

# New Term – New Start

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## Session 1: Changes

Series: **New Term – New Start**

Themes: **adjustment, changes, perseverance, God's faithfulness**

Bible Passage: **Lamentations 3:21-24; Philippians 3:12-14**

Suggested age group: **11-14's (mostly S1-S2)**

Session aims: **To help young people realize that, although changes are happening around them, God remains the same.**

**To help young people realize that when changes happen, it is important to keep our eyes on our goals.**

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## Way in 1 - Distractions

Time: *5-10 mins*

Bible knowledge: *n/a*

With: *an item for each group to balance on their head, eg trays, books, cups*

1. Divide the group into teams of three or four.
2. Give one person on each team an item to balance on their head.
3. Explain that the person with the item on their head must make it to the other side of the room without dropping the item or placing their hand on the item to keep it steady.
4. Tell the remaining team members that they must run alongside the opposing team members and try to distract the opposing players making them drop the item. They can pull faces and tell jokes but cannot touch the other player.
5. If the item is dropped the player is out of the game until one player is remaining. The game can continue with another round of players if there is time.

## Way In 2 - Carrier Bag Sketches

Time: *10-15 mins*

Bible knowledge: *n/a*

With: *Carriers bags with random props in them, eg wigs, hats, kitchen utensils, torches, balls (Number of bags and props will depend on how many teams you want and the total number in the group)*

1. Divide the group into teams depending on the number of carrier bags prepared.
2. Explain that each team will be given a bag with props and they will have five minutes to prepare a drama using all of the props in the bag. The items do not have to be used for their original purpose and they can choose the subject matter for their drama.
3. After five minutes, ask each team to perform their sketch.
4. Ask the group to think about what they had to do with/to themselves in order to perform the sketch. Make the point that they had to go through a change or make changes in some way. Discuss what they had to do to get into character for the sketch.

## Connecting 1 - Handling Changes

Time: *10 mins*

Bible knowledge: *limited*

With: *white board or large sheet of paper, marker pens, resource sheet 1 'Changes – Bible reading 1' or Bibles*

1. **Ask: What changes have occurred in your life in the last six months? What's different about this year of school? Are there any changes that are more difficult than others?**

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2. While asking the questions, record the answers on the board/paper. You might want to divide the answers into sections such as changes in school, at home, with friends, etc.
3. Comment to the group that life is constantly changing but one person remains the same – God!
4. Provide some background for the book of Lamentations. Explain:
  - Lamentations is a book full of lament poems
  - Lament means “a cry of sorrow or grief”
  - The people were lamenting over the destruction of Jerusalem which was the royal city of God in 586 BC.
5. Ask a volunteer to read Lamentations 3:21-24 (NCV). Make the point that in the midst of the laments it is written that God is good, loving, and faithful. Discuss the fact that God’s love never ends and God’s mercies are new every morning.
6. Ask: When times are difficult, what are we supposed to do? What is God asking us to do? Have a volunteer read Philippians 3:12-14 (NCV). Refer back to the distraction game (Way In 1) and make the point that we are asked to keep our focus and not be distracted by all of the changes going on around us. We are to press on and focus on what is ahead of us in life.

## Connecting 2 - Handling Changes

**Time:** 10-15 mins

**Bible knowledge:** some

**With:** white board or large sheet of paper, marker pens, resource sheet 2 ‘Changes – Bible reading 2’ or Bibles

1. Ask: What changes have occurred in your life in the last six months? What’s different about this year of school? Are there any changes that are more difficult than others? While asking the questions, record the answers on the board/paper. You might want to divide the answers into sections such as changes in school, at home, with friends, etc.
2. Comment to the group that life is constantly changing but one person remains the same. Explore the fact that God remains the same through the following verses: Hebrews 13:8; Malachi 3:6a; Numbers 23:19; James 1:17. Briefly discuss what each verse says about the character of God. Ask: Who is the one person that remains the same in our lives?
3. Provide some background for the book of Lamentations. Explain:
  - Lamentations is a book full of lament poems
  - Lament means “a cry of sorrow or grief”
  - The people were lamenting over the destruction of Jerusalem which was the royal city of God in 586 BC.
4. Ask a volunteer to read Lamentations 3:21-24 (NCV). Make the point that in the midst of the laments it is written that God is good, loving, and faithful. Discuss the fact that God’s love never ends and God’s mercies are new every morning.
5. Ask: When times are difficult, what are we supposed to do? What is God asking us to do? Have a volunteer read Philippians 3:12-14 (NCV). Refer back to the distraction game (Way In 1 if you used it) and make the point that we are asked to keep our focus and not be distracted by all of the changes going on around us. We are to press on and focus on what is ahead of us in life. Discuss what it means to strive on toward the goal.

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## Response 1 - Encouragement cards

**Time:** 2-3 mins

**Bible knowledge:** *limited*

**With:** *Resource sheet 3 – Encouragement cards (if possible, print double-sided on yellow card)*

1. Present a challenge to the group to take on changes with a smile! Comment to the group that we can look at changes as a way to grow and we can find comfort in a God that never changes.
2. Show the encouragement cards to the group. Explain that the card has a smiley face on one side to remind them of the challenge and the verses from Lamentations on the other side to encourage them.
3. Present the idea that they can put this card in a place where they will see it often and might be encouraged by it.
4. Ask: How could we share God's faithfulness or consistency with others?
5. Lead a prayer for the group.

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## Resource sheet 1 Changes - Bible reading 1

### Lamentations 3:21-24

But I have hope  
when I think of this:  
The Lord's love never ends;  
his mercies never stop.  
They are new every morning;  
LORD, your loyalty is great.  
I say to myself, "The LORD is mine,  
so I hope in him."



### Philippians 3:12-14

I do not mean that I am already as God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal, but I continue trying to reach it and to make it mine. Christ wants me to do that, which is the reason he made me his. Brothers and sisters, I know that I have not yet reached that goal, but there is one thing I always do. Forgetting the past and straining toward what is ahead, I keep trying to reach the goal and get the prize for which God called me through Christ to the life above.

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## Resource sheet 2 Changes - Bible reading 1

### Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today,  
and forever.

### Malachi 3:6a

I the LORD do not change.

### Numbers 23:19

God is not a human being, and he will not lie.

He is not a human, and he does not change his mind.

What he says he will do, he does.

What he promises, he makes come true.

### James 1:17

Every good action and every perfect gift is from God. These good gifts come down from the Creator of the sun, moon, and stars, who does not change like their shifting shadows.

### Lamentations 3:21-24

But I have hope

when I think of this:

The Lord's love never ends;

his mercies never stop.

They are new every morning;

LORD, your loyalty is great.

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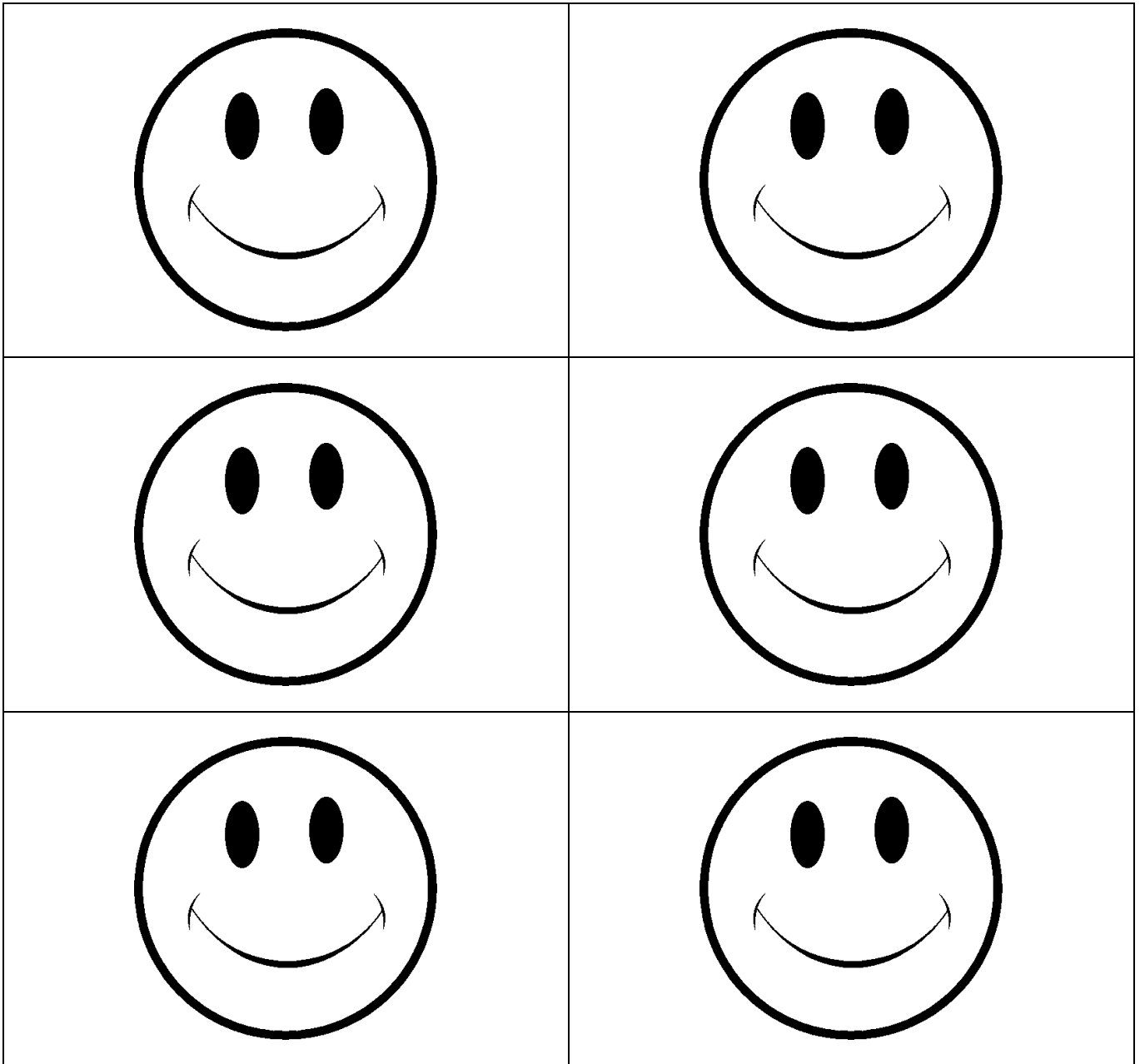
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## Resource sheet 3 – Encouragement cards side 1



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## Resource sheet 3 – Encouragement cards side 2

<p>But I have hope when I think of this: The Lord's love never ends; his mercies never stop. They are new every morning; LORD, your loyalty is great. I say to myself, "The LORD is mine, so I hope in him."</p> <p>Lamentations 3:21-24</p>	<p>But I have hope when I think of this: The Lord's love never ends; his mercies never stop. They are new every morning; LORD, your loyalty is great. I say to myself, "The LORD is mine, so I hope in him."</p> <p>Lamentations 3:21-24</p>
<p>But I have hope when I think of this: The Lord's love never ends; his mercies never stop. They are new every morning; LORD, your loyalty is great. I say to myself, "The LORD is mine, so I hope in him."</p> <p>Lamentations 3:21-24</p>	<p>But I have hope when I think of this: The Lord's love never ends; his mercies never stop. They are new every morning; LORD, your loyalty is great. I say to myself, "The LORD is mine, so I hope in him."</p> <p>Lamentations 3:21-24</p>
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## Session 2: Rules

Series: New Term – New Start

Themes: adjustment, changes, God's love

Bible Passage: Psalm 119:111; Matthew 22:36-40

Suggested age group: 11-14's (mostly S1-S2)

Session aims: To help young people recognize God's rules as a positive aspect in their lives.

To help young people realize that God wants us to follow his commandments because we love him and other people, not because we must follow them.

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## Way in 1 - North, South, East, and West

Time: 5-10 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

1. Designate the four corners of the room as north, south, east, and west. Make sure everyone in the group knows what they are.
2. Explain that you will call out a direction such as north and they will need to move quickly to that corner of the room. The last person to reach the corner is out or if they go to the wrong corner they are out. Call randomly and quickly. If the game needs to go faster, call two people out at a time or start calling mixed directions such as north-east, south-west, etc.
3. Mention how some people went to the wrong corner because they were following someone else or they were not listening to what was called out. Comment that life can be like this because we sometimes follow what everyone else is doing and do not think for ourselves or we get distracted by what others are doing.

## Way in 2 - Speed Draw

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: paper, marker pens, list of items to draw

1. Divide the group into teams of four or five. Ask one member of each team to stand outside the room for a moment or to close their eyes. Hold up a piece of paper with a word on it for the rest of the team members to see.
2. Ask the people to return to the room/open their eyes. Each team must give their player directions that relate to drawing the object that was shown to them on the paper. They might give directions such as: draw a straight line, then draw a circle on the bottom, draw a line across the top, etc. The aim is for the person drawing to guess what the object is while they are drawing it. The first team to guess correctly wins. Continue playing until you need to move on to the next activity or until the young people are disinterested.
3. Ask: How was success in that game achieved? Some possible answers are: following directions carefully, giving clear directions, only listening to one person at a time, etc. Comment that we can find the right directions for our life in the Bible but we also need to follow them carefully.



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## Connecting - Following the rules

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: resources sheet 1 'Rules' or Bibles

1. Ask: What do we think of rules? Give examples of all types of rules especially school rules. Ask the group to give thumbs up/down according to whether they think each rule is helpful or not. After each rule, have the pupils share their reasoning.
2. Ask: If there was one rule in your life that you could change, what would it be?
3. Ask a volunteer to read Psalm 119:111 from resource sheet 1 or Bible. Ask: Do we often think that following the rules will make us happy? What are some other responses we have to following the rules?
4. Comment that most of them have probably heard of the Ten Commandments. Ask: Can you list some of the commandments? (Help the group if they cannot think of many) What do you think about these rules? Are they still useful today?
5. Comment that there are also requests made of us in the New Testament. What do you think is the thing that Jesus wants those who believe in him to do the most? Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 22:36-40.
6. Ask: What are the two things Jesus asks Christians to do? (The answers should be love God and love your neighbour.)
7. Ask: Why would/should we do this? Ask a volunteer to read 1 John 4:7-12. Briefly discuss these points:
  - God is love and we are to be an example of that love
  - God showed his love to us by sending his only son to die for us
  - It's not about us loving God but God loving us first
  - God's love is best shown when we love others
8. Ask a volunteer to read 1 John 5:2-4. Ask: What happens when we love God and also when we put others first? Comment that it makes us happy to follow the rules when we are not focusing on ourselves and when we are putting what others want first.

## Responding - How do I follow the rules?

Time: 3-5 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: slips of paper, marker pens or pencils

1. Give the group a minute or two to think of a rule that they find difficult to follow. This could be something God asked them to do in the Bible, or a school or home rule.
2. Ask each person to write that rule on a slip of paper and then to write down a step they might take toward being content to follow the rule. Encourage the young people to take this away with them and to place it somewhere as a daily reminder of their goal.
3. Ask the young people to get into groups of three or four to pray for each other. They might mention what they have written on the paper but that is not required. If the group is not comfortable praying in small groups, then ask for a volunteer to pray for the whole group.

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## Resources sheet 1 - Rules

### Psalm 119:111

I will follow your rules forever,  
because they make me happy.

### Matthew 22:36-40

"Teacher, which command in the law is the most important?"

Jesus answered, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and most important command. And the second command is like the first: 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' All the law and the writings of the prophets depend on these two commands."

### 1 John 4:7-12

Dear friends, we should love each other, because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has become God's child and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love to us: He sent his one and only Son into the world so that we could have life through him. This is what real love is: It is not our love for God; it is God's love for us. He sent his Son to die in our place to take away our sins.

Dear friends, if God loved us that much we also should love each other. No one has ever seen God, but if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is made perfect in us.

### 1 John 5:2-4

This is how we know we love God's children: when we love God and obey his commands. Loving God means obeying his commands. And God's commands are not too hard for us, because everyone who is a child of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world—our faith.

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## Session 3: Friends

Series: New Term – New Start

Themes: adjustment, changes, perseverance, sacrifice

Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 18-20

Suggested age group: 11-14's (mostly S1-S2)

Session aims: To help young people recognise some of the qualities of true friendship.

To help young people realise that sometimes we have to make sacrifices to be a friend.

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## Way in 1 - Best Friends?

Time: 5-10 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: chairs

1. Place the chairs in a circle. Ask a volunteer to stand in the centre of the circle without a chair. This person is going to attempt to get a chair.
2. Explain that the "it" person will walk up to someone in the circle and say "Are these your best friends?" The friends are the two people sitting on either side of this person. The person being asked does not move. However:
  - If the person says yes, everyone in the circle moves except for the person being asked and their two friends. The "it" person then tries to get a chair.
  - If the person says no, they call out two people's names who must exchange places with the two friends that are there. The "it" person tries to get one of the four chairs. There should be a new "it" person in the middle and the game starts again.

## Way in 2 - Friendly Bob

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: large drawing of a person, Post-it notes in various colours with pens or single coloured Post-it notes with various coloured pens

1. Divide the group into two teams. Give each group a different colour of Post-it notes or pens depending on what you purchased.
2. Explain to the teams that you have put friendly Bob (a drawing that you have made) on the other side of the room. They have two minutes to think of character traits that describe good friends, running and placing one Post-it note at a time on friendly Bob. They must not repeat words.
3. Read off the words at the end of the two minutes while counting which team has the most. Discuss some of the words and why we might want friends that have the character traits listed.

## Connecting 1 - Friends forever

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: resource sheet 1 – 1 Samuel 18, resource sheet 2 – 1 Samuel 19, resource sheet 3 – 1 Samuel 20:1-17; resource sheet 4 – 1 Samuel 20 part 2, resource sheet 5 - Friends, Coloured pens

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1. Ask: What makes someone your friend? Same interests...? Do we choose our friends or do they choose us? Has it ever cost you anything to be someone's friend?
2. Divide the group into four small groups. Give each group one of resource sheets 1-4
3. Ask the groups to read the chapter from the resource sheet they have and then summarise the chapter in a drama.
4. Ask the groups to read the chapter again and circle at least three phrases that talk about friendship in their section of the reading.
5. Discuss the following questions:
  - How does Jonathan show his friendship (love) for David?
  - What does Jonathan do to defend David?
  - Why does Saul not keep his promise to Jonathan?
  - What promise do the two friends make?
6. Ask volunteers to read Proverbs 18:24; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; John 15:13-15 from resource sheet 5 - Friends. Ask: What can we learn about friendship from these verses as well as from the story about David and Jonathan? What do you need to change in your life to become a better friend? How can we be like Jesus to our friends?

## Responding - Good friends

*Time: 3-5 mins*

*Bible knowledge: limited*

*With: song on CD or iPod, stereo/speakers*

1. Put on a song about friendship such as 'I'll be there for you' by the Rembrandts or 'Friends' by Michael W. Smith.
2. Ask the group to think about two questions. What can we do this week to show our friends that we really care for them? Is there anyone who needs a friend that we could speak to this week?
3. Ask the group to divide into smaller groups of two or three. Have them pray together about the answers to the previous questions.

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## Resource sheet 1 – I Samuel 18

### 1 Samuel 18 - Saul Becomes Jealous of David

1 After David had finished talking with Saul, he met Jonathan, the king's son. There was an immediate bond between them, for Jonathan loved David. 2 From that day on Saul kept David with him and wouldn't let him return home. 3 And Jonathan made a solemn pact with David, because he loved him as he loved himself. 4 Jonathan sealed the pact by taking off his robe and giving it to David, together with his tunic, sword, bow, and belt.

5 Whatever Saul asked David to do, David did it successfully. So Saul made him a commander over the men of war, an appointment that was welcomed by the people and Saul's officers alike.

6 When the victorious Israelite army was returning home after David had killed the Philistine, women from all the towns of Israel came out to meet King Saul. They sang and danced for joy with tambourines and cymbals. 7 This was their song:

“Saul has killed his thousands,  
and David his ten thousands!”

8 This made Saul very angry. “What's this?” he said. “They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!” 9 So from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

10 The very next day a tormenting spirit from God overwhelmed Saul, and he began to rave in his house like a madman. David was playing the harp, as he did each day. But Saul had a spear in his hand, 11 and he suddenly hurled it at David, intending to pin him to the wall. But David escaped him twice.

12 Saul was then afraid of David, for the LORD was with David and had turned away from Saul. 13 Finally, Saul sent him away and appointed him commander over 1,000 men, and David faithfully led his troops into battle.

14 David continued to succeed in everything he did, for the LORD was with him. 15 When Saul recognized this, he became even more afraid of him. 16 But all Israel and Judah loved David because he was so successful at leading his troops into battle.

### 1 Samuel 18:24-30

24 When Saul's men reported this back to the king, 25 he told them, “Tell David that all I want for the bride price is 100 Philistine foreskins! Vengeance on my enemies is all I really want.” But what Saul had in mind was that David would be killed in the fight.

26 David was delighted to accept the offer. Before the time limit expired, 27 he and his men went out and killed 200 Philistines. Then David fulfilled the king's requirement by presenting all their foreskins to him. So Saul gave his daughter Michal to David to be his wife.

28 When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and how much his daughter Michal loved him, 29 Saul became even more afraid of him, and he remained David's enemy for the rest of his life.

30 Every time the commanders of the Philistines attacked, David was more successful against them than all the rest of Saul's officers. So David's name became very famous.

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## Resource sheet 2 – 1 Samuel 19

### 1 Samuel 19 - Saul Tries to Kill David

1 Saul now urged his servants and his son Jonathan to assassinate David. But Jonathan, because of his strong affection for David, 2 told him what his father was planning. “Tomorrow morning,” he warned him, “you must find a hiding place out in the fields. 3 I’ll ask my father to go out there with me, and I’ll talk to him about you. Then I’ll tell you everything I can find out.”

4 The next morning Jonathan spoke with his father about David, saying many good things about him. “The king must not sin against his servant David,” Jonathan said. “He’s never done anything to harm you. He has always helped you in any way he could. 5 Have you forgotten about the time he risked his life to kill the Philistine giant and how the LORD brought a great victory to all Israel as a result? You were certainly happy about it then. Why should you murder an innocent man like David? There is no reason for it at all!”

6 So Saul listened to Jonathan and vowed, “As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be killed.”

7 Afterward Jonathan called David and told him what had happened. Then he brought David to Saul, and David served in the court as before.

8 War broke out again after that, and David led his troops against the Philistines. He attacked them with such fury that they all ran away.

9 But one day when Saul was sitting at home, with spear in hand, the tormenting spirit from the LORD suddenly came upon him again. As David played his harp, 10 Saul hurled his spear at David. But David dodged out of the way, and leaving the spear stuck in the wall, he fled and escaped into the night.

### Michal Saves David’s Life

11 Then Saul sent troops to watch David’s house. They were told to kill David when he came out the next morning. But Michal, David’s wife, warned him, “If you don’t escape tonight, you will be dead by morning.” 12 So she helped him climb out through a window, and he fled and escaped. 13 Then she took an idol and put it in his bed, covered it with blankets, and put a cushion of goat’s hair at its head.

14 When the troops came to arrest David, she told them he was sick and couldn’t get out of bed.

15 But Saul sent the troops back to get David. He ordered, “Bring him to me in his bed so I can kill him!” 16 But when they came to carry David out, they discovered that it was only an idol in the bed with a cushion of goat’s hair at its head.

17 “Why have you betrayed me like this and let my enemy escape?” Saul demanded of Michal. “I had to,” Michal replied. “He threatened to kill me if I didn’t help him.”

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## Resource sheet 3 – 1 Samuel 20:1-17

### 1 Samuel 20 - Jonathan Helps David

David now fled from Naioth in Ramah and found Jonathan. “What have I done?” he exclaimed. “What is my crime? How have I offended your father that he is so determined to kill me?”

2 “That’s not true!” Jonathan protested. “You’re not going to die. He always tells me everything he’s going to do, even the little things. I know my father wouldn’t hide something like this from me. It just isn’t so!”

3 Then David took an oath before Jonathan and said, “Your father knows perfectly well about our friendship, so he has said to himself, ‘I won’t tell Jonathan—why should I hurt him?’ But I swear to you that I am only a step away from death! I swear it by the LORD and by your own soul!”

4 “Tell me what I can do to help you,” Jonathan exclaimed.

5 David replied, “Tomorrow we celebrate the new moon festival. I’ve always eaten with the king on this occasion, but tomorrow I’ll hide in the field and stay there until the evening of the third day. 6 If your father asks where I am, tell him I asked permission to go home to Bethlehem for an annual family sacrifice. 7 If he says, ‘Fine!’ you will know all is well. But if he is angry and loses his temper, you will know he is determined to kill me. 8 Show me this loyalty as my sworn friend—for we made a solemn pact before the LORD—or kill me yourself if I have sinned against your father. But please don’t betray me to him!”

9 “Never!” Jonathan exclaimed. “You know that if I had the slightest notion my father was planning to kill you, I would tell you at once.”

10 Then David asked, “How will I know whether or not your father is angry?”

11 “Come out to the field with me,” Jonathan replied. And they went out there together. 12 Then Jonathan told David, “I promise by the LORD, the God of Israel, that by this time tomorrow, or the next day at the latest, I will talk to my father and let you know at once how he feels about you. If he speaks favorably about you, I will let you know. 13 But if he is angry and wants you killed, may the LORD strike me and even kill me if I don’t warn you so you can escape and live. May the LORD be with you as he used to be with my father. 14 And may you treat me with the faithful love of the LORD as long as I live. But if I die, 15 treat my family with this faithful love, even when the LORD destroys all your enemies from the face of the earth.”

16 So Jonathan made a solemn pact with David, saying, “May the LORD destroy all your enemies!” 17 And Jonathan made David reaffirm his vow of friendship again, for Jonathan loved David as he loved himself.

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## Resource sheet 4 – 1 Samuel 20 part 2

### 1 Samuel 20:24-34

24 So David hid himself in the field, and when the new moon festival began, the king sat down to eat. 25 He sat at his usual place against the wall, with Jonathan sitting opposite him and Abner beside him. But David's place was empty. 26 Saul didn't say anything about it that day, for he said to himself, "Something must have made David ceremonially unclean." 27 But when David's place was empty again the next day, Saul asked Jonathan, "Why hasn't the son of Jesse been here for the meal either yesterday or today?"

28 Jonathan replied, "David earnestly asked me if he could go to Bethlehem. 29 He said, 'Please let me go, for we are having a family sacrifice. My brother demanded that I be there. So please let me get away to see my brothers.' That's why he isn't here at the king's table."

30 Saul boiled with rage at Jonathan. "You son of a wicked, worthless woman! he swore at him. "Do you think I don't know that you want him to be king in your place, shaming yourself and your mother? 31 As long as that son of Jesse is alive, you'll never be king. Now go and get him so I can kill him!"

32 "But why should he be put to death?" Jonathan asked his father. "What has he done?" 33 Then Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan, intending to kill him. So at last Jonathan realized that his father was really determined to kill David.

34 Jonathan left the table in fierce anger and refused to eat on that second day of the festival, for he was crushed by his father's shameful behavior toward David.

### 1 Samuel 20:41-42

41 As soon as the boy was gone, David came out from where he had been hiding near the stone pile. Then David bowed three times to Jonathan with his face to the ground. Both of them were in tears as they embraced each other and said good-bye, especially David.

42 At last Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn loyalty to each other in the LORD's name. The LORD is the witness of a bond between us and our children forever." Then David left, and Jonathan returned to the town.

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## Resource sheet 5 – Friends

### Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- <sup>9</sup> Two people are better than one,  
because they get more done by working together.
- <sup>10</sup> If one falls down,  
the other can help him up.  
But it is bad for the person who is alone and falls,  
because no one is there to help.
- <sup>11</sup> If two lie down together, they will be warm,  
but a person alone will not be warm.
- <sup>12</sup> An enemy might defeat one person,  
but two people together can defend themselves;  
a rope that is woven of three strings is hard to break.

### Proverbs 18:24

- <sup>24</sup> Some friends may ruin you, but a real friend will be more loyal than a brother.

### John 15:13-15

- <sup>13</sup> The greatest love a person can show is to die for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing. But I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I heard from my Father.

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## Session 4: Gossip

Series: New Term – New Start

Themes: adjustment, changes, friendship, appropriate speech

Bible Passage: James 3:3-12; Ephesians 4:29

Suggested age group: 11-14's (mostly S1-S2)

Session aims: To help young people realise how their words might hurt others.

To help young people remember to speak positively to and about each other.

---

## Way in 1 - Chinese whispers

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: n/a

1. Think up a phrase about one of the other leaders (nothing mean!) and then whisper it to one or two people in the room and ask them to pass it on.
2. After two or three minutes, stop everyone from talking and ask some people what secret they heard about that leader. Compare it to the original message.
3. Briefly discuss how long it took for the message to get confused.

## Way in 2 - Encouraging words

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: paper, pens or pencils

1. Divide the group into two or three smaller groups.
2. Give everyone a sheet of paper and ask each person to write their name at the bottom of the paper.
3. Ask each person to pass their sheet of paper to the person on their left. The person who receives the paper is asked to write one encouraging/nice sentence about the person whose name is on the paper.
4. Ask the person to fold the paper down so their comment is covered and then pass it to the left. Continue to do this until the paper reaches the original person.

## Way in 3 - Mean Girls

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: Mean Girls DVD clip, DVD player

1. Play a clip from the film *Mean Girls*. Start clip at 1:03:40 and end at 1:05:42. In the film, the girls write lies and rumours about people at their school in something called the Burn Book. This particular clip shows what happens when everyone in the school finds out about the gossip written in the book. A fight ensues throughout the whole school.
2. Ask the young people to write down the things that happened because of the gossip in the Burn Book and all of the feelings experienced.

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3. Discuss why the young people in the clip experienced these feelings.

## Connecting 1 - Power of the Tongue

**Time:** 10 mins

**Bible knowledge:** limited

**With: Gossip:** resource sheet 1- 'How much power does the tongue have' or Bibles

1. Ask: What does the word “gossip” mean? The official definition is:
  - Rumour or talk of a personal, sensational or intimate nature
  - A person who habitually spreads intimate or private rumours or facts
  - Idle talk, usually about other people’s private lives, esp. of a disapproving or malicious nature ([www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com))
2. Comment that we have all done it and many times we even convince ourselves that it is acceptable. You might want to mention myths that we use to make ourselves feel better about gossip such as:
  - It’s alright to say this about him/her just once
  - Maybe if I tell someone, it will help the person  
(Comment that usually this is not what happens.)
3. Ask the group to think for a moment about their tongue. Ask: Is this a very big part of your body? Present some facts about the tongue such as:
  - In more than 10 languages, tongue and language are the same word.
  - Your tongue plays a more important role than just tasting stuff. Without it, you wouldn’t be able to eat, speak, or spit.
  - Not only is it the strongest muscle in your body, but it is the only muscle that is connected at only one end.
  - Every single tongue on earth has its own individual tongue print.
  - There are over 10,000 taste buds on the surface of your tongue, giving you the ability to taste the difference between, sweet, sour, salty and bitter.
  - Your tongue is unfortunately also the primary source of bad breath. Food particles collect in between your taste buds, feeding bacteria which leads to bad breath.
  - The colour of your tongue can be a good indicator of your health, and if it is a pale pink, it could mean something has broken down. If you get a yellowish coating over your tongue, it usually means you have a fever, or some kind of digestive complication. ([www.health24.com/tongue/](http://www.health24.com/tongue/))
4. Ask a volunteer to read James 3:3-12. Ask: What types of images is the tongue related to in the verses? How much harm do you think the tongue can cause?
5. Share with the group an acronym to help them THINK about what they say before they say it.
  - T- Is it true?
  - H-Is it helpful?
  - I - Is it inspiring?
  - N- Is it necessary?

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- K- Is it kind?  
(Quote from Alan Redpath, A Passion for Preaching, 1989)
6. Present an example of something true about yourself and something that is not true. (Just the leader should do this so that nothing mean is said) Go through each of the questions above to help the young people examine things they might say.
  7. Ask a volunteer to read Ephesians 4:29. On a whiteboard or large piece of paper, write the word “encouragement.” Ask the group to think of words that might “help others become stronger” as it says in Ephesians 4:29.

## Connecting 2 – Taking it further

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: some

With: Gossip: resource sheet 1- ‘How much power does the tongue have’ or Bibles

1. Ask a volunteer to read Colossians 3:8.
2. Discuss the following:
  - What things does this verse tell you to put out of your life?
  - Would you rate these things as equally bad, or would you say that some are worse than others?
  - What difference would it make to you to know that God hates us doing all these things?
3. Ask a volunteer to read Exodus 20:7.
4. Present some questions such as:
  - What does it mean to use God’s name “thoughtlessly”?
  - How can we guard against doing that?
5. Ask a volunteer to read Ephesians 5:4
6. Talk about some of the following:
  - What might happen if you replaced “obscenity, foolish talk, or coarse joking” with giving thanks to God?
  - In what ways do you think it might help others around you?

## Responding 1 - What time is it?

Time: 5-7 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: resource sheet 2 – ‘What time is it?’ (if you are able - print on bright coloured card)

1. Present a challenge to the group to try to help each other out before gossiping happens. Comment that when a friend is about to gossip, you could say “What time is it?” Then, either they reply 4:29 or you say 4:29 which will help both of you to remember what it says in Ephesians about gossip.
2. Give each young person a “What time is it?” card. Explain that one side of the card asks what time is it? and the other side of the card says 4:29. Below the 4:29, encourage them to either copy Ephesians 4.29 or re-write it in their own words.

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- 3. Encourage the group to learn Ephesians 4:29 as a memory verse.**
- 4. Ask the group to spend one minute praying that they will use appropriate words that honour God. Close with a group prayer after one minute.**

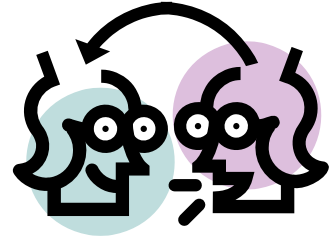
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## Resource sheet 1 – How much power does the tongue have?

### James 3:3-12

<sup>3</sup> When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can control their whole bodies. <sup>4</sup> Also a ship is very big, and it is pushed by strong winds. But a very small rudder controls that big ship, making it go wherever the pilot wants. <sup>5</sup> It is the same with the tongue. It is a small part of the body, but it brags about great things. A big forest fire can be started with only a little flame. <sup>6</sup> And the tongue is like a fire. It is a whole world of evil among the parts of our bodies. The tongue spreads its evil through the whole body. The tongue is set on fire by hell, and it starts a fire that influences all of life. <sup>7</sup> People can tame every kind of wild animal, bird, reptile, and fish, and they have tamed them, <sup>8</sup> but no one can tame the tongue. It is wild and evil and full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> We use our tongues to praise our Lord and Father, but then we curse people, whom God made like himself. <sup>10</sup> Praises and curses come from the same mouth! My brothers and /sisters, this should not happen. <sup>11</sup> Do good and bad water flow from the same spring? <sup>12</sup> My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree make olives, or can a grapevine make figs? No! And a well full of salty water cannot give good water.



### Ephesians 4:29

<sup>29</sup> When you talk, do not say harmful things, but say what people need—words that will help others become stronger. Then what you say will do good to those who listen to you.

### Colossians 3:8

<sup>8</sup> But now also put these things out of your life: anger, bad temper, doing or saying things to hurt others, and using evil words when you talk.

### Exodus 20:7

<sup>7</sup> "You must not use the name of the LORD your God thoughtlessly; the LORD will punish anyone who misuses his name.

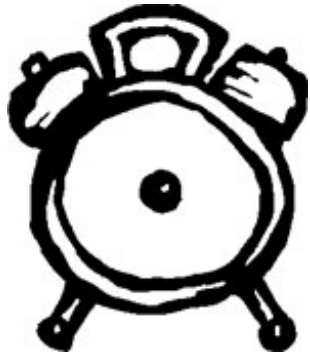
### Ephesians 5:4

<sup>4</sup> Also, there must be no evil talk among you, and you must not speak foolishly or tell evil jokes. These things are not right for you. Instead, you should be giving thanks to God.

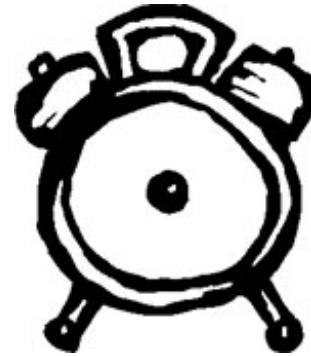
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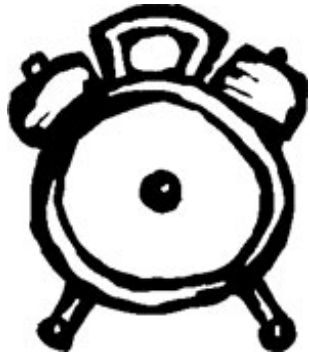
## Resource sheet 2 – What time is it? (side 1)



**What time is it?**



**What time is it?**



**What time is it?**



**What time is it?**



**What time is it?**



**What time is it?**

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## Resource sheet 2 – What time is it? (side 2)

(Ephesians) <b>4:29!</b>	(Ephesians) <b>4:29!</b>
(Ephesians) <b>4:29!</b>	(Ephesians) <b>4:29!</b>
(Ephesians) <b>4:29!</b>	(Ephesians) <b>4:29!</b>



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## Session 5: Attitudes

Series: New Term – New Start

Themes: adjustment, changes, character of Christ, witness

Bible Passage: Matthew 20:25-28; Philippians 2:3-11

Suggested age group: 11-14's (mostly S1-S2)

Session aims: To help young people realise how their attitude affects others.

To help young people recognise the attitude of Christ and consider how they can strive to have the same attitude.

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## Way in 1 - What a character!

Time: 7-10 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: resource sheet 1 – 'What a character!', pens or pencils

1. Give each person a copy of resource sheet 1 -What a character! and a pen or pencil. Ask them to look at the faces carefully for a moment.
2. Ask the group to look at row one (across) on the sheet. Say the phrase: The last sentence this character heard was.... Ask them to write down a thought for each face in that row.
3. Ask the group to look at row two on the sheet. Say the phrase: I would like to invite this character on a date because.... Ask them to write down a thought for each face in that row.
4. Ask the group to look at row three on the sheet. Say the phrase: This character is thinking.... Ask them to write down a thought for each face in that row.
5. Go back to each row and repeat the phrases while asking for their best suggestions.
6. Discuss how we might be able to understand a lot about a person's attitude just from their face.

## Way in 2 - Giveaway Grab

Time: 7-10 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: dried peas, straws, trays, bowls (enough for two or three teams)

1. Divide the group into two or three teams and ask them to gather on one side of the room.
2. Give each team a tray with dried peas and a straw for each person. On the opposite side of the room, place an empty bowl for each team.
3. Ask the team to transfer the peas from the tray to the bowl without using their hands. Give the teams approximately two minutes to do this.
4. When the time is up, bring out another bowl that belongs to a fictitious person named "Poor Penny." Explain that Poor Penny has nothing in her bowl and you would like to see which team can transfer their entire bowl to Penny's bowl in the same way that they transferred the peas before (no hands). The odds of course will be in favour of the team who had the least in the first round. Allow the teams to play until one bowl is emptied into Penny's bowl.
5. Make points such as:
  - Thinking about taking more than we need
  - Giving to others in need
  - The winners were not the ones with the most but the ones who gave the most

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## Connecting 1 - Attitude?

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: resource sheet 2 – Attitudes or Bibles

1. Ask: What does the word “attitude” mean? Some definitions are:
  - a perspective or outlook on life
  - a position of the body or manner of carrying oneself
  - a state of mind or feeling; disposition (thefreedictionary.com)
2. Ask: Have you had a “bad” attitude about something? What are some examples? How does it affect the attitude of others around you? As a leader, you might want to provide a personal example.
3. Give the group a minute to think personally about what type of attitude we should have.
4. Ask volunteers to read Philippians 2:3-4 and Matthew 20:25-28 from resource sheet 2 – ‘Attitudes’.
5. Discuss what each passage says about attitudes.

## Connecting 2 – Going Deeper

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: some

With: resource sheet 3 – Going Deeper, coloured markers

1. Sometimes it is helpful to have a role model with a good attitude – the Bible gives us the perfect role model.
2. Ask a volunteer to read Philippians 2:3-11 from resource sheet 3 – Going Deeper.
3. Allow pupils to underline anything in the passage that describes an attitude they could aspire to. Discuss everyone’s findings together.
4. Repeat this exercise with the other passages on the sheet, noting the following:
  - we should be like Jesus (showing real love to those in need) - 1 John 3:16-20
  - we should be like servants (not selfish) - Matthew 20:25-28
  - we should be obedient (listen to what God is asking us) - Psalm 19:7-11

## Responding - What’s my attitude like?

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

1. Ask the group two questions:
  - What is your attitude like?
  - What would you like to change about your attitude?
2. Ask each young person to think of one phrase they would like to pray aloud about having the right attitude.
3. Explain that the group is going to participate in a responsive prayer. Each person will pray their phrase one at a time and in response the group will say “Help us have an attitude like Jesus.” When the whole group has prayed, the leader can close with a short prayer.

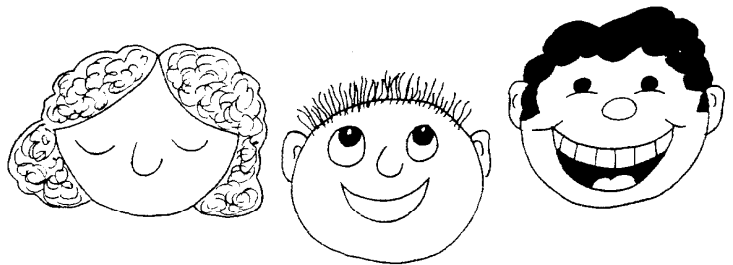
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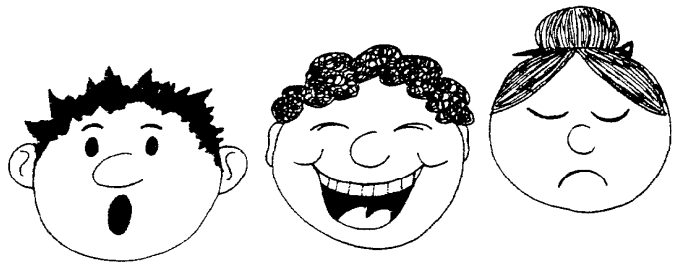
## Resource sheet 1 – What a character!

Under each character, write a thought that completes the sentence at the beginning of the row:

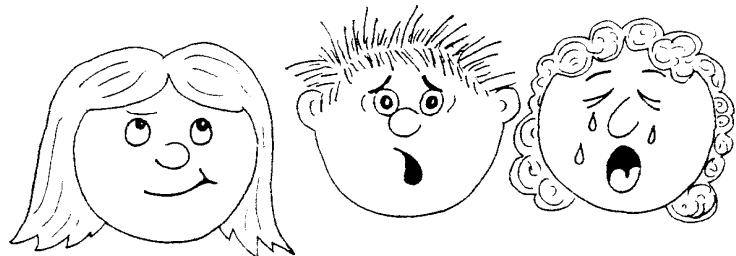
**The last sentence  
this character  
heard was...**



**I would like to  
invite this character  
to dinner because...**



**This character is  
thinking...**



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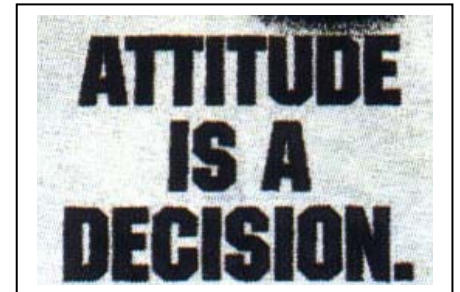
## Resource sheet 2 – Attitudes

### Philippians 2:3-4

<sup>3</sup> When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others.

### Matthew 20:25-28

<sup>25</sup> Jesus called all the followers together and said, "You know that the rulers of the non-Jewish people love to show their power over the people. And their important leaders love to use all their authority. <sup>26</sup> But it should not be that way among you. Whoever wants to become great among you must serve the rest of you like a servant. <sup>27</sup> Whoever wants to become first among you must serve the rest of you like a slave. <sup>28</sup> In the same way, the Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many people."



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## Resource sheet 3 – Going Deeper

### Philippians 2:3-11

<sup>3</sup> When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others. <sup>5</sup> In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus. <sup>6</sup> Christ himself was like God in everything. But he did not think that being equal with God was something to be used for his own benefit. <sup>7</sup> But he gave up his place with God and made himself nothing. He was born as a man and became like a servant. <sup>8</sup> And when he was living as a man, he humbled himself and was fully obedient to God, even when that caused his death— death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> So God raised him to the highest place. God made his name greater than every other name <sup>10</sup> so that every knee will bow to the name of Jesus— everyone in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. <sup>11</sup> And everyone will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and bring glory to God the Father.

### 1 John 3:16-20

<sup>16</sup> This is how we know what real love is: Jesus gave his life for us. So we should give our lives for our brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup> Suppose someone has enough to live and sees a brother or sister in need, but does not help. Then God's love is not living in that person. <sup>18</sup> My children, we should love people not only with words and talk, but by our actions and true caring. <sup>19-20</sup> This is the way we know that we belong to the way of truth. When our hearts make us feel guilty, we can still have peace before God. God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

### Matthew 20:25-28

<sup>25</sup> Jesus called all the followers together and said, "You know that the rulers of the non-Jewish people love to show their power over the people. And their important leaders love to use all their authority. <sup>26</sup> But it should not be that way among you. Whoever wants to become great among you must serve the rest of you like a servant. <sup>27</sup> Whoever wants to become first among you must serve the rest of you like a slave. <sup>28</sup> In the same way, the Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many people."

### Psalms 19:7-11

<sup>7</sup> The teachings of the Lord are perfect; they give new strength.  
The rules of the Lord can be trusted; they make plain people wise.  
<sup>8</sup> The orders of the LORD are right; they make people happy.  
The commands of the LORD are pure; they light up the way.  
<sup>9</sup> Respect for the LORD is good; it will last forever.  
The judgments of the LORD are true; they are completely right.  
<sup>10</sup> They are worth more than gold, even the purest gold.  
They are sweeter than honey, even the finest honey.  
<sup>11</sup> By them your servant is warned. Keeping them brings great reward.

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