

# Youth group session

Education Sunday 2010

## VOCATION

[This needs a 'worksheet' with it – A blank jigsaw that can be cut into pieces. You can probably fit two jigsaws on one A4 sheet.]

### Aim:

To explore the topic of vocation, introducing the ideas of primary and secondary callings

Read the article about Vocation from the Education Sunday website to help you prepare. This session uses the example of teaching when talking about vocation, because it's easier to talk about a specific example rather than just in general terms. The principles and ideas covered apply to any vocation however, and so will be valuable to everyone in the group – whether they want to be teachers or not!

### You'll need:

- flipchart and pens
- Bibles
- film clip one from the Education Sunday website or the *Transforming Lives* DVD – Christian Teachers Transform Lives - and equipment to play it. You can download this from the website, or send off for a copy of the *Transforming Lives* DVD which contains a high quality version of the film clip from [transforminglives@stapleford-centre.org](mailto:transforminglives@stapleford-centre.org)
- a jigsaw for each person and an envelope. Cut up each jigsaw and put it inside the envelope.
- pens

### Shoe swap shuffle

Get everyone to sit in a big circle. Invite them to take off their shoes and put them gently into the centre. Get everyone to close their eyes and get a couple of volunteers to jumble up the shoes as well as they can. The shoes need to no longer be in pairs or opposite the people that they belong to. While people have their eyes closed, explain the rest of the game. Keeping their eyes closed, people have to grab one random shoe from the pile. They will then open their eyes and find the matching shoe to the one in their hand. Once they have a pair, they need to put them on their feet if the shoes are big enough, or on their hands if they are too small. Stress that no one should squeeze their feet into shoes that are too small for them or they will damage the shoes! Then they walk around in the shoes until they see someone with their own shoes. They swap their pair for their own shoes and go and sit down. The game continues until the last person has got their shoes back.

### Vocation vacation

Get a couple of people to act out or read the 'Vocation vacation' sketch included in this pack.

Discuss the word 'vocation'. Where have people heard that word before? What does it mean? Who has a vocation? Introduce this definition: Your vocation is your calling – your purpose in life, what you were put on this earth to be and to do. So we all have a vocation in life. The challenge for each of us is to find out what that calling is.

## Bible study

Split the group into three. Give each group one of these passages and the set of questions. Invite them to discuss the questions and record their answers.

Genesis 1:26-28

Mark 1:16-20

Matthew 22:34-40

- From this passage, what does God want people to do with their lives?
- Who does the passage apply to?

Invite the groups to feedback what they discovered and write their ideas up on a flipchart. From these answers, draw out the fact that our primary calling in life is to be in a relationship with God – to love God. That's what we were put on this earth to be and to do. That's the most important thing for us to get right.

## Secondary callings

But there's more to vocation than that. Introduce the idea of secondary callings – the places and roles in which we called to love God and to serve him in the world. God wants us to work alongside him to bring about his plans for the world. He invites us to do that in lots of different ways. Talk about some of your own secondary callings – perhaps a relationship that is important as a spouse, son or daughter or sibling; the work that you do; the way you serve at your church, perhaps helping with the youth group. Read or tell the story of Jeremiah's calling to be a prophet from Jeremiah 1:4-10, pointing out that Jeremiah received this call as a young man.

Draw the outline of a person on the flipchart. Ask people to brainstorm what are the secondary callings that God might give us – the places and roles in which we are called to love God and to serve him in the world. Encourage the group to think widely, particularly in the area of work. You want to emphasise that they might be called to work in lots of different areas, not just in 'Christian work'. So for example, include artist, builder, architect, chef, surgeon, wind-turbine engineer, development worker, fashion designer and teacher as well as worship leader and youth worker. Ask people what their secondary callings are at the moment. They will be their involvement at schools they go to, their friends and family, and may include the interests that they have.

## Film Clip – Christian teachers transform lives

Ask people, as they watch the clip, to listen out for any mention of vocation or calling. Play clip one from the DVD. Discuss with the group:

- What did people say about vocation or calling on the clip?
- What was Ben's experience of being called to be a teacher? Was Ben given good advice? (He was encouraged to think about how different roles he had enjoyed and look for a job that included that.)
- How did Dave's experience of being called to teaching differ?
- Angharad talks about the challenge of following God's calling – of being stretched in places where she didn't feel stretchy. If God is calling you to something, why isn't it always easy?
- How should we expect to hear God's call today? Have you felt God calling you to be involved in anything?

## Fit and fulfilment

Explain that one of the most important secondary callings that people are interested in is discovering what career they should follow. This can be quite difficult to decide, as they may have already found out when choosing their options. Although we might wish that God would flash a neon light in the sky saying 'Be a teacher' or whatever, our sense of vocation doesn't come from 'out there', it comes from 'in here' – a growing sense that this is what you are meant to be doing. It's usually a journey of praying, trying things out, seeking advice from people who know us well and learning from our mistakes. It is about discovering and developing the gifts God has given us, about becoming the person God has given us the potential to be.

Talk about the importance of 'fit and fulfilment'. We'll find fulfilment in our work – we'll enjoy it and be excited about it - if the things we have to do in the job fit with our skills and talents. In the game at the start, you had to walk around in someone else's shoes which was not very comfortable. It was probably a relief when you got your own shoes back again. That's what you're looking for in a job – the sense that 'this fits me. I love doing this. I belong here. This is what God made me for.'

So for example, what kind of person will fit the job of being a Christian teacher - What skills will they have? What abilities? What personal qualities? Think back to what you saw on the DVD as well as your own experience of teachers to help you answer.

### Vocational jigsaws

Hand out the envelopes so that each person has a set of blank jigsaw pieces. Explain that discovering the work or occupation that you are called to in life is a bit like putting together the pieces of a jigsaw. Like Ben on the DVD it's a good idea to start by thinking about what things you are good at. When have you enjoyed using your gifts? What have you done that has brought you life and energy? When have you felt most alive? Encourage people to take some time on their own and write on their jigsaw pieces some of their responses to those questions. It may help if you write the questions up on the flipchart for them to think about.

Pray together as a group. You may want to encourage them to pray in twos, or give them some space to reflect and close in prayer on their behalf. Encourage people to take their jigsaws away and to add to them over the coming weeks and months as they think about the subject more. Invite them to pray about the issue, expecting God to show them what's on all the pieces of the jigsaw and to eventually bring them together into a beautiful whole.

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The Education Sunday 2010 theme was devised by an ecumenical steering group co-ordinated by Churches Together in England representing the following Christian denominations and organisations: the Association of Christian Teachers, the Baptist Union, the Catholic Church, the Church of England and the National Society, the Methodist Church, The Salvation Army, the Student Christian Movement and the United Reformed Church. The material in this resource was written by members of the *Transforming Lives* Project and the Education Sunday team. All worship material in this publication may be freely copied for single-occasion use as part of Christian worship. Any organisations or individuals wishing to reproduce this material in any other circumstances should seek prior permission from the Education Sunday Steering Group, Churches Together in England, 27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH.

