

# UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS - SESSION 6

# SPIRITUALITY

## Short of time?

These are the core activities – topic introduction, Bible basics, real life application, time to reflect – taking action, and the prayer. If you have more time, then pick and mix additional activities from those below to add to these core ones.

## What are we trying to achieve?

By the end of this session, your young people should have an understanding of what spirituality means and how they can stay connected to God.

## Topic introduction

**Note to leaders:** Share this introduction about what spirituality means with your group of young people.

What you'll need: The ability to show either of these YouTube clips - [Queen's 2021 speech](#) – 9 mins 3 secs or [Queen's faith](#) - 1 min.

**Length of activity:** 5-10 minutes.

Explain to your group that the word spirituality on its own can refer to the spiritual side of our lives and isn't specific to the Christian faith. In this case it means caring about things that are unseen and intangible as opposed to physical or ordinary.

However, Christian spirituality basically means how we stay connected to God through Jesus Christ. This includes spiritual practices like prayer, reading the Bible, and spending time with other Christians, but can also refer to our lifestyles and values.

If you believe in God and are a friend of his then you'll want to spend time with him improving your relationship. As we spend more time with God, then we experience growth and transformation as he challenges and shapes us. Jesus, God in human form, taught a way of living that impacts every part of our lives.

There are many spiritual practices we can choose to do and it's ok to experiment and try new ways of connecting with God and living out our faith. Just remember that God loves you as you are, and you don't have to earn his love - there's nothing we can do to make him love us more or less.

The Queen is a great example of someone who has a Christian faith, and this has been evident throughout her life in her words and actions.

She often points to her faith in her Christmas Day speeches. Watch a previous Queen's speech, such as the one from 2021, or the summary video about her faith produced by Premier. Ask your young people to pay particular attention to how she talks about her faith. What stands out to them the most?

## Quirky question

**Length of activity:** 5 minutes.

Ask your young people the following question and have a short discussion using their answers.

If you could ask God one question, what would it be?

## Activity – introducing holy habits

**What you'll need:** Leaders prepared to share their spiritual disciplines.

**Length of activity:** 5-15 minutes.

Talk to your group about some of the various spiritual disciplines they could do, and may already be doing, to get to know God better. There is no set list of spiritual disciplines in the Bible.

Holy habits could include meditation, prayer, fasting, studying, reading the Bible, simplicity, quiet time alone, serving others, worshiping God in song or dance, worshiping God with others at church/youth group/GB/BB etc., being in a prayer/small group, retreats, confession, spiritual direction, noticing signs of God around us, creative expression through writing/music/drawing, acts of kindness, concern for equality and social justice, generous giving of finances/time/gifts, and sharing Jesus' message with others. Some of these disciplines can be done using apps on your phone, such as listening to worship music or podcasts or praying.

It would be great if you, or other leaders, could share what holy habits you try to do each day/week and what this means for your relationship with God.

## Activity – Simon Says

**Length of activity:** 10 minutes.

Play Simon Says to introduce the idea of following instructions, and paying attention.

Make this as fun and active as you like, within your setting. The rules are simple, instructions must be followed if it starts with 'Simon Says' (use your own name if you would rather), and instructions should be ignored if this phrase is missing. If someone moves to follow the instruction without hearing 'Simon Says', they're out.

At the end of the game, talk briefly about how easy or hard it was to listen for the instruction, and how easy the instructions were to complete. Draw a parallel between the game and that if we're a friend of God we can listen carefully to what he tells us. The idea of the spiritual disciplines we've been considering, like prayer and quiet time, is to help us listen to God and focus on him.

## Activity – Sword drill

**What you'll need:** A Bible for each young person

**Length of activity:** 10 minutes.

Explain the Bible consists of 66 different books and letters. It's divided into the Old Testament (the first 39 books) and the New Testament (the last 27 books). This game is a fun way to learn the books of the Bible and where they're located by turning quickly to a specific verse in the Bible. Explain that reading the Bible is one way we learn about God, his character and will, and we can also hear from God, so it's an important spiritual discipline.

1. The leader explains the rules.
2. Everyone should have their Bible closed, holding it in one hand and tucked under the opposite arm.
3. The leader holds up their Bible and says, 'Swords ready'.
4. Everyone lifts their closed Bible with the spine in the palm of their hand, to head level or higher.
5. The leader says the book, chapter and verse (for example Genesis Chapter 6, Verse 8) and everyone repeats the book, chapter and verse.
6. The leader says 'Ready' and then shouts 'Go!'
7. Everyone brings their Bibles down and turns to the verse as quickly as possible.
8. As soon as a person finds the verse they stand up. The leader recognises the first person to stand and that person reads the verse out to the others.
9. The person who finds the most verses first wins the round. Choose 10 verses to find that can be easily read by the young people.

## Bible basics – love the Lord your God

**What you'll need:** A Bible.

**Length of activity:** 5 minutes.

Read Matthew 22:34-40 from an easy-to-understand version of the Bible such as a youth Bible or the New International Reader's Version. You can read to your group or get one of them to read the verses.

Explain that the key part of this passage is verse 37 – Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind.'

Do the young people have any idea what this means? Listen to their answers.

We're told this is the most important commandment from God in the Bible.

## Real life application – Stormzy

**Note to leaders:** More information about Stormzy can be found online.

**What you'll need:** A picture of Stormzy.

**Length of activity:** 5 minutes.

Ask the young people if they know who is pictured. Explain that it's Stormzy. Have they heard of him, and do they know why he's famous?

Stormzy, real name Michael Omari Owuo Jr, is a British rapper who is also a Christian. In his music he has spoken openly about his faith, in tracks like *Blinded By Your Grace* and *Audacity*.

In 2019, Stormzy read a Bible passage from the book of Luke as part of BBC One's Christmas Day coverage. He attends a church in south London, and he used to be a member of Boys' Brigade.

What holy habits do the young people think Stormzy demonstrates? We know he reads the Bible and attends church for starters!

As an alternative, you could consider singer Justin Bieber and his faith. He talks about it more [in this video](#).

## Time to reflect – thinking it through

**Note to leaders:** Read the information below to help your young people think through why it's important to have spiritual disciplines in their life.

**Length of activity:** 5 minutes.

As we saw in the Bible passage from Matthew, Christians are told to love God and put him first in their lives.

Humans tend to be creatures of habit and many of us follow certain routines throughout the day from getting up at the same time, to the way we drink our tea and do certain activities on certain days.

These habits we follow make us into the people we are. Spiritual habits do the same – the routines we follow shape our lives as followers of Christ. The Bible verse we shared is the most important command from God and therefore should be what we aspire to do every day.

If we love God, then we should want to draw closer to him and spiritual disciplines help us do that as they grow our faith.

The second commandment is to 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' This means that although we have to think about our relationship with God, we also have to think about how we relate to everyone else too! This could be serving others through what we do.

## Time to reflect – taking action

**Note to leaders:** Pose these questions to your group and then listen to their answers.

**Length of activity:** 5-10 minutes.

Like Stormzy and the Queen, we can develop spiritual disciplines too. Encourage your group to try one of those talked about in Activity – introducing holy habits in the week ahead.

Recap on the list of holy habits with the group. Then reflect on these questions with your group of young people to prepare them for the challenge:

- 👑 Do any of them already have any holy habits/spiritual disciplines? Hopefully they'll say attending your group for starters!
- 👑 What new holy habits/spiritual disciplines do they think they could try?
- 👑 What do they need to do, or stop, to make this happen?
- 👑 What are they looking forward to about trying it?
- 👑 What are they nervous about?
- 👑 How can they be supported by their leaders/your group?

Arrange a time at your next session for them to report back and share with each other about how trying a new holy habit/spiritual discipline went.

## Challenge – space to reflect

**Note to leaders:** This activity is more in-depth and will have to be planned over several weeks.

**What you'll need:** Equipment and instructions for your chosen activities.

Help your group to encourage others to develop spiritual disciplines too by hosting an art installation/ reflection space.

This could take the form of art the young people create themselves around a biblical theme or could be a series of prayer stations.

Ensure your young people are involved in the decision making, planning and carrying out of your event. This could be a good opportunity to work with your church and to invite in people who wouldn't normally engage with your church's activities.

## Let us pray – starting new habits

**Note to leaders:** Share this prayer with your group.

**Length of activity:** 1 minute.

Dear Lord,

Thank you that you help us grow and get closer to you. Help us Lord to develop holy habits that will draw us nearer to you. Thank you that there isn't just one way of doing this and that we can discover what works best for us. We pray that we'll be determined to make time for our new habits and that we will be persistent in our efforts to know you better, not just finding out facts about you but discovering your character and will. Help us also to love our neighbours as ourselves.

Amen

## 70 Acts of Service

The Queen has served the UK and the Commonwealth for 70 years. To honour her, let's join together in [70 Acts of Service](#) during 2022.