

# The power of hope 10/05/20

EAHs05

**To explore the meaning of hope and help young people understand that for Christians, hope is found in Jesus.**

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## Leader's notes

I am a man of hope, not for human reasons, nor from any natural optimism, but because I believe the Holy Spirit is at work in the church and in the world." Cardinal Joseph Suenens.

In these days many young people seem to be without hope, they have almost no hope for the future and little hope in the present. Environmental concerns, epidemics, terrorism and economies where no one can be guaranteed a job no matter how good their qualifications are, can lead to a sense of hopelessness and even despair.

In marked contrast the Christian has much to hope for in the future – eternal life, forever being with God and the eventual second-coming of Christ. We have hope of a heavenly home where there will be no more sadness or illness or suffering. For the immediate future we have the sure hope that God has a plan for our lives, that none of us is here by accident and that, no matter how our human fathers act, we have a loving heavenly Father who will never let go of us. This hope is a powerful force but knowledge of it is not enough: we need to own it for ourselves.

During this session it is important that the young people come to understand that the 'hope' that is talked about in the Bible is not some insubstantial wish but is in fact a certainty, something unseen, but definite and secure. As they begin to grasp the implications of the hope that is offered in the Bible through a trusting relationship in and with Jesus, they should be filled with hope for the present and future. We need to encourage them to share this hope with their friends, peers and family – too good a treasure to keep to themselves. In fact, as they understand more what Christian hope is all about and begin to believe it for themselves then this should be reflected in their own attitudes as they become far more positive individuals.

In 1 Peter 3:15 the writer says that we should be prepared to explain the hope that we have as Christians – as our young people grow in the knowledge and belief of the certainty of salvation, eternal life and a purposeful life to be lived now many others will want to know where they get their hope from; part of our role as youth workers is to encourage them to be prepared to answer confidently but with respect.

As we see our young people developing in confidence to share their Christian story maybe we can dare to believe that the church of Christ can bring hope to the world.

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## Hope On Fire

Ask the young people to brainstorm, 'What people put their hope in?'. As they make suggestions, write them up on the big sheet of paper.

Once a few suggestions have been made, read together the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:16-46).

Ask the young people what the nation of Israel had placed its hope in? The answer is of course, everything but God! A corrupt King and Queen, Prophets of Baal, and themselves. None of these things though had been able to end the drought, or bring prosperity to the land.

Talk with the group about what happens when we place our hope with things that are meaningless. Will they fulfil us? Or are they capable of bringing us anything? What does Job 8:13 say about those who do not place their hope in God?

What marks God out as different in this story? What is the reaction of the people when they witness the power of something that they can truly put their hope in?

Finally, ask the group to come up with practical ways that we can use to demonstrate that our hope needs to be set in God to avoid futility. We cannot all set mountains on fire, but we could all make a public stand, declaring that our Hope is in Jesus. How?

**The Point:** This study aims to show the young people that it is not a new thing for people to place their hope in all sorts of things. Other people, other religions, alternative therapies, celebrities, positive thinking, themselves, money, love, sex, drugs, have all long had hope placed in them.

In this story we see though the futility of hope that is not rooted in God. He alone is able to come in power and actually change situations. In this story not only does He perform a wonderful miracle but He also gives the nation what it needs; rain.

Encourage the young people to think about any times that they have placed their hope in something else, and how they could now place it in Christ.

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## Equipment

Bibles, or print outs of 1 Kings 18:16-46, Elijah on Mount Carmel, large sheet of paper and a pen

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## Praise You Through Circumstances

Make sure everyone has a piece of paper and a pen and ask them to draw a jelly. Any size, any shape, any colour.

Then on their jelly they are to write the things that are making them feel a bit wobbly at the moment. Things that are getting them down and causing them to not want to praise God. Explain that nobody is going to read their jelly notes, so they can be completely honest.

When everyone is ready, read them these 3 lines from Shackles by Mary Mary:

*'Feel like the hope is gone  
But as I lift my hands, I understand  
That I should praise you through my circumstance'*

Even though this song is about someone in very difficult circumstances and they feel that hope is gone, they know that they should praise God in spite of what they're going through. Explain that, that is what everyone is going to do now. Ask them to put their jelly thoughts somewhere safe.

Say a simple prayer asking God to remind everyone that the hope they have in Jesus as their Saviour and friend is firm and certain. Asking God to be with each person in the circumstances they find themselves in and asking Him to help each person to be able to praise and worship Him.

Play Shackles by Mary Mary encouraging everyone to join in by singing or/and dancing along.

[www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/marymary/shacklespraiseyou.html](http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/marymary/shacklespraiseyou.html)

**The Point:** To remind the young people that the hope they have in Jesus is real and certain and by using the Shackles song to encourage them to worship God even if they are in difficult circumstances.

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## **Equipment**


Song 'Shackles' by Mary, Mary and means to play it, lyrics printed out or on Power Point, paper, pens.

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## **Light Of Hope**

Response

10 mins

 Prayer

Give each of the young people a tea-light candle. Stress that you are trusting them to be sensible with this activity and not burn each other.

Mention the fact that light is a sign of hope. Jesus talked about the fact that He was the light of the world – the hope for the world.

Across the world, people light candles as a way of expressing their hopes to God.

Encourage the young people to light their tea-light and then put it on the cross silently. As they do that encourage them to be thinking of an area of their life that they would want to bring to God so that they can experience His hope – and His answer. Perhaps it's something about their own life, or perhaps it's about the life of someone else they know or different situation.

Once they have laid all the candles on the cross, everybody should stand around the cross.

Challenge that not only do we bring our needs to God and ask for His hope and help, we also ask Him to help us be people of hope in the world - that we will be a light, shining brightly in the dark places, making the world a better place.

In small groups ask them to take just a few minutes to talk about what it means to be a person who

brings hope to others – and to the world. How can they make a difference in the world?

**The Point:** To challenge the young people to think not only about their own lives, but how they can bring hope to others and make a difference.

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### ***Equipment***

Tea lights, matches and a large cross on the floor (either wooden or drawn).

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