



# CALLED

RESOURCE FOR YOUTH GROUPS

## Called Resource Content

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### Page

- 3 Introduction and sample outlines
- 5 Section 1: Hearing God's voice
- 9 Section 2: Bearing God's name
- 13 Appendix: additional resources



# INTRODUCTION SHEET

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Do you ever think about what it feels like to hear someone call out your name? Your parent, child, or spouse when you have just returned home from a trip away. As a player on a sports field hearing your name chanted. Hearing the words “And the winner is....” How much more special it is when our name is called by the King of kings, our creator and our Lord. To hear him say “follow me”. To understand what he wants us to do and how special that is to him. To appreciate what it means to bear his name – Christian: “Christ’s one”. This resource has the potential to be a powerful tool in your hands, the leader who knows your young people so well. Through the work of God’s Spirit, may it help them listen out for God’s voice, as he calls their name, so they learn to follow what He calls them to do with their lives.

## Theme

This resource is based on the theme of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland’s Youth Night and is the first of a series of three to be developed from the events between 2019 and 2021:

- o CALLED: Hearing God’s voice. Bearing God’s name.
- o EQUIPPED: Understanding gifts. Identifying opportunities.
- o SENT: Living as everyday disciples.

This first part of the trilogy is split into two sections which explore the theme Called, aimed at helping young people in all our congregations to begin to grasp what it means to be called.

- Section 1: Hearing God’s call - discovering our primary calling is not about what we do, but who we are. We are not primarily called to something but to someone: Jesus.
- Section 2: Bearing God’s name - exploring what we are called to be: bearers of God’s name. It is all aimed at teaching truth well, and helping young people to work out how to live it out.

## A flexible menu

This resource is created to be very flexible to allow you to decide how many sessions you need, how long each session is, and to adapt the material to suit your unique context and young people. Both sections work like menus, offering a range of different ways to teach each element, according to your own particular needs. There are a selection of openers, story options, discussion questions and response options. There is guidance on using the Youth Night talks (on video), outlines of an alternative talk, and three character studies so each section can be used over one session or up to five. You know best what is appropriate for the time you have and the needs of your young people. So make up your own rules and use this resource as it works for you.

## Downloads

Additional material can be downloaded at [www.presbyterianireland.org/called](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/called) :

- PDF files of Section 1 and Section 2
- An appendix of additional material
- Videos of Youth Night talks, stories and other material.

## SAMPLE OUTLINES

If the range of options bamboozles you, here are a few examples of how you could plan a series and a session within those.

### Option 1: 2 Sessions

Two sessions built around each part of the Youth Night talks on Video

OR

Two sessions built around your own talks

### Option 2: 4 Sessions

Two sessions built around each part of the Youth Night talks on Video

AND

After each of these, two sessions built around your own talks

### Option 3: 6 Sessions

Use the three character studies from each of the two sections to create a series of six short sessions, each looking at call through the eyes of a biblical character

### Option 4: 10 Sessions

Use all of the talk outlines in each section:

- Youth Night Video talk (x2)
- Alternative talk (x2)
- Set of three character studies (x2)

Of course, you can work out your own way of doing things, these are just suggestions. When it comes to planning each session, you also have options depending on time, context etc. Here are some sample outlines which demonstrate the flexibility of the material: Of course, you can work out your own way of doing things, these are just suggestions. When it comes to planning each session, you also have options depending on time, context etc. Here are some sample outlines which demonstrate the flexibility of the material:

#### Youth night video talk 1 (75 minutes)

- Opening: intro / *Guess Who game* (10)
- Story: show video of Rebecca's story (5)
- Discussion: reflect on the story either in small groups or as one group (10)
- Activity (5)
- Video: Phil Houston - *Hearing God's voice* (15)
- Discussion groups (15)
- Worship: three songs (10)
- Response: *Prayer challenge* (5)

#### Character study (30 minutes)

- Opening: *Alphabetical game* (5)
- Discussion: reflect as a way into topic (5)
- Talk: *Abraham* (10)
- Discussion groups (10)

#### Leader talk from part 1 (50 minutes)

- Opening: *Called by name game* (5)
- Story: elder shares story of call -opportunity to ask questions after (10)
- Activity: *Whisper challenge* (5)
- Talk: *Called to God* (15)
- Discussion groups (15)

# SECTION 1: HEARING GOD'S VOICE

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## Introduction

Whether using this material in one session or a number of different sessions, you need to have a clear plan for your programme, (there are some suggested outlines in the introduction sheet). Write down a plan for the session and share it with everyone who is taking part. Make sure there is a clear learning goal for the session and be clear what is most important in what you are teaching.

## Openers, games and activities

Each group is different in terms of how they engage in games and activities and you may well prefer to use your own ideas. These are a few suggested games and activities which can be used as icebreakers or as a way to engage and explore as part of the programme. The details of how to operate these are in the appendix of additional resources.

- *Game: Called by Name*
- *Game: Blanket Name Game*
- *Game: Empires*
- *Game: The Sofa Game*
- *Game: Guess Who?*
- *Game: Alphabetical*
- *Activity: Blindfolded obstacle course*
- *Activity: The Whisper Challenge*

## Story

It is hard to measure the power of story. When we want to teach the truth contained in Scripture, it is no better taught than through the life of Christ. As the church, we live out truth in a flawed way, learning to follow Christ together. Young people need to see the reality of faith and hear the stories of others who follow Jesus, so that they can learn to do the same.

Rebecca's story (video 3 mins)

Rebecca is 18 and shares how she grew up in the church, but it took her some time to understand what the gospel really means and how God's call on her life pushed her from a comfortable place to one of serving Christ and his church.

Rebecca's story was shared at Youth Night 2019 and it can be downloaded from [www.presbyterianireland.org/called](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/called).

## Local story

Perhaps you would like to share a story from your own context as this may impact your young people even more. It does not need to be dramatic or produced in a fancy way, but sometimes hearing the story of how God has worked in the life of someone they know well can have the biggest impact on young people's lives. Perhaps one of your leadership team, one of the elders, parents or any member of your church has a story which illustrates what it means to hear God's call on their life. It may be something unexpected and requiring life change, such as a call overseas, but it is more likely to be a story of everyday obedience and service. When you invite someone to share their story, assure them that you will help them to prepare, but that they need only to share their heart and what God has done, without any need to be polished and eloquent. A life that speaks of the call of God has a powerful impact.

## SECTION 1: HEARING GOD'S VOICE

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### Teaching

There are three options how to teach this subject, using between one and five separate sessions.

### Youth Night talk

Phil Houston was the speaker at Youth Night 2019 and his talk has been recorded in two parts so you can show it in your church, whether or not your group was at the event. The first part *Hearing God's voice* can be downloaded from: [www.presbyterianireland.org/called](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/called) and shown as part of your programme. Watching video together can be more challenging than listening to a live speaker so it may be helpful to set up the talk and even encourage your young people to take notes to help them engage.

### Talk outline: *Called to God*

The appendix includes a talk outline with three parts, exploring how our calling is not about what we do but who we are.

The points are: Called by name / Called from darkness to light / Called to follow.

### Character studies

Depending on your context, you may want to either emphasis the teaching of previous sessions, go into more detail, or teach it in shorter bite-sized mouthfuls. The appendix contains outlines of three biblical characters: Abraham, Paul and Peter. Each has a short bio, identifies key passages and includes some questions you can explore together. These may work especially well with a small group and an interactive teaching style.

## SECTION 1: HEARING GOD'S VOICE

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### Discussion questions

Even if your time is short, it is very important to allow space in your programme to discuss and reflect on the teaching, to see how much it has engaged them and allow them to ask their own questions. How you do this depends very much on how you have decided to approach the session, but the more discussion, the more chance to help the young people engage with the material and apply it to their lives. Often the best questions are unplanned, but it is good to have some prepared questions and these may be useful to you. As with all this material, adapt to suit your context.

- Think about reasons people would call you?  
*(e.g. to tell you news, to ask if you've recently been in an accident, because they need you).*
- What is one of the best phone calls you have ever received?  
*(No phone call can match how amazing it is when God calls us into relationship with him).*
- Who were the most followed people online in 2019? (Alter to year you are in!)
- What does Psalm 139 tell us about God and us?  
*(It tells us of a God who knows every detail of our lives – He is the God who calls us by name).*
- Do you think you are too young to be called by God? Can you think of anyone in the Bible who would suggest an answer to this?
- Look at 1 Peter 2:9. What does it tell us about God? What does it say about us?  
What does it tell us about being called?

### Questions for *Hearing God's voice* talk

- What do you think it means to hear God's call?
- What is the difference between being called to be something and being called to God?
- What most challenged you from Phil's talk?
- Have you heard the call to follow Jesus? Have you responded?

### Questions for *Called by God* talk

- When do you like / not like someone calling your name? What makes the difference?  
How can God "call our name"?
- Are you scared of the dark?  
Do you think many of your friends feel like they are "in darkness"?  
Why or why not? How does God call us from darkness to light?
- Who do you like to follow?  
What does it mean to really follow Jesus?  
Is anything stopping you from doing that?  
How can we help each other to follow Jesus?

## SECTION 1: HEARING GOD'S VOICE

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### Worship

Not every group has musicians, or the time and opportunity to sing praise together. However, even if your group is small and self-conscious, perhaps you can experiment by watching a video of a worship song and playing it loud enough that they can sing along quietly. The key is creating a response in genuine worship to what they have been learning. Here are some songs you might consider using, including those which were sung at Youth Night:

- *God of angel armies* (Chris Tomlin)
- *Rising sun* (All Sons & Daughters)
- *His mercy is more* (Matt Boswell)
- *Forever reign* (Hillsong)
- *God is so good* (Pat Barrett)
- *O come to the altar* (Elevation Worship)
- *Living hope* (Phil Wickham)

### Response

If you have time, it can be very helpful to create an opportunity for young people to respond tangibly to what has been taught and discussed. These are a few suggestions of what you could try, but you may well be able to think of better ones for your context.

- **Prayer challenge:** hand out paper and ask people to create a prayer list, naming friends and family that have not heard God's call to trust in Him.
- **Alarm prayer challenge:** Set an alarm on your phone for each day this week. Have 7 people in mind who you can pray for and pray for them when the alarm goes off. Maybe they are far from God when once they were close and they need to remember they have been called by Him or maybe they've never listened to His calling?
- **My identity:** give out paper or pre-printed sheets with a shape of a person on it; ask the young people to label the person as themselves, with their various things that identify them (descriptions, roles, talents etc.) Ask them to put the most important labels as bigger and closer to the top. Then explore where their relationship with Jesus comes.
- **Loving others:** Who might benefit from 'a call' from you today? Is there someone who is going through a hard time or that you haven't seen in a while that you could get in touch with to encourage?

### Additional resources

In the appendix you will find additional resource ideas, including a video of a spoken word piece used at Youth Night.

## SECTION 2: BEARING GOD'S NAME

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### Introduction

As in section 1, make sure you have a clear plan for the programme in each session, regardless of how you split up this material. Write down a schedule for the session for everyone who is taking part, ensuring there is a clear learning goal for the session and be clear what is most important in what you are teaching.

### Openers, games and activities

Each group is different in terms of how they engage in games and activities and you may well prefer to use your own ideas. Here are a few suggested games and activities which can be used as icebreakers or as a way to engage and explore as part of the programme. The details of how to operate these are in the appendix of additional resources.

- GAME: My Chair
- ACTIVITY: What's your response?
- DEBATE: "This house believes it is harmless to follow the patterns and culture of this world"
- GAME: Empires
- GAME: The Sofa Game

### Story

Real life stories can teach the truth as they tell of how God has changed lives. Young people need to see the reality of faith and hear the stories of others who follow Jesus, so that they can learn to do the same.

### Mark's story

Mark shares on video of how God called him in an unexpected way and at Youth Night he was interviewed on stage about what he learned through the experience.

You can download the video of Mark's story and a separate video of the Youth Night interview from: [www.presbyterianireland.org/called](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/called).

### Local story

As in section 1, it can be really powerful to share a story from your own congregation or community. It does not need to be dramatic or produced in a fancy way, but sometimes hearing the story of how God has worked in the life of someone they know well can have the biggest impact on young people's lives. One option is to interview someone familiar to young people in their congregation. What does it look like to be called to God and find your identity in him every day? Is there someone in your church who plays sport and so 'represents' a team or a place as they compete? Or maybe it could be a local politician who 'represents' the people in their area? (This could lead into a discussion about 'representing Christ' in our everyday life and what that might look like).

## SECTION 2: BEARING GOD'S NAME

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### Teaching

Again, there are three options for how to teach this subject, in between one and five separate sessions – or more if you want to divide it further.

### Youth Night talk

Youth Night 2019 speaker Phil Houston shared about what it means to be the bride of Christ, and sons of God. The second part of his talk - Bearing God's Name - can be downloaded from [www.presbyterianireland.org/called](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/called) and shown to your group, whether or not they heard it on the night. As before, think about how to help them watch a video talk which is not very interactive, by talking notes or giving them an outline of what to expect.

### Talk outline: *Called to be*

The appendix includes a talk outline with three parts, exploring how our calling is not about what we do but who we are. The points are: Called to represent / Called to a purpose / Called to serve.

### Character studies

Depending on your context, you may want to either emphasis the teaching of previous sessions, go into more detail, or teach it in shorter bite-sized mouthfuls. The appendix contains outlines of three biblical characters: Moses, Noah and Jesus. Each has a short bio, identifies key passages and includes some questions you can explore together. These may work especially well with a small group and an interactive teaching style.

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## SECTION 2: BEARING GOD'S NAME

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### Discussion questions

Even if your time is short, it is very important to allow space in your programme to discuss and reflect on the teaching, to see how much it has engaged them and allow them to ask their own questions. How you do this depends very much on how you have decided to approach the session, but the more discussion, the more chance to help the young people engage with the material and apply it to their lives. Often the best questions are unplanned, but it is good to have some prepared questions and these may be useful to you. As with all this material, adapt to suit your context.

### Romans 12 Discussion:

- What kind of stuff do people look to base their identity and worth on?
- What would you say are 'the patterns of the world'?
- How can we 'renew our minds' and learn how to live as Christ's ambassadors?
- How can you serve your: Family / Friends / Church / Neighbours / Community?
- Identity in Christ discussion (Visual Theology)

### Questions for *Bearing God's name* talk

- How does the picture of being a bride to Jesus the Bridegroom help us understand what it means to bear God's name?
- How about the idea of being Sons of God – how does this help us understand the idea of representing God and bearing his name?
- Where are you called to represent God? (*Think of actual situations*) Is anything coming in the way of you doing this effectively? Do you need to do something about it?
- What is God calling you to be?

### Questions for *Called to be* talk

- How have you represented others? (*Teams, school, church?*)
- How is it different to represent Christ?  
How can you be like an ambassador for him?
- Has God given you gifts and abilities?  
Do you know what they are?  
Are you using them?  
How does this parable challenge you?
- Where are your opportunities to serve God every day?

## SECTION 2: BEARING GOD'S NAME

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### Worship

Not every group has musicians, or the time and opportunity to sing praise together. However, even if your group is small and self-conscious, perhaps you can experiment by watching a video of a worship song and playing it loud enough that they can sing along quietly. The key is creating a response in genuine worship to what they have been learning. Here are some songs you might consider using, including those which were sung at Youth Night:

- *Here I am Lord* (I the Lord of sea and sky - Dan Schutte)
- *The Servant King* (Graham Kendrick)
- *Yet not I but through Christ in me* (CityAlight)
- *Build my life* (Housefire)
- *We must go* (Tim Hughes)
- *Who you say I am* (Hillsong)

### Response

If you have time, it can be very helpful to create an opportunity for young people to respond tangibly to what has been taught and discussed. These are a few suggestions of what you could try, but you may well be able to think of better ones for your context.

- Cardboard testimonies: How has being called to God made a difference to your identity/life. e.g. Lost/Found Darkness/Light, No God/Know God, Sad/Happy. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOh8P1eGD3A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOh8P1eGD3A) - cardboard testimonies
- Take home: bible character reflection
- Romans / Corinthians reflection
- Prayer: Give everyone the cut out of a foot and ask them to write down some ways they could serve others in the week ahead. (This is linked to the story of how Jesus, the one who came to serve and not be served, washed his disciples feet)

### Additional resources

In the appendix you will find additional resource ideas.

# APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## INTRODUCTION

This appendix includes all the detail of the various elements described in the 2 main sections – they are kept here to stop it all getting cluttered! This includes:

- Descriptions of how to run the various games and activities
- Talk outlines
- Additional resources

## GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

### • **Game: Called by Name**

In a circle one person in the middle who is trying to get someone out in order to get a seat. Those in the circle pass who the person is trying to “get out” by using their name and the other person’s name 3 times e.g. Graeme is in the middle trying to get a seat. Steph is trying to pass to Lorna so that Graeme can’t take her seat so Steph says “Steph, Steph, Steph- Lorna, Lorna, Lorna”. Graeme tries to run to take Lorna’s seat but she passes to Steve “Lorna, Lorna, Lorna- Steve, Steve, Steve”.

### • **Game: Blanket Name Game**

Two teams separated by a blanket held up between them so neither side can see each other. One person from each team comes forward toward the blanket. When each is there those holding the blanket count down from 3 and drop the blanket. Whoever calls out the name of the person on the other side of the blanket first gets a point for their team. (Search for Blanket Name Game by Youth Ministry Great Games on YouTube for how to do this).

### • **Activity: The Whisper Challenge**

Ask for a volunteer to sit on a chair and listen to music through a good set of headphones so that they can’t hear anyone speaking. A second volunteer then sits in front of them with some cards. On the cards are different phrases that they have to say and the person who can’t hear has to try and work out what they are saying by reading their lips.

### • **Game: Empires**

First of all select an adjudicator. Everyone in the room writes down the name of a famous person on a piece of paper and the adjudicator collects them all in. The adjudicator then randomly reads out all the names ONCE. Everyone has to try and memorize them. Starting with any player they pick someone and guess the name they have written down. If they are wrong the person just says no, but if they are right they say so and then move next to the person who got it right. They now are the King of an Empire. This same process goes around and around the circle gradually building up more empires. If your name has been guessed and you are in an Empire you cannot guess any more people but you can however help your King to decide who others players are.

If you are the King of an Empire and your name is guessed, you AND your ENTIRE empire has to get up and move to that person’s empire. The winner is the King whose Empire has everybody playing in it. (NOTE: The adjudicator must never read out the list of things again during the game)

### • **The Sofa Game**

The aim of the game is to get a sofa filled with either 4 guys or 4 girls. You start by getting everyone to write down their name on a piece of paper. You then collect all the names in a hat and then go back around so that everyone picks a name back out. Start with 2 guys and 2 girls on the sofa and an empty chair in the circle. The person with the empty seat to their right starts by calling out a name. Whoever has that name moves to the seat and swaps their name with the person who called them. Keep going until you fill the sofa with guys or girls.

### • **Game: Guess Who?**

The person to your right puts a sticky note on your forehead with a celebrity name on it. You have to try and work out who it is by asking questions that can be answered with a yes or no

### • **Alphabetical**

Have a look at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mihj1DcFi2s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mihj1DcFi2s) Maybe you could act out a phone call with one of your young people and see how well they can do.

## APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

#### • **Activity: Blindfolded Obstacle Course**

Make an obstacle course in the space you have. For example chairs to manoeuvre round, things to step over, and tables to crawl under. The person who is doing the obstacle course is to be blindfolded so they cannot see where they are going. They have to rely on another person shouting them the way to go. You could start by having a group of people shouting instructions at the same time making it hard for the person to know where they are going. You could then try again with one person calling out the way to go making it easier.

Link the game to the idea that there are many different voices calling to us today telling us where to go and it can be difficult for us to navigate our way. But if we chose to focus on God and listen to His voice alone it is easier for us to find our way. It may still be difficult because we can't see the path but God guides us along the way and his calling makes it easier for us to find our way.

#### • **Game: My Chair**

Make a circle of chairs with enough chairs for every player. Everyone gets a chair and sits in a circle except for one person who stands in the middle of the circle. The aim for the person in the middle is to find a seat to sit down. When there is a spare chair, the person with the empty chair on their right has to, touch the chair & say 'My Chair!' as they move and sit on the chair. This becomes 'their' chair and stops the person in the middle sitting down. The second person does the same, touching the chair and saying 'My Chair!' However when it gets to the third person's turn in a row, they have to touch the chair and name someone else in the group eg, 'Christina's Chair!' This becomes Christina's chair, so the person in the middle cannot sit in it once this has been shouted, but Christina must move to sit in the chair. It means Christina's previous chair is free and the process of three must start again. If anyone sitting makes a mistake, then they move into the middle.

Players make a mistake if they:

- Can't think of a name before the person in the middle takes a seat
- Saying 'My Chair' when they should say someone's chair
- Having an empty chair on their right and not realizing to start again before the middle person sits down
- Saying their own name when they are the third person
- Saying the name of the person in the middle when they are the third person

#### • **Activity: What's your response?**

Have five envelopes with a scenario in each one. Ask someone to come up and pick a number. When they have picked one, open the envelope and read out the scenario – they then have to act out their response to that scenario. Repeat it for the other envelopes. Suggested scenarios might be:

- *You've just got to the end of the saddest movie you have ever seen and need your friend to pass you a tissue. Your friend turns to get you one but there's none left.*
- *You order a Big Mac meal and specifically ask for no gherkins or sauce on it. When you get home and open it up, you realise they've forgotten and it has both.*
- *While on a trip to London, you walk into a shop and realise that your favourite actor (that you're totally in love with) is standing near you.*
- *Your friends very gently and quietly inform you that there is a spider crawling on top of your head.*
- *A family member is taking forever in the shower and meanwhile you're outside in desperation because you really need to pee.*

- Debate: "This house believes it is harmless to follow the patterns and culture of this world"

Other games ideas are available in the other PCI resources available at [www.presbyterianireland.org](http://www.presbyterianireland.org) including *40 years from now* and *Unfaithful*.

# APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## TALK OUTLINES

### Called to God

Our calling is not about what we do, but who we are – it addresses the fundamental task of adolescence, discovering identity. When we know who we are called by, we understand who we truly are. We are not primarily called to something but to someone.

### Called by name

I wonder how you remember people's names. Is it by someone's appearance? Is it by thinking of something else that starts with that letter? Do you remember them by the place where you meet them? Or the people they were with or by the person who introduced you? Names are really important, calling someone by their name shows that you care enough to go to the bother of remembering them.

In Genesis 1, we see God making mankind and he makes them in his very image (V27). This shows us how very important we are to God and that we are the greatest of all of his creation and have been made uniquely in his likeness. We are to be ambassadors of God and living out this calling as people made in the image of God. We are really precious to God (Isaiah 43:1) because he has made us, and he has called us by name.

Later in Genesis, in chapter 12, we read of God calling Abram by name and makes great promises to use him to form a people for himself, his descendants are to be as numerous as the stars (22:17). Even today as Christians we are called to be part of God's people, his church (1 Peter 2:9) who are to be set apart from the world as his people but also in the world as his image bearers to reach out. God doesn't just call us as a collective, but also individually to be one of his followers and to give our lives over to following him.

### Called from darkness to light

Have you ever found yourself locked out or got lost late at night in a forest or outside? Have the lights ever gone out in a room that you are in? Darkness can be really scary for people, so what if we thought about the fact that people who live their life without following Jesus are living in darkness? So many of our friends, classmates, teammates and family members are lost in their sin and need to hear the good news that Jesus has died for them so that they can be set free from the darkness of their sin.

Jesus told a parable once, which we read of in Luke 15:3-7, where a Shepherd lost one of his sheep and then he left the 99 other sheep that he had to search for the one lost one. Jesus acts as our great shepherd and helps us onto the right path as we, the sheep, lose our way. Jesus goes out and seeks the lost sheep like you and me and brings us back into the flock, Jesus forgives us, so we can be part of God's people again. Without Jesus, we are like a sheep without a shepherd (Mark 6:34).

Jesus calls us to leave the darkness and move into the light, he takes us from the shadow of death and darkness and gives us eternal life when we trust in him. We are called to be people who live in light and let our light shine to those around us, so that they can see there is something different about us and want to know Jesus for themselves (Matthew 5:14-16) and glorify God by trusting in him.

### Called to follow

In primary school, did you ever play follow the leader? That game that you had to repeat the actions of the one at the front, if he moved right you moved right, if he jumped you jumped and if he ran you ran. In life so many things are trying to take our action, we get suggestions all the time about cool stuff to follow on Social Media, there is always a new trend whether in fashion or in sport to get behind and do, there are always people who try to lead and direct our lives and tell what way we should be living, either at school or home or with our friends. All these things sadly however never really seem to work out, something new always has to come along to take over.

But Jesus is different, when he calls you to follow him, you don't need anything else. You don't need to add anything, to upgrade something every year, to renew your membership. No, when you follow Jesus, you just have to trust in him. In the bible, we read of the disciples when they are called to follow Jesus (Matthew 4:19) and they immediately leave everything and follow this man which we don't know how much they knew about him. But they knew he was different, he wasn't like everyone else.

The call to follow Jesus is a hard one, Jesus doesn't say life is going to be easy, instead he says the complete opposite. He tells us to expect suffering, to expect people to disagree with us and think we're mad. We are called at a cost, Jesus says that if we are to follow him, we should take up our cross and follow him (Matthew 16:24). To follow Jesus is so much more than hitting follow on Twitter or Instagram, it means to give your life to him, it comes with great cost. You are going to have to give up things you love, you will face persecution for it, it means saying that God has control over every part of your life. We are called to follow God, not a bunch of made up ideas or to obey a whole pile of rules but instead we are to follow our Saviour, Jesus.

# APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## TALK OUTLINES

### Called to God

Only when we discover who we are called by and who we are in Christ, can we then fully understand our secondary calling, which is what we are called to be and to do in him.

### Called to represent

Have you ever been in a situation where you stand out? Even gone to a party not knowing that it was fancy dress? Ever accidentally booked tickets for the wrong area of the football ground and found yourself with the opposition fans? Ever found yourself standing in a city centre on holiday holding a map outstretched because you don't know where you are going? I am sure everyone can think of a time when they stood out. A time when it was obvious that there was something different about you. Did you know that as Christians, we are actually called to stand out to those around us? We are called to be different and to shine for Christ in a dark world.

2 Corinthians 5:20-21 tells us that we are called to be ambassadors for Christ – but that does that mean? An ambassador is an official representative of his own government to a foreign country. While the ambassador has citizenship in his or her own country, they spend much of their time away from home, speaking for their leaders and representing the interests of their country. Philippians 3:20 says that our citizenship is in heaven. Yet here we are, living in this world for a time, on a mission for our King.

The work of an ambassador is an honourable calling, one that requires total commitment to the one who sends and complete dedication to the message that you have been given to preach. 'Come, follow me' Jesus says, 'and I will make you fishers of men'. Jesus calls us to be committed to Him first and foremost, and then commands us to share a message (the gospel). The One who saves us and shapes us is the One that we live to share in all that we say and do. As ambassadors for God, he makes an appeal through us. The appeal is to the world, to be reconciled to God. We are commissioned by God to proclaim the good news of salvation to the world in which we live. This salvation is given freely to all who turn away from their sin, and trust Jesus to save them.

### Called to a purpose

How do you feel when you get a gift card as a present? I love it, but I know there are those who think it's a bit thoughtless. Here is the thing about a gift card – it is pointless unless you use it, and it is the same with the gifts that God has given to us. He doesn't give us gifts so that we can feel good about ourselves. No, the point of our gifts is that we use them for his glory and for the sake of others. We see that in Matthew 25:14-30.

What are some of the gifts God has given you? A desire to serve, a heart for hospitality, or the gift of leadership? The disciples came to Jesus, wondering about the end of the world, and when He would finally right every wrong in this world. Jesus explained how no one knows the day or the hour when these things will happen, but we must live life to the fullest as if this is the only day we are given. He gave the Parable of the Three Servants as an example. A man was going on a trip, and he left money to his servants while he was away. Two invested their portion and doubled the amount, while the other hid his portion and only returned with the original amount. The master rewarded the first two servants with even more responsibilities, but took away the gift of the latter. The lesson was made clear here: "To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away."

Our God is a good God, who longs to give his people good things. And he does. He gives us the food we need to survive, he surrounds us with loving friends, and he gives us opportunities to serve others. But when we don't use the gifts God has given us for his purposes or rightly thank him for what he has given to us, we may see our passion dim, our gifts go to waste, and our strengths weaken. We must not waste our life, but use what God has given us to experience that abundant, full life.

That money in your account, that thing you can do better than anyone else, the circumstances you find yourself - the value of these things can be incredible when approached from the perspective of God's Kingdom. So let's not just read this parable as a warning. Let's see it as an invitation. God gives us a talent or five and asks us to build his Kingdom. That might be sharing his story. It might be digging a well or helping at a youth club or standing up for the marginalised. It could be a thousand and one things but a single fact underlies them all – God gives us the chance to be a part of building his Kingdom. What an incredible honour!

## APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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### TALK OUTLINES

#### **Called to serve**

Whatever we do, we are primarily servants of Jesus, the servant King. Romans 12:1-3 encourages us to be living sacrifices in view of the mercy we have received in Christ Jesus. In Jesus we have the perfect example of what sacrificial service looks like. Jesus took on a human body to accomplish God's will on earth and he gave that body as a sacrifice for our sins. His body was then raised to life again. We are now called to give him our bodies so that through us, he might continue God's work on earth.

We are part of the body of Christ, and so we all have our part to play. God gives us gifts and abilities not so that we can boast about them, but so that we can use them for the sake of others. Warren Wiersbe said "Spiritual gifts are tools to build with, not toys to play with or weapons to fight with." A humble attitude and a willingness to share are the marks of a disciple who truly ministers to the body. Because of what God has done for us, we are able to call ourselves disciples. As disciples, he then calls us to live for him and to make disciples - and the power to do that is found in him. So, let's go as lights in the darkness with the hope of heaven shining in our hearts.

# APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## Called to God Character Studies

### Abraham // Called by name

**Bio:**

Abraham was called by God to be the father of a great nation. God promised to bless rebellious humanity through Abraham's family, despite their constant failure and folly. Abraham's faith was tested many times, yet he trusted and obeyed God. He was part of God's big plan and was called to follow God in every way, even moving countries and believing God's promises when it was difficult.

**Passages:** Genesis 12, 15, 21, 22.

**Questions:**

- Abraham didn't expect God to call him as an individual, never mind about calling him as the father of God's people! He trusted God and obeyed. How do you respond when God calls you in unexpected ways?

- Abraham gave up his whole life when God called him by name in Genesis 12. God provided over and over again and showed Abraham how much he was loved. Sometimes though, God appeared to be silent or asked Abraham to do difficult things. How can you trust God more whenever times are difficult? What sort of things are helpful to remind yourself of God's goodness and faithfulness?

### Paul // Called from darkness to light

**Bio:**

Paul was a very clever man who was respected in his society, but he hated those who followed Jesus. He was passionate about destroying Christians and people feared him. God however, calls people to follow him whom we least expect. Paul was called from darkness into light when Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus Road. Jesus literally put him in darkness by removing his sight, but Paul saw the light, realising that Jesus is the Messiah. Paul trusted in Jesus and was called to share the Gospel across the world. His life was transformed and gave his life to following Jesus.

**Passages:** Acts 9, 17-28

**Questions:**

- Does God need to transform your life to make you see him? What needs to be removed from your life that is holding you back from seeing God's wonderful love?

- There is nothing that we do that can stop God from calling us because his grace makes us useful in his Kingdom. Paul's life was turned upside down when he met Jesus and he was willing to go to the ends of the earth to tell others about Jesus. Is there someone in your life who needs to hear the truth of the Gospel?

- Paul was called from darkness to light, but his life wasn't instantly made easy. He faced difficult times, including prison. Do you think it is easier to trust God when things are going well, or when things are hard? How can we stay focused on God and his plan for our lives when things don't seem to go to our plan?

### Peter // Called to follow

**Bio:**

Peter was an ordinary man who was called by Jesus to follow him. He was willing and obedient, yet sometimes was doubtful, but through it all, was amazed at Jesus' teaching and ministry. Peter made mistakes, but he grows in self-awareness and God-awareness. He is an example that shows us how an encounter with Jesus can change a life, and how gracious and faithful Jesus is to us when we follow him. Peter was called into a relationship with Jesus and to serve him. God uses those we least expect to help build his kingdom.

**Passages:** Mark 1-14, Acts 1-5.

**Questions:**

- Calling is a process and God is patient with us. How do you know when God is calling you to do something? What sort of things would God be calling you into? How has he given you gifts and talents that you can use to serve God?

- In Matthew 14:22-34. can we see ourselves in Peter's response? Do you stand for God and his truth, even when it goes against our culture and friends? Will you follow Jesus even in difficult circumstances and 'step out of the boat'?

- Peter made many mistakes, but he is humble and asks for forgiveness. He is always willing to learn. Do I look to Jesus when I fail and make mistakes, or do I try to fix everything on my own?

# APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## Called to God Character Studies

### Moses // Called to Represent

**Bio:**

Moses was called by God to represent him. He was a man who grew up in Egyptian tradition and yet was an Israelite. The Israelites were enslaved by the Egyptian Pharaoh and God had a plan to rescue them. Moses didn't grow up in Egyptian tradition by accident, rather this was God's way of preparing Moses (Acts 7:22) to represent him and lead his children out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. Although Moses was reluctant at the start to represent God, he stood many times confronting Pharaoh and speaking on God's behalf. In the face of many challenges from the Israelites whether that be the building of a Golden Calf or their longing to go back to Egypt, Moses continued to represent God in those situations.

**Passages:** Acts 7:20-44, Exodus 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 14, 17, 20, 32, 34 (Really the whole of Exodus)

**Questions:**

- Where does God call us to represent him?

- Moses was initially reluctant to be the one who represented God. He felt out of his depth and unable so he made many excuses. Sometimes when God calls us to represent him we make excuses too. What holds us back from representing God where he has placed us?

- How can we take courage and hope from the story of Moses that God can use us to represent him?

### Noah // Called for a Purpose

**Bio:**

Noah was a man who loved God in a world that was filled with corruption. God knew what he had to do to stop this, put a plan in action and called Noah to fulfil it. God had a purpose for Noah - to build an ark, to fill it with two of each animal and his family in order to survive the flood that would destroy the earth. To Noah this maybe sounded ridiculous and in the face of a world that was corrupt and separated from the ways of God, maybe Noah was concerned about what those around him would say. However, this was God's purpose for Noah and so Noah did everything exactly as God commanded him to do.

**Passages:** Genesis 6-9

**Questions:**

- Noah was called for a purpose. Do you feel that God is calling you for a purpose? Why/ Why not?

- In the face of a task that seemed impossible or ridiculous and a world that was opposed to the things of God, Noah was obedient and did what God commanded. What gets in the way of us fulfilling our purposes? How can we overcome these and be obedient?

### Jesus // Called to Serve

**Bio:**

Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, and the Saviour of the Earth. He is the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning and the end. He is the one who crushes the serpents head, he is the way, the truth and the life. He is a wonderful counsellor, an everlasting Father, Mighty God and Prince of Peace. He is the King of Kings, the Good Shepherd, our hope and Lord of all. Jesus was called to save but also called to serve. He came to earth fully human and fully God and walked among us. During his ministry on earth, Jesus served others in the face of ridicule from many around him. He healed the sick, he fed the hungry and he loved the outcast. Jesus washed his disciples' feet; the job of a servant completed by the King. He served them as an example of how they were to serve others. This example is for us too. Jesus came to "seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10). We are called to serve others who are lost so they can come to know Jesus. Our motivation should be to glorify God rather than to make ourselves look good. For us Jesus is the greatest example of all things, including the way we are to serve others.

**Passages:** Mark 10:32-45, John 13

**Questions:**

- In your life, how are you called to serve others? How could we do this differently? What is your motivation?

- Jesus faced ridicule as he served. As Christians, what do we face when we are called to serve? In what ways can we withstand this?

- What can you learn from the example of Jesus?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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### Called Resource Content

A video of the spoken word piece by Caleb from Youth Night can be downloaded from [www.presbyterianireland.org/called](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/called)

You might also find these video clips useful

- [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) search: *Since God Chose You* (Jon Jorgenson)
- [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) search: *The One who Calls You* (Jon Jorgenson)
- [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) search: *God doesn't just want you to go to church* (Troy Black)
- [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) search: *I am second* (e.g. Tori Kelly)
- [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) search: *Identity in Christ* (Tim Balow)
- [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) search: *Unlovable* (Thrvemedia)
- VIDEO: Designated Survivor clip

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) search: *Official Trailer*

OR *Designated Survivor: Season 3 Official Trailer*

A man named Thomas Kirkman, an American politician, is named the designated survivor for the State of the Union in America, and he suddenly ascends to the position of president after an explosion kills everyone in the line of succession. He goes from being a regular politician unknown to many, to suddenly being the President of the United States of America. In the moment that he is sworn into the office as president, he receives this new identity. He received the authority to represent America, power to make decisions on the country's behalf, and the responsibility of leading the nation in ways that were best of all. In order to do this job well, he would have to be constantly mindful of who he had become. If he will not take on that new identity, then he cannot live and do his job effectively. This new identity he has is a difficult one. Though he became president in the moment he recited the oath, it took him time to begin confidently behaving like the president. As Christians, we have also received new identities. Just like Thomas Kirkman was immediately given a new identity when he recited his oath of office, you and I are given a new identity in the very moment we put our faith in Jesus. Just like Kirkman, it takes time and knowledge for us to grow into our new identity. All through the Christian life, we will be growing and straining to become who God has declared us to be, so it is crucial that we understand what our new identity is.