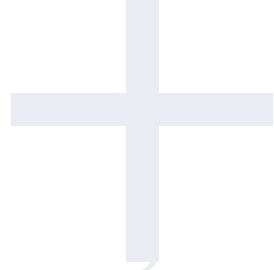




The Church of England  
Diocese of Ely



# Way of Life

explore

Facilitator's Guide



# INTRODUCTION: GETTING STARTED

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.*

## **Hebrews 12:1**

This version of the Diocese of Ely's *Way of Life* takes a shorter, interactive approach to the material. It is designed particularly for those who have a preference for engaging with material visually or through doing, rather than through text. It shares the same aim, helping us to discover what it might mean to be people fully alive, together and as individuals, following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Using a series of daily texts, accessible media and six facilitated interactive sessions, this *Way of Life* seeks to invite us into a daily conversation with God.

Based on the six core values of the *Way of Life*, we will look at the themes of togetherness, wholeness, holiness, witness, kindness and boldness over six sessions, designed to invite participants to begin a journey that we pray will last a lifetime. It uses the biblical imagery and language of 'running the race' (Hebrews 12:1). This facilitator's guide to the six sessions has been created to help encourage a relaxed exploration of faith, using Bible studies, discussion questions and prayer responses and challenges.

We gratefully acknowledge the creative work put into the *Youth Way of Life: Run the Race*, on which these sessions are based. At some points, the original focus on younger people may be evident, but our hope is that this will help and not hinder creative and imaginative engagement with the material.



# OVERVIEW: THE RUN-DOWN

The *Way of Life* is designed to run across six sessions, with each one focussing on a different core value. The sessions are suggested as follows:

SESSION 1: TOGETHERNESS - ONE GOD, ONE BODY

SESSION 2: WHOLENESS - GIVING YOUR ALL TO GOD





SESSION 3: HOLINESS - BECOMING MORE LIKE JESUS

SESSION 4: WITNESS - TELLING THE WORLD

SESSION 5: KINDNESS - SHARING THE LOVE

SESSION 6: BOLDNESS - SPEAKING UP FOR JUSTICE

Each of these sessions is then broken down into several sections, over approximately 60 minutes:

-  **Starting Out** - A few questions to start conversation
-  **Pushing On** - A time of Bible reading and study
-  **The Final Sprint** - A challenge going forward
-  **Crossing the Line** - A time of response and prayer

Alongside these sessions, members are encouraged to download the **Remind** app to receive daily encouraging texts, and to complete a journal to document their journey through the series.



## CHOP AND CHANGE

This session guide is just that – a Guide. You know your group, so simply adapt the sessions to suit the needs and range of your group members.

## TIMING

These sessions have been planned for 60 minutes but do tweak session timings as necessary.

## FOOD

Allowing time to share food and conversation is a great opportunity for growing in discipleship, too. Why not start with a meal or some snacks?

## JOURNALS

People can take their journals home between sessions, but do remind people to bring them to the next session!

## DOWNLOAD THE APP

Why not download the Remind app and join the @ywol-rtr class yourself, to sign up to the daily texts alongside group members who are used to using smartphones?

## PRAY

Obvious, but effective! And if you're part of team, why not meet for 10 minutes before the session to pray? There are suggested prayer points for the team at the start of each session.

# TOGETHERNESS: ONE GOD, ONE BODY

## PRAYER POINTS

- Wisdom for the team in starting the series and growing good relationships within the group
- For each group member to realise they are not alone. We are all part of One body with God – we share this journey together

## YOU WILL NEED:

- Material for junk modelling
- Bibles & Journals
- Church Video
- Wooden building blocks
- Marker Pens (ideally Sharpies)
- Sellotape/Scissors etc
- Balloons
- Paper / Pens
- Small team prize



### The warm-up (5 minutes)

- In teams create the best junk model structure using assorted items (newspapers/ milk bottles/cereal boxes/jam jars etc.)
- Award points for design/structure/teamwork and give a small prize to the winning team.

**Point:** Many parts can come together to make one very unique, very interesting thing – just like the Church!



### Starting out (10 minutes)

- Ask the group the following questions and then encourage them to share their answer with the group.
  - *If you could have any job what would it be and why?*
  - *What word/s come to mind when you think of “church”?*

**Point:** We all have different ideas, opinions, thoughts, feelings...but we can still be united and come together. The Church is full of people with all sorts of jobs and interests!

## Pushing on (20 minutes)

- Read: 1 Corinthians 12:12-20
- Watch: Video – “What is “Church”?” on the Youth Way of Life YouTube channel (search: Youth Way of Life Diocese of Ely)
- Discussion Questions:
  - Why believe in God? – Opportunity for sharing testimonies
  - How is the Church still going and growing?
  - What have been your best & worst experiences of church?
- Digging Deeper:

*The Early Church* – origins and style - see Acts 2:1-40 for the ‘birth’ of the Early Church with Pentecost (see *Resource Sheet 1*)

*One Body* – What it means to be baptised and how we can live more like Jesus together (see *Resource Sheet 2*)
- Helpful Quote:

*“...we are far more united and have far more in common with each other than things that divide us.”* – Jo Cox, 2016

## The final sprint (10 minutes)

- Allow time for the group to fill in their journals
- Encourage them to think in what ways they might be able to help their Church/community – as individuals or a group
- Write them down and invite group members to sign this sheet as a symbol of their willingness to join in as a part of One Body

## Crossing the line (15 minutes)

- Allow time for questions and response to the session
- Give each member a wooden building block them to write/draw their name on/something that represents them
  - Place all the blocks together to make a structure to represent our unity through our difference. That is the Church - One God, One Body.

# WHOLENESS: GIVING YOUR ALL TO GOD

## PRAYER POINTS

- For the team as they lead discussion & offer encouragement
- For each person to realise their gifts and to think about how they might be able to use them for God and for good

## YOU WILL NEED:

- Bibles & Journals
- Dice
- Paper / Pens
- Wrapped 1p pieces
- Balloons



### Starting out (10 minutes)

- Ask the group the following questions and then encourage them to share their answer with the group.
  - *If you could have any skill, what would it be and why?*
  - *What are you already good at?*

**Point:** We all have gifts and get better through learning, practice and discipline - so it is with following Jesus. Reading the Bible, praying & meeting together are great ways to start!

- Are there particular gifts you think you might have spotted in other people in the group? Don't hold back from mentioning them in the discussion.



### Pushing on (20 minutes)

- Read: Romans 12:1-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
- Play: Parcel Swap Game
  - Wrap a 1p piece up in different papers/boxes (enough for everyone) and place them in the middle of the room.
  - Take it in turns to roll a dice. When a player rolls a 6 they may take a present or steal another player's. When all the presents are gone, set a timer for 60 seconds. Unwrap them.



**Point:** Sometimes we might wish we had other gifts, but we each have gifts given us by God. It's up to us how to use them

- Discussion Questions:
  - How easy is it to compare yourself to others? When and why do we do this? (See Exodus 20:17) Can this change?
  - How can we recognise what gifts we have and how we can use them for God? What impact would that have on our life?
- Digging Deeper:
  - *Living differently* – Read Romans 12v.2 and the challenge of living like Jesus in the world today (see also Luke 9:23-25)
  - *Spiritual gifts* – Read 1 Cor.12:4-11 & Romans 12:6-8 – see the joy in there being different gifts. (See Resource Sheet 3)
- Helpful Quote:

*“Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.”* – Saint Catherine of Seina

### **The final sprint (10 minutes)**

- Allow time for the group to fill in their journals
- Encourage group members to draw their week as a pie chart. What do they spend most of their time doing? Challenge them to see where they can find “God time” this week (and beyond!)

### **Crossing the line (15 minutes)**

- Allow time for questions and response to the session
- Hand each person a balloon, a slip of paper and a pen
- Ask them to write a gift they have which they would like to use. Put the note in the (deflated) balloon and when they are ready, blow the balloons up as their “Amen”



# HOLINESS: BECOMING MORE LIKE JESUS

## PRAYER POINTS

- Wisdom for the team in leading and facilitating discussion
- For each person to begin to see themselves as God does and to continue to learn more of Jesus

## YOU WILL NEED:

- Pen / Paper
- Blank CDs
- Balloons
- Bibles and Journals
- Sharpies
- Post-It Notes
- Video Psalm 139



### The warm-up (5 minutes)

- Hand out a balloon to everyone with a felt tip pen and ask them to draw a self-portrait on the balloon before blowing it up to see the final result. Best resemblance wins.

**Point:** Sometimes we don't see ourselves the way others do and certainly not as God does. We warp ourselves into something we are not – just like these balloons



### Starting out (10 minutes)

- Ask the group the following questions and then encourage them to share their answer with the group
  - *Who is your biggest role model and why?*
  - *What one word best describes you?*

**Point:** We all have someone we can look up to and as Christians we believe that the ultimate role model is Jesus. How we see ourselves might make it seem impossible to be like Him.



### Pushing on (20 minutes)

- Read: Psalm 139:1-18

- Stop/Go (or timelapse) video based on Psalm 139
- Discussion Questions:
  - How would your colleagues, friends or family describe you? How does that compare to what you said to describe yourself? (Consider how we are all wonderfully and fearfully made (v.14))
  - How would you describe Jesus? Why do you think people choose to follow him? (See Matt. 4:18-22, Matt 9:9)
- Digging Deeper:
  - *Self-Image* - How God looks at us (see Samuel 16:7) versus how the world looks at us. Consider pressures of media on body image and worldly ideals (*see Resource Sheet 4*)
  - *More Like Jesus* – Explore the idea that the more time you spend with someone, the more you become like them; sharing in-jokes, phrases, habits, experiences... So it is with God. The more time we spend with Him, the more we become like Him.
- Helpful Quote:
 

*“God doesn’t make junk. You are an original masterpiece.”* – The Skit Guys, God’s Chisel Remastered

### **The final sprint (10 minutes)**

- Allow time for the group to fill in their journals
- Encourage the group to think of where they might be able to be like Jesus in their homes/work places/community/churches this week
- Ask them to write down somewhere they would like to “be” Jesus on a piece of paper. Collect them in and pray over them.

### **Crossing the line (15 minutes)**

- Allow time for questions and response to the session
- Give each member a blank CD and encourage them to write words to describe Jesus. Encourage them to think how they can be more like Him as they see their reflection in the CD
- Allow space where people can mould playdoh as a symbol of allowing God to shape us to be more like Him

# WITNESS: TELLING THE WORLD

## PRAYER POINTS

- For the group to grow in confidence in sharing their faith with others
- For each member to feel empowered and excited to share their 'God story'

## YOU WILL NEED:

- Paper / Pens
- Bible / Journals
- Timer
- String



### The warm-up (5 minutes)

- Play a version of 'Just a Minute', asking for volunteers to talk about their chosen subject for 1 minute with as few repetitions, pauses and tangents as possible.

**Point:** Sometimes talking about what we know really well can be super hard – so how are we supposed to go out and tell people about God, if we aren't sure we know all the answers?



### Starting out (10 minutes)

- Ask the group the following questions and then encourage them to share their answer with the group:
  - *If you could invite 5 people round for tea – alive or not – who would they be and why?*
  - *What is the best piece of news you have ever received? How did it make you feel?*

**Point:** When we hear good news we often share it, but do we want to share the Good News (Jesus) with others?

## Pushing on (20 minutes)

- Read: Matthew 28:16-20 and Romans 1:16
- Watch: Video - “Ripples” on Youth Way of Life YouTube channel – what difference can you make by sharing Jesus?
- Discussion Questions:
  - What do you think the “Good News” is? Why do you think it is called good?
  - What are the challenges of sharing our faith with others?
  - What/who would make us more confident to share our faith? (Sometimes known as “witnessing” or “evangelising”)
- Digging Deeper:
  - *The Good News*: Christians often talk about sharing “The Good News”, but what actually is it, why is it so good and why should we share it? (See Resource Sheet 5)
  - The Persecuted Church: Where are the places we need to share God the most? (See Resource Sheet 6)
- Helpful Quote:

*“Preach the gospel, and if necessary use words”* – Francis of Assisi

## The final sprint (10 minutes)

- Allow time for the group to fill in their journals
- Encourage group members to write down the names of 7 people they would like to pray to know Jesus better (one for each day)

## Crossing the line (15 minutes)

- Allow time for questions and response to the session
- Give each person a piece of string and ask them to imagine it as being their life.
- Ask them to lay it out on the floor and arrange it so it shows their “life-line” – the highs and lows of their life.
- Now encourage them to think of where God has been in all some/all of those times. This is their God story.
- Reminder that Jesus is with us, always (Matt 28:20)

# KINDNESS: SHARING THE LOVE

## PRAYER POINTS

- For each member to be encouraged in their discipleship
- For each person to feel convicted to love first and foremost as God loves them

## YOU WILL NEED:

- Paper / Pens
- Paper Plates
- Random Acts Sheet
- Bible / Journals
- YouTube clips

### Starting out (10 minutes)

- Ask the group the following questions and then encourage them to share their answer with the group
  - *What is the best present you have ever received? Why?*
  - *Who is the kindest person you know?*

**Point:** There have been a lot of distressing headlines in recent months but the stand out moments have been those of people sharing kindness and love to one another, no matter what

### Pushing on (20 minutes)

- Video – Search 'Brownlee Brothers Cross Finish Line on YouTube' as example of how we can encourage others
- Read: Colossians 3:12-17 & Hebrews 12:1
- Discussion Questions:
  - What is the kindest act you have ever seen/received?
  - How would you describe what love is? Are there different kinds of love? (See Resource Sheet 7)
  - What makes loving everyone (no matter what) so hard? Why? What would make it easier?

- Digging Deeper:
  - *Love* – How important loving others is to Jesus (see Mark 12:29-31)
  - *Helping Others* - Just as we need to keep going and running the race, so we can also be part of the “cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1) to help others
- Watch: Search “Black Eyed Peas, #wheresthelove on YouTube. This was adapted in response to several tragic world events.
- Helpful Quote:
 

*“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”* – Jesus, (Luke 6:31)



### **The final sprint (10 minutes)**

- Allow time for the group to fill in their journals
- Give each person a “Random Acts of Kindness” sheet with 7 blank spaces – one for each day of the week
- Encourage the group to think of different things we could each do this week to make the world a little brighter



### **Crossing the line (15 minutes)**

- Allow time for questions and response to the session
- Hand out paper plates to everyone to write their name on
- Pass them around the group for people to write an encouragement for each other on and take away as a reminder that we are loved – by one another but also by God

# BOLDNESS: SPEAKING UP FOR JUSTICE

## PRAYER POINTS

- For wisdom and discernment in handling sensitively any issues of injustice that may arise in conversation
- For each person to feel empowered that they can be the change the world needs to see

## YOU WILL NEED:

- Paper / Pens
- Bibles & Journals
- Map
- Stickers
- God of Justice' mp3
- Playdoh



### Starting out (10 minutes)

- Ask the group the following questions and then encourage them to share their answer with the group
  - *If you could get rid of 1 thing completely, what would it be?*
  - *What makes you angry?*

**Point:** We all want some things to be different. What would our perfect world look like and how would we make it?



### Pushing on (20 minutes)

- Read: Isaiah 61:1-3 & Ephesians 6:10-18
- Discussion Questions:
  - How can we make a difference in the world today?
  - What current events/situations are on your minds/hearts?
  - What one thing could make the world a better place?
- Digging Deeper:
  - *The Armour of God:* What that might it look like for us today – how can we equip ourselves to fight for good? (*See Resource Sheet 8*)



- *Hope and Change* - Read Isaiah 61:1-3 – Consider how God is a God of possibilities and hope
  - *The Holy Spirit* – Read John 14:16 – being a Christian and speaking up for justice won't always be easy but God has not left to do it by ourselves
- Helpful Quote:  
“Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.” – Benjamin Franklin



### **The final sprint (10 minutes)**

- Allow time for the group to fill in their journals
- Play: Tim Hughes' *God of Justice*
- Read Micah 6:8 and ask the group to think of what they each want to change and how they can do it – consciously praying into these situations each day



### **Crossing the line (15 minutes)**

- Allow time for questions and response to the session
- Lay a map of the world in the middle of the room and invite people to place stickers where they want to pray for as they pray for current world issues and leaders

# THE COMMISSION: GOING FORWARD

This may be the end of the journey with these resources but we pray you continue the *Way of Life* individually and as a group in the days, weeks, months and years ahead.

We truly believe that faith is not a sprint but rather it is a marathon; and one which takes training, trying and trusting to keep going.

Here are some of our top tips as you continue on the journey:

## BRINGING THE BIBLE TO LIFE

If colouring is your thing, find some biblical colouring to spend time focussing on the word and creating something beautiful. If writing is your thing, get a Bible with space to make notes.

## PRAYER JOURNALLING

Keeping a prayer diary can be a great way to see how God is moving in our lives. It can also be helpful to look back at our conversations with God and see how our relationship has changed.

## DOWNLOAD A BIBLE APP

Download a daily Bible reading app which will help you read the Bible each day and understand the passage/s - don't forget to find a translation that works for you (the NIV, NRSV, NLT and Message translations are good places to start.)

## PRAYER PARTNERS

Find someone – or a few people – to meet regularly with; to pray with, chat with, share where you're at with God with and grow together with.

## KEEP ASKING QUESTIONS

Never be afraid to ask questions. It's good to ask and there is always more to learn – whether you're just starting out or have been running the race for a very long time!

## KEEP RUNNING THE RACE!

Here's the big one...don't give up! God is on your side – no matter what. Life won't always be easy, but Jesus promises that he is with us; always.

We hope this resource has helped you a little along the way and our prayer for you going forward in all that is to come is this;

May you turn to God each new day,  
May you find peace when you pray,  
May you love others just as God loves you,  
May all you say be good and true.  
May you in the world be a shining light  
May you defend what is just and right.  
May you turn to God and draw ever near,  
May you find Him now, may you find Him here.  
Amen.

And finally;

“So here's what I want you to do, God helping you:  
Take your everyday, ordinary life — your sleeping,  
eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—  
and place it before God as an offering.”

*Romans 12:1 (The Message)*



# RESOURCE SHEET #1: THE EARLY CHURCH

- The book of Acts in the New Testament is essentially the story of the Early Church – how it started and how it grew
- It began with a small meeting of disciples in an upper room and now sees c.2.3 billion believers - that's a third of the planet!
- A whirlwind tour of the Early Church in Acts:
  - Small beginnings** – Read Acts 1:12-14
  - Growth after Pentecost** – Read Acts 2:41
  - Church-style** – Read Acts 2:42-47
  - Problems and Divisions** – Read Acts 5:1-2 & 6:1-5
- The Early Church was not without its problems – there were disagreements over which laws were still to be obeyed, who they were to follow and how Church should be
- Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 and see how there were divisions even in the Early Church about who to follow in the absence of the physical Jesus
- Many of the books in the New Testament are letters to the early churches – letters to churches in Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae and Thessalonica
- Several of these letters were written by Paul (formerly Saul) and were meant as encouragements to the churches in those places; giving instructions and advice on how to live life for Jesus and to help settle any disputes

The same problems can still be found in the Church today with differences in styles, theologies (thoughts about God) and denominations of Church

The Church is neither a building nor a place; it is the collection of believers gathered to worship One God

# RESOURCE SHEET #2: BAPTISM



- The Church of England website defines baptism as this;

Baptism is a response to God's love –  
a desire and a commitment to respond to God's call to  
follow the example of Jesus Christ.

It is also a celebration, a time to come together with family and friends;  
remembering that you are loved by God, are part of a wider community and  
have a place with God's people.

- Read Luke 3:15-16. People were being baptised as a symbol of committing their lives to God before Jesus' ministry began. Here, John speaks of the difference between being baptised with water in a physical sense as he could do, and being baptised by fire in a spiritual sense as only the Lord can do
- When people are baptised it is a commitment to live with and for Jesus and in doing so, they join the One Body (the Church) and are part of a global community of believers
- In a baptism service, it is not only the individual who commits to following Jesus but the Church congregation, too, make a commitment to help them in their walk with Jesus. Parents and Godparents have a particular responsibility to pray and to support those who have been baptised as children or babies. Their job is to help children and young people grow up into the faith they were baptised into, so that they are ready to own that faith for themselves as adults.
- Being a Christian doesn't end at being baptised. Theologian John Stott said; "becoming a Christian is one thing; *being* a Christian is another." Life has to be lived differently to truly follow God.
- Following on from being baptised, read 1 John 2:3-6 and Romans 12:1-2 about how life lived with Jesus looks different. There are challenges in behaving differently but it is this way of life that is pleasing to God
- Discuss what the challenges are which might stop us living "The Jesus Way" – Peer pressure? Too boring? Fear?



## RESOURCE SHEET #3: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 & Romans 12:6-8 and ask what you think the spiritual gifts are and why they are important;

**Wisdom:** Wisdom: NOT knowing something because of your own experience...BUT knowing the right thing to say or do because God tells you

**Knowledge:** NOT knowing lots of trivia...BUT knowing specific information about someone or something because the Spirit has told you

**Faith:** NOT just going to church and/or home group, prayer group...BUT having a confidence in God and His promises because of your relationship with Him

**Healing:** NOT having a super-power to heal every injury...BUT seeing people healed because of God's power

**Miraculous powers:** NOT something which makes you superhuman...BUT seeing God do impossible things because you have prayed

**Prophecy:** NOT seeing into the future in a sci-fi film kind of way...BUT speaking God's truth and encouragement into a situation which can sometimes be for the future, but more often the present because God is showing you

**Discernment:** NOT that you are a perfect judge of character...BUT knowing whether something is good or evil, true or false, because God has told you

**Tongues:** NOT being fluent in all languages...BUT a 'prayer language' that helps you speak to God in your own way through song, words or prayer

**Interpretation:** NOT a job description for those good with languages BUT knowing what someone speaking in tongues is saying because God tells you what it means

# RESOURCE SHEET #4: SOCIAL MEDIA STATS



- Play a game of higher or lower trying to guess how many users each social media platform has per month

**Twitter** (317,000,000 monthly users\*)

Fun Fact: 53% users never post updates

**Pinterest** (150,000,000 monthly users\*)

Fun Fact: 45% of online women use Pinterest, only 17% men

**YouTube** (1,000,000,000 monthly users\*)

Fun Fact: 2,000,000 video views per minute

**Instagram** (600,000,000 monthly users\*)

Fun Fact: 53% users follow brands

**Snapchat** (173,000,000 monthly users\*\*)

Fun Fact: 10,000,000,000 video views per day

**Whatsapp** (1,300,000,000 monthly users\*\*)

Fun Fact: One of the most popular mobile apps worldwide

**Facebook** (1,900,000,000 monthly users\*)

Fun Fact: 75% of users spend 20 minutes or more online

- Story: In November 2015, Instagram star Essena O'Neill revealed a dark truth about social media. She described it as; "contrived perfection made to get attention" as she had made money from simply posting photos showing off certain items. She said she "wasn't living in a 3D world"
- Ask: Do you use social media? Do you think it is a good thing or not? Why/ why not?

\*According to Social Media Today (March 2017)

\*\*According to Statista (September 2017)

# RESOURCE SHEET #5: THE GOOD NEWS

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

**John 3:16-17**

- This passage may well be one of the most heard Bible verses. It is often seen on posters, on t-shirts and called out on streets to passers-by because of the way it summarises the message of what we call “The Good News”
- As Christians, we believe this is the greatest news we could ever hear; that God – Creator of the universe and all in it – loves us; inexplicably, unconditionally and eternally
- Paul writes in his letter to the Romans (8:38-39);

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- When people talk about the Good News – this is what they mean. That we have a God who loves us no matter what
- This is manifested in Jesus’ life and death. He came so that we may have life and have it to the full (John 10:10) – but he isn’t just talking about an earthly life. Jesus died on the cross so that we could be forgiven for all the wrong we do and make ourselves right with God so we can spend eternal life with Him, when we say sorry and choose to live our lives for Him
- The Good News is worth sharing. Jesus didn’t come for a few; he came for everyone. We believe everyone should have a chance to hear this Good News – it’s up to them to accept it.



# RESOURCE SHEET #6: THE PERSECUTED CHURCH



- Being a Christian in the UK today might not be cool. You might be mocked for believing in a God you can't see, or called a hypocrite for going to church
- Open Doors is a charity which works to serve persecuted Christians across the world ([www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org)). It has a "World Watch List" which features the top 50 most difficult and dangerous countries to be a Christian
- The top 5 most difficult countries (as of September 2017) are; North Korea, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sudan. In spite of persecution of varying degrees, there are still millions of Christians following Jesus in these places
- There are several responses Christians can have in the persecuted Church; go 'underground' with secret meetings, establish 'state-approved' churches, exile or death. These are hard choices to make but every day, all over the world, people are making them
- A missionary is someone who has been sent on a religious mission; usually, but not exclusively, in a foreign country
- The founder of Open Doors, Brother Andrew, is a Christian missionary famous for smuggling Bibles into communist countries where they were banned – he tells stories of how he managed to get Bibles to people who otherwise wouldn't or couldn't read them as they weren't in their language. This is still happening in the world today
- Read Matthew 5:44. Jesus says; "But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...". Ask why would that be?
- Be ready to commit to pray for those who are being persecuted, as well as those who are persecuting

# RESOURCE SHEET #7: LOVE

- The English language has one word for love. It covers all feelings of affection from a love of food, to a love of a television show, to the love of a family member or friend.
- The Greek language has four definitions of love;

**Agape:** This is used to describe the unconditional love which remains no matter the change to circumstances. This is the kind of love we receive from God and what we should strive to share to others as Christians.

**Eros:** This is used to describe a romantic, physical love. This is the “I’m in love with someone” kind of love that we see in romantic comedy films.

**Philia:** This is used to describe the love of friendship that may resemble something like a family bond – a sort of ‘brotherly love’. This is the kind of love we see in “Bromance” films.

**Storge:** This is used to describe the love found in families. This is the kind of love we see between a parent and child and vice versa.

- As of September 2017, a simple Google search for “love” came up with 7,830,000,000 results in just 0.75 seconds – why do you think that is? Why are we so fascinated with and by the idea of love?
- Read 1 John 4:16-17&19

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them....

We love because he first loved us.

- In whatever way we love, we must remember that we are able to love because God first loved us

# RESOURCE SHEET #8: THE ARMOUR OF GOD



- Read Ephesians 6:10-17

**Belt of truth:** Belts are useful. They hold up our clothes and keep things in the right place. By wearing a belt of truth we are supporting ourselves with the knowledge that we are loved by a God who is bigger than anything life can throw our way.

**Breastplate of righteousness:** The heart is our most important organ. The breastplate would have been a soldier's most important piece of armour. By guarding ourselves with the righteousness of Jesus, we are protecting ourselves from that which would harm us.

**Shoes of peace:** Wearing shoes is helpful when you're going places. They bring comfort and protection and so by wearing shoes of peace you are travelling safe in the knowledge you go with a God who cares.

**Shield of faith:** A shield is a great form of defence; but even more so when joined together with other shields, in the way of the Romans. So it is when we join with other Christians, made stronger by our confidence in God and His promises.

**Helmet of salvation:** Our head is where our minds are and where our knowledge comes from. Wearing the helmet of salvation means that we know we are free because of Jesus.

**Sword of the spirit:** The sword of the Spirit is the Bible. It is another name for the Word of God as described in Hebrews 4:12. It is a weapon that does not seek to harm but rather has the power to heal.

- There are lots of other ways the armour of God could be interpreted but essentially it tells us that God is equipping us for spiritual battle. Being a Christian won't always be easy; but we aren't alone and we aren't unprepared.

# HELPFUL CONTACTS

## Diocese of Ely website

To see more of what is happening in the Diocese of Ely, including events happening near you, visit:

[www.elydiocese.org](http://www.elydiocese.org)

There are lots of resources and ideas you can follow-up at the Way of Life section of the Diocese of Ely's web site: [www.elydiocese.org/way-of-life](http://www.elydiocese.org/way-of-life)

## Helpful Links

Remind App (available at Apple Store and Google Play) @ywol-rtr

YouTube videos found in a playlist by searching "Youth Way of Life Diocese of Ely"

## Way of Life email

We'd love to hear your thoughts and feedback on the *Way of Life* and to know if there is anything we can do to help you as you continue going forward.

If there is anything you would like to say or share, please email us at:

[lisa.tulfer@elydiocese.org](mailto:lisa.tulfer@elydiocese.org)

## Acknowledgements

The Diocese of Ely is grateful to the work done by Rachael Heffer and Emma Perkins in creating the material for the *Youth Way of Life: Run the Race* on which this resource is based, and to Mike Booker for adapting the material for use by adults.

Nurturing a confident people of God