

## Servant king

### MEETING AIM

To think about how we can follow Jesus' example.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

John 13:1-20

### BACKGROUND

Jesus has been in Jerusalem a few days and has been teaching some challenging things. Miraculous signs are floating about but the Jewish teachers still don't believe that he's the Messiah, the special saviour sent from God. The disciples gather with Jesus for the Passover meal – probably the most important feast that Jewish people shared together – but before the meal even begins, Jesus begins to turn everything upside down.

### SIGNING IN

5 MINS

As people join your service, welcome them and ask them about their week.

### WELCOME

5 MINS

### OPTION ONE: Generation Game

**You will need:** equipment for a specialist task such as cake decorating or football freestyling

Before the session, ask someone in your congregation to demonstrate a special skill that they have. Line up some volunteers who are up for being taught that special skill. If you're online, deliver all the equipment needed to your volunteers so that they are ready to learn when the service starts.

Invite the participants to the front or spotlight people's screens. Ask your specialist to teach the volunteers a simple skill and see how well people are able to follow the example.

### OPTION TWO: Action songs

**You will need:** children's action song; children to demonstrate the actions

Explain that everyone is going to learn a new song. It's a song with actions and you're going to follow the actions of the children to learn it. Practise the song and actions, then sing it as part of your community's worship.

### BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

**You will need:** two volunteers to act out the story; a bowl of water; a towel; a chair

Give your volunteers the parts of Jesus and a disciple. (If you're online, make sure your two volunteers are from the same household.)

Explain to the congregation that today's Bible passage is being retold through mime. Use the following script – the two volunteers should act out what you read:

It was the Passover. Jesus and his disciples arrived for a meal together. As this is a time of economic uncertainty we only have one disciple to keep costs down.

Jesus and the disciples sat down.  
*Emphasise the plural 's'.*

While everyone was settling down, Jesus thought about what was about to happen. He knew that he was going back to be with God. Being with God was a wonderful thing. *'Jesus' mimes thinking.*

In fact, being with God is the most amazing thing you can think of – even better than chocolate and Ed Sheeran. *You could use another well-known personality that the congregation will relate to.*

Jesus was going to be with God because Jesus was the king.

He was going to get a crown. *Look pointedly at the mime artist until they mime!*

A robe... *Again, wait for the actor to mime.*

Cheering crowds... *And again.*

Jesus knew he would get a crown, but it wasn't going to be a golden one, just yet.

He knew that Judas was going to tell those who didn't like Jesus where to find him alone, so they could capture him, and put him on trial for pretending to be a king.

But Jesus was no ordinary king, like no king before or after.

Jesus stood up. Jesus stands. He wanted to show his disciples how they should live. He got a bowl of water and placed it in front of his disciple. He took off one of his friend's shoes, then the other. *Jesus does all this.*

In Israel, at the time of Jesus, the disciples would not have had shoes and socks, just sandals and their feet...well...

"Pooey, what a pong!" acted Jesus. *Wait for the overacting that is bound to happen, and the laughs.*

Actually, Jesus didn't act like that at all – that's the problem working with amateur mime artists.

Jesus was setting an example of how to treat others.

Jesus first washed one foot and then other.

He dried them with the towel. Washing the feet of someone was often done by servants. Yet here was a king, washing the feet of his disciples. Jesus' disciples were his pupils, his followers, they were pretty much his servants to command, and yet he washed their feet. In fact, Jesus even washed the feet of Judas, the one who was going to do a bad thing for their friendship.

Jesus did this to show his disciples how to be. It was a pattern for them to follow, an instruction and an example.

*Thank your actors and as the congregation to give them a round of applause.*

Explain that Jesus set an example for us to follow. Jesus taught us to be servants, to serve others. And yet, he was also the Messiah, God's chosen one and a king.

**SMALL GROUPS**

10 MINS

If your software allows, send everyone off into different breakout rooms made up of a few households. Put these questions into each group's chat box:

- What is your favourite part of the story?
- What does washing someone's feet symbolise?
- If this story took place today, what might Jesus have done for his disciples?
- What do you think this story tells us about Jesus?

Give the groups time to chat about these questions, referring to the Bible passage in they need to. If you can't put people into breakout rooms, ask individual households to discuss them, and link up those who live on their own using another messaging or video-calling app.

**REVIEW**

5 MINS

Get some feedback from 'Small groups', encouraging everyone to take part who wants to.

**RESPONSE ACTIVITIES**

10 MINS

Invite people to do one of these activities in breakout rooms to respond:

**OPTION ONE: Prayer**

Jesus taught his friends the prayer that we know call the Lord's Prayer. Ask if someone can remember the words of the Lord's Prayer and let them share.

Jesus also gives a pattern (or instruction) to follow to serve others. He did this by washing his disciples' feet. Jesus was the servant king. Invite the group to pray the Lord's Prayer, reminding them that they play a part in God's will being done on earth.

**OPTION TWO: Footprints**

**You will need:** A4 paper; pens

Ask the group to draw a pair of feet. On the soles and the toes, write ideas that they can do to serve others. These are the sort of things that you wouldn't expect those in charge to do. Would a top chef scrub the pots and pans? Would a chief executive drive his chauffeur?

**OPTION THREE: Discussion**

Ask a couple of people to lead a discussion about the story today and people's response to it. You could review the questions from 'Small groups' as well as any questions that the people in the group may have.

**CLOSING**

5 MINS

Bring everyone back together and ask if anyone would like to share anything from the response time. Thank everyone for taking part and say an appropriate blessing to close the service.



## Maggie and the medical mess

"I'm not doing that!" shouted Maggie.

"But your sister needs her dressing changed this afternoon and I'm going to be at work," said her mum.

"Can't she do it herself?" Maggie asked. "She was able to injure herself, so surely she can help with her own recovery."

"It's on the back of her leg," her mum said. "You try taping gauze to your own thigh without bursting your stitches."

"I can't, because I'm not stupid enough to climb a drainpipe."

The previous week, their cat, Boadicea, had got stuck on the roof of their conservatory. Maggie and her sister, Betsy, had tried in vain to coax her down. Maggie wanted to call the fire brigade, but Betsy insisted that would just be a waste of their time. She disappeared into the house before coming out with a rickety chair.

"I don't think you should stand on that," Maggie warned, but Betsy didn't listen. She hopped on the chair, which groaned ominously, then started to shin up the drainpipe to rescue the stranded pet.

Maggie half-heartedly tried to stop her, but once Betsy got an idea in her head, you couldn't shift it. It was the same with her plan to make money by selling her dad's golf clubs on eBay or the time she decided she was going to become a YouTube singing sensation, even though she was tone deaf.

Betsy was halfway up when the drainpipe came loose from the conservatory roof, pulling all of the guttering with it. She fell backwards onto the rickety chair, which collapsed beneath her weight. The splintered wood left her with a large gash in the back of her leg. In hospital, she'd had to have ten stitches, and needed the dressing changed regularly.

Which is what their mum was asking Maggie to do now. The wound was still fairly icky, and would need to be washed out before redressing.

Gross. Maggie was a little bit sick in her mouth just thinking about it.

Mum asked again: "Can you look after your sister's wound? She is your sister, after all. You'd think you'd jump at the chance to show how much you loved Betsy by being so servant-hearted."

Maggie sighed and got up off the sofa. Just then, she heard her sister's voice coming from upstairs.

"Maggie! I need your help!"

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Chat about the story, what everyone liked and didn't like. You could use some of these questions in your discussion:

- Have you ever had to do anything unpleasant for someone else? What was it like?
- What emotions do you have when you do something for someone else?
- Do you ever enthusiastically help others? Why? Why not?

This story is based on John 13:1-17. If you'd like to add a more explicit faith element to your discussion, then read this passage together. Think about the similarities and differences between the Bible story and this one. Encourage your family to think about this Bible story in a new way.

**ALEX TAYLOR**

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.

## Easter part one

This year, Easter falls at the very start of April so we're taking the time to explore the whole Easter story over March and April. Whatever the lockdown restrictions in your area, you can do these activities with your own family, make activity packs for other families, or enjoy them in children's groups. (Part two is coming in a month!)

### TOGETHER SESSION ONE

#### Reflective colouring sheet



**You will need:** copies of the colouring sheet (see next page); coloured pens or pencils

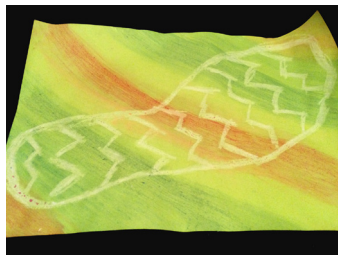
Taking time to reflectively colour in can be really useful in helping children to process their thoughts about a story, giving them time to express what they

are thinking.

After hearing the Palm Sunday story, give children time to colour in the sheet and, as they are colouring, chat about what the atmosphere would have been like on that day. Who did the people think Jesus was? What did they hope? What does 'hosanna' mean?

### TOGETHER SESSION TWO

#### Watercolour feet



**You will need:** watercolour paint; water; paintbrushes; white wax crayons; coloured paper

This craft helps children to explore the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet on Maundy Thursday. Use the creative time to chat about

responses to the story.

Draw around your foot with the wax crayon. Coloured paper makes it easier to see the white wax. Make sure that the line of wax is fairly thick. If you want to, make patterns inside the foot with the wax crayon. At this point, it will be really hard to see what you have drawn. Paint the paper with the watercolour paint and the wax will resist the paint so that you will see the clean outline of the foot and the patterns inside it. Link the watercolours to the water used by Jesus to wash his disciples' feet. Have you ever had your feet washed by someone else? Why did Jesus do this?

### TOGETHER SESSION THREE

#### Toast party



**You will need:** sliced bread (different types of bread might make this interesting); toaster; toast stamps; butter; knives for spreading; plates; toast toppings (eg jam)

Everyone loves a food craft and this is very simple to do with some common kitchen cupboard ingredients. You'll need to be aware of allergy and food hygiene issues; provide gluten-free bread, dairy-free

spread and a separate toaster if necessary.

This activity has the potential to be a great conversation starter for exploring the story of the last supper. Choose a slice of bread and toast it. Children might want to stamp it with a toast stamp first so that the toast comes with a picture or a message! When toasted, invite children to add spreads as desired and eat. Talk about how each of the children like to eat their toast. Think about what it means to share a meal together and what the symbolism of the bread means in the story. Link it with Holy Communion and how that is shared by your congregation.

### TOGETHER SESSION FOUR

#### Nail crosses



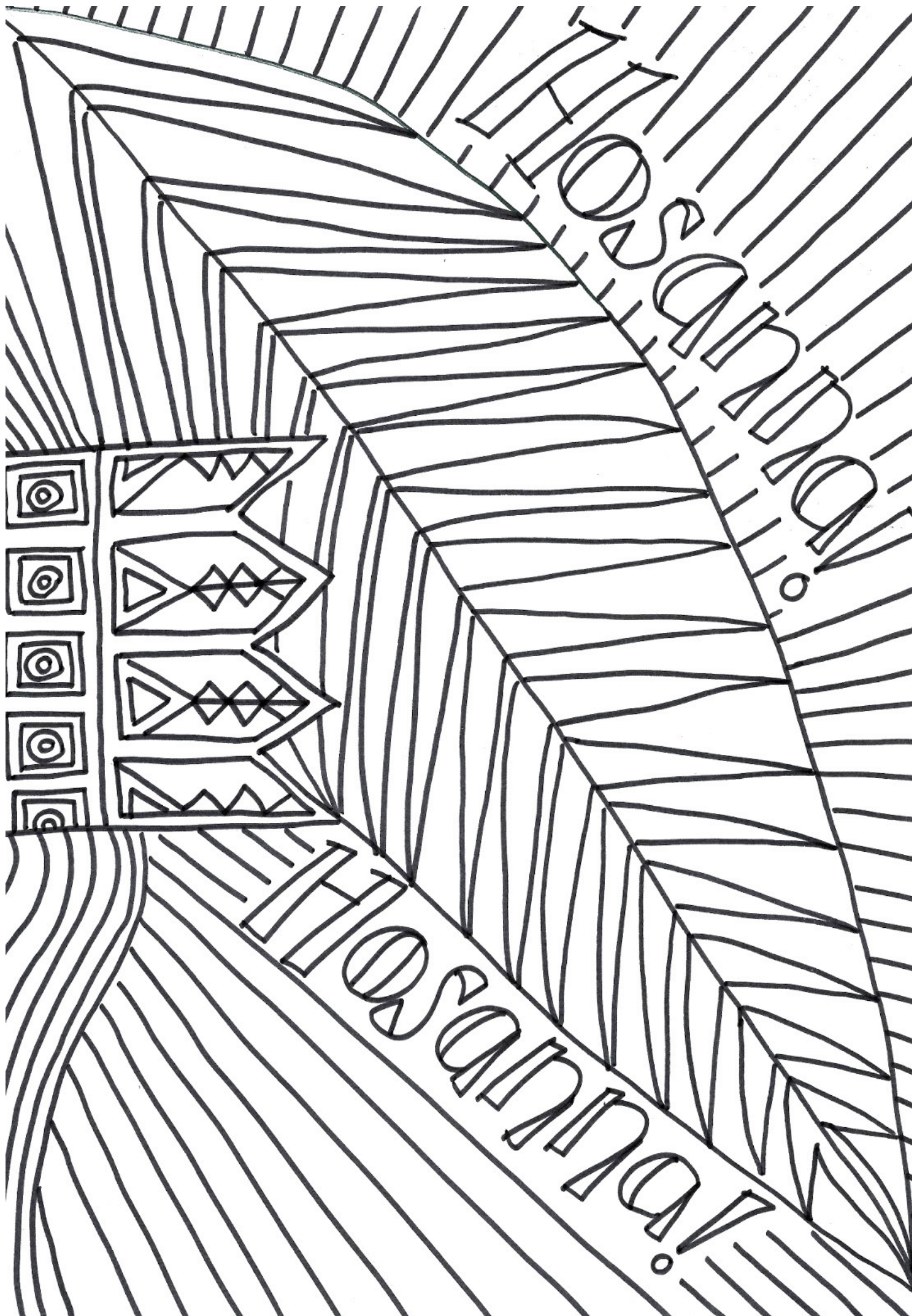
**You will need:** hammers; nails; wood offcuts; sandpaper; wool; pencils

This is a great craft to help evoke some of the senses of the crucifixion. It will need some supervision and maybe some safety demonstrations before beginning.

Choose a wood offcut each and take a little time to sand it down so that there are no unwanted splinters. Draw a cross on the wood offcut and (under supervision) hammer nails along the lines you have drawn. You will probably need six to eight nails per child. When the nail cross has been made, use coloured wool to wind around the nails. Think about the sounds made when hammering in the nails and how it felt to do the hammering. What do you think the sights, sounds, smells and sensations of Easter would have been like?

#### MINA MUNNS

is founder of Flame: Creative Children's Ministry  
[flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk](http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk)





## Treasure hunt

Something different this month – not a selection of games, but a series of clues you can use to construct a treasure hunt. While we're still under restrictions, you can run this in your own home. The treasure can be whatever you would like it to be – for an Easter hunt, use Easter eggs. If you're reading this when the pandemic is but a memory, then you could also do it as part of a children's session or Easter party.

### CLUE ONE

**You will need:** card; marker pen; scissors

Write this clue on a sheet of card, then cut it up into pieces (fewer pieces for younger children, more for older children):

*Welcome to this hunt for treasure!  
I hope it really gives you pleasure.  
The next clue sits just where you may  
Chat to others far away.*

Mix the pieces up and challenge the children to put the puzzle together and reveal the clue. Place clue two near a telephone, computer or device where you would normally voice- or video-call friends and relatives.

### CLUE TWO

**You will need:** card; marker pen; paper and pens

Write this clue on card, and provide pens and paper so that the children can write down the letters they need:

*My first is in 'tardy' but not in 'party',  
My second is in 'other' but never in 'hearty'.  
My third is in 'open' but not in 'spend',  
My fourth is in 'dream' but never 'amend'.  
My next is in 'weather' but not found in 'thread',  
My sixth is in 'padded' but never in 'sped'.  
The final letter that you desire  
is found in 'spicy' but not in 'conspire'.*

Challenge the children to solve the puzzle – the word is DOORWAY. Place the next clue outside your front door (or just inside, if it's raining).

### CLUE THREE

**You will need:** copies of the dot-to-dot puzzle

Give every child a copy of the dot-to-dot puzzle. Once they have finished, ask where they might make one of these.

The picture is an ice-cream sundae, which should lead them to the kitchen. Place clue four in a safe place for the children to find.

### CLUE FOUR

**You will need:** biscuits; buttercream; plates; blunt, flat knives or spatulas; tape measure

Help everyone to wash their hands and then give each child a plate, a flat knife or a spatula. Share out the biscuits evenly and challenge the children to build the highest tower they can, using buttercream to stick their biscuits together.

Give a time limit (say five minutes) and when that time is up, measure the towers to see whose is the tallest. Say that the key word in the fourth clue is 'tallest' or 'highest'; ask the children where the final clue might be.

Put clue five in the highest part of your house where you can safely all be together – an upstairs bedroom, the attic (if you can safely reach it) or on top of a high shelf if you live in a flat or bungalow. You could play a similar game with clips or stills from films.

### CLUE FIVE

**You will need:** code and message (see below)

Before your treasure hunt, create a simple code for the children to follow. You could hand-draw some symbols or use a symbol font on your computer. Create or use a symbol for every letter in the alphabet and create a code-cracker key for the children to use to crack the code. Put this message into your code:

The treasure is hidden [the name of your hiding place].

Hide your treasure (eg Easter eggs) in your chosen hiding place. Challenge the children to use the key to crack the code and discover the location of the treasure!

### ALEX TAYLOR

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children's Work*.



## The Map of Tiny Perfect Things (12)

Watch the whole film together or concentrate on the clip: 00:28:42 to 00:36:53

### SYNOPSIS

Quick-witted teen Mark (Kyle Allen) contentedly lives the same day in an endless loop. But his world is turned upside-down when he discovers that his cycle is being shared by the mysterious Margaret (Kathryn Newton). What follows is a love story with a fantastical twist, as the two struggle to figure out how to escape their never-ending day, or whether they even should.

The concept of being stuck in an endless loop has been around since 1993's *Groundhog Day* and has been revisited several times since. What's intriguing about *The Map of Tiny Perfect Things* is that the central character of Mark is an optimist and when we join him at the start of the film he's having a grand time in his small town. He's not angry about his situation nor is he having any particular existential meltdowns. It's only when he meets Margaret and falls in love that he considers exploring how to end the loop.

### DISCUSS

Begin by showing your young people the trailer to *The Map of Tiny Perfect Things*. Have any of your young people read the book? Ask them these questions:

- If you could choose one day to experience in a loop what day would it be?
- What has been the most boring experience during lockdown?
- If you were in a similar loop, what would they look to do or experience? Why?

In this sweet scene we see Mark and Margaret discuss their current situation. Upon revealing what they have been up to in their infinite loops, they discover that neither has been particu-

larly adventurous or sought to do much out of the ordinary. Inspired by their conversation, Mark encourages Margaret to begin mapping out all of the amazing things that are happening around them. What follows is a montage of some of the 'simple' but perfect moments that could easily be missed if you weren't looking for them.

After showing the clip as a stimulus, chat about these questions:

- Is it a positive thing to 'seize the day'? What would that look like for your life right now?
- "I guess this is all there is." What does Margaret mean by this?
- What is the most perfect 'simple' thing you've experienced recently?
- How did you feel during the montage of experiences in the clip?

Go on to read through Ephesians 5:15-20 with your young people and discuss the following questions:

- Does this passage reflect a 'seize the day' mentality?
- Having read through this message - what do you think the overall message is?
- Is this passage meant to be taken symbolically or literally?
- How might we understand God's will?

*The Map of Tiny Perfect Things* is available on Amazon Prime.

### TOM WADE

is head of humanities at Haileybury School.



## Treat people with kindness

ARTIST: Harry Styles SUITABLE FOR: ten to 13s

### INTRODUCTION

'Kindness' may not quite have made it into the lists of most widely used words of the last twelve months, but it must have come pretty close! In the midst of all the difficulties, there has never been more of a need to show kindness to others, and many children and young people will have their own stories of what this means to them. This session goes further and explores what the Bible has to say about kindness.

### LISTEN AND DISCUSS

As you begin, invite the young people to share some stories of kindness from the last few months. Can they recall something kind that someone else has done for them? What about ways they have shown kindness, perhaps to their friends or neighbours? You may be able to find some stories in the media of the way people have gone out of their way to be kind.

Play the track, distributing copies of the lyrics if needed. Explain to the children that we would probably all agree with this song; we all want to show and be shown kindness. The song offers a couple of examples of ways we can show kindness – ask the young people what else they would add to this to create a list together.

Explain that the Bible has a lot to say about kindness, as they may expect. Some of these verses remind us of the reason we should be kind, while others may surprise us. Look together at one or two of the verses or divide the young people into smaller groups and ask each group to look at a verse, before feeding back what they find.

- Ephesians 4:32
- Luke 6:35
- Galatians 5:22
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Ask the young people to share what they notice from these verses. Explain that God living in us through his Holy Spirit enables us to be kind and that kindness from God should be extended not only to our friends and neighbours, but further, even to our enemies, as God shows kindness to us. Invite the young people to share some examples of what this might look like, as well as talking about the times when this is particularly challenging. As you draw to a close, pray for the group, as appropriate, that they would be filled with the Holy Spirit and able to treat all people with kindness.

### BECKY MAY

is a freelance writer and experienced children's and youth leader. She can be found at [theresourcescupboard.co.uk](http://theresourcescupboard.co.uk).





## 5-4-3-2-1 anti-anxiety

It doesn't take a genius to work out that significantly more young people are suffering from anxiety and depression due to the protracted lockdowns and restrictions. It's not been fun for any of us but for the more vulnerable among your young people, it can be much more serious. We need to look out for these individuals and ensure we get alongside them in a meaningful but natural and personal way.

You may have seen the phrase: "We are all in the same storm, but we are not all in the same boat." What this means is that, due to our differing social, economic, geographic and even just genetic backgrounds, we all have differing levels of resilience to the stress; we have different opportunities and options when it comes to dealing with pressures, and varying skills and experience with which to cope with anxiety. Some have big strong 'boats' and can cope well – they might live near open countryside and be able get out for long walks; others might live in council flats with no garden at all. Some have plenty of distractions and technology to keep in touch with friends; others not so much, increasing a sense of isolation and abandonment and leaving them no way of venting and processing feelings. Other people might already have had a background of anxiety even before COVID, or a history of depression in their family which is only exacerbated by recent conditions.

The following is a widely known tool, but one that is helpful for you to adapt and share with your mentees. It only need be a quick moment to regain composure, or become more mindful and calmer, but it may take practise to remember to do it regularly. If you sell the idea well, it could become a significant self-help tool for your trapped and squeezed young mentees

### THE EXERCISE

We often talk about 'emotional rollercoasters'; we all recognise the image of twists and turns and excitement and fear from speeding round a track. Ask your mentees what their favourite theme park ride is. Use that (either an imaginary rollercoaster or their favourite real ride, if they know it well enough) as a template

for understanding the past year and looking forward and getting prepared for 2021. With younger mentees use fewer questions; they could jot down their thoughts on a winding track drawn on a sheet of paper.

### DO THE COUNTDOWN

#### 5. Notice five things that you can see

Look around you and bring your attention to five things that you can see. Aim for things that you like, especially things that you don't normally notice, such as a plant growing through the concrete, the shape of the clouds or rooftops.

#### 4. Notice four things that you can feel

Bring awareness to four things that you are currently feeling, like the cold wind on your face, the texture of the ground under your feet, the clothes on your legs.

#### 3. Notice three things you can hear

Take a moment to listen and note three things that you can hear in the background. This could be the hum of people talking, a nearby idling engine, or maybe something electrical buzzing.

#### 2. Notice two things you can smell

Try to notice the smells that you usually filter out. Perhaps the breeze is carrying something delicious across from the local curry house, or there's the smell of someone's perfume.

#### 1. Notice one thing you can taste

Focus on one thing that you can taste right now, in this moment. It might be the last sip of your drink, the gum in your mouth, something in your teeth...

And that's it. You are now more mindful and positive, so take that and move on with your day!

### DEVELOP THE COUNTDOWN

If you like, or if you are doing this with your mentee, you could even think of the perfect answer for each sense. For example, ask about the one thing you love to look at, such as the rolling waves. What was the cosiest thing you've ever felt – a new hoody, the rug in front of the fire? What would you love to hear right now? Your favourite artist, live in front of you? A lion's roar up close? Then the best smell ever – your mum's cooking? Cut grass? And what would you love to taste – steak, chocolate milkshake, vanilla lip balm?

Encourage your mentee to aim to do this a couple of times a day for a week and see and report back what happens, and what effect it has on them and their mental health. It may not be dramatic, but their reflections will be significant and valuable to them and therefore to us to explore as mentors. It may help identify triggers and come up with ways to avoid them.

### JOEL TOOMBS

has an MA in Christian mentoring and wrote the *Mentoring and Young People Grove* booklet. He is a volunteer youth worker.

# REMEMBER THE LORD

Proverbs is a book in the Bible full of wise advice.

In chapter 3, verse 6, it says:

**“Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right way.”**  
(GNB)

Draw, write or doodle in the boxes below what your typical day looks like; what is included in your “everything you do”?

As you draw, think about how you can remember God in those moments.

Are there ways you could remind yourself to turn to God throughout the day?

Perhaps as you draw, you come to times and activities where you feel unsure what “the right way” is.

Doodle around this on the sheet, asking God to show you which path to choose.

8am	11am	2pm
5pm	8pm	11pm

Put this sheet somewhere you will see it in the morning, so you can be reminded to commit your day to God.