



CALLING: To inspire young people to pursue the life God created them to live and is calling them into, for their benefit and his glory.

Written by Claire Farley sourced from YouthWork Magazine Nov. 2009

PREPARATION:

Write notes about 'calling' in the Bible. Consider the different ways God has called individuals and nations to know his blessings and to be a blessing to others. Reflect on how God has called you into relationship with him, into community, into service to others, and into the world. Pray for encouragement and affirmation for yourself and the young people through this meeting.

You will need:

- 4 translations of 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 enlarged onto A3 paper
- Bibles
- Learning Style questionnaires downloaded from www.springharvest.org/uploads/learning_styles_questionnaire.pdf
- Story downloaded from www.24-7prayer.com/content/834
- Newspapers and sticky tape
- The facility to watch the short film Justice to be found on www.24-7prayer.com
- Concordances.
- Pens, paper etc

Listening for the call (10 mins)

Find a large space with lots of good hiding places and encourage your group to go and hide.

Start by being the person in the middle who is listening while those who are hiding take it in



turns to call your name. You have to identify who is calling you. Give group members a chance to be in the middle, then discuss these questions:

1. What helped you identify the person's voice as they called your name?
2. Why was it easy/ hard?
3. How did the relationship you already have with that person help you identify their voice?

God calls us into relationship (10 mins)

Enlarge four translations of 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 onto A3 paper and display them together so that your group can see them.

Invite group members to read each translation and then write your own version together as a group. You could use phrases from each translation, but try and use the young people's own words while always referring back to the NRSV

www.devotions.net/bible/00bible.htm or your church Bible.

Help the group to see the passage as part of the whole letter, and encourage them to ask

questions like those of a journalist who has only found this section and wants to know what the authors are on about.

What do they think the 'calling' spoken of here involves?

KEY POINT: Use your research from the back-ground preparation to help you think about what God calls every disciple to be and do. The great commandment and the great commission give some clarity, but try and be specific about your views on how that works out in practice - e.g. connecting to a community of believers every week? Standing up for justice for the poor and oppressed in our world through campaigning?

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Team tasks (20 mins)

It is pretty obvious that people are all different, and as we get older it is good for us to reflect on who we are and how we work.



Give out this learning styles questionnaire

www.springharvest.org/uploads/learning_styles_questionnaire.pdf and encourage your group members to help each other to find out which is their preferred learning style.

Then encourage them to get into teams with a mixture of learning styles. They will then work together on four team tasks suited to each learning style and be allocated points by leaders according to their success and cooperation.

Activist task: Make your own megaphone out of newspaper and sellotape and test it.

Reflector task: Watch the 'justice' short film on www.24-7prayer.com and make notes on the words and pictures used. In one sentence explain what this film teaches us about calling. (Please note: check film content for your young people first).

Pragmatist task: Come up with a new design or a message delivery system that doesn't rely on current technology. Be imaginative - How can we communicate creatively?

Theorist task: Use a concordance to find 'calling' and look at the passages referenced.

What do they teach us about the calling God has for individuals? Whole communities?

Get feedback from each team about how they got on and reward them according to their success and cooperation together.

Explain: Your teams were created by mixing you up according to your preferred learning styles so that between you there were the skills needed to approach each task. As well as our different learning styles God also gives us spiritual gifts and natural abilities that make up our potential. God wants to help us realise who we are so we can fulfil our potential in partnership with him.

But our aim is not just to live life in all its fullness for ourselves, but to use our lives to accomplish the mission Jesus gave to his followers - what was that?



Read Matthew 28:18-20.

We can see that with God's help the first followers of Jesus made a huge impact on the world as Christianity has spread to every country despite persecution. But the mission is not over yet, there are still people who do not know about the life they can have connected to God.

Read the following story to be found at www.24-7prayer.com/content/834 about how God is still calling his followers to share the good news about life through Jesus Christ.

KEY POINT: There are many views on how God works out his plans in our lives within our free will. The Bible shows how God speaks to and leads people into the plans he has for them, which are always connected to the plans he has for his people as a whole. God called Abraham to be blessed and to be a blessing (Genesis 12). Encourage your group to think about how God has blessed them and how they could be a blessing within your youth work, your church and your community.

Considering our calling (15 mins)

Path4Life helps young people think about the questions: 'Who am I?' 'Where am I going?' and 'How will I get there?' Find out more at www.in-your-element.co.uk

Working in twos and threes, encourage your group members to work through each question as follows:

- Who am I? Write down all the words that describe who you are.
- Where am I going? Chose one phrase to describe what you want your whole life to be about.
- How will I get there? In the light of your gifts and talents, how / where/ when will you get to your destination (i.e. where am I going? answer)

Committing to our calling (5 mins)



Read Luke 10:27, Matthew 28:18-20 and 1 John 3:16 and encourage group members to find a space to sit and read those verses again on their own. Encourage them to pray that God would help them pursue and fulfil their potential in partnership with Him. End with a prayer thanking Jesus for his love and the life we can know in him.

Notes for adapting

For younger groups ... Invite someone from your church who you know is pursuing God's will for their lives and encourage them to share their experiences of God leading them.

For older groups ... Watch the nooma 'Name' (available from Sarah Welply) and give time to reflect on the names they have, and the names they feel have been given them by others, some for good, some not.

Spend time praying and seeking God's peace that comes from self-acceptance.

For unchurched young people ... Listen to 'Meant to live' by Switchfoot (*The Beautiful Letdown* album). Use the lyrics and discuss: What does the world have to offer us? What more does Christianity suggest is on offer?

www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jR4k84sot4

www.lyrics007.com/Switchfoot%20Lyrics/Meant%20to%20Live%20Lyrics.html

For churched young people ... Use a spiritual gifts questionnaire to help them discern what gifts God might have given them for building up his church and making an impact in the world.

www.exeter.anglican.org/cpage/cmudownloads/discovering_your_spiritualgifts_77.pdf