

Evaluating your SU Group

It is encouraging for every SU Group leader to know that there are another 450 groups across Scottish Schools. We pray that each of these groups would be a place where children and young people get a chance to *explore the Bible and respond to the significance of Jesus*. We also want to encourage each SU group to be the best they can be for the young people who come along. The easiest way to do that is to ask them.

We have designed this evaluation tool so it works as a programme for one of your group meetings, engaging with the Bible whilst helping you and your group reflect on all you have done together. It can be adapted for either Primary or Secondary groups. This is not seeking to be a 'check-up' on leaders but rather to give an opportunity to ask children what they like about their SU group, what they have learned, and how it could be better.

We want every child at an SU group to have a great experience, knowing that they are in a safe place where they belong, somewhere they can ask questions and that their opinions are heard and respected. We hope that you enjoy using this session outline and that you are encouraged as you hear from the pupils about what the group means to them.

Session plan

Bible base: Deuteronomy 11:18-21 (GNB)

Aims:

1. To discover what the Israelites remembered about God and how they were to keep going with Him.
2. To help pupils remember what they have learned in their SU group and how they can keep exploring.
3. To help leaders evaluate and reflect on the values of the SU group.

| Overview for a 15 min group time | Overview for a 30 min group time |
|---|--|
| Introduction: Key opening activity but abbreviate it by giving children just a couple of post-its each. (3 mins) | Introduction: Key opening activity. (6 mins) |
| | Link: Use a Bible time-line if you can. (6 mins) |
| Bible exploration: Jump straight to this, explain context briefly and the word "cherish". (5 mins) | Bible exploration: lead into this from the Bible time-line discussion. (4 mins) |
| Our memories: Go to the "2 things I want to cherish..." handout, Appendix 2. (3 mins) | Our memories: Go to the "2 things I want to cherish..." handout, Appendix 2. (5 mins) |
| | Cherishing the words: (3 mins) |
| How is our SU Group doing?: Use the handout in Appendix 3. (3 mins) | How is our SU Group doing?: Use the handout in Appendix 3. (5 mins) |
| Prayer: (1 min) | Prayer: (1 min) |

Introduction:

In the middle of a large sheet of paper, write "What do we remember?" Invite the group to draw and write what they remember about the group over the past year. Chat with them as they do this activity, encouraging a breadth of memories and reflections. This is a key activity to get your group chatting about how they feel about the group. To help the young people engage you could break down the question into categories, e.g. your funniest memory or first memory of the group.

To abbreviate this activity, give each child two or three post-it notes to write their memories on. Get them to stick these onto the large sheet. It is possible to do this activity while the group is eating their lunch if that is an important part of your time together.

Link:

Explain that today's story from the Bible takes place when Moses and the Israelites are nearly at the Promised Land. Moses is encouraging the people to remember all that God has done. Ask the group if they know what kind of things the Israelites would be remembering. Use a Bible

timeline to briefly chat about the main things that have happened up to this point in the Bible. It will help if you have thought this through yourself in preparation for this session. We would recommend buying the timeline resource from SU England & Wales¹, which gives the first four segments as:

- i. God made the world.
- ii. God chose the Israelites to be his special people.
- iii. God brought them out of slavery in Egypt.
- iv. God gave them the Promised Land.

This activity can be condensed or even omitted if you are short of time.

Bible exploration:

Invite the group to look up Deuteronomy 11:18-21 (GNB, Appendix 1). Explain the word "cherish" used in line one. Talk about how we choose to "cherish" certain memories. These are things which we "treasure" – that we hold very dear to us. Read the Bible passage and ask the group to listen carefully to what Moses is asking the people to cherish. (God's commands/ Word).

Our memories:

Explain that the SU Group is all about cherishing God's word too, finding out from the Bible what God is like, what he Has done and how He wants us to live our lives. Today we are going to take some time to remember what we have learned from the Bible this year in our SU Group.

Give out the review sheet (Appendix 2) - "Two things I want to cherish from the Bible" to each member of the group. Invite them to write or draw 2 things that they remember and cherish from the Bible this year at SU group. If they just want to draw their memories, ask to scribe a note beside their drawing as this will help in collating responses later on.

Cherishing the words:

The Israelites remembered all these special things but also did certain things so that they wouldn't forget. Ask the group to look at the Bible passage to find out what they did (tied the commands to their heads² and arms; wrote them on their doorposts so they passed them on the way out and in to their home, talked to each other about them all the time.)

Explain this is why we have SU Groups. We want them to be places where we can discover the Bible and chose to keep God's words in our heads and our hearts. We don't wear it in the way Jewish people may do but we want to know it really well and cherish it. The SU Group is a place where we can talk about the Bible safely and get to know God better, when we're happy or sad - at all times of life.

¹ Go to <http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/8.id> and search for Mini Bible Time-line, or see a sample of the first four stages here: <http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/Uploads/Documents/Sample%20Bible%20Timeline%20Panel.pdf>

² <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/458479/phyllactery>

How is our SU Group doing?

Explain that you are going to spend a few minutes thinking about how their SU Group does things well and how they could do it better. Give out the evaluation form (Appendix 3) and ask them to complete it. This can be done anonymously.

Prayer:

Ask the young people to think about something they have learned about God this year at the group. Explain that you are going to say the words "Thank you God for..." and then they can all shout out something they've learned at the same time, and then you will say Amen at the end.

Leaders' Reflection: after the Group

Reflecting on young people's responses:

Take some time as leaders to look through and talk about the responses from the young people. Be encouraged as you read about the things they have remembered from the group and the things they think are good about it. Consider how you might respond to their suggestions about how to make the group better.

Reflecting on the values of your group:

Appendix 4 lists the values of all Scripture Union Groups. Take some time together to look at the list and evaluate how you feel your group is fulfilling them. Discuss what two areas are going well in your group and identify one area in which you would like see improvement.

Collation:

Take all the completed "2 things I want to cherish..." handouts and the "How is our group doing?" forms. Collate the group's responses on the attached Summary Form. (Appendix 5) Add in your responses after reflecting on the values of your SU Group, and return this to your local Regional or Associate Worker who supports you.

APPENDIX 1

Deuteronomy 11:18-21

¹⁸ “Remember these commands and cherish them. Tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder. ¹⁹ Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working. ²⁰ Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates. ²¹ Then you and your children will live a long time in the land that the LORD your God promised to give to your ancestors. You will live there as long as there is a sky above the earth.

APPENDIX 2

Two THINGS I want to CHERISH FROM THE BIBLE, THIS YEAR at SU GROUP.

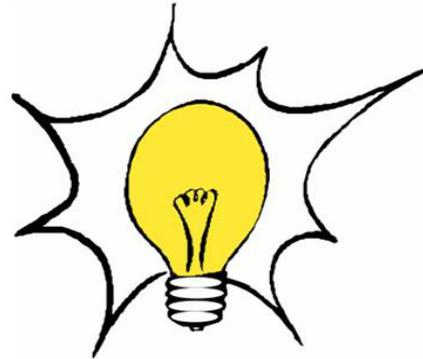


APPENDIX 3

How is YOUR GROUP DOING?



What is really good
about our group?



What could make our
group better?

APPENDIX 4

Values of a Scripture Union Group

SU Scotland works to see the children and young people of Scotland exploring the Bible and responding to the significance of Jesus.

| The young people involved with SU Scotland described the values of SU groups as: | How we feel our SU Group is fulfilling these: | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---------------|---|---|
| | 1 = not well | | | 6 = excellent | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe places where all pupils are welcomed and respected; where Christian values are modelled. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fun, memorable, exciting and age-appropriate. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having good, challenging, interactive Bible engagement. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having time where there is opportunity for prayer. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being well structured and led; the leader(s) recognising and using the talents of others. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a positive impact on the school, and being known amongst pupils. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring Christian faith and encouraging one another on their journey | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working cooperatively and openly with the leadership of the school | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ | ⑥ |

SU groups are all led by fully accredited volunteers. Groups can take many forms and styles, and creative involvement of the children is to be encouraged. These values seek to engender a common ethos that will define the work of all SU Groups across Scotland.

Discuss this list with your fellow group leaders and comment on two areas that you feel are going well, one area you would like to see improve in your group and how you would like your local Regional/Associate worker to support you in that.

Please enter your answers to these questions on the reverse of Appendix 5.

APPENDIX 5

Summary Feedback Form

Please make a list of the young people's responses. Please put a number in brackets to indicate how many young people gave the same response. Add extra bullet points as needed.

2 things I want to cherish (Collated answers from Appendix 2)

-
-
-
-
-
-

How is our group doing? (Collated answers from Appendix 3)

What is really good about our group?

-
-
-
-

What could make our group better?

-
-
-
-

The values of our SU Group? (Answers from Appendix 4)

Two areas we feel are going well and why:

-
-

One area we feel we want to improve on:

-
-

Support we would like from our Regional/Associate Worker to help us with this:

-

**Please return Appendix 5 to your local Regional
or Associate worker who supports you.**