



Moses

MEETING AIM

To discover that God chooses us for a mission, just as he chose Moses.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Exodus 3:1-4:23

BACKGROUND

The story of Moses is rich with stories of God's faithfulness and humanity's failings. While we often focus on the circumstances surrounding his rescue as a baby, this session instead looks at the way that God chose Moses to lead his people to freedom. Moses reveals much of his vulnerability, and yet God chooses to remind Moses that he will be with him at every point. Moses is not chosen because of his strengths, but because of what God can do in and through him.

SIGNING IN

5 MINS

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

WELCOME

5 MINS

OPTION ONE: Strange tastes

You will need: volunteers to share their strangest tastes

Before the service, invite two or three people to share the story of strange food that they really like. If possible, ask them to have some of that food ready to taste live onscreen.

Display the following verse on the screen: "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him" Psalm 34:8.

Chat with your volunteers about their strange favourite food, and then vote on the strangest!

OPTION TWO: Paper plane prayers

You will need: paper; pens

Give everyone sheets of plain paper and felt-tip pens. Invite them to draw or write prayers of thanks on the paper of things from this week and then fold the paper into planes. They can do as many as they like! When everyone has finished, after the count of three, throw the paper planes and shout: "Thank you!"

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: pens and paper

Make sure everyone has pens and paper with them. Ask them to draw six circles (perhaps three per sheet). Tell this story, if possible asking one of your household to act out being Moses:

Moses, a Hebrew who escaped living in Egypt after committing murder, had made a new life for himself far away. He got married and has a son. But Moses knew that his people, the Israelites, and his family were still living in slavery back in Egypt.

Emoji one: How would you feel if you were Moses? Guilty? Relieved? Afraid of being caught? Ask everyone to draw a suitable emoji in one of their circles.

One day while Moses was shepherding sheep, he took them to Mount Sinai, otherwise known as "the mountain of God". He saw a bush – it was on fire! Going over to investigate, he realised that it wasn't burning up! He jumped back as he heard a voice.

"Don't come any closer! Take off your shoes because you are standing on holy ground. I am the God of your family and your ancestors. I'm the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Moses was very scared. He covered up his face.

Emoji two: What would you do in Moses' position? What would you be thinking?

God spoke again: "I can see the way my people are suffering in Egypt. I can hear their cries and feel their pain. I'm going to bring them out of Egypt. I've got a new place for them to live. It's got great land for growing food. So, I'm sending you back. Go to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and bring my people, the Israelites, out!"

"I can't do that!" Moses replied. "I'm not a great man! Why have you picked me?"

God promised to be with him.

Emoji three: How was Moses feeling right now?

"But what if the Israelites ask me who has sent me? What do I say?" asked Moses.

God explained everything to Moses. "I AM who I AM. Tell them I AM has sent you. This is my name and from now on,

this is what people will call me. Here's the plan. Find the older leaders and explain all I have said to you. Tell them I've seen their suffering. Tell them I've got a new land for them which will provide plenty of food. Then, find Pharaoh and tell him that I have appeared to you and that you need to take the Israelites on a journey for three days into the desert to make sacrifices. Don't expect him to agree, though. He's a powerful man, but I am more powerful and I will make miracles happen that will make him let you go."

But Moses was still unsure. "What if the Israelites don't believe me?" he asked.

"See that staff in your hand? Throw it down on the ground," God told him.

Moses did, and it turned into a snake.

Emoji four: How would Moses have been feeling at that point?

"And now pick it back up again," God said.

Moses picked it back up, and it became his staff again.

"This will prove to the Israelites that I have appeared to you."

But Moses still wasn't convinced that this plan would work.

"Put your hand inside your coat," God said.

Moses did it, and when he took it out, his hand was covered in disease.

"And now put your hand back in again."

Moses did so, and his hand was healthy again.

Emoji five: How was Moses feeling now?

"The people might not be convinced by the first miracle, so show them the second," God explained. "If they still don't believe you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on dry ground. It will become blood. Then they will believe you."

Moses, amazed by all the miracles, was still finding excuses! "But, I'm not even a great speaker. I always speak too slowly and can't find the right words to say. Surely there is someone else you can send who will do a better job. Please!"

Emoji six: How would God feel now?

God answered him: "Your brother, Aaron, is a good speaker. Take him! He will speak for you."

So, after all those excuses and with Aaron by his side, Moses finally went!

**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?
- Why do you think Moses was so insistent that he shouldn't be the person to go?
- Moses made lots of excuses. What kinds of excuses do we make when God is asking us to do something?
- Is there any part of this story that is like your life?

Give the groups time to chat about these questions, referring to the Bible passage if 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: 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.

OPTION TWO: Footprints

You will need: paper; paint; clean-up and cover-up facilities; pens

Make sure everyone has covered their floor and has clean-up equipment to hand. Invite people to take off their shoes, stand in a tray of paint and walk across the paper, cleaning their feet off at the end.

When this has been done, ask everyone to write next to the footprints where God sends them – this could be school, a club, work, neighbours or friends. Reflect on the fact that we are sent by God for a purpose.

OPTION THREE: Creative response

You will need: paper and pens

Continue the emoji theme by encouraging people to share what they drew during the story. Ask them to imagine how they might feel if God were to call them today. Perhaps someone already has been called by God! How do they feel?

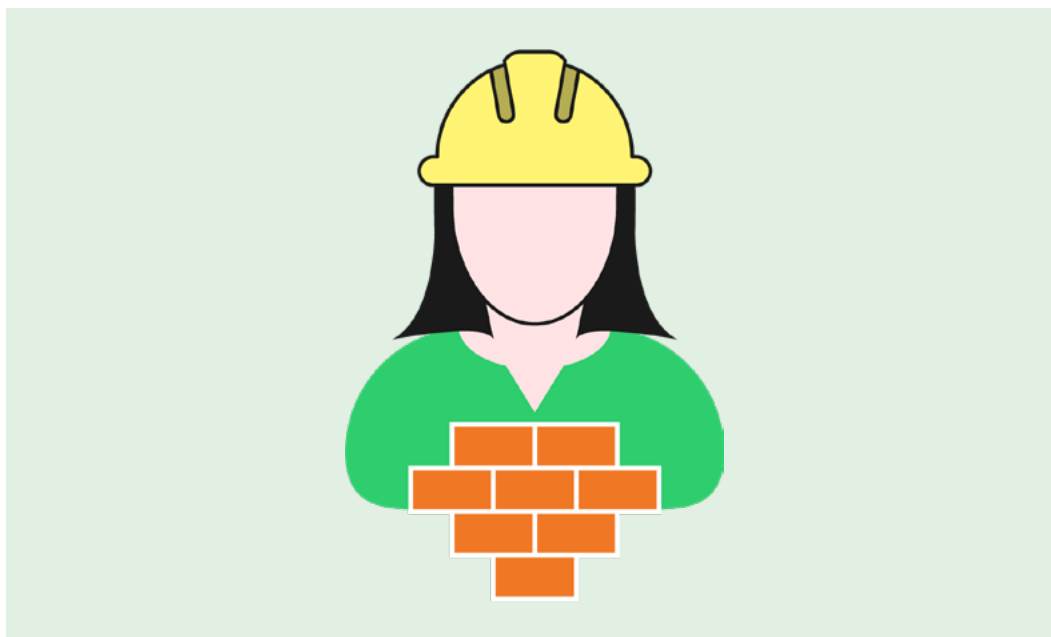
CLOSING

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.

HELEN HODGSON

leads the children's and youth work at Gracechurch, Bromsgrove.



Nadiya and the new-house nightmare

Nadiya and the new-house nightmare

"Nadiya, can I have a word?" Mr Awoniyi asked, as the class hurried out to their next lesson.

"Er, sure," she said, her mask hanging off one ear, bottle of water poised at her lips.

"You know we have this partnership with a school in Malawi."

Nadiya wracked her brain; she vaguely remembered an assembly about it a few months ago. She hadn't been concentrating – she'd been distracted by Freddie's haircut. It looked like his dad had attacked it with the kitchen scissors.

"Yeah," she said, wondering where this was going. She took a swig of her water.

"Well, we're hoping to go out to Lilongwe at the end of the year to visit the school and help build some new sports' facilities. You should think about signing up for the trip, you'd get a lot out of it."

"What?" Nadiya was so shocked she started coughing. Mr Awoniyi tried to conceal his horror as he recoiled.

"Are you OK? Have you got a fever?" he asked, frantically fishing his mask out of his pocket and hooking it around his ears.

"No, it's OK. I was just a bit surprised when you said that and inhaled some of my water by accident." With much clearing of her throat, she managed to compose herself. "You think I should go to Malawi? And help with building?"

"Yes, you'd be brilliant. In fact, we're looking for someone to lead the trip, and I think you might be just the person."

"You know I'm more top hat than hard hat, don't you, sir?"

"Yes, but I saw the way you took the lead during that Karate Kid disaster. You calmed Kelvin right down and helped the cast get used to what was happening."

"But that won't help me out with building anything!"

"Look, Nadiya," said Mr Awoniyi. "You don't think we'd send you out there without the right support and expertise, do you? I'm going, as well as Mrs de Silva and a few other staff members. And we're taking Bill De Bighouse with us – you know, he runs the firm that's building the new sports hall. He should have all the knowledge we need."

"But what if the rest of the group don't listen to me? What if Saskia and Chelsea come? I tried to get them to help me with the last charity fun day – I was sat for a whole day in a bath of beans while they turned up for five minutes and chucked wet sponges at my head!"

"Listen, you'll have the full weight of the head teacher behind you. If people don't listen to you, then they will have to answer to Mrs McClusky."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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

- Should Nadiya go to Malawi? Why? Why not?
- What might be stopping her from going?
- Have you ever been asked to do something you felt unprepared for? What happened?

This story is based on Exodus 3-4. 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.

Moses

Use these craft ideas to explore the Bible passages about Moses, the Exodus and the promised land. There is one idea for each of February's Together sessions.

POP-OUT CARD



You will need: card; coloured paper; scissors; glue; felt-tip pens; paint pens; instruction sheet

Before the Passover happens, Moses goes to Pharaoh and asks him several times to: "Let my people go." This craft is a way to act out the releasing of people in a symbolic way.

The card starts closed and opens to show the people who are being set free from being hidden and held down. Cut out a square 15cm x 15cm and some pieces of coloured paper, roughly 5cm by 3cm. Use the instruction sheet to make your card.

HONEY LOLLIPOPS



You will need: a saucepan and hob; 50g honey; 100g sugar; 20 to 30 lolly sticks; greaseproof paper; a sugar thermometer or a glass of cold water; teaspoon; wooden spoon

The promised land is described in the Bible as a land flowing with "milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8), so these lollipops are made

with honey.

Put the sugar and honey into the saucepan and heat over a medium heat. The mixture will start to bubble. Stir constantly with the wooden spoon. Meanwhile, lay out a long sheet of greaseproof paper on a work surface and lay lolly sticks on top, spaced out at roughly 10cm intervals.

When the sugar and honey mixture reaches 150°C or 300°F on the sugar thermometer, take the pan off the heat. If you don't have a sugar thermometer, the mixture is ready when you drop a tiny amount of it into a cup of cold water and it immediately turns hard. Carefully use a teaspoon to spoon mixture over the top of each lolly stick to make the lollipops.

When the lollipops have set, peel them off the greaseproof paper; they are ready to eat. As you eat the lollipops, think about the sweetness of the lolly and how good it must have been for people to get to a place where they have everything they need after the struggle of wandering in the desert.

Be extra careful when using hot sugar; risk assess this activity before you start.

FINGERPRINT FLAMES



You will need: red, yellow and orange paint; white paper or card; black felt-tip pens; clean-up equipment

Moses encountered God's presence in the burning bush and his life was changed.

Use a pen to draw the branches of a bush onto the paper or card. Then use your fingers to paint flames onto the bush. As you paint the flames, look at any fingerprints you make and think about what makes you special, and if or how you personally feel God with you. God gives Moses a job to do. What job might God have for you that is as unique as the fingerprints you've made?

MOUNT SINAI CONSTRUCTION PROJECT



You will need: brown paper bags; newspaper; card; paper; scissors; cardboard boxes; tissue paper; bubble wrap; foil; coloured paper; sticky tape; glue

Moses goes up the mountain and meets God in the cloud. Here he receives the Ten Commandments. This craft focuses on the mountain as the meeting place with God and

how we might show what the presence of God might look like.

Use the brown paper bag as a basis to make your 'mountain'. Scrunch up sheets of newspaper and put them in the bag. Turn the bag upside down (making sure the newspaper doesn't fall out) and tape the open mouth of the bag to a sheet of card. Invite your children to think about how they might use the other available items to make the cloud, and give some idea of the presence of God that Moses finds there. Share your ideas and continue to chat about what the children think as you work.

At-home games

It's eleven months since the start of the first lockdown and we're still spending a lot of time at home! So, to help you as the days continue to stretch ahead, here are some games to play at home. Daft games where the whole household joins in and slightly wrecks the place will create good memories in difficult times.

And if the wheels have come off your family lockdown wagon, then don't forget to check out Anna Hawken's excellent article in January Vol 3.



INDOOR BOWLING ALLEY

You will need: ten plastic bottles; foam ball or similar; cushions
In the longest room in your house (or outside if it's not cold and wet) set out the ten bottles in a triangle formation at one end and mark a line at the other (use masking tape or a line in the pattern of your carpet!). If you need to, use cushions (seat cushions from sofas would be effective) along the edges of your bowling lane to form bumpers, to give all your players a chance of hitting the bottle-skittles.

Each player has two attempts to roll the ball down the lane and knock down as many bottles as possible. Keep score and the player with the most bottles knocked over wins.

GIANT SNAKES AND LADDERS

You will need: masking tape or chalk; sheets or blankets; items to be used for ladders (see below); dice

Have fun creating a giant snakes and ladders board in your own house. Mark out a board on the floor using tape, or outside using chalk. Make as many squares as you have space for, ensuring that each square is large enough for someone to stand in. Make snakes out of blankets and sheets – you could even give them eyes and tongues if you like! Create ladders from whatever you can find: garden canes, actual ladders, strips of paper, broom handles – encourage your household to use their imagination.

When you're ready, play the game with people being their own counters.

DOUGHNUT CHALLENGE

You will need: ring doughnuts; string

Stretch a piece of string across your playing space, tying it to window or door handles, or other suitable hooks. Tie each ring doughnut to a piece of string and then hang these off the string stretching across your room. Make sure the doughnuts hang around head height, when the members of your household are kneeling down.

Kneel everyone down in front of a doughnut and challenge them to eat it using only their mouths – they have to keep their hands behind their backs. The first person to do so is the winner. (You might want to place a tablecloth or similar under the doughnuts so that you don't get mess everywhere!)

PICTURE PERFECT

You will need: camera or smartphone; list of situations

Before you play, come up with a list of a few situations that your household might find themselves in. They can be simple ('Going to the shops'), outlandish ('Being attacked by sharks') or abstract ('Blue' or 'Hope'). Give everyone time to think about how they might create a picture that shows that particular situation (the funnier the better). When you're ready, take a picture (use the timer so that you can be in the picture too).

Look through all the photos and decide together which one is best. Keep the photos safe so that you can remember the fun you had in the future!

BUCKET BASKETBALL

You will need: a bucket; socks

Place the bucket somewhere suitable – on a fairly high cupboard or hanging from the back of a door. Roll some socks up in a ball to make your basketball. Play in pairs or teams (if your household is large enough) and pass the sock ball between teammates, before shooting it into the bucket. Your playing area needn't be limited to just the room where the bucket is; you could play across your whole house, as long as you've checked to make sure you can do so safely.

If your household is small, take it in turns to throw the sock ball into the bucket. Keep score or who gets the most 'baskets'. Alternatively, keep moving further and further away each time you throw the sock ball, awarding more points for 'baskets' scored from greater distances.

ALEX TAYLOR

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



The Prom (12A)

Watch the whole film together or concentrate on the clip: 01:28:23 to 01:33:51

SYNOPSIS

The film follows some down-on-their-luck Broadway stars, who shake up a small Indiana town as they rally behind a teen who wants to go to the prom with her girlfriend. *The Prom* has been causing its fair share of controversy since its release, whether it's the debate around heterosexual James Corden depicting a homosexual character or some Christian communities feeling upset with some of the film's central messages. *The Prom* is a feel-good musical that has unintentionally managed to make some people feel not so great, but will open up an interesting debate and discussion around many issues that affect your young people.

DISCUSS

Begin by showing your young people the trailer to *The Prom*. Ask them to reflect on the following:

- Who do you think this film is aimed at?
- What do you think about musicals?
- What do you think some of the themes covered in this film are?

A quick web search will reveal several articles and reviews from Christian websites that respond to *The Prom*. You could read some of these or pick choice quotes to highlight to your young people some of the controversies raised by this film.

This clip takes place two-thirds into the film and sees some of Alyssa's (the central character not seen in this clip) former friends having lunch together in a shopping mall. Having decided to no longer spend time with her due to her sexual orientation, they are challenged by Trent (one of the actors supporting Alyssa) who suggests that their reading of the Bible is subjective. Trent challenges Alyssa's friends asking them: "Why do you

hate gay people?" He begins a catchy musical number where he chastises them individually for actions such as having a tattoo and not being a virgin, but being against homosexuality. Trent's advice is that everyone should use "common sense" and follow Jesus' rule of "love thy neighbour" which trumps all other biblical rules. During the clip some of the characters are immediately persuaded by this viewpoint while others are resistant to the message. Eventually they all change their viewpoints and agree that "love thy neighbour" trumps all other rules.

After showing the clip as a stimulus, discuss these questions together:

- How did you feel watching this song?
- "You can't cherry-pick the Bible" is a key lyric of the song: do you agree with this?
- Why do you think that some Christians have found this song offensive?
- Do you agree with Trent's advice that he gives to each of the characters?

Go on to explore Matthew 22:34-40 with your young people. Read the passage and then discuss the following questions:

- How do you think that Christians should interpret this passage?
- Having read through this passage, do you agree with Trent from the video clip?
- What does it actually mean to "love thy neighbour" practically?
- What is the importance of verse 40 in this passage?

The Prom is available on Netflix.

TOM WADE

is head of humanities at Haileybury School.



Parting ways

ARTIST: Cody ChesnuTT (from the film *Soul*)
 SUITABLE FOR: under-tens

INTRODUCTION

This song is taken from the new Pixar movie, *Soul*, which raises all kinds of questions about the meaning of life, what happens when we die and what make us 'us'. The song talks of parting and this session uses that to explore good 'goodbyes', looking at some of the parting blessings in the Bible.

LISTEN AND DISCUSS

As you begin, explain that today you will be thinking about what it means for us to say goodbye. You may want to take some time to talk about some of the children's experiences over the last few months. You may not have seen each other in person at all in the last year, perhaps there have been other significant goodbyes or missed goodbyes, such as people changing school and even bereavements experienced by members of the group. It may be helpful to talk about, or find another way of sharing, some of these stories as is appropriate to your group.

Play the track, distributing copies of the lyrics if needed, or use the music video version.

Invite the children to share what strikes them most about this song: what do these lyrics mean to them? Which lyrics most mean something to them? Where do they connect with this song?

Explain to the children that these words are a goodbye speech, a bit like a blessing. Explain that in the Bible, there are several

examples that are given of words of parting or blessings for saying goodbye. Distribute Bibles and take a look at some of the following passages. You could look at one passage each, in small groups, as appropriate, or choose one or two to look at together.

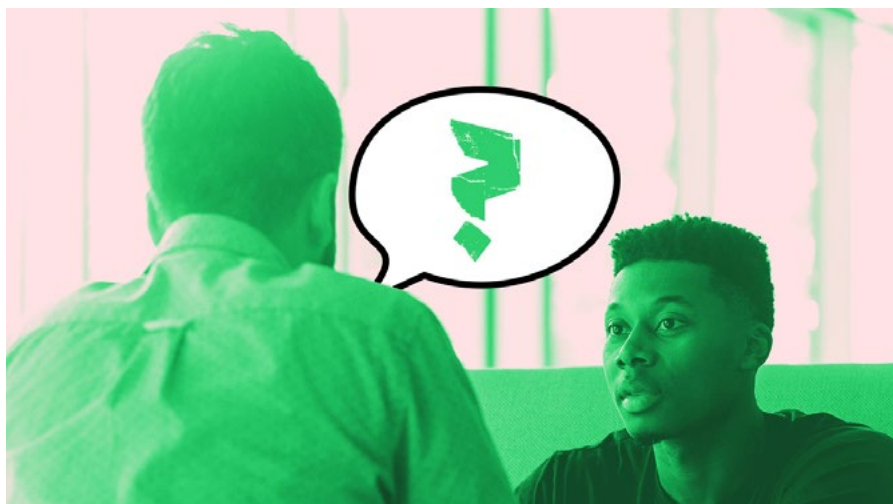
- Numbers 6:24-26
- Matthew 28:16-20
- Philippians 4:4-9
- Hebrews 13:20-25

Ask the children what they notice from these passages. Why do words matter when we say goodbye? Being mindful of your children's experiences recently, this may be an opportunity to talk about death and resurrection, drawing attention particularly to Jesus' goodbye words in Matthew 28, or it may be more appropriate to focus on parting blessings, when we are temporarily separated.

Remind the children that the song mentions 'God-given' love to go with us, but the Bible passages are more specific, promising that God will be with us, even when we are separated. As you close, you could use the words of one of the blessings you have read as a prayer.

BECKY MAY

is a freelance writer and experienced children's and youth leader. She can be found at theresourcescupboard.co.uk.



Getting to know (you) better

Consider these three conversations:

Mentor: Question: Do you have any bad habits?

Mentee: No.

Mentor: What bad habits do you have?

Mentee: I bite my nails.

Mentor: Oh, why do you do that?

Mentee: I guess I feel nervous quite a lot...

Mentor: Ah, that's interesting. What is it that makes you feel that way?

Mentor: Finish this sentence: "The bad habits that stop me from growing past my glass ceilings are..."

Mentee: Ooh. Well, I guess I never believe in myself. I lack confidence in my own decisions and so constantly feel nervous and end up undermining myself...

The way you ask a question will directly affect whether you get an answer or not, and the quality of that answer and the speed of getting to the core of the issue. Hopefully you are aware that closed questions prompt single-word answers, but open questions encourage more elaboration. In my experience, phrasing a question not as a question but as a scenario allows the mentee to be more objective and to look at themselves and their responses in a new light, and importantly these scenarios feel less intimidating or accusatory.

Print these off and cut out one per line, roll up and put in a cup like straws. Take it in turns to pick one out for each other. Obviously, you can add or skip as appropriate for your age group, context, stage and so on.

THE QUESTIONS

- Believe it or not, I...
- Don't hate me if I...
- A random fact I love is...
- We'll get along if...
- The geekiest thing about me is...
- The key to my heart is...
- What if I told you that...
- Change my mind about...
- Give me travel guide tips about where you live...
- My mantra is...
- Together we could...
- I get along best with people who...
- This year I really want to...
- I'm convinced that...
- The secret to getting to know me is...
- The way to win me over is...
- I'd like you to teach me...
- I could teach you something about...
- It's a bit weird but I love to...
- I know the best ever place, it is...
- You won't be able to shut me up when I start talking about...
- You would run a mile if you knew that I...
- The award I should be nominated for is...
- I bet you can't beat me at...
- I bet you can't...
- I have an irrational fear of...
- I only just discovered that...
- Something I will NEVER do again is...
- The weirdest gift I ever received was...
- The worst idea I ever had was...
- The thing that surprises people about me is...
- A cause I care about is...

JOEL TOOMBS

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

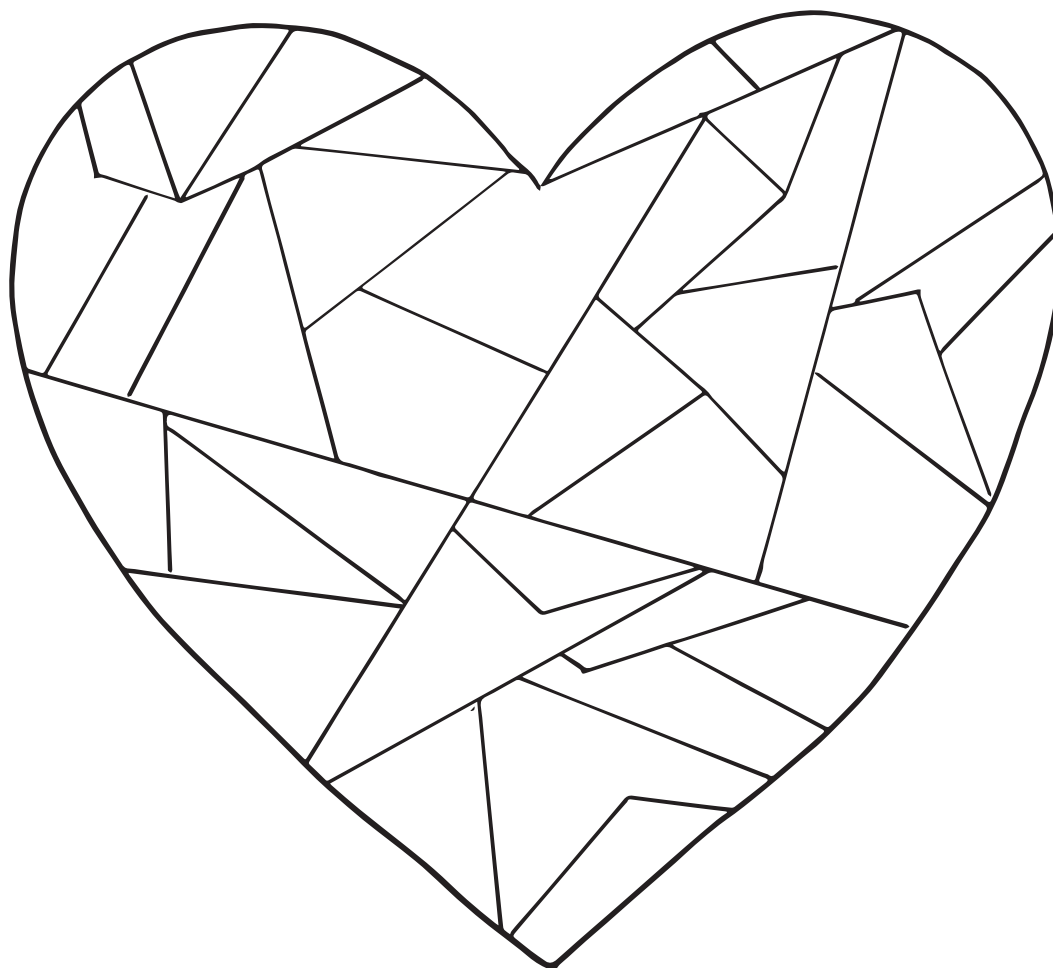
WHOLEHEARTED

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart...”

(Luke 10:27)

The Bible tells us to love God with all our heart. What do you think that means? Do you know someone who loves God with 100 percent of their heart? What does that look like?

Colour in this heart in different colours as you think about what it means to love God with all your heart. You might want to ask God for help to love him in difficult parts of your heart, for example, with your money, in school or any other area. You could write those things in the heart or colour those things in a different colour as a prayer for help.



““Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...”

(Colossians 3:15)

Spend a quiet moment letting Jesus' peace into your heart.