

## TOGETHER APART

### *A simple curriculum for use online*

*The current period of quarantine and isolation provides uncharted territory for youth workers. While it is an anxious time for many, as we strive to keep up contact with our socially-distanced young people, it is also an opportunity for us to find completely new approaches to youth ministry. As we rethink how we previously engaged teenagers and seek to translate much of this now into a digital context, we find ourselves at the frontier of youth work innovation. However, this takes time, and while we explore new possibilities for online youth work, it's important to continue to support our young people as they try to find their feet in this new normal.*

*This six-part series of session plans are a suggestion of how you might run a fairly traditional-style youth group by using an online format. **This is not a revolutionary new youth work model**; rather it's a basic tool to help you continue to care for your young people, to keep sharing Jesus with them and to bring them together to have fellowship with one another. Also remember: technology is not failproof – if what we or you've planned doesn't work for technical reasons, that's ok. Youth work has always been about connection rather than content, and that's doubly true now.*

### **Session 5: God's Plan (50 minute)** *Study material used with permission*

SESSION PLAN	LEADERS GUIDANCE for use in online groups
<p><b>BEFORE THE SESSION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If you need to remind young people how to join your online youth group, get in touch (making sure you follow safeguarding procedures) and make sure they understand how to work your chosen video chat platform.</li> <li>- Schedule a time to meet and forward any relevant access information to your group.</li> <li>- Prior to the session, ask all the leaders to buy a packet of Oreos and have them ready for the leader challenge.</li> <li>- Prior to the session, read over the game for today which requires additional preparation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If you haven't done this already, choose a video chat platform that is best / safest for your needs. Register and download your chosen app and familiarise yourself with how it works.</li> <li>- For guidance on creating an online safeguarding policy please see the 38:1 Youthscape document.</li> <li>- Make sure you are available and ready to go plenty of time before the start of your scheduled meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>OPENING THOUGHT</b>	

# Youthscape

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As young people get logged on to the video chat, have them discuss the opening thought for today...</li> <li>- Do you believe things happen for a reason?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage the young people to talk through different aspects of the question...</li> <li>- Do good things happen for a reason?</li> <li>- What about the bad things?</li> <li>- Do you believe there's a plan for your life? For the lives of your friends?</li> <li>- Who do you think is in control of the plan?</li> </ul>
<p><b>CHALLENGE (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Once everyone is online, officially start the session with a leader challenge.</li> <li>- All the leaders should have an oreo ready for the challenge. Have them place the oreo on their forehead and then put their hands behind their back.</li> <li>- Once the timer starts, the leaders must use only their face to work the oreo from their forehead to their mouths.</li> <li>- If the oreo drops, they have to pick it up and start over.</li> <li>- The winner is the first to eat their oreo and show the group their empty mouth!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If you want the young people to be able to see a visual countdown, load a 60 second countdown on YouTube and share your screen (if you're able) so that they can watch the clock tick down.</li> <li>- Alternatively, nominate someone to time 1 minute on their phones. Have them shout out regular intervals such as 30 seconds to go, 10 seconds to go, etc.</li> <li>- After the challenge, celebrate the winner before moving on to the next activity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>GAME (10 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who am I?</li> <li>- Before the session starts, write out the names of different famous people/characters on pieces of paper or sticky notes. You can also include names of people in the group – the main thing is that everyone in the group would know the names you write down.</li> <li>- In this game, you assign the name of a famous person to a player and they have to work out who they are by asking questions. However, everyone else can only answer the player's questions with 'yes' or 'no'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explain how the game works and give an example of how the game might play out (e.g. use Joe as an example).</li> <li>- Make sure to have a list of names ready before the session starts and that there are a good number and variety of people/characters on there.</li> <li>- Name ideas include:            Superheroes such as Superman, Batman, Thor, Hulk, Iron Man, etc.            Disney characters such as Mickey Mouse, Elsa from Frozen, etc.            Cartoons such as Shrek, Spongebob, Scooby Doo, etc.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- For example, Joe is a young person in your group. You ask Joe to close his eyes (no peaking) and show everyone else a piece of paper with the name 'Superman'. Joe can now open his eyes and start asking questions to try and work out who he is.</li><li>- He might ask questions like 'Am I male?' and everyone would answer 'yes'. But if he asked, 'Am I male or female?' no one would be able to say anything because the group can only answer 'yes' or 'no'.</li><li>- Good questions include: Am I male? Am I female? Am I in a movie? Am I an animal? Am I young? Am I old? Am I American? Am I British? Etc... Am I a real person? Am I fictional?</li><li>- If the young person is struggling to work out who they are, you can give them clues to help them figure it out.</li><li>- Once they guess correctly, choose someone else and assign them a new name.</li></ul>	<p>Famous leaders such as Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, Greta Thunberg, etc.</p>
<p><b>Story (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Explain to the group that you are going to read them a true story and then ask them some questions about what they've heard.</li><li>- In preparation for the story, maybe ask the young people if they know who Gordon Ramsey is and what he's famous for.</li><li>- If you have time, you might want to look up a clip of Gordon Ramsey in the kitchen to remind the group who he is.</li></ul> <p><b>The bigger picture</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Make sure you have read through the story beforehand.</li><li>- Take your time and make sure the young people are listening before you start.</li><li>- If you want the young people to follow along while you read, you can either send a copy of the story to them beforehand or share your screen while on the video call (if possible).</li></ul>

Gordon Ramsey had dreamed of becoming a professional football player throughout his childhood. And when, during a match for his youth team, he was spotted by a Glasgow Rangers scout, it seemed all his dreams had come true.

After completing trials, Rangers signed Gordon aged fifteen. For three years, he played for the youth teams of a club which was consistently at the top of the Scottish championship, and one of the best teams in Europe for a young player to be learning his trade. There was a problem, however. One of Gordon's knees was consistently giving him problems, and he often missed matches through injury. Eventually, doctors told Gordon that his knee wasn't healing properly. His professional football career was over before it had really begun.

Most people are planning their first career when they turn 18, but Gordon was already faced with the reality that he would have to embark on a second. Devastated, he had to rethink his entire future. After careful thought he began his second career as a chef, a decision that saw him leave his hometown in Scotland to study in London and Paris with some of the best chefs in the world. Thanks to his determination and hard work, Gordon is now a well-known celebrity chef, with several TV programmes and restaurants in London, Tokyo and New York. He still occasionally plays a game of football for charity, but it seems strange to think that had it not been for a sad and heart-breaking problem, Gordon's true gifting might never have come to the surface.

**QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION (20 minutes)**

## **What do you think about what you've heard?**

- Imagine you are in the position Gordon found himself in when he found out he would never be able to play football again. How would you feel?
- Looking back now, do you think Gordon would be able to see the 'bigger picture' and not feel angry about having to give up football?
- What do you think Gordon learnt from his first career as a footballer and his injury?

## **Themes from Gordon's story**

- Do you think God has a plan for us? Does this include our careers?
- Think of a time when you have had to give up something you love doing temporarily or permanently, was it hard? Why?
- Consider the last time you were angry. Were you angry at yourself, your family and friends or even God? How did you recover? What did you learn?
- Think about two very different things that you are good at. How would you feel to lose one of these skills?

## **Optional bible study questions:**

- Read Job 1:1-22
- Despite terrible things happening to Job, he doesn't give up on God – is this how a Christian should act when bad things happen?
- You may have heard the phrase 'the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away' before. What do you think it means?
- How do you think Job's story compares to Gordon's?

- Make sure to read through the questions beforehand and have an idea of responses so that you can facilitate conversation if it seems to be drying up.
- Consider thinking about how you want the young people to answer these questions. Do you want a hands-up system and then you choose who answers? Do you want them each to take a couple of minutes to think of an answer and then you choose someone at random to answer?

# Youthscape

<p><b>PRAYER (10 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Close the session by praying together.</li><li>- Ask the young people what they're anxious about and how you can support them at this time.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Again, think about how you want to young people to interact in this. Do you want to go around and ask each person for a prayer request? Do you want to leave it open and see who volunteers a prayer point?</li><li>- Also, if you want leave time for the young people to pray as well make sure you explain to the group how that will work.</li></ul>
<p><b>POST-SESSION</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Think about how you want to session to end. You can either end the meeting once is prayer is over and goodbyes are said, or you can allow space for the young people to chat and catch up then end the meeting at a later time.</li><li>- Ask the leaders to stick around for an online debrief after the young people leave the chat. Talk through any concerns (safeguarding, pastoral, etc.) and decide on how best to follow up.</li></ul>