

**LIFE
LABS**

We love because God first loved us.

1 JOHN 4:19

WHO AM I THE WAY THE WAY THE WAY THE WAY THE WAY THE WAY BECOMING

LEADERS MATERIAL


**Jesus
centred
Spirit-led
Hope
revealed**

LIFE LABS 2026 | TERM 1
SALVOS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS



TOPIC OUTLINE

This term we will explore the question, 'Who am I becoming?'

In the first half of the term, we will explore who we want to be and how we can grow in character.

In the second half of the term, we will explore how we can find direction and make decisions that will help us become who we want to be.

LIFE LABS PART 1: BECOMING WHO I WANT TO BE

LIFE LAB 1: What kind of person would I like to be? (page 4)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people consider the qualities they would like to have.

Scripture: The Scripture (Colossians 3:12-14) explores the Good News that God can fill us with his Spirit and help us develop good fruit.

LIFE LAB 2: How can we grow in kindness? (page 8)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people consider the times they find it easy or difficult to show kindness to others.

Scripture: The Scripture (Philippians 1:9-11) explores the Good News that God can fill us with his love, helping us to show kindness to others.

LIFE LAB 3: How can I work on the parts of me that don't match who I want to be? (page 12)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people to consider the things about their character they would like to change.

Scripture: The Scripture (Galatians 5:16-17 & 25) explores the Good News that Jesus invites us to follow him and be transformed by his Holy Spirit.

LIFE LAB 4: How can I stay true to the kind of person I want to be? (page 16)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people consider the things that help them stay true to the person they want to be.

Scripture: The Scripture (Daniel 6:16-23) explores the Good News that keeping our eyes on God can help us stay strong and true.

PART 2: FINDING DIRECTION

LIFE LAB 5: Who are we following? (page 21)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people consider the people they are being influenced by and looking to as an example.

Scripture: The Scripture (John 10:14-15 and 27-28) explores the Good News that Jesus cares for us and invites us to follow him.

LIFE LAB 6: When we face big decisions, how can we decide which option is best? (page 25)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people consider the things that shape our big decisions.

Scripture: The Scriptures (Psalm 119:105 and Proverbs 3:5-6) explore the Good News that God can guide us and help us with our big decisions.

LIFE LAB 7: How are our habits shaping us? (page 29)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people consider what personal habits and routines we have and how they are shaping the person we are becoming.

Scripture: The Scriptures (Mark 1:35, Luke 4:16a and John 6:11) explore the Good News that Jesus modelled habits that will help us.

LIFE LAB 8: What if we want to change direction? (page 32)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people explore what it is like to change direction and live differently to how we've been living.

Scripture: The Scripture (Acts 9:1-22) explores the Good News that it's never too late – Jesus can transform our hearts and show us a different way to live.

APPENDIX – ACTIVITY SESSIONS

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY SESSION (page 36)

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 provides fun activities to help young people connect and start thinking about the topics that will be coming up in Life Labs this term. For example, you could explore the idea of following Jesus and doing what he did through activities like the Secret Service game, a banquet-style dinner, copycat dance or sash snatch.

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY SESSION (page 37)

The reflective activity 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 to explore the idea that Jesus guides us with love and can help us make good decisions through activities like 'rock-paper-scissors hula hoop', a scavenger hunt or 'find the pattern'.

SPEAKER BRIEF (page 38)

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, when they wonder if they can make a difference in the world. Using the Scripture Acts 9:1-22, we explore the Good News that it's never too late to change and that Jesus can come into our lives and transform us.

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."

WHAT KIND OF PERSON WOULD I LIKE TO BE?

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 consider the qualities they would like to have.

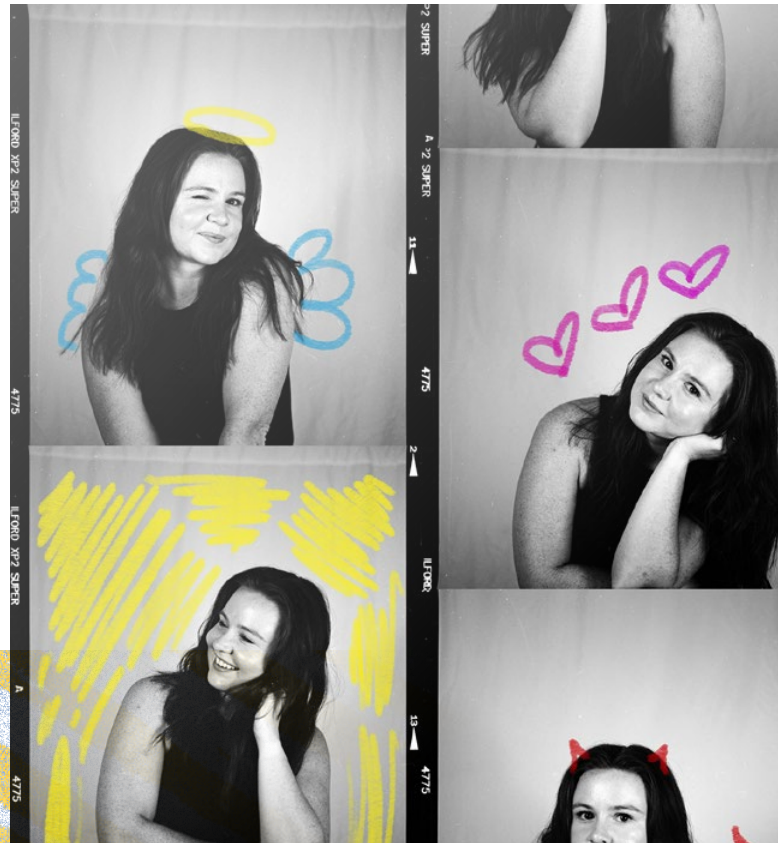
Game: The *Good Qualities* game gets young people to start to think about what qualities and attributes they want to have.

Activity: The *What Matters to Me* activity helps young people to reflect on the top three qualities that are most important to them.

Scripture: The Scripture (Colossians 3:12-14) explores the Good News that God can fill us with his Spirit and help us develop good fruit.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Good Qualities cards (enough for each group of 2-6 people)
- ☐ Two pieces of paper: one with 'Very important to me' and the other with 'Not important to me'



READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

From birth, our parents and guardians start shaping us into a certain type of person. Some encourage generosity, others warn that 'nice guys finish last'. Some say confidence is key, others emphasise humility. As we get older, we start to reflect and decide whether we want to follow in their footsteps or be a different kind of person.

But it's not just family that shapes who we want to be. Our culture, religion, the people we meet – whether inspiring or difficult – and even books or movies can all play a role.

Some of us might have a clear sense of the kind of person we want to be. Others might have glimpses or impressions but haven't thought about it deeply yet, and that's okay.

Thinking about who we want to be can help us understand ourselves better and equip us to make choices that support our values. So, it's helpful to ask ourselves:

What kind of person would I like to be?

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

PLAY THE 'GOOD QUALITIES' GAME

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ 'The Good Qualities' cards. Print enough sets for each small group.

This game is like 'Go fish', but with a different name.

- The aim is to collect five of the same card. For example, five kindness cards.
- Each player is given three cards, the remaining cards go into the middle pile.
- The first player chooses another player to ask for a particular card, e.g. "Sarah, do you have any [insert card type] cards?"
- If Sarah has any of that type of card, she must hand over all those cards. If she doesn't have that card, she says, "pick up".
- Continue around the group, taking turns until someone wins by completing a set of five.

How did you go with the game? How did it feel when you completed a set of good qualities?

Which of the qualities on these cards is most important to you and why?



DO ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTIONS

LEADERS, WATCH THE PARTICIPANTS FOR:

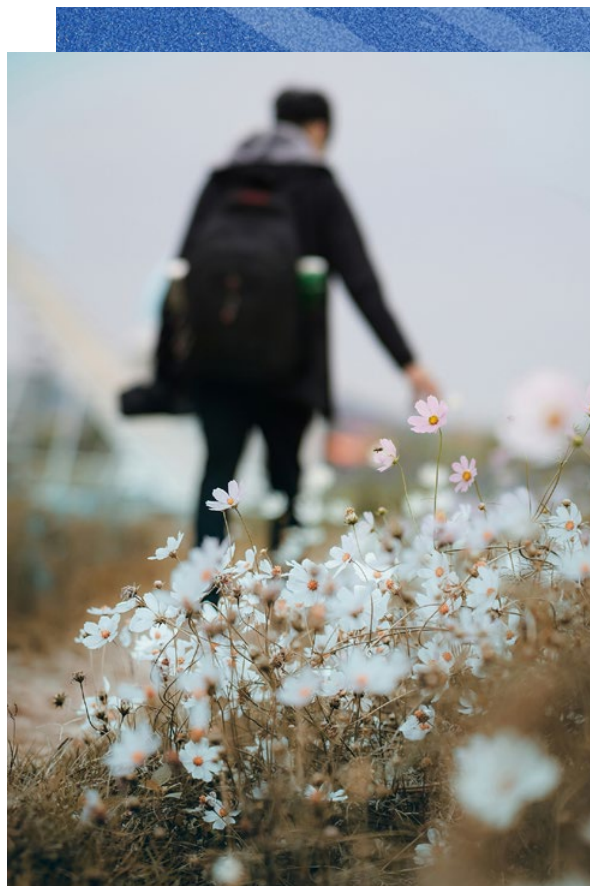
- what they say to each other
- what they find hard
- what they find easy
- what worked
- what caused conflict

HOW TO DO THE 'WHAT MATTERS TO ME' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Two pieces of paper: one with 'Very important to me' and the other with 'Not important to me'

- Place the pieces of paper at opposite ends of a room. Explain that you are going to read out some characteristics or qualities.
- For each one, think about how important it is to you.
- If it is very important to you, stand near the 'very important to me' sign. If it is not important to you, stand near the 'Not important to me' sign.
- If it is somewhat important, move toward the middle of the room, etc.



DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

How did you go with the activity?

What did you notice about what was important to you and what was important to others?

Can you identify one trait that was 'very important' to you? Why do you think this is important to you?

Who or what has shaped the kind of person who you want to be?

How would you like people to describe you?



In the group material:
'3 qualities that matter to me'
(page 4)

READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

GOD LOVES YOU

Colossians 3:12-14 (CEV)

¹² God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient. ¹³ Put up with each other, and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you. ¹⁴ Love is more important than anything else. It is what ties everything completely together.

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

*What do you think about what we just read?
How do you think it might relate to the question,
‘What kind of person would I like to be?’*

*Where do you see the qualities in these verses in
people around you or in Jesus?
What do you admire about these qualities?*

*Which of these traits do think you are strongest in?
Which one would you like to have more of?*

*Why do you think Verse 12 says, “So be... kind...”?
What is the connection between God’s love and the
kind of person you want to be?*

Notes on the Scripture for facilitators:

- In Verse 12, Paul uses a Greek word that evokes the idea of putting on clothing. Many translations say we should ‘clothe’ ourselves in these good qualities – a deliberate choice.
- In these verses, Paul wants us to understand that our good treatment of others is a response to God’s love for us. We love because he loved us; we forgive because he forgave us.

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

Family, culture, religion, books, movies and the people we meet can all shape the person we want to be. We can decide whether we want to follow in others’ footsteps or be a different kind of person.

Thinking about who we want to be can help us understand ourselves better and equip us to make choices that support what we believe in and the things that are important to us.

The Good News is that God can fill us with his Spirit and help us develop good fruit that shows who we are and what matters to 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

HOW CAN WE GROW IN KINDNESS?

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 consider the times we find it easy or difficult to show kindness to others.

Game: The *Kindness Ball Toss* game gets young people to experience saying kind things about others.

Activity: The *Kindness Brainstorm* activity helps young people to reflect on what helps or hinders kindness in their lives.

Scripture: The Scripture (Philippians 1:9-11) explores the Good News that God can fill us with his love, helping us to show kindness to others.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ A soft ball
- ☐ Whiteboard and whiteboard markers

READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

Being kind to others might sound simple – and it’s certainly a good thing to do – but it isn’t always easy. If our friends are making fun of someone or leaving them out, being kind means going against the crowd, and that can feel big and scary. We might not feel brave enough.

If we haven’t felt or seen much kindness in our lives, it can make it harder to show kindness to others. We may have picked up unkind habits or may simply struggle to know how to be kind.

If we’ve gone out of our way to show kindness to someone in the past and they’ve hurt us, we can become cautious and may close ourselves off, to avoid being hurt again.

So, how can we grow in kindness?

As a way to begin thinking about this, let’s play the ‘Kindness Ball Toss’ game.

PLAY THE ‘KINDNESS BALL TOSS’ GAME

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ A soft ball

- Stand in a circle and throw the ball to someone.
- While the ball is in the air, use *one positive word* to describe the person you are throwing the ball to.
- There is a time limit to say the word once the person catches the ball (10 seconds). If you hold the ball too long, you’re out.
- If you repeat a word, you’re out.
- Last one left standing is the winner.

How did you go with the game? How did it feel to say positive things about others?

When do you find it easy or difficult to say kind things to others?



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 'KINDNESS BRAINSTORM' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Whiteboard markers
- On the left side of a whiteboard, draw a nice, healthy flower. On the right side, draw some weeds.
- As a group, brainstorm some things that help us feed kindness – things that grow kindness in our hearts and make it easier to be kind to others. For example, hanging around with kind people, thinking about someone else's experience or perspective, learning about heroes who changed the world through kindness, practising saying/doing kind things. Write these near the flower.
- Brainstorm some things that kill kindness (i.e. things that can cause our hearts to become less kind). For example, reading/watching content that is cruel or hateful, dwelling on hateful thoughts, gossiping, judging people before we know them. Write these next to the weeds.
- Allow time for group members to note some of these things in the table in their group material.

DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

How did you go with the activity? Do you notice any similarities among the things that feed kindness?

Can anyone share an example when one of these things has made it easier for you to be kind?

What might it look like for you to add more of the things that feed kindness to your life?

Which of the 'things that kill kindness' do you relate to the most? How can we reduce these in our lives?



In the group material:

Things that feed or kill kindness template.
(page 8)

READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

PAUL'S PRAYER

Philippians 1:9-11

⁹This is my prayer for you: that your love will grow more and more; that you will have knowledge and understanding with your love; ¹⁰that you will see the difference between what is important and what is not and choose what is important; that you will be pure and blameless for the coming of Christ; ¹¹that your life will be full of the many good works that are produced by Jesus Christ to bring glory and praise to 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 we grow in kindness?'

Paul prays that the people in Philippi would have more and more love for others. How do think praying can help us become more loving?

Can you think of a time when you went out of your way to show kindness to someone? What prompted you to do it? How did the experience feel for you?

Verse 11 points out that it is Jesus who changes us and produces kindness in us. How do you think he does this? How could this help when you are struggling to show kindness?

Notes on the Scripture for facilitators:

- Paul is praying that the Christians in Philippi would grow in their knowledge of love and in their capacity to love others. No matter how loving we are, our love can grow.
- Paul's prayer highlights that Jesus produces good works in us. The closer we get to him, the more good works are produced in and through our lives.

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

Being kind to others isn't always easy. It can mean going against the crowd, and that can feel big and scary.

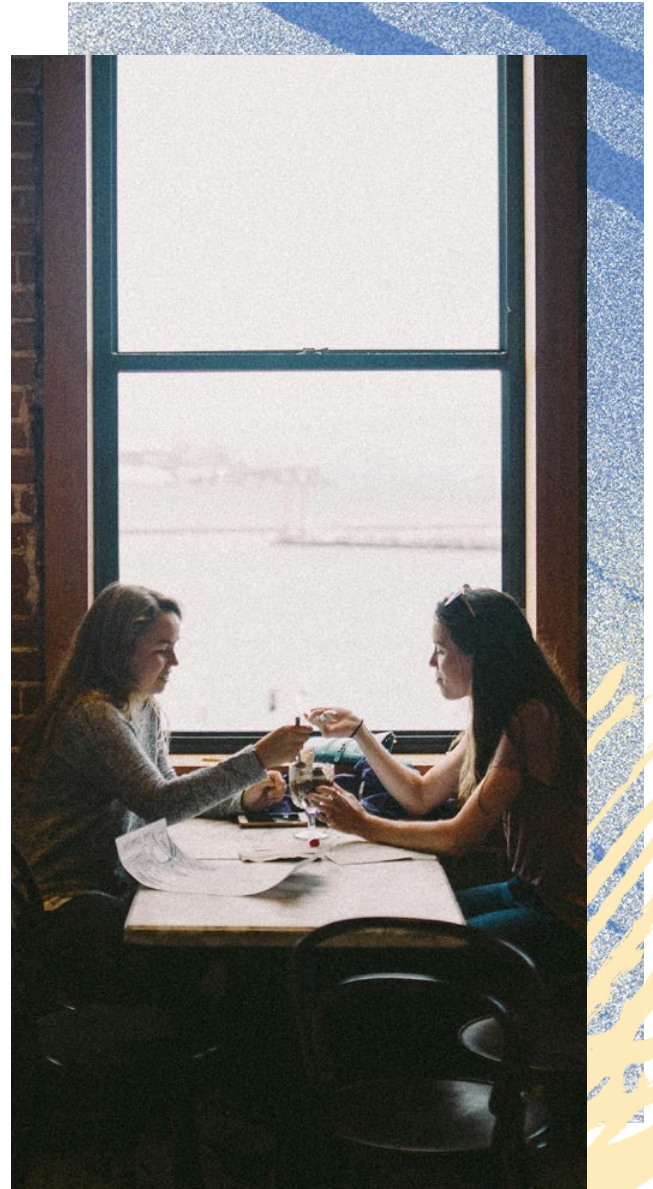
If we haven't felt or seen much kindness in our lives, it can make it harder to show kindness to others. If we've gone out of our way to show kindness to someone in the past and they've hurt us, we can become cautious, and we may close ourselves off to avoid being hurt again.

The Good News is that God can fill us with his love, helping us show kindness to others.

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 WORK ON THE PARTS OF ME THAT DON'T MATCH WHO I WANT TO BE?

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.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Five stuffed toys, tennis balls or similar per person
- ☐ Colouring pencils or crayons to share (Optional: magazines, scissors and glue)

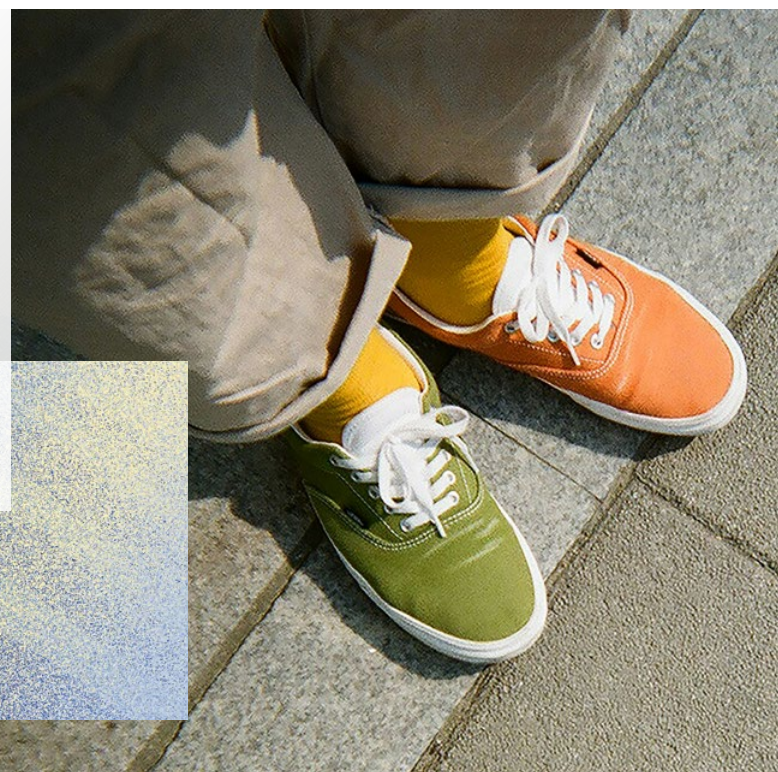
SESSION OUTLINE

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people consider the things about their character they would like to change.

Game: The *I Don't Want This Anymore* game gets young people to experience trying to get rid of things they don't want anymore.

Activity: The *Moving Forward* activity helps young people reflect on the behaviours or traits they would like to leave behind or change about themselves.

Scripture: The Scripture (Galatians 5:16-17 and 25) explores the Good News that Jesus invites us to follow him and be transformed by his Holy Spirit.



READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

We all know the feeling of regret when we've acted in a way that doesn't match up with the person we want to be. None of us are perfect, so it's something we all experience.

We might feel disappointed in ourselves or even frustrated that – despite our best efforts – we have gotten aggressive again, or stolen again, or lied again... or whatever it might be.

When we keep slipping back into behaviours we're trying to stop, we can feel discouraged and we might wonder if change is really possible.

Sometimes life events shake up our idea of who we want to be, and we might feel like we want to do a U-turn and let go of old behaviours. But can we really change?

How can I work on the parts of me that don't match who I want to be?

As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the 'I Don't Want This Anymore' game.

PLAY THE 'I DON'T WANT THIS ANYMORE' GAME

EQUIPMENT:

☐ Five stuffed toys, tennis bags or similar per person

- Each person is given five items in a pile in front of them.
- The aim of the game is to get rid of your items.
- To get rid of your items, you must place them in someone else's pile.
- You can only touch one item at a time.

How did you go with the game?

How did it feel when things you were trying to get rid of kept coming back?

How does it feel when we have a behaviour or trait that we want to get rid of, but can't seem to shake?



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 'MOVING FORWARD' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Colouring pencils or crayons (Optional: Magazines, scissors and glue)
- Ask group members to turn to the artistic expression and reflection page in their workbooks.
- Group members will creatively depict one behaviour or trait they would love to be able to leave behind. They can depict it however they like (symbols, pictures, patterns, colours, collage, etc). It doesn't need to be obvious what they are depicting, and they won't need to show it to anyone else.
- Once they have finished this, allow time for them to answer the two reflection questions on the page: 'What might it feel like if I could make this change?' and 'Who or what could support me with making this change?'

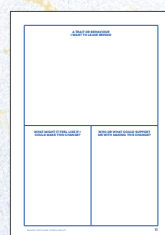
DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

*How did you go with the activity?
How did it feel to put the thing that you want to leave behind down on paper?*

Why do you think we sometimes behave in ways that don't match who we want to be?

Can anyone think of a time when they have changed a trait or behaviour they didn't want to have anymore? How did you do it?

How can other people help us grow and leave behind behaviours we want to leave behind?



In the group material:

Artistic expression and reflection page (page 11)



READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

THE SPIRIT AND HUMAN NATURE

Galatians 5:16-17 and 25

¹⁶ So I tell you, live the way the Spirit leads you. Then you will not do the evil things your sinful self wants. ¹⁷ The sinful self wants what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit wants what is against the sinful self. They are always fighting against each other, so that you don't do what you really want to do.

²⁵ We get our new life from the Spirit, so we should follow the Spirit.

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 work on the parts of me that don't match who I want to be?'

Paul's advice is to "live the way the Spirit leads you". What do you think this looks in practical terms? How do you think this helps?

Paul says that the sinful parts of us fight against the Spirit. What sorts of things in our lives fight against what we really want to do?

Verse 25 talks about our "new life from the Spirit." What attitudes and actions would you like to have in your new life from the Spirit?

Notes on the Scripture for facilitators:

- Here, Paul contrasts two ways of living: following the sinful self and following the Spirit. He explains that the sinful self and the Spirit are working in opposition to each other.
- Following the Spirit helps us to live holy lives and involves inviting the Holy Spirit to fill us. We listen for his voice and are obedient to his leading.

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

None of us are perfect. We all know the feeling of regret when we've acted in a way that doesn't match up with the person we want to be. We can feel frustrated or disappointed in ourselves for slipping back into behaviours we're trying to stop. We may want to do a U-turn and work on those things, but might feel discouraged and wonder if change is really possible.

The Good News is that Jesus invites us to follow him and be transformed by his Holy Spirit.

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 STAY TRUE TO THE KIND OF PERSON I WANT TO BE?

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 consider the things that help them stay true to the person they want to be.

Game: The *Stay Steady* game gets young people to experience how focusing on something can keep us steady.

Activity: The *True North* activity helps young people to reflect on the things that make it easier or more difficult to stay true to who they want to be.

Scripture: The Scripture (Daniel 6:16-23) explores the Good News that keeping our eyes on God can help us stay strong and true.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Red and blue pens or textas



READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

If the people around us have similar values to us and are encouraging us to live those values out, it might feel fairly easy to stay true to who we want to be.

But what about when we are surrounded by people who have different values and behave differently to how we want to? We might feel tempted to change ourselves to fit in and belong. Sometimes, we might even be pressured or bullied into doing what they are doing.

As we grow, we get exposed to new situations, influences and points of view. We might feel like our values and sense of self are tested.

With all of this happening, how can we stay true to who we are – to the person we want to be on the inside?

What can I do to stay true to the kind of person I really want to be?

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

PLAY THE 'STAY STEADY' GAME

Before playing, clear plenty of space and remove any potentially dangerous obstacles.

- **Round One:**

Everyone stands in a line.

On "Go!" each person spins around eight times without focusing on anything.

When they stop, they need to balance on one foot for five seconds.

- **Round Two:**

Everyone stands in a line.

They pick something to keep their focus on while they spin eight times.

When they stop, they need to balance on one foot for five seconds.

- **Round Three: Elimination Round (Optional)**

Everyone stands in a line.

They pick something to keep their focus on while they spin eight times.

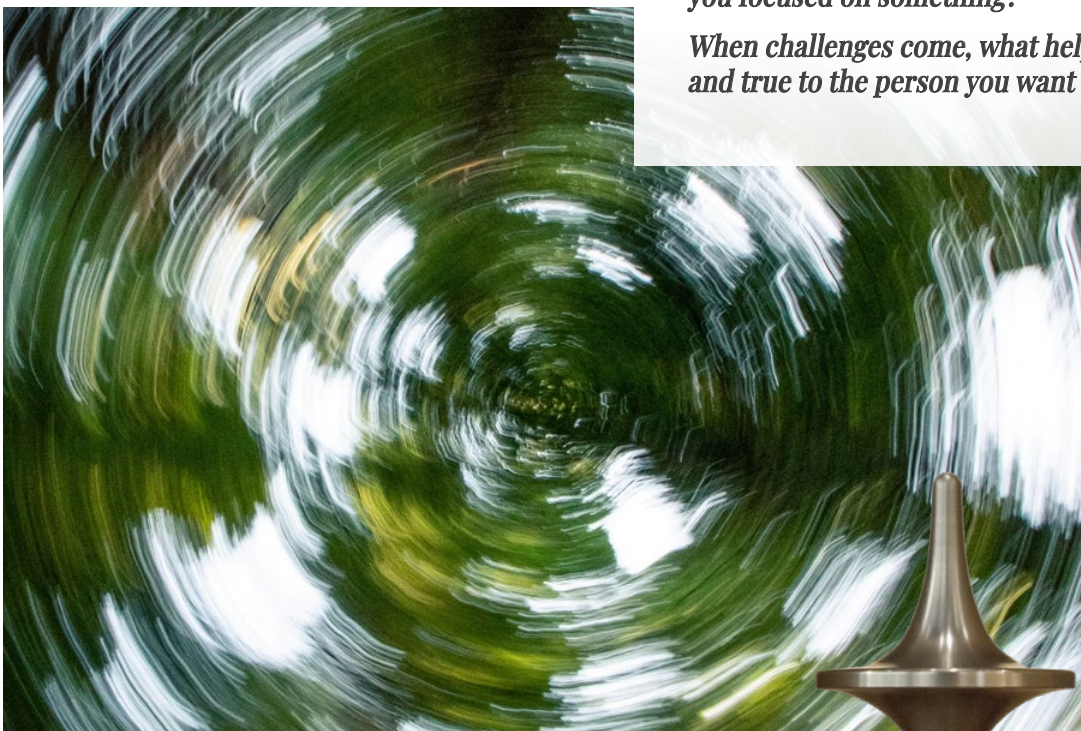
When they stop, they stay on one foot for as long as possible.

Whoever loses balance (puts their balancing foot on the ground) is out.

Repeat until there is one winner.

How did you go with the game? What changed when you focused on something?

When challenges come, what helps you stay steady and true to the person you want to be?



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 'TRUE NORTH' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- Red and blue pens or textas

- Ask group members to turn to the 'True North' sheet in their workbooks.
- Around 'North' they will write things that help them be who they want to be.
- Around 'South' they will write things that make it more difficult to be who they want to be.

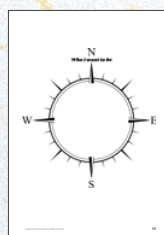
DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

How did you go with the activity? What is one thing on your compass (positive or negative) that affects you a lot?

Have you ever gone out of your way to do more of the things that keep you steady? What happened?

How do you think we should respond to things that make it more difficult for us to stay true to who we want to be? Is the answer always the same?

What steps could you take to have more of the things that help you to be who you want to be?



In the group material:

True North compass template.
(page 15)



READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

DANIEL AND THE LIONS

Daniel 6:16-23

¹⁶ So King Darius gave the order. They brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May the God you serve save you!" ¹⁷ A big rock was brought and put over the opening of the lions' den. Then the king used his ring and put his seal on the rock. He also used the rings of his officials and put their seals on the rock. This showed that no one could move that rock and bring Daniel out of the lion's den. ¹⁸ Then King Darius went back to his house. He did not eat that night. He did not want anyone to come and entertain him. He could not sleep all night.

¹⁹ The next morning, King Darius got up just as it was getting light and ran to the lions' den. ²⁰ He was very worried. When he got to the lions' den, he called to Daniel. He said, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God been able to save you from the lions? You always serve your God."

²¹ Daniel answered, "King, live forever! ²² My God sent his angel to save me. The angel closed the lions' mouths. The lions have not hurt me because my God knows I am innocent. I never did anything wrong to you, King."

²³ King Darius was very happy. He told his servants to lift Daniel out of the lions' den. And when Daniel was lifted out of the den, they did not find any injury on his body. The lions did not hurt Daniel because he trusted in his God.

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

What do you think about what we just read? How do you think it might relate to the question, 'What can I do to stay true to the kind of person I want to be?'

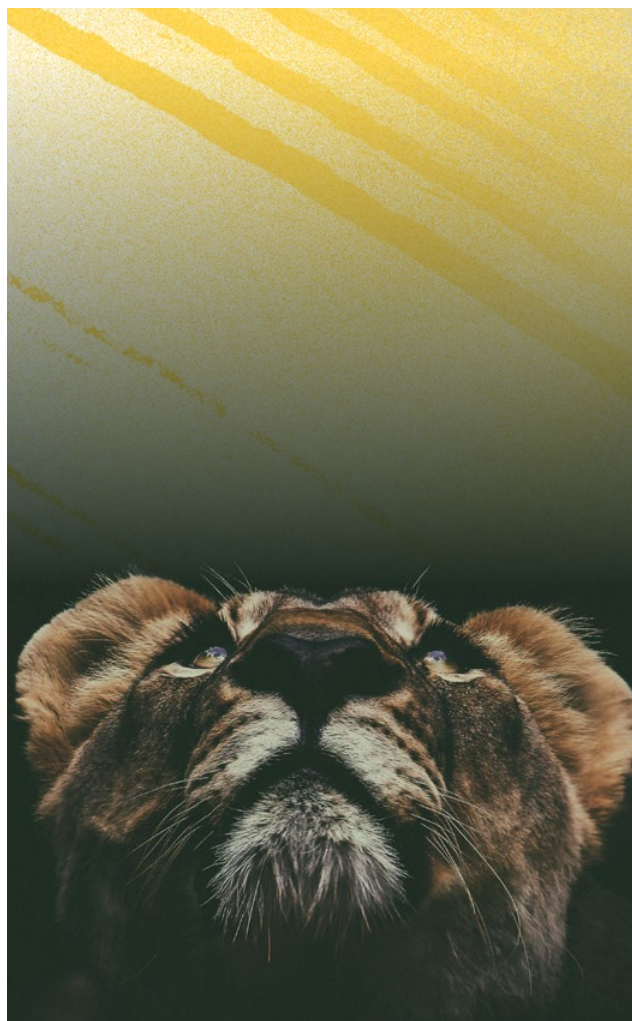
What sorts of thoughts or feelings do you think Daniel wrestled with in this story?

Daniel had a clear idea of what he stood for before it was put to the test. How might this have helped him stay strong? Do you think this could help us too?

Daniel spent time praying regularly. How could spending time with God help us stay true to who we want to be?

Notes on the Scripture for facilitators:

- Daniel had served under multiple Babylonian kings and was now functioning under a new government and legal structure, with new rules. Even though his environment changed, Daniel stayed true to what he believed was right.
- Daniel's example (and God's display of power) led King Darius to acknowledge God's power.



READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

If the people around us have similar values to us, it might feel easy to stay true to who we want to be. But when we are surrounded by people with different values and behaviours, we might feel tempted to change ourselves to fit in with them. We might even feel pressured or bullied into doing what they are doing.

As we grow and are exposed to new situations, influences and points of view, we might feel like our values and who we are is tested.

The Good News is that when we focus on God he will strengthen us and help us stay true to who we want to be.

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

WHO ARE WE FOLLOWING?

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 consider the people they are being influenced by and looking to as an example, and to explore the Good News that Jesus cares for us and invites us to follow him.

Game: The *Who is the Influencer* game gets young people to experience what it's like to try to work out who is influencing us.

Activity: The *Who Are We Following* activity helps young people to think about the types of people they are following online and in person, and reflect on whether they are helpful or unhelpful influences.

Scripture: The Scripture (John 10:14-15 and 27-28) explores the Good News that Jesus cares for us and invites us to follow him.



EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Sticky notes and pens
- ☐ 3 x A4 paper with headings
- ☐ Blue tac

READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

As we try to find our way in life, it's natural to look for others to follow – people we can watch and be influenced by. It could be an older sibling, a grandmother, a teacher – or even an influencer or celebrity.

Some of us are following others on purpose. We might choose a role model or hero and go out of our way to follow them. Other times, it just happens. The people we spend time with and pay attention to influence us. They shape our ideas about what is important, and how we should live.

The people we follow shape us, so it's helpful to ask ourselves, Who am I following?

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

PLAY THE 'WHO IS THE INFLUENCER' GAME

- The leader nominates one person to guess the influencer, then they go outside the room so they can't hear who is chosen.
- Once they're not in the room, the influencer is nominated.
- Once the guesser comes back into the room, the influencer starts doing actions that everyone must copy.
- The guesser must guess who the influencer is, i.e. who everyone is copying.
- The guesser has three guesses to get it right. If they don't guess correctly, the influencer wins.
- Chose another guesser and influencer.
- Play several rounds.

How did you go with the game? How did it feel when you were unsure who the influencer was?

In life, when is it easy or difficult to know who is influencing us?



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 ARE WE FOLLOWING?' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Sticky notes and pens
- ☐ 3 x A4 paper with headings "Positive", "Neutral" or "Negative"
- ☐ Blue tac

- Stick the A4 paper with headings on to the wall.
- Give group members a pile of sticky notes.
- On the sticky notes, write down the names or types of people who influence you, e.g. Friends, celebrities, YouTubers, Social Media influencers, mentors. (One per sticky note.)
- Stick the note under the heading you think it belongs to.

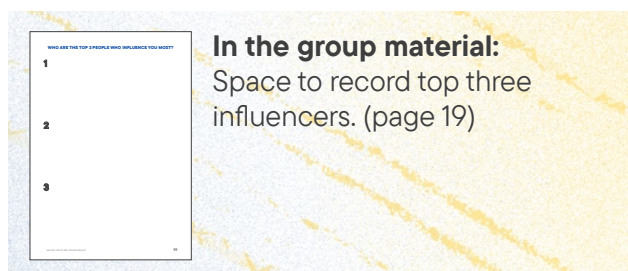
DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

How did you go with the activity? Was it easy to come up with influencers?

Were your answers similar or different to others? Were there any influencers that appear in more than one column? Why do you think that is?

What do you notice about the 'positive' influencers? Do they have anything in common?

Looking at the wall, are there any changes you would be keen to make to your influencers? How much power do we have to change who is influencing us?



READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:14-15 and 27-28

I am the shepherd who cares for the sheep. I know my sheep just as the Father knows me. And my sheep know me just as I know the Father. I give my life for these sheep.

My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give my sheep eternal life. They will never die, and no one can take them out of my hand.

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

What do you think about what we just read? How do you think it relates to the question, 'Who are we following?'

In this passage, Jesus says he cares for and looks after and would even give his life for us (his sheep). How do we know if someone cares about us?

Jesus says he knows his sheep and his sheep know him. What difference does it make to follow someone we have a close relationship with?

Jesus says, "My sheep know my voice." What do you think this means? How can we recognise when Jesus is leading us?

Notes on the Scripture for facilitators:

- We might think of sheep all looking the same, but good shepherds know their sheep as individuals with their own personalities and characteristics. Jesus knows us as individuals too.
- Jesus invites us into a close and intimate relationship. He loves us, like the Father loves him.
- When Jesus says, “No one can take them out of my hand”, he is promising that followers of Jesus are safe in his care.

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

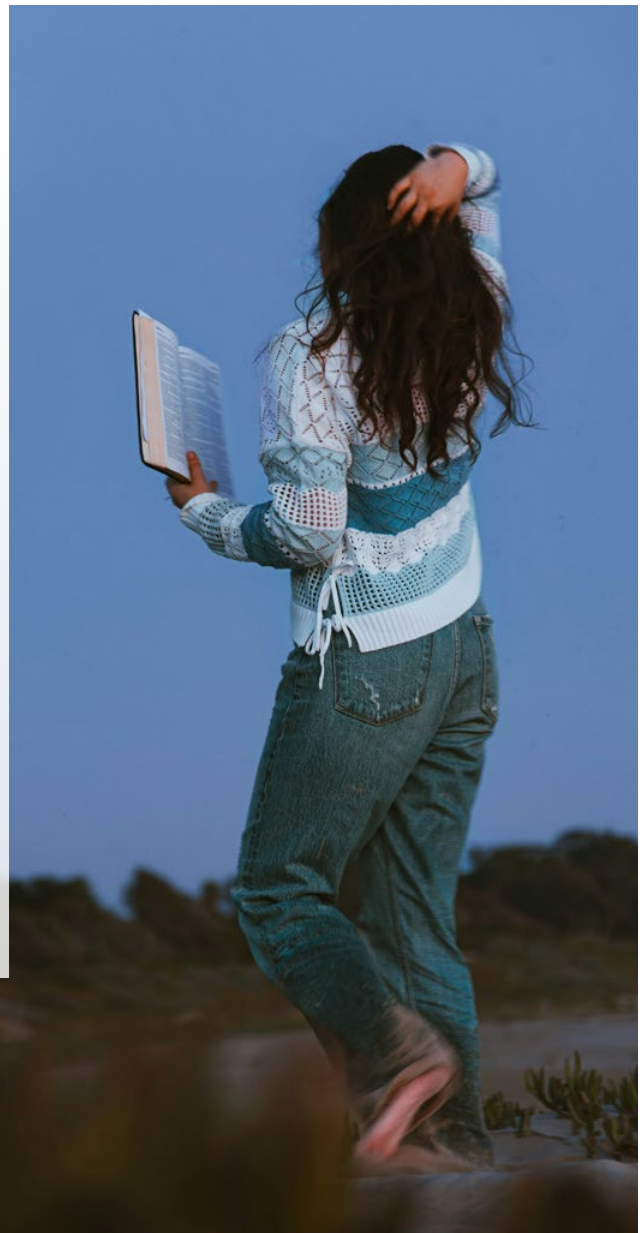
As we try to find our way in life, it's natural to look for others to follow – people we can watch and be influenced by. The people we spend time with and pay attention to influence us. They shape our ideas about what is important, and how we should live. Some of us are following others on purpose. Other times, it just happens.

The Good News is that Jesus is a trustworthy person for us to follow because he cares for us and looks after 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



WHEN WE FACE BIG DECISIONS, HOW CAN WE DECIDE WHICH OPTION IS BEST?

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 consider the things that shape our big decisions and to explore the Good News that God can guide us and help us with our big decisions.

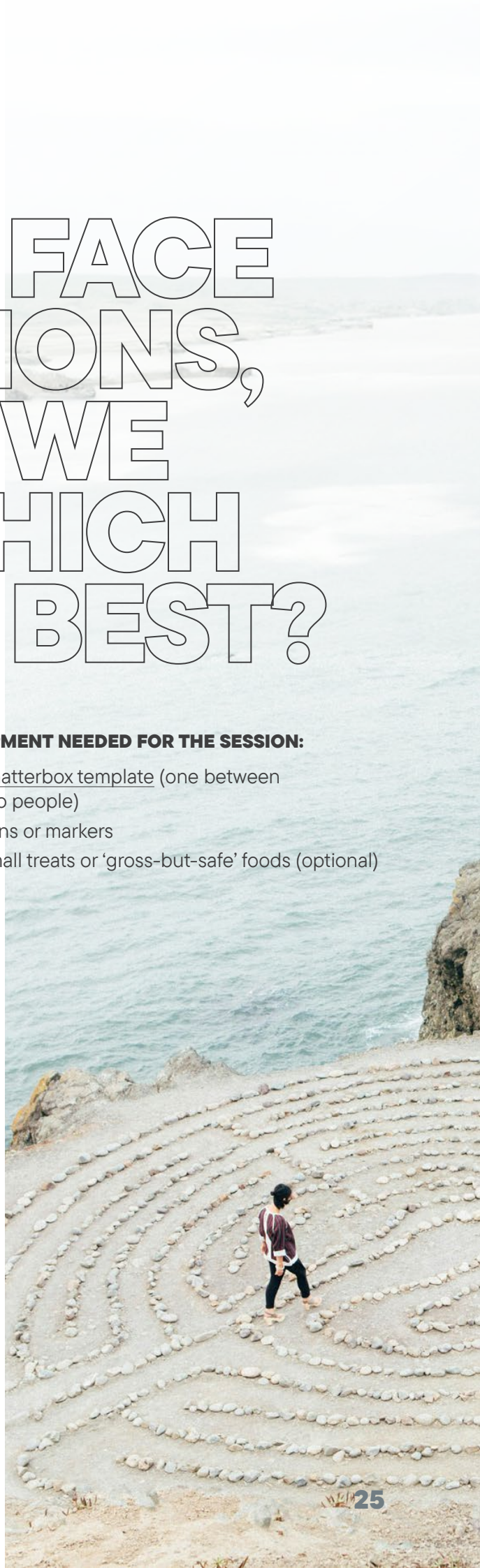
Game: The *This or That Chatterbox* game gets young people to experience making choices and accepting the consequences of those choices, whether good or bad.

Activity: The *Pros and Cons list* activity helps young people to practise thinking through the positives and negatives of a particular decision.

Scriptures: The Scriptures (Psalm 119:105 and Proverbs 3:5-6) explore the Good News that God can guide us and help us with our big decisions.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Chatterbox template (one between two people)
- ☐ Pens or markers
- ☐ Small treats or 'gross-but-safe' foods (optional)



READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

As we get older, we are faced with more decisions, and bigger ones too.

What subjects should I choose? Should I get a job? Should I play sport or go to church? Which uni should I apply for? The list goes on...

Some of us might find it easy to make big decisions or we might just copy what others are doing or do whatever seems easiest at the time.

On the other hand, many of us feel overwhelmed. We worry about the impact our decisions might have. What if we choose the wrong one? What if we end up regretting our choice? We can even feel panicked.

Some of us might have people or processes that help us make tough decisions. Others might feel alone and not sure where to start.

When we face big decisions, how can we decide which option is best?

As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the 'This or That Chatterbox' game.

PLAY THE 'THIS OR THAT CHATTERBOX' GAME

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Printed chatterbox templates (one between two people)
- ☐ Pens or markers
- ☐ Small treats or 'gross-but-safe' foods (optional)

If you are not sure how to assemble a chatterbox, search and follow some instructions on YouTube.

TO PLAY:

- Partner up – one person holds the chatterbox, the other chooses
- Ask: "Pick a category!" Open and close the chatterbox as you spell it out
- Ask: "Pick a number!" Count it out with the chatterbox again
- Reveal the 'This or That' choice under the flap
- The chooser picks one option – then you reveal or deliver their consequence

How did you go with the game? How did it feel to have to make a choice, not knowing if it would lead to something good or bad?

What are some big choices we face in life? How does it feel when we are faced with them?

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 'PROS AND CONS LIST' ACTIVITY

- Say, "When we have big decisions to make, it can help to make a pros and cons list. In the group material, there is an example of a pros and cons list. We are each going to choose a decision in our lives (big or small) and create our own list."
- Everyone writes their decision at the top of the page, then they brainstorm the pros (positive things that would come from making that choice) and cons (negatives that would come from making that choice).
- Group members can keep their lists confidential if they want to.

DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

How did you go with the activity?

How did it feel to brainstorm the pros and cons?

Did anything stand out or become clearer to you as you made your list?

How could making a pros and cons list help you in everyday life?

What are the limits of a pros and cons list? What are some other things that can help you when you need to make big decisions?

DECISION	
PROS	CONS

IN THE GROUP MATERIAL:

- An example pros and cons list
- Pros and cons list template (page 23)
- Tips for making tough decision



READ THE SCRIPTURES AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

ASK GOD TO HELP

PROVERBS 3:5-6

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

LIGHT TO GUIDE YOUR PATH

Psalm 119:105

Your word is like a lamp that guides my steps, a light that shows the path I should take.

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

What do you think about what we just read? How does it relate to the question, 'When we face big decisions, how can we decide which option is best?'

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Don't depend on your own knowledge." Do you think this is good advice? Is it telling us to not use our brains or is it saying something else?

Read Verse 6 again. How does it feel to read these words from God? Can you think of an example of where this has happened in your life?

Psalm 119:105 says God's Word (the Bible) is like a lamp or a light that shows us which way to go. When have you experienced this in your life? How can the Bible help us with our big decisions?

Notes on the Scripture for facilitators:

- Everyone leans on something – self, others, or God – but real faith means consciously choosing the Lord. If we are fully trusting in God, we lean so fully on him that if he fails, we fall. And we can trust he will not fail.¹
- Psalm 119:105: The Bible shows the path we should stay on. It helps us discern what is right and wrong and teaches our conscience God's thoughts and ways.²

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

As we get older, we're faced with more and bigger decisions. Some people make choices easily or just go with the flow, while others feel weighed down by the pressure to get it right. Sometimes it can feel confusing and overwhelming.

The Good News is that when we include God in our decisions and lean on his wisdom instead of just our own, he lights our way and helps us find the right path.

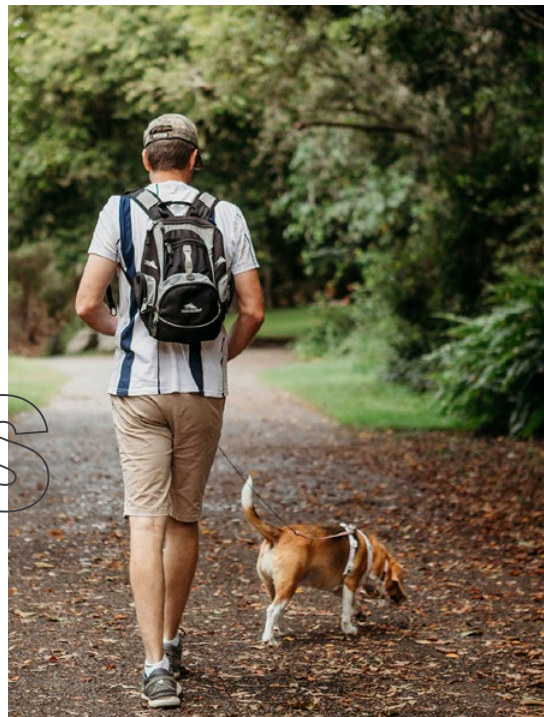
ASK THE GROUP:

- 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

¹ Trapp – see Enduring Word Bible Commentary Proverbs 3
² Enduring Word Bible Commentary Psalm 119

HOW ARE OUR HABITS SHAPING US?



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 consider what personal habits and routines we have and how they are shaping the person we are becoming.

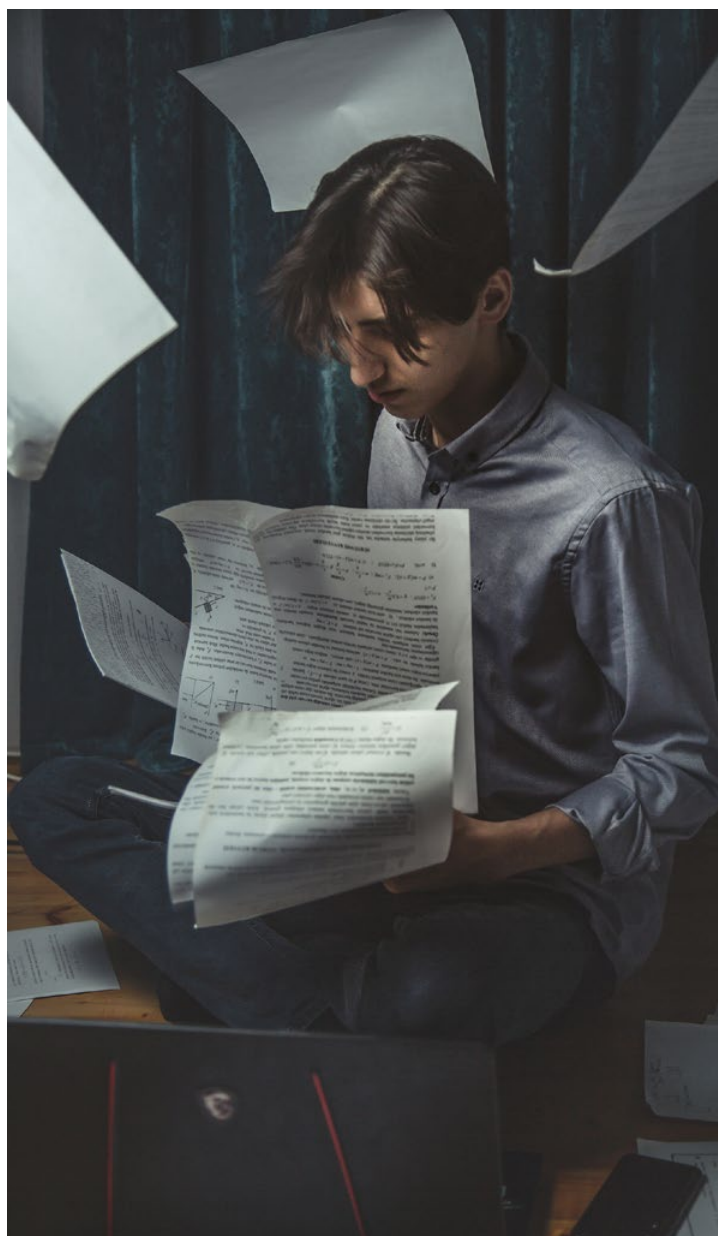
Game: The *Charades IRL* game gets young people to experience showing others their habits.

Activity: The *Activity Log* activity helps young people reflect on the habits and routines that are part of their daily lives.

Scripture: The Scriptures (Mark 1:35, Luke 4:16a and John 6:11) explore the Good News that Jesus modelled habits that will help us thrive.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Pens



READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

We all have habits and routines – things we do every week or even multiple times a day! Some of us wake up at 7am for a jog or scroll on our phone for an hour before bed. Some of us have a habit of freezing friends out when we are annoyed or being friendly to every new person we meet. Some of us have a habit of reading the Bible every day or online shopping whenever we have money to spend.

Some of our routines and habits might have been set for us by study or work schedules – like having to get up early for classes. Other habits have been passed down from our parents. Then there are other patterns that we get to choose and control.

We might have put some habits in place on purpose, others might have crept in without us realising. No matter how our habits form, they can quietly shape the people we are becoming.

So, how are our habits shaping us?

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

PLAY THE 'CHARADES IRL' GAME

- The aim of this game is for everyone to guess what habit you are acting out.
- Explain to the group that they will each need to think of something they do that is part of their regular routine. For example, playing basketball or learning a musical instrument.
- Everyone else will need to try to guess what it is.
- Optional: award a point to the person who guesses correctly.

How did you go with the game?

What similarities or differences did you notice among the habits people shared?

How do you think we end up with the habits we have?

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 'ACTIVITY LOG' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Pens

Participants think about the habits or routines they follow during a typical week and note some of them in the activity log.

DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

How did you go with the activity?

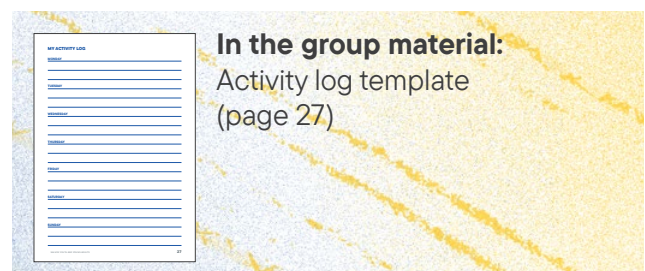
Were there any habits or routines you hadn't really noticed or thought about before?

Have you ever stopped or started a habit on purpose? What made you do that, and what was the outcome?

Can you identify some things in your log that help you become who you want to be?

How do they do that?

Is there anything in your log that might be taking you away from who you want to be? Is there anything you could do to change that?



In the group material:
Activity log template
(page 27)

READ THE SCRIPTURES AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

JESUS GETS UP EARLY TO PRAY ALONE

Mark 1:35

The next morning Jesus woke up very early. He left the house while it was still dark and went to a place where he could be alone and pray.

JESUS GOES TO THE SYNAGOGUE

Luke 4:16a

Jesus traveled to Nazareth, the town where he grew up. On the Sabbath day he went to the synagogue as he always did.

JESUS GIVES THANKS FOR FOOD

John 6:11

Jesus took the loaves of bread and gave thanks for them. Then he gave them to the people who were waiting to eat. He did the same with the fish. He gave them as much as they wanted.

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

What do you think about what we have just read? How does it relate to the question, 'How are our habits shaping us?'

What habits do you see Jesus having here? What stands out to you about them?

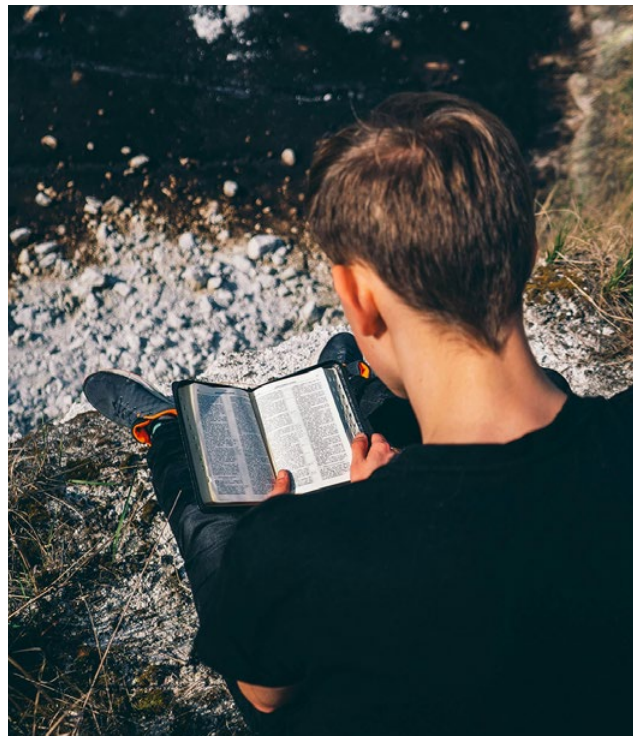
How do you think these habits impacted him?

If you have one of these same habits that Jesus had, how does it shape you? What impact could it have if you introduced one of these habits to your life?

Notes on the Scripture for facilitators:

- On the night before Mark 1:35, many people in the town were brought to Jesus for healing. Jesus was probably tired, but he wakes up very early to pray. He prioritises quiet time alone with God.
- In Luke 4:16, we read that Jesus went to the synagogue "as he always did." Jesus was in the habit of spending time with the people of God in the Temple – worshipping, learning, singing, teaching, reading the Word of God and praying.
- John 6:11 is one of many times in the gospels when Jesus gives thanks for food. This was his habit.

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION



READ THE CONCLUSION

We all have routines or habits in our lives. We might plan them into our schedules or find that they have just crept into our lives without us even noticing. Our families and friends can influence some of our habits, too.

We might be happy about the impact these habits are having on who we are but there are times when their effects might not be so positive.

The Good News is that we can follow the example of Jesus, who modelled healthy and helpful habits that can help us to thrive.

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 IF WE WANT TO CHANGE DIRECTION?

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 what it is like to change direction and live differently to how they've been living.

Game: The *Plot Twist* game gets young people to experience what it is like to make a big change to a scene they are acting out, while the scene is still happening.

Activity: The *Two Letters* activity helps young people reflect on their life experiences, habits and daily living from two different perspectives.

Scripture: The Scripture (Acts 9:1-22) explores the Good News that it's never too late – Jesus can transform our hearts and show us a different way to live.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Pens



READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

READ THE INTRODUCTION

At times in life we might long for a change of direction, for the chance to be a different kind of person to who we are today. But we might wonder if that's really possible.

Some of us have been typecast as a certain kind of person – for example, the 'troublemaker' or 'the anti-church one' – and it can be difficult to imagine breaking free from that reputation. We might worry how our friends will respond if we change – will they still accept us?

If we've done things we are really ashamed of, we might feel like our mistakes define us and we may wonder if it is even possible to leave that part of us behind.

When we see other people turn their lives around – friends, people at church or even celebrities – it can inspire us. But is it possible for us to change? And if it is possible, how can we do it?

What if we want to change direction?

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

PLAY THE 'PLOT TWIST' GAME

- This is an improvisation game.
- The chosen volunteers are given a scene to act out (see examples below) and then given an instruction/idea mid-way through their scene.
- The actors need to incorporate the new instruction or idea into the scene.

SCENE IDEAS	PLOT TWIST IDEA
(3 people) Two people are sitting in a cafe and the server comes to take their order.	The server can now only speak in song lyrics.
(3-4 people) You are superheroes saving someone.	The superpowers run out.
(3-4 people) You are working on a group project about zoo animals.	The zoo animals come to life.
(3-4 people) You are undercover secret agents getting intel on a mission.	The target turns into an alien.

How did you go with the game? How did it feel to suddenly change how you were doing things?

How does it feel when we want to change the way we've been living?

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 'TWO LETTERS' ACTIVITY

EQUIPMENT:

- ☐ Pens

Group members will fill out the 'Two letters' template in their workbooks, following the prompts provided.

DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY


How did you go with the activity?

What was it like to imagine yourself in the future?

What would you say to someone who thought they couldn't change?

Did anything surprise you about what you imagined or wrote down?

Who or what can help you on your journey of transformation?



IN THE GROUP MATERIAL:
'Two letters to myself' template
One thing I will remember from Life Labs this term (page 31)

- Two letters to myself' template
- One thing I will remember from Life Labs this term

READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

SAUL BECOMES A FOLLOWER OF JESUS

Acts 9:1-22

¹In Jerusalem Saul was still trying to scare the followers of the Lord, even saying he would kill them. He went to the high priest² and asked him to write letters to the synagogues in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted the high priest to give him the authority to find people in Damascus who were followers of the Way. If he found any believers there, men or women, he would arrest them and bring them back to Jerusalem.

³So Saul went to Damascus. When he came near the city, a very bright light from heaven suddenly shined around him.⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me?"

⁵Saul said, "Who are you, Lord?"

The voice answered, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting."⁶Get up now and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do."

⁷The men traveling with Saul just stood there, unable to speak. They heard the voice, but they saw no one.⁸Saul got up from the ground and opened his eyes, but he could not see. So the men with him held his hand and led him into Damascus.⁹For three days, Saul could not see; he did not eat or drink.

¹⁰There was a follower of Jesus in Damascus named Ananias. In a vision the Lord said to him, "Ananias!"

Ananias answered, "Here I am, Lord."

¹¹The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight Street. Find the house of Judas and ask for a man named Saul from the city of Tarsus. He is there now, praying."¹²He has seen a vision in which a man named Ananias came and laid his hands on him so that he could see again."

¹³But Ananias answered, "Lord, many people have told me about this man. They told me about the many bad things he did to your holy people in Jerusalem."¹⁴Now he has come here to Damascus. The leading priests have given him the power to arrest all people who trust in you."

¹⁵But the Lord Jesus said to Ananias, "Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. I want him to tell other nations, their rulers, and the people of

Israel about me.¹⁶I will show him all that he must suffer for me.”

¹⁷So Ananias left and went to the house of Judas. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Saul, my brother, the Lord Jesus sent me. He is the one you saw on the road when you came here. He sent me so that you can see again and also be filled with the Holy Spirit.”¹⁸Immediately, something that looked like fish scales fell off Saul’s eyes. He was able to see! Then he got up and was baptized.¹⁹After he ate, he began to feel strong again.

Saul stayed with the followers of Jesus in Damascus for a few days.²⁰Soon he began to go to the synagogues and tell people about Jesus. He told the people, “Jesus is the Son of God!”

²¹All the people who heard Saul were amazed. They said, “This is the same man who was in Jerusalem trying to destroy the people who trust in Jesus! And that’s why he has come here—to arrest the followers of Jesus and take them back to the leading priests.”

²²But Saul became more and more powerful in proving that Jesus is the Messiah. His proofs were so strong that the Jews who lived in Damascus could not argue with him.

DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

What do you think about what we have just read? How does it relate to the question, ‘What if I want to change direction?’

Saul went from trying to kill Christians to leading hundreds to Jesus. When have you seen someone change in a big way because of Jesus? Or has it happened to you? What stands out to you about the transformations you’ve seen or experienced?

In what ways would you like Jesus to change you as a person?

When Ananias prays for Saul, he is filled with the Holy Spirit. Why do you think this is important? What can we do if we want to be filled with the Spirit?

Notes on the Scripture for facilitators:

- Saul wasn’t looking for Jesus when he encountered him. Saul thought that he was serving God in viciously attacking believers in Jesus, but when Jesus spoke to him, he discovered that he was actually fighting against God. Even if we don’t believe in Jesus, his love and power is at work, reaching out to us.
- Saul’s dramatic transformation proves that anyone can be transformed by Jesus – no exceptions.
- After Saul became a Christian, he remembered his days as a persecutor. In Philippians Chapter 3, he makes mention of his background and his change in direction.

READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

READ THE CONCLUSION

At times in life, we might long for a change of direction – for the chance to be a different kind of person to who we are today. But we might wonder if it’s really possible.

If we’ve been typecast as a particular kind of person, it can be difficult to imagine breaking free from that reputation and changing.

We might worry how our friends will respond if we change – will they still accept us? Or, if we’ve done some things we are really ashamed of, we might wonder if it is even possible to leave that part of us behind.

The Good News is that Jesus can come into our lives and transform 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

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY SESSION – BECOMING LIKE JESUS

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 help young people to experience what it is like to do what Jesus did.

INTRODUCTION:

Through the Life Labs sessions, we will look at how we can become the people we want to be and how Jesus can help us become more like him. We can choose to do what Jesus did: spend quiet time with God, memorise Scripture, be generous, serve others, and so much more. When we choose to follow Jesus, we are choosing to become more like him.

WHAT YOU COULD DO:

You could use this session to talk about what it can look like to become more like Jesus. Here are some ideas that would make sense for the term:

Sash snatch.

Set Up:

- Form two teams. Give all players a fabric sash. Players from the same team get the same-coloured sash. All players tie their sash loosely around their waist (no knots!).
- When the leader starts the game, players need to snatch sashes from players in the other team, while protecting their own. If a player loses their sash, they need to do an act of kindness before replacing it (e.g. high five someone, compliment someone, encourage someone).

Copycat dance.

- Play upbeat music and pick a 'leader' to wear the dance hat. Everyone copies the leader. After 30-60 seconds, the leader gives the hat to someone else, and they become the leader. (If someone gets the hat and doesn't want to lead, they give it to someone else.)

Banquet-style dinner.

- Hold a big dinner, preferably on one long rectangle table. Have different roles assigned for each person on their place card/name card, e.g. serving the food, pouring drinks, setting the table, etc. Talk about how Jesus came to serve others.

Secret Service Game.

- When young people arrive, they are given a 'Secret Service Agent' card with three different tasks on it.
- Each person has the whole night to complete their tasks without being noticed.
- Each player only gets one opportunity to call out someone else for doing their secret service. The player only gets a secret service point if they complete their task without anyone noticing.
- (Players might try throw others off by doing things that are nice for others that are not on their cards).

Examples of tasks:

- Write a kind sticky note and put on someone's bag
- Pick up rubbish without being asked
- Compliment someone *indirectly* (e.g. tell someone else how awesome they are)
- Offer to help the leader (setting up, packing away)
- Pack up chairs, etc

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:

Do you think becoming more like Jesus is difficult or easy? Why?

What is one way you can be like Jesus in the way you treat someone else this week?

As Christians, why do you think it is important to follow what Jesus did?

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY – REFLECTING ON THE TERM

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 look at finding direction in our lives.

INTRODUCTION:

This term we have explored the Good News that Jesus can help us when we have big decisions to make. He can lead us and help us make good choices. He cares for us and wants what is best for us. This concluding activity session is a way to further explore this idea.

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.

Rock Paper Scissors Hula Hoop

Set Up:

- Lay hula hoops on the floor in a curving path between two ends of the space.
- Divide players into two teams. Each team lines up at an opposite end of the path.
- The first player from each team hops forward, one hoop at a time.
- When the two players meet, they play one round of 'Rock, paper, scissors'.
- The winner keeps hopping toward the far end. The loser returns to the back of their team line, and the next teammate starts.
- Play continues until a player reaches the far end. That team scores a point or wins the round.

Scavenger Hunt

- Set up a scavenger hunt with directions players need to follow to find specific items.

Find the pattern

- Set up a grid on the floor with masking tape. 4x6 with the four squares at the base and six as the length of the grid.

- Each person gets one turn to figure out the pattern on the grid by taking one step. If they get one right, they can take another step. If they get it wrong, they go to the back of the line.
- Continue until the pattern is discovered.

DISCUSSION:

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

Does Jesus guide you in life? If yes, how does he do that?

How do you know you are on the right path? Is there a feeling you get?

How do you feel when you are faced with big decisions? Who or what helps you decide which path to take?

SPEAKER BRIEF

Message: The purpose of this session is to help young people explore what it is like to change direction and live differently to how they've been living.

LIVED EXPERIENCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE:

- *Young people might long for a change of direction – for the chance to be a different kind of person. But they might wonder if that's possible.*
- *Some young people have been typecast as a certain kind of person – for example, the 'troublemaker' or 'the anti-church one' – and it can be difficult for them to imagine breaking free from that reputation.*
- *Young people might worry how their friends will respond if they change – will their friends still accept them?*
- *If they've done things they are ashamed of, they might feel like their mistakes define them, and wonder if it is even possible to leave that part of them behind.*
- *When they see other people turn their lives around – friends, people at church or even celebrities – it can inspire them.*

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

As a teenager, when did you want to change direction and be a different person? What inspired the desire for change?

Can you think of a time when you felt your mistakes defined you? How did you break free from your old reputation?

How did you manage your friends' responses to you changing?

SCRIPTURE:

Acts 9:1-22

¹In Jerusalem Saul was still trying to scare the followers of the Lord, even saying he would kill them. He went to the high priest² and asked him to write letters to the synagogues in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted the high priest to give him the authority to find people in Damascus who were followers of the Way. If he found any believers there, men or women, he would arrest them and bring them back to Jerusalem.

³So Saul went to Damascus. When he came near the city, a very bright light from heaven suddenly shined around him.⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me?"

⁵Saul said, "Who are you, Lord?"

The voice answered, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting."⁶Get up now and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do."

⁷The men traveling with Saul just stood there, unable to speak. They heard the voice, but they saw no one.⁸Saul got up from the ground and opened his eyes, but he could not see. So the men with him held his hand and led him into Damascus.⁹For three days, Saul could not see; he did not eat or drink.

¹⁰There was a follower of Jesus in Damascus named Ananias. In a vision the Lord said to him, "Ananias!"

Ananias answered, "Here I am, Lord."

¹¹The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight Street. Find the house of Judas and ask for a man named Saul from the city of Tarsus. He is there now, praying."¹²He has seen a vision in which a man named Ananias came and laid his hands on him so that he could see again."

¹³But Ananias answered, "Lord, many people have told me about this man. They told me about the many bad things he did to your holy people in Jerusalem."¹⁴Now he has come here to Damascus. The leading priests have given him the power to arrest all people who trust in you."

¹⁵But the Lord Jesus said to Ananias, "Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. I want him to tell other nations, their rulers, and the people of Israel about me."¹⁶I will show him all that he must suffer for me."

¹⁷So Ananias left and went to the house of Judas. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Saul, my brother, the Lord Jesus sent me. He is the one you saw on the road when you came here. He sent me so that you can see again and also be filled with the Holy Spirit."¹⁸Immediately, something that looked like fish scales fell off Saul's eyes. He was able to see! Then he got up and was baptized.¹⁹After he ate, he began to feel strong again. Saul stayed with the followers of Jesus in Damascus for a few days.²⁰Soon he began to go to

the synagogues and tell people about Jesus. He told the people, “Jesus is the Son of God!”

²¹All the people who heard Saul were amazed. They said, “This is the same man who was in Jerusalem trying to destroy the people who trust in Jesus! And that’s why he has come here—to arrest the followers of Jesus and take them back to the leading priests.”

²²But Saul became more and more powerful in proving that Jesus is the Messiah. His proofs were so strong that the Jews who lived in Damascus could not argue with him.

SCRIPTURE POINTS:

- Saul wasn’t looking for Jesus when he encountered him. Saul thought that he was serving God in viciously attacking believers in Jesus, but when Jesus spoke to him, he discovered that he was actually fighting against God. Even if we don’t believe in Jesus, his love and power is at work, reaching out to us.
- Saul’s dramatic transformation proves that anyone can be transformed by Jesus – no exceptions.
- After Saul became a Christian, he remembered his days as a persecutor. In Philippians Chapter 3, he makes mention of his background and his change in direction.

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Saul went from trying to kill Christians to leading hundreds to Jesus. When have you seen someone change in a big way because of Jesus? Or has it happened to you? What stands out to you about the transformations you’ve seen or experienced?
- In what ways would you like Jesus to change you as a person?
- When Ananias prays for Saul, he is filled with the Holy Spirit. What difference does the Holy Spirit make in our lives? When has the Holy Spirit helped you to change and grow?

The Good News message: Many young people long for a change and for the chance to be a different kind of person. They may wonder if it’s possible to break free from their old reputation. They might worry how their friends will respond if they change direction and live differently. The

Good News is that Jesus can come into our lives and transform us. He helps us make the changes that we want and need to make.

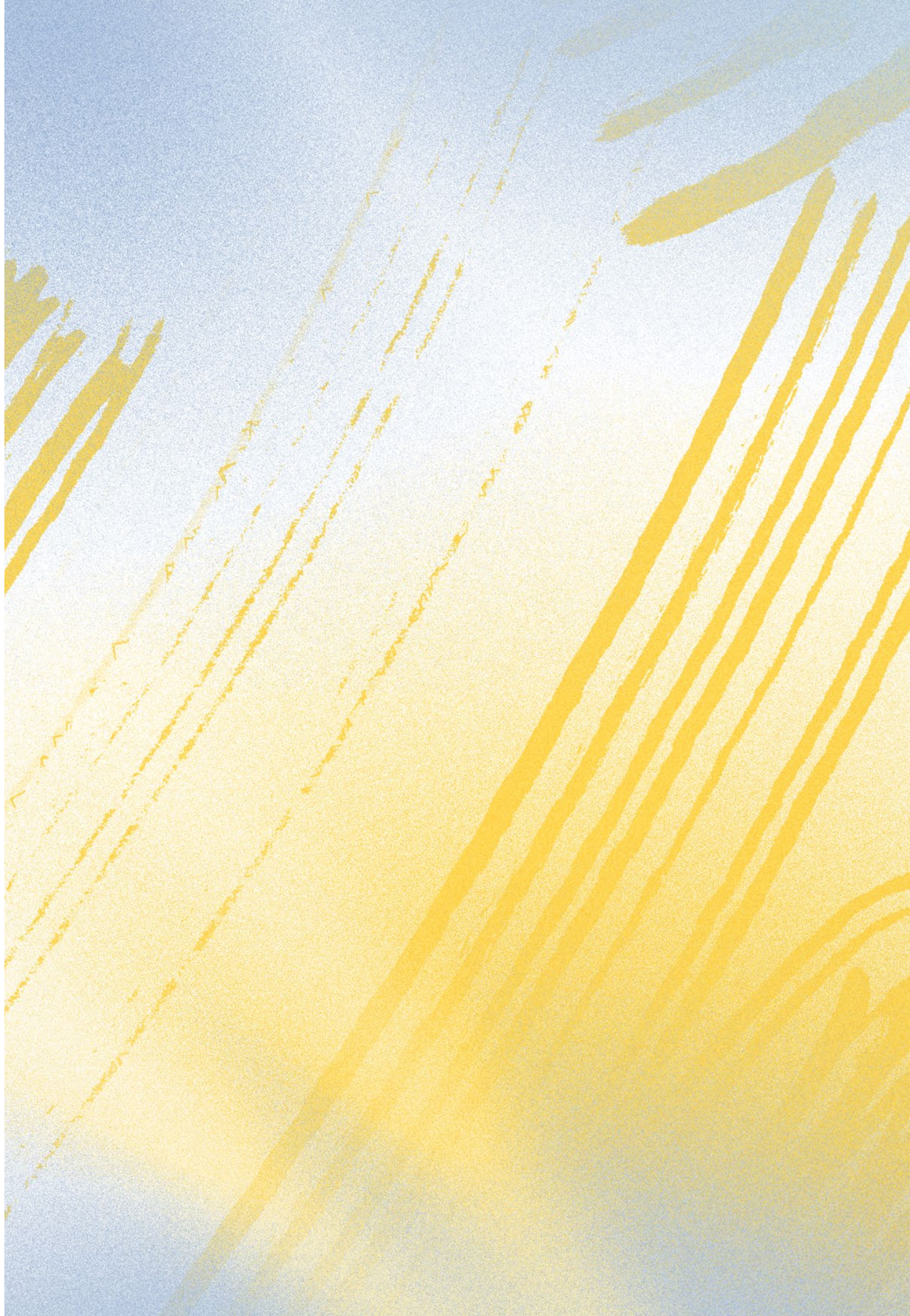
RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- For young people who aren’t followers of Jesus, this is an invitation. God loves all of us, no matter our background or situation. Changing direction and living differently may be something they have thought about, something they want or need. Jesus and his different way of living may be just what they are looking for.
- For young people who are followers of Jesus and may be struggling, this is a message of encouragement: there is the hope of a different way. As we remember and experience that God has good plans for us in life, it can help us to make the changes we want to make and go in the direction we want to head toward.
- For young people who are not struggling to change direction and live differently to the world, this message is a reminder that they probably have friends who are struggling. They can be like Jesus for their friends, loving and encouraging them to understand they can change and live differently, heading toward their purpose in life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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