

Teaching Pack

The Parables Idea Guides

The Parables provides teachers and youth workers with sparky sketches, designed to help young people engage with and discuss real life issues.

How many times have you been given a meeting guide written by someone else which they expect you to follow as if it were your own? However helpful ready-to-use meeting plans are, more often than not we end up changing a little detail here, coming up with a better activity than the one suggested or modifying it slightly to better suit the group we are working with.

What this guide is not

With this in mind, the guide included for each Parable film is not a full blown ready-to-use meeting plan, but nor is it just a piece of paper to keep the DVD from being lonely!

What this guide is

The Parable idea guides contain various helpful suggestions and ideas to use alongside the showing of the film. Rather than leaving you with no ideas whatsoever on what to do before or after the film is shown, various ideas are provided to help explore the film's theme further. Alongside this, there is also space for you to incorporate your own ideas and creativity as to how you use the film. In some instances, the ideas suggested might trigger off ideas of your own which would better suit your group or context.

Use in schools

The idea guides have been written with teachers and youth workers in mind and work particularly well in helping to implement SEAL – Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning. SEAL has been developed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and aims to develop the underpinning qualities and skills that help promote positive behaviour and effective learning.

Where appropriate the guide identifies the relevant SEAL theme and aspect of learning which is covered by the DVD.



This icon helps to distinguish activities which would be appropriate for use in a school context.

The DVD films could also be linked to interactive whiteboard activities.

Breakdown of material

Each idea guide consists of the following components:

- a) **Conversation starters** – Key questions to kick start conversation around the main theme of the short film.
- b) **Activity suggestions** – Ideas on how to develop and explore the theme of the short film further.
- c) **Quotes** – Some wise sayings to include in a short talk either before or after the film. Alternatively, they could be used to trigger further discussion.
- d) **Bible references** – Some key passages from the Bible that pick up on the theme of the film.

The Assistant

Parable: Parable of the talents

Bible reference: Matthew 25:14-30

Target audience: 6- 11 year olds

Key Stage(s) for school: KS 1, 2

SEAL themes: Good to be me
Going for goals



Conversation starters

- What skills do you possess?
- How can your skills be used to help others?
- Do you have a skill that you worked hard to acquire? Was there a time it seemed impossible you would acquire it? (*For example in sport, learning to play a musical instrument etc.*)
- What helped in this process? What did not?
- What dreams do you have for your life?



Activity suggestions

- 1) Read over the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. Have the group focus in on each of the servants and brainstorm their various feelings and emotions throughout the story and why.

Perhaps it would be useful to divide the story up into three sections:

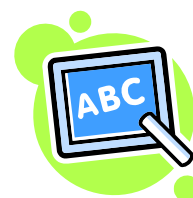
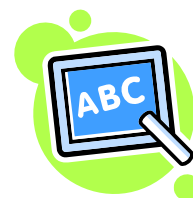
- a) Before the meeting with the boss
 - b) Immediately after the meeting with the boss once they have their allocation of money
 - c) At the meeting with the boss and where they tell him what they have done with the money.
- 2) Ask each member of the group to think about the dream(s) they have for their life. Have them depict these dreams either by drawing them on paper, creating a collage or through modelling clay.

Make the point that whilst it is great to have a dream, it is important to identify the necessary steps in order to make that dream into a reality.

Either in small groups or as one large group, ask each young people to discuss what they think a goal is. Why do people set goals? What use are they?

Ask them to come up with their own definition for what a goal is.

Following this, ask each person to think about one goal they would like to



achieve. Make the point that identifying a goal is like identifying the destination of where you would like to get to. However, another key part of the process is working out how you are going to get there or achieve it. In other words you need a map!

Have each person come up with a series of steps which will form the map to help them reach their destination and achieve their goals.

3) In advance of these activity, create the following handouts:

- A handout with a hand print on it. *Alternatively have each young people draw round their own hand.*
- A handout with a foot print on it.
- A handout with a 'thumbs up' icon on it.



- a) On the hand print handout, have each person write down something that they could not do when they were young. Perhaps ask them to construct a sentence along the following lines “When I was young I could not do.....”
- b) On the foot print handout ask each person to write down something that they have learnt to do this year. Perhaps ask them to construct a sentence along the following lines, “This year I have learnt to....”
- c) On the ‘thumbs up’ handout ask each person to note down something that they are working on achieving at the moment - it could be a new sport, learning to play a new musical instrument, improving their handwriting etc. Ask them to construct a sentence along the following line, “I am learning to....”

According to the ability and mix of your group you could have people draw their ideas alongside the text.

Make the following points:

- We are all continuing to learn, grow and master new skills through out our lives.
- There are some things we were not able to do when we were very young that we can do now. Likewise, during this year there are skills that we have learn to grow in.
- For those skills and areas of our lives where we are still learning to grow we need to set ourselves goals in order to help us achieve those things.

4) Compile a list of fears and definitions and print them onto card. A good website to gather this kind of information from can be found here:

<http://www.phobialist.com/>

Depending on the size of your group either as one large group or in smaller sub groups, have the groups match up the fear with the correct definition.

In the parable, one of the servants was scared and fearful of his boss so much so that he did not do anything with his money.

- a) What fears might we have in life?



- b) How can fear restrict you and stop you from moving forward in life?
- c) What fears might keep you from achieving your dream and moving forward in life?

Someone once said that FEAR is

False
Expectations
Appearing
Real

How can we deal with fear? Have the group brainstorm this question in order to come up with a series of steps which someone could follow in order to help deal with a fear they could be experiencing.

An example of some steps could be as follows:

- Acknowledge the fear is there.
- Identify truth versus reality
- Talk about it with someone.

When they have come up with their series of steps ask them to devise and design a poster campaign which could be used around the school or youth premises. Encourage them to think about:

- What are your key points?
- What's the best way of communicating them? Can you do it visually with only a small amount of text?
Can you come up with a catchy slogan?
- Design – What's your target audience? How colourful does it need to be?
- Communication – Is the message clear? Is the lettering easy to read?

5) Encourage one another with affirming words!

1 Thessalonians 5:11 says to encourage one another and build each other up.

Have each person take a sheet of A4 paper and write their names along the bottom of the sheet of paper.

Pass the sheet onto the next person so each person now has a piece of paper different to their own.

Ask each person to write an encouraging word, phrase or statement about the person named at the bottom. Once they have done this, fold the top of the paper over so their comment cannot be seen.

Pass the sheet onto the next person. Continue this process until everyone has their sheet of paper returned to them.

- 6) Read the following short story to the group and have them reflect on it. Initiate discussion about goal setting, vision and purpose in life.



The story is often told of a traveller in the Middle Ages, who visited a city where many stone cutters were working. Approaching several, he asked the same question:

"What are you doing?"

The first stonecutter he met replied, "I'm cutting stone. It's dull work, but it pays the bills."

A second stonecutter responded, "I'm the best stone cutter in the land. Look at the smoothness of this stone, how perfect the edges are."

A third pointed to a foundation several yards away, and said, "I'm building a cathedral."

One lacked purpose altogether. The second was proud of the work he did. But the third clearly had a sense of purpose, of the greater reason for his work. It's safe to assume that the third stone cutter never got lost in the boredom of the work or became obsessed with being the best. The third stone cutter knew that his work was critical to the successful completion of a larger project the construction of a cathedral.

Some questions to kick start discussion:

- What strikes you most about the story?
- Do you think there is a difference behind a vision and a cause? What are the differences?

Pastor Brian Houston, who is pastor of a church in Australia, has noted two key points about vision versus a cause. First, whilst you can possess a vision, a cause possesses you. Secondly, whilst each of us can have a vision, a cause is bigger than any one individual.

- How do you think understanding the difference between the two could help you live your life?



Quotes

- "Good character is more to be praised than outstanding talent. Most talents are, to some extent, a gift. Good character, by contrast, is not given to us. We have to build it, piece by piece -- by thought, choice, courage, and determination" - *H. Jackson Brown*.
- "People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anyone" - *Audrey Hepburn*.
- "We are all something, but none of us are everything" - *Blaise Pascal*.
- "This is the final test of a gentleman: his respect for those who can be of no possible value to him" - *William Lyon Phelps*.



Bible references

- Luke 12:48
- 1 Corinthians 12:14-24
- Philippians 3:12-25

The Fancy Party

Parable:	The ten wise virgins
Bible reference:	Matthew 25:1-13
Target audience:	6-11 year olds
Key Stage(s) for school:	KS 1,2
SEAL theme:	Relationships Changes Getting on and falling out



Conversation starters

- When have you made a poor decision in life? Why and how did this happen?
- What do you think wisdom is?
- In your opinion, who is a wise person?
- “A problem solved is a problem shared”. Do you agree?
- What is the difference between worldly wisdom and godly wisdom? Is there a difference?



Activity suggestions

- 1) Play the game ‘Consequences’.

Make the point that it is one of life’s interesting principles that we reap what we sow. Consequently, we need to think through the consequences of our actions and seek to be wise and not foolish.



- 2) Have the group divide into smaller sub groups.

Set each group the task of devising a short sketch based upon ‘wisdom vs folly’ .

If they need some inspiration, perhaps direct them to look at the book of Proverbs (one of the wisdom books in the Bible) .

- 3) Have the group divide into smaller sub groups.

Set each group the task of creating a set of instructions for an alien to follow in order to make a cheese sandwich.

The instructions should be in the form of a flow diagram using the arrow templates enclosed with the pack.

Once all the groups have finished, work through each of instructions and see how accurate and detailed the instructions are.

Were there are missing steps?



4) Produce a series of decisions on pieces on flash cards.

Show each one of them to the class/group and have them decide whether it is a poor decision or a good decision.

If they think it is a poor decision have them move to one side of the room. If they think it is a good decision have them to the other side.

Repeat this process for all of the cards.

Some ideas to get you going:

- Going to shops without any money
- Talking to a teacher about a problem at school.
- Not wearing a coat when it's raining.

5) Have the group divide into pairs, assigning one of the pair person A and the other person B.

The task is to blindfold person A and then have person B guide person A around a course.

The course can be fairly simply using a combination of tables and chairs to create various obstacles to tackle by going around them, over or under them.

Once person A has completed the course have the pair swap roles so both have the opportunity of completing the course.

Facilitate a time of feedback and response covering the following key points:

- What your partner good in communicating instruction to you?
- How easy was it to trust your partner to give you true and accurate directions?
- What made it easier?
- What made it more difficult?

Make the point that trust and truth are important aspects of being wise and being able to assess what is true in order to making good decisions.

6) Working in small groups set the challenge of producing a vox pop on the topic of wisdom.

A vox pop literally means voice of the people and is a term often used in broadcasting for interviews of members of the "general public".

Depending upon resources available to you, this could be a vox pop recorded for TV using a camcorder or for radio using a MP3 recorder or other audio recording equipment.

Before the group can go out interviewing people they must have a plan in place of what they are going to do and who's going to do it. Facilitate a time of planning which covers the following points:

- Who will ask the questions?
- Who will be responsible for recording?
- Who will you ask? Parents, teachers, other pupils, random people on



the street?

Clearly depending on the scope and the context you are working in you will need to consider suitable adult supervision and permission to film people.

- What questions will you ask?

Some suggestions:

- How would you define wisdom?
- What would you define as a wise act?
- What would you define as a foolish act?
- What is being foolish?
- Who do you consider to be wise and why?
- How do you make wise decisions?



Quotes

- “Guts are important. Your guts are what digest things. But it is your brains that tell you which things to swallow and which not to swallow” - *Austin Dacey*
- “Wisdom is knowing what to do next; Skill is knowing how to do it, and Virtue is doing it” - *David Starr Jordan*
- “To understand reality is not the same as to know about outward events. It is to perceive the essential nature of things. The best-informed man is not necessarily the wisest. Indeed there is a danger that precisely in the multiplicity of his knowledge he will lose sight of what is essential. But on the other hand, knowledge of an apparently trivial detail quite often makes it possible to see into the depth of things. And so the wise man will seek to acquire the best possible knowledge about events, but always without becoming dependent upon this knowledge. To recognize the significant in the factual is wisdom” - *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*
- “Science is organized knowledge. Wisdom is organized life” - *Immanuel Kant*
- “Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools, because they have to say something” – *Plato*.
- “Whatever is at the center of our life will be the source of our security, guidance, wisdom, and power” - *Stephen Covey*.
- “Good people are good because they've come to wisdom through failure. We get very little wisdom from success, you know” - *William Saroyan*.



Bible references

- Proverbs 8:10
- John 7: 16-18
- Luke 12: 35-48

Mega Designs

Parable:	Parable of the wise and foolish builders
Bible reference:	Matthew 7:24-28
Target audience:	6-11 year olds
Key Stage(s) for school:	KS 1,2
SEAL theme:	Going for goals Good to be me
SEAL assessment:	Self awareness Motivation Social skills



Conversation starters

- Who do you go to for advice when making decisions? Why?
- Who has been influential in your life?
- Who's life do you most admire and why?
- In your opinion, what are the top 3 most important things for a good life?



Activity suggestions

- 1) Using sticky office notes, work through the parable and sequence the story. Identify bad and good decisions. What could have been done better?

- 2) Pose the question to the group, 'What helps to make a good strong building?'

Have the group brainstorm their ideas. It may be useful to have some photos available to inspire ideas.

As appropriate have the group consider points such as foundations, structure and building materials.

In response to this, draw the group's attention to the fact that our lives could be likened to a building. We need to build our lives on good foundations, grow and develop through out life in such a way as to build a 'sound' structure.

Ask the group the question:

- What they think establishes good foundation in life?
- What helps us to build good 'walls' or 'structures' in our lives?



3) Divide the group into pairs.

Have them assign each other A and B. Have one of the pair sit at one end of the room and the other at the opposite end.

Give A a set of instructions whilst B has a piece of paper and a pen.

The challenge is for A to dictate the instructions to B. However, because there are several other pairs doing the same thing it should become quite a challenge to hear correctly!

Make the point there are many influences in life which try to distract us and cause us to hear incorrectly the instructions we are trying to follow.

4) Ask the group to come up with suggestions of positive and negative personality traits.

On a whiteboard or something similar, divide the board into two sections – positive and negative. Have them write their ideas on sticky office notes and place them in the appropriate half of the board.

Once the group has come up with a fairly substantial list of different traits, either on their own or in small groups of 2 or 3, assign between 1-3 different traits to each group and have them think about the following questions:

- How do **I** feel when they demonstrate this characteristic?
- How do **others** feel when I demonstrate this characteristic?

For example, in the case of say honesty, the questions would follow the pattern of “How do I feel when I am honest?” and “How does it make others around me feel when I am honest?”.

To aid the group in asking these questions, worksheet [A] has been produced. The character trait can be written in the central circle and the various ideas and suggestions placed in the circles around them.

5) To help the group further their understanding of decision making processes, either on their own or in small groups, have the group work through the process of coming to a decision about a certain task.

Have them write each stage of the process down on an arrow card and ask them to assemble the process as they see it taking place.

Some examples are given below:

- Buying a new game
- Choosing what to eat
- Walking to school or going by bus
- Choosing who to play with
- Tidying my room
- Which pet to buy
- What football team to support

A master sheet of arrow shapes is included with this page which can be



photocopied several times in order to provide the necessary arrow cards for this activity.

Have each group feedback on their work.



Quotes

- “Setting an example is not the main means of influencing another, it is the only means” - *Albert Einstein*.
- “How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world” - Anne Frank.
- “We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms -- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way” - *Viktor Frankl*.
- “The greatest minds are capable of the greatest vices as well as of the greatest virtues” - *Rene Descartes*.



Bible references

- Psalm 119:104-108
- Isaiah 30:20-22
- John 3:20-22
- John 11:9-11
- Ephesians 5:12-14

The Lost Brian

Parable: The parable of the lost sheep

Bible reference: Luke 15:3-7

Target audience: 6-12 year olds

Key Stage(s) for school: KS 1, 2

SEAL themes: Relationships



Conversation starters

- Have you ever lost anything precious? How did it make you feel? Did you find it?
- What ways can you show love to one another?
- What do you think of when you hear the word 'love'?
- When someone uses the phrase "I value you" what do you think they mean?



Activity suggestions

- 1) Have each person produce a collage based on the theme of 'love'.



- 2) How do you think God's take on love differs to Man's?

Have the group read through 1 Corinthians 13 and then listen to the track 'The closest thing to crazy' by Katie Melua on her album, *Call off the search*, with a copy of the lyrics available for each person to follow.

Facilitate discussion using the following question to kick start discussion:

- What lines of the song particularly caught your attention? Why?
- What lines of the Bible passage caught your attention? Why?
- Why do you think the writers of both passage use the imagery they did to describe love?
- Would you use different imagery? Why?
- How are the two passages different to one another? How are they similar?

- 3) Whilst it is important that we show and demonstrate love to one another, we do not necessarily show love in the same way.



Christian author Gary Chapman has written a book entitled 'The Five Love Languages'. In the book he identifies five love languages or ways in which people can communicate love to one another.

1. **Physical touch** - Holding a hand, giving someone a hug, a hand on someone's shoulder.
2. **Affirming words** - Encouraging and loving someone through words either verbally or in a card, letter, text or email.
3. **Gifts** - Not necessarily spending lots of money but putting time, thought and love into making something for someone.
4. **Acts of service** - Showing love by offering to do things for people. For example cook them a meal, clean their home etc.
5. **Quality time** - Simply taking time out to spend with someone either over a coffee, meal, as you do a certain activity etc.

Have the group think about this list of 'love languages'. Pose the following questions to them:

- From looking at this list, which two languages do you prefer to communicate love to others?
 - Which ways do you like to receive love?
 - Are the ways in which you give and receive love the same? Why is this?
- 4) Either individually or as a group, ask each person to think about the character and nature of God. Ask them to compile a list of their ideas.

Once they have a reasonable list of ideas (say 10+), ask them to look down their list and note what they think our response should be in relation to the characteristic listed in order to form a 'pair' of responses.

For example:

- God as Father – We are God's children
- God as our shepherd – We are guided and protected by Him.
- God is love – We are loved by Him, receive His love and show that love to others.

Once each group has completed their lists of 'pairs', have them select their top two ideas and ask them to create either a collage, 3D model or poem which depicts their 'pair' – God's character and our response.

You may wish to use each group's creation in an act of collective worship.



Quotes

- "Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value" - *Albert Einstein*
- "If you have love in your life it can make up for a great many things you lack. If you don't have it, no matter what else there is, it's not enough" - *Ann Landers*.

- “Love life and life will love you back. Love people and they will love you back” - *Arthur Rubinstein*.
- “Why love if losing hurts so much? We love to know that we are not alone” - *C.S. Lewis*
- “The love we give away is the only love we keep” - *Elbert Hubbard*.
- “Love doesn't make the world go 'round; love is what makes the ride worthwhile” - *Franklin P. Jones*.
- “Where there is love there is life” - *Mohandas K. Gandhi*.
- “The first duty of love is to listen” - *Paul Tillich*.



Bible references

- Psalm 146
- Zephaniah 3:14-17
- 1 John 3:1-3
- John 3:16

Odd Jobs

Parable:	Workers in the vineyard
Bible reference:	Matthew 20: 1-16
Target audience:	6-11 year olds
Key Stage(s) for school:	KS 1, 2
SEAL theme:	Relationship New beginnings Change



Conversation starters

- How do other people serve you on a daily basis?
- How can you serve those around you?
- Do you prefer to serve or be served? Why?
- Christian author Philip Yancey writes, “Grace means that there is nothing that we can do to make God love us more and there is nothing that we can do make God love us less”. What is your response to this?



Activity suggestions

- 1) Engage the group in a form of competition. For example, it could be a competition in which two teams compete against one another in trying to get as many balls in a bin as possible by throwing them from a set distance away from the bin.

Set the game going but after a while begin to introduce ‘acts of grace’ towards different members of the team. For example, drop two extra balls in only one team’s bin. Alternatively, move the bin ridiculously closer to one of the competitors so that they cannot miss!

It will not be long before cries of “That’s not fair!” will no doubt be heard. Anarchy may even begin to rule!

Make the point that there are no real winners or losers when everyone is treated gracefully.

- 2) As a group take a moment to brainstorm what the word ‘justice’ means to you. Produce a mindmap or spidergram of all the different ideas offered.



- 3) Make available to the group a selection of newspapers. Either on their own or in smaller groups of two or three, set them the task of searching out stories which relate to the theme of justice and injustice.



Some key questions for everyone to have in mind as they complete this activity could be as follows:

- How did the justice/injustice come about?
- If you had been involved would you have reacted differently or the same as the people involved?
- What could have been handled differently in order to have reached a more positive outcome?

Set a time limit for this task. Once completed, have each group feedback to the rest of the group on the stories they have found.

- 4) Read over the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) in the Bible which the 'Odd jobs' short film is based upon.



Draw up a chart consisting of two columns. The first column should list all the characters involved in the story. The second column should be entitled "Feelings and emotions".

Have the group read through the story noting down how they think each of the characters felt and why.

Once completed, reflect and look over the suggestions made. Would anyone have reacted any differently or would they have responded in the same way? Why?

Facilitate discussion as appropriate picking up on any interesting themes and points which come up.

- 5) The parable in the Bible looks at how a group of new people were treated when they became part of an existing group.



As a group take some time to think about what positive steps you could take to make new people feel welcome to your church, youth group or class.

Some questions to consider:

- Imagine a time when you've been a new person amongst a new group of people. What things made you feel relaxed? What things made you feel like a stranger or anxious and afraid?
- How would someone new to our group feel if they become part of it today? How friendly are we as a group?
- What actions can be taken to make new people welcome?
- What do we need to change or do differently in terms of how we think about new people?

Aim to come up with a list of a 5-point action plan for making new people feel welcome.

- 6) Christian pastor and author, Rick Warren, writes in his book *The Purpose Drive Life* of the hallmarks of a real servant. These six hallmarks are:
1. Real servants make themselves available to serve.
 2. Real servants pay attention to needs.
 3. Real servants do their best with what they have.
 4. Real servants do every task with equal dedication.
 5. Real servants are faithful to their ministry.
 6. Real servants maintain a low profile.

Give each person time to think and consider how they each fair in relation to the six points.

- What aspects do they feel they fair well in?
- What aspects are bit more of a challenge? Why?

As people feel able to and want to, facilitate a time of discussion based upon the responses.



Quotes

- “What you are is God’s gift to you; what you do with yourself is your gift to God” - *Danish proverb*
- “Happiness cannot come from without. It must come from within. It is not what we see and touch or that which others do for us which makes us happy; it is that which we think and feel and do, first for the other fellow and then for ourselves” - *Helen Keller*.
- “We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results” - *Herman Melville*
- “Service is what life is all about” - *Marian Wright Edelman*.
- “Giving frees us from the familiar territory of our own needs by opening our mind to the unexplained worlds occupied by the needs of others” - *Barbara Bush*.
- “Kings and cabbages go back to compost, but good deeds stay green forever” - *Rick de Marinis*.
- “Become a student of change. It is the only thing that will remain constant” - *Anthony J. D’Angelo*.
- “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek” - *Barack Obama*.
- “Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself” - *Leo Tolstoy*.



Bible references

- Job 8:3-6
- Matthew 10:42
- Mark 10:43
- Luke 14:12-24
- Philippians 2:5
- 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12

The Golden Biscuit

Parable:	Hidden treasure
Bible reference:	Matthew 13:44
Target audience:	6-11 year olds
Key Stage(s) for school:	KS 1,2
SEAL theme:	Relationships New beginnings



Conversation starters

- Have you ever been let down by someone? How did it make you feel?
- What's important to you in life?
- How can you demonstrate commitment?
- What drives your life? What do you think others would say in response to this question about your life?



Activity suggestions

- 1) Either working on their own or in small groups, set the group the following task:

You are going on holiday for 2 weeks and need to pack a suitcase which has everything in it you need for your time away. You will travel by aeroplane to the destination which is somewhere hot and sunny. Along with spending some time on the beach, you will also have chance to explore the area and do some sight seeing.

Your task now is to decide what you need to pack in your suitcase.

After a while bring in the following complication:

Due to luggage restrictions you have to change to a suitcase half the size. You must select what is essential for you to carry.

Have a time of feedback. Make the point that life can sometimes be like packing a suitcase. We try and cram loads of things in or think something is absolutely crucial to life (having the latest games console, set of clothes or DVD) when in fact it is not.

In light of this pose the question, what do you think are the essentials for life?



- 2) Set up a large scale treasure hunt, complete with clues and a prize at the end. Organising this as an outdoors event would be ideal – the wider the area that has to be covered by the young people the better!

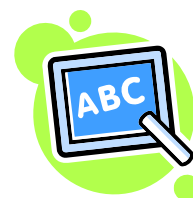


Afterwards, have the group feedback on their reactions, thoughts and feelings to playing the game. Make sure in the feedback time the following aspects are covered in discussion:

- How important was determination in completing the treasure hunt? Would it have mattered if some of the group were more interested in doing something else?
- After a while did you get tired?
- How did you keep focus on the task?
- Were there any points at which people become frustrated? Why was this and who did you overcome this frustration?

Make the point that life can be sometimes like the treasure hunt. We need to search things out, constantly learn new skills and develop determination to keep on going.

- 3) For the duration of a week, play the game 'angels and mortals'.



Have each member of the group write their name on a small slip of paper. Once they have done this, ask them to fold it up so no one see their name. Put all the slips of paper into a container, mix them up and ask each person to draw out a name.

Important: Do not allow anyone else to see your slip of paper! Clearly if they draw out their own name, ask them to pick out another slip of paper.

Make sure that everyone understands the following points:

- The task that each person has is to be an 'angel' to their 'mortal' who is named on the piece of paper.
- The idea is to bless and encourage the person without them knowing who their angel is. This can be done in mystery gifts, deeds, words of encouragement etc. The aim is not to spend lots of money buying presents for people but simply through secret acts of kindness.
- As youth leader/teacher you may wish to act as a 'go-between'. 'Angels' can pass items to their mortals via you although it adds to the intrigue and surprise if acts are carried out randomly and mysteriously!
- Once the week is up, ask each person to guess who their angel is. See if they are correct or not!

Make the point that whilst it has been fun to play the game for a week we could all do with 'playing' this game all the time. Seeking to bless, show appreciation and value to one another without the need for recognition.

- 4) In advance of the session, record a selection of TV adverts. Have the group try and guess by going on just the audio which advert it is and what it is selling.



Facilitate a time of discussion based around the following questions:

- How do adverts work?
- What is consumerism? A possible definition is "*the pursuit of*

happiness through goods”.

- Can happiness be truly found simply through buying things?
- How can we learn to recognise what we really need in life and what we can do without?
- How can we learn to be content in life?

5) Have each person consider the word ‘commitment’.

What do they think of when they hear the word? What feelings are conjured in your mind when you think of the word 'commitment'? Have them brain storm their ideas then write an acrostic poem based upon their ideas.



Quotes

- “Treasure your relationships, not your possessions” - *Anthony J. D'Angelo*.
- “Relationships are all there is. Everything in the universe only exists because it is in relationship to everything else. Nothing exists in isolation. We have to stop pretending we are individuals that can go it alone [from Never Eat Alone]” - *Margaret Wheatley*.
- “Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful” - *Albert Schweitzer*.
- “When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us” - *Helen Keller*.
- “Action may not always bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action” - *Benjamin Disraeli*.
- “Happiness cannot come from without. It must come from within. It is not what we see and touch or that which others do for us which makes us happy; it is that which we think and feel and do, first for the other fellow and then for ourselves” - *Helen Keller*.
- “The greatest part of our happiness depends on our dispositions, not our circumstances” - *Martha Washington*.
- “Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony” - *Mohandas K. Gandhi*.



Bible references

- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
- Joshua 24:14-27
- Philippians 4:4-9
- Revelation 3:14-22

