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Student  
Christian  
Movement



# STUDENT SUNDAY

UNIVERSAL DAY OF PRAYER  
FOR STUDENTS

21 February 2016

Your Resource Toolkit



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# Foreword

“ One of the things Christianity constantly reminds us of is that we’re connected at levels deeper than we can be aware of, and so connected in very significant ways with people we don’t know and might seem to have little in common with. To spend time in prayer together across the world is more than just a pious exercise; it points us to the central radical vision of Christian faith, that we are held together not by common ideas and achievement, and not even by shared student experience! What holds us in unity is the invitation of God to all. It’s a way of opening ourselves up to be channels for that invitation into love and justice.



*Revd Dr Rowan Williams*

“We pray for students around the world because they face challenges as social actors in their communities, excluded in developing policies and in shaping the future of their generation. We pray for students who struggle to support their education. We pray for students to have courage and determination to fight for the right to education, the right to organise movements, to express their opinions and sentiments free from violence, coercion and intimidation.”



*Necta Montes, Interim Coordinator of the World Student Christian Federation*

# Introduction

## Uniting the Church

Every year individuals, churches and communities around the world unite to lift up students in prayer on Student Sunday, also known as the Universal Day of Prayer for Students (UDPS). Student Sunday is coordinated by the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), and has been celebrated since 1898, making it one of the oldest ecumenical days of prayer. It serves as one of the tangible signs of our common life and connection between students and alumni of WSCF all around the world.

We invite all our members and friends to unite in prayer for the world, the church, students, and WSCF itself on (or around) the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of February. You may also choose to set an alternate date that is more convenient for your community.

On 21 February 2016, people are coming together from different denominations to bring words of encouragement and support around the theme 'Stories of Faith'.

## Why Students?



Students come from every walk of life, representing a rich tapestry of experiences, cultures, traditions and languages. They have the potential to shape our world for the better. If the world could see how our faith brings our diversity together and unites us in Christ, how might we change?

We believe a transformation can happen. A world acting more justly, a people speaking up for the poor, and a church bringing healing to broken communities. By joining us this Student Sunday to pray for the global body of students, you are helping to realise this vision.

## How to use this resource

In this resource you'll find a selection of prayers, reflections, stories and activities to use within your church service or with your student group. The toolkit is designed to allow you to incorporate elements of the resource into your own liturgy for Student Sunday, so please feel free to adapt the materials to suit your audience.

## About the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF)

The WSCF is the oldest international student organisation, founded in 1895. As a federation of student movements, the WSCF empowers and connects young people around the world in their path to changing tomorrow. We encourage a culture of democracy to mobilise youth to become pro-active in society, promoting positive change through dialogue and action between different traditions and cultures. Presently there are 117 affiliated national student movements in 94 countries, reaching out to over two million members worldwide.

## Local, National, Regional, Global



The life of WSCF is based on local groups of students called Student Christian Movements, or SCMs, based in universities and colleges around the world who work, study and pray together. Local groups form the national movements, who work to support the local groups through providing training and resources, and organising national events.

The national movements are part of one of six WSCF regions - Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia Pacific and North America. Each region has a committee made up of students and recent graduates that shape the work of the region. Two representatives from each region also form the Global Executive Committee, which oversees the work of WSCF on a global level.

## About Student Christian Movement Britain

SCM Britain is a student-led movement inspired by Jesus to act for justice and show God's love in the world. As a community we come together to pray, worship and explore faith in an open and non-judgemental environment.

The movement is made up of a network of groups and individual members across Britain, as well as link churches and affiliated chaplaincies. Each SCM group is different, but you can expect to find a warm welcome as well as activities including bible study, prayer, campaigns and social action, talks, discussions and socials.

As a national movement we come together at regional and national events to learn more about our faith and spend time as a community. We take action on issues of social justice chosen by our members.



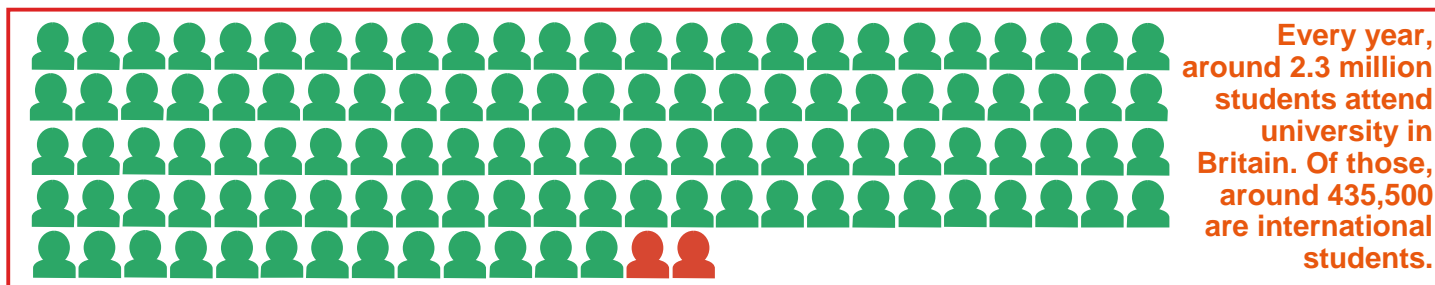
SCM provides resources and training to student groups, churches and chaplaincies on student outreach and engagement, leadership and social action.



# Student Life

“ I remember being given a book before leaving for university. It was all about going to university and facing all the ways in which your faith would be attacked. It framed university as a place where thriving as a Christian would be difficult. On the one hand that’s helpful to bear in mind, but on the other, being a Christian isn’t about holding on for dear life to your Christian values. For me it was a huge period of spiritual growth, working out what my life with Jesus was and would be like.”

*Victoria Mason, SCM Britain*



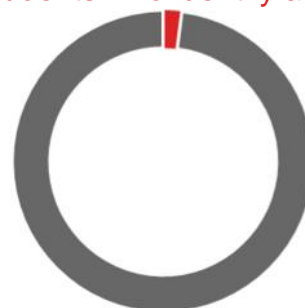
A survey of over 4,500 students in the UK<sup>1</sup> found that among students who identify as Christian,



75% are not part of a church, cell group or student society during term time.



Just over 55% of students say that they are 'spiritual but not religious'.



Only 2% surveyed said that they had met their university chaplain.

Between 1970 and 2007, the number of students entering university education around the world rose from around 28 million to over 150 million. The region that saw the largest increase was East Asia and the Pacific, with an increase of over 700%.<sup>2</sup>

In 2007, 21.4% of students that studied outside of their country of origin did so in the United States, with 12.6% studying in the United Kingdom. Just under half of all international students were enrolled on Masters or Doctorate level degrees.<sup>2</sup>

A survey by the National Union of Students showed that one in five students said that they suffered from mental health problems.



The average student debt upon leaving university in the UK is £44,000.<sup>3</sup>

1. Christianity and the University Experience, M Guest, et al.  
 2. <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/GED%20Documents%20C/ged-2009-final-4-err-en.pdf>  
 3. Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2014



# Stories of Faith

“Having a safe space to speak about Christianity helped me to mature in my own faith. The camaraderie in our SCM group really brought people together and allowed for more open discussion.”

*Lois Barnett, SCM Britain*



## WSCF Middle East

“A lot of students are fearing the future, they have only one question – how can we emigrate? We are helping them to stay and witness to Jesus Christ in these times of war and violence.” – Elsy Wakil, Regional Secretary for WSCF Middle East

Amid all the war and turmoil, this past year has seen some good news. After many years of work, we finally managed to establish an ‘ecumenical institute’ in the Middle East. The project will help students from across the region to come to Lebanon to study ecumenism, praying and living together for three weeks, before returning home to continue their studies online for the rest of the year. This is a real source of joy for us – the ecumenical movement is important for our region because we have so many different churches and denominations, and we need to find ways to work together. We had 40 students from seven different countries this year at the institute, including Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan and Syria.

Of course, there are also many challenges and we need students and people around the world to be in solidarity with us. There are Christians being persecuted all over the region, people who are being forced to leave their homes and driven from their own land. We need your prayers.

### Prayer Points

Pray for the continuing political situation, which is very uncertain at the moment.

Pray for Christians in Egypt who are facing discrimination.

Pray for communities and leaders to work together to recognise the importance of all faiths and people in their society.

Pray for Christians in Iraq who are being pushed to leave the country because of fear of violence.





# Stories of Faith



## WSCF Europe

Coming from many churches and denominations, we share our diverse understandings of faith, learning from each other's traditions, exploring different forms of worship and confronting contemporary and social issues from a theological perspective. We see these differences not as divisive, but as uniting – celebrating diversity is our driving force.

The changing face of higher education is of particular importance to us. With the increased commercialisation of universities and time pressures on students, it is essential to revive the presence and responsibility of Christian witness in the academic world. Learning about cultures and cultural expression is central to our activities: we provide a space for sharing, respecting, and celebrating our diverse backgrounds in a multicultural Europe.

*Natia Tsintsadze, Regional Secretary for WSCF Europe*



When I first set off to university to study theology, along with a reading list and my childhood teddy, I also took with me two determinations: to heed the warnings from home and ensure that my studies did not damage my faith, and more importantly to prove everyone wrong and not work for the church after graduating. Thankfully, God challenged me on both fronts. Not only did my three years of studying theology strengthen my faith and propel me on to a Masters degree, but God used those years to challenge my sense of vocation, and here I am now, working as a parish intern and testing a potential call to ordained ministry.

My time at university was not without its challenges. Moving away from home meant I had to choose to make my faith my own and I was quickly taught that my naïve understanding of the Bible would need some prayerful reworking. But friends encouraged me to keep asking questions and taught me that I could trust God to challenge me, drawing me ever closer to both the truth and mystery of Himself.

Some of my best memories and friends from university come from the faith societies I joined. As an undergraduate I found friendship and encouragement in the Christian Union, and as a graduate student in the Student Christian Movement, and I will always thank God for my time with both. It was through being involved in two groups of very different character that I was most challenged to think through my beliefs and learn to love those with whom I shared differences.

As I look to the future, excited to continue being challenged in my theology, and to serve the church, I look back on my time at university with a smile on my face and a thankful heart.

*Kirsty Borthwick, SCM Britain*



# Stories of Faith



## WSCF Asia Pacific

*"The Asia Pacific region is very diverse; each context is so different. So we do celebrate diversity – it's a gift from God."* – Sunita Suna, Regional Secretary for WSCF Asia Pacific

WSCF AP works with many students from lots of different cultures and countries. At the moment we are focusing on issues of human rights, migration, commercialisation and privatisation of education, violence against women and ecumenism. We organise programmes to try to respond to those issues and challenges. We run training for human rights defenders, organise a women's leadership project and programmes for ecumenical leaders.

One of the biggest challenges at the moment is Hong Kong, which is a place where you are free to talk about issues. Every year there are two incidents that are very significant in Hong Kong – 4 June, the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, when there is a candlelight vigil. The second one is 1 July which marks when Hong Kong was handed over to China in 1997. That is the time when those who do not support the one country, two political systems rule show their unhappiness through protests and demonstrations. They are calling for independence and democracy.



## Prayer Points

Please pray for the student community in Asia, for good access to education irrespective of their background, culture or economic status.

Pray for students in Nepal who are continuing to rebuild their homes and communities after the devastating earthquake in April 2015.

Pray for young people migrating to other countries due to socio-political and/or economic reasons. Pray particularly for young women who are moving as domestic helpers. This is something very common in Asia and we are witnessing more cases. Pray for safety for them.



*"Rather than getting in the way, staying true to my faith has made the whole experience of university much more enjoyable. My faith has kept me grounded and helped to keep things in perspective."*

*Emma Temple, SCM Britain*

# Stories of Faith



Moving to a brand new city full of people I didn't know was one of the most exciting and scary things I have ever done. Exciting because it was a chance for me to live life the way I wanted to, and scary because it was something I had never done before. Suddenly being able to choose who you are and how you present yourself to a brand new set of people isn't easy! There were many times when I was tempted to act how I thought other people wanted me to, or times when I didn't want to allow people to see my weaknesses, because I was afraid they wouldn't like me if I wasn't perfect. Yet looking back, I can see that God was with me through it all. He was there helping me to connect with people who have now become some of my closest friends. God was there encouraging me, telling that who I am will always be good enough. He met me where I was, and I'm so thankful that I can rely on God to love me through everything.

*Beki Cansdale, SCM Britain*



## WSCF Latin America and Caribbean

*"What we try to do is empower young people"* – Marcelo Leites, Regional Secretary for WSCF LAC

FUMECALC  
WSCFLAC

WSCF LAC has two priorities right now. The first is all about eco-justice because we have a direct relationship with the consequences of climate change, which is causing a lot of pain, especially for the poor. We want to equip more students from SCMs to advocate for climate justice in their local communities.

Our second priority is focused on peace and humanitarian crises. In Colombia, there is a very complicated internal conflict, which is directly harming the poor – farmers, peasants and indigenous people. These people are fighting for ownership of their land, whether from multinational companies or paramilitary forces. It's a very complicated situation, and we want our SCMs to be partners in the struggle for freedom.



### Prayer Points

Thank God for opening doors through the WSCF General Assembly in Bogota, Colombia in February 2015. This event was a turning point for WSCF LAC, enabling us to deepen people's knowledge of what's going on, not just in Colombia but in the whole of the region.

For the families of the missing 43 Mexican students, for perseverance in the struggle to uncover the truth of what happened and for the ongoing solidarity and advocacy campaign.

For safety among the students in Colombia and Mexico who are involved in justice campaigns and are threatened with violence and intimidation.



**UDPS**  
UNIVERSAL DAY OF PRAYER  
FOR STUDENTS



# Prayers

## A Prayer for Students

God alongside us  
You know what it is  
To live a student life  
Always seeking, asking questions  
Always adapting, reassessing  
Always learning, but never sure ourselves.  
Be with us as we gather  
To listen to your words  
And help us to share our stories  
In peace and confidence.

Amen.

*Jelly Morgans*

### A Prayer for Unity

To our God who unifies us, Grant your  
church the will to come together,  
The patience to live and work amidst our  
differences,  
And the joy of the Lord to sustain our  
strength.

Teach us to celebrate our diversity,  
So that all people may be welcomed in  
without fear,  
And encounter the immeasurable love of  
Christ.

Fix our eyes on the one who unites,  
Our king and our servant,  
And encourage us to draw from your well,  
To offer our lives to each other,  
And to share in the riches of your kingdom.

Amen.

### We Are Many, We Are One

Lord, you prayed that we may all be one as  
you are one with the father. Look not on our  
sins of division, but on the faith of your  
Church. Send your spirit on all your faithful  
people, that our pursuit to grow in faith,  
hope and love of you draw us closer, that  
one day we may share in one communion.  
Amen.

*Daniel Leung*



# Intercessions

*These prayers are intended to be adaptable to your context, so please make any alterations you feel necessary. Periods of quiet and a bidding and response have been suggested. If you would rather, you could break up each verse, or every three verses, with the singing of a verse from a hymn, or a chant. If your congregation is familiar with extempore prayer, they may well wish to pray out loud into the spaces.*

We bring our prayers and concerns for the world, our communities and ourselves to the God who knows our story better than we know it ourselves. Let us pray...

God of Sarah, Rachel and Rebekah, we lament our hurting world and pray for those who are victims of injustice and oppression, and for those who suffer violence.

*Quiet is kept.*

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

**All: May we carry God's story.**

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give strength and comfort to all those who feel their story has been silenced or destroyed, and those who try to restore the voice of the voiceless.

Blessed is the one...

God, who writes the story of history, we remember before you the World Student Christian Federation and the global student movement. Empower students across the world, as they grow in community, glorify you, and expand the Kingdom.

Blessed is the one ...

O Incarnate Word, we pray for your body, the Church: may she strive for justice, serve the hurting and be a light in the world.

Blessed is the one...

Christ, like a brooding Mother Hen, Your will is that the Church be one. Strengthen those who work for ecumenism and grant your Churches hospitable hearts and gracious ears, that we may work more closely together.

Blessed is the one...

Saviour, who wrote the divine story as a human body, hear our prayers for ourselves, those close to us, and for the communities around us, as we bring the concerns of our hearts into the silence of your tender embrace.

*A longer period of quiet is kept.*

Blessed is the one...

O Breath of Life, energise all those who work with students; Chaplains, Student Workers and Chaplaincy Assistants. Fill them with passion and grace, as they serve students and universities.

Blessed is the one...

Dancing God, we ask that you sustain the Student Christian Movement. Strengthen SCM staff and local student groups and equip local churches in their work with students.

Blessed is the one...

Spirit, who perpetuates the story of God-in-the-world, we pray for students. Sustain them in their passions, comfort them in their distress and enthuse they way they think and see the world.

Blessed is the one...

God who wrote the story of history, is writing the story of now, and who knows the story that will be, as we tell our stories, hear the stories of others and share our stories of faith, accept the prayers of your servants, as we live out your good news in our lives.

Amen.

*Paul Parker*





# A Simple Liturgy

## Welcome

As people arrive they are welcomed at the door with a tea light candle, and invited to light it and place it on a table at the front or centre of the room.

## Opening Prayer

Leader: Jesus said: I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

**All: May the good news of Christ's joy dwell among us and speak to our hearts**

Leader: Jesus said: By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

**All: May the good news of Christ's love dwell among us and speak to our hearts**

Leader: Jesus said: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you

**All: May the good news of Christ's peace Dwell among us and speak to our hearts. Amen**

## Song

## Confession

Leader: We keep this silence to remember the times we have acted without reflection, the times we have spoken without love, and the times we have turned away without recognition. We keep this silence together.

## *Silence*

Leader: Let us love one another, encourage and forgive each other

**All: As God in Christ loves, encourages and forgives us. Amen.**

## Sharing the Peace

Leader: God calls us to peace:

**All: in God's justice is our peace.**

Leader: Christ calls us to be God's people:

**All: in Christ is our peace.**

*The leader invites everyone to share a sign of peace.*

## Scripture Reading

Suggested readings:

John 20: 24-29 *Jesus appears to Thomas*

Luke 10: 25-37 *The Parable of the Good Samaritan*

Matthew 28: 16-20 *The Great Commission*

1 Corinthians 12: 12-31 *Unity and Diversity in the Body*

Matthew 17: 1-9 *The Transfiguration*

## Reflection

Gather together in small groups or two or three to share your reflections on the Bible reading.

## Intercessions

You may choose to use the intercessions suggested in this toolkit, or have a period of open prayer.

### Prayer of Commitment and Lord's Prayer

Leader: Lift up our hearts  
To give thanks and praise  
To respond to your call  
To live out the good news  
And to be salt and light in the world

**All: So that together, we can say;  
Hallowed be your name**

Leader: Give us the courage  
To pursue peace  
To act for justice  
To work for freedom  
And to prepare the way of God

**All: So that together, we can say;  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven**

Leader: Challenge and inspire us  
To live simply  
To share what we have  
To offer hospitality  
And to welcome strangers

**All: So that together, we can say;  
Give us today our daily bread**

Leader: Give us the wisdom  
To be open to questions  
To recognise our failings and our gifts  
To seek unity  
And to rejoice in your image in others

**All: So that together, we can say;  
Forgive us our sins  
As we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil.**

Leader: May we know the love of God  
Grow in the likeness of Christ  
And be open to the Spirit

**All: For yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory  
Now and forever more. Amen**

## Song

*Rosie Venner*



# Small Group Worship Ideas

## Prayer Stations

*The following is adapted from SCM's 'Little Book of Prayer', a guide to facilitating different styles and traditions of prayer.*

### How to set up a prayer room/space

- If possible, turn off the main lights and have plenty of lamps and candles around.
- Have a CD of relaxing background music playing.
- Have some cushions or pillows around - make the space comfortable for people to sit and pray.
- Set up a number of different prayer activities or stations around the room. You'll find a few ideas on the theme of 'Stories of Faith' below.

### Prayer station ideas

- **Students around the world.** In the 'Stories of Faith' section of this toolkit, you'll find reflections from WSCF regions with some prayer requests. You could set up a station decorated to represent each region, for example with pictures from the countries or a map of the region, and print or write out the prayer points to guide people in prayer.
- **Your university.** Create a station to represent your university with pictures of your campus. Hang a large sheet of paper on the wall, and encourage people to write on the paper prayers for the people at your university. You could have a few suggestions printed nearby, for example a prayer for those about to graduate, that they are encouraged as they make the transition from university into work, or a prayer giving thanks for university staff.
- **Your small group.** Create a station to represent your small group, and place a large bowl or tray of water on a low table or the floor along with some paper and washable pens. Invite people to write prayers for other members of the group and place them in the water—the pen will 'run' so the prayer cannot be read by anyone else.
- **Faith Journeys.** Using the outline on page 18, create a station for people to think about their own faith journey. Have pieces of paper and pens available so that people can draw their faith journey. Encourage people to pray for those that have helped them on their spiritual journey.
- **Personal Prayer.** Create a station with some slips of paper, pens and a large envelope. Invite people to write a prayer request on a slip of paper and place it in the envelope, and to take someone else's request from the envelope and to pray for the request. This could be done anonymously, and people could also be encouraged to take the prayer request to use as a prompt for prayer throughout the following week.
- **Stories of Faith from the bible.** Create a station with some bibles and a list of people from the bible for people to read about. For example, you could provide a list of women in the bible, or a list of people called by God to do something such as Moses, Jonah, Abraham etc.



# Small Group Worship Ideas

## The Examen

The Daily Examen is a technique for reviewing your day and discerning God's purpose and presence in your life. It is part of Ignatian spiritual practice and was the prayer that Ignatius asked those in his order to prioritise; once at noon and once in the evening.

To prepare, find a quiet, comfortable space to sit that is free from distractions. It might be helpful to have a candle for people to focus on if they feel uncomfortable sitting with their eyes closed.

To pray the Examen as a group, a leader should introduce each stage as follows:

1. Become aware of God's presence. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding as you begin to review your day.
2. Review the day with gratitude. Recall your day, in God's presence, note its joys, delights and gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things—the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.
3. Pay attention to your emotions. One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings? Notice where you have fallen short today and offer your sins and faults to God.
4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to an important feature of your day. It may involve a feeling - positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.
5. Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Allow these feelings to turn into prayer and seek God's guidance.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus, asking for what you need and thanking Him for all you've been given. End this prayer with the Our Father.

After praying the Examen together you might want to ask your group to share any thoughts they have about the prayer in small groups.

*With thanks to [www.ignationspirituality.com](http://www.ignationspirituality.com).*



# Lectionary Readings: Reflections

The Church of England Lectionary reading for Student Sunday is Luke 13:31-35, Jesus' Sorrow for Jerusalem.

## Reflections

There is no escaping the rawness, anger and power of Jesus the prophet in this passage. He is full of passion, refusing to back down on His principles or to compromise. Jesus' concern is for the truth, to speak God's Word to Jerusalem - not for His safety, not even for His life. How often are we really and fully imitating this? When people threaten us with consequences (perhaps the loss of money, status or freedom) if we persist in sharing our message, are we prepared to commit and persist? Or do we back down quietly, tempted by comfort and safety? When the city council threatened to imprison Londoners who offered food to homeless people, were we ready to step up and represent justice or did we fear the stigma of a criminal record? If we had been told by the Saudi ruling elite to shut down our blog, as Raif Badawi was, or face 1000 lashes, would we have continued to fight for free speech?

We are invited by Christ to live a prophetic lifestyle in His image: to speak of God's justice by speaking out. The world may curse and punish us but He reminds us that "blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." God sees and looks on us with gladness when we choose to be like Jesus saying "today and tomorrow I must go on."

*Jessica Dalton*

"I shall have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people." And so the Christian pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, left the safety of the USA and returned to oppose the Nazi regime in Germany. He died in prison, convinced to the end that his place was to suffer with the persecuted and oppressed.

In this, he surely showed himself a true prophet and a faithful follower of Christ. Jesus is given a very compelling reason to turn aside from his path – a threat to his life. But he is clear that he has a choice: fear of human power and its potential to harm, or faith in God's plan and his own destiny.

"Today, tomorrow, and on the third day" – he will follow each step of his purpose in its proper time, bringing it to completion, believing that God is in control. If he dies in Jerusalem, it will not be by the decree of a despotic ruler but a divinely ordained destiny.

In our studies and discipleship, are we learning to make our own successful way in the world, or to participate fully in God's mission? Are we running away from a threat to our reputation, career or comfort, or are we risking all to speak prophetically in the face of injustice?

*Catrin Harland*



# Lectionary Readings: Reflections

The Catholic Church Lectionary reading for Student Sunday is Luke 9:28-36, the Transfiguration.

## Reflections

The transfiguration in Luke, occurs eight days after Jesus has told the disciples just what it means to follow him. Jesus takes Peter, James and John with him to pray and they see him transformed as he speaks with Moses and Elijah on the mountain. Peter misunderstands the encounter, just as he has misunderstood the declaration he made that Jesus is the Messiah.

Peter has much learning and growing to do to break out of the institutional “norms” of Jewish culture and faith because Jesus is offering a new and radical way of being and living. Often we criticise ourselves and one another because our faith is small, weak and undeveloped but we forget that God does great things with small beginnings.

Peter got lots of things wrong. We get a lot of things wrong, but if we can learn anything from Peter, it is that faith is a journey of growth. We aren't the same today as we were yesterday and we will be different people in six months, six years, sixty years' time. The big question is, are we willing for that change to be because of God? Do we want our stories to be stories of the journey we have taken with God?

*Kirsty-Ann Mabbott*

This bible passage defines the phrase 'mountain top experience'; that moment when everything is glorious, clear and right with the world. In scripture, mountains are a symbol for meeting with God. Think of Moses going up to receive the Ten Commandments, and Elijah hearing the small whisper of God from his mountainous cave. Jesus delivers his clearest teachings in sermons on a mount and finally goes to the Mount of Olives to pray the night before he dies.

The disciples must have been overwhelmed by all that they saw and heard that day with Jesus on the mountain, and yet there was also clarity about who Jesus was and their own calling to follow him. We all need that clarity every now and again, perhaps by withdrawing from the busy world and seeking the clear voice of God and feeling his presence: it's so much easier out of the hubbub of life.

How easy it would have been for the disciples to stay there away from the confusion of the busy world. They even suggest building shelters and staying up there, but Jesus says no. Instead their response must be to take that experience and clarity down with them to try and live it out in all the complexity of the valleys below. The balance of mountain and valley helps us too to live authentically as disciples of Jesus in the reality of our world.

Where do you spend more of your time I wonder? On the mountain or in the valley? Where might God be calling you to be now?

*Sally Hayden*



# All-Age Activity: Milestones

The aim of this activity is to encourage members of your group/congregation to share their 'faith story' and reflect on how as a community we can learn from each other's stories. By doing so, we hope to positively shape the world we live in and our relationships with loved ones, friends, family, colleagues, or just people we bump into every day.

This activity works best in small groups. If you are planning to run this during a church service, you could ask people who represent different age groups to volunteer as participants in the main activity. For younger people or children, encourage parents or friends to sit alongside them and join the activity.

## Materials you will need

Small Pebbles  
10+ sheets of A4 paper (depending on size of group)  
Felt pens or colouring pencils  
Music

## Preparation

Before you meet, draw the outline of a winding path across each sheet of paper. Alternatively, you could ask each participant to draw their own path.

## Activity

### Drawing milestones (10 minutes)

Give each participant a sheet of paper and some pebbles. Ask each member of the group to think about their life and consider what 'milestones' they have been through. These could include milestones such as their first day at school, baptism, going to university, a memory of praying for something or someone.

Questions to prompt reflection: what moments in your life made you the person you are today? Who was with you during this time? What contribution did they make? In which moments or situations in your life have you seen God working and in what ways?

Ask each participant to draw these milestones along the path, placing a pebble on each. You should make sure they leave some space along the road for future milestones. Spend 5-10 minutes allowing the group to do this. You could play some music or a video during this time to encourage reflection.

### Sharing (10-15 minutes)

Invite members of the group to share some of their milestones.

### Discussion (15 minutes)

Begin the discussion with some starter questions. Examples include:

1. How do you see God at work during your own journey?
2. Looking back over your milestones, what aspects of your personality or identity do you notice most strongly?
3. Do you see yourself in anybody else's milestones or stories? Which part of these stories can you relate to the most?
4. In what practical ways could we learn to support each other, now that we know a little bit more about our stories and what's important to us?
5. What future milestone would you like to see in your own story – and in other people's journeys?

*Ellis Tsang*



# All-Age Activity: Stories

The aim of this activity is to encourage members of your group/congregation to think about different 'faith stories' and reflect on how we as a community can learn from each other's stories and stories in the Bible. This activity aims to be inclusive of younger children, so it may sometimes move away from faith stories into the realm of fantasy, and that's ok!

This activity works best in small groups. If you are planning to run this during a church service, you could ask people to get into smaller groups. If there are children present, encourage parents or friends to sit alongside them and join the activity.

## **Materials you will need**

About 8-10 objects (these can be anything at all but make sure some can be used to tell the first story of the prodigal son, e.g. a hat, a pair of shoes, a party popper, etc.)

## **Preparation**

Before you begin, place the objects/props in a box.

Choose a person to tell the story of the Prodigal Son from Luke 15: 11-32, using the objects in the box to illustrate key moments in the story.

## **Activity**

### Ice-breaker (5-20 minutes)

To get everyone in the mood for sharing and speaking up in the group, tell a story by going round the group, with each person adding one sentence at a time. Someone can start with, for example, 'Once upon a time there was a small mouse who lived in a shoe.' Then the next person must continue the story with another sentence. If you have a large group, you could split them into smaller groups for this activity.

### Bible Reading

Follow up questions:

1. What do you think about the father?
2. What do you think about the older son's reaction to the feast?

### Sharing Stories

Invite people to come and tell a story (for the adults, this can be a faith story, for the children it can be any story they want to tell) using the objects in the box.

### Discussion (15 minutes)

Begin the discussion with some starter questions. Examples include:

1. Why is it important to listen to people's stories?
2. What can we learn from stories people tell?
3. What are your favourite stories (in the Bible or elsewhere)?

*Ruth Wilde*

# Moving Forward

## What Next?

You can continue to keep students around the world in prayer, and the work of organisations like WSCF and SCM Britain.

Visit [www.movement.org.uk](http://www.movement.org.uk) for more information about SCM Britain, and sign up for our email newsletter. You can also follow @SCM\_Britain on Twitter and 'like' us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/StudentChristianMovement](http://www.facebook.com/StudentChristianMovement)) for regular updates.

If you are interested in the global student movement and what students are doing around the world, follow the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) on [www.wscfglobal.org](http://www.wscfglobal.org)

## Become an SCM Britain Link Church

Signing up as an SCM Link Church is a great way to tell students about what your church has to offer. You will get:

- A **profile on the SCM website**, including photo, short description and contact details
- **Support and advice** on engaging students and supporting student groups
- Information about **training** that we are running in your area
- Regional gatherings and national **events** for your students
- **Workshops** from staff members on a variety of topics
- A free pack of **resources and publicity materials**, with the opportunity to order more
- Mailings three times a year with copies of **Movement magazine** and information about upcoming events and new resources
- Opportunities for your students to be involved in the **global movement** including bursaries for WSCF Europe conferences once a term.

We also have staff members who can join you for a Sunday service to run an SCM stall and either be interviewed or give a sermon. To become a link church, you can sign up using the online form at [www.movement.org.uk/become-scm-link-church](http://www.movement.org.uk/become-scm-link-church). To contact us about a visit to your Church, get in touch with our Groups Worker Lizzie Gawen by emailing [lizze@movement.org.uk](mailto:lizze@movement.org.uk).

## Thank you for using this resource and praying for students!

