



L'Immensite: Gustave Courbet

Week4 -Life Change

Prayer as life evolves

Diocesan Lent Course

FOR YOUTH



YEAR OF PRAYER 2018

Week 4 - Life Change

Prayer as life evolves

Aim

To get young people thinking about how as time goes on life changes and so does the world around them. They should understand that God is through all things no matter what comes their way.

Learning outcomes

The world is constantly changing and we are constantly changing, sometime for good and sometime for bad. We'll be looking at some of the ways we can have an impact on these changes both inside and outside. God stays the same but perhaps sometimes our understandings of Him change over time as we get to know him better through prayer, social action, bible study and support from other Christians.

Materials needed

- Screen and speakers with video clips queued up.
- Paper and pens for every young person
- Hot chocolate ingredients - mugs, hot chocolate, milk, marshmallows etc...
- Giant map of the world, UK or your town
- Post-it notes, plasticine, sand, tea light candles, string, bluetack/pins.
- Map for cutting up and giving out.
- Music for reflection
- Large printout of Gustave Courbet's L'Immense or digital copy on a screen.

Any videos or downloadable resources needed in this session can be accessed from:

youth.chichester.anglican.org/lent

Alternatively; from the Diocesan youth website navigate to 'Year of Prayer' then 'Lent Course for Youth'

Breathe...Pray...Let's begin...

Quick recap

Last week we looked at discipleship and the takeaway was to find a thin space and have a go at using the examen exercise by yourself. Ask young people about their thin spaces and to share photos if they took them on their phones. Ask how they have used their thin space and what impact they feel it has had on their prayer this week.

Icebreaker

Consequences

Each person needs a piece of paper. Everyone sits in a big circle. You ask everyone to write one of the things below, then fold the top of the paper over so what they've written can't be seen. They then pass their piece of paper on to the person next to them. The idea is that the things they write build up a story which you read out at the end. They write in turn:

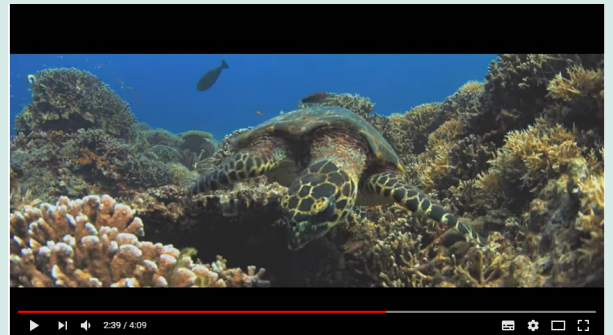
1. One or more adjectives
2. The name of a man
3. More adjectives
4. The name of a woman
5. Where they met
6. What he gave her
7. What he said to her
8. What she said to him
9. The consequence
10. What the world said about it

Video

This video shows some of the dangers of plastic waste in our oceans. We will be looking in this session at how the world is changing because of our actions

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGB-pHYLNtRA>

Use this video as an introduction if it will fit better with your group rather than a focus.



Creative Prayer Ideas

Pray for the World

Have a map of the world (ideally as big as you can lay your hands on) laid out on the floor. If you have the space you may want to lay out a sandpit or lay sand on a tarpaulin around the edge of the map of the world. Make post it notes, pens, tealight candles, string, plasticine and other materials available for young people to pray using the map.

Here are some ideas to get them started:

- Shape the sand to represent their home/school/town. When they've said a prayer, light a tealight candle and place it in the sand
- Write a prayer on a post-it and stick it to the place on the map where they prayed.
- Join a line between your home and a place you're praying for with a piece of string
- Make a model that represents your prayer or something specific relating to a place. Leave the model on the map

When you've finished praying take a photo of your map and prayers as a reminder. (You could share this with the rest of your church and get them participating)

You're a 10 - this is an extra activity that may work well with some groups but not others.

This activity is done with the young people spread out around the room and quietly by themselves with you leading the activity from the front. They shouldn't look at what other people are writing.

Give every young person a piece of paper. First you ask them to give themselves a score out of 10. They write this at the top of the page and fold the paper down so that number is hidden

You now ask them: **when was the last time you were a 10? Was it this year, last year, perhaps it was when you were a newborn baby?** Get them to visualise this and ask them to **think forward from then, when was the first time they dropped from a 10?** Get them to write it down at the top of the visible page and something to remind them of what happened to make them drop from a 10. Ask: **What does the you at that time need to hear to bring you back to a 10?** Get them to write it down and visualise themselves telling that former version of themselves what they need to hear. After they've done this pray out loud thanking God that he loves us, forgives us and will pursue relationship with us no matter what.

Repeat this step as many times as necessary until you arrive at their current age.

At the end ask the first question again. What score would they give themselves on a scale of 1-10. Hopefully having spent some time going through and building themselves up and examining the things they feel have dragged them down, forgiving themselves for those things and recognising God's forgiveness in those areas of their lives. Hopefully their score is higher than the one they had at the beginning.

They don't need to share any numbers in the group.

Pray to finish

Bible Reading

Colossians 1:15-20

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world.

Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body.

He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

Reflection

Show the painting and play the song 'This Is Me' From The Greatest Showman soundtrack. The lyrics talk about being who you're meant to be and accepting the parts of your life that perhaps you're not proud of. The words could be an encouragement to stand up for what you believe, being bold for good causes and standing up for others. This reflection may easily lead to talking about bullying, the environment, and being proud of who you are and not needing to conform to what society thinks you should be.

Links to download the painting and find the song on YouTube, iTunes and Spotify are all at youth.chichester.anglican.org/lent/week4/

When the song has finished ask the young people:



What do you **think** is being depicted in the painting?

What did you **feel** whilst listening to the song and examining the painting?

What captures your **imagination** in this image?

How does this inform the way you understand who God is?

Game

Hot Chocolate Collaboration

Split group into four teams. Each team is given a different object (one for each team member)

Every member of team 1 has a mug

Every member of team 2 has a hot chocolate sachet

Every member of team 3 has milk and a marshmallow

Every member of team 4 has a spoon and squirty cream

If you have lots of young people and want to create more teams then feel free to add more ingredients, cocoa sprinkles, chopped nuts, chocolate sauce, flakes etc

These teams need to split up and form new teams so they have everything they need to make a hot chocolate. The winning team is the first group to form with all the components. They can then access the urn/kettle to make the drinks. Make sure everyone in the group gets a drink. Once they do, gather them together to drink them during the discussion.



Discussion

As Christians what responsibility do we have to look after the planet?

The earth is God's and so is everything in it. In the story of creation in Genesis we are placed here to look after the creation. Jesus may be coming back but revelation talks about heaven coming on earth. Is it responsible to be filling the sea with plastic and dumping millions of tonnes of rubbish in landfill?

What changes have you seen in the world around you in the last few years?

Donald Trump, more awareness of pollution and climate change. Closer to home there have been government cuts to benefits and community services like youth work, increased awareness of mental health issues, increase in homelessness. Increase in renewable energy. First days in the UK without burning coal for power, uptake of Electric vehicles.

What impact can you have on your community if you pulled together?

Is there a social issue that has an impact in your local community? What can you as a group do to help this issue in your community. Consider starting some sort of social action project. If this is something that people are interested in use some time to plan this and lead into the takeaway session.

What changes can you make in your life in the future that will help you grow closer to God and have an impact on the world around you?

We tend to separate our relationship with God and the things we do for the world around us. The world looks to Christians to set an example of how to live. How do you think social action can help you to grow deeper with God?

Takeaway

Take a map of the world/country/town and cut it up into as many pieces as there are people in the group. Be careful about how you cut it because each person is going to take the map away and every day they are going to pray for everything in their piece of map. They may want to pray for the people, the government, the environment etc. Challenge them to find out as much about the places in their part of map as they can and be prepared to share next week.

Zero waste jar challenge. To encourage young people to think about the environment and the world around them challenge them to reduce the amount of waste they produce this week. Perhaps get them to have a conversation with their parents about plastic packaging they buy or about how much they recycle. The ultimate challenge is to live producing no more waste in a week than you can fit into a jam jar.