LIVING MARKS OF MISSION

An educational resource exploring faith and sustainable development
INTRODUCTION

This series was borne out of many conversations with Chaplains and Religious Educators in mid-2017, as we travelled throughout Australia conducting the One World Wontok conferences, sponsored by the Anglican Board of Mission. These conferences engaged students with issues of poverty, justice and sustainable development, and were always a hit with those who attended.

At the end of each day, a reoccurring question was posed by Chaplains and teachers, which generally went along the lines of, “How do we now continue these conversations with students, and encourage sustained action, so the messages of today aren’t forgotten?”

The question led us to invest time and attention in developing this series, which has been specifically tailored for both Chapel services and the classroom. A particular focus is given to the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Church, providing a lens through which we can look at issues of justice and inequality in relation to the Christian faith.

Personal stories from all over the world are told, providing encounters with real people and their struggles and triumphs. This link puts a ‘human face’ on the bigger issues, helping students to understand how they might feel if placed in the same situation.

An introduction is also given to the Sustainable Development Goals, the 17 global goals set by the United Nations which aim for the eradication of poverty and a sustainable future for humanity and the natural world.

We’d like to thank everyone who contributed to the creation of this series – for your ideas, suggestions and feedback – we are very appreciative.

We pray that the content may inspire your students, and spark a lasting dedication to end poverty and fight against injustice, wherever it exists.

God bless

Jess Melas

Development Education and Advocacy Officer
The Anglican Board of Mission

Cover image: A proud member of the ABM - funded Village Savings and Loans project, Machakos, Kenya. © ABM, Ivy Wang 2015.
ABM’S FIVE MARKS OF MISSION

The Five Marks of Mission are an important statement on mission, which expresses the Anglican Communion’s common commitment to, and understanding of, God’s holistic mission.

• Witness to Christ’s saving, forgiving and reconciling love for all people
• Build welcoming, transforming communities of faith
• Stand in solidarity with the poor and needy
• Challenge violence, injustice and oppression, and work for peace and reconciliation
• Protect, care for and renew life on our planet

ABM is the national mission agency of the Anglican Church of Australia. We have a holistic view of God’s mission. We work with Anglican Church partners and others to see lives empowered and transformed spiritually, materially and socially. We help the Anglican Church and the wider community realise and respond to the invitation for all to be a part of God’s hope for the world.
THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Global Goals for Sustainable Development emerged from an extensive global conversation about our common aspirations for the future of our planet. In September 2015, 193 world leaders committed to the 17 goals which addressed three essential areas: ending extreme poverty, fighting inequality and injustice, and fixing climate change.

FORMAT

This resource is designed for use in both Chapel Services and the classroom. The Chapel Services are outlined at the beginning of each of the five sections, after which a lesson plan for the classroom is articulated. This lesson plan incorporates the same stories and structure as the Chapel Services, with the addition of interactive activities, extra useful information, and specific actions that students can take outside the classroom.

There are also PowerPoint slides to accompany the material, which can be used in both settings. These can be accessed from www.abmission.org/mompowerpoint
CONFLICT, RECONCILIATION AND LOVE

“Witness to Christ’s saving, forgiving and reconciling love for all people”

INTRODUCTION

Today we are going to talk about the first Mark of Mission.

This can be found on the PowerPoint slideshow, or the ABM web homepage at: https://www.abmission.org/index.php

Ask the students to think about conflict. What does it look like? Why does it start? What happens during a conflict? How does it end?

Encourage students to share their thoughts with those sitting next to them.

“Conflict can exist on many levels. It can be personal, as in a conflict between siblings or friends, or on a much larger scale, between countries or groups within a country.

When a conflict affects a whole country, the results can be devastating for people, whose homes, work, and even their very lives can be destroyed, leaving them with nothing.”
Main Story

“Today we are going to learn about the story of Nahimana. Nahimana is a widow around 60 years of age, living with her two daughters in western Burundi, at a place called Gasenyi. Her name literally means “Only God can intervene”.

(Read the story. You might like to ask students to read one paragraph each.)

Nahimana knows only too well the effects of conflict within a country. In April 2015, Burundi descended into turmoil after President Pierre Nkurunziza’s controversial decision to run for a third consecutive term - a vote he later won amid violent protests. Since then, more than 300,000 people have fled the country due to ongoing ethnic violence, and hundreds of thousands more have been internally displaced.*

Nahimana decided to host four women and their families who had fled the town of Kinama, one of the areas worst affected by the violence in 2015. She recounted her story through the Anglican Communion;

“I really had no capacity to take charge of such a number of persons on my own. What I have is the love that pushes me to not consider what I have or don’t have to help someone in need. I simply act in love”.

She told the refugees, “Even though you don’t know me, come, you will share with me what I have and you will stay in my small house until you feel safe to go back to your houses.”

Nahimana and her daughters shared one room, and left another room and a sitting room to those families. “I am happy to contribute as I can to save a life,” said Nahimana with a sincere smile on her face.

The community of Gasenyi has experienced the impact of the command of Jesus, “Love one another.”

Gasenyi Church originally had around 200 members, most of whom have very low incomes. Because of the witness of people like Nahimana towards the refugees, 150 new members have joined the congregation and the parish is now struggling to find ways to extend the Church building and buy new chairs.

“We thought for a long time that the love preached in the Gospel is an ideal, a concept, even fiction. But we have really seen that it is a reality; it is true,” said one of the new members.

Now Gasenyi Church is the witness of the verse written in Acts 2: 47 “…And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

The Gasenyi Church were assisted by the Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi, using funds given by organisations like ABM through the Anglican Communion. They have provided seeds, planting materials, livestock and training in agriculture and animal husbandry. The parish is now producing food for everyone through their kitchen gardens, the first harvest being made early in 2016.

* According to a report released by International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and Burundian Human Rights League (ITEKA) in November 2016.
QUESTIONS

• What dangers or difficulties would the refugees have experienced as they fled Kinama?
• What compelled Nahimana to share her home with the four families?
• What was the response from the refugees to this selfless love?

BIBLE READING

Read John 15: 9-13

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

Read Matthew 22: 36-40

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

DISCUSSION

• Think about this Mark of Mission of the Anglican Church – to “Witness to Christ’s saving, forgiving and reconciling love for all people”.
• How did Nahimana witness to Christ’s love?
• What affect does Christ’s love and grace have on us?
• How might we participate in, and witness to this love in the world around us?
• Share an experience from your own life of Christ’s saving, forgiving, and reconciling love. (Chaplain Note: If you feel this is not appropriate for the class, perhaps you could share an experience of your own).
PRAYER

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
We thank You for the selfless love of Jesus,
Which found its full expression on the cross,
As He died to take our sins.

Please forgive us for the times
When we have wronged You,
And caused grief and strife
In our attitudes and actions.

Help us to be like You,
Loving one another as You love us,
Caring for those who are in trouble or need,
And bringing them comfort.

Give us boldness to share about Your gracious,
Saving, forgiving and reconciling love,
Whether by word or by deed,
With everyone that we meet.

We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
**TIME REQUIRED: 45 MINS – 1 HOUR**

**Aim:**
Students will reflect on the difficulties faced by those in areas of conflict, and how the love of God can literally save lives.

**Resources Required:**
- Computer with internet access
- Projector and screen
- Bibles
- Computers with internet access

**Main Lesson:**
Follow the format used in the Chapel Service plan above. Adjustments may be needed to include more class interaction and small group discussion.

**Additional activity:**
Go to [http://www.ifitweremyhome.com/compare/AU/BI](http://www.ifitweremyhome.com/compare/AU/BI)
This website enables students to compare Australia with other countries in terms of wealth, health, and safety.

**Students to answer the following questions:**
What are the main differences between Australia and Burundi?
What one thing shocked or surprised you?
What questions do you have from comparing the countries?

**End note:**

**Current situation in Burundi**
The situation in Burundi still remains unpredictable, with extreme violence permeating many communities. In February 2017, the United Nations reported that there were 380,000 refugees who have fled Burundi since the unrest began, mostly sheltering in neighbouring Tanzania. Between May and August of 2017, four separate grenade attacks have killed 16 people and injured over 100 within Burundi itself.

“We are talking about a forgotten conflict here,” the International Federation for Human Rights president Dimitris Christopoulos told Al Jazeera. “There is an extreme, systematic violation of human rights here on a daily basis, which may lead to dynamics of genocide.”

The increased unemployment places a heavy burden on the few families who are still able to earn an income, and many orphaned children require support by struggling relatives. ABM is continuing to monitor the situation through the Anglican Communion, and welcomes your prayers for the peace and safety of refugees throughout the region.
"Build welcoming, transforming communities of faith"

INTRODUCTION

Today we are going to talk about the second Mark of Mission.

This can be found on the PowerPoint slideshow, or the ABM web homepage at; https://www.abmission.org/index.php

“What do you imagine when you think of a ‘welcoming, transforming community of faith’? What kinds of things do you imagine these people doing?

How would you expect to feel if you walked into the middle of this community gathering?”

(Allow space for the students to think about this, and perhaps respond.)

“Today we are going to hear about an indigenous faith community who gather in tropical north Queensland, to see their living example of this Mark of Mission. As you listen, note one example that strikes you as particularly meaningful.”
ABM recently organised a pilgrimage for theological students from Trinity College Theological School, Melbourne and St Francis College, Brisbane. The students visited Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, Cairns, and met with the staff and local students who were participating in a two-week theology teaching block.

Kathryn Bellhouse was among them, and afterwards wrote about her experiences of the trip and the inspirational people that she met.

“Four times a year the students of Wontulp-Bi-Buya Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theological College travel from all over Australia - islands in the Torres Strait, Yarrabah, Lismore, even Melbourne and Broome - to gather for two weeks in Cairns, Queensland. Wontulp-Bi-Buya offers certificates and diplomas in addictions management, community development and indigenous mental health, and theology. The theological courses maintain a strong focus on indigenous contextual theology. Thinking about the place of scripture in the history of ancient Israel leads students to reflect upon the place of God in the lives and histories of the first peoples of this nation. Each morning during the teaching period, the students put the skills they are developing into practice by leading one another in prayer, reflection and song.

“Our trip coincided with NAIDOC week, a celebration of the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as the annual celebration on July 1st of the ‘Coming of the Light to the Torres Strait Islands’. The theme of NAIDOC week was ‘Language Matters’ and on the opening Saturday, the Wontulp students gathered onstage at a park in the city to perform a series of songs and dance. One student who came to Wontulp a few years ago has a gift for intercession, and stood up to deliver a powerful prayer for the chains of suicide to be broken from over indigenous communities. At a barbeque after the service, some First Nations brothers and sisters from Cairns had been sitting behind a toilet block during the performance and listening. Many had family members going through tough times, and thanked the Wontulp students for their prayers, which had really spoken to them.

“One night I was sitting with a student who, in the breaks between teaching blocks, goes out to the desert to complete his workbooks. They come back to his tutors filled with red dust. After a long day of classes, he and I were getting into all sorts of knots trying to explain what a covenant means in everyday language. For a while we were trying to explain the concept with reference to used-car exchange – something along the lines of, ‘we promise to trust you, you promise to guide us’ – but something about the analogy didn’t feel right. Eventually he put the workbook aside and drew a series of pictures: two open arms facing and embracing each other (that was the covenant), then another where one set of arms turns away (as a people or a person strays), and then in the last picture the arms returned to an embrace. After that he found a fresh sheet of paper and drew a series of faint, chaotic lines that formed a globe. The lines were the lives of people wandering like ghosts, lost and misguided, until God’s arms appeared on the periphery open to receive them. And then, the arms appeared again and again all around the edge of the paper, and he explained that no matter which way we turned, God would find a way to guide us home.

“The other night toward the end of the trip, I lay awake listening to a woman who, waiting for her laundry, was singing ‘Jesus, just the mention of your name.’ Since coming home, I can barely make it through a day without humming the chorus—

Jesus, just the mention of your name
Flowers grow, the desert blooms again
Like fire in winters cold
Like pure precious gold
Jesus, just the mention of your name
QUESTIONS

• What was Kathryn’s overall experience of the community at Wontulp College?
• How was it a “welcoming, transforming community of faith”?
• What was the one example from the trip that spoke to you particularly? Why do you think this was meaningful?

BIBLE READING

Read Acts 2: 36-47

“Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”

DISCUSSION

• Encourage students to share their thoughts about how the early disciples were living.
• Was this a “welcoming, transforming community of faith”? How so?
• What do you really like about their approach? What would be difficult to replicate in today’s society?
• How do faith communities do things nowadays?
PRAYER

Generous and welcoming God,
In Your goodness You created us all,
That we might participate in and enjoy relationships,
With Yourself and the people around us.

Give us grace to welcome those not like us
To be an example of Your kindness and love
Open our eyes to see,
That our hearts may hunger for justice and peace.

Help us to be generous with the gifts we have been given
And to receive the gifts you give to us through community.

We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
TIME REQUIRED: 45 MINS – 1 HOUR

Aim:
To encourage thinking and discussion around the concept of a “welcoming, transforming community of faith”. Students will consider what elements would make up this type of community, using examples from life and scripture.

Resources Required:
- Computer with internet access
- Projector and screen
- Bibles
- Paper and pens for writing or drawing

Main Lesson:
Follow the format used in the Chapel Service plan above. Adjustments may be needed to include more class interaction and small group discussion.

Additional activity:
Choose either of the following activities;

1. Write a short description of your ideal “welcoming, transforming community of faith”. Describe what the people are like, what values they hold, and what happens when they get together. Think about things like how often they would meet, how they would resolve grievances, and what things they would accomplish together.

2. Design a logo to express a “welcoming, transforming community of faith”. Think about what colours/icons/symbols/typography would best express this community's core values, activities and approach. You might like to gain inspiration from the indigenous man in the story, who expressed deep theological concepts through drawing.

End note:
ABM supports Wontulp Bi-Buya theological college through funding and prayers. To learn more about their good work, visit; https://www.abmission.org/pages/australiawontulp-bi-buya-college-cairns.html
“Stand in solidarity with the poor and needy”

INTRODUCTION

Today we are going to talk about the third Mark of Mission.

This can be found on the PowerPoint slideshow, or the ABM web homepage at; https://www.abmission.org/index.php

“Who has heard of the Sustainable Development Goals?”

Watch the following video clip, either on the PowerPoint slideshow, or at; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4FAil2mdal

Video notes: 15 years ago, the United Nations set out 8 Millennium Development Goals to tackle extreme poverty and improve people’s lives around the world. Today, 700 million people have been lifted from extreme poverty and 9 in 10 children are able to go to primary school in developing regions. We have come a long way, but there is still more to be done. Building on the momentum generated by these goals, we are ready to adopt the new Sustainable Development Agenda. (United Nations, published 1st September 2015).

Broadly speaking, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are aiming to achieve the eradication of poverty and provide a sustainable future for humanity and the natural world.
Today we are going to look at the story of Serah, who lives in Papua New Guinea. Serah has a disability, and her family didn’t have much money. So at a young age, she left school to help her parents provide food for the family. Life was tough, and she had little hope for her future.

All of this changed when she was given the opportunity to attend an Adult Literacy course, run by Anglicare PNG. Let’s see what happened…

Watch this video from ABM: https://youtu.be/YqY8XiOsM6k
QUESTIONS

- What would it feel like to be in Serah’s position during her Primary school years?
- How does Serah’s faith help her through?
- Was it God who answered Serah’s prayers? Or was it the kind-hearted people who set up the literacy school? Or was it both?
- What difference would Serah’s income make to her family, including her child’s future?

BIBLE READING

Read 1 John 3:17-18

“If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God’s love be in that person? Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.”

Read 2 Corinthians 9:8-10

“And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. As the Scriptures say, ‘They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever.’ For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you.”

DISCUSSION

- Do the verses above mean that we can just give money to programs like Adult Literacy education in PNG, and that is enough?
- What other ways can we be effective in helping to reduce poverty, using the resources at our disposal? (i.e. resources such as time, our own education, social media contacts, skills, etc.)
- How does your faith motivate you to action on this global issue of poverty? Or, how do you see faith motivating others to respond to poverty?
Prayer

God of the poor,
You reveal your face to us in the face of the refugee,
The lonely, the oppressed, and the downtrodden.

Your heart breaks when people experience injustice.
Open our hearts to Your kindness and wisdom, that we may learn
How to best partner with those experiencing poverty
That together we may rid the world of this affliction.

Open our hands to give generously, and
Embolden us to stand steadfast with grace and love.

We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
TIME REQUIRED: 45 mins – 1 hour

Aim:
To introduce students to the Sustainable Development Goals, and encourage them to think about how they can play a part in reducing poverty and creating a brighter future for all.

Resources Required:
- Computer with internet access
- Projector and screen
- Bibles
- Pens and paper
- Newspaper, printouts, pens, table, chair, masking tape (for optional game)

Main Lesson:
Follow the format used in the Chapel Service plan above. Adjustments may be needed to include more class interaction and small group discussion.

Call to Action:
Invite the students to write down what practical steps they will take to reduce poverty around the world.

Encourage them to set a timeframe for achieving these steps.

Additional activity:
Basti Life – Simulation Game (30 mins needed for explanation and play)
This game is a simulation of life in an Indian slum, helping students to consider the challenges that poverty presents to families.
Download the instructions from the ABM website here; https://www.abmission.org/pages/wontok-resources.html
You can watch the YouTube paper bag demonstration here; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tzw80fQQ4
"Challenge violence, injustice and oppression, and work for peace and reconciliation”

INTRODUCTION

Today we are going to talk about the fourth Mark of Mission.

This can be found on the PowerPoint slideshow, or the ABM web homepage at: https://www.abmission.org/index.php

Ask one student to read out the fourth Mark of Mission listed, which will be the focus of today’s lesson.

What countries do you think of when you consider this particular Mark of Mission? Why do you think of these countries?

Do you ever think of Australia as having problems with violence/injustice/oppression, or countries close to our shores?

Today we are going to hear from two ex-convicts in the Solomon Islands, and learn that violence, injustice and oppression can be more subtle than we sometimes think.
Choose several students to read the parts of narrator, interviewer, Danny and Alan.

**Narrator:** Danny and Alan are ex-prisoners. They met in the Honiara Men’s Prison, where they were serving time for various offenses, some violent. Whilst there, they heard of the Positive Parenting Program that was being run by the Mother’s Union and the Anglican Church of Melanesia, supported with ABM funding. Curious about what this program might involve and inspired by the good reports of other inmates who had attended, Danny and Alan joined in. They could never have guessed at that moment just how life changing this decision would be.

**Interviewer:** What was life like before the Positive Parenting program?

**Alan:** We are used to ignoring each other’s feelings. We don’t really get taught, you know, how to think of what other people might be feeling about something.

**Danny:** That’s just our cultural ways. I didn’t know there were ways to do parenting before, our cultural ways are just….different.

**Interviewer:** What is life like now you’ve done the Positive Parenting program?

**Danny:** The program gives clear advice and views on our cultural practices, suddenly I realised this is wrong. There is value in a family. The Positive Parenting program doesn’t get RID of our culture, it just improves it. We’re used to culturally degrading women. We judge women as labourers and men as the owners, the dictators – the Positive Parenting Program makes you realise that’s not fair, it helps you see women and children as important and that you should treat them that way.

**Alan:** It changed the way I communicate, I used to dominate, I gave direction without asking others opinions, I made all the big decisions for the family that weren’t always right. Now I want to talk about those decisions with them and make joint ones.

It’s like love came with Christ, the Positive Parenting Program came from this love, and I now have this love for my family. I used to see family as replaceable, I had in my head thoughts of ‘I can get another one, I can leave if it gets tough.’ Now I realise you can’t just treat them as if they are disposable.

**Interviewer:** How long were you in prison for?

**Danny:** 6 months.

**Alan:** 3 years

**Interviewer:** What practical ways will Positive Parenting Program change your behaviour?
**Danny:** My motive towards my nieces and nephews was to discipline them so they wouldn’t turn into bad adults, they wouldn’t get arrogant, they wouldn’t misbehave, and they would be good children. I wanted to protect them from being disrespectful and swearing, I used to do this by canning them and beating them with sticks. My sister didn’t agree with me doing this, she ended up reporting me and I went to prison. I realise now you need to have proper conversations with your wife and children, it’s more important than sticks.

**Alan:** I used to whip my kids instead of telling them what they were doing wrong. I didn’t warn them, I just hit them. I disciplined them with the sticks.

Yeah, before the sticks spoke all the words. Now WE speak the words. The right words can be way more powerful than sticks. Some homes still have sticks, I see my neighbours with them, it’s everywhere! It needs to change.

**Interviewer:** Would you encourage others in prison to do the Positive Parenting Program?

**Danny:** We already did! They’re desperate for it! They read our manuals and kept saying ‘this is me’ they can already see their weaknesses – family violence is what bought most of them to prison so they’re desperate to know how to work on it and make it better.

**Interviewer:** Danny, you phoned the Positive Parenting course coordinator the day you got out of prison, to ask to be trained as a facilitator. Why was that important for you?

**Danny:** It changed me. As a person, as a father. It changed me mentally and saved my relationship with my family. I want this for other families. There are so many young families that need this before it’s too late…

**Alan:** We move too quickly here! Dating isn’t really a thing so there is pressure to move fast into marriage with one person. Then, later things are hard and they think ‘I must have married the wrong person’ so they start to point the finger at each other. That’s when the violence starts.

**Danny:** That’s why you both have to want to be willing to try, because both people can point the finger not just one.

**Interviewer:** Now that you’re a trained facilitator, what do you hope to achieve?

**Danny:** The clue is in the name, it’s called the POSITIVE Parenting program, it’s so positive! I read that in the Bible it says ‘my people are destroyed by their lack of knowledge.’ (Hosea 4:6) We HAVE this positive knowledge, we can’t hold it back from people, we need to share it. If we hold this knowledge back from them they will be destroyed by family violence.

*(Mother’s Union Pacific Coordinator, Anne-Marie Clive, conducted these interviews on a monitoring visit in October 2016.)*
QUESTIONS

• What reasons did Danny and Alan give for the violence they were inflicting on their families?
• Is domestic violence a problem here in Australia as well? How widespread do you think it is?
• Why was a training course on Positive Parenting methods effective in changing the violent behaviour in Danny and Alan’s lives?

BIBLE READING

Read Matthew 5: 1-10.

The Sermon on the Mount

One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them.

The Beatitudes

“God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.
God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.
God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.
God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.
God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.
God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.”
**DISCUSSION**

- How do you respond to this passage? What stands out the most for you?
- How would you live out these beatitudes?
- Is it possible for us to play a role in ending violence and oppression, and bring justice to the world?
- What would this look like? What kinds of things would we need to do?

**PRAYER**

Prayer of St. Francis (slightly adapted)

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let us sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.

God, grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled,
as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.
TIME REQUIRED: 45 MINS – 1 HOUR

Aim:
To encourage students to consider the different forms of violence, injustice and oppression, and how they might work for peace and reconciliation.

Resources Required:
• Computer with internet access
• Projector and screen
• Bibles
• Printouts of interview for those reading

Main Lesson:
Follow the format used in the Chapel Service plan above. Adjustments may be needed to include more class interaction and small group discussion.

Additional activity:
1. Students to brainstorm a campaign that will attract widespread attention to their cause. Be as creative as possible – use costumes, props, catchy slogans and hashtags to increase engagement from the general public.

   Think about how social media can be used to generate the most attention, and achieve your aims for the campaign.

   Note:
   When beginning a campaign, always consider the dignity of those you are wanting to help. Every aspect of the campaign should be designed to bring respect, especially to those who have already suffered from physical and/or psychological abuse and distress.

2. Provide printed, laminated (if possible) tiles of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
   Ask students to pick which ones relate to today’s story, and explain why.

Call to Action:
There is an overwhelming need for advocacy on issues of violence, oppression and injustice. Many advocacy organisations have already been formed and require support from passionate, caring people who are willing to make a stand.

Encourage students to investigate those organisations that centre on issues particularly important to them, whether domestic violence, modern slavery, land rights, etc. and decide how they can be involved.
Some websites to start with may include;

**Domestic violence:**
https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/
https://www.ourwatch.org.au/

**Modern slavery:**

**Land rights:**
https://www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk/what-we-do/where-we-work/advocacy-land-and-inheritance-rights
https://www.forestpeoples.org/en/guiding-principles/5947?gclid=EAIaIQobChMInZte7N-61wIV0gMqCh0qiwYoEAYASAAAqJzVfD_BwE

**Multiple issues:**
http://doingjustice.org.au/
https://secure.avaaz.org/page/en/

**End note:**
ABM supports the Positive Parenting Program in the Solomon Islands through funding and prayers. To learn more about their good work, visit; https://www.abmission.org/pages/bildim-ap-mothers-union-leadership-empowerment.html
“Protect, care for and renew life on our planet”

INTRODUCTION

Today we are going to talk about the fifth Mark of Mission.

This can be found on the PowerPoint slideshow, or the ABM web homepage at; https://www.abmission.org/index.php

“Why would we want to talk about Climate Change in a Chapel service? Wouldn’t this topic be better placed in a science or social studies class?”

(Allow space for the students to think about this, and perhaps respond.)

“Perhaps, just maybe, this issue is still plaguing us because it reveals a moral problem, and not purely a physical, economic, or political one. If it is moral, we are well placed discussing it here.”
MAIN STORY

We are now going to watch a short video about the little Pacific coastal village of Fanalei, located in the Solomon Islands to the north-east of Australia.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0g1bGPBFR9g

Video Notes: This video was commissioned by the Melanesian Mission. For more information, visit http://mission.melanesia.anglican.org

Because of the Mark of Mission regarding creation, which was formed out of a sense of moral responsibility, ABM recently engaged in some Advocacy on the issue of Climate Justice. We have many Pacific neighbours who are struggling due to rising sea levels, soil salination, increasing frequency of severe storms and cyclones, and drought.

ABM asked our partners in the Pacific – the Anglican Church of PNG and the Anglican Church of Melanesia – to write letters describing their experiences, in order to present them to policy makers in Australia in the hope that more governmental action would be taken to address Climate Change.

These letters were then personally handed to Australian Parliamentarians during private meetings in a major event coordinated by the Christian Coalition “Micah Australia”.

Choose several students to read one letter each.

“I am Newton Ekoda, a priest in the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea, who is so much overwhelmed by the effect of Climate Change and Global Warming faced by the world and more particularly by the Pacific Island nations.

I was born and raised in the Northern Coast of PNG, then moved to the Highlands 21 years ago where I am currently teaching in a Bible School. My village on the coast 50 years ago is no more there. It is now [under] salt water like so many others along the Northern coast.

Last year from April to December the whole nation of PNG went through drought
(caused by a severe El Nino weather system) resulting in food gardens badly devastated. In Highlands where kau kau (sweet potato) is the staple food, people lost all their crops and thus resorting to fruits, wild berries and nuts for survival losing [through death] some of their young and oldies in the process.

I am hereby writing to seek Australian Government’s generosity in its own policies and to advocate for Climate Justice in the Pacific.”

(Newton teaches at Kerina College, an evangelist training centre of the Anglican Church of PNG)

“Hi, my name is Tagolyn Kabekabe and I am from the most beautiful part of the Solomon Islands, Western Province. Our subsistence way of life is fast changing due to the effects and impacts of climate change.

Repi Island in the middle of the Vona Vona lagoon once had a population of almost a thousand people and provided the basic services to its community such as a local primary school, a clinic, a church building for daily prayers and a network of bore holes for their daily water. All these changed more than 15 – 20 years ago when families would wake up in the mornings and find that everything in their bush kitchen on the ground had been washed away by unusual high tides in the night including their canoes, livestock and … water tanks.

The community got fed up and with no external help [and] relocated the entire community to a much bigger island… Repi Island is a ghost skeleton of an island now…

Such communities as this here in the Solomon Islands are calling on the Australian leaders to … accept the fact that internal displacement of indigenous people is real, and that these people need help to determine their own future..

(Tagolyn Kabekabe works for the Anglican Alliance in Honiara, the Solomon Islands)

“Hello, my name is Riko Mone and I am from Rarumana village in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands. I grew up in the village, attend the local primary and middle school and enjoyed the rural subsistence way of life in gardening, swimming, fishing, diving and collecting shellfish from the mangroves and reefs. There was always plentiful to harvest and plentiful left for another day and plentiful to eat to ones content!

This has changed drastically in the last ten or so years and it is now very difficult to find enough shellfish to feed the family. The mangrove swamps have either dried up or too much salt water intrusion that the shellfish can no longer survive and multiply.

With the loss of an income [from selling shellfish], it affects their ability to pay for their children’s school fees, medical expenses, access to communication and many other things.

We are calling on Australian leaders as our nearest neighbours and wontoks [relatives] to… come to our islands with experts in these areas and see for yourselves the destruction, and do something that will help alleviate the problems. Thank you.”
Questions

- What would it be like to live in a coastal village such as these, and experience Climate Change first-hand?
- Is there anything we can do to help, as teenagers living in Australia?
- Are we morally obliged to help, or isn’t it our problem?

Bible Reading

Read Genesis 1:20-31.

Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind.” So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”

And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened. God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

So God created human beings in his own image.
In the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!”

Discussion

- Discuss God’s commands given to Adam and Eve in verse 28.
- Why would God have given humans care over all creation?
- Does this mean that we are responsible for looking after all of God’s creation, if we call ourselves Christians? What about those who don’t believe in God?
PRAYER

Everlasting God,
We thank You for this glorious creation,
The earth, with all its richness and beauty,
Which You have given to us to care for and protect.

Forgive us for those times we have been neglectful
Not recognising the true value of Your gift
Nor the responsibility we have in ensuring its preservation.

Give us strength and grace to act justly,
Not forgetting those who are suffering the most
But standing alongside them in their quest for justice,
That the world might find peace and renewal.

We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
TIME REQUIRED: 45 MINS – 1 HOUR

Aim:
To engage students in a discussion about the “morality” behind Climate change, and whether we have a responsibility to work for Climate justice.

Resources Required:
• Computer with internet access
• Projector and screen
• Bibles
• Printouts of letters for those reading

Main Lesson:
Follow the format used in the Chapel Service plan above. Adjustments may be needed to include more class interaction and small group discussion.

Additional activities:

2. Test your knowledge of Climate Change with the “Climate Change Q&A game”. [https://www.abmission.org/pages/wontok-resources.html](https://www.abmission.org/pages/wontok-resources.html) (included in the 2017 Wontok resources list)

3. Develop an Advocacy Action to petition political leaders for greater action on Climate Change.

End note:
There are tangible actions that everyone can take to reduce the impacts of Climate Change, or advocate for Climate Justice.

At the Micah Australia event, many teenagers participated in the conference, and attended the meetings with politicians. These MPs were especially interested to hear from teenagers, as they represent the future of Australia, and will soon be eligible to vote!
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