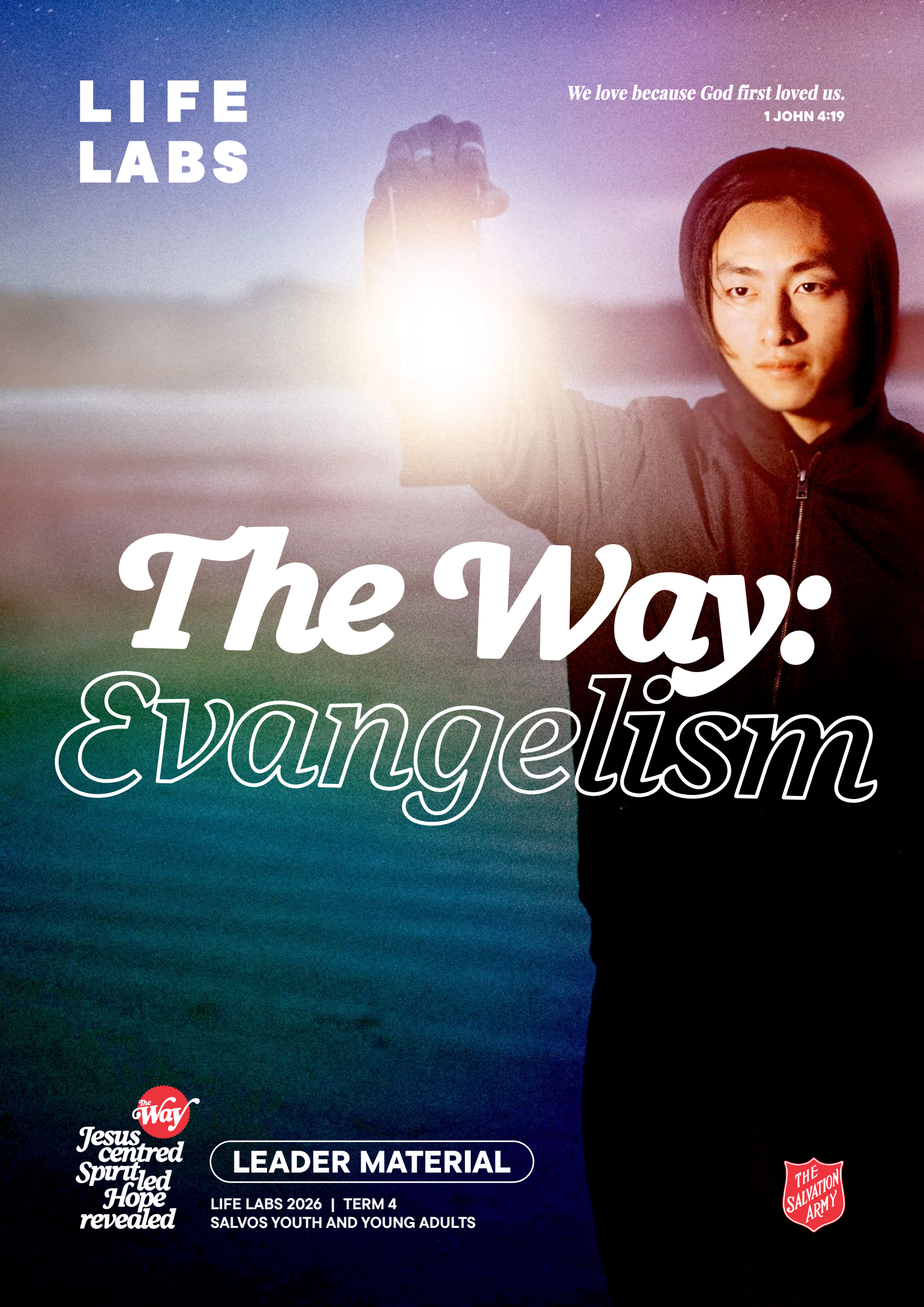
LIFE LABS

*We love because God first loved us.*
1 JOHN 4:19



# The Way: Evangelism

The Way
Jesus centred Spirit led Hope revealed

## LEADER MATERIAL

LIFE LABS 2026 | TERM 4
SALVOS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

THE SALVATION ARMY

## TOPIC OUTLINE:

In the first half of the term, we will explore how we can tell people about Jesus. In the second half of the term, we will explore how we can be part of God's work in the world.

## PART ONE – HOW WE CAN TELL PEOPLE ABOUT JESUS?

### **LIFE LAB 1:** What can we do if we feel nervous about sharing our faith? (page 04)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this session is to help young people identify strategies to help them be more courageous and confident in sharing their faith.

**Scripture:** The Scripture (1 Corinthians 2:1-5) explores the Good News that even when we are nervous, we can pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us to be brave to share Jesus with others.

### **LIFE LAB 2:** What's the best way to bring someone along to church or youth group? (page 08)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this session is to help young people identify ways to bring someone along to church or youth group, and to consider who they could invite.

**Scripture:** The Scriptures (John 1:45-48 & John 4:28-30) explore the Good News that we can invite people to experience Jesus for themselves.

### **LIFE LAB 3:** How can I share my experience of Jesus in a way that connects with people? (page 12)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this session is to help young people identify the key aspects of their testimony and practise sharing it with others.

**Scripture:** The Scripture (John 9:10-11) explores the Good News that God uses our personal faith stories and the power of our testimony to connect with others.

### **LIFE LAB 4:** How can we respect other people's beliefs while sharing our own? (page 16)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this session is to help young people consider how they can respect and listen to someone else's beliefs while sharing their own.

**Scripture:** The Scripture (Colossians 4:5-6) explores the Good News that the Holy Spirit helps us to be wise and kind, even in tricky conversations.

## PART TWO – HOW WE CAN BE PART OF GOD'S WORK IN THE WORLD?

### **LIFE LAB 5:** What do we mean when we talk about 'mission'? (page 20)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this session is to help young people recognise what God's work looks like in the world.

**Scripture:** The Scriptures (Luke 4:14-21 & John 20:21) explore the Good News that, in the Bible, Jesus describes his mission and says he has sent all of us to carry on the mission that God sent him to do.

### **LIFE LAB 6:** How can we get involved in mission? (page 25)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this session is to help young people identify ways they can join in God's mission.

**Scripture:** The Scripture (1 Corinthians 3:4-9) explores the Good News that we don't need to do mission alone – Jesus encouraged the disciples to partner with others.

### **LIFE LAB 7:** How can we bring the goodness of Jesus into everyday situations? (page 29)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people identify how to bring the goodness of Jesus into everyday situations.

Scripture: The Scripture (Matthew 5:13-16) explores the Good News that Jesus has made us 'salt' and 'light' for the world. When we live for him, the world is made better and people are pointed to God.

### **LIFE LAB 8:** What does it look like to be guided by the Holy Spirit (in mission)? (page 33)

Purpose: The purpose of this session is to help young people reflect on what it means that the Holy Spirit can guide us in mission, and the ways we can be guided.

Scripture: The Scripture (Acts 16:6-10) explores the Good News that God has sent the Holy Spirit to lead us as we join in God's mission.

## APPENDIX – ACTIVITY SESSIONS

### **INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY SESSION** (page 40)

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 mission and evangelism through activities like *'Mission Possible'*, *'Scavenger Hunt'* and *'Evangelism Word Game'*.

### **REFLECTION ACTIVITY SESSION** (page 42)

The Reflection 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 people explore the ideas from this year of discipleship, prayer, spiritual warfare, evangelism and mission, through activities like *'Discipleship Olympics'*, *'Youth Group Awards'* and *'Beat the Leaders'*.

### **SPEAKER BRIEF** (page 44)

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 Scripture (Acts 16:6-10) we explore the Good News that the Holy Spirit can guide us as we join in God's mission.

### 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."

LIFE
LABS

# 1. What can we do if we feel nervous about sharing our faith?

## 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 strategies to help them be more courageous and confident in sharing their faith.

**Game:** The *Rubber band balloon* game gets young people to experience what it is like to feel nervous.

**Activity:** The *Nail-biter* activity helps young people to reflect on things that can make us feel nervous when sharing our faith, and how to overcome these.

**Scripture:** The Scripture (1 Corinthians 2:1-5) explores the Good News that even when we are nervous, we can pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us to be brave to share Jesus with others.

## EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Eye protection x 2
- ☐ Bag of large rubber bands
- ☐ Bowl (big enough for the balloon to sit in)
- ☐ Sticky tape
- ☐ Balloons
- ☐ Butcher's paper
- ☐ Blu tac
- ☐ Coloured markers: you will need at least three black, at least three blue and at least three red

## READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

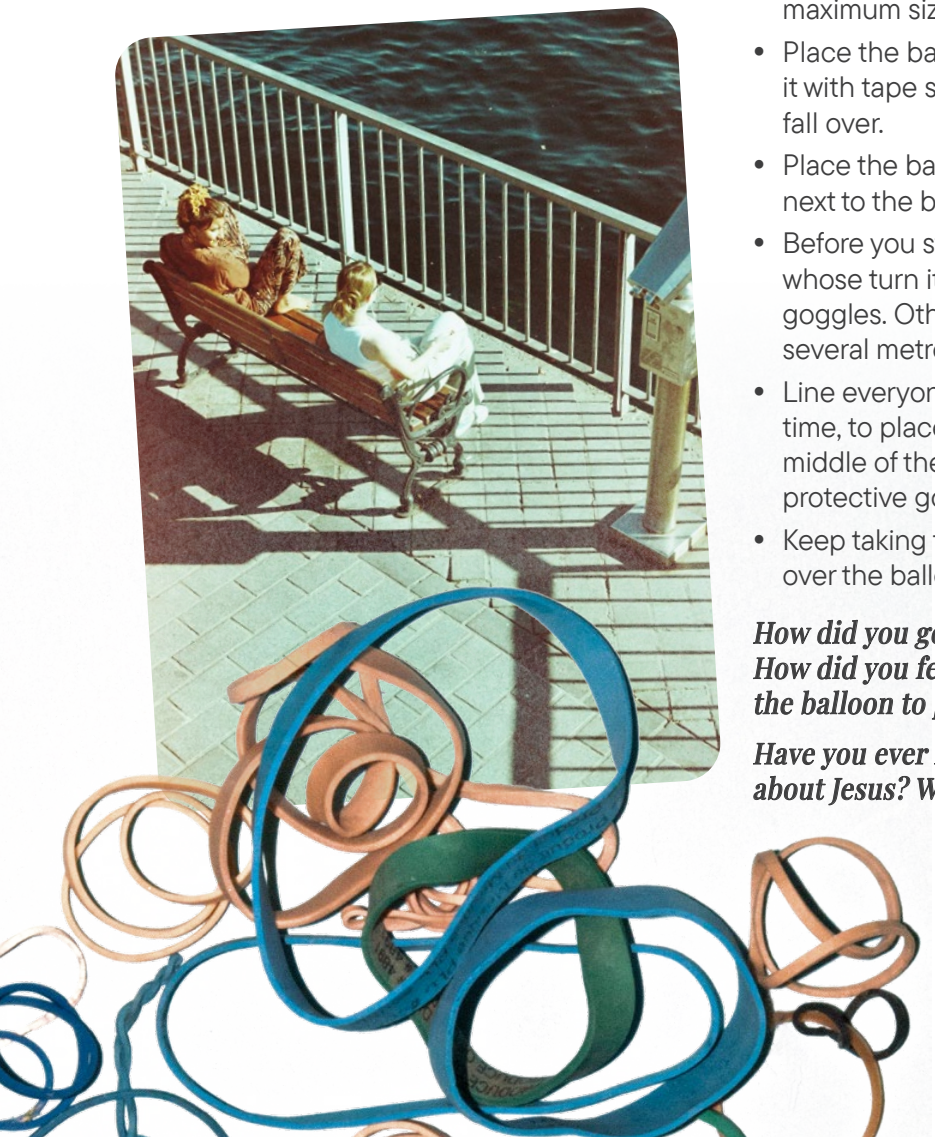
### READ THE INTRODUCTION

Some of us might be excited about sharing Jesus with other people, but at the same time, many of us feel nervous or flat-out scared. What if we offend or upset someone? What if they feel like we are judging them? What if we stuff up the conversation and turn them off Jesus altogether? We might even have already tried and had a challenging response from someone.

If we have kept our faith private for a long time, opening up can feel overwhelming, especially when we are unsure how our friends will respond. We can struggle with self-doubt and a lack of confidence, so the fear of rejection can be terrifying.

***All of this can lead us to ask: What can we do if we feel nervous about sharing our faith?***

***As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the 'Rubber band balloon' game.***



# PLAY THE 'RUBBER BAND BALLOON' GAME

Note: This game involves a balloon popping. Check whether your young people are okay with this and let them know they can leave the room for the game if they prefer.

**EQUIPMENT:**

- ☐ Eye protection x 2
- ☐ Bag of large rubber bands
- ☐ Bowl (big enough for the balloon to sit in)
- ☐ Sticky tape
- ☐ Balloons

- Place the bowl on the table.
- Blow up a balloon to approximately ¾ of its maximum size.
- Place the balloon in the bowl and secure it with tape so the bowl and balloon don't fall over.
- Place the bag of rubber bands on the table next to the balloon.
- Before you start the game, the person whose turn it is needs to put on protective goggles. Other participants need to stand several metres away.
- Line everyone up and ask them, one at a time, to place one rubber band around the middle of the balloon, while wearing the protective goggles.
- Keep taking turns placing rubber bands over the balloon until it pops.

***How did you go with the game?***
***How did you feel when you were waiting for the balloon to pop?***

***Have you ever felt nervous to talk to people about Jesus? What was that like?***

## DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTION

**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 'NAIL-BITER' ACTIVITY

**EQUIPMENT:**

- ☐ Butcher's paper
- ☐ Blu tac
- ☐ Coloured markers: you will need at least three black, at least three blue and at least three red

- Place the butcher's paper somewhere everyone can write on it.
- As a group, use black markers to brainstorm things that might make us feel nervous about sharing Jesus with others. See how many answers you can come up with.
- Circle anything you can relate to with a blue marker. If it has already been circled by someone else, circle it again.
- If there is something you've previously been able to push past, circle it with a red marker.

### DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

*How did you go with the activity? Was it easy to think of things that are nerve-wracking about sharing Jesus with people?*

*Which of the things we brainstormed do you relate to most? How does it affect you?*

*Whether or not you felt nervous, who would you talk to about Jesus?*

*Did anyone circle anything in red? What has helped you confidently share your faith with others?*

**In the group material (page 03):**

Simple ways to start a conversation about Jesus

## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

### IN GOD'S POWER, NOT OUR OWN

**1 Corinthians 2:1-5**

1 Dear brothers and sisters, when I came to
you, I told you the secret truth of God. But I
did not use fancy words or great wisdom.
2 I decided that while I was with you I would
forget about everything except Jesus Christ
and his death on the cross. 3 When I came to
you, I was weak and shook with fear.

4 My teaching and my speaking were not with
wise words that persuade people. But the
proof of my teaching was the power that the
Spirit gives. 5 I did this so that your faith would
be in God's power, not in human wisdom.

### 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 we do if we feel nervous about sharing our faith?'*

*Paul wrote much of the New Testament and planted churches across the Roman world, and yet he says he "was weak and shook with fear". In what ways is this surprising or encouraging?*

*What do you think it looks like to rely on God's power rather than our own words and ability?*

*How might this passage change the way we approach sharing Jesus with our friends this week?*

**NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:**

- In the city of Corinth, the people placed a high value on intellect, reasoning and philosophy.
- Paul, too, could have chosen to use persuasive words to convince people about God. Instead, he chose to speak simply about Jesus.
- Paul saw his fear and nervousness as a strength rather than a weakness, because it caused him to rely on God's power rather than himself.

## READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

### READ THE CONCLUSION

Some of us might be excited about sharing Jesus with people, but at the same time, many of us feel nervous about it. We can worry about offending people, seeming judgy or turning someone off Jesus by saying the wrong thing.

If we have kept our faith private for a long time, opening up about it can feel overwhelming. And we might be unsure of how our friends will respond.

The Good News is that when we are nervous about sharing our faith, we can pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us. We don't need to share Jesus in our own strength. The Holy Spirit will guide our words and give us courage.

### 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

LIFE LABS

# 2. What's the best way to bring someone along to church or youth group?

## 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 ways to bring someone along to church or youth group, and to consider who they could invite.

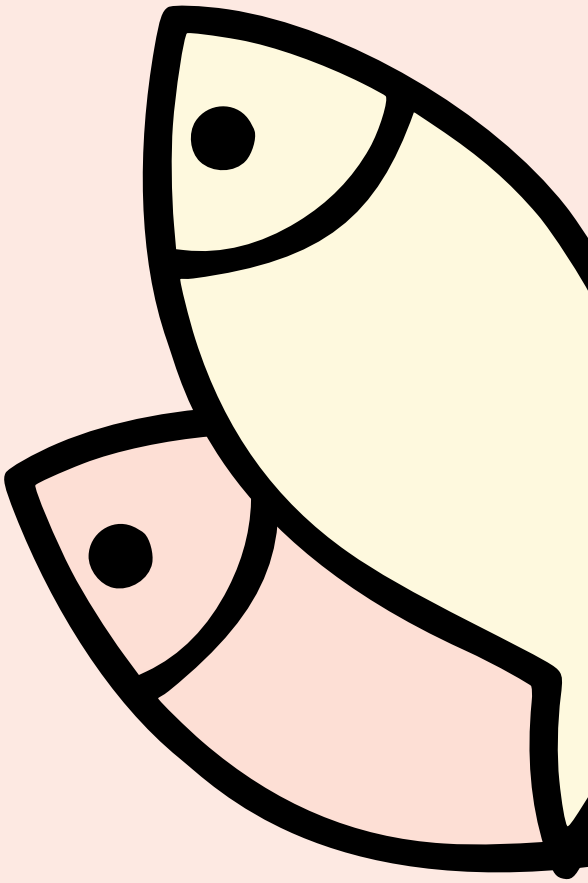
**Game:** The *Fan the fish* game gets young people to experience finding it challenging to get something to a destination.

**Activity:** The *Assess it* activity helps young people to assess the positives and negatives of different approaches to inviting someone to church.

**Scripture:** The Scriptures (John 4:28-30 & John 1:45-46) explore the Good News that we can invite people to experience Jesus for themselves.

## EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Three plates (one to use, plus two spares)
- ☐ Fish cutouts x 30
- ☐ Seven pieces of cardboard
- ☐ 'Assess it' PPT slides



# READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

## READ THE INTRODUCTION

If sharing our faith with friends through words feels a little scary, inviting them to youth group or church can seem like a great alternative. And when we've experienced the love and welcome of a Christian community ourselves, it's natural to want our friends to experience it, too.

But even then, we might feel unsure about how to invite them. When's the right time to ask? What can we say without making it feel awkward or forced?

We might also worry about what happens if they come along and have a bad experience. What if we invite them to an event that turns them off?

Working out how to go about bringing a friend along can feel stressful or overwhelming.

All of this can lead us to ask:

***What's the best way to bring someone along to church or youth group?***

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

## PLAY THE 'FAN THE FISH' GAME

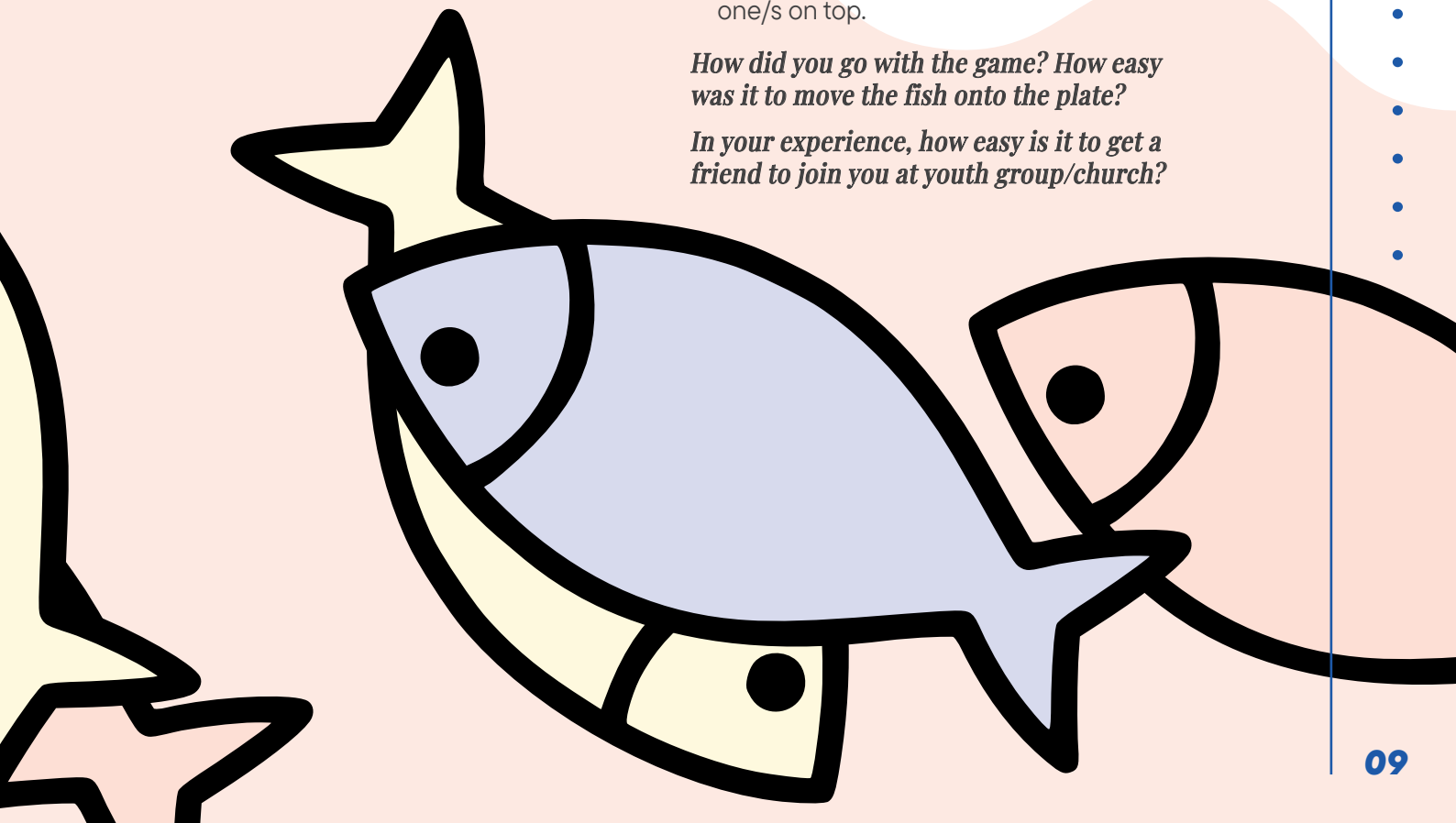
**EQUIPMENT:**

- ☐ Three plates (one to use, plus two spares)
- ☐ Fish cutouts x 30
- ☐ Seven pieces of cardboard, to use as fans

- Place the fish cutouts one metre from the plate in the centre of the circle.
- Ask for seven volunteers and give each person a piece of cardboard.
- Space volunteers equally around the fish.
- Each volunteer needs to use their piece of cardboard to fan the fish to land on the plate.
- Once a volunteer has successfully 'fanned' a fish onto the plate, they pick it up and keep it.
- Once they have five fish, they win the game.
- If someone fans a fish onto the plate and another person fans a fish on top of it, the person who fanned their fish first wins the one/s on top.

***How did you go with the game? How easy was it to move the fish onto the plate?***

***In your experience, how easy is it to get a friend to join you at youth group/church?***



## DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTION

**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 'ASSESS IT' ACTIVITY

**EQUIPMENT:**

☐ A way to display the 'Assess it' PPT slides

- At the beginning of each round, everyone starts in the middle of the room.
- Allocate the left side of the room as 'helpful' and right side of the room as 'unhelpful'.
- Show the group one prompt at a time.
- If they think the prompt is a good way to invite someone to church, ask them to walk to the 'helpful' side. If they think it's a bad way, ask them to walk to the 'unhelpful' side.
- Ask one person from each side to explain why they picked that option. If someone picked the bad side, ask how the prompt could be improved.

Encourage open ended discussion.

### DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

*How did you go with the activity? Were there any moments where you weren't sure if an approach was a good or bad way of inviting someone to church?*

*Did anyone change their mind after hearing someone else's reasoning? What made you change?*

*What makes you want to say "Yes" when someone invites you to something?*

*Can you think of some of your own prompts that could be effective in inviting a friend to church?*

**In the group material (page 06):**

Personal commitment

## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

### COME SEE JESUS

**John 4:28-30**

28 Then the woman left her water jar and went back to town. She told the people there,
29 "A man told me everything I have ever done. Come see him. Maybe he is the Messiah." 30 So the people left the town and went to see Jesus.

### COME AND SEE

**John 1:45-46**

45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the man that Moses wrote about in the law. The prophets wrote about him too. He is Jesus, the son of Joseph. He is from Nazareth." 46 But Nathanael said to Philip, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Philip answered, "Come and see."

### DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

*What do you think about what we just read? How do you think it might relate to the question, 'What's the best way to bring someone along to church or youth group?'*

*How does it feel knowing that – like the Samaritan woman – you don't have to be the perfect Christian or have it all together to invite someone to church or youth group?*

*Why do you think Philip responded with "Come and see", instead of debating and defending his faith with Nathanael?*

*Who is someone you can invite to church or youth group this week? How do the stories of the Samaritan woman and Philip encourage and inspire you to take that step?*

**NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:**

- In this culture, women were seen as unreliable storytellers. The Samaritan woman in John chapter four had also made many mistakes and seemed too far gone. Despite this, Jesus invited her to experience his love.
- After the Samaritan woman had an encounter with Jesus, she couldn't help but share it with others and invite them to experience Jesus for themselves.
- Nazareth was seen as a small town where nothing interesting happened. This is why Nathanael asked, in John 1:46, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"
- When Philip experienced what it was like to follow Jesus, he didn't need to show Nathanael any miracles or use fancy words – he just invited him to experience Jesus for himself.

## READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

### READ THE CONCLUSION

When we've experienced a loving Christian community, we can feel excited for our friends to experience that same sense of belonging. If they're going through a difficult time we might feel that coming to church or youth group could really help them. But how do we go about inviting them? How do we pick the right time? What do we say without making it feel awkward or forced?

We might worry about doing it in the wrong way or worry about how they'll respond.

The Good News is that we can invite our friends to experience Jesus for themselves. Our invitation doesn't need to be perfect, and we don't need to choose the perfect event. Like so many people who met Jesus in the Bible, we can simply invite people to come and experience Jesus for themselves.

### 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

LIFE LABS

# 3. How can I share my experience of Jesus in a way that connects with people?

## 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 key aspects of their testimony and practise sharing it with others.

**Game:** The *Wavelength* game gets young people to experience trying to connect with their partner by guessing what word they will say and matching it.

**Activity:** The *Before and after* activity helps young people to reflect on an example of Jesus bringing change to their life.

**Scripture:** The Scripture (John 9:10-11) explores the Good News that God uses our personal faith stories and the power of our testimony to connect with others.

### EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Instrumental music
- ☐ Template in group material (page 9)
- ☐ Pens

# READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

## READ THE INTRODUCTION

As Christians, we know we're called to tell people about Jesus. And many of us genuinely want to! But how can we share our faith in a way that really connects with the people around us?

At church, we often use Christian words and ideas like 'sin' and 'the cross'. If we're used to talking about our faith with this language, we might worry that we'll slip into Christian jargon when talking with friends outside church. We might worry about sounding strange, being judged, or not knowing how to explain what we believe in a way our friends will understand.

We might also have heard Christians share dramatic stories about how they came to faith and wonder how our own story compares. If our experience of Jesus seems ordinary, we might assume that no one would be interested in hearing it. We might feel like we don't have a 'good enough' story to share or worry that our friends will think Christianity has to involve some big, dramatic experience. This kind of thinking can knock our confidence and make it tempting to stay quiet.

All of this can leave us wondering:

***How can I share my experience of Jesus in a way that connects with people?***

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

## PLAY THE 'WAVELENGTH' GAME

The aim of the game is for two people around the circle to find the same word.

- Gather everyone into a circle.
- Pick two people who are standing next to each other to start the round.
- These people jump into the middle of the circle.
- Each person says one word at the same time.
- If they guess different words, they step back and the two people next to them jump into the middle of the circle.
- These two people need to guess a word that relates to the previous guesses.
- Keep going, with two new people each time, until the same word is said at the same time.

Example:

**Player A:** "Beach!"
**Player B:** "Pizza!"

**Player C:** "Cheese!"
**Player D:** "Sand!"

**Player E:** "Yellow!"
**Player F:** "Yellow!"

***How did you go with the game? What was it like to try to connect with the other person and say the same word?***

***Have you ever struggled to share your faith with others?***

## DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTION

**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 'BEFORE AND AFTER' ACTIVITY

**EQUIPMENT:**

- ☐ Instrumental music
- ☐ Template in group material (page 9)
- ☐ Pens

Encourage the young people to think of an example of how Jesus has changed their life. It can focus on what happened when they became a Christian, but it could also be about anything they've experienced at any point as a Christian, e.g. how Jesus helped them overcome stress about exams, how Jesus helped them when they moved house, etc.

Once everyone has drafted their story, encourage participants to share theirs with the group (or in pairs), if they are comfortable.

### DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

***How did you go with the activity? How easy was it to come up with something to write about?***

***What was it like hearing other people's stories? Why do you think personal stories impact people?***

***Would you feel comfortable sharing this story with someone who isn't a Christian? What would help you get the confidence to do that?***

***Who could you share your mini-story with this week?***

**In the group material (page 09):**

Before and After template

## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

**John 9:10-11**

10 They asked, "What happened? How did you get your sight?"

11 He answered, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. Then he told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went there and washed. And then I could see."

### 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 share my experience of Jesus in a way that connects with people?'***

***How would you describe the man's story-telling style? In what ways does this encourage or surprise you?***

***Have you ever heard someone share something they experienced that stuck with you? Why do you think it stuck with you?***

***If you had the opportunity to tell someone just one way of how Jesus has made a difference in your life, what would you share? What would you want them to know?***

**NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:**

- In Jesus' day, people who were born with disabilities were often avoided and excluded. And yet, people listened to the man's story because they saw how he had been transformed, and they wanted to know how it happened.
- When the man who was born blind shared his experience of Jesus to his neighbours he didn't use fancy, charming or persuasive words – he just told his story plainly and simply. And it had a huge impact.

# READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

## READ THE CONCLUSION

As Christians, we know we're called to tell people about Jesus. And many of us genuinely want to! But how can we share our faith in a way that really connects with the people around us?

If we're used to talking about our faith using Christian jargon, we might question whether we'll be able to use relatable language when talking to friends outside church.

If we've heard Christians share dramatic faith stories we might feel inadequate or like our story won't matter to people. These feelings can knock our confidence and make it tempting to stay quiet.

The Good News is that God uses our personal faith stories and the power of our testimony to connect with others. When we share how God has changed our lives and continues to change us, people are impacted and drawn to Jesus. No matter how ordinary our stories might feel to us, we can trust that God will use them.

## 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

LIFE
LABS

# 4. How can we respect other people's beliefs while sharing our own?

## 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 how they can respect and listen to someone else's beliefs while sharing their own.

**Game:** The *'Pool noodle'* game gets young people to experience considering and actioning two things at one time.

**Activity:** The *'Respectfully disagree'* activity helps young people to reflect on how they can have a positive and respectful conversation with someone who holds a different view to them.

**Scripture:** The Scripture (Colossians 4:5-6) explores the Good News that the Holy Spirit can help us to be wise and kind, even in tricky conversations.

## EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ Pool noodles – one for each person
- ☐ Timer

# READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

## READ THE INTRODUCTION

We live in a world where people hold all kinds of beliefs and have different ideas about how to live. We're encouraged to be tolerant and respect that everyone has their own 'truth'. So, when we talk about our Christian beliefs, it can feel like tricky territory. What if we offend someone? What if they think we're judging them?

It can feel even more daunting when we don't know much about other religions, or we're not confident talking about science and faith. We might worry that someone will ask a question we can't answer and we'll end up feeling out of our depth – or just plain foolish.
Some of us may have experienced this before. Perhaps we've tried to share our faith and realised afterwards that something we said came across as disrespectful. These experiences can stick with us. We might think, *What if I get it wrong again?*

For some of us, it could have been more intense: we may have faced hostility because we're Christians. Maybe someone has laughed at our beliefs or made us feel like our faith isn't welcome. When we've experienced that, speaking openly about Jesus can take real courage.

***So, how can we respect other people's beliefs while sharing our own?***

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

## PLAY THE 'POOL NOODLE' GAME

**EQUIPMENT:**

☐ Pool noodles – one for each person

- Have everyone form a circle.
- Give each person one pool noodle.
- The pool noodles need to be held vertical (pointing to the ceiling and floor).
- When the leader says, "Right!", each person drops their noodle and catches the one to the right without it falling over.
- When the leader says, "Left!", each person drops their noodle and catches the one to the left without it falling over.

Note: The pool noodles can hit the floor but not fall completely over.

***How did you go with the game?***
***What was it like trying to think about your pool noodle and someone else's pool noodle at the same time?***

***Have you ever tried to have a conversation with someone who believed something very different to you?***
***What was challenging about that?***

## DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTION

**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 'RESPECTFULLY DISAGREE' ACTIVITY

**EQUIPMENT:**

☐ Timer

- Ask participants to open their group materials to the 'Tips to respectfully disagree' (page 12)
- In pairs, participants have a three-minute discussion about something they disagree about. For example, the greatest sports team, most delicious food, best season of a show, most influential person in Australia.
- Practise listening to each other with respect.
- Swap partners and try again.

### DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

*How did you go with the activity? What did your partner do or say that helped you to feel 'heard'?*

*How do you think these tips could be applied to sharing your faith?*

*Who do you think God might be leading you to have a faith discussion with at the moment?*

*Which of these tips would you like to try to use?*

**In the group material (page 12):**

Tips to respectfully disagree

# READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

## BE KIND AND WISE

**Colossians 4:5-6**

5 Be wise in the way you act with those who are not believers. Use your time in the best way you can.

6 When you talk, you should always be kind and wise. Then you will be able to answer everyone in the way you should.

## 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 respect other people's beliefs while sharing our own?'***

***Why do you think it sometimes feels hard or scary to talk to others that have a different religion or belief to us?***

***What does it look like to share our faith without kindness or wisdom? What do you think would lead Christians to take this approach?***

***What is one moment this week where you can share about Jesus in a kind and wise way with another person? What could it look like to make the most of "your time"?[1]***

### NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:

- Like Australia today, Colossae was made up of people with different cultures, religions, beliefs and practices.
- When Paul refers to being 'wise' he means showing good judgement and making the most of every opportunity, while remaining kind.
- Some other translations of verse 6 say: "Let your conversation be always full of grace." Paul is encouraging believers to speak in a way that is full of love and looking to help the other person.
- As someone who was shipwrecked, persecuted and put into prison while spreading the Gospel, Paul understood the importance of making the most of every opportunity.

1 Colossians 4:5 (ERV)

# READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

## READ THE CONCLUSION

Our world encourages us to respect that everyone has their own 'truth', so sharing our Christian beliefs can feel like tricky territory. What if we offend someone? What if they think we're judging them?

It can feel even more daunting when we don't know much about other religions, or we're not confident talking about science and faith.

If we've caused offense to someone in the past or faced hostility for our faith, we might be tempted to stay quiet.

The Good News is that the Holy Spirit helps us to be wise and kind, even in tricky conversations. And we can trust that he'll show us how to respect and listen to someone else's beliefs while sharing our own.

## 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

LIFE LABS

# 5. What do we mean when we talk about 'mission'?

- 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 recognise what God's work looks like in the world.

**Game:** The *What do you mean?* game gets young people to experience trying to work out what something means.

**Activity:** The *Mission is...* activity helps young people to reflect on the meaning of the mission statement of The Salvation Army.

**Scripture:** The Scriptures (Luke 4:14-21 and John 20:21) explore the Good News that, in the Bible, Jesus describes his mission and says he has sent all of us to carry on the mission that God sent him to do.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:**

- ☐ Printed copies of the 'What do you mean' cards, cut out
- ☐ Printed copies of the Clue cards, cut out
- ☐ A timer
- ☐ A printed copy of The Salvation Army's Mission Statement – cut into sections
- ☐ A printed copy of the Scripture verses – cut into individual cards
- ☐ Blank cards
- ☐ Pens

# READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

## READ THE INTRODUCTION

If we've been around church for a while, we will have heard the word 'mission', but we might feel uncertain about what it really means.

Sometimes they're talking about a special trip to serve people in a faraway country. Other times they're talking about helping people in need. Still other times, they seem to use it to refer to anything Christians do to live out their faith. With so many different meanings, we might feel unsure about what people are actually talking about. We might even wonder, *Am I missing something*?

Some of us have seen people who aren't Christians caring deeply for others, standing up for what is right or making a real difference in someone's life. This can leave us feeling surprised or curious: *Is God at work in and through their lives, even before they come to know him?* And if God is at work in these ways, what does that tell us about what mission really is?

Leaders might encourage us to get involved in mission, but if we are not sure what it is, how do we start?

***So:***
***What do we mean when we talk about 'mission'?***

***As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the 'What do you mean?' game.***

# PLAY THE 'WHAT DO YOU MEAN?' GAME

**EQUIPMENT:**

- ☐ Printed copies of the 'What do you mean?' cards, cut out
- ☐ Printed copies of the 'Clue cards', cut out
- ☐ A timer

- Divide everyone into two teams.
- A player from Team 1 will draw a 'What do you mean?' card and look at it, not showing anyone else.
- The same player will then draw a 'Clue card' and a 30 second timer will start.
- The player must help their teammates guess the prompt by only following what the clue card lets them do.
- At any time, the player can pick up another clue card to help their team guess. The more clue cards they pick up, the less points the team will get:

| | |
|---|---|
| **20 points** | = Group guesses on the first clue card |
| **10 points** | = Group guesses on the second clue card |
| **5 points** | = Group guesses on the third clue card |
| **1 point** | = Group guesses on the fourth clue card. |

- Play a few rounds, alternating between teams. The team with the most points, wins!

*Example of a round:*

The 'What do you mean?' card says 'Dog riding a motor bike'

- First clue card says 'Make sounds': They try making dog and motor bike sounds.
- Second clue card says 'Act it out': They act out a dog riding a motor bike.
- Third clue card says 'Draw it': They try to draw a dog riding a motor bike.
- Fourth clue card says 'Describe it': They try describing a dog riding a motor bike, without using the actual words in the 'What do you mean' card.

***How did you go with the game? What was it like trying to work out what the clues meant?***

***Who or what has shaped your idea of what 'mission' is?***

## DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTION

**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 'MISSION IS...' ACTIVITY

**EQUIPMENT:**

- ☐ A printed copy of The Salvation Army's Mission Statement – cut into sections
- ☐ A printed copy of the Scripture verses – cut into individual cards
- ☐ Blank cards
- ☐ Pens

- Spread the sections of the Mission Statement around the room or stick them to the wall.
- Divide the group into pairs and give each pair one or more Scripture verses.
- In pairs, everyone places their Scripture verses next to the part of the Mission Statement they think their verse most relates to.
- When all the verses have been placed, give each pair an opportunity to briefly explain their choice.

Mission Statement

### DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

***How did you go with the activity? What was it like trying to match the Scripture verses with the mission statement?***

***After doing this activity, how would you explain 'mission' to a Christian friend who was confused about what it is?***

***Does the mission statement match what you would you usually think of as 'mission'? Why/why not?***

***Which parts of the mission statement do you find yourself drawn to? Why do you think that is?***

**In the group material (page 15):**

The Salvation Army's Mission Statement

# READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

## JESUS PROCLAIMS HIS MISSION

**Luke 4:14-21**

14 Jesus went back to Galilee with the power
of the Spirit. Stories about him spread all over
the area around Galilee. 15 He began to teach
in the synagogues, and everyone praised him.
16 Jesus traveled to Nazareth, the town where
he grew up. On the Sabbath day he went to
the synagogue as he always did. He stood up
to read. 17 The book of Isaiah the prophet was
given to him. He opened the book and found
the place where this is written:

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."

20 Jesus closed the book, gave it back to the
helper, and sat down. As everyone in the
synagogue watched him closely, 21 he began
to speak to them. He said, "While you heard
me reading these words just now, they were
coming true!"

## JESUS SENDS US TO CARRY ON HIS MISSION

**John 20:21**

21 After Jesus had greeted them again, he
said, "I am sending you, just as the Father has
sent me."

## DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

***What do you think about what we just read? How do you think it relates to the question: 'What do we mean when we talk about 'mission'?'***

***What do Jesus' words in Luke 4:18–19 show you about the kind of mission he came to carry out? Where do you see people around you who might need the kind of freedom, hope or kindness Jesus talks about?***

***In John chapter 20, Jesus says, "I am sending you." What do these words mean to you personally? Who might Jesus be sending you to?***

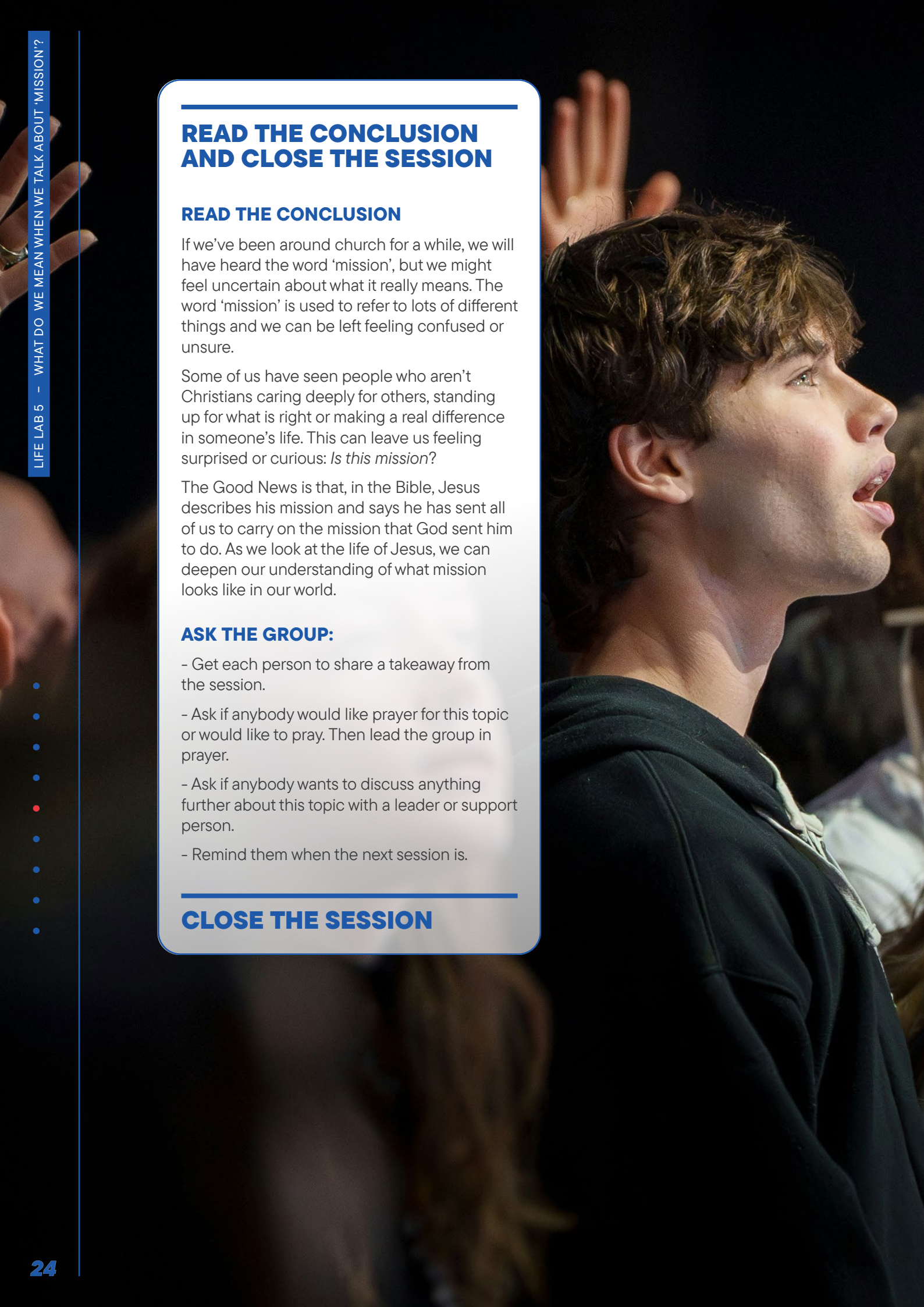
***What might make it difficult to step into Jesus' mission in your everyday life, and what could help you do it?***

### NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:

- In Luke 4:18–19, Jesus describes his mission to heal the damage caused by sin and bring freedom, hope and good news. In verse 21, he makes it clear that these words are about him. Jesus came to heal us and open our eyes to who he is and what he has done for us.
- Luke 4:19 says Jesus came to "proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (NIV). This points back to the Old Testament idea of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:9–15) – a time when slaves were set free, debts were cancelled and people could have a fresh start. Jesus offers us the fresh start we can't find anywhere else. Our mission is to share this Good News message with everyone.[2]
- In John 20:21, Jesus tells his disciples that, just as the Father sent him, he is sending them to continue his mission in the world. Jesus had already prayed about this in John 17:18: "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you" (NLT). This means that followers of Jesus are 'sent ones' = missionaries, after the Latin verb "to send".[3]

2 Luke 4 Commentary: Jesus' Temptation and First Galilean

3 John 20 Commentary: An Empty Tomb and A Risen Jesus



## READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

### READ THE CONCLUSION

If we've been around church for a while, we will have heard the word 'mission', but we might feel uncertain about what it really means. The word 'mission' is used to refer to lots of different things and we can be left feeling confused or unsure.

Some of us have seen people who aren't Christians caring deeply for others, standing up for what is right or making a real difference in someone's life. This can leave us feeling surprised or curious: *Is this mission*?

The Good News is that, in the Bible, Jesus describes his mission and says he has sent all of us to carry on the mission that God sent him to do. As we look at the life of Jesus, we can deepen our understanding of what mission looks like in our world.

### 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

# 6. How can we get involved in mission?

- 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 ways they can join in God's mission.

**Game:** The *'Spot the pattern'* game gets young people to experience struggling to get involved.

**Activity:** The *'Mission opportunities'* activity helps young people to reflect on ways they can get involved in mission.

**Scripture:** The Scripture (1 Corinthians 3:4-9) explores the Good News that we don't need to do mission alone – Jesus encouraged the disciples to partner with others.

### EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

- ☐ A printed set of 'Mission opportunity' cards for each person
- ☐ One blank card per person
- ☐ Pens

# READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

## READ THE INTRODUCTION

Many of us are keen to get involved in mission, but how do we do that?

Some of us might already be involved in mission and are loving it, but for others it can feel a bit out of reach. Mission might feel like a big, complicated thing that is for people who are older, or more experienced. If we think of it this way, we might feel intimidated or inadequate.

Some of us are unclear on what options are available, while others are overwhelmed by the choices! Still others know exactly how they'd like to get involved but feel shy about taking the first step, or are unclear on what the first step even is!

***All this leads us to ask, 'How can we get involved in mission?'***

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

## PLAY THE 'SPOT THE PATTERN' GAME

- Choose one person to be the Detective. They leave the room.
- While they're gone, the group agrees on a rule that everyone will follow when the Detective returns.
- The Detective comes back and can ask questions.
- Everyone follows the secret rule without explaining it.
- The Detective has to work out what everyone is doing and identify the rule.
- Once they guess correctly, choose someone new to be the Detective or finish the game.

Secret rule examples:

- People can only answer the Detective's questions if the Detective is smiling.
- The group chooses one person as the leader, and everyone copies their actions.
- Everyone must touch something blue before answering.
- Everyone must answer questions with the opposite of what they mean.
- No one can say any words that contain the letter 'O'. If they do, they need to do a squat.

***How did you go with the game? How did it feel when you were struggling to join in?***

***What makes it challenging for us to join in God's mission?***

## DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTION

**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 'MISSION OPPORTUNITIES' ACTIVITY

**EQUIPMENT:**

- ☐ A printed set of 'Mission opportunity' cards for each person
- ☐ One blank card per person
- ☐ Pens

- Give each participant a set of 'Mission opportunity' cards.
- Participants sort through the cards and select the ones they think they have the skills to do – don't worry about whether you would want to do them or have time to do them, etc.
- Participants take those cards and select the ones they think they might enjoy or be excited about.
- Participants take those cards and select the ones they think are realistic for them to do right now.
- Participants take a moment to pray and reflect. Is there an opportunity on the cards, or something else not on the cards, that they feel drawn to? They can write it on a blank card if the option is not already on a printed card.

**MISSION OPPORTUNITIES**

Printable Mission Opportunity cards

### DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

*How did you go with the activity? What stood out to you?*

*Why do you think you are excited about the opportunities that you selected?*

*What makes the ones you selected feel realistic and achievable?*

*What would help you to commit to one of the opportunities that you have chosen?*

**In the group material (page 18):**

## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

### WORKERS TOGETHER FOR GOD

**1 Corinthians 3:4-9**

4 One of you says, "I follow Paul," and
someone else says, "I follow Apollos." When
you say things like that, you are acting like
people of the world. 5 Is Apollos so important?
Is Paul so important? We are only servants of
God who helped you believe. Each one of us
did the work God gave us to do. 6 I planted
the seed and Apollos watered it. But God is
the one who made the seed grow. 7 So the

one who plants is not important, and the one who waters is not important. Only God is important, because he is the one who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have the same purpose. And each one will be rewarded for his own work. 9 We are workers together for God, and you are like a farm that belongs 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 get involved in mission?'***

***What is one part of this verse that you find encouraging or challenging, as you think about getting involved in mission?***

***Paul emphasises that we are workers together for God. Can you think of a time when you saw people working together in mission? How did their talents and passions complement each other?***

***What difference does it make to know that, while we have a part to play, it is God who makes things grow?***

#### NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:

- Paul emphasises the importance of us knowing our place in mission. God is the one who is important and the one who can grow faith in a person.
- Paul and Apollos were quite different in their giftings and personalities, but they both had a part to play in building the faith of the believers at Corinth.
- Paul's words highlight the importance of partnering together in mission. He reminds the Corinthian church they are all on the same team. Whether a planter or a waterer or whatever role we play, we are all necessary, we all need each other and we are all working towards the same goal.[4]

## READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

### READ THE CONCLUSION

Many of us are keen to get involved in mission but may wonder how to do that. Some of us might already be involved in mission and are loving it, but for others it can feel a bit out of reach. Mission might feel complicated, or that it's only for older and more experienced people.

Some of us might not know what options are available for us, or maybe there are too many options to choose from! Some of us know what we'd like to do but feel shy, or don't know where to start.

The Good News is that we don't need to do mission alone – Jesus encouraged the disciples to partner with others. We can raise our hand and join in with others to do our part in God's mission.

### 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

4 1 Corinthians 3 Commentary: Carnal Christians and Godly

LIFE
LABS

# 7. How can we bring the goodness of Jesus into everyday situations?

- 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 how to bring the goodness of Jesus into everyday situations.

**Game:** The *Goodness Bingo!* game gets young people to experience showing the love of Jesus to people in small ways.

**Activity:** *The Act it Out* activity helps young people to reflect on how they can bring the goodness of Jesus into everyday situations.

**Scripture:** The Scripture (Matthew 5:13-16) explores the Good News that Jesus has made us 'salt' and 'light' for the world. When we live for him, the world is made better and people are pointed to God.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:**

- ☐ Bingo sheets (in group material, page 21)
- ☐ Large sheets of paper
- ☐ Pens, pencils, markers

# READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

## READ THE INTRODUCTION

Sometimes getting involved in mission can feel daunting. If we've tried to get involved through our church or corps we might have come up against barriers. Applications, training and other requirements can make getting involved feel like a struggle. Or some of us may have felt there aren't many opportunities, or we've felt shut down or left out. If we want to get involved in mission but keep encountering hurdles, we can feel discouraged.

For some of us, the barrier is our already-full schedule. If we're juggling exams, assessments, work and school, we can feel stressed at the idea of taking on another commitment.

But what if mission isn't just a programmed activity? What if it is part of our everyday lives?

We might be keen to live out God's mission in our everyday lives but feel unsure about what that might look like.

***So, how can we bring the goodness of Jesus into everyday situations?***

***As a way to begin thinking about this, let's play the 'Goodness Bingo!' game.***

## PLAY THE 'GOODNESS BINGO!' GAME

**EQUIPMENT:**

- ☐ Bingo sheets (in group material, page 21)
- ☐ Pens

- Do tasks and mark them off on your Bingo sheet. Be the first to complete a row or column. Once you complete a line, shout "Bingo!"

***How did you go with the game? How did it feel to show kindness to others in small, practical ways?***

***Can you think of a time when someone showed you kindness in a small way that made a big difference? What happened?***

## DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTION

**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:**

- ☐ Large sheets of paper
- ☐ Pencils, pens, markers

- Form small groups and assign everyone a different scenario.
- Groups have five minutes to think about how they could bring the goodness of Jesus into the situation.
- They can draw or write their response OR express it through a mini role play.

Scenarios

1. Your friends want to leave someone out of a plan because they think they're annoying.
2. Someone you don't know sits next to you at youth group
3. You discover that one of your friends has betrayed your trust.
4. You are out with a group and notice someone sleeping rough.
5. A house in your community burns down.
6. The family of someone you know breaks up.
7. The person in front of you drops the drink they just bought.
8. You are on a train and notice that someone is quietly crying.

### DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

*How did you go with the activity?*
*How easy or difficult was it to think of ways that you could bring the goodness of Jesus into that scenario?*

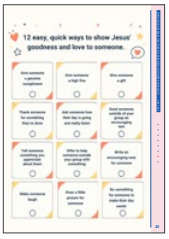
*How do you think it would impact you if you were in one of these situations and someone responded to you this way?*

*What difference do you think it might make to someone's faith if they experienced your response?*

*Can you think of a situation in your life now where you could bring the goodness of Jesus? What could you do?*

**In the group material (page 21):**

Bingo sheet



## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

### SALT AND LIGHT

**Matthew 5:13-16**

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its taste, it cannot be made salty again. Salt is useless if it loses its salty taste. It will be thrown out where people will just walk on it. 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.

### 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 bring the goodness of Jesus into everyday situations?'***

***What do you think Jesus meant when he called his followers "salt" and "light"?***

***What might it look like for you to be a 'light' for your friends today?***

***What do you think Jesus means by "the good things you do"? What are some ways that we could point people towards God with our actions?***

#### NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:

- In Jesus' day, salt was highly valued. It was used to preserve meat, slow decay and add flavour to food. Christians are like salt because they can help preserve people's lives by pointing them to God. They can make knowing Jesus more appealing through the way they live. If Christians are no different from those around them, they have lost their 'flavour' and are no longer living as Jesus intended.
- Jesus calls us to let our light shine openly, not hide it away. Our faith isn't meant to be lived in isolation but shown through the way we live and the good we do. Like a city on a hill, our lives should show God to others – not so people notice how good we are, but so they see God at work in us and are drawn to him. Like a light that helps people find their way, our lives can help others see the way towards God.
- Jesus never challenged us to become salt or light. He simply said that we are – and we are either fulfilling or failing that given responsibility.
- A key idea in both pictures of salt and light is that Christians are different. Salt is needed because the world is rotting and decaying; if our Christianity is also becoming like that, it won't be of any use. Light is needed because the world is in darkness; if our Christianity simply hides in that darkness, we have nothing different to offer. To make a difference for Jesus, we need to live out what is distinct about following him. We can't influence the world for Jesus by becoming like it.[5]

## READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

### READ THE CONCLUSION

Sometimes getting involved in mission can feel daunting. Applications, training and other requirements can make getting involved feel like a struggle. For some of us, the barrier is our already-full schedule. If we're juggling exams, assessments, work and school, we can feel stressed at the idea of taking on another commitment.

But what if mission could be part of our everyday lives?

We might be keen to live out God's mission in our everyday lives but feel unsure about what that looks like.

The Good News is that Jesus has made us 'salt' and 'light' for the world. There are things all of us can do to bring the goodness of Jesus into everyday situations. In God's mission, every small act of kindness counts. And when each of us live for Jesus, the world is made better and people are pointed to God.

### 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

5 Matthew 5 Commentary: The Sermon on the Mount

LIFE
LABS

# 8. What does it look like to be guided by the Holy Spirit (in mission)?

- 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 it means that the Holy Spirit can guide us in mission, and the ways we can be guided.

**Game:** The *'Secret task'* game gets young people to experience what it feels like to figure out what to do.

**Activity:** The *'Listen up'* activity helps young people to experience listening to the Holy Spirit in different ways.

**Scripture:** The Scripture (Acts 16:6-10) explores the Good News that God has sent the Holy Spirit to lead us as we join in God's mission.

### EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THE SESSION:

If you choose the low prep activity option:

- ☐ Printed prompt cards
- ☐ Journals and pens
- ☐ Music

If you choose the higher prep activity option:

- ☐ Prayer station cards
- ☐ Assorted prayer station materials (see activity for more details)

# READ THE INTRODUCTION AND PLAY THE GAME

## READ THE INTRODUCTION

We may want to be guided by the Holy Spirit, or even feel excited by the idea, but might second-guess what we are feeling, unsure of whether we're hearing the Spirit's voice or just our own.

We might also wonder what being 'led by the Spirit' looks like. If we're using our gifts and trying to live like Jesus did, is that the Holy Spirit at work? Or does the Spirit always give more obvious signs? If we're expecting the Spirit to guide us in dramatic ways and that doesn't happen, we may feel disappointed or wonder if we are doing something wrong.

Sometimes we hear stories about the Holy Spirit leading someone into a particular mission and wonder how they knew it was the Holy Spirit. We may feel inspired by their stories, but also wonder why God hasn't given us such a clear calling.

We may try to listen for God's voice in our hearts and minds, but worry we're missing it.

All of this can lead us to ask:

***What does it look like to be guided by the Holy Spirit (in mission)?***

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

## PLAY THE 'SECRET TASK' GAME

Choose one person to leave the room. While they are outside, the rest of the group secretly decides on a task they want that person to complete.

- Send one person out of the room.
- The group chooses a simple task for that person to complete.
- When the person returns, they need to work out what that task is.
- They can try different actions, but the group can't give clues.
- They can only say 'hot' or 'cold'
  - Hot: they're getting close or doing something right
  - Cold: they're nowhere near the task
- Keep going until the person successfully completes the task.
- Celebrate when the task is complete!

Example tasks:

- Strum the guitar
- Shake hands with a specific person
- Sit in a particular chair
- Turn the light on or off

***How did you go with the game? How did it feel when you were trying to figure out what you were meant to be doing?***

***Have you ever felt like the Holy Spirit was saying something to you? What do you think it's like when the Holy Spirit leads us?***

## DO THE ACTIVITY AND DISCUSS QUESTION

**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 'LISTENING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT' ACTIVITY

A low prep and higher prep option have been provided. Choose whichever option works best for you.

### LOW PREP OPTION – 'QUESTIONS FOR GOD'

**EQUIPMENT**

- ☐ Printed prompt cards
- ☐ Journals and pens
- ☐ Music

- Place prayer prompt cards around the room
- Play some quiet music in the background
- Give everyone a small journal and pen
- Participants move around the room at their own pace, reading the prompts and spending time praying
- Participants write down any thoughts or questions that come to mind

## HIGHER PREP OPTION: PRAYER STATIONS

**EQUIPMENT**

- ☐ Prayer station cards
- ☐ Assorted prayer station materials (see higher prep activity below)

- Play some music in the background
- Participants move around the prayer stations, participating in one or more
- Participants read and follow the instructions in each space

### 1. I'm listening

Set up:

- Cushions or beanbags
- Bible opened to 1 Samuel 3:1-10
- Timer (2-3 minutes)
- Paper
- Coloured pencils, markers, paints

Instructions:

1. Read the passage slowly.
2. Sit in silence for a few minutes.
3. Pray, "Holy Spirit, what would you like me to know today?"
4. Draw shapes, colours, symbols, or images that come to mind.

### 2. What's on your mind?

Set up:

- Basket of stones
- Small cross

Instructions:

1. Choose a stone and hold it.
2. Think about a challenge or worry that you are facing at the moment.
3. Pray, "God, what are you saying to me about this worry today?"
4. Place the stone on the cross and ask God to give you peace.

### 3. Bible inspiration

Set up:

- Selection of Scripture verses printed on individual cards – placed face down
- Journal

Instructions:

1. Choose a card and read the verse on it.
2. Pray, "God, help me to understand how this verse might apply for me today."
3. Reflect for a moment on what the Holy Spirit might be highlighting.

### 4. Whose voice?

Set up:

- Place three posters on the table that say, 'God's voice', 'My voice', 'Other voices'
- Sticky notes
- Pens

Instructions:

1. Ask God to help you to hear what is saying to you today.
2. Sit quietly for a few minutes.
3. As thoughts or ideas or feeling come to mind, write each one down.
4. When you are ready, think about each one.

***Does it match with what the Bible says?***

***Does it bring you closer to Jesus?***

***Does it produce lead to love, hope, peace or encouragement?***

5. Sort each sticky note onto the posters

### 5. Choose a photo

Set up:

- Supply a variety of interesting photos (nature, people helping others, pathways, storms, mountains, etc.)
- Paper and pens

Instructions:

1. Choose a photo that grabs your attention.

2. Pray, "Holy Spirit, why did this image stand out to me?"
3. Write down or talk to someone about what you noticed.

### 6. Graffiti prayer wall

Set up:

- Stick large (double thick) sheets of paper on the wall, or use a whiteboard
- Coloured markers

Instructions:

1. Pray, "God, what do you want young people to know?"
2. Write words, verses, prayers or pictures on the wall in response.

### 7. Encouragement challenge

Set up:

- Cards
- Pens

Instruction:

1. Think of someone who needs encouragement.
2. Pray, "Holy Spirit, how would you like me to pray for this person?"
3. Write a note or send a text message to anyone that God brings to mind.

### 8. Next step

Set up:

- Supply cards that are printed with the words, "This week I will..."
- Pens

Instructions:

1. Ask God, "What is one thing you would like me to do this week?"
2. Write it on a card and take it with you as a reminder.

## DISCUSS THE ACTIVITY

***How did you go with the activity? Which way(s) of listening felt most natural for you?***

***Have you ever tried one of these ways of listening before? What happened?***

***Which of these ways of listening could you make part of your life? Are there any barriers to that happening?***

***Who could support you in listening to the Holy Spirit?***

**In the group material (page 24):**

Personal commitment

## READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS

### THE HOLY SPIRIT CLOSES AND OPENS DOORS

**Acts 16:6-10**

6 Paul and those with him went through the
areas of Phrygia and Galatia because the
Holy Spirit did not allow them to tell the Good
News in the province of Asia. 7 When they
reached the border of Mysia, they tried to go
on into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not
let them go there. 8 So they passed by Mysia
and went to the city of Troas.

9 That night Paul saw a vision. In it, a man
from Macedonia came to Paul. The man
stood there and begged, "Come across to
Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had
seen the vision, we immediately prepared
to leave for Macedonia. We understood that
God had called us to tell the Good News to
those people.

### DISCUSS THESE TOPIC QUESTIONS

*What do you think about what we just read? How does it relate to the question, 'What does it look like to be guided by the Holy Spirit (in mission)?'*

*How do you think Paul and his friends felt when they were trying to share the Gospel in a new area, but the Holy Spirit didn't allow them to? What do you find interesting or surprising about this?*

*The Holy Spirit spoke to Paul through a vision, telling him and his friends where to go. What do you think that would have been like? In what ways might the Holy Spirit guide us today?*

*How would you like the Holy Spirit to speak to you or guide you as you step out in mission?*

**NOTES ON THE SCRIPTURE FOR FACILITATORS:**

- The Holy Spirit did not allow Paul to do something we normally think of as good – to preach God's Word to people in various places. The Spirit of God knew the right time and place Paul and his friends needed to be, and when they followed the Holy Spirit's guidance, they ended up in that place.
- Paul was guided by being stopped. The Holy Spirit often guides as much by the closing of doors as he does by the opening of doors.
- Paul and his friends were stopped twice and ended up in Troas. This is where a doctor named Luke joined them. Now we see one of the reasons they may have been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia, and why the Spirit did not permit them to go into Bithynia. Because God said "no" to Paul these two times, we have the gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, written by Doctor Luke.[6]
- Paul was led by the Holy Spirit in a vision, or a dream. Once he got the green light, he didn't hesitate to obey.

# READ THE CONCLUSION AND CLOSE THE SESSION

## READ THE CONCLUSION

We may want to be guided by the Holy Spirit, or even feel excited by the idea, but might be unsure of whether we're hearing the Spirit's voice or just our own.

We might wonder what being 'led by the Spirit' looks like. If we're expecting the Spirit to guide us in dramatic ways and that doesn't happen, we may feel disappointed or wonder if we are doing something wrong.

Sometimes we hear stories about the Holy Spirit leading someone into a particular mission and wonder how they knew it was the Holy Spirit. We might worry we won't hear, and we'll miss God's call on our life.

The Good News is that God has sent the Holy Spirit to lead us as we join in God's mission, and he will show us how to follow him. When we ask the Holy Spirit to guide us, and we are reading the Bible and drawing closer to Jesus, we can trust he will show us the way.

## 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

6 Acts 16 Commentary: The Second Missionary Journey Begins

# INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY SESSION – EVANGELISM AND MISSION

*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 explore evangelism and mission.*

## INTRODUCTION:

Through the Life Labs sessions this term we will look at how we can talk to others about God and how we can serve God and others through mission.

## WHAT YOU COULD DO:

You could use this session to introduce these ideas in a fun way.

Here are some ideas that would make sense for the term:

### → 'MISSION POSSIBLE'

Split into teams and give participants a series of ridiculous missions to complete around the building. Find an object, solve a puzzle, take a creative photo, get another team to help them, etc.

### → 'SCAVENGER HUNT'

Create clues for locations around your neighbourhood. Split into teams to find the different locations and activities that need to be completed. Activities should be mission focused. E.g. pick up as much rubbish as you can find. Optional: Take photos to show you've completed each activity.

### → 'EVANGELISM WORD GAME'

What you need

- ☐ Three pieces of paper per person
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ A bowl

**Setup**

Give each person three pieces of paper.

On each piece, write one word:

1. An action e.g. running, swimming, preaching
2. A famous person e.g. Taylor Swift, Spider-Man, Albert Einstein
3. A thing e.g. Bible, pizza, skateboard

Fold all the papers and put them into a bowl.

Split everyone into 2–4 teams.

**How to play**

One person from a team takes a paper from the bowl and tries to get their team to guess the word. Once their team guesses correctly, they keep the paper and immediately take another one.

Give each team 60 seconds per turn. When time is up, the next team goes.

Continue until all the papers have been guessed.

Then put all the papers back into the bowl and start the next round.

**ROUND 1: TABOO**

Pick a paper and describe the word without actually saying the word.

You can use as many words as you like, but you cannot say any part of the word.

**ROUND 2: CHARADES**

Put all the papers back into the bowl. This time, you cannot speak at all. Use only

actions and gestures to help your team guess the word.

**ROUND 3: ONE WORD OR SOUND**

Put all the papers back into the bowl again. This time, you can only say ONE word or make ONE sound to help your team guess. You can repeat your one word or sound, but you cannot use anything else.

## 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:

***Have you ever shared your faith story with someone? How did it go?***

***What are some different ways we can tell people about Jesus?***

***What motivates you to share your faith with others?***

***What makes it challenging to tell people about Jesus?***

# REFLECTION ACTIVITY – REFLECTING ON THE YEAR

*The Reflection 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 explore different aspects of the year in a fun, celebratory way.*

## INTRODUCTION:

This year we've explored the Good News that God is at work in many ways and that we can have a relationship with him. We can join with him to do his mission and show the love of Jesus to others. This concluding activity session is a way to further reflect on what we have learnt through Life Labs about discipleship, prayer, spiritual warfare, evangelism and mission.

## 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.

### → 'DISCIPLESHIP OLYMPICS'

Set up some 'Olympic' events, e.g.

- **The Great Commission relay**
  Teams have to transport a Bible from one side of the room to the other using increasingly ridiculous methods, like between elbows, two people's backs, etc.
- **Prayer charades**
  Write down some prayer needs you could act out, e.g. exams, someone is sick, etc.
- **Shield of faith**
  Give each team a cardboard shield. A leader throws soft balls at them while they try to protect a team member carrying a cup of water from one side of the room to the other.
- **Evangelism challenge**
  Teams have thirty seconds to convince a leader that a completely random object is the greatest invention ever made.

### → THE 2026 'YOUTH GROUP AWARDS'

Have an end of year award show. Come up with an award for each person. Make the awards specific to your youth group. Example awards could be:

- Best dance moves
- Most likely to bring a friend (Evangelism award)
- Most likely to help someone (Mission award)
- Most likely to pray for everyone (Prayer award)
- Most likely to stand up for their faith (Spiritual Warfare award)
- Most improved in the way of Jesus (Discipleship award)
- Best jokes
- Best random Bible knowledge

### → 'BEAT THE LEADERS' CHALLENGE

If the leaders lose they have to do a funny challenge like a TikTok dance or eat something weird.

Other challenges could include:

- Cup stacking
- Relays
- Bible trivia
- Youth group trivia
- Uno

## DISCUSSION:

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

***What is one thing from Life Labs this term that will stick with you?***

***What is something you are praying for next year?***

***Can you think of a way that you have grown more like Jesus or understood this year?***

***Have you had any opportunities to share Jesus this year? How would you like to share Jesus more next year?***

***What does following Jesus mean to you?***

# SPEAKER BRIEF

## MESSAGE:

The purpose of this session is to help young people reflect on what it means that the Holy Spirit can guide us in mission, and the ways we can be guided.

## LIVED EXPERIENCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE:

- Young people might be excited about the idea of being led by the Holy Spirit but unsure about what that looks and feels like. They may be unsure if what they're hearing is the Spirit's voice or just their own.
- Young people might wonder if the Holy Spirit uses more subtle signs to lead people or if he always uses big, obvious signs.
- Young people may have heard stories of God leading others and wonder if that might happen for them, or they may question why it hasn't.
- Young people may worry they'll miss the Holy Spirit's signs or promptings.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

***As a teenager, was there a time when you felt confused or unsure about how the Holy Spirit leads people? What was that like? What contributed to the confusion?***

***As a teenager, was there a time when you wanted the Holy Spirit to lead you, but you felt unsure what he wanted you to do? Did you worry that you had missed his prompting? What thoughts and feelings did you experience?***

***Can you think of a particular event or experience that helped you better understand how the Holy Spirit leads people? What happened?***

## SCRIPTURE:

**ACTS 16:6-10**

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9 That night Paul saw a vision. In it, a man from Macedonia came to Paul. The man stood there and begged, "Come across to Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we immediately prepared to leave for Macedonia. We understood that God had called us to tell the Good News to those people.

## SCRIPTURE POINTS:

- The Holy Spirit did not allow Paul to do something we normally think of as good – to preach God's Word to people in various places. The Spirit of God knew the right time and place Paul and his friends needed to be, and when they followed the Holy Spirit's guidance, they ended up in that place.
- Paul was guided by being stopped. The Holy Spirit often guides as much by the closing of doors as he does by the opening of doors.
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- Paul was led by the Holy Spirit in a vision, or a dream. Once he got the green light, he didn't hesitate to obey.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

***Can you think of a time you believed you were doing the right thing, but felt God stop you?***

***In this passage, the Holy Spirit spoke to Paul through a dream. Can you think of a time when the Holy Spirit spoke to you in a way that surprised you?***

***When have you felt the Holy Spirit leading you in mission? What was it like?***

## THE GOOD NEWS MESSAGE:

Young people may be unsure of the Spirit's voice, or how he will lead them. They may worry they're doing something wrong, or they might miss their calling. The Good News is that God has sent the Holy Spirit to lead his people as we join in God's mission, and he will show us how to follow him. When we ask the Holy Spirit to guide us, and we are reading the Bible and drawing closer to Jesus, we can trust he will show us the way.

## RESPONSE OPTIONS:

- For young people who aren't followers of Jesus, this message is an invitation. It doesn't matter who they are or what they've done, everyone can know God and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. They only need to reach out to him.
- For young people who are followers of Jesus but may feel like they don't know how to follow the leading of the Spirit – or worry they may have missed their calling – this is a message of encouragement. They can ask the Holy Spirit to lead them and learn how to listen out and look for his leading. As they read the Bible and draw closer to Jesus, they can trust the Holy Spirit will show them the way.
- For young people who follow Jesus and the leading of the Holy Spirit, this message is a reminder to keep listening and looking out for the Spirit's leading. They can see God do amazing things in the lives of people around them as they continue to read the Bible, draw closer to Jesus, and follow the leading of the Spirit as he continues to show them the way.

# LIFE LABS

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the Easy-to-Read Version (ERV).
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