

Easter 5

Lectionary Bible readings

RCL Easter 5 Year C

Acts 11.1-18

Psalm 148

Revelation 21.1-6

John 13.31-35

Easter glory

John 13.31-35

- After their last supper, Judas departs and Jesus speaks to the remaining disciples.
- Jesus talks about divine glory, which he links to his own departure from them.
- He has loved them, and their love for one another will be his abiding witness.

This week's resources explore: seeing glory in unexpected places; loving as Jesus loves – serving others and loving those we don't choose to love.

Bible notes WEB

New Testament

Acts 11.1-18

This passage is an explanation, by Peter, of his encounter with Cornelius and the baptism of the Gentiles who had received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10). Peter is speaking, explaining 'step by step', but in Acts, it is 'the word of God' that moves the story forward as we hear that 'it continued to spread' (6.7) and 'gain adherents' (12.24), spreading 'throughout the region' (13.49) so that it 'grew mightily and prevailed' (19.20). The critical breakthrough from Jewish separateness from the rest of the world is summarised here as 'the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God'. We hear that 'the Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us'. And Peter describes his speech to Cornelius as 'the message by which you and your entire household will be saved'. The Jewish Pentecost was interpreted as the fulfilment of God's word through the prophet Joel (Acts 2.14-21), and, as Peter remembers Jesus, this 'Gentile Pentecost' is interpreted as the fulfilment of 'the word of the Lord, how he had said, "John baptised with water, but you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit"' (see Luke 3.16 and Acts 1.5).

Gospel John 13.31-35

Jesus has told Judas to 'do quickly what you are going to do' (13.27), and he has gone out into the darkness. Now Jesus begins his 'farewell discourses' (13.31-17.26) to the remaining disciples, who will, by their own testimony later on, enable others also to believe in him (17.20-24). Judas will act quickly, and 'the hour' of Jesus' arrest, trial and execution is now striking, so that those whom Jesus loved must now understand that with



How do you read this New York sculpture?

When have you experienced love turning upside down?

his imminent departure (i.e. death), 'the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified' (12.23).

In Daniel, the vision of 'a Son of Man' who is 'given dominion and glory and kingship' represents the future of 'the holy ones' who are presently suffering for their faithfulness to God (Daniel 7.13-14,27). In John, both the suffering and the glory of 'the Son of Man' are brought together into the one 'hour' of Jesus' being 'lifted up from the earth' (12.32) in crucifixion and resurrection. This 'hour' in which Judas will act 'quickly' and Jesus will be glorified 'at once' is the climax of the ministry of Jesus, who has already both been glorified and has glorified God. He has demonstrated the difference between self-serving 'human glory' (12.43, see 5.44; 7.18; 8.50,54) and the divine glory of God's presence (Exodus 24.15-18; 1 Kings 8.10-11; Psalm 26.8; Ezekiel 44.4) in the self-giving act of love that was the washing of the disciples' feet.

In Jesus' departure and death 'God will glorify him in himself', because Jesus is totally faithful to the life-giving God whose loving purposes are not to be defeated by the many death-dealing ways of the search for 'human glory'. In Jesus' faithfulness to death, the Father's love of humanity and the Son's love of God will

shine brightly together, making visible 'the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth' (1.14). And the disciples are given the 'new commandment' to love one another. This mutual love is 'new' because it is rooted in and shaped by Jesus' own love 'to the end' (13.1). By understanding that Jesus' departure was his glorification, his followers can continue his work of making God's love visible in and for the world.

The links between the lectionary readings

It took time for the Church to fully accept that 'God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life'. This is illustrated by Peter's not imposing his view on others but rather explaining his experience 'step by step'. In this he follows Jesus, whose 'farewell discourses' recognise that it will take those he loves as 'little children' time to understand, from their own experience, that his departure from them is his glorification, the fulfilment of his Father's promise that 'I will be with you', as topsy-turvy as that seems.

WEB Notes on Psalm 148 and ideas for using it together.

Prayers

WEB All prayer text and Welsh translations.

Call to worship based on Psalm 148.13

Let us praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.

Let us praise the name of the Lord together.

A gathering prayer

Lord, we come before you,
individual and complex people;
yet all with the same desire
to worship you.

We pray that you will speak your love
deep into our hearts this morning.

Be with us, Lord. Amen.

A prayer of approach

Risen Lord, we understand so little
of what your glory really means.
Yet we dare to approach you.

Have mercy on us, and fill us with wonder,
understanding what we need to understand,
and marvelling at that which is beyond understanding.

Amen.

A prayer of confession

Lord, we confess that often we are too tied up in our own lives
to attempt to think creatively, imaginatively, differently;
to begin to pursue all the wonderfully positive
'what ifs' there may be around us;
to take the time to see your glory and all that this means;
to look for glory in unexpected places.

Forgive us, Lord, as we come humbly to you.

Help us to listen for, and act upon, your Spirit's promptings.

Amen.

A prayer of thanksgiving

We thank you, Jesus, that you loved us so much
that you died for us and rose again.

We thank you, Jesus, that you gave us your Spirit
to comfort us and to lead us.

We thank you, Jesus, that you gave us
the perfect way to show your love to others,
not with long words

but simply by loving them with your love.

Open our hearts today
so that we can receive your love anew,
and then we can give

far beyond what we would have believed possible. **Amen.**

Prayers of intercession based on Acts 11.15

'And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them
just as it had upon us at the beginning.'

Lord, we know that we tend to love those like ourselves.
We are prone to think of people who are hard to love
as 'out there', not in our backyards.

But they are sometimes much closer than that,
they are in our family.

And, dare we admit, sometimes it is ourselves whom we find
difficult to love.

Holy Spirit, fall on us.

We pray now for our families, for our nearest and dearest.
They don't always choose the lifestyle we would choose for
them, but, Lord, we pray you would help us to walk wisely
alongside them, being there for them, but not in their face.
Help us to remember that you don't work on just one side of the
equation; you are with them as much as you are with us.

May we all be guided by your Spirit,
as we look for glimpses of your glory in those around us.

Holy Spirit, fall on us.

We pray for those 'out there',
that we would not so much seek to bring them in,
as to be ready and willing to be out there
with them at their point of need.

Holy Spirit, fall on us.

Lord, we sometimes walk a difficult path
between being true to ourselves, and not offending others.

We pray for:

those we find difficult to love because they are different,
those we perhaps feel might help themselves more,
those who haven't had our advantages.

We pray for a spirit of openness
and a willingness to see your glory everywhere.

Holy Spirit, fall on us.

Amen.

A personal prayer

Lord, help me to know when I am not being easy to love,
and help me to do something about it.

Amen.

A way into prayer

Spend some time bringing to mind someone you find it difficult
to love. Resolve to show kindness to them in a specific small way
this week, and pray for mighty oaks to grow from small acorns.

A prayer for all ages together

Lord, sometimes we find it hard to love other people.

Fill us with your love (*mime drinking down a full glass*).

We pray that you will help us to understand them.

Fill us with your love.

And see you in them.

Fill us with your love.

And carry you with us, wherever we go.

Fill us with your love.

Amen.

A sending out prayer based on John 13.35

'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have
love for one another.'

Lord, we go out now,
in your name and in your love.

Bless us, Lord.

Amen.

Gather

Prepare the space

Cover a table with a cloth. Put stones of various sizes all over the cloth. Some of these should be small, rough and irregular – that people might carry with them during the week (see *A simple worship activity for all ages and Live in faith*). Others can be much larger to make a better display. Add some sparkle to the display using some gold glitter or tinsel.

Children's talk

WEB This week's talk, before they go into groups, is about Jesus' promises, and his Holy Spirit, being for everyone – not just those who were around him at the time.

Open the Word

To help the listener

The reader might use these words to provide context.

Before Judas' return with the soldiers, Jesus says he is leaving his 'little children'. When their love for one another is shaped by his love for them, then they too will go out into the world's darkness to love, as we see in Acts, even those whom they thought 'unclean'.

Present the New Testament

Peter is trying to balance what he has known to be true with what he is discovering about his new life. He is reminded in a dream that everything God made in creation is good.

Prepare a large white flag attached to a long cane. The flag should be of a light material (e.g. parachute material) that will float and hover as it is waved around. After the reading, play 'Circle of life' (from the film *The Lion King*), and wave the flag over the people, to represent and remind them that they and all creation are made and loved by God, and that the Spirit continues to hover over creation, loving us and nudging us into God's new creation. Move the flag around and over the people in time to the music, sometimes moving it quickly, sometimes slowly, sometimes swooping up into the air in a spiral, and down again. Let it finally come to rest in front of the people as the music ends.

Present the Gospel

Read the Gospel passage, then ask the question: 'Why are we reading this today?' Leave a space for silent and personal reflection on the reading and the question. Now read the short poem 'May I sit here?' (**WEB** *Further resources*). You could read the poem using different voices to ask the question: 'May I sit here?' each time it occurs, or you could prepare in advance a dramatic presentation. Alternatively, you could read out the whole of the blog entry from which the poem comes. After the poem, keep a few moments of silence, then read the Gospel passage a second time.

With very young children

Play, and explore loving one another.

Play materials: hearts cut out of card or paper in different colours and sizes, plastic or wooden figures of people (or pictures cut from magazines).

Mini Bible story with actions

Jesus said: 'Now you can see the Son of Man's glory (*reach arms wide and twinkle fingers*), and also the Father's glory (*point up and twinkle fingers*). Love one another (*hold hands*), as I have loved you (*put hand on heart then point round the room*). Then everyone will know (*tap head*) that you follow me (*walk fingers, one hand following the other*).' Repeat so the children can join in.

Play activity

Invite the children to arrange patterns of hearts around the 'people'.

Further provision for very young children is in *ROOTS Children & Young People*.

Explore & respond

WEB Go to *Further resources* to find links and additional resource suggestions.

Sermon ideas

WEB *PostScript*: up-to-the-minute comment on Thursday morning.

- In history, when great generals won battles, the grateful nation would raise for them a tribute that would stand to their glory for ever. So, Blenheim Palace was given to the Churchill family after

a victory won at the Battle of Blenheim (against the French). Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square commemorates both a British hero and a British victory. Glory is supposed to show battles won, armies commanded, triumphs, power, and the defeat of a hated enemy. But Jesus says that he is to be glorified in the place where he is shortly to go, but where the disciples can't follow. And this glory comes not from victory, but from defeat. Not from triumph, but from his ignominious execution as a criminal.

- In John's Gospel, we are time and time again told to follow Jesus, preferably like sheep. But now Jesus says that his disciples won't be able to. As yet, they're not ready to hear this. But the new commandment has a hint of the contrast with the old – instead of 'love as you love yourself', now it is 'love as I have loved you'. The world still doesn't understand this radical new commandment; it still makes no sense in human terms. The old saying that 'charity begins at home' is the exact opposite of Jesus' new commandment. For charity to begin at home, it must start with me, and my own interests. Jesus instead calls his disciples to love without counting the cost, and to not worry about themselves in the process.

- The new commandment takes a long time to become embedded in the life of the disciples. Peter is still learning about what it means when he is called to Caesarea. He sees that God is working in the lives of those who call him, and he realises that the commandment to love has no boundaries, no limits, no need for us to choose who we can and can't love.

- Through over-simplification of people's thoughts, through misunderstanding and poor listening, through the need for drama in news programmes, soap operas and entertainment, and more, we see polarisation and hatred all around us, and an expectation that conflict can only be overcome with power, and must end in victory for one side and defeat for the other. Instead, reconciliation can happen when we put aside all of this, and try to see the world as God sees it, loving all, unconditionally. Resurrection can happen, but it often happens slowly, with long periods of seemingly no progress.

WEB Sermon ideas on Revelation 21.1-6.

Informal talk

A way for leaders to guide all ages through the reading.

Prepare a game based on the TV programme *Dragons' Den*. In advance, brief a few volunteers to be those seeking investment from the dragons. Each of them is trying to raise money for a new ministry. Choose any appropriate ministries or charity work (e.g. working with the homeless, the mentally unwell, or refugees, single parents, or the traveller community). Include a few less obvious and non-traditional (in church terms) ministries as well, perhaps with some intentional humour (e.g. ministry to the bankers who haven't received bonuses, to retired football players, to unemployed billionaires – it could provoke an interesting discussion: what ministry do such people need?). The volunteers could be asked to research and prepare their own material, or it could be provided for them on cue cards.

Now, on the day, tell the rest of the people present that they are to be investors, and that they've got £100,000 to invest in a new charity. Each volunteer will give a brief 'pitch' (maximum of, say, two minutes), designed to get the dragons to invest in their cause. Once all pitches are delivered, invite the dragons to give opinions about the causes and pitches they have heard. What is a deserving cause? What is not? What are the real needs of those who seem not to be so deserving? How do you decide between equally deserving causes? Finally, invite the dragons to vote on who they want to give the money to.

After the game, talk about the need not to choose who to invest our time and love in, but to follow the commandment we have from Jesus to love *all*, and ask what that might mean for those present, and for their church – how might, or should, they be doing things differently?

Active worship

Ideas to engage different ages, spiritual styles and learning preferences.

A simple worship activity for all ages

Give out small, rough and irregular stones (small enough for people to carry around). Ask people to look at their stone, its colours, its markings, its roughness. Ask them to imagine what its journey might have been before it rested in their hand today. Pass round a bowl or jug of cold water, and a bowl containing

gold glitter. Ask people to dip their stones in the water, then in the glitter and to shake off any excess (the water is not essential, but it will help the glitter to stick to the stone). Now ask them to look at it again: how has it changed? Invite people to share their thoughts with the person next to them.

Ask people now to imagine that the stone represents them, that its journey represents their life's journey, and that the glitter represents everything in their lives that reflects the light and glory of the risen Lord. Invite them to reflect on their lives, and to try and identify any moments that 'sparkle' because of a particular experience of encounter with, or feeling close to, Jesus. If appropriate, people could share these thoughts too, but some may not wish to do so.

Now invite people to come and put their stones close to the Easter garden (see *A simple worship activity for all ages* on page 21), or in another appropriate place, to represent placing themselves close to the risen Christ. When all have returned to their places, end with a prayer of thanksgiving for those 'sparkly' moments, and that all present may remain close to the risen Lord. **E S**

Caring, sharing

In advance, rehearse a circle dance with a small group of people, using the song 'Caring, sharing, loving, giving' (**WEB** *Further resources*). Demonstrate the dance, and then repeat it, inviting all those present to join in. The song is short and simple, and the dance will not take long to learn or demonstrate. **E A**

Love's endeavour

Read out loud, as poetry, the words of 'Morning glory, starlit sky' (also known as 'Love's endeavour, love's expense' and found in many hymn books). Invite people to read the words again for themselves (either from their hymn book, or project them) and to reflect silently on Jesus' example of sacrificial living, and his command (from today's Gospel reading) to 'Love one another as I have loved you'. **W S A**

May I sit here?

Share your response to the reading 'May I sit here?' (see *Present the Gospel*) – if it was not used earlier, the poem could be read out now. Invite people to reflect on the words, and to share with those sitting next to them how it challenges their church and their own daily lives.

Are there people whom they would find it difficult to sit next to, whether in church or in daily life – if so, why? What can they do about it? **W E**

WEB extras

Children's Sheet: to do in worship and at home. Welsh version available.

Drama sketch: *Christians United*

Psalm 148: ideas for all ages

Picture pointers: with questions for reflection

Pass it on: resources to share for DIY discipleship

Hymns & songs

Songs in italics are suitable for all ages.

WEB See *Hymns, songs & music* for key to abbreviations.

All hail the power of Jesus' name
Dear Lord and Father of mankind
Glorious things of thee are spoken
Let there be love shared among us
Lord, I come to you (SoF)
Lord, I come to you, I come (TS)
Love is his word, love is his way
Love one another for love is of God (WGWG)
My heart is filled with thankfulness
O Lord, your tenderness
O love that wilt not let me go
One, two, three, Jesus loves me
Praise God from whom all blessings flow
She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters
Take my life and let it be
Take up thy cross, the Saviour said
We have heard the call to go (SoF, TS)
When I needed a neighbour

Send out

Live in faith **W S**

Invite people to pick up a glitter stone (see *A simple worship activity for all ages*) as they leave, and, by holding it for a few moments, to let it remind them of their closeness to the risen Christ, and to say to someone, each day, 'He is risen!'

Spiritual styles:

W Word **E** Emotion **S** Symbol **A** Action

WEB More info in the *Support* section

Easter 5

Other lectionary Bible readings

RCL Easter 5 Year C
Acts 11.1-18
Psalm 148
Revelation 21.1-6

Easter glory

John 13.31-35

- After their last supper, Judas departs and Jesus speaks to the remaining disciples.
- Jesus talks about divine glory, which he links to his own departure from them.
- He has loved them, and their love for one another will be his abiding witness.

This week's resources explore: seeing glory in unexpected places; loving as Jesus loves – serving others and loving people we don't choose to love.

WEB Download a Planning Sheet to help prepare your session.

Bible notes **WEB**

- 'Glory' is a huge theme in John's Gospel, but it can be difficult to understand, as we rarely think about it except in a sporting or military context. Here it has a very different meaning, because it is something that comes from God, not from human admiration, and it comes through suffering. Judas has just left to betray Jesus (v.30) and it is at this moment – the climax of his ministry when Jesus is faced with his death – that the 'Son of Man' is glorified (v.31).
- Jesus calls his disciples 'little children' (v.33), suggesting that their discipleship is immature, but destined to grow in the future, as God's glory is revealed through their suffering and sacrifice.
- Jesus gives his followers a 'new commandment' to love one another, as he has loved them. This mutual love is hardly a new idea, as love of neighbour rings through the ten commandments. However, it is the way that Jesus loves that is new: through service, symbolised in the washing of the disciples' feet (John 13.4-5), and loving people whom we might not choose to love, such as the woman caught in adultery (John 8.1-11).
- Jesus' commandment becomes reality in the powerful reading from Acts when Peter explains his love, even for Gentiles, based on his vision and encounter with Cornelius. He and his family accept the word of God and are baptised by the Holy Spirit. Whom might we be called to love?

Prayers **WEB** All prayer text and Welsh translations.

A gathering prayer

God, who lives everywhere,
and fills everything,
we have seen you already this morning;
at home and on our way to church.
Your light shines on and out of
all creation.
We are here to learn and to worship you.
Amen.

A prayer of praise

*Children shake percussive instruments at the end of each line.**
We worship you, God,
when we see your glory in the world;*
when we see the extraordinary detail
in the smallest of insects;*
when our own paintings
and Lego™ buildings
teach us about you as maker;*
when Christians love one another,
and show your love to the world.*
We worship you.
Amen.

A prayer for forgiveness

Holy God,
we are sorry that we find it hard
to love other people as Jesus did.
Teach us how to love,
even the people who are unkind to us.
Amen.

A prayer for others

Response line: For the glory of God.
Help us, Jesus, to love each other.
For the glory of God.
To make our church a good place to be...
To show other people we follow you...
And to bring your message to the world...
Amen.

A sending out prayer

Jesus, you said to your disciples,
'Where I am going, you cannot come.'
But wherever we go, you come with us.
We pray for your love in our lives this week,
through the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Gather **WEB** Open the Bible at John 13.31-35

Prepare the space

Place some objects that need polishing on a table, e.g. shoes, silver cutlery or ornaments, brass candlesticks, along with some clean brushes/cloths and the appropriate polish.

Gathering activity

Invite the children to polish the objects until they shine. Talk about how they are bringing out the glory of the object, and doing a loving act of service for the person who owns the object. Glory and love are key words that will feature in today's story.

Open the Word

Present the reading John 13.31-35

Knowing that he will leave them soon, Jesus explains to his disciples that in his death, God is glorified in him. He gives his disciples a new commandment: love one another.

Choose from these two ways of telling the story.

Powerful words Read the first paragraph of the story and then challenge the children to form the letters of the word 'GLORY' with their bodies on the floor. Read the second paragraph and invite them to do the same for the word 'LOVE'.

Spread the light Darken the room, sit in a circle and place a large lighted candle in the centre. Give everyone a tealight. This reading comes from a dark time – Jesus knows he will die soon and wants his disciples to understand more about him and God. Read the story, and then light a taper from the central candle and carefully give it to each child to light their tealight as a symbol of understanding and hope.

For very young children

Play, and explore loving one another.

Play materials: silver and gold card hearts, 'hidden' around the play space to be found by the children.

Mini Bible story with actions

Seeing the glory and sharing the love

Jesus said, 'Now you can see the Son of Man's glory,

Reach arms wide and twinkle fingers.

and also the Father's glory.

Point up and twinkle fingers.

Love one another,

Hold hands.

as I have loved you.

Put hand on heart, then point round the room.

Then everyone will know

Tap head.

that you follow me.'

Walk fingers, one hand following the other.

Repeat so the children can join in.

Love one another...

You will need: hearts of different colours and sizes cut from paper/card, plastic or wooden figures of people, or pictures cut from magazines.

Invite the children to arrange patterns of hearts around the 'people'.

...as I have loved you

You will need: paper plates, red or pink playdough, (optional) glitter, rolling pins, heart-shaped cutters or cards (template on [WEB](#)) and plastic knives, paper plates, pens.

Invite the children to write their names on a paper plate, and then roll the playdough and make hearts to put on their plate.

Prayer

You will need: a large red heart cut from card, a bowl of glitter or sequins.

Invite the children to sprinkle a pinch of glitter or some sequins over the heart.

Finish with this prayer. Ask the children to repeat each phrase after you:

Lord Jesus,
help us to see your glory,
and share your love
with each other.

Amen.

Find more prayers opposite and additional activities on the next page.

It was night and all the disciples were gathered together with Jesus for a Passover meal. Judas had just left the supper table and gone out to betray Jesus. Jesus looked at his disciples around the table and said, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. God is showing his glory through him.'

Jesus continued, 'Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me, but I tell you, "Where I am going, you cannot come."' He paused. Then he said, 'I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should love one another. If you have love for one another, everyone will know that you are my disciples.'



Glossary

Passover a joyful Jewish festival that celebrates the Jewish people's escape from slavery in Egypt under Moses' leadership; **Son of Man** a title from the Old Testament book of Daniel, used by Jesus to describe himself; **commandment** a rule to follow in life, given by God.

Talk together

- Have you ever seen or felt God's glory? Where?
- When have you experienced God's love, particularly through other people?
- How can we show more clearly our love for one another?

Explore & respond

Ideas to engage different ages, spiritual styles and learning preferences. On the [WEB](#) find templates in *Explore & respond*, and links to clips and more info in *Further resources*.

Do

Glimpses of glory

15 mins **E S**

Spot glimpses of glory in unexpected places

You will need: (optional) cameras/phones.

- Take the children on a walk outside or around your building, looking for glimpses of glory – things that make us smile and remind us of God, e.g. a beautiful flower, children's artwork.
- The children could take pictures to discuss later or create a display/slideshow to show in church.

Love in action

10 mins **E A**

Guess Jesus' actions and consider how we can show acts of love

You will need: slips of paper, a container.

- Beforehand, write out on separate slips Jesus' loving actions: Healed the sick; Welcomed children; Fed the five thousand; Calmed the storm; Cried for his friend Lazarus; Washed the disciples' feet; Shared bread and wine; Died on the cross. Fold these slips up and put them in a container.
- Invite individuals up to pick a slip and mime the action for the others to guess. Once everyone has had a turn at miming, talk together about ways in which we can mirror Jesus' behaviour and share his love.

Make

Glory and love duster

15 mins **S A**

A reminder that God's glory is seen in our love and service to others

You will need: new dusters, one per child, paintbrushes, lemon juice in dishes, (optional) an iron.

- Give everyone a duster and a paintbrush. Invite the children to paint the words 'Glory' and 'Love' onto their duster with lemon juice. They can add decorations around the edge.
- Leave the dusters to dry and explain that when they are ironed, the words will magically appear! If possible, demonstrate this with an iron and a prepared duster.
- Talk about how God's glory and love can be seen in our service to one another, and encourage the children to take their dusters home to use.

Challenge booklet

20 mins **W E S A**

Explore active ways of loving others and making a difference

You will need: A4 paper, a stapler, pens, felt tips, (optional) old *Love Life Live Lent* booklets, internet access.

- Show the group some old *Love Life Live Lent* booklets or go online and get ideas on serving others from a website ([WEB](#) *Further resources*). Which actions are appealing/fun/challenging?

Spiritual styles: **W** Word **E** Emotion **S** Symbol **A** Action

[WEB](#) More info in the *Support* section

- Give everyone two sheets of A4 paper. Show them how to make a simple booklet by folding the sheets in half and stapling them in two places along the folded edge, to create a front cover, and one page per day for the week ahead. They can decorate the front cover with words and pictures.
- Encourage the children to write a challenge for each day in their booklet, e.g. an act of kindness for a friend, family member or someone they find it difficult to get on with.
- The children can tick off the challenges as they do them each day, and write down any consequences. Report back next week!

Pray

Light in the darkness

10 mins **E S**

Invite Jesus' love and glory into dark places

You will need: newspapers and scissors, a large black cloth, a large candle, matches, battery tealights, one per child.

- Give everyone some newspaper pages and scissors, and invite them to cut out headlines and pictures of situations around the world that need our prayers.
- Lay out the headlines and pictures on the black cloth, leaving space in the centre. Remind the children that Jesus knows what it feels like to suffer and be in a dark situation. Light the candle and place it in the centre of the cloth.
- Give each person a battery tealight, and invite them to place it on the cloth, among the cuttings. Close with a prayer:

Lord Jesus, we pray that you would bring your light, love, hope and glory into the midst of this darkness. **Amen.**

More prayers are on p.34.

Sing

[WEB](#) See *Hymns, songs & music* for key to abbreviations.

Father, I place into your hands
He's got the whole world in his hands
I watch the sunrise, lighting the sky
Lord, the light of your love
One, two, three, Jesus loves me
When I needed a neighbour

WEB extras www.rootsontheweb.com

Children's Sheet: for session and at home. Welsh version available.

Psalm 148: response line with actions

Picture pointers: to download, print and share

Pass it on: resources to share for DIY discipleship

Send out

Live in faith **E A**

Encourage the children to use their challenge booklets, or suggest they do an act of service for someone every day this week.

ROOTS YOUNG PEOPLE

BIBLE John 13.31-35

Find Bible notes and more prayers on p.34. Use this section first, then choose any combination of activities from the other sections. Extra ideas can be found in *Explore & respond* opposite. On the [WEB](#) find templates; *Further resources* for links; images; *Pass it on*: resources to share for DIY discipleship.

Warm up 5 mins W

Write the word 'GLORY' on a piece of paper and put it in the centre of the group. Invite the young people to think of any context or situation in which the word might be used and write down their ideas. Does it have positive or negative associations?

10 words 10 mins W E

Read John 13.31-35 together. Divide the young people into three groups and challenge each group to summarise, in no more than 10 words, the Gospel message of one section:

1) vv.31-32; 2) v.33; 3) vv.34-35.

Questions to discuss

- How is it possible to find glory in Jesus' betrayal, humiliation and death?
- What does it mean to love like Jesus?
- How can we serve others and love those we would rather not love?

EXPLORE

Foot-washing race 5 mins E

Divide the group into two teams and give each a chair, a bowl of warm water and a towel. Have a relay race to see which team can wash and dry every member's feet first.

Weighty words 10 mins W S

Give everyone a stone and provide brushes and paint. Invite the young people to choose a key word or phrase from the reading to paint on their stone, e.g. Love one another. These can be varnished with PVA glue when dry, and then taken home, to be used as paperweights.

Acts of love 10 mins W E A

On a large sheet of paper write the word 'LOVE' in bubble writing so that it fills the page. Provide felt tips and encourage everyone to write, inside the letters, practical examples of loving and serving other people.



How do you react to this New York sculpture?

Picture pointers [WEB](#)

CONNECT

Fame and glory 15 mins W E

Display a selection of images of current celebrities and people in history who have loved like Jesus and been willing to risk their lives for their beliefs, e.g. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Oscar Romero. Challenge the group to identify all the people, fill in any gaps in their knowledge and discuss the difference between glory through media fame and sacrifice.

Humble service 10 mins W E A

Which jobs make a real difference to people's lives, but are looked down upon and seen as menial? Which parenting activities are vital and nurturing, but neither pleasant nor easy? Discuss the importance of these hidden acts of service and the ways in which we can show our appreciation.

[WEB](#) PostScript: weekly topical issues and commentary every Thursday.

PRAY

Wonderful world 5 mins E S

Play the YouTube film with the accompanying soundtrack of Louis Armstrong's 'What a Wonderful World' ([WEB](#) *Further resources*) as a guided visual meditation on God's glory.

Loving like Jesus 5 mins E S

We all know people whom we find difficult to love. Ask the young people to focus on someone in particular whom they struggle to love, for whatever reason. In silence, invite them to name that person before God and pray for his help in understanding, forgiving and loving them.

Listen

How He Loves, Jesus Culture
Shadows, David Crowder Band
Love Came Down, Ben Cantelon

[WEB](#) See *Hymns, songs & music* for links.

Live in faith E S

Keep a record of all the things you experience this week that remind you of God's glory or Jesus' love.