



The Beatitudes

MEETING AIM

To discover something of meaning behind the Beatitudes.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 5:1-12

BACKGROUND

The Beatitudes (from the Latin *beatus*) are the starting point for the Sermon on the Mount that Matthew records in chapters 5 to 7 of his Gospel. The word 'happy' or 'blessed' (depending on your translation) refers to more than just the temporary feeling of happiness. Rather Jesus is talking about the well-being of being in relationship with God. Jesus highlights the reality of living in his kingdom and the difference in values between it and the world around him 2,000 years ago and us now.

SIGNING IN

5 MINS

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

WELCOME

5 MINS

OPTION ONE: What makes you happy

You will need: long sheets of paper and marker pens

Set up long sheets of paper around your meeting space. As people arrive, encourage them to fill the paper with things that make them happy. Encourage people to chat with the people they've come with (or with people they don't know, if they're feeling brave) about what they have written.

If you're online, then have the question 'What makes you happy?' onscreen as people join. Encourage them to chat to the people they're with, or to others via messaging apps.

Share some of the things people have written or talked about. Highlight the fact that different things make different people happy.

OPTION TWO: Happy song

You will need: video of 'Happy' by Pharrell Williams

Ask for some volunteers to come up and show you their dance moves. Play the video of 'Happy' (where lots of people dance happily) and invite your dancers to dance along with the music and video.

Ask your volunteers (and the congregation as a whole) how they feel when they dance. If people don't like dancing, what other things make them happy?

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: volunteer to be Jesus; chair; biblical costume (optional); each of the categories of people mentioned written on large sheets of paper (or on a PowerPoint slide)

Refer back to the pieces of paper filled with what makes people happy if you did that activity. If you didn't, ask a few people to tell others what makes them happy. Say that you're going to explore a Bible story today where Jesus talks about different groups of people being 'blessed' or 'happy' (depending on what translation you're reading). But it's not the same as the meaning of 'happy' you've been exploring already. Challenge the congregation to wonder about what that might mean as they listen to the Bible passage.

Welcome your volunteer (dressed in appropriate costume if you have one) and ask them to sit down. (Make sure your chair is placed so that everyone can see your volunteer.) Explain that rabbis would sit down to teach and that's what Jesus does now.

Ask your volunteer to read out Matthew 5:3-12 in a dramatic voice (if possible, they should try to learn the passage beforehand so that they can deliver it without the need for a Bible). As each category of person is mentioned, ask a volunteer to hold up the relevant sign (or show it on a screen).

At the end of the reading, stick the signs somewhere that everyone can see them for the rest of the service.

SMALL GROUPS

10 MINS

You will need: copies of the questions below; Bibles; signs from 'Bible story'

If you're online, send everyone off into different breakout rooms made up of a few households to discuss these questions. If meeting in person, encourage people to discuss these in their household and link up those on their own with others using a messaging or video-calling app:

- What do you think Jesus means when he says the word 'blessed' or 'happy'?
- Which of the statements Jesus makes do you like the best? Why?
- Which of these statements unsettles you? Why?
- Look at the kinds of people Jesus is talking about. What difference is there between these and the kinds of people valued by society?

Give the groups time to chat about these questions, referring to the Bible passage in they need to.

REVIEW

5 MINS

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

**RESPONSE ACTIVITIES** 10 MINS

Set these three activities up in different parts of your meeting space or in different breakout rooms.

OPTION ONE: Bible journaling

You will need: printouts of Matthew 5:3-12 (or plain paper); art materials

Provide printouts of the Bible passage, printed on A3 paper, allowing lots of space around the text. Invite the people in the group to write and draw around the text. As they do so, encourage them to reflect further on the text and what God is saying to them, and to add that into their journal page.

If you're online, ask people to write out a verse that spoke to them and to decorate that.

OPTION TWO: Creative prayer

You will need: newspapers; large sheets of paper; scissors; glue; felt-tip pens; large map

Encourage the group to look through the newspapers and find stories of those who mourn, or places in need of peacemakers, of where humility is needed etc. They should cut these out and stick them on a sheet of paper. (If you're online, encourage people to search for different stories and put the links in the chat.) They could also write and draw different situations they know about, or mark some of the places on a map. Pray together for what you have discovered in a way appropriate for the group: out loud, silently, writing or drawing.

OPTION THREE: Discussion

You will need: volunteers to facilitate discussion; paper and pens

Gather people together in small groups, each one with a facilitator, and challenge them to think about how what they have discovered today will make a difference in their lives.

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.

ALEX TAYLOR

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



Kwame and the quirky question

"Ask her," said Kwame.

"I'm not asking her," said Kyle. "You ask her."

"She won't give it to me. She likes you better."

"Rubbish. Just ask her."

"Listen, man," Kwame said. "The last time I asked her for something she blanked me completely. Then she said she'd rather stick needles in her eyes than give me what I asked for."

"That's brutal," said Kyle.

"No word of a lie, she actually acted it out..."

"What are you two whispering about?" asked Chloe.

"Nothing!" Kwame replied. Both he and Kyle looked decidedly shifty. Chloe narrowed her eyes.

"I don't like it when you two whisper and then deny anything is going on," she said.

"I agree," said Kelly. "I'm going to get a drink."

As Kelly wandered to the kitchen, Chloe followed her. "Me too. These two are giving me the creeps."

When they were out of earshot, Kyle turned to Kwame.

"What is your problem? Why don't you ask her? We can't go any further until you ask her."

"Leave me alone," said Kwame, getting defensive. "I'll get round to it."

"No, don't just 'get round to it', do it now."

"OK, man!"

"Look, she's coming back. If you do this now, we can all move on, get this done and maybe have a life again. You've been playing this game far too long," said Kyle. He sat back and folded his arms. "Some of us have got lives to lead."

"You?" laughed Kwame. "What have you got to do? All you do is play FIFA."

"Yeah, well. I said I'd meet Nadia at half past. So the sooner we get this out of the way, the sooner I can go and get ready."

"What? Nadia? The girl who wouldn't even look at you last week? When did this happen?"

"Shut up!" Kyle punched Kwame on the arm. "She sent me a message. Asked me if I fancied meeting up."

"She asked you?"

"Yes, she asked me," hissed Kyle, as Chloe and Kelly sat down. "Now, you ask Kelly!"

"Ask Kelly what?" said Kelly.

"Er, Kelly," Kwame paused as he looked at his cards. "Have you got any tens?"

"No," said Kelly. "Go fish."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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

- What's going on in this story?
- Have you ever had trouble asking someone for something? Why?
- Has anyone turned you down when you asked for something? Why? Were you surprised?

This story is a way into Matthew 7:7-12. Read the Bible passage and chat about these questions:

- What are the similarities and differences between this story and the Bible story?
- What do you think Jesus is talking about here?
- Have you had an experience of this? What happened?

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Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is full of teaching about life, about relying on God and talking with him. These craft ideas will help children and young people dig deeper into Jesus' words and reflect on the impact they can have on their lives.

TOGETHER SESSION ONE

Beatitude luminaries



You will need: A5 card or paper; hole punch; scissors; pens; sticky tape; battery-operated tea lights; pens

The Beatitudes turn our expectations upside down and tell us that there is hope of something better in God's kingdom for all people who are struggling with their lives now. This craft allows flickers of light to shine through as a sign of that hope.

Take an A5 sheet of paper or card and write on it some of the ways that people struggle in life and some of the situations that Jesus mentions in the Beatitudes – illness, grief, poverty, making peace. Use a hole punch and scissors to cut holes and shapes into the card. Roll the card into a tube and stick the edge down so that it stays secure. Make sure that the tube is wide enough to stand over the top of a battery-operated tea light. Switch the tea light on, and place it inside the tube, with the tube standing upright. Watch the light flickering through the holes and shapes you have cut. Think about light shining through as a sign of the hope of something different and better coming through Jesus.

TOGETHER SESSION TWO AND FOUR

Prayer finger labyrinths



You will need: printouts of labyrinth patterns; air-drying clay; sharp pencils; tracing paper; paint or varnish (optional)

Jesus teaches his followers how to pray. This craft uses an ancient way of prayer to give children space to reflect as they talk to God in private.

Roll out the clay and, from it, cut out small side plate-sized circles (or use the template). Look at pictures of labyrinths and trace a line with a pencil on top of the clay circle to make your own. Alternatively, use tracing paper to trace the labyrinth from the template. Turn the tracing paper pencil side down onto the clay and draw over the top of the lines, transferring the pattern onto the clay. Now make long, thin sausages of clay and lay them on top of the lines you have traced, so that the labyrinth has a raised path to follow. When dry, paint and varnish if you'd like to. Demonstrate how to follow the path of the labyrinth as an aid to reflective prayer and let the children have a try!

TOGETHER SESSION TWO

Worry parachute



You will need: string; wool; scissors; tissue paper; newspaper; fabric; plastic food bags; paper cups; coins; Lego or Playmobil figures; sticky tape

Experiment with making parachutes out of the materials provided. Use squares, circles or rectangles of paper, fabric or plastic and attach wool or string to the edges. Then attach

a weight such as a toy figure or a cup, and watch what happens when you drop them from a height. Which takes the longest time to fall? Which is most satisfying? Each child will probably have their own criteria for the best parachute! Talk about the passage and about how we are encouraged to trust that God will take care of us. Ask children to think about their worries and, as they drop the parachutes from a height and watch them fall, to imagine releasing the worries to God.

TOGETHER SESSION FOUR

Finding God collage



You will need: smartphones, tablets or digital cameras; printer, paper, pens and glue or a computer and projector

God says that when we look for him we will find him. Go outside and take photos of anything you see that reminds you of or makes you think about God.

Look also for things that make you want to ask questions

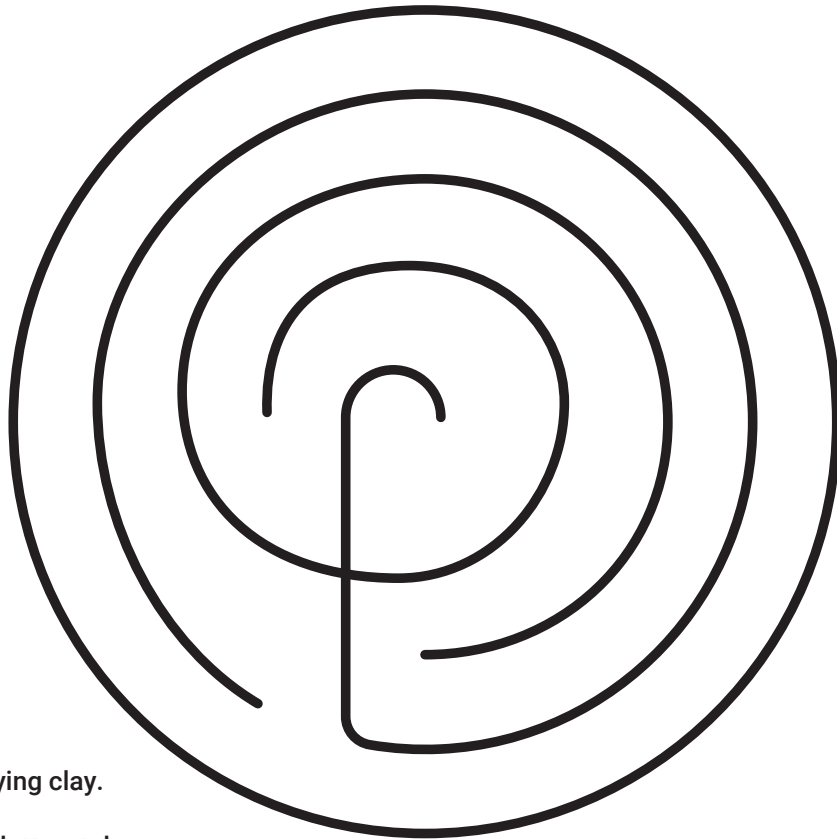
about God or the world. When everyone has taken some photos, print them out and make a collage with words that children choose to describe God, or questions they would like to ask about God.

If you have the chance to gather together, project the different photos onto a screen interspersed with words and questions for other people to see and share. Use the display to open up a discussion about searching for God and for answers about our lives. Why have children chosen the particular images that they have? Do the images and words open up new ideas for other people who see them?

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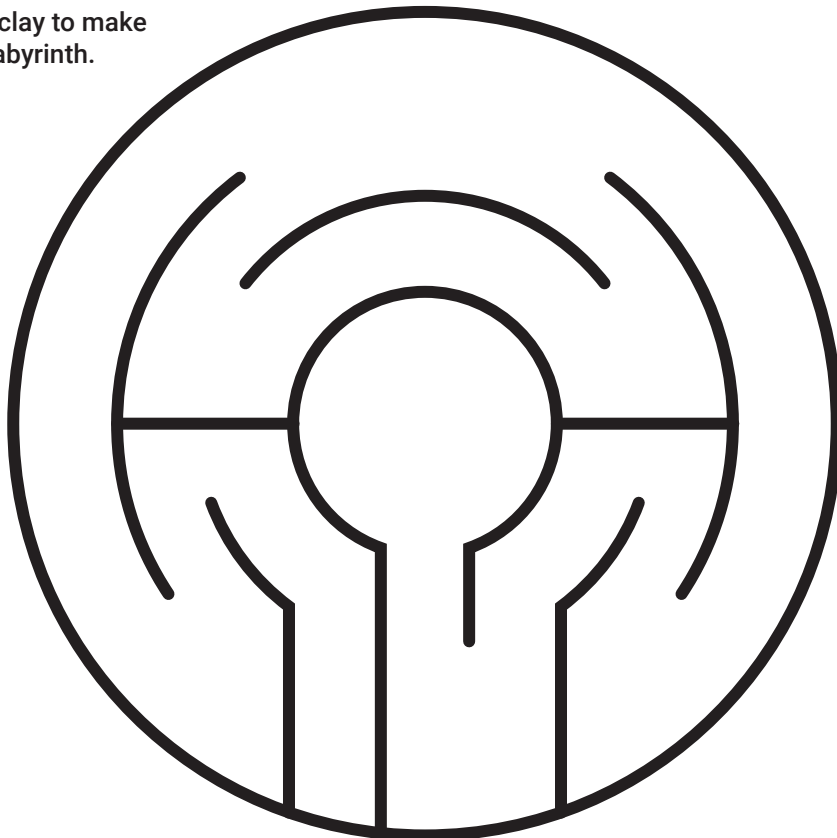
Labyrinth patterns



Roll out some air drying clay.

Trace one of the patterns on to the clay.

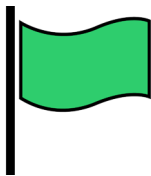
Use more pieces of clay to make raised lines on the labyrinth.



Wide games

The long, light evenings mean that we can play some games in the great outdoors. And even as restrictions ease, outside is safer than inside. Make sure your playing area is safe and secure, and that the players know the boundaries, and where they can and can't go. Big games and long evenings are great for making memories.

CAPTURE THE FLAG



You will need: two flags of different colours; lengths of wool in the same colours as the flag

The classic wide game. Divide the players into two teams. Give each team a flag and each

player three lengths of wool the same colour as their flag. They should tie these loosely around their wrist. Send each team off to find a hiding place – a base to house their flag.

The two teams have to go in search of the opposing team's flag, while at the same time defending their own. If a player catches or tags a player from the other team, they take one of their lengths of wool. When a player has lost all three pieces of wool, they have to return to base for two minutes before setting out again with three new pieces of wool. The winning team is the one who captures the other's flag.

You might wish to have leaders stationed around your playing area to keep an eye on the game, especially where the terrain is rough.

WHERE'S WALLY?



You will need: lots of Where's Wally? costumes (stripy hats and scarves, round spectacle frames); pens and paper

Dress up leaders in the Wally costumes and send them out to hide in your playing space.

Give the players a piece of paper and pen each. They have to go out and find as many Wallys as possible, getting a signature from each one. The player with the most signatures at the end of the time limit is the winner. Leaders don't have to stay in the same place; they can move around the playing space during the game.

If you can't get hold of Wally costumes, then dress your leaders in whatever you have, as long as each leader is dressed identically.

HUNTER GATHERER



You will need: lengths of wool in two colours; marker pens; small cards; bell

Send off five or six leaders (each with a different coloured marker pen) to hide somewhere in your playing space. Split the players into two teams and give everyone

in each team a piece of wool (each team a different colour), together with a card. The remaining leaders sit in the centre of the playing space, with the remaining lengths of wool. The players have to find the leaders and have their card marked by the hidden leaders. Designate one team the hunters and one the hunted. If the hunters catch the hunted during the game, they can claim their length of wool and escort the caught player back to the leaders (the common jail).

However, at various points during the game, ring the bell. This signals a swapping of roles. The hunters become the hunted; the hunted become the hunters. At this point, all prisoners are freed and given a new length of wool. Continue playing (and swapping roles) until a time limit is reached. Award points for coloured marks from the hidden leaders, as well as for captured wool. The team with the most points is the winner. catch them, before throwing them into a bucket.

FIND THE TORCH



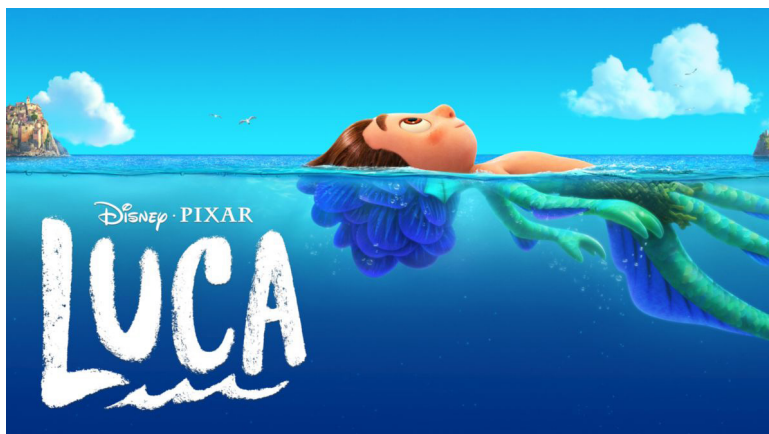
You will need: a torch; a building with many rooms

If the weather is not playing ball, this is a great game to play in a building that has many rooms (this is ideal when you're able to go away with your group at a residential centre or boarding school). Take the torch, turn it on and hide it in a room. It should remain hidden so that you can find it only if you really look – make sure you can't see the light as you enter the room.

The players have to search the building to find the torch. Once they do, they have to hide in the same room. Choose three pairs of leaders to be hunters. Hunters are not allowed to go into rooms, but can roam the corridors. If they catch or tag a player, they escort the player outside to a gathering point. The player has to re-enter the building and start their search afresh. The game is over when a time limit is reached or when everyone has found the torch.

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Luca (U)

Watch the whole film together or concentrate on the clip: 00:56:42 to 01:04:47

SYNOPSIS

A young boy experiences an unforgettable seaside summer on the Italian Riviera filled with gelato, pasta and endless scooter rides. Luca shares these adventures with his newfound best friend, but all the fun is threatened by a deeply held secret: he is a sea monster from another world just below the ocean's surface. But with a desire to go and explore the world, Luca must take part in – and win – the town's traditional triathlon, a race that consists of swimming, eating pasta and cycling. Luca must balance his new friendships, his desire to learn about the world, and avoiding his parents, all while living in a town that is trying to find out where the sea monster is...

You'd be forgiven for reading the plot of Luca and assuming that this was some form of *Little Mermaid* remake. The similarities are there (young person trying to escape over cautious parents, wanting to explore the exciting world beyond the sea, a transformation from sea-dwelling creature into a human etc), but there's enough Italian charm and Pixar magic here to make Luca a feelgood way to entertain a younger audience. It is a sweet, gentle film about friendship and the struggles along the way. An interesting dynamic in the film is the growing friendship between Luca and Alberto (another sea monster) and growing differences in their worldviews. Luca wants to go to school to learn whilst Alberto wants to escape and explore the world. This becomes an interesting discussion point as the film develops.

DISCUSS

Show the trailer for *Luca* and briefly describe the plot. Ask the group these questions:

- What other Disney or animated films does this sound like?
- What are some of the best animated films you have seen (and why)?
- What do you know about Italy (where the film is set)?

The clip takes place after Luca and Alberto have spent some time on land. After enrolling themselves in the town race in a bid to

earn prize money so that they can buy a Vespa and explore the world, Luca and Alberto start to train for the race. What follows is a montage interspersed with some key character development moments. Luca and Alberto have their first discussion about their changing desires, with Alberto wanting to escape and Luca wanting to learn at school. In amongst this we Alberto's growing frustration towards Luca and some fractures in their friendship. This culminates with Alberto and Luca having a pushing fight by the sea and Alberto revealing himself as a sea monster to their friend Giulia. Shocked by this, Luca decides to keep his secret hidden and runs away from the despondent Alberto.

After showing the clip as a stimulus, break into smaller discussion groups or discuss together the following questions:

- How do you think Luca is feeling in this clip?
- Who do you think is right in their argument – Luca or Alberto?
- Should Luca have told the truth when Alberto was exposed as a sea monster?
- Have you ever felt worried about a situation or going somewhere? Did you manage to overcome those feelings?

Read Acts 10 together. It is a longer passage, and depending on the age of your group, you may wish to summarise the story and pick out certain verses along the way. Chat about these questions:

- How were Cornelius and Peter different from each other?
- What is the key message that Peter tells Cornelius?
- According to this story, how should we treat people that we might see as different from us?
- What can we learn from this story in our group today and in the future?

Luca is available on Disney+.

TOM WADE

is head of humanities at Haileybury School.



By your side

Calvin Harris ft Tom Grennan
Suitable for ten to 13-plus

INTRODUCTION

We are all painfully aware of the impact the pandemic and lockdowns have had on mental health and well-being, particularly among children and young people. This song speaks of the desire to get away from it all and was recently performed at the BRIT awards, together with a choir of NHS workers. This session gives a space for young people to talk about their own mental well-being and introduces the idea that God can shelter us.

LISTEN AND DISCUSS

As you begin, ask the young people how they are feeling; perhaps they want to talk about it openly, or perhaps you will need to provide a simple activity to open this up, such as using emoji cards (they can choose one that represents them) or setting up a graffiti wall for the young people to doodle across.

Play the track, distributing copies of the lyrics if needed. It may work well to show the official video, as this adds to the understanding of what the song is about.

Explain to the children that mental health is something that affects each of us at times, whether we are feeling good or are struggling. Sometimes our struggles are great and we need to get more help with this; sometimes we just feel a bit low and

wish we could escape our present situation. As appropriate, allow more time to discuss this, perhaps making suggestions about other support avenues as appropriate, and giving the young people the time they need to be able to talk.

Invite someone to read Psalm 91 and ask the group what they notice about this psalm. How do the psalmist's feelings relate to those in the song? Explain that this psalm was written with regards to going into physical battle; sometimes life can feel like a battle. Here, God promises that no harm will come, but life doesn't always feel like that. Help the young people to understand that following God doesn't mean we won't go through hard times, but rather that ultimately, we are saved through him. Give the young people the opportunity to discuss what this means and ask their own questions.

Pray as you close, for the group and for individual circumstances. Take the opportunity to follow up any particular situations where young people may need extra support through the appropriate avenues.

BECKY MAY

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



15 steps to success

Summer may be a time for thinking through future mentoring initiatives or perhaps appraising existing mentoring. Here are 15 key principles (not exhaustive, of course) that successful mentoring relationships and schemes seem to share:

1. TEACH YOUR MENTEES HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM YOU

What expertise you actually have, why you're mentoring them, the boundaries you want to set, your pet peeves, your typical styles of communicating and thinking...

2. GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Go beyond the obvious – learn some detail about their hobbies you have no interest in! Look for the value in those things for your mentee. Pray for your mentee.

3. URGE YOUR MENTEES TO BE SELF-RELIANT

Discourage them from turning up to meetings ready to just be passive, a consumer. Teach them to identify what they want and use you to try to achieve those things.

4. AGREE ON EXPECTATIONS

Discuss how things will work, what you want each other to do, how you will know if it is going well or badly etc.

5. DEVISE AIMS

Yes, at times just walk with them through life from a Christian perspective, but it is still important to identify a direction, an aim, a goal, an objective or an area of growth.

6. HAVE THEM SHADOW YOU FOR A DAY OR A WEEK

There's nothing like learning about or from someone by watching them – involve your mentee in your life at least once by just having them accompany you.

7. GIVE THEM WRITTEN FEEDBACK

Occasionally, or regularly, it is super-helpful for a mentee to receive something written that they can absorb and return to in their own time. It can be powerful for them for a long time. Spoken words can be easily forgotten or clumsily formed.

8. ASK FOR FEEDBACK

You need to know how well you are doing at finding the balance between pushing and probing them to reach that uncomfortable growth area and being respectful of boundaries and the limit of the invitation they are offering you into their life.

9. PRAISE THEM

Give regular encouragement – postcards, emails, texts, voice messages. Tell them what you see in them, what you hope for them, what you see they have done well and the good that is in them. Have profound and honest moments, even if it feels awkward to create. Let them hear you praise them to, or in front of, other people.

10. REMEMBER KEY THINGS ABOUT THEM

Send them a card on their birthday. Remember the names of their friends. Revise before sessions if you have to, but genuinely care about the details. Pop up in their life sometimes outside of expected meetings and channels.

11. CO-AUTHOR SOMETHING

Work together on a project where you can both input. It could be a preach, an article for a magazine, putting on an event, starting an initiative. Working side by side is a different dynamic to just talking mentor to mentee face to face.

12. ASK THEM TO INTERVIEW FIVE PEOPLE THEY ADMIRE

A tasty challenge, this one. You can help set it up and work with them about what they want to ask, but get them to do the work of finding out from those people about the things they would like to emulate, borrow, steal, imitate, learn from or aspire to.

13. HAVE THEM TEACH YOU SOMETHING

Makes the relationship two-way, less patronising, more personal and stops you from becoming out of touch!

14. ACHIEVE 'QUICK WINS'

You may have long-term goals agreed, but build in or contrive short-term goals and achievable way-markers, to get the 'ticked off the list' feeling, and also to help them learn how to form and execute measurable metrics and experiences into their lives.

15. LAUGH TOGETHER

And eat together.

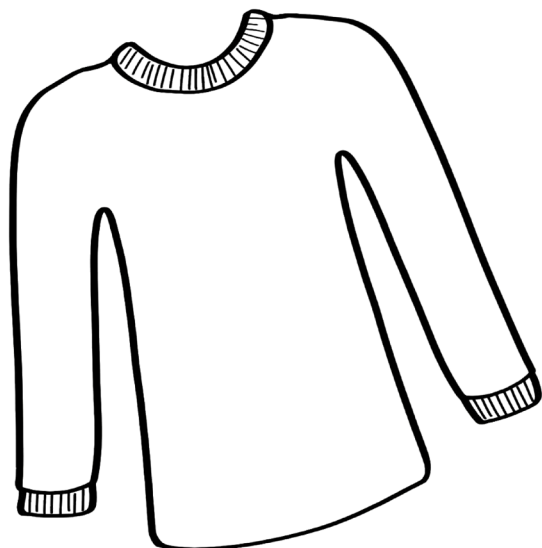
Do not worry

“Therefore I tell you, **do not worry** about your life, what you will **eat or drink**; or about your body, what you will **wear**. Is not life more than **food**, and the body more than **clothes**? Look at the **birds** of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

Matthew 6:25-27 NIV

1. What are you worried about?

Inside the jumper, write down or draw some of the things that make you worried.



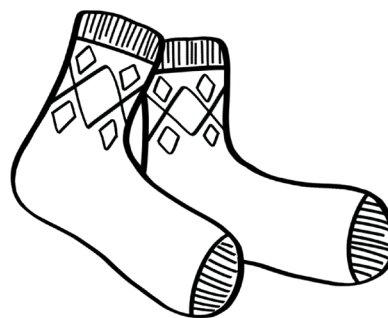
2. Look at the birds

Why do you think Jesus tells us to look at the birds? What can we learn from them?

Write down your thoughts here:

3. Hand over your worries...

As you colour in these socks, thank God that he cares for us and try to hand over your worries to him.



4. Your heavenly father cares.

Jesus tells us not to worry about what we will eat or drink, because God cares for us more than even the birds for whom he provides food. Write down some things you are grateful to God for providing for you.