

Introduction

These reflections are designed to help children understand what the *livesimply* project is about, how it relates to their faith and how they can contribute. Please feel free to adapt and to use each section as a separate session.

Key message for children

God calls us to work together to look after our world, and share what we have so that everyone has what they need. Building a better world is not just about having more money; it is about respecting yourself and others, and becoming the best person you can be.

Working together

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14, 20-21, 25-27.
We are members of one body.

Explore this passage to show how everyone has a role to play when working together. No one is excluded. Everyone is our neighbour and we all need each other like members of a team.

To explore further the concept of working with our neighbour, read or act out the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:29-37 and discuss:

- Who was neighbour to the man who was robbed?
- Why was he the most unlikely person to help?
- Who is our neighbour?
- How can we work together?

Sharing what we have

Read John 6: 8-11: *The feeding of the 5,000*

Help the children look at this familiar story with fresh eyes so that the miracle is in the sharing, not the numbers. Start with the small boy whose generosity was the catalyst for the miracle. Jesus showed that what we offer, however small, can be transformed for the good of all.

Building a better world

“It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for someone rich to enter the kingdom of God.” Mark 10:25

Discuss:

- What this means
- Why wealth could be a barrier to our relationship with God

Read the story of the Rich Young Man in Mark 10:17-22 and discuss how holding on to wealth can prevent us from building a better world. Even the Rich Young Man, who otherwise led a good life, was so wedded to his possessions that he couldn't sell them to help the poor. His wealth had possessed him and he went away sad.

Make a list of the kind of things that make people happy, for example, love, friendship and good health. Encourage the children to make a banner or a poster illustrating their vision of a better world.

Looking after our earth

*Only when the last tree has died
and the last river has been poisoned
and the last fish has been caught
will we realise that we cannot eat money.*

19th century Cree Indian

How can one sell the air?

Chief Seattle was asked to sell the indigenous peoples' land to the white settlers. What does his speech tell us about looking after our earth and sharing our resources?

*How can one sell the air
or buy the warmth of the earth?
It is difficult for us to imagine.
If we don't own the sweet air
or the bubbling water,
how can you buy it from us?
Each hillside of pines shining in the sun,
each sandy beach and rocky river bank,
every steep valley with bees humming
or mists hanging in dark woods,
has been made sacred by some event
in the memory of our people.*

Chief Seattle

Respecting yourself and others

Read Mark 10:41-45. Explain how James and John annoyed the other disciples by asking Jesus to give them special seats at his table. Explain Jesus' response: that no one who followed him could expect preferential treatment because everyone was important. To be his friends, they must love and care for each other.

Look at some more stories that show how Jesus respected people who others considered of little value:

- Blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52)
- The woman with a haemorrhage (Luke 8:43-38)
- The welcoming of children (Luke 9:46-48)
- The widow's mite (Luke 21:1-4)
- Eating with sinners (Matthew 2: 15-17)

Being the best person you can be

We can help each other to be the best person we can be by sharing our gifts. Sometimes we won't get things right, but God's forgiveness means that we can always start again.

Explore the examples of Peter and Paul:

- Peter denied Jesus three times yet went on to become the leader of the Church
- Paul, once a persecutor of Christians, travelled far and wide to spread the Gospel to the Gentiles.



The prayer of St Teresa of Avila

Christ has no body on earth but yours,
no hands but yours, no feet but yours;
Yours are the eyes
through which to look with Christ's
compassion to the world,
yours are the feet
with which he is to go about doing good,
and yours are his hands
with which to bless us now. Amen.

Suggested song: *The Servant Song*
(Brother, sister, let me serve you)