

# SU Group Session – Poverty

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## Way in 1 – If I was in power for a day (20 minutes)

You will need: paper, pens, large whiteboard/flipchart (for leader)

1. Put the young people into small groups of between two and five people, and give them paper and pens.
2. Tell them they can be in charge of any level of government: local council, the Scottish Government, the UK Government, the European Union, the world...
3. Ask the question “if you were in charge for a day, what would you change?”
4. After ten minutes (or whenever they are finished) ask them to give feedback on how they would use this power, writing up their ideas on the board.
5. Does anyone want to change the same things? Why?
6. If no-one suggests anything related to poverty, suggest it. What do they think?

## Way in 2 – One word (10 minutes)

You will need: ball/something that can be thrown, whiteboard/flipchart

1. Get the young people to stand/sit in a circle and throw the ball around. As they catch it, ask the young people to say one word they associate with poverty as you write them down on the whiteboard
2. Once everyone has said a few words, or you run out of words, ask the young people:
  - a. How many of these words have to do with not having enough money or ‘things’?
  - b. How many are to do with not having enough opportunities?
  - c. How many are to do with not having access to basic needs – water, food, shelter, etc.?
  - d. Are any to do with not having enough power?

## Connecting 1 – Getting personal (15 mins)

You will need: Resources sheet ‘Personal Experiences,’ whiteboard/flipchart, Bible

1. Tell the young people you are going to read three true stories from people in the UK who live in poverty.
2. Either choose three volunteers (preferably able readers) or read the three experiences yourself.
3. Ask the young people what they would think/say if these people lived on their streets or went to their school.
4. Write down some of the ideas on the board.
5. Point out that the Bible speaks a lot about poverty and share Isaiah 58:6-11 (alternatively Matthew 25:31ff or proverbs 31:8-9)
6. Ask the young people to explain how these verses help us understand
  - a. God’s concern for those in poverty?
  - b. What God expects of us.

7. Ask them to consider which is most important: having that little bit extra in your pocket, or giving it to those who need it even more?

### **Responding (5 – 10 minutes)**

You will need: a sheet of paper per person in the group, PowerPoint (attached to the email), song: 'Live Like That' by Sidewalk Prophets

1. Tell the young people that you are going to play a song for them and turn on 'Live Like That' by Sidewalk Prophets
2. As it plays, encourage them to sit individually and think about, then write down, how they could use what little they have to help other young people in Scotland
3. Meanwhile, have the PowerPoint (attached to the email) on in the background, displaying statistics about child poverty in the UK.
4. After as long as is appropriate (between five and ten minutes), display the last slide on the PowerPoint and reiterate the message – if anyone would like to know more about how they can help the Scottish Youth Parliament tackle child poverty then follow the Twitter and like the Facebook pages.

# Resources Sheet – Personal Experiences

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## Jennie

I am a single mother with three sons: Jordan (16), Mark (13) and Michael (11). They all have disabilities. Mark and Michael are both visually impaired. My eldest son Jordan has ADHD. I've been waiting for a long time to be rehoused permanently. I could be moved tomorrow to another place if the landlord or whoever owns this property wants it back. I had to leave my children's dad because of domestic violence. I was working before that but once I left him I could not go to work because my children needed me. I have onions, sauces, vinegar, and one pack of ham. I've got nothing really which I can do for them, like eggs or anything. I haven't got any of them at the moment. My neighbour from upstairs gave me the ham today. That's about it, I think. Two of my children have to share a bed, which is the two youngest boys, Mark and Michael. I used to ask – well, I still do at times – why has it happened to me to go to a refuge? Being in temporary accommodation, it's hurtful. I don't like it, but I have to stay strong for myself and for my children, and I hate being in the situation that I'm in now.

## Marc

I came out of school with English, science, geography, catering, team leadership in PE and ICT. That's basically all my qualifications, but no one wants to look at them really. I've been searching for work for two and a half years, near enough three, but there's just nothing. It must have been hundreds, hundreds of jobs I've applied for in the past two/three years: bartending jobs, cleaning jobs, everything you can probably think of – even fixing lampposts. It's not what you know; it's who you know around here. If there's no decent jobs then you have to live off benefits, but no one is going to look at you because you are on benefits. My mum was on benefits all the way through her life. Working in and out, coming on and off it. Me and my sisters grew up on them. Some days my mum couldn't afford to feed all of us so she would feed us and starve herself for two days. I don't know how she got through it at all. I met a girlfriend, settled down, moved out of home and moved in with her. But then everything went upside down and I became homeless. My mum couldn't take me in, so I lived in the caravan for a bit and now I live in temporary accommodation but I could be kicked out any day.

## Renee

My name is Renée Johnson. I have four children. Girvan, Cheyrice, Tyrone and three year old Zennisha. I also have my mum living with us. In our house, the bathroom is full of damp – all on the ceiling it's cracking, all down the walls... even though they've put in the double glazing, it hasn't made it better, it's got worse. Even if you clean the walls, wipe the walls off, it comes back again, it doesn't make no difference. It can affect the children's health. They constantly have colds as well, quite frequently. More than they usually should have due from timing of year. This is what I have to live with. We are overcrowded. Everyone is on top of each other. When one child is doing work you've got another making noise, another wants to watch TV. It's difficult. I had to send my eldest son to my brother so he could focus on helping him get his GCSEs. Due to the circumstances of the flat with the damp and mould, me as a parent, as a mother, I feel greatly embarrassed. Quite shameful. I never thought I'd be living in this situation. I thought I would have my own home. In this

day and age you'd never think that people would be living this way. You may not see it on the outside, but it is a very real and very scary truth for people in Britain.