



Go with Greta to **Zimbabwe**



Commitment
for **Life**



The
United
Reformed
Church **Children**

Contents



	<i>page</i>
Welcome	1
Session 1 Here we are	2
Session 2 Childhood in Zimbabwe	4
Session 3 Celebrating my country	6
Session 4 Challenges for Children in Zimbabwe	8
Session 5 Love is... ?	10
Session 6 Let's celebrate Zimbabwe (intergenerational celebration)	13

This booklet was produced as a collaborative project between URC Children's and Youth Work and URC Commitment for Life in 2023.

Contributors: We would like to thank Christian Aid for the provision of factual information about our partners in Zimbabwe and the work they do. We also wish to thank Christian Aid for the provision of some of the photographs and Commitment for Life's the Revd Dr Kevin Snyman for others.

Go with Greta was written by Lorraine Webb and Suzanne Pearson.

#connect2 was written by Tom Hackett, Leo Roberts, Lorraine Webb and Sharon Lloyd.

With thanks to Steven Mitchell for video editing, proofreading by Laurence Wareing and Heather Wilkinson, and design and cover illustration by Sara Foyle. Edited by Lorraine Webb.

Illustrations

Page 1: Flag of Zimbabwe – Public Domain

1 Here we are

Map – <https://www.distance.to/London/Zimbabwe>

Great Zimbabwe – Kevin Snyman, 2023

Monkey eating fruit – Kevin Snyman, 2023

Corn – Kevin Snyman, 2023

African elephant – EcoView, AdobeStock

Silhouette activity – Lorraine Webb, 2023

2 Everyday Life

Harare Skyline, Macvivo 2006 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>

Family outside hut – David Brazier, Christian Aid

Vimbai Nyamakambo – Kevin Snyman, 2023

Falcon school – Revd Wilbert Sayimani, 2023

Woman making shoes – David Brazier, Christian Aid

3 Celebrating my country

The Great Victoria Falls Thexrd, CC BY-SA 4.0

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>,
via Wikimedia Commons, 2022

Mbira – Kevin Snyman, 2023

Oliver Mtukudzi, English Wikipedia user Jshecket, CC BY-SA 3.0

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>,
via Wikimedia Commons

Victoria Falls – Klara Bakalarova, AdobeStock

Fruit and veg competition – Kevin Snyman, 2023

Pottery – Kevin Snyman, 2023

4 Challenges for children

Toilet block – Kevin Snyman, 2023

Women cooking – David Brazier, Christian Aid, 2023

Cyclone Idai – MODIS image captured by NASA's
Aqua satellite, Public Domain, 14 March 2019

Boy in blue T-shirt – Kevin Snyman, 2023

Woman carrying grain – Kevin Snyman, 2023

5 Love in Action

Family with goats – David Brazier, Christian Aid

Woman measuring – David Brazier, Christian Aid

Man with chicks in incubator – David Brazier,
Christian Aid

Many hands, many grains – David Brazier, Christian Aid

Children of Falcon School – Kevin Snyman, 2023

Women working in field – David Brazier, Christian Aid

Page 12, map – Sanjay Rao, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

6 International Celebration

Chikenduza (Zimbabwe Candy Cake) from
tarasmulticulturaltable.com

Beadwork – poco_bw, AdobeStock

Prayer from Ashell Gundidza

Zimbabwe – Kevin Snyman 2023

Bible References

Scripture in *Go with Greta* taken from the
International Children's Bible®.

Copyright © 1986, 1988, 1999 by Thomas Nelson.

Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Welcome to the Republic of Zimbabwe!

Welcome to URC Children's mission magazine from the United Reformed Church (URC) Children's and Youth Work, produced in collaboration with URC Commitment for Life which, in turn, partners with Christian Aid and Global Justice Now.

Greta Globe is the mascot of Commitment for Life, and each year will invite children aged between 5 and 10 to 'Go with Greta' to one of the regions that Commitment for Life supports through Christian Aid. The material in 'Go with Greta' is designed for leaders to use in planning their sessions. For the 11 to 14 age range, we have '#connect 2', which emphasises the increasing focus on our inter-connected world as we aim to build and explore the relationship between each of the four regions, the people who live there, and ourselves as a Church and as individuals. Young people may choose to use this material independently, or leaders may use it in their planning.



The two regions we have visited so far are Central America (which includes Nicaragua) and Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, though since starting this resource Commitment for Life no longer directly supports Central America. This year we visit the Republic of Zimbabwe and this will be followed by one further resource all about Bangladesh next year.

Our part in mission involves learning more about the problems facing the poorest people, by listening to the stories told by our partners and learning about the issues. We can pray, asking God to send the Holy Spirit to bring about justice. And we can act by working for justice, using our voices and writing to our MPs, joining in the campaigns hosted by Christian Aid and Global Justice Now, and also by speaking up at school, work, in church and online. We can share our gifts and money to support the people in these regions.

Learn more by visiting:

Commitment for Life: www.bit.ly/C4L_URC

Christian Aid: www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/schools/youth-resources and www.christianaid.org.uk

Global Justice Now: www.globaljustice.org.uk/youth

Fairtrade: www.fairtrade.org.uk

This booklet provides material for six sessions, including an intergenerational celebration. This might be used by a group meeting weekly to form the basis of a half term's sessions. Alternatively, the material might be used for a holiday club, or an event over one or two days within your church. Each half of the magazine follows the same pattern, as this will allow mixed age groups to engage in the same theme but with slightly different activities. And, of course, you may wish to dip into both halves of the magazine for material to use.

The booklet is available as a downloadable pdf at www.urc.org.uk/go-with-greta-and-connect, where you will also find additional resources. A video to kick-start your exploration of Zimbabwe is also available on this page at www.bit.ly/Greta_Connect_Youtube. This video is most suitable for the under-11 age group.

It will be noted that this booklet focuses entirely on current life in Zimbabwe without looking into the country's troubled past or current politics. While colonialism and white minority government, rebellion and independence, and subsequent political challenges have played a major part in forming the Republic of Zimbabwe as it is today, our interest in this resource is primarily in establishing a sense of empathy and commonality between the children of the UK and the children of Zimbabwe through their day to day lives.

The United Reformed Church produces materials, training and resources on the themes of the legacies of slavery, anti-racism, and the effects of colonialism and imperialism, though these are aimed primarily at adults. Please contact the Mission department to find out more. The Children's and Youth Work team recognise the need for children's materials on these subjects and will be addressing this in coming years.



Session 1

Here we are



Greta is off on a journey to Zimbabwe. From the UK, it's about 13 hours by plane as it is about 8,300 km away. But because you are travelling mostly southwards, the time difference is only two hours, so 9am in the UK will be 11am in Zimbabwe. The country is landlocked, which means all its borders are with other countries and it does not have a coast. There are five major rivers, one of which is called the Zambezi and is the fourth longest river in Africa, and there is a very famous big waterfall called the Victoria Falls. The capital city is called Harare. Have a look at the map and see what countries border Zimbabwe.

The climate is mild, with a rainy season (November to March) and a dry season. Some areas, especially the south east, experience frequent droughts.

Much of Zimbabwe is covered with grassland (savanna) with occasional trees. In the east are evergreen forests. Animals that live there include lions, hyenas, jackals, elephants, hippopotamuses, giraffes, gorillas, chimpanzees, baboons, antelope, and crocodiles.

The country is named after Great Zimbabwe, an ancient city in the south eastern hills, thought to have been the capital of a great kingdom between around 1100 CE and the 15th century. In the ruins archaeologists found several soapstone sculptures of birds, which are now the national symbol. Can you spot them on the flag?

Almost everyone who lives in Zimbabwe is African. The main groups are Shona (82%) and Ndebele (14%). Shona and Ndebele languages are widely spoken but English is used in government.



Most people live in rural areas where the main crops grown are tobacco, cotton, corn and sugarcane. Coffee is becoming a popular crop and farmers may grow bananas, oranges and other produce. Some keep cows, goats, sheep, pigs or chickens. Mining is important: gold, nickel, coal and other minerals are mined in the hills. According to UNESCO, about 92% of young Zimbabweans and 87% of adults are literate. Despite this, many are unemployed.

About 13 million people live in Zimbabwe, nearly half of them (6.3 million) children. Over two thirds of these children live in poverty, many in extreme poverty. More than a quarter of children under 18 do not live with their parents, being orphans or abandoned, mainly because adults have died from a highly contagious and very dangerous illness called AIDS. A small number of children live in orphanages, children's homes or foster care; many live with relatives, and some actually just continue to live alone.

Three quarters of Zimbabweans are Christian, mostly Protestants. Some mix their Christian belief with traditional religions of the Shona and Ndebele people. The Shona god is known as 'Mwari', whilst the Ndebele god is called 'uMlimu'. Many people believe they can talk to Mwari and uMlimu through the spirits of their ancestors and deceased chiefs. There are a very small number of Muslims in Zimbabwe and about ten per cent of people say they do not follow any particular faith.

People in Zimbabwe consider politeness very important, especially respect for people older than you. People who are older than 50 are sometimes referred to as "Sekuru" (Old man) or "Ambuya" (Granny), a way of showing respect. People don't tend to have middle names in Zimbabwe. Their family names are almost always traditional and usually in the language of their origin, but sometimes they may have an English first name – either one like those used in Britain (such as Henry or Mary) or one which represents a quality their parents hope they will display (such as Patience or Happiness or Bright).



Bible link Genesis 1:24-25

Then God said, "Let the earth be filled with animals. And let each produce more of its own kind. Let there be tame animals and small crawling animals and wild animals. And let each produce more of its kind." And it happened. So God made the wild animals, the tame animals and all the small crawling animals to produce more of their own kind. God saw that this was good.



- I wonder which of the many animals God placed in Zimbabwe is your favourite
- I wonder why God created such variety and didn't just stop at one or two different creatures
- I wonder what God's hope is for all who live in Zimbabwe and for all who live in the UK

Prayer

Creator God, thank you for all the variety on earth – different creatures, plants, landscapes, climates and all the different people. You made all these things and called each of them good. Help us to be curious as we find out more about different countries and especially as we learn about children like us in Zimbabwe, all part of your big family here on earth. Amen.

Active Prayer

Take a heart-shaped piece of coloured or decorated paper. Tear it into three pieces. Think about those children who have no parent to care for them or whose families have been torn apart. Glue the pieces onto a square of card, slightly apart, and colour between them with gold pen. Ask God to heal their fear and sadness, to love them, and to bring people into their lives who will love them and keep them safe.

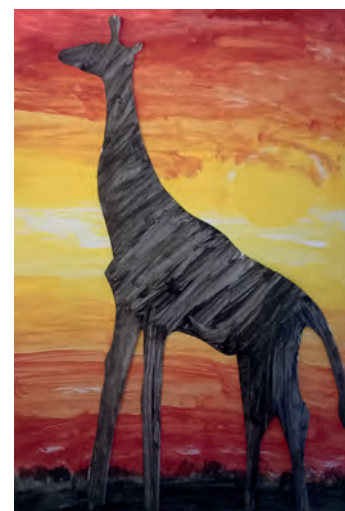
Game

You need sets of cards with the names of African animals on, with either three or four cards each having the same animal. Shuffle the cards and give one each to the players. They have to make a sound effect or do an action for their animal and, without speaking, find the other players who have the same card. Animals: Elephant, Giraffe, Lion, Crocodile, Snake, Monkey, Warthog, Cow, Goat, Chicken.



Greta Wonders...

- What must it be like to live in a country where there are very few elderly people and there are as many children as adults? How would it be different?
- Many people in Zimbabwe have a name which says something about them, such as "Innocent" or "Happy" or "Patience". What name would best describe you?



Activity

Create silhouettes of African animals by cutting them out of black paper. Take a sheet of white paper and colour it with paint, wax crayon, pastel etc. You could do a sunset pattern – a black stripe at the base for land, then starting with a pale yellow stripe, then deeper yellow, and then adding a bit more red to the yellow each time until finishing with a red stripe. Or do a pattern reminiscent of the animal's coat (you may need some photographs of different Zimbabwean animals to refer to). Then glue the silhouette on top.

Action Point

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states the rights of every child in the world, regardless of their race, religion or abilities. Read the UNICEF child-friendly version www.bit.ly/46oFkHy and think about how these rights are reflected in your daily life. As we start to find out about a child's life in Zimbabwe, look out for where things might be different for them, especially if they have no parent to look after them.

Watch

https://youtu.be/GcCATJm_EJg

Party Croc – a folktale from Zimbabwe



Session 2

Everyday life for children



‘ The families do not have a fancy life. Some of the parents struggle to pay school fees ’

Vimbai Nyamakambo at Falcon Primary School

Homes

How does where you live compare to the capital city of Harare or to a house in rural Zimbabwe? Compare the two pictures of housing. Does it surprise you that they are in the same country?



School

As in this country, the children of Zimbabwe attend school. Children start attending school when they are six years old, and primary and secondary school last 13 years. The school year runs from January to December, each term lasting three months with one-month holidays between them, making a total of 40 weeks of school per year. In urban areas the children are taught in English, while in rural areas teachers switch over to Shona or Ndebele.



Vimbai Nyamakambo is the head teacher at the Falcon Primary school in Harare Metropolitan DZ extension. Commitment for Life gave a grant to the school in 2022 so they could purchase a solar geyser at the school, to provide Green Energy. Vimbai tells us what life is like for many of the children that attend the school:

“When the children wake up, if they are aged nine years or over, they will have some chores to do before going to school. These will include washing plates, sweeping yards and their rooms. After the chores, if there is any food, they will have breakfast. When they arrive at school, Vimbai will ask the children if they have had anything to eat, or if they have something in their bag for break time. Often the answer is no, and the children attend school hungry.”

If they do have breakfast, then it is usually a maize porridge with sugar and peanut butter. Some may have Sadza, which is part of the Zimbabwean staple diet and is a maize porridge mixed into a stiff mixture. It can be had with vegetables or meat such as beef stew or pork if available. Children will often carry with them for break time mapudzi, a popped maize like a popcorn, or biscuits and a bottled drink.

Many of the children must walk anything up to about five kilometres (approx. 3 miles) to get to school, and they don't have very good shoes.



The children in the infant part of the school finish the day at 1pm, while the juniors finish at 3.30pm. When the children get home, they will have more chores to do, like washing plates, before they can do their homework. In any spare time, the children like to play, and will chase each other, play football or different local games like pada (like hopscotch) and tsoro.

Food at supper time will be Sadza. Bedtime for the children is at 8pm. Most of the homes do not have electricity. However, the homes with solar panels may have a TV and a little may be watched before bed. Children do not have access to social media, or mobile phones, unless it is an old phone from their parents.



Bible Link Matthew 6:25-26

“So, I tell you, don’t worry about the food you need to live. And don’t worry about the clothes you need for your body. Life is more important than food. And the body is more important than clothes. Look at the birds in the air. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns. But your heavenly Father feeds the birds. And you know that you are worth much more than the birds.”

- I wonder what is the most important thing in your life
- I wonder if you think Jesus really meant that you shouldn’t make sure people have enough food or whether he meant something else when he said this

Prayer

Dear God, help me not to take my shoes for granted. We remember those in countries like Zimbabwe who struggle to earn enough money to buy shoes or school uniform to wear for school. We thank you for Christian Aid partners who are working with communities, teaching women new skills in leatherwork so they can make shoes for their families. Amen.

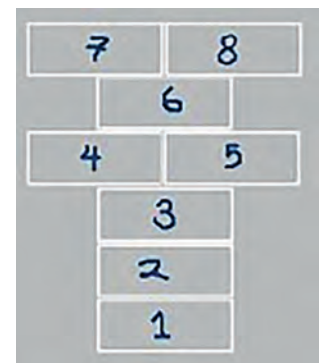


Active Prayer

Using a marker and a piece of paper, draw round your foot or shoe and cut it out. Think about what you have in common with children in Zimbabwe and what is different. Choose one thing to ask or thank God for and draw it on your foot shape. Use the footprints to make a path to a cross.

Game Pada

To play Pada you need one flat stone and ground markings like a hopscotch grid, each box measuring approximately 60cm x 50 cm. Rules are like hopscotch. Players aim to throw the stone into box 1 so that it doesn’t touch the boundary of the box. They then hop into every box except that with the stone in, landing with only one foot in each box and, where two boxes are side by side, landing with one foot in each. When they get to the end, they return in the same fashion, picking up the stone on the way. Then they do the same again, this time throwing the stone into box two. If they fail to get the stone cleanly in the correct box or make a mistake when hopping from box to box or picking the stone up, their turn is over.



Greta Wonders...

- How does your day differ to that of a child that might attend Falcon Primary School?
- What do you eat for breakfast before going to school? How does this differ from what the children in the Falcon Primary School might eat before they go to school?
- Do you have any chores to do before or after school?

Activity

Sadza is probably the most widely known food in Zimbabwe. Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup maize meal (available fairly cheaply online) with $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups room-temperature water to make a paste in the bottom of the saucepan. Bring to the boil then gradually add two cups hot water. Allow to simmer for several minutes then add another $\frac{1}{2}$ cup maize meal, stirring constantly for about five minutes. Leave cooking for 15 more minutes with the saucepan lid on, then uncover and stir again for two minutes. Make sure it doesn’t go lumpy! Form into balls and eat with your fingers with chicken or some other accompaniment.

Action Point

Children in some parts of Zimbabwe do not have access to social media, computer games, television, or smart phones etc. Why not put your phones, laptops, and computer games away for a weekend and, if you can, go outside and play with your friends games such as chase, hide and seek, football or hop scotch. Or read a book or play board games or do some craft activities. Alternatively you could always do some extra chores for your family around the home. Afterwards reflect how it felt not to use your devices for a whole weekend. Do you have old reusable shoes or outgrown items of school uniform that could be given to someone who is struggling financially to buy new shoes/uniform for school?



Session 3

Celebrating my country



Zimbabwe's famous waterfall Mosi-oa-Tunya (meaning “the smoke that thunders”) is the original name of Victoria Falls on the Zambezi river. It's one of the biggest in the world – over 1,700m wide, with a drop of over 98m. The mist that rises from it creates a permanent rainbow! It is one of the seven natural wonders of the world. David Livingstone was one of the first European people to see it in the mid-nineteenth century and he named it after Queen Victoria, but of course it was there long before Livingstone saw it.

Great Zimbabwe The ancient city of Great Zimbabwe is a national monument. It was once the capital city of the kingdom of Zimbabwe from the 11th to the 15th century and was one of the largest cities in the world during that time, being home to as many as 18,000 people. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Community Zimbabwean people have a sense of community and tend to put their group or family's interests before their own. They enjoy gathering together and telling stories, sharing music and songs and dancing together. They have a tradition of storytelling and folklore and feel a connection to their ancestors with stories passed down the generations. Zimbabweans like to give gifts and it is polite always to accept what you are offered. A guest will always offer a gift to a host and will usually be offered a drink.

Music and Dance <https://youtu.be/rPWmWk8uv-I> The Mbira is a traditional instrument of the Shona people and originated in Zimbabwean culture. It was originally used to make ritual music to celebrate at festivals, to entertain, and to help communicate with ancestors long dead. It was very unusual for women to learn to play the mbira and Stella Chiweshe, a famous mbira musician, is still one of only a small number of women who play.



Another musician who has performed around the world is Oliver Mtukudzi, usually known as Tuku. He has a unique style, blending jazz with traditional African music and singing in Shona, Ndebele and English. He has won many awards and some of his popular songs include 'Neria' (2001), 'Todii' (1999), 'Mutserendende' (2000), 'Hear Me, Lord' (1995). Tuku is also known as a human rights activist and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador for Southern Africa Region. <https://youtu.be/WgBRuNfzpTA>

There are lots of traditional dances in Zimbabwe, with different tribes each having their own distinctive dance moves. You can see some of them here: <https://youtu.be/rGvUxtc2QUs>

Record Breakers Zimbabwe has one of the highest number of national languages, sixteen in all. English, Shona, Kalanga, Ndebele, Xhosa, Tonga, Sotho, Sign language, Shangani, Khoisan, Ndau, Venda, Nambya, Chibarwe, Tswana, and Chewa. It has the largest man-made lake by volume, Lake Kariba, which holds up to 180 cubic kilometres of water. And Victoria Falls is the world's largest sheet of falling water, being almost twice as high as Niagara Falls. It also holds the record for the highest denomination bank note: 100,000,000,000 USD, though due to inflation it was only enough to buy two loaves of bread or three eggs in 2008 when it was issued.

Some famous people from Zimbabwe

Blessing Annatoria Chitapa, originally from Zimbabwe but now living in the UK, won “The Voice” in 2020 with the song ‘Angels’: <https://youtu.be/kWBDQNq2xas>

Colleen Madamombe (1964-2009) was a Zimbabwean sculptor making images of Shona women in stone. Danai Gurira is an actor and playwright who played Okoye in *Black Panther* and *Avengers: Infinity War*. Alexander McCall Smith, author of the *No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency* books, was born in Zimbabwe to British parents.



Bible Link Amos 5:24

*But let justice flow like a river.
Let goodness flow like a never-ending stream.*

- Zimbabwe is famous for a huge waterfall. I wonder what it means for justice to roll down like waters
- I wonder how the world would be different if justice and doing the right thing in God's eyes happened everywhere
- I wonder if you can remember any Bible stories about water



Prayer

Loving God, we know that a huge river starts from a tiny spring of water. Each tiny drop of rain that falls into it makes it bigger and stronger. Help us to remember to love justice and try to do the right thing in everything we do and say, because no matter how tiny our part, we join with others to make a massive difference in your world. Amen.

Active Prayer

Have a large bowl of water and a pile of pebbles, one pebble for each child. What we do and say doesn't only affect us, it has a ripple effect that can make a difference to others. Where there is injustice, we may not be able to change things alone, but the little things we do can make a difference and can join with other actions to make a bigger difference. Ask God to help you let justice flow until God's love and fairness spreads all over the world. Drop your pebbles in the bowl of water one at a time and watch the ripples. If you have an outdoor area, you could also think about what would happen if everyone dropped their pebbles in at once!

Game

There is a fire in the mountain <https://youtu.be/wEPHlFE4f-4>



Greta Wonders...

- Why might community be more important to people in Zimbabwe than it often is in the UK?
- Why do people say that David Livingstone "discovered" Victoria Falls?
- Do you know (and can you share) any stories that have been passed down the generations in your culture?



Activity

Make some Zimbabwean pottery

Use air dried clay to form bowl shapes and allow to dry before painting in designs similar to the ones shown in this photograph.



Make Mopopo – a Zimbabwean sweet

Peel a papaya, remove the seeds, wash it and slice it into little strips. Using a heavy bottomed pan, cook it over a low heat with ½ tsp chopped fresh or dried mint, the grated peel of a lemon or lime, and two cups of granulated sugar. Keep stirring with a wooden spoon until the sugar has all dissolved then stop stirring and let it cook for about ten more minutes. Allow it to cool away from the heat for half an hour, then heat again over a medium heat until it starts to form tiny crystals of sugar around the strips of papaya. Take it off the heat and, when it has cooled enough to touch it safely, use a spoon and fork to shape it into little balls. You could roll the balls in a bit more sugar if you choose, or eat it as it is.

Action Point

Visit your local supermarket and see what produce you can find that comes from, or grows in, Zimbabwe. Which have you tasted? Cassava, lemons, limes, grapefruit, papaya, green beans, mangetout peas, passion fruit, peanuts.

Watch

<https://youtu.be/ZfprTYQnkKI> Zimbabwe national anthem

Session 4

Challenges for children



‘I’m a witness, climate has changed. Nowadays it’s not the way it used to be when we were children.’ Margaret Nsona

Despite some improvements, many children in Zimbabwe are still poor and have limited access to clean water, nutritious food and shelter. Many are affected by gender violence, child labour, child marriage.

Water For children in rural Zimbabwe, access to safe and clean water is not a guarantee and some struggle to find water. It often has to be carried long distances, usually by women who carry it on their heads. The Falcon Primary School has a bore hole, which means the children attending the school can have access to water to drink and can wash their hands. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities is essential for health and it is important to educate people about hygiene and to distribute soap.



Food A third of the children in Zimbabwe are malnourished. This has been made worse by droughts, the cost of food and other things going up, currency instability, widespread electricity shortages, and fuel and food scarcity. Many children in the more rural areas will attend school hungry as their parents are unable to afford much food. The staple dish that is eaten is Sadza.



Health Unlike in this country, where we have the NHS and can go to the doctor for free, the health system in Zimbabwe is quite expensive. If you have to pay to go to the doctor, a consultation fee is around \$10 plus any medication on top, which is a large part of a poor family’s monthly income. Children under the age of five are treated for free if seen in a government hospital. The single leading cause of child mortality in Zimbabwe is HIV and AIDS, which contributes 21% of deaths. The other major contributions to under-five mortality are pneumonia, diarrhea and measles. Vimbai Nyamakambo, the head of the Falcon Primary School, reports that many of the children suffer from a lot of respiratory problems with coughing and sneezing. When the weather is cold, the windows have to be kept closed, as just one child can infect the whole class.

Poverty Of the 6.3 million boys and girls in the country, 4.8 million live in poverty, including 1.6 million in extreme poverty. Of the 13 million people in Zimbabwe, 48% are children. Salaries range from \$80 to \$100 per month, and parents often struggle to buy food, pay school fees, or buy shoes or uniform for their children.

Climate Challenges The country experiences its rainy season along with relatively high temperatures from October to March, and dry seasons with low temperatures from June to August.

In March 2019, Tropical Cyclone Idai hit Zimbabwe, causing floods and heavy rains. It left households and individuals in need of various things like shelter, washing facilities etc. The effects were made worse by the 2020-2021 rainy season with unusually high rainfall. On 30 December 2020 Tropical Storm Chalane swept across much of Zimbabwe. Tropical Cyclone Eloise crossed into the south-eastern part of the country in January 2021.

Margaret Nsona was just one person among many, who lost all the crops she had planted, along with many of her possessions. But due to the support that she received from Christian Aid’s partner PROACT, she was able to get back on her feet again. She says, “We were trained to be courageous enough not to be shaken by the floods, but to move on and be strong.” Margaret explains that the rains are no longer consistent, and the area she lives in is often hit by both drought and flooding. She says “I’m a witness, climate has changed. Nowadays It’s not the way it used to be when we were children.”



Bible Link Joshua 1:9

“Remember that I commanded you to be strong and brave. So, don’t be afraid. The Lord your God will be with you everywhere you go.”

- I wonder if there’s been a time when God has helped you to be strong and brave
- I wonder where God is at work in Zimbabwe

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the beauty of your creation that surrounds us. Help us to take nothing for granted and to respect our homes, our food and access to clean water. We pray for people in Zimbabwe being greatly affected by changing weather patterns like cyclones, droughts or floods which cause destruction of crops, homes and livelihoods. Help them to be strong and brave as they work with organisations that can help them make a difference. Amen.

Active Prayer You will need a plant and wooden lolly sticks

A plant that produces food needs to get the right amount of water. Too much and it can drown or too little and it can dry out. Variations in rainfall around the world, caused by climate change, can lead to floods, droughts, and crop failure, which then has a knock-on effect to the community, causing poverty, poor health, lack of food etc. Take the lolly stick and write prayers on it for the community in Zimbabwe who are being affected by the changing weather patterns and rainfall.



Game Water Carrying Race

Often women have to carry water for their households long distances from a well, river or water pump by holding water containers on their heads. Have a team relay race where team members have to run carrying a full cup of water on their heads. Obviously, this is best played outside and you will need a towel and possibly a change of clothes available. If playing inside, team members could ‘run’ with a book balanced on their head instead, going back to the beginning if it drops.



Greta Wonders...

- What challenges do you face in your everyday life or have faced in the past? How did you cope with them?
- Of the challenges that children in Zimbabwe face, which do you think is the most important to change?
- Why might families want to send their children to school, even though it costs so much?

Activity

A cyclone is a storm that brings strong winds and rain. When warm ocean air rises it starts to cool and forms clouds: an area of high pressure. This then means there is less air closer to the ocean surface, an area of low pressure, so air moves in to fill the gap. As this air warms, it rises, and so a spinning reaction begins. The clouds formed spin with the rotation of the earth. You can see the effect by making your own cyclone jar. You need a jar or bottle with a tight lid. Put in four to five teaspoons of glitter to help make the effect clearer. Then fill the jar/bottle with water, leaving about five centimetres of air at the top. Add a few squirts of washing up liquid. Put the lid on firmly. Shake the bottle in your hand with a circular motion until it starts swirling. Keep spinning until your cyclone starts properly. Experiment with different sized bottles, different types of washing up liquid etc. Which creates the best effect?

Action Point

- We often take our food, shelter and ease of fresh drinking water and electricity for granted. Try sleeping in a tent for a night or two outside, without any electricity, or devices and only a few biscuits to eat and water to drink during the day. Talk about your experience and what it was like.
- Look up a project in Zimbabwe that you might be able to support either through fund raising or prayer. If you would like further information on how to help the Falcon Primary School, please contact Commitment for Life.



Session 5

Love is... love in action



Jesus said, "I give you a new command: Love each other. You must love each other as I have loved you." (John 13:34) The United Reformed Church's Commitment for Life programme works with Christian Aid to put God's love into action around the world, including in Zimbabwe. Christian Aid then partners with organisations in Zimbabwe that support and enable the people there to make changes that will help them. BRACT is one of those organisations.



BRACT helps people become more resilient so that they are affected less by the harsh climate and unpredictable extreme weather. By telling people about the different crops they can grow and livestock they can keep, and by giving them what they need to get started, BRACT helps them ensure they have enough and healthier food to eat, and extra to share and to sell for extra income. Farmer Gilbert Batau, for example, was introduced to the idea of raising goats and chickens. Gilbert says, "Each time I got male kids, I would pass on one of them to another farmer in the next village. In that way we are realising great success with the goat improvement programme."

BRACT also provides training to help young people learn a trade that isn't reliant on the weather, such as confectionery/bakery; bricklaying; carpentry; dressmaking; food processing (and peanut butter making); motor

mechanics and welding. And this isn't just for men. They help women have the confidence to take up work that was once thought to be just for men. Jerina Nyamukondiwa has become a welder through one of their projects and she says, "Do not be intimidated by being told that this and this job cannot be done by women. There is no work that cannot be done by women because (they say) it is hard."



The support that BRACT gives to individuals helps them change their own lives and they then pass what they have learned on to others in the community. BRACT sets up community gardens and water pumps that everyone can use.

Falcon Junior School in Harare is supported by Commitment for Life who helped provide a hot water system, which means the children can wash their hands. The school was founded in 2009 for the children of the poorest of families in the region.

Tererai Trent was born into a cattle-herding family in Zimbabwe and dreamed of getting an education like her brother but, like many girls in Zimbabwe, she was married young and had three children by the time she was eighteen. She taught herself to read and write and dreamed of going to America. She wrote her dreams down on paper, put them in a tin and buried it. She was determined to get an education overseas and then use what she learned to help people in her own country. She now works with charitable organisations to fund schools and to promote education for all children, regardless of gender and wealth. She speaks out about injustice.

She has written books, including books for children. Listen to her own true story, *The Girl who Buried her Dreams in a Can* <https://youtu.be/3GDByOOju1w>. She also wrote *Zandi finds Ubuntu* https://youtu.be/v_R8n7KJa10. Ubuntu is an idea that is known across the countries of southern Africa, including Zimbabwe, and means many different things, but it is basically about togetherness and how each has an impact on the lives of others.



Bible Link James 1:22

Do what God's teaching says; do not just listen and do nothing. When you only sit and listen, you are fooling yourselves.

- I wonder what God wants us to do to be good friends to the people of Zimbabwe
- I wonder what you have learned from *Go with Greta* about Zimbabwe and about God



Prayer

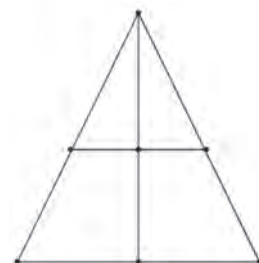
Loving God, you created your wonderful world to live in harmony and care for each other. We are sorry for the times when we take things for granted. Help us to listen to your teaching, to learn about your world and to play our part in sharing your love. Amen.

Active Prayer

Some children in Falcon School walk as much as five kilometres each way to go to school, and have chores to do before and after school too. Go on a prayer walk in your local area (it doesn't have to be 5km!). As you walk, thank God for the things you see that you are grateful for and say sorry for the signs of pollution or littering. Whenever you see children, ask God to bless the children of Zimbabwe and those who work to help them with the challenges they face.

Game Tsoro Yematatu

You need three counters each. On a triangle shape with seven points marked on, like in the picture, take it in turns to place your counter in on empty spot, trying to get three in a row like in noughts and crosses. Once all the pieces are placed, you take it in turns to move one of your counters to an empty adjacent spot. You can jump over an opponent's counter (without taking it) but only in a straight line, you can't go round a corner. The winner is the person who gets three in a row first.



Greta Wonders...

- What are your hopes and dreams for the future? Do you think they are the same as those of children in Zimbabwe or different?
- What do you think the word 'Ubuntu' means for you?
- Why might women and girls in Zimbabwe need support to go to school or to get good jobs?

Activity

Banana Fatcooks

Mix 125g flour, 2 tbsp sugar, 2 tsp baking powder and 1 tsp cinnamon in a bowl. Mash 2 overripe bananas and beat 2 eggs then add these to the dry ingredients and mix until they are combined but without overmixing. Heat cooking oil in a saucepan to 180°C (an adult may have to do this part of the activity) then spoon the banana mixture into the oil and cook for about 2 minutes on each side. Drain on a paper towel before serving warm.

Create a dream-holder

Use a clean, empty tin can with the lid safely removed, making sure you leave no sharp edges. Use acrylic paints to decorate it with a Zimbabwean pattern. Write your dreams on a piece of paper and put it in, then stretch a piece of balloon over the top and fasten with an elastic band.

Action Point

A lot of the challenges for families in Zimbabwe come from climate change. We in the UK contribute to climate change when we drive petrol and diesel engines, use non-renewable energy, and cut down trees. Try to remember to turn off electrical appliances (including light bulbs!) when not using them, to walk or cycle or use public transport instead of going by car, and to care for the environment.

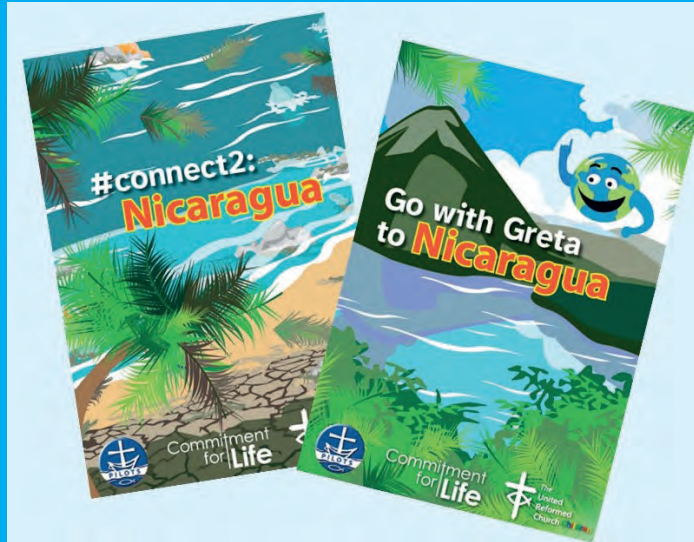
Watch

<https://youtu.be/KZcGMRemqrY>

Tida, Tipa ne shamwari is a classic rhyme that talks about little hands doing good so as to please God.



Also from the United Reformed Church's Commitment for Life and Children's and Youth Work partnership, resources on Nicaragua and on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Visit the website www.bit.ly/Greta_Connect_Resource or contact suzanne.pearson@urc.org.uk or children.youth@urc.org.uk for your copy.



November 2024 watch out for
Go with Greta and #Connect2 Bangladesh.

Has your church considered becoming a Commitment for Life church, supporting one of the three regions? Find out more on their webpage: www.bit.ly/C4L_URC. And why not order a frisbee!



www.urc.org.uk



URC Children and URC Youth provide resources covering the 0-25 age range, including holiday club materials, themed resource books, intergenerational resources for Advent and much much more.

Our Faith Adventures range provides material for families, children's groups and youth groups across the 0-14 age range with Faith Adventures: Children Together, Faith Adventures: Youth Resource and Families on Faith Adventures At Home. Visit: www.urc.org.uk/your-faith/children-young-people

