









Session 2: Transforming Communities – Leaders Notes

Diocesan Vision Course	Youth Companion
<p>Resources: Course members’ materials (plus some spares), vision course DVD, DVD player, TV, a map of your local area, pens, post-it notes, and sachets of mustard or small packets of mustard seeds. You may wish to use music during the prayer reflection at the end of the session and you will need some means of playing music (CD and CD player, MP3 player or similar)</p> <p>You could get a map of your local area from an OS Map, order from the OS website, use Google Maps or from a local A-Z guide.</p>	<p>Extra Resources (in addition to those on the left): Salted Popcorn Sweet Popcorn A large bowl Device on which to play music Version of the Magnificat</p>
<p>Session Outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome Opening Worship and Prayer including Vision Prayer Getting Started Bible Passage DVD Teaching input Magnificat On the Map (you will need a map of the local area for this exercise) Our Priorities Prayer Reflection Take it Away Material 	<p>Session Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To encourage young people to think about what reason we might have to seek to bring about transformation in our local communities (and further afield) ● To discuss what could be done as individuals, a group or a church to share God’s love with members of your community
<p>Welcome: (3 minutes)</p>  <p>Welcome back those who came last week and any new members to the group, and briefly recap last week’s session.</p>	<p>Icebreaker Game: (5 minutes)</p> <p>Gather round in a circle. Ask everyone to think of a place in your community/area that begins with the same letter as their name (e.g. Lauren – Library, Harvey – High Street).</p> <p>The first person introduces themselves and the place they’ve chosen. The second person introduces the first person (& their place) and then the second person (& their place). The third person introduces the first, second and then themselves and so on. See how far you can get around the circle before people start forgetting.</p>

<p>Opening Worship and Vision Prayer: (3 minutes)</p>  <p>Begin the course in prayer and join together in praying the Diocesan Vision Prayer. Heavenly Father, we embrace Your call for us to make disciples, to be witnesses and to grow leaders. Give us the eyes to see Your vision, ears to hear the prompting of Your Spirit and courage to follow in the footsteps of Your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.</p>	<p>As a youth group you may wish to start with the prayer on the left or say it together at the end of your session.</p>
<p>Getting Started: (5 minutes)</p>  <p>Get two people in the group to read out the following quotations. <i>‘Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty. We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.’</i> - Mother Teresa</p> <p><i>‘I was challenged by the poverty and deprivation in Manchester and the chaos in people’s lives. I was gutted at how little the church was doing to engage with people. I felt this crazy, slightly arrogant, naive vision well up in me to make a difference in young people’s lives. Manchester for years and years had been like the fag-end of Christianity, the steepest church decline, the church leaders weren’t really getting on. And God started to do something, not just through The Message, but other things, other ministries were born, and the spirit of God was working. It’s amazing.’</i> - Andy Hawthorn – Founder of ‘The Message Trust’</p> <p>Invite people to discuss what motivated these people to say what they said and to act in the way they did?</p>	<p>Getting Started Discussion: (5 minutes)</p> <p>Remind the group that last session you talked about being a healthy church. Introduce this session by saying that you’re now going to spend some time thinking about the effect that a healthy church has on the people it comes into contact with (and who it might seek to come into contact with in the first place!)</p> <p>Read the quotes from Mother Teresa and Andy Hawthorne (on the left) and discuss what motivated these two individuals to commit their lives to helping people in their communities.</p> <p>To aid discussion it may be helpful to invite young people to think of someone else they know (or know of) who has made a difference in their local community (or a group of people outside of their local community that they felt motivated to help). What did they do? Why did they do it?</p>
<p>Bible Passage: Matthew 5.13-16 (11 minutes)</p>  <p>Invite someone in the group to read the following passage and then explore the Bible passage using either Option 1 or Option 2 below.</p>	<p>Bible Passage Activity (10minutes)</p> <p>Read the Bible passage (on the left), then before discussing the passage, do the activity below.</p>

<p>¹³ <i>You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.</i></p> <p>¹⁴ <i>You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.</i></p> <p>Option 1 The church is sometimes accused of hypocrisy because our words and our actions don't match. Do you think these comments are fair? In what positive ways can we live out our faith in words and actions?</p> <p>Option 2 At the start of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5), Jesus outlined the characteristics of the believer and the blessings that follow. He follows this immediately in the passage above with two images that describe the transformative impact such a life will have.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From the images of salt and light how important is it for the People of God to be different from those around them? 2. What is it that makes Christian disciples different or have we lost our saltiness? 3. Share examples of ways in which Christians being salt and light has had a transformative impact on the wider community 	<p>Pass round a large bowl containing a small amount of sweet popcorn and invite everyone to take a piece and eat it. Then mix into the bowl a few (only about 5 pieces) of salted popcorn and pass round the bowl again inviting everyone to take a piece and eat it. Ask if anyone got salted popcorn, did anyone get a piece that they thought was sweet but tasted a little salty?</p> <p>Then mix into the bowl a lot of salted popcorn. Pass the bowl around for a final time inviting everyone to take a piece and eat it. Ask how many got salted popcorn this time, did anyone get a piece that they thought was sweet but tasted a little salty?</p> <p>After the activity discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think the activity relates to the Bible passage? What do you think the popcorn represents? What do you think the salt represents? • What do you think Jesus meant when he said that we are salt? • What do you think Jesus said meant when he said that we are light? • Can you think of an example of a way in which a Christian you know has been salt and light?
<p>DVD Teaching input: (5 Minutes)</p>  <p>Play session 2 Transforming Communities from the DVD</p>	<p>Watch the DVD in advance to see if you think your group will engage with it. If you don't think they will then skip this activity.</p>
<p>Magnificat: (10 minutes)</p>  <p>Invite someone to read out the Magnificat – Mary's song of praise. <i>My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; he has looked with favour on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed; the Almighty has done great</i></p>	<p>Magnificat: (10 minutes)</p> <p>Explain that one young person made a huge difference to not only her local community but also to all people, everywhere, at all times by saying 'yes' to God. That young person was Mary, the mother of Jesus and she sang a song about the transforming power of God's love in her life. Her song begins with</p>

<p><i>things for me and holy is his name. He has mercy on those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm and has scattered the proud in their conceit, casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, to remember his promise of mercy, the promise made to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children for ever.</i></p> <p>Mary's song of praise speaks of the transforming power of God's love. It points to God's Kingdom of justice and mercy transforming the world. Underline some of the phrases that particularly strike you and share together how it might be possible for Mary's song to become a reality.</p>	<p>herself and God's interaction with her but she then begins to sing about how God can transform the lives of others too.</p> <p>In addition to reading the Magnificat (printed on the left) and underlining striking phrases, your group may find it helpful to listen to a sung paraphrase version* and share what stood out to them after listening.</p> <p>* e.g. Todd Agnew's version 'Magnificat' on the album 'Do you see what I see?' (available to purchase on iTunes or Google Play)</p>
<p>On the Map: (18 minutes)</p>  <p>Take a map of your local area/parish. Write on post-it notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The things that you like and value about your local community. • The challenges and difficulties that your local community faces. <p>And place the post it notes on the map.</p> <p>Discuss as a group: What are the common things that people have mentioned as either likes or challenges? Are there any comments or observations that surprised you?</p>	<p>On the Map: (15mins)</p> <p>Following on from the example of Mary explain that as God's love transforms us personally it gives us the desire to see others experience His love and be transformed too.</p> <p>Complete the activity on the left.</p> <p>Encourage young people to think about what issues they feel particularly strongly about and encourage them to think how God may be calling them to seek transformation in the area of that issue.</p>
<p>Our Priorities: (14 minutes)</p>  <p>In groups of three or four think of ways in which your local church/churches can make a difference and help to bring transformation to the area and to people's lives. Are there any groups or organisations that you could work in partnership with? You might like to pick some of the ideas listed in Appendix 1 or you might like to write your own suggestions where it says other... Pick two or three suggestions that your church could do over the next year or so and, as a leader of the group, make sure these are fed back to the church leadership, PCC and parish priest.</p>	<p>Our Priorities: (14minutes)</p> <p>Complete the activity on the left. You may come up with suggestions of things that you could do independently as a youth group but bear in mind in your discussions that it might be positive to work with other groups. Try and come up with some suggestions of how people from different groups and generations could work together.</p> <p>If you think your groups will struggle for ideas you may wish to invite a member of your congregation who is actively involved in the community in some way to come along and be quizzed by your young people.</p>

Prayer Reflection: (3 minutes)



Use the following reflection

Leader: In the face of poverty and deprivation

All: Your kingdom come Your will be done.

Leader: In the face of affluence and opportunity

All: Your kingdom come Your will be done.

Leader: In towns, cities and villages

All: Your kingdom come Your will be done.

Leader: In lives of young and old

All: Your kingdom come Your will be done.

Leader: In hope and despair

All: Your kingdom come Your will be done.

Leader: Through joy and strength; sorrow and weakness

All: Your kingdom come Your will be done.

Leader: In nations and individual lives

All: Your kingdom come Your will be done.

Leader: At all times, in all places

All: Your kingdom come Your will be done.

Alternative Reflection:

Explain that when we pray 'Your kingdom come, Your will be done' in the Lord's Prayer we are praying for transformation in our communities.

Take the 'challenges and difficulties' post-it notes from the map activity and distribute them amongst young people that are comfortable reading aloud. Take it in turns reading the post-its out loud and, after each one is read, all pray together 'Your kingdom come, Your will be done'.

Take it Away Material: (3 minutes)



Invite people to use the take away material to help them continue to reflect on the theme of Transforming Communities in the coming week.

When you watch the news on TV, listen to the radio news or pick up a newspaper use the phrase 'Your kingdom come Your will be done' as a prayer when you encounter stories that move or touch you.

Mark 4:30-32

³⁰Again he said, 'What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it?' ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on

Take it Away Material: (3 minutes)

Challenge the group to do the first activity on the left.

earth. ³²Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.'

You might like to carry a sachet of mustard (or a packet of mustard seeds) around in your pocket and whenever you feel the sachet in your pocket you might like to pray for the coming of God's Kingdom.

Appendix 1

Some suggestions:

Acts of Random Kindness - doing something kind for other people

Planting bulbs

Organising some faith sharing outreach events

Litter pick and prayer walk

Active involvement in community life

Community festival – a celebration of community life

Running enquirers' courses

Building relationships with people of other faiths

Supporting Street Pastors

Helping people explore the Christian Faith for themselves

Foodbanks

Supporting or working in Charity Shops

Connecting with local schools

Encouraging recycling and energy efficiency

Campaigning for justice on national or international issues

Providing a drop in centre for people to come and chat

Getting involved in an environmental project

Other ...

Other...

Other...

Healthy Churches Transforming Communities – Blackburn Diocesan Vision 2026 Course
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