

TRANSFORMING POVERTY

BY GAYLE GREENWAY



**Six sessions for churches
and house groups**

**Use the film *I, Daniel Blake*
to engage with God's heart
for poverty in your community**



**Church Action
on Poverty**

Church Action on Poverty is a national ecumenical Christian social justice charity, committed to tackling poverty in the UK. We work in partnership with churches and with people in poverty themselves to find solutions to poverty, locally, nationally and globally. Further information can be found at www.church-poverty.org.uk.

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“Poverty affects millions of people in the UK. Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent, or buy the essentials for your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty, and impossible decisions about money. It means facing marginalisation – and even discrimination – because of your financial circumstances. The constant stress it causes can lead to problems that deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society.”

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation

“Charity is no substitute for justice withheld.”

Saint Augustine

“Churches are concerned that the imposition of sanctions, in the way that is currently experienced by many, undermines human dignity... There are foundational Christian principles that call into question the sanctions system in operation today. We have concluded that it is very hard to justify a system which impacts most harshly on the people who most need help and support. Irrespective of circumstances or material need, all people have innate human dignity and are created in the image of God. It is incumbent upon the Christian community to speak out against any system which treats people so unjustly.”

The Joint Public Issues Team

INTRODUCTION

What's this course about?

It's all about coming together to talk, think and pray about the struggles that local people, maybe including ourselves, have today or have had in the past because of having little money.

Alongside this, we'll be looking at how the Bible and our faith in Jesus guide us to respond to these issues.

The course uses Ken Loach's film *I, Daniel Blake* to inspire conversations and apply scriptural insights to everyday life issues relating to socio-economic deprivation.

Who might want to come along?

This course is for anyone who is passionate about sharing Jesus through what we say and how we serve others in our local community.

Participants should know that coming does not mean that they have to talk a lot or even at all – just by coming along, they will be inspired and contribute more than they think.

What are the sessions?

- Week 1: All lives matter – Introducing Daniel Blake.
- Week 2: God's will to save – Introducing Katie, Dylan and Daisy.
- Week 3: How has poverty affected us? – “We're digital by default”.
- Week 4: Our calling for one another and our local community – At the food bank and at the supermarket.
- Week 5: Growing beyond our church's walls as we walk with people – CVs, a bookcase and vulnerability.
- Week 6: Always upholding God's heart for the poor – Outside the Jobcentre and at the end.

What are the aims of the course?

1. To help churches begin to open up the topic of local poverty, by creating a safe place to talk about our own experiences of poverty with one another.
2. To think together about issues of local poverty affecting our lives and others' lives here and now that are specific to where they are.
3. To equip churches to pray meaningfully and in a life-transforming, kingdom-oriented way for the poverty within our community.
4. To enable churches in time to practically take their place in serving those who find themselves living in situations of poverty in the community.

As for practical outcomes, through providing a space where disciples of Jesus can become more attuned to God's heart for those in need locally, the course will help churches discern how they may serve local people's needs. To be used most helpfully, rather than being seen as a course to complete, *Transforming Poverty* needs to be considered as an early stage of a church's journey exploring issues of faith and poverty.

HOW TO USE THE COURSE

Preparing to run the course

Before running *Transforming Poverty*, think about what you could do to make the church as attuned as possible to their community's particular needs and God's heart for these needs. For example, you may want to go on prayer-walks around the local area, or have intentional conversations with local shop assistants or hairdressers and barbers.

Planning the course

You will need a copy of the film *I, Daniel Blake*. It is available on DVD and through some online streaming services. The notes for each session will tell you which scene to show to the group. The production company Sixteen Films have given permission for churches to show the film in this way.

We suggest you organise your sessions at about 7:30pm on a weeknight, aiming to attract mainly adults as participants. (Be aware that *I, Daniel Blake* includes strong language and has a 15 certificate.)

Facilitating the course

The course is designed to be facilitated by one person, or a group working as a team. The facilitator(s) should read each session in advance and make sure they are prepared to run the session and answer any questions that may arise. (Each session includes some suggestions for further reading if you need to learn more about the issues being raised.)

Make it clear that the sessions are a safe setting where people can share stories, views and experiences in confidence. Encourage everyone to listen deeply and authentically to the rest of the group. The materials include questions which are intended to inspire the conversations most helpful to each group taking part. Facilitators should encourage an atmosphere in which participants sense they're journeying together with hearts open to all God wants to impart.

This same attitude of learning together and drawing alongside others will also help churches to understand how they can best relate to the wider community and support people. Wanting to see other's needs and oppose any source of their oppression means genuinely wanting to uphold the God-given worth of others – as we see in Jesus' words and actions in Luke 13:10–17:

¹⁰ Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. ¹¹ And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." ¹³ When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. ¹⁴ But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day." ¹⁵ But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? ¹⁶ And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?" ¹⁷ When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

Our hope is that churches will partner with those they serve and share Jesus with, to realise lasting change in Jesus' name, rather than only providing charity.

WEEK 1: ALL LIVES MATTER

Preparation

You will need a pen and a thought bubble printed on card for each person, to use in the closing prayer activity. You could use the bubble shape opposite as a template. You will also need to prepare music or prayers for the opening and closing worship.

Opening worship

Share together in a time of worship, for example using the song ‘Good, good Father’ by Chris Tomlin (from the 2015 album *Never Lose Sight*) or a prayer from the suggested resources on page 18.

“Listen, I’ve had a major heart attack. I nearly fell off the scaffolding. I wanna get back to work, too. Now, please, can we talk about me heart?”

Scene from the film

Play the scene ‘Introducing Daniel Blake’ (from the start of the film to 13:45 minutes – scenes 1 and 2 on the DVD).

Discussion

- What stood out to each of us most?
- Have any of us had any experiences like Daniel’s shown here? Has anyone felt misunderstood or not listened to by housing officers, Jobcentre Plus staff, social workers, or staff at the civic centre, etc? Do we know other people who have felt like this?

Key Bible passage: Psalm 139:1–15

- ¹ O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
- ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
- ³ You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
- ⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.
- ⁵ You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
- ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.
- ⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
- ⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
- ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
- ¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.

Discussion

- As we consider the words of this Psalm alongside Daniel’s situation, what sorts of emotions, thoughts or ideas are stirred within us?
- What difference does it make to us that we know that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” and that we were seen by God when he was forming us in our mothers’ wombs? How could these truths potentially be transformative for others’ lives?

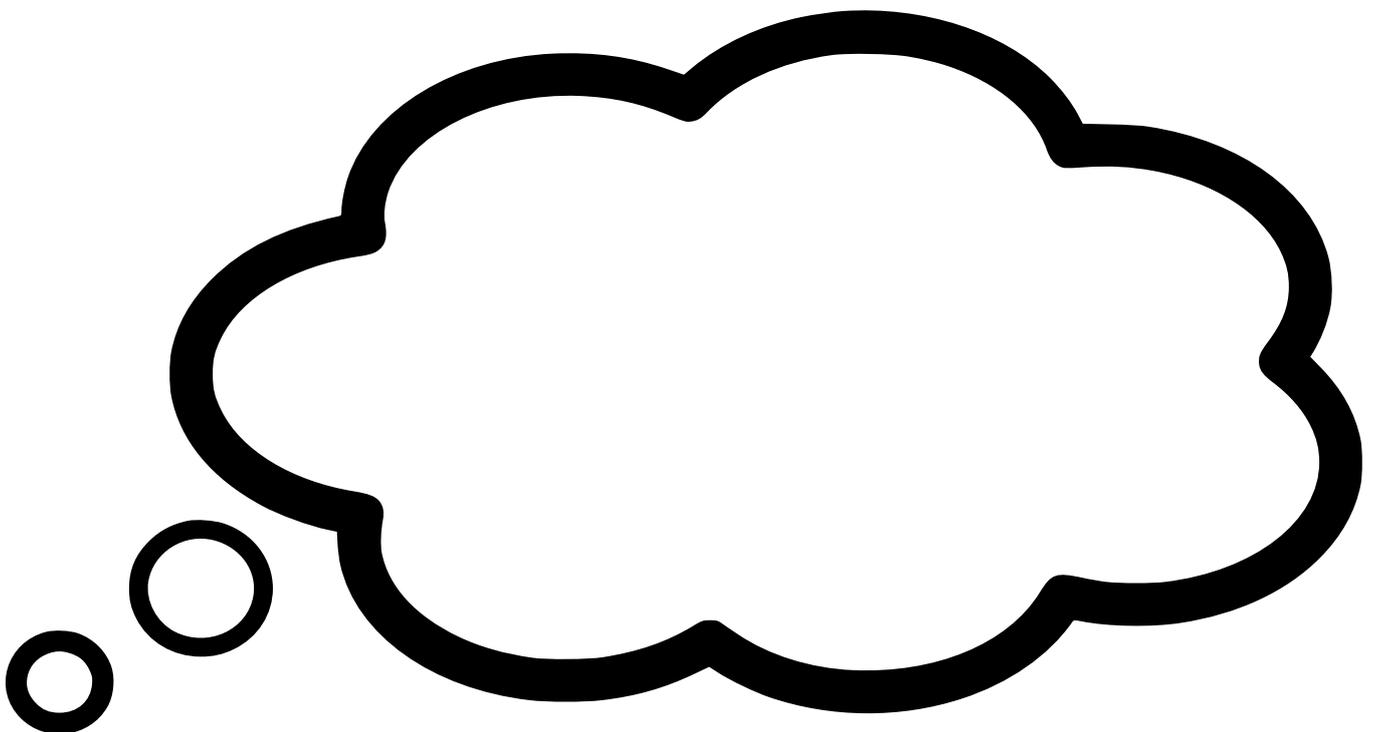


Prayer time

Play some reflective music. Give each person a pen and a thought bubble shape, and ask each person to write a word or two that expresses their hopes about this course: how they hope that it will make a difference to their lives and the life of the local community.

Background reading

Daniel's experiences of being ignored and misunderstood here are based on things that really happen to people in poverty and receiving benefits in the UK. To see stories of real people's experiences, visit the 'Voices from the Margins' website at www.voicesfromthemargins.org.uk.



WEEK 2: GOD'S WILL TO SAVE

Preparation

You will need to provide pens, and images of umbrellas for the closing prayer activity – you could copy the image on the opposite page. You will also need to prepare music or prayers for the opening and closing worship.

Worship

Share together in a time of worship, for example using the 2005 song 'Praise is rising (Hosanna)' by Paul Baloche, or a prayer from the suggested resources on page 18.

Scene from the film

Play the scene introducing Katie, Daisy and Dylan (scenes 3 and 4 on the DVD, from 13:45 minutes to 25:04 minutes).

Discussion

- How did we feel as we were watching the Jobcentre scene that brings Katie and her two children, Daisy and Dylan, into the film's story? Are we reminded by this scene of any occasions when others have helped us?
- Reflect in pairs: How do we feel if we're helped by someone or we see others helping people? Also, how have we befriended or helped others in need, whether in the past or maybe more recently?
- Feed back to the rest of the group.

Key Bible passage: Isaiah 43:1–7

¹ But now thus says the Lord,
 he who created you, O Jacob,
 he who formed you, O Israel:
 "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
 I have called you by name, you are mine.
² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
 and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
 when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
 and the flame shall not consume you.
³ For I am the Lord your God,
 the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.
 I give Egypt as your ransom,
 Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.
⁴ Because you are precious in my sight,
 and honoured, and I love you,
 I give people in return for you,
 nations in exchange for your life.
⁵ Do not fear, for I am with you;
 I will bring your offspring from the east,
 and from the west I will gather you;
⁶ I will say to the north, 'Give them up',
 and to the south, 'Do not withhold';
 bring my sons from far away
 and my daughters from the end of the earth—
⁷ everyone who is called by my name,
 whom I created for my glory,
 whom I formed and made."



Discussion

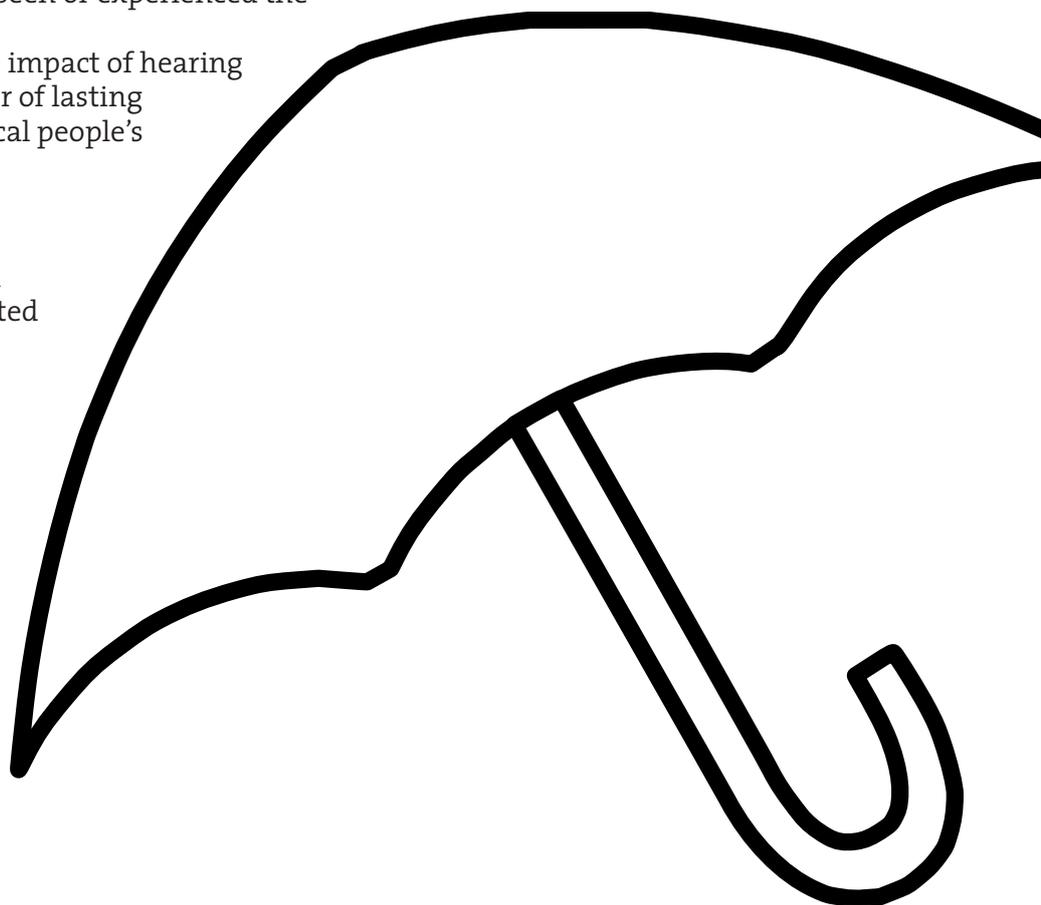
- Can we recognise any links between God's message about not being afraid and God's promise to protect and save God's people in this passage, and what we have just watched?
- In what sense might it feel like being near to 'fire' or in deep 'waters' for those of us who have seen or experienced the effects of poverty?
- What does this make us think the impact of hearing a caring voice or receiving an offer of lasting emotional support could be on local people's lives?

Prayer time

Give out pieces of card or paper with images of umbrellas or shelters printed on them. Ask everyone to write some short prayers about God's care, protection and desire to save, and how we long to be used as God's instruments in these processes.

Background reading

Again, Katie's experience of being humiliated at the Jobcentre is rooted in reality. You can read some of the true stories Church Action on Poverty has gathered about sanctions and Jobcentres at <http://voicesfromthemargins.org.uk/2018/07/02/sanctions>



WEEK 3: HOW HAS POVERTY AFFECTED US?

Preparation

For the closing prayers, you will need to collect a range of pictures from newspapers, magazines, etc, that all either show or symbolise acts of caring for others, and attach a loop of string to each one. You should also set up a small branch or tree, and provide string so people can tie pictures onto it. You will also need to prepare music or prayers for the opening and closing worship.

Opening worship

Share together in a time of worship, for example using the song ‘The basin and the towel’ by Michael Card (from the 1994 album *Poema*) or a prayer from the suggested resources on page 18.

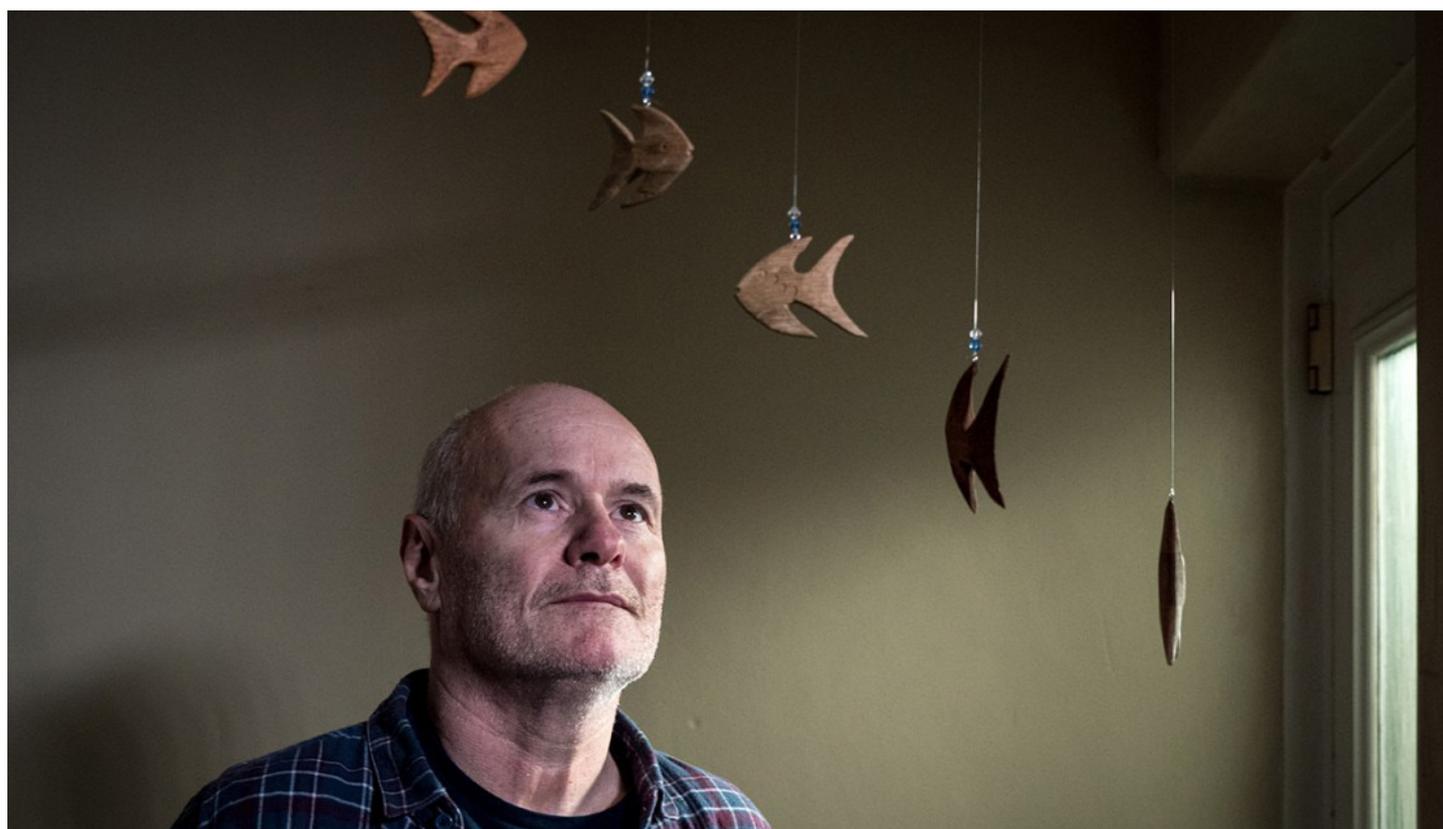
“Was I a soldier?
Oh, more dangerous
than that.
I was a carpenter.”

Scene from the film

Play the scene ‘Computers, wooden fish and broken tiles’ (scenes 6 and 7 on the DVD, from 25:04 minutes to 40:56 minutes).

Discussion

- Many struggles loom large in this part of the film. Which ones resonate with us the most?
- How might we, as a Christian community, respond to some of these struggles? What sorts of support might we be in a position to offer one another – and, in time, to others in our midst?



Key Bible passage: John 15:12–17

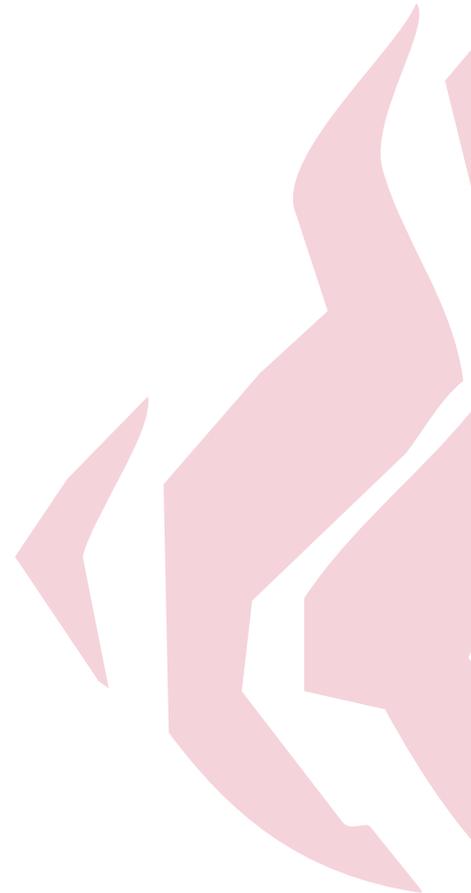
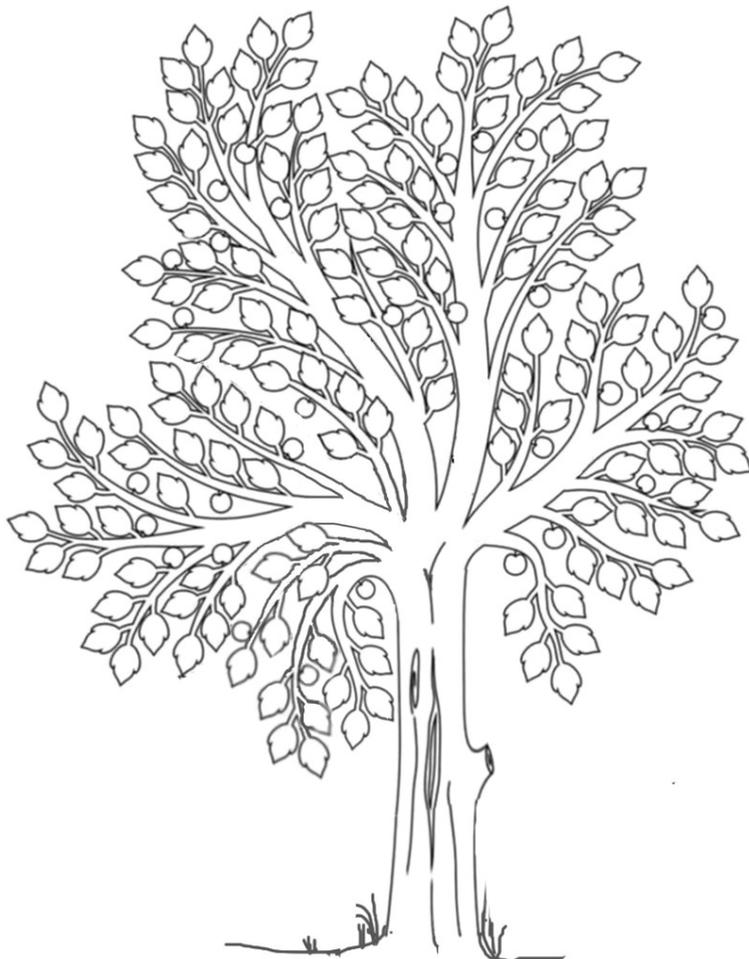
¹² “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶ You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷ I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

Discussion

- In what ways does Dan’s care for Katie, Daisy and Dylan reflect the kind of love that Jesus is talking about in this passage and calling us to increasingly live out?
- How do these connections challenge, inspire or motivate us?
- What might we consider doing for one another and others beyond our current church community, as a result of the practical and emotional needs that are revealed in these scenes?

Prayer time

Ask each person to choose one small picture from the range of pictures you have laid out, and to hang their picture on the tree with the attached string as a sign that they are open to serving others in these ways. Then invite everyone to share together in spontaneous prayer.



WEEK 4: OUR CALLING FOR ONE ANOTHER AND FOR OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Preparation

You will need to provide pens and shapes of people printed on paper for the closing prayer activity – you could copy the image on the opposite page. You will also need to prepare music or prayers for the opening and closing worship.

“I’m just really hungry.”

Opening worship

Share together in a time of worship, for example using the 2008 song ‘God of justice (We must go)’ by Tim Hughes or a prayer from the suggested resources on page 18.

Scene from the film

Play the scenes at the food bank and at the supermarket (scenes 9 and 10 on the DVD, from 40:56 minutes to 59:37 minutes).



Discussion

- What moments of this evening's clip struck you most strongly? Why was that?
- How do the food bank volunteers, Daniel and Katie speak to you about God's call upon us when we encounter those lacking food?
- Have any of us volunteered at a food bank or drop-in centre, etc? How did we find it? Would those of us who haven't be open to going to support the food bank in this way some time? Would some of us like to go together to see what happens and to join in – and/or could we get involved in campaigning for change through End Hunger UK?

Key Bible passage: James 1:27–2:8

²⁷ Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

² My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favouritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? ³ For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, ⁴ and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please", while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there", or, "Sit at my feet", ⁵ have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁶ Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? ⁷ But you have dishonoured the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? ⁸ Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

⁸ You do well if you really fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

Discussion

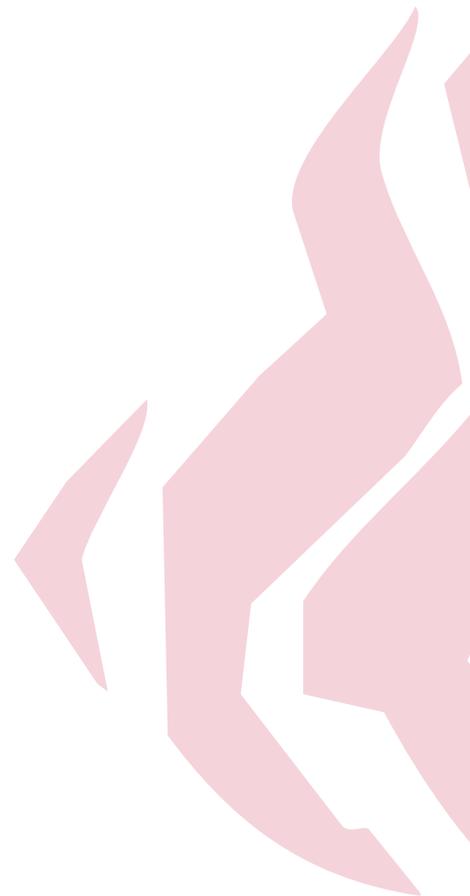
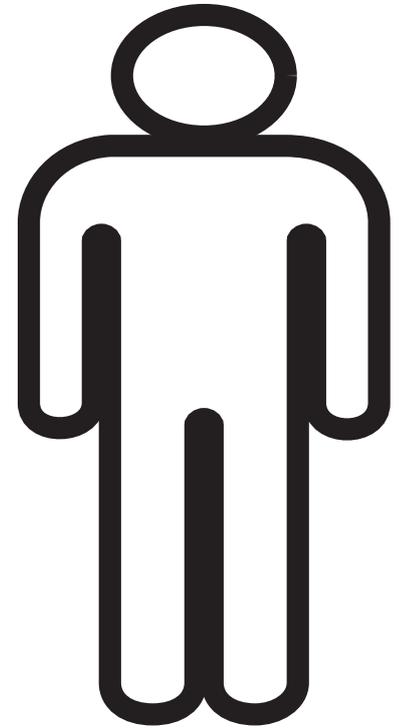
- How might this passage motivate us to act in response to needs among ourselves and others in our local community who God may be calling us to walk with?
- What are our thoughts about how we could challenge the systems that create seemingly impossible circumstances?
- Think and begin praying into the key words or themes that have already been emerging as we've been seeking to better understand how God sees our local area.

Prayer time

Invite everyone to take a paper person template and spend a few minutes writing a prayer to God for themselves, others in the church and those in the local community who have known what it is like to be without food. Take some time to acknowledge all known to the group who are suffering for want of their basic needs being met.

Background reading

To learn more about the reasons why so many people have to turn to food aid to survive, read the Church Action on Poverty reports *Walking the Breadline* and *Below the Breadline* (www.church-poverty.org.uk/breadline). To find out what needs to be done to tackle the root causes of this hunger, read the *Menu to End Hunger in the UK* (www.endhungeruk.org/menu).



WEEK 5: GROWING BEYOND OUR CHURCH'S WALLS AS WE WALK WITH PEOPLE

“All it does is
humiliate me,
grind me down.
Or is that the point,
to get my name off
those computers?
Well, I’m not
doing it any more.
I’ve had enough.”

Preparation

You will need to provide pens and shapes of worn-out boots or shoes printed on paper for the closing prayer activity – you could copy the image on the opposite page. You will also need to prepare music or prayers for the opening and closing worship.

Opening worship

Share together in a time of worship, for example using the 2010 song ‘Beautiful Things (You make beautiful things)’ by Michael and Lisa Gungor, or a prayer from the suggested resources on page 18.

Scene from the film

Play the scene ‘CVs, a bookcase and self-giving’ (scenes 11–13 on the DVD, from 59:37 minutes to 77:46 minutes).

Discussion

- What do we think about Katie and Dan’s responses to their situations?
- How do these scenes speak to us about giving of ourselves for others’ sake?
- Would any of us like to share any time when we have prioritised others’ needs, perhaps those of our children or our parents, above our own?

Key Bible passages: The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:3–12

- ³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- ⁵ “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
- ⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
- ⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
- ⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
- ⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
- ¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ¹¹ “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Luke 6:20–26

- ²⁰ “Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.
- ²¹ “Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.

“Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

²² “Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. ²³ Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

²⁴ “But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.

²⁵ “Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.

“Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.

²⁶ “Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.”

Discussion

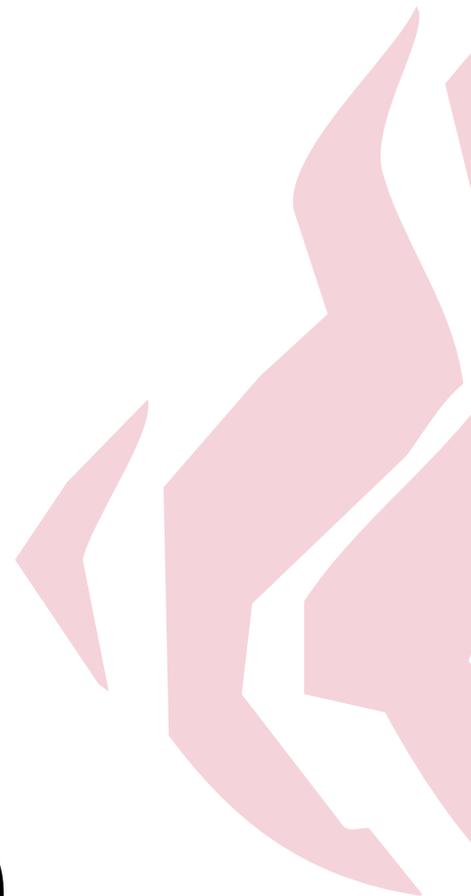
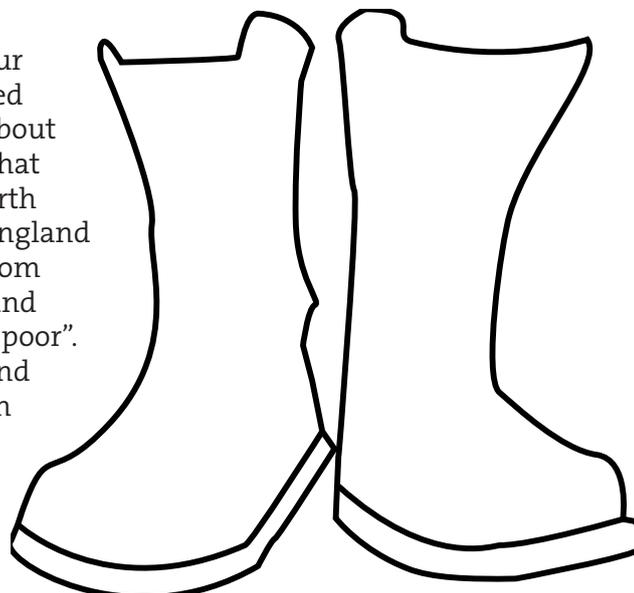
- What does being literally in poverty look like to us? How do we understand it?
- If we as a Christian community were to uphold this teaching from the Gospels, what might it mean for how we view the reality of poverty?
- How does serving local needs beyond our church walls link with our desire to grow deeper in our discipleship as a Christian community?
- God may be calling us to join in what other local churches and groups in our community are already doing... Could we look at working together with them and discover what we could contribute to their efforts?
- We might feel as we work with them, though, that there are other ways that are unique to ourselves in which we are being called to serve. Do we have any initial ideas about what we as a church might want to do or see happen to serve those in need?

Prayer time

Invite everyone to write, draw or stamp print their prayers on a large outline of a pair of worn-out boots or shoes. Ask them to express how they want to walk with people in poverty, among us and beyond us.

Background reading

Genuinely walking alongside people in poverty may require our churches to change in unexpected ways. Pope Francis has spoken about his desire to see “a poor church that is for the poor”. Bishop Philip North has warned that the Church of England is excluding people in poverty from ministry and decision-making, and becoming “deaf to the cry of the poor”. Read more about these ideas – and how we can respond to them – in Church Action on Poverty’s report *Church of the Poor?* (www.church-poverty.org.uk/poorchurch).



WEEK 6: ALWAYS UPHOLDING GOD'S HEART FOR THE POOR

“They call this a ‘pauper’s funeral’ because it’s the cheapest slot, at 9:00. But Dan wasn’t a pauper to us. He gave us things that money can’t buy.”

Preparation

You will need to collect and display images relating to needs in your local area, for use in the closing prayer activity. You will also need to choose a prayer or song to use in the opening worship.

Opening worship

Share together in a time of worship, for example using the 2011 song ‘All the poor and powerless’ by Travis Cotterell, or a prayer from the suggested resources on page 18.

Scene from the film

Play the scene ‘Outside the Jobcentre and at the end’ (scenes 14 and 15 on the DVD, from 77:46 minutes to the end).

Discussion

- What do we think of Dan’s act of defiance in spray-painting the Jobcentre building?
- Although it may seem evident, can we try to articulate our feelings at the end of the film? Why are we so deeply affected by the ending of the story? How might it connect personally to our own stories – or what challenges might the ending pose to us directly and personally?



Key Bible passage: Amos 4:1–5

Hear this word, you cows of Bashan who are on Mount Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to their husbands, “Bring something to drink!”

² The Lord God has sworn by his holiness: The time is surely coming upon you, when they shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fish-hooks.

³ Through breaches in the wall you shall leave, each one straight ahead; and you shall be flung out into Harmon, says the Lord.

⁴ Come to Bethel—and transgress; to Gilgal—and multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days; ⁵ bring a thank-offering of leavened bread, and proclaim freewill-offerings, publish them; for so you love to do, O people of Israel! says the Lord God.

Discussion

- In a society that has become increasingly known for treating people like National Insurance numbers rather than as citizens facing challenging life circumstances, how may this passage encourage or urge us to respond?
- How can we make sure that we, like Dan, are known for giving, and valuing love, care and relationships, which money cannot buy, whilst at the same time working towards seeing positive change in Jesus’ name wherever we encounter social injustice?

Prayer time

Work together to create a psalm of lament in response to what you have learned. (See page 18.) A psalm of lament characteristically:

1. expresses how we feel about our and/or others’ suffering;
2. engages in complaint, describing further what is happening;
3. asks God to act now and to use us;
4. declares our trust in God’s care and power to do something;
5. says how God doing something points to God’s power – for all to see.

In a time of quietness, ask everyone to allow the Holy Spirit to inspire them to pray using the structure of a lament psalm. They can meditate on the images related to local needs that you have laid out on the floor and use pencils and paper to express their prayers if they find writing helpful.

Action

Having asked in your prayer for God to use you and your church to tackle poverty, spend some time talking about what you plan to do – as individuals and as a church. Some possible actions include:

- Sign up to take part in online campaign actions with Church Action on Poverty, engaging with your MP and others to tackle the root causes of poverty and hunger. www.church-poverty.org.uk/act
- Find out how your church can be part of the End Hunger UK campaign. www.endhungeruk.org/churches
- Organise a service and raise funds for Church Action on Poverty on Church Action on Poverty Sunday. www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday

Background reading

Church Action on Poverty’s *Just Church* programme includes additional ideas and activities that could help you assess local need and plan your response. Download the modules from www.justchurch.org.uk

The End Hunger UK campaign has prepared an introduction for churches, outlining the issues and ways for you to get involved. Download it from www.endhungeruk.org/churches

APPENDIX: PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Suggested resources

Church Action on Poverty regularly publishes liturgies and worship materials which are relevant to the themes of *Transforming Poverty*. You are welcome to use any of the prayers and activities from these resources in the opening and closing worship for your sessions.

All Church Action on Poverty worship resources are freely available online at www.church-poverty.org.uk/pray

An example of a psalm of lament

This is an example of how people might pray in the form of a psalm of lament, for the closing prayer in the final session:

1. By the very nature of your trinitarian being, Lord, you have made us to be community, to make real what it is to belong to one another – not just sing songs about this calling.
2. And yet O Lord, how I am grieved to see the destructiveness of oppressive systems, marking lives that you have created for this security of belonging one to another, lives you made to be abundant and to reach their full, not only partial, potential in you.
3. I cry out to you, Lord almighty, to vindicate your word through your people, that our whole lives themselves, as we walk the streets and talk face to face with people, will be our worship.
4. Let us, Lord, see with eyes given by you and show your compassion: not, loving God, just by giving out food and resources, but by walking with people in their pain and struggles to places of joy and freedom.
5. We humbly ask you, servant king, to awaken us by your Spirit, that all people struggling with deprivation will find practical support and deliverance through your wondrous gospel being revealed.
6. Cause these efforts to have such an impact in our society that the truth of your gospel and your heart for community will speak prophetically, and open closed minds to the plight of those who fall through the current systems.
7. Yet, O Lord, before we can see society impacted in this prophetic way, we must cry out for you to bring about this first change: that your people inside church buildings throughout the UK will be moved.
8. Use anything that you wish, Lord, and use me. Empower me to exercise wisdom and together with my brothers and sisters to not fear 'volatile' people or difficult situations.
9. There must be a change in our times, Lord, and let it be through your kingdom touching Earth, as Joel and Acts tell us is to increasingly underline the times we are in. We as Christians can often appear to be much like the world, quite unaware of hidden poverty or else risk-averse.
10. But Lord, we must be present – so please equip us all to stand alongside those unable to support themselves. Help us to arise and not shrink back out of the vain belief that compassion can be comfortable – for there is no such thing.
11. Act, Lord, to demonstrate your heart for the vulnerable in a way that society cannot ignore or belittle. Deliver the oppressed through us. Make us channels of your freedom, as whatever we do, we do it as for serving Christ.

12. I ask that we will live as though we believe that our lives are really found as we lose them, as we die to the narratives of striving for more for ourselves, and instead strive for more for people in poverty.
13. We ask you to bring more – the security of a home with the sense of belonging it brings and the influence that good education brings – to those whom society does not favour. We want more, Lord, for those who are not construed as being from ‘respectable’ backgrounds.
14. I dare to cry out to you that this more would come through your Spirit, who hovered over the waters at creation, and who with you spoke light into being.
15. Because of your ineffable power, I praise your ability to save and say “No! No! No!” to the structures and to the ideologies that would have the ‘more’ reserved only for those born into ‘suitable’ families or localities.
16. Breathe wisdom, humility, grace and boldness into us, your people, releasing us to speak out the message in love that says that we need not fear the effect on the economy if we act with compassion and justice, for you will sustain us. We cannot out-give you.
17. As we partner with other agencies to work for a fairer society, we cannot lose anything. We can only gain a voice for your message of eternal salvation.
18. I pray this kingdom-centred, huge petition before you, Lord, because you are the creator of all and you are friend of the poor.
19. It is through seeing you that we, and all impacted by your love in this process, will come to praise you. All will see your will for humanity entirely to have more.
20. People in poverty will see with us your will for more, just because all people are invited to be raised to the heights of intimacy with you, and to always be open to more that you would do.
21. Then, heavenly servant king, we will forever adore you for the tangible aroma of your faithful presence pervading our streets, our homes, and remaining with us evermore.

Download additional copies from www.church-poverty.org.uk/transform

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