

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 4: Curiosity and Conviction (50 minute) *Study material used with permission*

SESSION PLAN	LEADERS GUIDANCE for use in online groups
BEFORE THE SESSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. - Schedule a time to meet and forward any relevant access information to your group. - Prior to the session, ask all the leaders to buy a straw and a pack of skittles and make sure they have a couple of bowls ready at home. - Prior to the session, read over the game for today which requires additional preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. - For guidance on creating an online safeguarding policy please see the 38:1 Youthscape document. - Make sure you are available and ready to go plenty of time before the start of your scheduled meeting.

<p>OPENING THOUGHT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As young people get logged on to the video chat, have them discuss the opening thought for today... - Would you stand up for something you believe in even if everyone else was against you? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage the young people to talk through different aspects of the question... - What kind of thing would you stand up for? - How strong is the opposition against you? - What if standing up for something you believed in was actually very dangerous?
<p>CHALLENGE (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once everyone is online, officially start the session with a leader challenge. - Get the leaders to bring out their bowls, skittles and straw and have them empty all the skittles into one bowl. - When the timer starts, they have to put the straw in their mouths and use the straw to try and move skittles from one bowl to another. - The leader with the most skittles in the second bowl at the end of the challenge is the winner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. - 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. - After the challenge, celebrate the winner before moving on to the next activity.
<p>GAME (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pictionary - There's a couple of ways to play Pictionary as a group. If you are using a video platform where you are able to share your screen you can use this as your page to draw on. It may even be possible for other people in the group to also use that screen and add their own drawings by annotating. - Alternatively, you can just use paper and pen to draw and the young people can shout out their guesses. If you are using the paper and pen option, you may need to angle your screen so that it's on the paper or you could hold the piece of paper up or use bluetac to stick it to a wall where you can then draw on it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Before the session starts, experiment with the video platform you are using to see if it would be possible to play the game digitally. - Explain how the game works for your context and give an example of what you might draw, who might guess and how points work. - Make sure to have a list of things to draw ready before the session starts and that there are a good number and variety of things on there.

<p>Regardless of camera angle, the most important thing is that the young people can see what you draw, as you draw it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Points are scored on an individual basis so if a young person guesses correctly, they get that point. The individual with the most points at the end of the game is the winner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assign one leader to keep track of points and decide where points should be awarded if two people get the right answer at the same time.
<p>Story (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. <p>The insistent heroine</p> <p>A few years ago, 11-year-old Tilly Smith, holidaying with her family in South-East Asia, did not expect to become caught up in one of the biggest disasters of modern times. However, when she was, her presence of mind saved more than a hundred other tourists from the deadly waves of the infamous tsunami.</p> <p>Playing on a beach in Phuket, Thailand, Tilly was struck by strange goings-on in the sea. She noticed that the water was bubbling: 'all frothy like the top of a beer'. This occurred to her as odd, before she remembered similar images in a video shown to her in a Geography class – a video about how a tsunami forms. Immediately she warned her parents, but they did not believe her.</p> <p>Tilly was not about to give up – she was sure that danger was not far away. She became hysterical, and eventually, her mum and dad warned other holidaymakers to clear the beach and hotel. Shortly afterwards, the tsunami hit the now empty beach. Around 200,000 people across the region were killed. The tourists from Tilly's beach survived.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make sure you have read through the story beforehand. - Take your time and make sure the young people are listening before you start. - 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).
<p>QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION (20 minutes)</p>	

What do you think about what you've heard?

- Why do you think Tilly was so insistent? Do you find it hard to believe that she eventually persuaded everyone to clear the beach? Why or why not?
- What does Tilly's story say to you about having courage in your convictions?
- In what situations have you memorably stuck to your guns, or backed down when perhaps you shouldn't have? What happened? Are there times when it's right to back down?

Themes from Tilly's story

- What are the things that you're most convinced of?
- How far would you go to insist on, or defend, the convictions that you've described?
- How do others see your deepest convictions? How do you see the deep convictions of others?

Optional bible study questions:

- Read Jeremiah 26: 1-16
- What are the similarities with Tilly's story?
- Just like Tilly, Jeremiah is insistent in this passage; he doesn't back down. Why do you think this is, and what would the effect have been on the people?
- What does this passage teach us about the virtues of perseverance and courage? How might you grow them more in your own life?
- Look also at 1 Timothy 4: 12. How is the wisdom of this verse exemplified in Tilly, and how could you apply it more to your own life?

- 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?

PRAYER (10 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Close the session by praying together.- Ask the young people what they're anxious about and how you can support them at this time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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?- 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.
POST-SESSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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.- 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.