

Session 5

Love is... ?



‘Love is patient, love is kind, love isn’t jealous, it doesn’t sing its own praises, it isn’t arrogant or rude.’ (GW) 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

The URC’s Commitment for Life programme works in partnership with Christian Aid, to support our global neighbours around the world. Christian Aid works with local partner organisations in Zimbabwe, which work to tackle the root causes of poverty within local communities. BRACKT is a Christian Aid partner which has worked alongside the community in Mutoko, a small town in the East of Zimbabwe.



Netsai Kateera (left) is a mother of three from Nhire village, Mutoko. Netsai and her husband used to make a living from farming and brick moulding, but life was tough, as unpredictable weather patterns impacted their farming. Christian Aid’s partner project BRACKT offered her vocational training to become a welder.

“I believe in equal delegation of duties for men and women and my husband is in full support of my choice of occupation. The whole family is really happy with the extra income and my children are also interested in taking up the business when they finish school.”

Netsai has now set up a business called ‘Star Welding’, alongside other training graduates.



Nyarai Zirugo (right) lives with her two children, her parents and her sisters in Njani village, Mutoko. The family makes a living from farming, and training from BRACKT has equipped them with the knowledge to help prepare for unpredictable

weather patterns. The family was taught how to make use of naturally occurring wild plants from the local area, such as nhengeni fruit, marula and hacha nuts, which can be harvested and sold for a high price. Nyarai shared how the project had impacted her community.

“People have adapted to the unpredictable climate by using the climate-smart farming methods and have food and economic security. There is less environmental destruction because we have realised that our natural resources are valuable. Women are also becoming more independent and incidences of gender-based violence have been reduced. Working in groups has also brought the community together, helping us learn how to work together. The community has been empowered through knowledge.”

Discussion

- Why do you think it is important that Christian Aid works with local partners and engages in community projects like these?
- What difference do you think BRACKT has made to life in the Mutoko community?
- An important focus for Christian Aid is building resilience. What do you think this means in Zimbabwe?

Getting your voices heard

Whether in Zimbabwe, the UK, or anywhere else in the world, it is important that all individuals have a voice and are listened to. Christian Aid’s ‘Faith in Action’ resource showcases some of the different ways that Christians are acting for a world free from poverty. www.bit.ly/3taig0U. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-14

- What gifts and talents has God given you? How could you put these gifts and talents into action in order to make a positive change in the world?
- How can we support young people in Zimbabwe to make their voices heard? What can we do to share their story? How do you think this differs from speaking on their behalf?



Game

Bvutu (Snatch) is not exactly a game about showing love, but is a popular game in Zimbabwe. Each player needs to bring in a low-value item which they are happy to lose, but which someone else might like (e.g. packets of sweets). They should hold it loosely in their hand. Then chase each other around the room, trying to snatch whatever is in someone else's hand without any other physical contact. When the whistle blows, players get to keep whatever they have "snatched". If there is an imbalance, where some people have a lot and some have nothing, players could decide to show a bit of love and share things out.

Bible Discussion Romans 12:9-21

- What do you like or dislike about this passage? Is it relevant in your day to day life?
- How could we put love into action for our local neighbourhood and for our global neighbours including those in Zimbabwe?



Watch Zimbabwean folk tale

Listen to this Zimbabwean folk tale: www.bit.ly/ZimTale

Think about what this story is about. There is a verse in the Bible which says, "Don't forget to welcome outsiders. By doing that, some people have welcomed angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2) (NIRV). Why not create your own folk tale on a similar theme and find a way of sharing it with others – stop motion animation, graphic story, drama etc.

Ubuntu

A word which is often used in Zimbabwe is Ubuntu, which means, 'A person is only a person through other people'. Ubuntu is the concept that we each can act amongst others to show love and compassion, and we all rely on that from others to live. Former South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu explains it this way:

"It speaks of the very essence of being human. When we want to give high praise to someone we say, 'Yu, u nobuntu'; 'Hey, so-and-so has Ubuntu'. Then you are generous, you are hospitable, and you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours. We belong in a bundle of life.

We say a person is a person through other persons. It is not I think therefore I am. It says rather: I am human because I belong, I participate, and I share. A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are."

Stand together as a group, spaced out. Take a ball of string and throw it from one person to another, hold onto the string as you pass it on. As it's caught and passed on, say who you are, how would you describe yourself, and then how you are connected to the person you (then) throw the string to. Quietly thank God for that person.

Recipe

Nhopi

Peel and remove the seeds from half a butternut squash and cut into cubes. Put in a bowl with 1.5 cups of water. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a saucepan on a medium heat.

Add ½ tsp each of coriander, ground cinnamon and ground ginger and stir well. Pour the water and squash into the pan, cover with a lid, and cook until the butternut squash pieces are soft. Stir in 2 tbsp peanut butter and cook for another three minutes.

Meanwhile, mix together ½ cup water and ½ cup cornmeal until there are no lumps. After three minutes, add this mix into the pan and stir well to mash up the butternut squash. Cover and allow to cook for about five more minutes until thick. Then eat hot, with or without milk.

