

The Year We Stayed at Home - With Hope



A Pick and Mix Resource pack of activities
and Bible linked materials for reflecting on
our shared experiences
of the COVID 19 Pandemic



The Year We Stayed at Home With Hope

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*Material created collaboratively by Dawn Lonsdale and Carolyn Gower
With credited guest contributions*

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The materials contain some things which are not original to Unlock. We have attempted to identify all the sources, but in some cases it has not been possible. Unlock will take immediate steps to rectify any breach of copyright upon notification. Thank you for your co-operation in this.

If you have any queries relating to Unlock materials, please contact:

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Why this? Why now?

Introduction

The COVID 19 Pandemic has been undeniably tough for everyone and particularly for those communities where our Unlock work is focussed.

We believe that ***all of us*** need, (without moaning or whingeing), to be prepared to acknowledge the energy drain and the emotional cost of COVID 19, for ourselves, for each other and in our communities.

Everyone is more or less bereaved all of the time, even if we have not lost anyone, and even if we have plenty to be grateful for. We have all lost opportunities and precious time with loved ones, we have all had to let go of hopes and dreams and plans; and that disappointment is real and painful. As well as that everyone is dealing with heightened levels of fear and anxiety, and having to manage day to day decisions that potentially have far more significant consequences than we are accustomed to. Many of us know at least some people who have lost loved ones, which is both sad to bear and adds to the fear. Plus we have all had to adjust repeatedly and fairly swiftly to new ways of doing things and to relate, usually by pretty clunky means, to everyone else who is dealing with all of that stuff as well, but probably differently! It's hard to rest and feel refreshed when we do not have access to many of the ways we would usually do that, and the end is still some way off. Self-care and care for one another are going to be really critical over the next 24 months or so at least; and creating safe environments where people can express their pain and vulnerability, without abdicating responsibility or getting sucked into unproductive self-pity, are going to be an essential part of what we need to offer out of our faith, both personally, as Unlock and as Churches.

We may feel that we just want to move on and forget all about it but ultimately that will not help us to grow and learn from these exceptional experiences. It's going to be essential that we support one another to remember and process the collective trauma of COVID 19, that includes allowing appropriate grief, acknowledging anger and remembering effectively, both the good and the bad things.

So we are offering you this resource pack as a way to start to do that work, in your own places, with your own people. We hope and pray that you will find it useful.

Dawn Lonsdale, Chief Officer





We suggest that you begin with the **timeline activities on pages 6&7**. We have noticed that, in the course of this pandemic, the details of what was happening just a few months ago become hazy memories quite quickly. It is hard to keep a clear picture of what happened when; when we last saw so and so, when we last went inside someone else's home, when we last left our home town and so on. The timeline will help us to get some perspective, a long overview of all that has happened. Those experiences will be different for everyone and it will be good to explore them together. You will be amazed at how much you have forgotten! You might return to the timeline activities as part of each of the other sections, or at the end, to see if there are any new insights to add.

We have chosen **six topics** that have formed a part of our own journey and reflections through 2020 and 2021. They are **Lament, Gratitude, Patience, Hope, Kindness and Discernment**. Each topic has its own section, which includes a reflection, some creative activities for groups or individuals, and some Bible material. These sections are not in any particular order and you can use them in any way that you like. **This pack includes the section on Hope only**. The full pack is also available, as are five other individual topic sections.

You are encouraged to **be selective**. You use as much or as little of the material as you like. You know your people and your place. You know what will connect for folk, and what will engage them; please feel free to **choose** from this material and use only that which seems best suited to your own context. There's no reason why you can't present your groups with some options and respond to what they would like to do.

The **topic reflection/introduction** is on pages 9-11 and is intended as *preparatory reading for group facilitators*. Facilitators can choose how much of that material to share with their groups and how. Please note that there is absolutely no need to provide printed copies of all of the material for everyone involved!

The approaches in this pack are based on the **Unlock learning cycle** which you will find on page 28. Unlock has been using this approach for nearly 50 years. It is linked to the ways in which Jesus taught; using stories and connections with people's day to day lives; and we continue to use it because it works. We recommend that in using this material you use the learning cycle to structure your approach. The most important aspect is that we engage with our *own stories before* we explore what the Bible has to say, not the other way around.

It is important that you take some time when you are planning to **really understand the needs of your local group**, so that you can select activities and material that are appropriate for them, and work in a way that fits your local context. You can use pages 20—27 of our facilitator training pack, '**Unlock DIY**' to help you reflect effectively on the needs of your group(s). <http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/documents/UnlockDIY2020update.pdf>

We recommend that you give yourself and your group plenty of **time and space** to work through this material. You will all get more out of it if you don't rush it, allow yourselves to be **creative** and to break free of the notion that there are 'right' answers. This is much more about sharing our experiences, what we can discover together, and how we can support one another in doing that, than it is about getting from point A to point B.

The participants are not the only ones who will benefit from thinking about this stuff, but not everyone will come and join in with group activities. So **share what you are doing**; find creative ways to display the results of your activities so that other people can see them and have a moment to do their own reflecting too.

See page 33 & 34 for further Unlock facilitator guidance.

What follows on pages 6&7 is an activity to help us begin to recall, process and understand the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on us personally, as a group, or groups, and also as a community.

The Timeline image maps some of the key events of 2020 (you can add others in 2021) and helps us place our personal key events into this framework.

The timeline image on page 6 is only for illustration. Obviously it is far too small for people to use to work on. The Unlock office has a supply of ready printed A2 copies of the timeline so (unless you have your own facilities to print page 6 at A2 size) you need to contact the Unlock Office and request sufficient copies to have at least one per person for your group(s). There is an order form below, or you can e-mail or telephone the Unlock office providing the necessary information.

The idea is that each person has their own individual copy and can personalise it by adding anything that feels important for them to remember. The coloured squares are deliberately left blank as spaces where people can add in their own personal events, milestones and experiences. Page 7 gives suggestions for the kind of things we might think about and add into our own copy of the timeline. Items can be added using pictures, words or a combination, or using cut out images pasted on. This needn't be a one off activity. We can return to our timelines and add more to them at any stage.

Groups can work both individually and together to help each other remember what happened when.

Ultimately each person's timeline will be their own personal record of their lives during the pandemic, a kind of visual diary, which they can keep and use to recall 'The Year We Stayed at Home', and perhaps to explain what it was like to future generations!

Covid timeline order form

The Year We stayed at Home

Please mail copies of the Unlock Covid timeline to -

Name: E-mail address

.

Postal address:

Telephone number (in case we need to check anything with you)

Please send completed orders to the Unlock Office, (C/O Shiloh) 15 Station Road,
Rotherham, S60 1HN or to office@unlock/urban.org.uk Tel: 01709 380318.

We welcome (but do not require) donations to cover the cost of printing and postage.



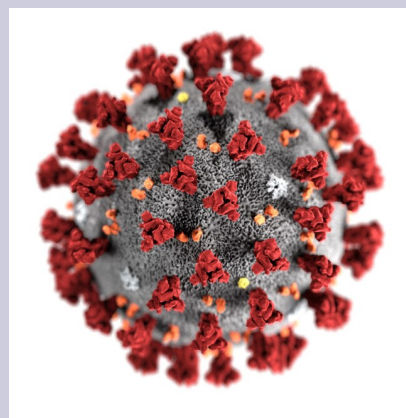
COVID-19 Pandemic Timeline Activities

You can add to the timeline anything that you want to record and remember about your personal experience of the pandemic.

You can use words, symbols, stickers, colours, drawings, pictures, or a combination; as you prefer.

You could include:-

- **Things that just were: -**
 - ◇ Family events, birthdays, etc
 - ◇ Significant moments or turning points
- **Lost or missed things: -**
 - ◇ People, activities or things you have lost or missed
 - ◇ Places you didn't go.
- **New things and things to be glad about: -**
 - ◇ Things you enjoyed
 - ◇ Things you are grateful for
 - ◇ Places you went
 - ◇ Things you made
 - ◇ Things that helped you get through
 - ◇ Things you learnt, or noticed
 - ◇ New things that you didn't do before that you want to keep
 - ◇ People you spent time with, either face to face or in other ways
- **Your responses and reactions: -**
 - ◇ What you discovered about yourself
 - ◇ What emotions did you feel?
 - ◇ When were you most afraid?
 - ◇ When were you most at peace?
 - ◇ Where was God for you; and where were God's people?



We have not included the regularly issued data on case numbers, hospitalisations and deaths. If you want to add in that kind of data you can find it here <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

You might find this Wikipedia timeline useful for reference, especially if you like to have precise dates and details https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_COVID-19_pandemic_in_England

You can use the months that are blank, either to continue to journal as the months go by, or to express your hopes for what is to come (or a bit of both!) The big yellow box at the bottom is for you to make a note of things you want to do when it's over that you can't do now.

Once groups can meet again safely the timeline could be used to structure a group or community reflection process.



The work of the mature person is to carry grief in one hand and gratitude in the other and to be stretched large by them. How much sorrow can I hold? That's how much gratitude I can give. If I carry only grief, I'll bend toward cynicism and despair. If I have only gratitude, I'll become saccharine and won't develop much compassion for other people's suffering. Grief keeps the heart fluid and soft, which helps make compassion possible.

~Francis Ward Weller

Photo by Magne Traeland - Unsplash

BRASSBALLS TENDER HEART Helping women Coaching for Men

AND
LET THE PEACE
OF CHRIST RULE
IN YOUR HEARTS
TO WHICH INDEED
YOU WERE CALLED IN ONE BODY
AND *be thankful*
COLOSSIANS 3:15



Hope

By Dawn

Lonsdale

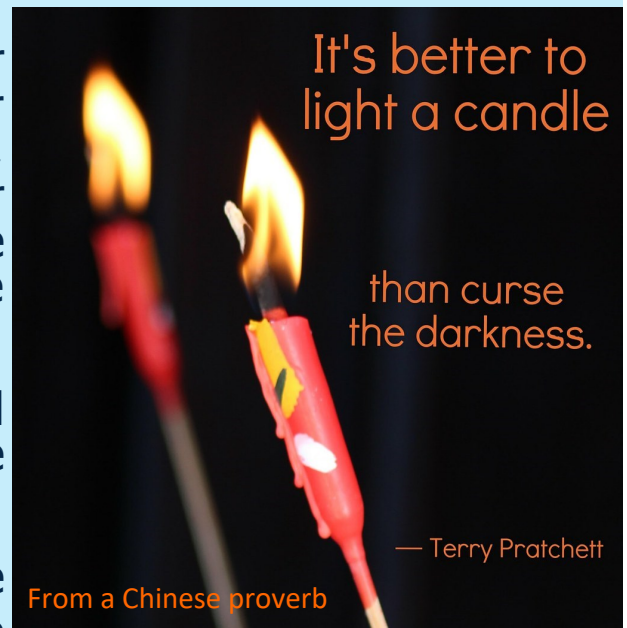
March 2021

It's hard to see why we would ever do anything at all without hope.

Hope is an essential aspect of our humanity. It is as vital to us as the air we breathe. Without it we die; spiritually, emotionally, passively, or actively; one way or another, we cease to be, or at least, to be ourselves.

Having no hope is an emotional emergency that requires immediate attention if we are to recover.

We simply ***must*** have hope, we cannot do without it. We must nurture it, we must practice it and we must give it to one another, always, but especially when times are tough.



Remember, the only thing more contagious than a virus is hope.

WILLIAM MCRAVEN

becomingminimalist

Hope has pulled us bodily through the pandemic. Hope for a vaccine, hope for a treatment, hope for better daily numbers, hope for leaders we can trust, hope for a time when we can be together again, hope, hope, hope! Soon, soon, soon!

The Wikipedia **definition** is: that is based on an expectation of positive outcomes with respect to events and circumstances in one's life or the world at large. As a verb, its definitions include: "expect with confidence" and "to cherish a desire with anticipation."





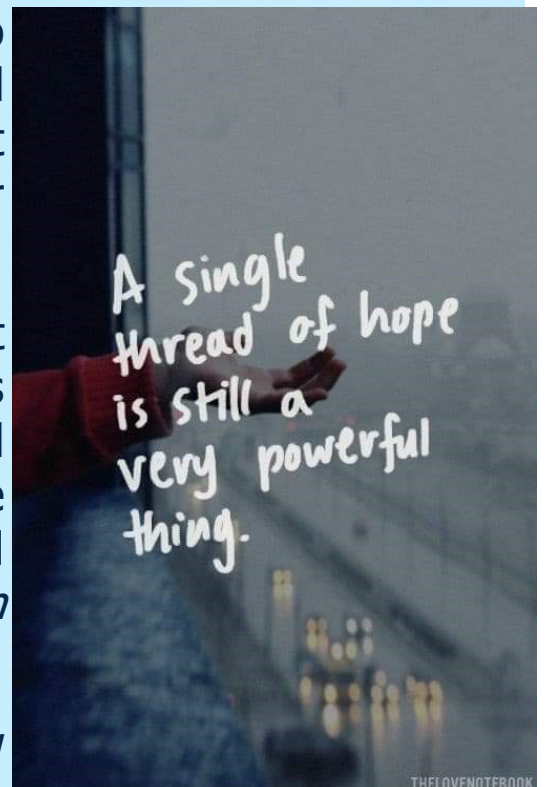
Hope is the belief things will work out, especially when it seems otherwise. It helps us stay calm and peaceful when we face difficulties. Hope believes we will get through it. Hope remembers the times we made it through. Hope teams with faith and believes in the impossible.

Hope is associated with many positive outcomes, including greater happiness, better

academic achievement and even lowered risk of death. It's a necessary ingredient for getting through tough times, of course, but also for meeting everyday goals.

About Hope

- ◇ We can give Hope to others and still have it for ourselves.
- ◇ *Believing* that something is possible can sometimes be what actually *makes it* possible.
- ◇ Hope comes partly from being able to think about the bigger picture. Instead of focussing on something that is not going right we are able to look wider and see what else might work instead.
- ◇ Hope is not just optimistic fantasy that takes no account of reality. It includes a balance between positivity and realism. Something may be more difficult than we expect but it may still be possible, so let's see what we *can* achieve.



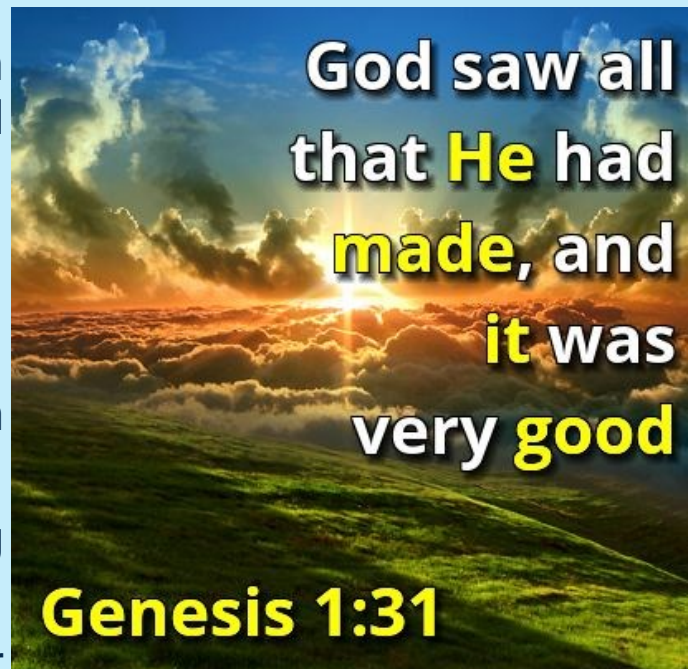
◇ You'll never know

unless you try – hope gives us the courage to aim for our goals.

- ◇ The lack of certainty about a good outcome is not a reason not to try.
- ◇ If we can't do it this way then we'll try another way, and another, and another.

Hope: -

- ◇ Gets us through
- ◇ Gives us something to hang on to
- ◇ Enables us to keep on keeping on
- ◇ Is always there if you look for it



Where does hope come from?

- ◇ From inside us; practice and self-discipline, determination, past experience, perspective.
- ◇ From faith. From trust in a good, faithful loving God.
- ◇ From a belief in the essential goodness of humanity and the world.
- ◇ From a belief in ourselves and one another and what we can achieve together.
- ◇ From the natural world. The sun always rises, the spring always comes.

Hope in the Bible

In the **Bible** **hope** is the confident expectation of what God has promised and its strength is in His faithfulness. Christian hope focusses on what Christ has done for us and what that means. Because of Christ's life and death and resurrection, we have hope; hope that we are connected with God, hope that we are redeemed, hope that there is more holding us



together than we can really see or know.

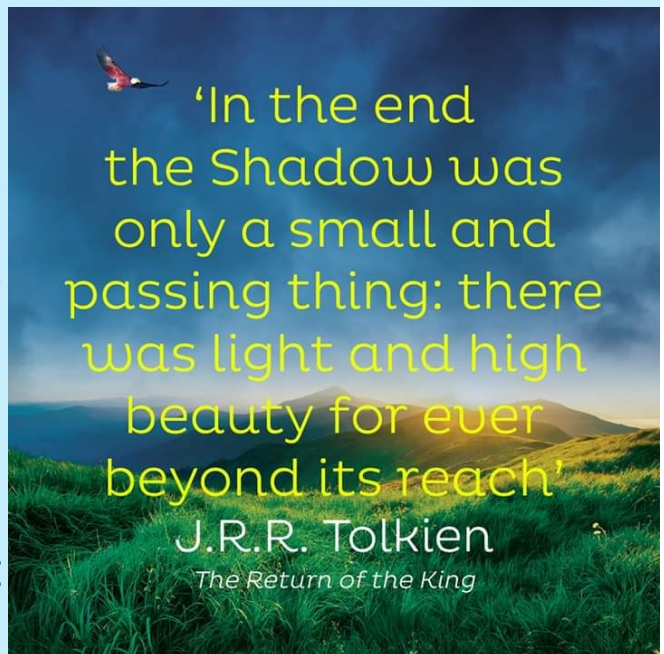
And Christian hope can also be rooted in a belief that God's creation, and therefore human beings as part of it, are ultimately good.

But what about disappointment?

The benefits of hope are not dependent on our hopes being fulfilled. Disappointment will happen. If it doesn't we were not challenging ourselves. But disappointment is just a reason to look for new hope. Hope is effective at keeping us going, whether or not it is fulfilled.

Responding to setbacks with hope depends on practice and resilience and determination. For most people hope doesn't just happen; the possibility of it is hard wired within us but ultimately we do it because we make ourselves do it.

And you know, maybe prayer!



References: -

TEDx <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXpKIGi5DFg>

<https://hopegrows.net/news/why-is-hope-so-important>

<https://medium.com/the-mission/why-the-power-of-hope-overcomes-all-obstacles-adabff43f0d1>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhMI2-aEvWM> only watch to 3.42.

Activities to help us reflect on Hope

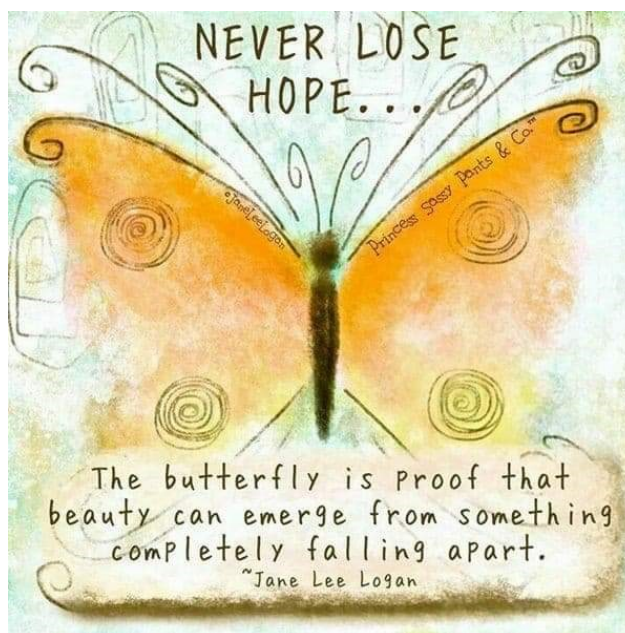
Select whichever of these you think your group will relate to best and use them to explore together our own COVID experiences of hope.

What is hope.

What does hope mean to each of us?

Look at the 'hope' quotes on pages 22 - 24. Which do you agree with? Take turns to tell your group.

Encourage people to suggest their definition of 'hope'. Compare with the Wikipedia definition: "Hope is an optimistic state of mind that is based on an expectation of positive outcomes with respect to events and circumstances in one's life or the world at large. As a verb, its definitions include: 'expect with confidence' and 'to cherish a desire with anticipation.'"



Dreams and hopes: Looking back / looking at now / looking forward.

Looking back: think back to when you were a child. What did you hope for? Would you describe that as a hope or a dream? Play a game with your group. Take it in turns to finish this sentence, "When I was a child I wanted to..." When everyone has had a go, think about what happened to your childhood dream. How does that reflection make you feel?

Looking at now: After more than a year of living with Covid-19 and various limitations to life – Think of one thing you have valued over this time and one thing you have found very difficult.

Looking at the future: What gives you hope? What are your concerns?

This activity could easily be done on a display board with everyone posting their responses with post-it notes.

hope

Thinking especially about the time living with Covid-19. What have you found gives you hope. Look at the various images (page 16 - 18) – which three images help you feel more hopeful. Why?

What have you found that gets in the way or robs us of hope – select words from the



word cards on the table (page 19).

Listen or Singalong: -

Choose your favourite songs and sing along to them

<https://www.pastemagazine.com/music/hope/songs-about-hope/>

<https://spinditty.com/playlists/10-Best-Songs-of-Hope-for-Humanity-and-a-Better-World>

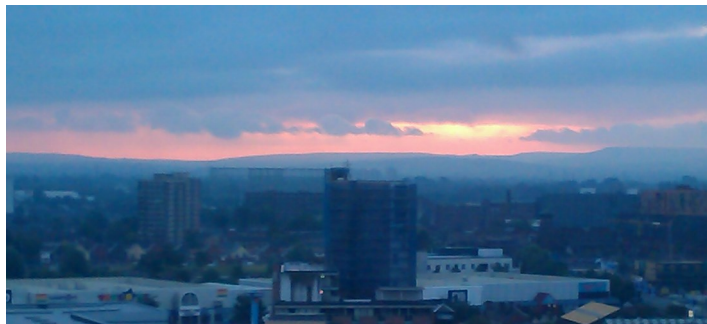
<https://blog.gigsandtours.com/2020/04/30-songs-for-hope-inspiration-and-a-better-world/>

What am I? Half empty or half full? Create a game – the participants work in pairs. One of the pair is given a full glass of water and their partner an empty one. The aim is for each person to end up with a glass half full of water. Which couple manages it best? (measure to decide) They are the winners! Create a poster of half empty/half full – look at the quotes from famous people (page 22 - 24) – Who do you identify with most – Write your definition of hope as a quote and add it to the poster.

Activities to generate hope:

Sunrise:-

Start the day by watching the sun rise. Check out the time it will rise (<https://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/uk>) and set your alarm to be up in time to be at your viewing spot before the sun appears above



the horizon. Sit quietly. How do you feel? What are you thinking? Watch ... (Please note, there is no need to go far to do this, you can see the sunrise from a city rooftop or a dingy backstreet, just as well as you can in stunning countryside!)

When you get home make a suncatcher (instructions on page 20 - 21)

Outside:-

Go for a walk in a garden, park or the countryside. Pause often to look carefully all around you and up high too. Smell the air. Listen to all the sounds. What do you see, smell and hear? How do those things make you feel? Do you notice anything that gives you hope?

Listen: -

Dire Straits—why Worry? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 03uXQiz6eY>



Be generous:-

Do a kind thing for someone else: bake for them, write them a card, give them a call, send them a message



Get creative:-

Use some **rainbow scratch cards** and scrapers. Scratch the black surface off the card to create pictures showing the rainbow colours underneath.

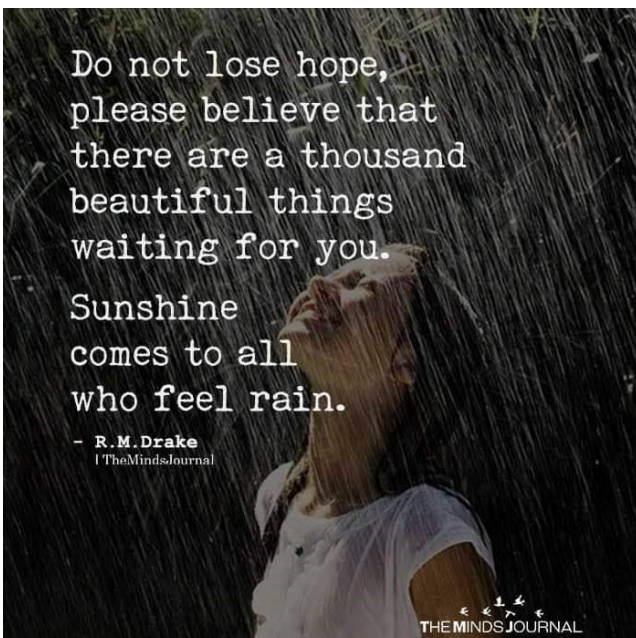


Make pictures of things you are hoping for. Reflect on what new possibilities we might find hidden under darkness.

String selections of **beads** together to make bracelets etc. Dark beads can be included to represent the dark times and then light or shiny/sparkly beads to represent hope for a brighter future and God's comfort and love.

Make pictures using shades of dark and light **glitter** (if you can face the prospect of the clearing up!)

Use dark and light **fabric scraps** to make light and dark patchwork. Work together to make a cushion cover, a table cloth or a wall hanging for your meeting space to remind you what you have been thinking about together. It doesn't have to be slick, or large!



Display & Share:-

Find ways to display your work in a community space; trees, posters, photo display, plants, etc; to help other people to reflect as well.



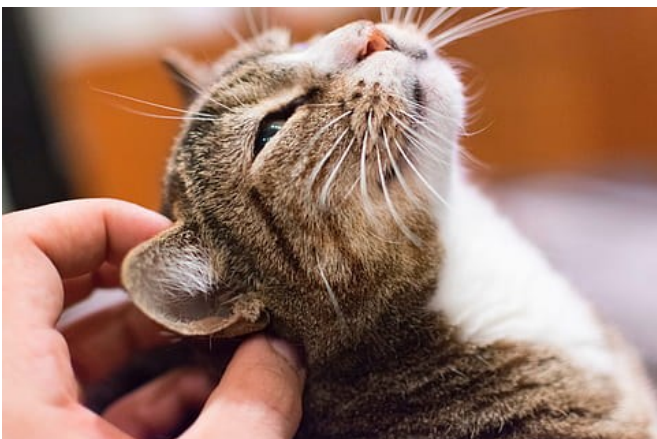
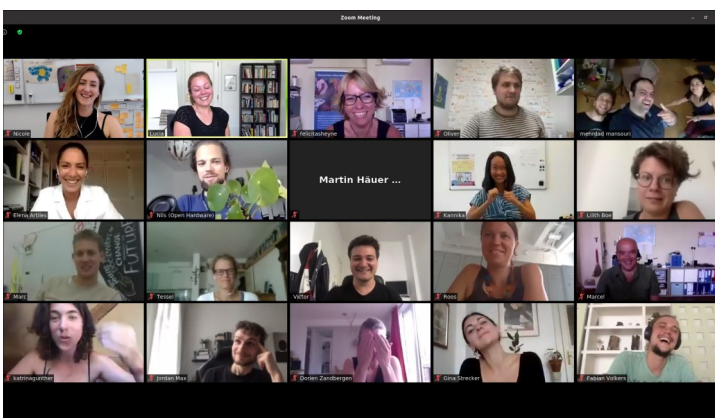
Resource 1 Hope pictures



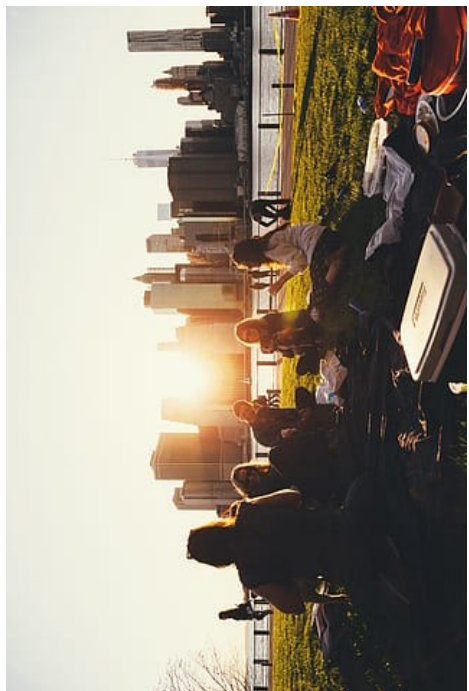
Hope—Resources



Hope—Resources



Hope—Resources



Being alone	Not seeing friends	Not seeing family	Not being able to choose what I do each day	The shops being closed
Anxiety	Fear	Not being able to work	Worrying about buying food	Worrying about the bills
Fear of loved ones getting ill	Fear of losing my job	Not seeing any-one	My social clubs and groups being closed	Not being able to hug family and friends
Not seeing my grandchildren	Not being able to travel	Not sharing meals	Not being able to go out for a coffee	Not being able to go on a bus or train



Making a Sun-Catcher—instructions

You will need:

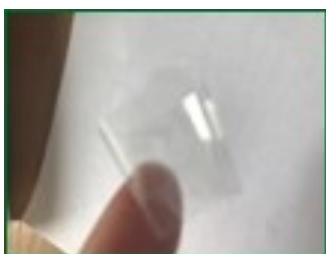
- 2 pieces of sticky-back-plastic
- 4 strips of black card
- Coloured tissue paper
- A surface you can stick tape to
- Sticky tape
- A glue stick
- Scissors
- A hole punch
- Ribbon, thread, wool or string

What to do:

1. Tear your tissue paper into small pieces:

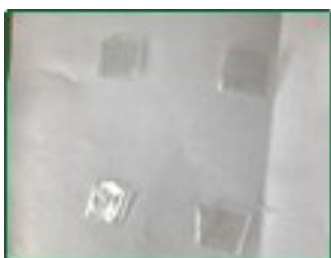


2. Make a circle of sticky tape so that it sticks down and up:



3. Stick your circle of sticky tape to your surface.

This will be under one corner of your sticky-back-plastic. Repeat for each corner:



4. Take one of the pieces of sticky-back-plastic.

Peel back one corner of it (just a small bit).

Then, with the backing paper upwards and the plastic side downwards, stick the whole piece onto your four circles of sticky tape:



5. Peel the backing off the sticky-back-plastic.



6. Stick your small pieces of tissue paper to the sticky-back-plastic. Its okay for them to overlap:



7. Take your second piece of sticky-back-plastic. Peel the backing off:





8. Carefully place the sticky-back-plastic (sticky side down) onto your mosaic of colour, so that it matches the one on the bottom.



9. Now to make a border for your suncatcher:

Take the four strips of black card. Decide how they best fit around the edge of your plastic suncatcher. You need a piece of card on both sides of the sticky-back-plastic (like the bread in a sandwich). Cut the card to fit the sides and glue them onto the edges of the suncatcher - a matching piece on each side of the plastic.



10. Your suncatcher is complete.

To finish it off: make two holes with the hole-punch, add thread, ribbon, string or wool and hang it up in a window to catch the light!



The Blessing by Kari Jobe & Cody Carnes

The Lord bless you and keep you
Make His face shine upon you and be
gracious to you

The Lord turn His face toward you
And give you peace

The Lord bless you and keep you
Make His face shine upon you and be
gracious to you

The Lord turn His face toward you
And give you peace

Bridge 1:

May His favour be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family and your children
And their children, and their children
May His favour be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family and your children
And their children, and their children

The Story Behind The Blessing

According to [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Blessing),

Initially, "The Blessing" was released as a music video on Elevation Worship's YouTube channel in early March 2020, with Kari Jobe and Cody Carnes leading the song in a worship service at Elevation Church's Ballantyne campus on March 1. Jobe & Carnes had written the song together with Steven Furtick and Chris Brown in a writing session on Thursday, February 27, 2020, at Elevation prior to leading it at Elevation's Sunday service on March 1, 2020. The song became popular on YouTube, leading to the release of the live audio recording on March 20, 2020, to other platforms. The song's music video had garnered over 3 million views on YouTube at the time of its release. "The Blessing" was serviced to Christian radio stations on May 1, 2020.

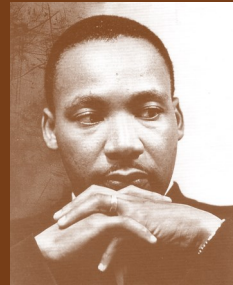


Resource 3 Hope Quotes

'Everything that is done in the world is done by hope'



"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour



of their skin, but by the content of their character."



Everything will be okay in the end; and if it's not okay, it's not the end.

John Lennon

Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is to not stop questioning.

- Albert Einstein

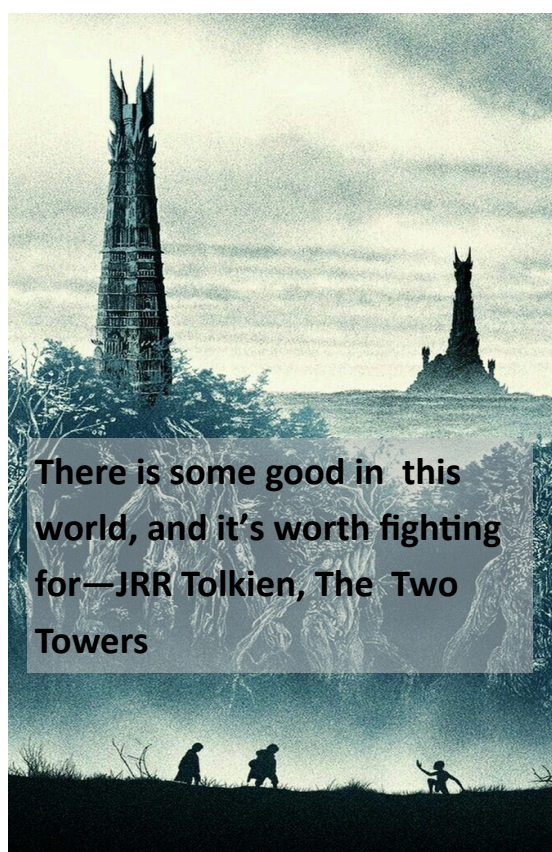
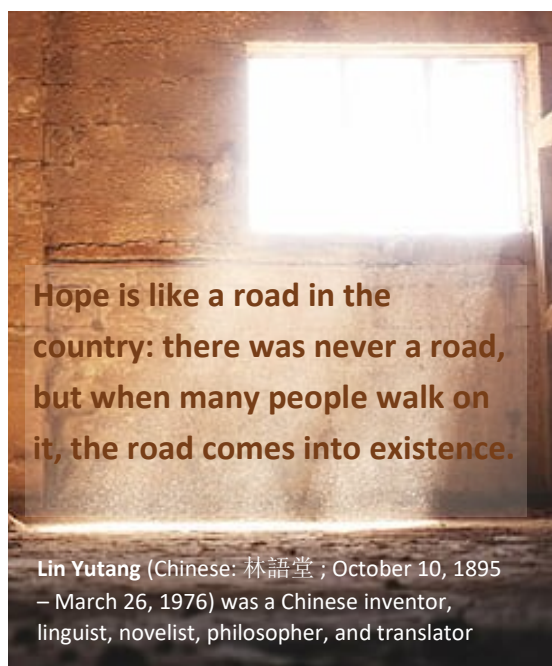
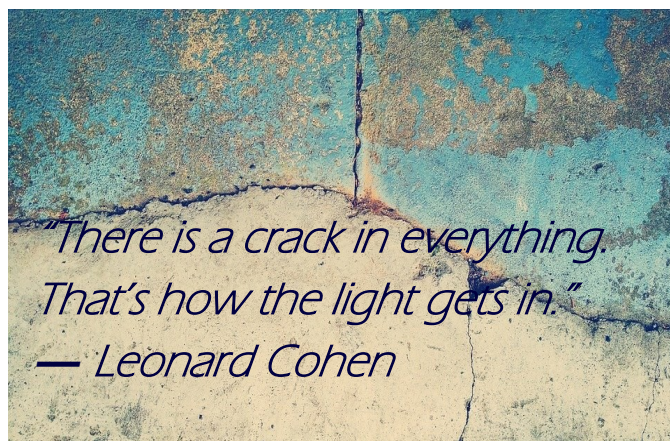
brainquotes.org

Hope Quotes

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.

Desmond Tutu





Don't Lose
Hope. When
the Sun Goes
Down, The
Stars Come
Out.



BizwareMagic.com

*"Hope is
like a
bird that
senses the
dawn and
carefully
starts to
sing while
it is still
dark."*

- Unknown Author -



love lives on.com

HOPE IS
THE
ONLY THING
STRONGER
THAN FEAR

Hope

IS THE ABILITY TO HEAR

THE MELODY OF THE FUTURE.

Faith

IS THE COURAGE

TO DANCE TO IT TODAY.



“Hope” is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all.

And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I’ve heard it in the chilliest land
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

—EMILY DICKINSON



Bible Stories to help us think about Hope

Hope—Bible

Whatever your own preference we encourage the use of the Good News Translation with Unlock groups because it has the most accessible vocabulary

Select whichever of these you think your group will relate to best and use them to explore together our own COVID experiences of hope.

Listen:

- In Christ alone my hope is found: Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16KYvflc2bE>
- Living Hope by Phil Wickham <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f2FXxDVO6w>
- Never Walk Alone by Rend Collective <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCRELKW8gaY>
- The Blessing by Kari Jobe & Cody Carnes Elevation Worship 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZ55mDL7dA0>
- Hillsong Worship, In Control - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOlZxBzvNmW>
- Hope wins <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1EuWjA6hy4>
- Just One Touch From the King - Godfrey Birtill <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6k8-Zju4wk>

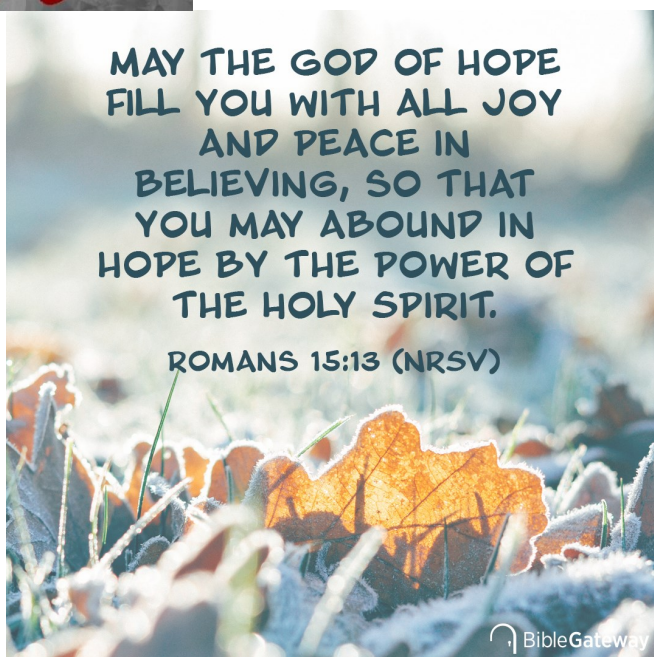


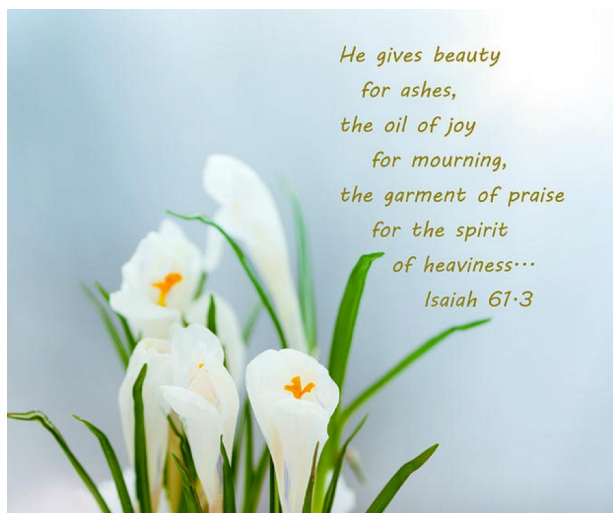
I Corinthians 13:13 Hope is identified in Paul's theology as one of the three key elements of the Christian life. This thinking is portrayed all the way through his letter to the Roman church. His frequent references to hope (Romans 5:1-5; Romans 8:14-25 & 26-39) culminate in this wish prayer:

Romans 15:13 May God, the

source of hope (in other translations this reads, 'May the God of hope...') fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so that your hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This prayer has been used by many churches as a blessing over the 2020 Christmas season. It can be adapted to make a banner.





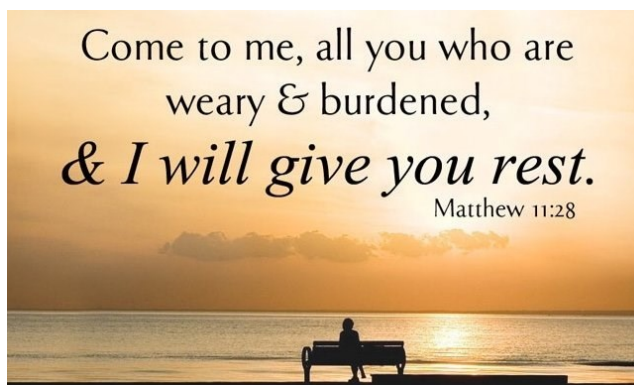
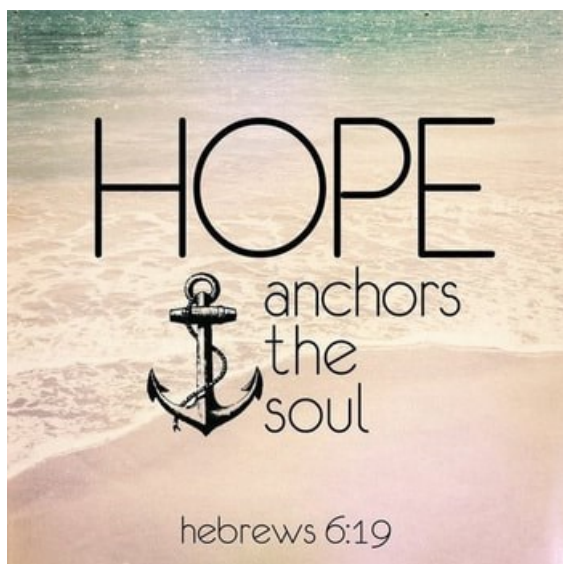
Isaiah 40:28-31

Don't you know? Haven't you heard? The LORD is the everlasting God; he created all the world. He never grows tired or weary. No one understands his thoughts. He strengthens those who are weak and tired. Even those who are young grow weak; young people can fall exhausted. But those who trust (other translations read hope) in the LORD for help will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings

like eagles; they will run and not get weary; they will walk and not grow weak.

This Isaiah 40 passage dovetails well with Jesus' invitation in [Matthew 11:28](#)

[Hebrews 6:18-19](#) The imagery of hope as an anchor for our lives.



There are these two things, then, that cannot change and about which God cannot lie. So we who have found safety with him are greatly encouraged to hold firmly to the hope placed before us. We have this hope as an anchor for our lives. It is safe and sure, and goes through the curtain of the heavenly temple into the inner sanctuary.

Hope Stories in the New Testament:

The most poignant of these are those of the disciples around the resurrection and the waiting time before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (stories of the early church may also be useful):

[Luke 24:1-12](#) - Luke's account of the resurrection discovery by the women and Peter and running to the tomb

Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, carrying the spices they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the entrance to the tomb, so they went in; but they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. They stood there puzzled about this, when suddenly two men in bright shining clothes stood by them. Full of fear, the women bowed down to the ground, as the men said to them, "Why are you looking among the dead for one who is alive? He is not here; he has



Psalm 130:7

*Israel, trust in the LORD,
because his love is
constant and he is
always willing to save*

been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, be crucified, and three days later rise to life.’”

Then the women remembered his words, returned from the tomb, and told all these things to the eleven disciples and all the rest. The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James; they and the other women with them told these things to the apostles. But the apostles thought that what the women said was nonsense, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; he bent down and saw the grave cloths but nothing else. Then he went back home amazed at what had happened

Luke 24:13-35 - The story of the 2 men on the road to Emmaus, dejected and downhearted whose hope was fully restored by the meeting of Jesus on the road .

On that same day two of Jesus' followers were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. As they talked and discussed, Jesus himself drew near and walked along with them; they saw him, but somehow did not recognize him. Jesus said to them, “What are you talking about to each other, as you walk along?” They stood still, with sad faces. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have been happening there these last few days?”

“What things?” he asked.

“The things that happened to Jesus of Nazareth,” they answered. “This man was a prophet and was considered by God and by all the people to be powerful in

everything he said and did. Our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and he was crucified. And we had hoped that he would be the one who was going to set Israel free! Besides all that, this is now the third day since it happened. Some of the women of our group surprised us; they went at dawn to the tomb, but could not find his body. They came back saying they had seen a vision of angels who told them that he is alive. Some of our group went to the tomb and found it exactly as the women had said, but they did not see him.”

*Your hope waters
the roots of
flowers that have
yet to bloom*



Then Jesus said to them, “How foolish you are, how slow you are to believe everything the prophets said! Was it not necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and then to enter his glory?” And Jesus explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scriptures, beginning with the books of Moses and the

writings of all the prophets.

As they came near the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther; but they held him back, saying, “Stay with us; the day is almost over and it is getting dark.” So he went in to stay with them. He sat down to eat with them, took the bread, and said the blessing; then he broke the bread and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. They said to each other, “Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?” They got up at once and went back to Jerusalem, where they found the eleven disciples gathered together with the

others and saying, “The Lord is risen indeed! He has appeared to Simon!”

The two then explained to them what had happened on the road, and how they had recognized the Lord when he broke the bread.

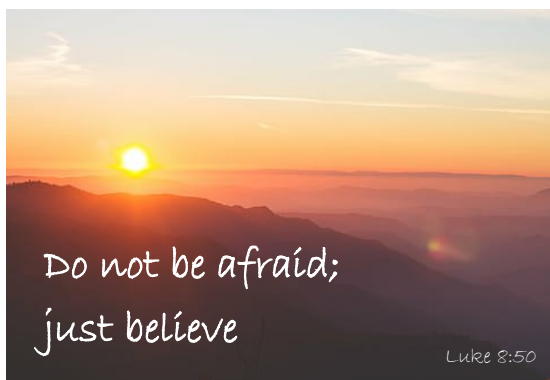
John 21:1-14 - The fishing story in John when Jesus appears to the disciples who had returned to what they had always done before they met Jesus and the miraculous catch of fish .

After this, Jesus appeared once more to his disciples at Lake Tiberias. This is how it happened. Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael (the one from Cana in Galilee), the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples of Jesus were all together. Simon Peter said to the others, “I am going fishing.”

“We will come with you,” they told him. So they went out in a boat, but all that night they did not catch a thing. As the sun was rising, Jesus stood at the water's edge, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then he asked them, “Young men, haven't you caught anything?”

“Not a thing,” they answered.

He said to them, “Throw your net out on the right side of the boat, and you will catch some.” So they threw the net out and could not pull it back in, because they had caught so many fish. The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Peter heard that it was the Lord, he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken his clothes off) and jumped



into the water. The other disciples came to shore in the boat, pulling the net full of fish. They were not very far from land, about a hundred yards away. When they stepped ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there with fish on it and some bread. Then Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.”

Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net ashore full of big fish, a hundred and fifty-three in all; even though there were so many, still the net did not tear. Jesus said to them, “Come and eat.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” because they knew it was the Lord. So Jesus went over, took the bread, and gave it to them; he did the same with the fish.

She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.



Luke 8:44

This, then, was the third time Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from death.

There are other stories of individuals who had faith:

Luke 8:40 - Jairus who fell at Jesus' feet pleading for healing for his daughter. But he had to wait and his hope and trust was really tested because of -

Luke 8:44 - The bleeding woman who thought that if she just touched Jesus' cloak she might be healed. (Jesus stopped the crowd, held up everything

to prioritise and give his full attention to this desperate, ostracised, women over Jairus the synagogue ruler.) See Page 114 for full Bible text

The Song by Godfrey Birtle, [Just One Touch from the King](#) (link above) would work well with this story.

Luke 15:11-24 - The Parable of the Lost Son (Loving Father) could also be turned around to focus on hope – the limited hope of the Son when he came to his senses having lost everything – and the extravagant fulfilment of his wildest hopes when he did return home.



Jesus went on to say, “There was once a man who had two sons. The younger one said to him, ‘Father, give me my share of the property now.’ So the man divided his property between his two sons. After a few days the younger son sold his part of the property and left home with the money. He went to a country far away, where he wasted his money in reckless living. He spent everything he had. Then a severe famine spread over that country, and



he was left without a thing. So he went to work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him out to his farm to take care of the pigs. He wished he could fill himself with the bean pods the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything to eat. At last he came to his senses and said, 'All my father's hired workers have more than they can eat, and here I am about to starve! I will get up and go to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired workers."' So he got up and started back to his father.

"He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity, and he ran, threw his arms around his son, and kissed him. 'Father,' the son said, 'I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.' But the father called to his servants. 'Hurry!' he said. 'Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.' And so the feasting began.

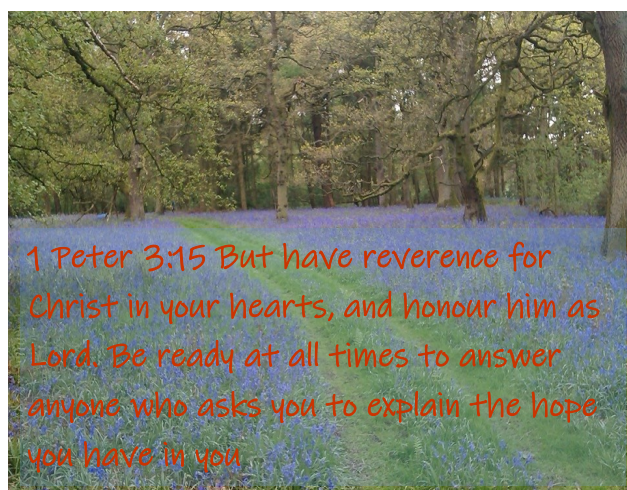
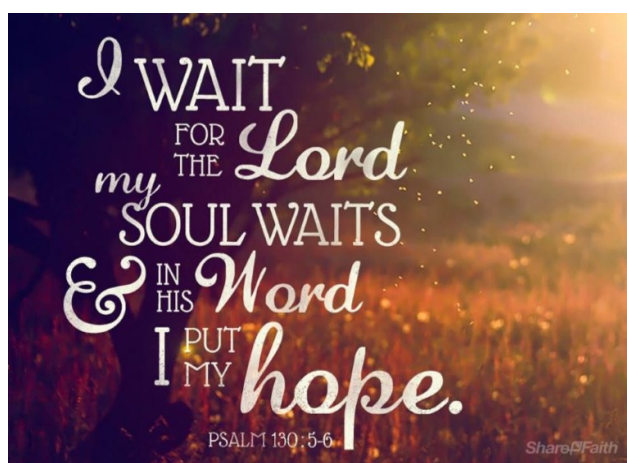
For more activities related to this Bible story see Unlock resource pack 'Unlocking the Prodigal' <http://unlock-urban.org.uk/documents/unlockingtheprodigalHeanorpopversion.pdf>

Perhaps even the story of Zacchaeus has an element of hope in it. After all, what was he hoping to see?

Luke 19:1-10.

Jesus went on into Jericho and was passing through. There was a chief tax collector there named Zacchaeus, who was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was a little man and could not see Jesus because of the crowd. So he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus, who was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and said to Zacchaeus, "Hurry down, Zacchaeus, because I must stay in your house today."

Zacchaeus hurried down and welcomed him with great joy. All the people who saw it started grumbling, "This man has gone as a guest to the home of a sinner!" Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Listen, sir! I will give half my belongings to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay back four times as much." Jesus said to him, "Salvation has come to this house today, for this man, also, is a descendant of Abraham. The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."



Unlock, by various names, has been around since 1972, trying to help (mainly) urban Christians to understand and share their faith appropriately. Our life experience matters; our stories; our joys and sorrows. The Bible has plenty to say, more than we'll ever know, about our lives, if we know how to read it and apply it - if we know how to **UNLOCK** it!

Unlock uses an approach to engaging with the Bible that is different to traditional Bible studies, based on a reflective learning cycle which is a tried and tested way of introducing people to the Bible in a non-threatening way (see below). We usually work with people outside of church who may be interested in finding out a bit more about faith but perhaps are not attracted to the formal methods of learning often associated with church life. Our approach starts from the stories and experiences of group members, whereas a more traditional approach starts from the Biblical text. It has been found to work well with small groups of urban, oral learners. Many churches have activities that draw in members of their surrounding community but then struggle with how to move on from those relationships into exploring faith, especially in urban environments where anything formal might be treated with suspicion. Unlock's approach can help with that.

There are many free resources on the Unlock website www.unlock-urban.org.uk/resources designed for use with such groups. However, because each of these resources was designed for a particular

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group in a particular time and place they are unlikely be a perfect fit for your group as they stand. They are offered more as inspiration to you to design your own materials along the same lines, rather than as ready to use packages.

If you have any queries relating to Unlock materials, please contact:

Unlock, 15 Station Road, Rotherham S60 1HN

01709 380318 office@unlock-urban.org.uk

The Unlock Learning Cycle

Unlocking real life

stories of urban people

Start with the group telling stories from their real life experience.

Releasing life changing skills and confidence

Change happens as a result of linking real life experience with the Bible. This change often leads to action among others.

Leading to more experience

What we learn now is learnt for life and changes us. We also learn to keep reflecting!

Revealing Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

The real life stories are connected to and compared with similar situations in the Bible.



10 principles of Training used by Unlock in its work

1. Pay attention to the local, regional and cultural factors that influence people's lives
2. Develop the ability to help other people tell their stories.
3. Take a genuine interest and enjoyment in LISTENING to other people's stories.
4. AFFIRM and ENCOURAGE people so that they can be confident enough to formulate their own questions, and not to impose our own answers on other people's questions.
5. Be PATIENT and WAIT for people to see the gaps in their own knowledge.
6. Believe that people can make sense of the Bible and their own experience, and make the connection between the two; and that God by his spirit will lead people to truth and action.
7. Encourage working together in groups where each person's contribution is valued, and where diversity of opinion is accepted and tolerated.
8. Be aware of what is going on in and between people in such groups.
9. Work with a group so that it can come to its own conclusions and decide on its own actions.
10. Value everyone as a 'Treasure –chest of information and experience'; seeing our task as one of giving people the keys to undo their treasures.

And some Dos and Don'ts

Do: -

- Know and use each person's name
- Accept whatever is offered and encourage further contributions
- Encourage everyone to have a go
- Find non threatening questions to enable people to join in
- Build trust between group members
- Try to work with groups of between 5 and 15 people
- Create an environment where each member has confidence to contribute
- Encourage and enable people to draw on their own experience as a primary learning tool
- Help the group to work together
- Make it clear that you value each person's opinion enough to want them to say what they think
- Gather information about what is already known and shared in a group before introducing new information



- Ask questions like, 'What do you think?' 'What would you like to change?', 'How are you going to change it?', 'What's the best thing about . . .?', 'What's the worst thing about . . .?'
- Encourage participants to consider where their information has come from and how their views have been formed.
- Create experiences for the group to reflect on, you can use film, drama, pictures, paintings, or photographs, cartoons, music, creative activities, community experiences.
- Stress the vastness of the data which the group already possesses.
- Give chances for people to respond, question, discuss.
- Introduce new information (including the Bible) in manageable chunks
- Expect change
- Help the group apply the Word to the here and now. 'What has this got to do with me? With us?'
- Work at presenting in the language of the group.
- Be creative
- Adapt published material to the needs of the group
- Write or make your own material
- Create flexible programmes that can adjust to group needs as they emerge
- Seek the group's agreement for the programme, allow them to modify it as necessary
- Listen attentively

Don't: -

- Use religious language, jargon, or clichés
- Use middle class illustrations, examples, case studies
- Assume a familiarity with the bible
- Tell people what they should do, think, believe; don't say, 'This is how it is.'
- Put people on the spot, or in the spotlight
- Make assumptions about people's lifestyles and domestic arrangements
- Don't ask questions with 'right' or 'wrong' answers or that rely on knowledge, rather than experience
- Make value judgements about people who think and learn differently to you and your friends
- Assume that everyone can read – or that no one can
- Lecture, give out handouts, issue book lists.



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