

God's family and
Christ's friendship
Workshop notes



HOLDING SLIDE

*This workshop has been created by Missio to help schools celebrate the **Extraordinary month of Mission**, October 2019, but it can be used at any time to fit with your curriculum/school activities.*

*The workshop lasts **up to 50 minutes**. We recommend you deliver all, but please use the slides and script as time and circumstances allow.*



missio

To reduce time, omit extension suggestions.

INTRODUCTION

In this workshop we'll be thinking about relationships - in our families, with each other and with God.

Let's start with an activity to help develop our relationship as a class.

Go through the following questions one by one. Ask additional questions that help the class to deepen their understanding e.g. What is it like to be the eldest?

I'd like you to stand up if...

- You are the eldest in your family. You are an only child. Your family came from another country. You'd like to travel the world. You are a member of a club. You are a bit shy.

By sharing, listening to, and reflecting on responses you're getting to know more about each other and consequently more about yourself.

- Where's the first place we get to know ourselves?

At the start of our lives we don't know who we are at all. As babies we learn many things: how to walk, talk, interact, and respond to others. We learn all this through our relationship with those around us, our family. We depend on those close to us to teach us how to live and how to love.

As we get older our families continue to teach us about the world around us, but increasingly we start to know more about ourselves through others too.

Other people introduce us to new ideas and experiences. Through these we start to work out what we like and don't like; whether that is music, styles, or activities.

Those who play a big part in helping us know ourselves better are good friends who - like our family - love us for who we are, want us to grow well and want to look out for us.

Extension Reflection - discuss in small groups. Write responses on a whiteboard or flipchart.

Pope Francis has spoken often about the importance of good friends. He says that 'Faithful friends are a reflection of the Lord's love.'

- How can we be faithful friends? What do we need to do?

As we grow from childhood to adolescence, our sense of family begins to widen. It includes faithful friends and sometimes communities - like school or clubs - where we feel looked after and supported, and where we look after and support others too.

This sense of responsibility and attention to each other takes us closer to the original meaning of the word *family*.

SLIDE TWO

Family comes from an ancient Latin word *famulus*, which meant *servant*.

This ancient definition reminds us that being part of a family means accepting our responsibility to serve one another.

It means being attentive to the needs of each member, so that everyone has what they need to flourish.



Extension Reflection - to be discussed in small groups

Some of you will have specific responsibilities in your family. Maybe you care for a sibling, or an older family member. These responsibilities can sometimes seem demanding, but they are also a source of blessing.

- What are the good things, the blessings, you receive from your family responsibilities?
E.g. sense of pride, happiness in knowing your help makes a difference.

So far, we've been thinking about families we know well, but there's one we haven't mentioned. It's one we sometimes forget to notice, which is ironic as we all belong to it and it's huge!

- What family might this be? **God's universal family**, to which everyone belongs and where we are all brothers and sisters.

To shorten the workshop or for students familiar with Missio, it is possible to omit slides 3 & 4

SLIDE THREE

This mention of God's Universal family provides a good introduction to the work of Missio.

Has anyone heard of Missio or recognise the Red Box?

Missio is the Catholic Church's charity for overseas mission.

Before we go any further, let's be clear about what we mean by Church.

- Hands up if you think the Church is a building made of stone.
- Hands up if you think the Church is a community made of people.

There are sacred buildings that we call churches, but that name is given *because of* the people that gather inside. We must always remember that the Church is far more than a building; it is a diverse global community of Christians, united in their efforts to live as Jesus did.

[Click to reveal image of Catholic communities overseas](#)

- Now we are clear what 'Church' means. What about the word 'mission'?

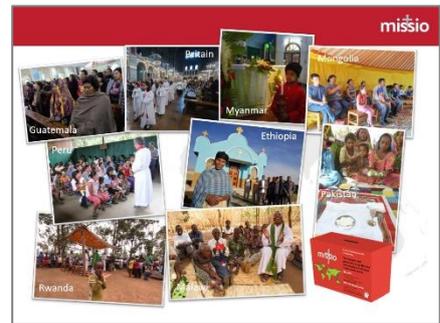
Possible answers: an important task, a goal, a difficult aim.

One way to understand 'mission' is by going back to the original meaning.

Mission comes from another ancient Latin word, *Mittere*, meaning *to send*.

As children of God and followers of Christ, we are sent into our world to share God's love with all people, everywhere. This is an impossible mission to undertake on our own, but as children of God we don't work alone. We work as one family. God's family.

Missio asks Catholic communities around the world, like those on screen and our own, to stand in solidarity with and support their brothers and sisters who are struggling because of poverty, turmoil, or conflict.



SLIDE FOUR

- How do you think Missio uses the money shared by these Catholic communities? What kind of projects does it fund?

The photos on screen - all taken at Missio-funded projects - provide clues.

By working together with Catholic communities like [school name], Missio supports the education of thousands of children across the world.



Missio also helps to build Church community centres and clinics. It helps run orphanages, after-school clubs, training for work schemes, and faith development programmes. It trains religious sisters and priests, who serve in some of the world's most dangerous and difficult places.

- Why does Missio do this? Whose example does it follow?

Missio follows the example of Jesus, who taught us that all people are made in God's image. Because of this, everyone - wherever they are from, whatever their belief, however little they own - must be valued equally and have what they need to flourish. That's also why Missio's projects support anyone in need. People don't have to be Catholic to benefit from them.

SLIDE FIVE

Throughout his ministry Jesus invited people to see themselves as children of God, that is brothers and sisters with one Father – Our Father – in heaven.

Jesus knew the importance of relationships; that by getting to know one another and standing together, we build a better world.

Because of this, Jesus taught us how to deepen all our relationships. Most especially that with God. For Jesus, it is the friendship we develop with Him that provides the foundation on which our life and all our relationships should be built.

One famous lesson Jesus delivered in the Gospels is known as the Beatitudes. We're going to look at parts of the Beatitudes now and consider how, through his words, Jesus is drawing us closer to God and each other.

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven...

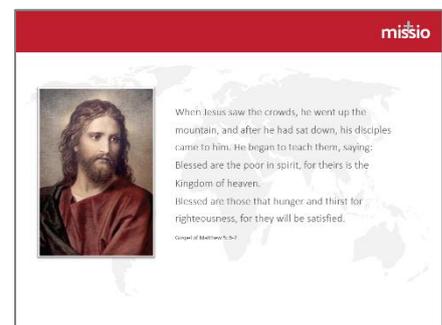
Blessed are those that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Gospel of Matthew 5:3,6

Invite young people to discuss in pairs or threes:

- What do you think Jesus is trying to teach us in the first Beatitude?
What do you think it means to be 'poor in spirit'?

We might think that someone 'poor in spirit' feels weak and unable to cope: hardly reasons to feel blessed.



But Jesus is saying, blessed is the person who **knows they can't cope on their own**, and so turns to God and others for support - as we did when we were babies. Blessed the person who knows that to live well and make their world better, they need others and they need God, our Father.

- What do you think Jesus is trying to teach us in the second Beatitude?
What do you think righteousness means?

Today the word 'righteousness' is often associated with arrogance. Someone who thinks they are always right and good might be called self-righteous.

But in Jesus' day the Hebrew word for 'righteous' meant maintaining faithful relationships, especially with God. Guided and strengthened by their friendship with God, a righteous person restored relationships in their community that had broken down because of injustices and cruelty.

SLIDE SIX

Across the world there are hundreds of missionaries who dedicate their lives to living out Christ's teachings. The film we'll watch now provides just one example. It focuses on the Lindalva school, established by Filipino missionary Sr Eulie, and supported by Missio. While you watch:

- Notice how Sr Eulie (on screen) builds up faithful relationships with the people she serves.
- Consider how, through the loving relationships Sr Eulie forms, other faithful bonds develop.
- Identify the relationships that enable Sr Eulie to do what she does.



Click on link to view film or visit <https://missio.org.uk/films/> and select *Red Box in Cambodia*

Now click in turn to reveal screenshot images

Screenshot one: Through caring for the children of migrant workers, Sr Eulie is able to build up relationships with their parents. In turn this allows them to know Christ and the love God has for everyone.

EXTENSION REFLECTION – to be discussed in small groups or undertaken as a private reflection.

- How do we share God's love with all the people we meet – friends and strangers?

Screenshot two: In the film we heard that when Sambat and Srey Neach arrived at Lindalva, they did not smile and found it difficult to interact. As babies learn how to interact and care for others through imitating loved ones, so Sambat and Srey Neach slowly learned to do the same through their relationships at Lindalva.

EXTENSION REFLECTION – to be discussed in small groups or undertaken as a private reflection.

- Whose example do we follow? Are we imitating behaviours that strengthen our relationships and help us to flourish?

Screenshot three: Sr Eulie finds support through her Church family - that includes you and me - who pray and share so that God's love might be known everywhere. She also finds strength through her friendship with Jesus. To deepen this friendship and know Jesus better, every day she reads the Gospels and spends time with Jesus in prayer.

SLIDE SEVEN

Pope Francis recently asked young Catholics to consider how important **their** friendship was with Jesus. He said:

'The choice that Jesus sets before us is to follow him as friends follow one another, seeking each other's company and spending time together out of pure friendship.'

Christus Vivit 290

- How could you do that?

If you undertook the extension task 'How can we be faithful friends', reflect back on the responses. Ask the group to consider how they can translate their suggestions e.g. share and listen, into their friendship with Jesus.



EXTENSION REFLECTION – to be discussed in small groups or undertaken as a private reflection.

- Do we see Jesus as a friend? If we chose to develop this friendship, what difference could this make in our lives, our communities, our world?

SLIDE EIGHT

Prayer is vital for developing our friendship with Jesus.

Let's conclude our time together with the prayer Jesus taught us, reminding us of our responsibility as members of God's family to build a kingdom of justice and mercy for everyone.

Our Father who art in Heaven...

