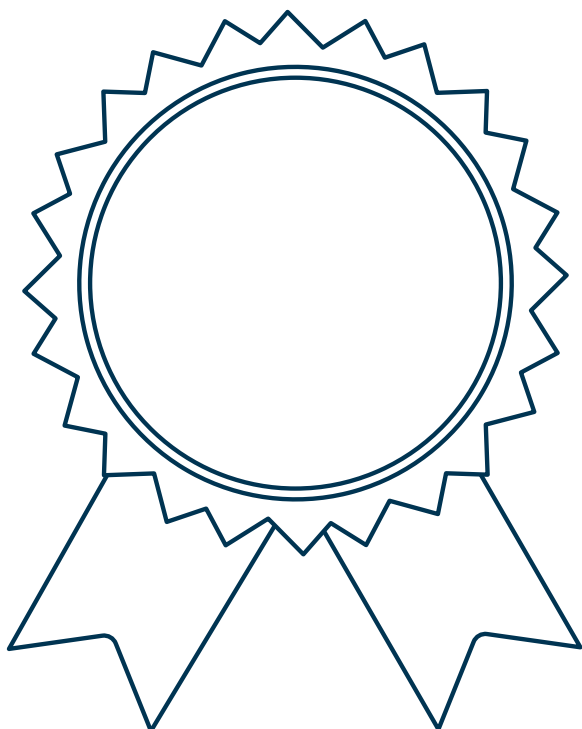
How did you go with the activity? How did you feel when you read what people wrote?

What surprises you about how you have grown this year?

In what area of your life have you seen the most growth this year?

What helped you grow this year?

In the group material (page 23): Award ribbon outline.



READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

GROWING IN FAITH

2 PETER 1:5-8

⁵Because you have these blessings, do all you can to add to your life these things: to your faith add goodness; to your goodness add knowledge; ⁶to your knowledge add self-control; to your self-control add patience; to your patience add devotion to God; ⁷to your devotion add kindness toward your brothers and sisters in Christ, and to this kindness add love. ⁸If all these things are in you and growing, you will never fail to be useful to God. You will produce the kind of fruit that should come from your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

What do you think about what we just read? How do you think it might relate to the question, 'What have we achieved this year?'

These verses remind us that when we follow Jesus, we become more like him. When have you seen this happen in your life or someone else's?

Which of these characteristics do you see growing in your life? How does this impact how you relate to others?

Where do you think people might see God working in your life? How do you think the Holy Spirit is helping you to grow more like Jesus?

NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:

- 2 Peter was written to Christians to warn them about false teachings, help them to grow in their faith, and understand how to live as God's people.
- Many of the false teachings at the time suggested that self-control was unnecessary if you had knowledge. Peter rejects this, insisting that Christian knowledge leads to living with self-control and godliness.
- In these verses, Peter encourages us to see that faith in Jesus is the beginning of our journey. With the help of the Spirit, we continue to grow more like Jesus in the way that we think and the way that we live.
- 1 John 4:16-18 also talks about this idea of growing to be more like Jesus.

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

When we compare ourselves or try to meet the expectations of others, we might feel like we are not good enough, or we may wonder if we measure up.

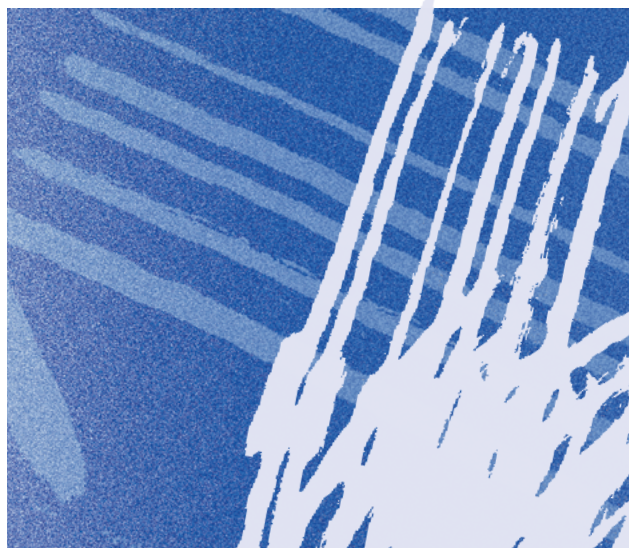
Instead, it is helpful to reflect on what we have learnt, how we have personally improved and ways in which we have grown to be more like Jesus. We can pause and ask ourselves, 'What have I achieved this year?'

The Good News is that God's Holy Spirit is working in us, leading us and helping us to grow more like Jesus.

ASK THE GROUP:

- Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.
- Ask if anybody would like prayer for this topic or would like to pray. Then lead the group in prayer.
- Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.
- Remind them when the next session is.

CLOSE THE SESSION



Session 8

WHAT DO WE WANT NEXT YEAR TO BE LIKE?

HOW TO RUN A SESSION:

- Read the introduction and play the game
- Do the activity and discuss the questions
- Read the Scripture and discuss the questions
- Read the conclusion and close the session

Adapt this session to suit the needs of your group as required.

SESSION OUTLINE

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people explore their hopes for next year, support them in setting achievable goals, and to reflect on the Good News that God promises to guide us and keep us on the right path.

Game: The *Get a Goal* game gets young people to experience trying to get a goal.

Activity: The *My goals* activity helps young people to reflect on their dreams and goals for next year.

Scripture: The Scripture (Proverbs 3:5-6) explores the Good News that God promises to guide us down the right path.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Soccer ball and makeshift goal (e.g. two rolled up hoodies)
- ☐ One set of the 'goals photo cards' – download [here](#)

READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

As we look ahead to the new year, it's natural to imagine what it will be like. We might find ourselves dreaming about the possibilities or wishing for things to be different.

If we've faced some tough circumstances this year, we might be longing for those things to change. Or we might hope for new opportunities and experiences. The possibility of trying new things or reaching new milestones can excite us.

Some of these things are outside our control, but some of them are things we can achieve if we set goals and work toward them. As we prepare for the year to end, it's helpful for us to consider,

What do we want next year to look like?

As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the 'Get a goal' game.

PLAY THE 'GET A GOAL' GAME

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Soccer ball
- ☐ Makeshift goal (e.g. two rolled up hoodies)
- Group members stand in a single line, in front of the goal.
- The player at the front of the line takes a shot, then moves to the end of the line.
- The next player takes a shot and moves to the end of the line.
- Do several rounds, e.g. kicking with your feet, throwing, rolling.
- The winner is the one who scored the most goals.

How did you go with the game?

How did it feel to try to score a goal?

How does it feel when we set a goal in life and achieve it?

DO ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTIONS

LEADERS, WATCH THE PARTICIPANTS FOR:

- What they say to each other
- What they find hard
- What they find easy
- What worked
- What caused conflict

HOW TO DO THE 'MY GOALS' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ One set of 'goals photo cards' – with the white edges trimmed off.
- Spread out photos on the table – each one represents a goal someone might want to aim for next year.
- Group members walk around and choose one picture that connect with something they'd like to work toward next year.
- Group members glue their picture into the group materials and write a few words or sentences about what their goal is and why it matters to them. Underneath, they can add one small step they could take in the next month to move toward that goal.

DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

How did you go with the activity?

Why did you choose the picture/goal you did?

How do you think working on this goal might change things for you next year?

What's one challenge you might face while working toward this goal? What could you do to overcome this challenge?

Who could support or encourage you as you work on your goal? How will you know you're making progress?

In the group material (page 26): Full page for photo and reflections.

READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

TRUSTING GOD WITH OUR FUTURE

PROVERBS 3:5-6

⁵ Trust the LORD completely, and don't depend on your own knowledge. ⁶ With every step you take, think about what he wants, and he will help you go the right way.

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

*What do you think about what we just read?
How do you think it might relate to the question,
'What do we want next year to be like?'*

What do you think it means to "trust the Lord completely" in our lives?

Can you think of a time when you felt like God helped you go the right way? What happened?

How could this verse connect with the goals you want to set for next year?

NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:

- Verse 5 talks about "trust." This means putting your full weight on God – like if you sat in a chair without worrying it might break. You're depending on him for everything, not keeping a backup plan just in case he doesn't come through. It's knowing he's got you, no matter what.
- When we trust God with all our heart, we trust him like a child trusts – knowing that God knows what is best for us and he has the answers we need.
- When we trust in God's ability, he will lead us into a future that fulfils us and honours him.
- When we focus on what God wants to do in our everyday lives, we can trust that he will direct our paths. As we read our Bible, ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance and listen to the wise counsel of trusted leaders, we will find ourselves on the path God has made for us to walk.



READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

As we set goals for the new year, we might see the possibility for new opportunities and experiences, or we might simply be longing for our current circumstances to change. Some things are outside our control, but some are things we can achieve if we set goals and work toward them.

The Good News is that God promises to guide us along the right path. He knows our hopes and dreams, and wants to see us succeed, as we trust in him and walk with him.

ASK THE GROUP:

- Get each person to share a takeaway from the session.
- Ask if anybody would like prayer for this topic or would like to pray. Then lead the group in prayer.
- Ask if anybody wants to discuss anything further about this topic with a leader or support person.
- Remind them when the next session is.

CLOSE THE SESSION

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY SESSION – PURPOSE IN LIFE

The Introduction Activity session provides an opportunity to introduce the topic of the term in a less structured session than a Life Lab. You can use the ideas to create a fun and social session that will help introduce the concepts. For example, for this topic, we share ideas for activities that centre conversations around purpose in life and different ways to discover purpose.

INTRODUCTION:

Every person has a purpose for which God put them on the Earth. It may take time to unfold, but we know that God made us who we are and he has good things planned for us to do. Through Life Lab sessions, we will look at why we are here, what God is doing in our world, and the difference we can make – as individuals and in working together.

WHAT YOU COULD DO:

You could use this session to talk about God's purpose for us. Here are some ideas that would make sense for the term:

- **Scavenger Hunt** – Hide objects that symbolise purpose. Once everyone has found the items, discuss what that symbolism could be e.g. a compass – represents directions. Packet of seeds – represents growth.
- **Purpose Cafe** – Set up tables and chairs with snacks and drinks. On the tables are a few questions that relate to purpose. Get the small groups to move tables every 10 minutes. Different questions on each table, e.g.
 - When do you feel the most alive?
 - Who inspires you?
 - What do you love doing where time seems to speed by?
 - Would you rather do something you love for little money or something boring for a high salary?
 - Would you rather impact 10 people deeply or 1,000 people a little?
 - Would you rather know your purpose now or discover it slowly over time?
- **Roll the Dice** – Use large foam dice with prompts written on each side. Take turns rolling and responding.
 - “Something I care deeply about...”
 - “A dream I had as a child...”
 - “A way I can help others...”

DISCUSSION:

Take the opportunity to explore young people's experiences with the topic before we spend the next few sessions on it. You can ask questions like:

- How can we find purpose in each season of life – not just the future?
- Where do we start to find out what our purpose is?
- How does understanding God's purpose for your life influence you to reach out to others?

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY – REFLECTING ON THE YEAR

The Reflective Activity session provides an opportunity to reflect on the topic idea in a less structured session than a Life Lab. You can use the ideas to create a fun and social session that will help reflect on the concepts of the term. For example, for this topic, we will reflect on our year, celebrate what God has done in and through us, and set goals for the year to come.

INTRODUCTION:

This term we've explored the Good News that we have had a year of growth and achievement. This concluding activity session is a way to further reflect and celebrate all that has happened this year.

WHAT YOU COULD DO:

You could use this session to help your group reflect on the topics explored this term. Here are some ideas that would be fun to incorporate into your end of term celebration.

Photo Reflection – Gather all the photos from the year and display them around the room. Make the night fun with different snacks and party games.

Testimony night – everyone takes turns sharing short testimonies from the year – what they learned, what challenged them, etc.

Reflection Stations – Set up different stations with questions, Scriptures, or creative prompts:

- Write a letter to your future self
- Journal your biggest lesson from God
- Draw a timeline of the year's emotional journey
- Write a prayer of gratitude or surrender

DISCUSSION:

Take the opportunity to explore with young people their experiences of the topic in informal ways. You could ask questions like:

- What is one way you have grown this year?
- What is something you can encourage in someone else that you have seen them achieve?
- What is one goal you want to focus on for the upcoming year?

SPEAKER BRIEF

Message: God has a purpose for you, and you can make a difference in the world!

LIVED EXPERIENCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE:

- Young people can feel powerless. Big decisions about their lives can get made by other people, and they may not have much money or experience. It can leave them feeling small.
- Young people may have been put down by others – told they are too young or too stupid to achieve anything worthwhile. Words like this can crush their confidence and intensify the feeling of powerlessness.
- Even if they haven't had those experiences, young people can wonder whether one person can really make a difference in a world of 8 billion people.
- Young people may not have had role models that show them that one person can make a difference.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- As a teenager, did you ever feel powerless, put down, lacking the resources to achieve anything worthwhile?
- What would you say to a young person who asks if one person can really make a difference in the world?

SCRIPTURES:

MATTHEW 5:14-16

¹⁴ “You are the light that shines for the world to see. You are like a city built on a hill that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ People don't hide a lamp under a bowl. They put it on a lampstand. Then the light shines for everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.”

MICAH 6:8

“Human, the Lord has told you what goodness is. This is what he wants from you: Be fair to other people. Love kindness and loyalty, and humbly obey your God.”

SCRIPTURE POINTS:

- Verse 14 says, “You are the light.” Jesus didn't challenge us to *become* the light – he simply said that we *are*. God doesn't want us to live just for ourselves – he wants us to shine light for others.
- “A city built on a hill... cannot be hidden”: If you see a lit-up city from a distance, it's difficult to take your eyes off it. In the same way, Jesus wants us to live ‘lit-up’ lives that attract attention to the beauty of God's work in and through us.
- The world is in darkness and people need light. If we just copy the darkness, we've got nothing different to show. To make a real difference for Jesus, we need to live in a way that's clearly His way – not just becoming like the world and its ways.
- Micah 6:8 – God says he wants us to do three things: ‘Act justly’, i.e. treat people with fairness and equity, ‘Love mercy’, i.e. let compassion and kindness guide us, and ‘Walk humbly with God’, i.e. humbly depend on God and try to align our lives with his will.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Have you had opportunities to ‘be the light’ to those around you? What did that look like? What did you do?
- Share a time when you (or someone you know) said or did something that stood out like light in darkness. What impact did it have on the person/people/situation?
- When have you seen someone treated fairly/justly, with mercy, all in a humble way? What small steps can young people take to treat people this way?

THE GOOD NEWS MESSAGE:

Sometimes young people can feel powerless. They may have been put down, with no control and not many options. They may not have the resources, money or experience to do what they'd like to do. Even if young people haven't had those experiences, they can wonder whether one person can really make a difference in this world. The Good News is that God can do significant things through everyday people. He empowers young people to bring light, justice and kindness to those around them, one small act at a time.

LIFE LABS



salvationarmy.org.au/youth-ya
equipleaders.com.au