

THE STORY BEHIND MY NAME

Preparation ahead of the meeting

- Give advanced warning that you will be doing this activity, to allow time for a bit of research if it's needed!

Hymn As we are gathered (CH4 197)

Prayer

Loving God, we gather as brothers and sisters of faith and welcome you into our midst as we share time together, your family here. As we explore a little about our family names today, we ask you to bless those who named us and who have loved us. Be with us, the One who has called us by name and loves us through and through. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

The story behind our names (one person to lead)

- Parents often share with their children the "story" behind their names.
- Give members the chance (either with the whole group or divided into smaller groups) to tell the story behind their name/middle name...
- OR why they chose certain names for their own children
- Let the conversation flow and develop

Bible reading: Isaiah 43: 1-4

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, Jacob, and formed you, Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine. When you pass through waters, I will be with you; through rivers, you shall not be swept away.

Hymn

CH4 191 - Do not be afraid

[\(Do Not be Afraid, For I Have Redeemed You \(5vv+refrain\) \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube\)](#)

Closing Prayer

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, this day and forevermore. Amen

BIBLE JOURNALING

Preparation

Ask everyone to bring a notebook, a pen and a Bible

Hymn

Speak, O Lord ([Speak, O Lord - Keith & Kristyn Getty - YouTube](#))

Or, O Lord, you search me and you know me (CH4 197)

Opening Prayer

Read CH4 606 (Lord, you sometimes speak in wonders) as a prayer

Group chat

- Share some of your favourite Bible texts
- Why are they so significant for us?
- Share thoughts and experiences

Individual Activity

- Take your notebook, pen and Bible
- Write out one of your favourite Bible verses
- Optional – add some kind of decoration
- At home, continue adding a text or passage a day

This is a very personal diary but perhaps extend an invitation to reflect on the journals at a later point in the year

Hymn

Be thou my vision (CH4 465) or One more step along the world I go (CH4 530)

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for your Word and the way it speaks to us in every situation of life. As we leave now, we take all that we have shared with us and pray that you will help us to continue sharing your Gospel in the day ahead. We pray in Jesus' name and for his sake, who died and rose again for us. Amen

BLESSINGS BASKETS AND BOXES

Hymn Make me a channel of your peace (CH4 528)

Opening Prayer

Father God, thank you that we can meet together, knowing that we will find a welcome here and knowing that we belong to you and to this fellowship. Today, we pray especially for everyone who feels isolated and lonely; for everyone who is anxious about what each day will hold; for those who are grieving a loss of any kind. In a moment of quiet, we name in our hearts those who are known to us..... and we pray that everyone in need would come to know the peace that your offer in Jesus' name. Amen

Blessing Baskets/Boxes

- For members of your group, church or community who are struggling one way or another.
- Prepare baskets (e.g. Food (Biscuits, tinned soup, fresh fruits etc), baby/children's clothes or toys, shawl or knee blanket, flowers, simple basic household items etc.)
- Deliver the basket/bag/box to their door
- These don't need to be extravagant to be meaningful.
- Consider adding a gift tag with a simple message agreed by everyone

Hymn When I needed a neighbour (CH4 544)

Closing Prayer

We'll close with the Prayer of St Ignatius of Loyola: Teach us, good Lord, to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we will do your will through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

COLOUR IN THE BIBLE – an interactive talk

This works well with different voices for the different colours and another voice for the Bible texts.

Materials needed and explanation

- A set of coloured gummed paper strips for each person (e.g. use Christmas paper chain lengths and make your own additional coloured ones, especially for the gold and silver)
- Have Pritt sticks available if strips are not gummed paper
- Each person will create their own paper chain as the relevance of each colour is described
- Once the talk is finished, put all the separate chains together to form one long one.
- All hold the long chain and use as an aid to prayer.
- Leave the whole thing (colour explanation and chain) somewhere on display for others to see!

Hymn Who put the colours in the rainbow? (CH4 143)

Opening Prayer

Creator God, who put the rainbow in the sky, we thank you for the myriad of colours that fill our world. As we reflect today on the way that colour reflects different things within the Bible, we thank you for the layers of meaning that we will discover together. Be with us as we learn and share together, for Jesus' sake. Amen

The Activity (either have one leader or a different person to read about each colour)

Colours, like numbers, have significant meaning in the Bible. Understanding what different colours symbolize can help us gain a deeper understanding of Scripture and give us revelation in our faith walk.

RED Red is translated in the Old Testament as *oudem*, which means “red clay.” It is the root word for mankind. Biblical figures such as Adam (*Genesis 2:7*) and Esau (*Genesis 25:25*) have their names derived from the word *oudem*.

The symbolism of red extends its meaning for mankind as a metaphor for humanity. In the Old Testament, the blood sacrifice of an animal meant atonement for one's sin. The Israelites also painted the blood of a Passover lamb offering in order for the angel of death to pass over their homes during the tenth and final plague of Egypt (*Exodus 12:1-13*).

However, red is most commonly associated with the blood of Jesus Christ that He spilled as the bond price for our Salvation on the cross at Calvary (*Colossians 1:20*).

BLUE Blue in the Bible represents the heavens and the Word of God. In Exodus, when Moses, his sons, and 70 elders of Israel went up to Mount Sinai to worship God, they saw God and described the pavement under His feet as being bright as the blue sky (*Exodus 24:10*). Blue is translated in Hebrew as *tekelet*. It is also found in the Bible to mean purple (*Ezekiel 23:6*) or violet (*Jeremiah 10:9*). *Tekelet* was the colour assigned for priest's clothing (*Exodus 28:5-6*). Blue is also accredited with being the colour of God's healing and grace.

YELLOW Yellow is referenced in the Bible by the Hebrew word *charuts*, which refers to the precious metal gold. At Jesus' birth, one of the gifts He received was gold. In the Old Testament, Solomon had the Temple built and overlaid in gold, even down to the priest's utensils (*1 Kings 6*). At Jesus' birth, one of the gifts He received was gold (*Matthew 2:11*). Additionally, in The Book of Revelations, the New Jerusalem is referred to as a city of pure gold (*Revelation 21:18*).

Yellow and gold also represent the presence of God (*Deuteronomy 4:24*) and purification through fire.

GREEN Green, being the colour of vegetation, symbolizes life, restoration, and new beginnings (*Psalms 1:3*). Green is also the colour of resurrection which we experience in Spring.

AMBER Amber symbolizes the glory of God, His judgment, and endurance (*Ezekiel 1:4*).

PURPLE Purple represents royalty, majesty, and priesthood in the Bible.

White: White refers to holiness, light, purity, redemption, and the righteousness of Jesus Christ (*John 19:2*)

WHITE White refers to holiness, light, purity, redemption, and the righteousness of Jesus Christ (*Mark 16:5*).

BLACK Black symbolizes sin, darkness, death, and catastrophe (*Zephaniah 1:15*).

SILVER Silver is symbolic for the Word of God, divinity, salvation, and refining (*Psalms 66:10*).

SCARLET Scarlet can represent sin ([Isaiah 1:18](#)), but it also refers to royalty ([Daniel 5:16](#)).

BRONZE Bronze stands for strength and durability. As an alloy, it is hard and durable and was used to make the ten brazen lavers, which were basins for washing ([Exodus 30:18](#)) and the Molten Sea, a large basin for ablution of the priests in the temple Solomon built ([1 Kings 7:23-26](#)). In the Book of Revelation, Jesus' feet are described as being like bronze ([Revelation 1:15](#)).

(Adapted from [Is There Any Significance to Colors in the Bible? \(christianity.com\)](#))

Closing Prayer

God of Light, thank you for this time together. Remind us to always shine our light, that's made up of many beautiful colours. We make this prayer through Christ your Son our Saviour. Amen

LETTERS/CARDS TO MISSION/PROJECT PARTNERS

Preparation

- Establish with whom you would like to make contact via letters and/or cards
- Provide resources for the activity or ask members to bring materials that they wish to use

Hymn Holy Spirit, ever living (CH4 615)

Opening Prayer

Loving Father, as we meet today, we give thanks for everyone who has helped us on our journey of faith, those who have listened to our hopes and fears, our dreams and our disappointments. As we spend time today focussing on others who seek to care in different and practical ways, remind us again of how simple actions and heartfelt prayer can be so encouraging to those helping others in your name. Amen

Activity

Write Christmas cards annually, or letters, to show love and care for mission or project partners.

Hymn I, the Lord of sea and sky (CH4 251)

Closing Prayer

Loving God, bless the letters we have written and the cards we have made. And bless us as we go on our way, your family of faith here, whose we are and whom we serve. Amen

ONE IN FIVE

Hymn 'I have a dream', a man once said (CH4 710)

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for creating us in your image, each of us unique and uniquely loved by you. In a world that encourages self over other, we pray that, through the course of our time together this afternoon/evening, we might be reminded of the many things that unite us and bind us together, one humanity called to love and care for one another. Bless our meeting, in Jesus' name. Amen

Activity

(How you go about this will depend very much on the size of your Guild)

- Find one person who has something in common with you, but make it something unusual like a place you have travelled; someone who has as many siblings as you; whose middle name starts with the same letter; matching mothers' names.
- Once everyone has found someone, do it again, but they must find two people, and so on.

Hymn Bind us together, Lord (MP54)

Closing Prayer

Loving God, we thank you for the new things we have learned about one another this afternoon and for the things we have discovered that we have in common. In that Spirit of Unity, bless us as we go our separate ways and keep us safe until we meet again. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son, our living Saviour. Amen

THE TAPESTRY OF OUR LIVES – a reflective activity

This is a group activity which concludes in a beautiful woven picture that includes something from everyone's life.

Materials to prepare ahead of the meeting

- A sturdy picture frame with string strips of string attached from top to bottom @1cm apart (the size will depend on the size of your Guild group)
- A selection of strips of material - different colours, patterns, fabrics, widths etc.. available in the centre of the room

Hymn Through all the changing scenes of life (MP 702)

Opening Prayer

Read CH4 618 (Spirit of love, you move within creation) as a prayer

The Activity (One person to lead)

1. Think back to the past

- Recall a time when you were aware of the presence of God in your life
- Choose a strip of fabric to represent that time. Choose the colour carefully
- Weave your piece of fabric into the prepared frame. Work from side to side starting at the bottom of the frame

2. Think about the present

- Where are you on your faith journey now?
- Choose a strip of fabric to represent your relationship with God now.
- Add your piece of fabric to the picture that is being created. Continue working from the bottom upwards

3. Look to the future

- How do you picture heaven?
- Choose a strip of fabric to represent that image.
- Add your piece of fabric to the picture that is being created.

Reflection

- Place the finished tapestry where everyone can see it
- Play some quiet music to allow a little time to sit and 'take in' the picture as a whole and what it represents
- Read Colossians 2:2-4 (The Living Bible)
This is what I have asked of God for you: that you will be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love, and that you will have the rich experience of knowing Christ with real certainty and clear understanding. For God's secret plan, now at last

made known, is Christ himself. In him lie hidden all the mighty, untapped treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

- Pray

*My Life is but a weaving
between my Lord and me;
I cannot choose the colours
He worketh steadily.
Oft times He weaveth sorrow
And I, in foolish pride,
Forget He sees the upper,
And I the underside.
Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly,
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why.
The dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver's skilful hand,
as the threads of gold and silver
in the pattern He has planned.
He knows, He loves, He cares,
nothing this truth can dim.
He gives His very best to those
who leave the choice with Him.*

Lord God, thank for this time of reflection and creativity. As we look at the picture that has emerged, we can see the many different strands of our lives and how they are woven together by faith. Make the ties stronger with each passing year, we pray, until the day we see you and the tapestry of our life is complete. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

WHAT MATTERS MOST?

Hymn In the name of Christ we gather (CH4 677)

Opening Prayer

Loving God, as we spend time together in fellowship, be with us, moving among us, prompting our thinking and our speaking. Let it be a time of sharing and reflection, of love and laughter, in Jesus name. Amen

Virtual Time Capsule

- Divide people into small groups and give them a large piece of paper and some markers.
- Ask them draw or write words of 20 things they would want in a time capsule that would show people in the future what was important to them.
- Share each list with the whole group.

Bible reading: Philippians 1:9-11 (NLT)

Paul writing to the Christians in Philippi... "I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. **For I want you to understand what really matters**, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation - the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ – for this will bring much glory and praise to God".

Discuss

- Why were the items we put into the virtual time capsule so important to us?
- Do they have any relationship to our faith?
- What things would Christ have included?

Hymn You are called to tell the story (CH4 680)

Closing Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for all the things we have talked about this afternoon/evening. Bless us as we go back to our homes and keep us mindful of what really matters to YOU day by day. So, be with us until we meet again, whose we are and whom we serve. Amen

SOMETHING OLD – SOMETHING NEW

At the meeting prior to this one: Invite everyone to bring two special items from home...one old and one new.

Suggestions...

- Photo album
- Ornament
- Clothing
- Kitchen utensil
- Gardening tool
- Book
- Crockery
- Musical instrument
- School reports
- Vinyl record, cassette tape, cd etc..
- Craft items
- Homemade objects

Activity

1. Share the old items you have brought (as a whole group or smaller ones)
 - Why you have kept them
 - What value you would place on them
 - To whom you would be prepared to give them away
2. Share the new items you have brought
 - Why have you got it?
 - Why did you bring it today?
3. If you could only keep one of the items, which would you choose... and why?

Reflection

We can become attached to 'things' for all sorts of reasons: some are emotional, some are practical. Whatever or reason, the items we choose to keep over the years have a value, to us at least – a drawing given to us by a child or grandchild many years ago, a wedding gift, a holiday snap... and the list could go on.

Some of us would keep **everything** and others are more content to let things go and there are complex reasons for our decisions. Very often there are **memories** attached to the things we keep and a simple item that would mean nothing to another person can mean the world to us. By keeping them we somehow preserve a memory.

But we recognise that those are moments from the past... but time moves on... and we buy or are given new items to use, enjoy and treasure. Our homes are filled with mod-cons that we take for granted as the years pass – central heating, inside toilets, washing machines, mobile phones which have built-in cameras.

Would we want to go back and live without them? Each has brought about **significant** change to our lives... but haven't we adapted, accepted and incorporated them into the way we live now?

And that's really the point of Jesu's comments about new wine and new wineskins – we don't keep doing things the way we always have. We can treasure the past but we have to live in the present and look to the future – and that inevitably means change!

Reading

Matthew 9: 16-17 '...who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the old skins would burst from the pressure, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine is stored in new wineskins so that both are preserved.'

Hymn

CH4 153/MP 200 Great is thy faithfulness

Prayer

Lord God, we thank for all that we have shared together this afternoon/evening. We thank you for people, places, and items that we treasure and that hold special memories for us. But we thank you too, for our evolving lives and for the ways you help us to adapt and accept change in its many guises.

As the Church seeks to be new wine, we pray that we will trust in your grace to travel where you lead, and allow you to work in and through us in your own way.

All this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

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Activity

4. Share the old items you have brought (as a whole group or smaller ones)
 - Why you have kept them
 - What value you would place on them
 - To whom you would be prepared to give them away
5. Share the new items you have brought
 - Why have you got it?
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