

#connect2: Zimbabwe

Equality

Education

Diversity

Commitment
for **Life**



The
United
Reformed
Church Youth

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Illustrations

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1 Here we are

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Tererai Trent – <https://tererai.org/about-tererai-trent/>

3 Celebrating my country

All – Kevin Snyman, 2023

4 Challenges facing young people in Zimbabwe

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Woman welding a bicycle, gender equality – David Brazier, Christian Aid

5 Love is... ?

Woman with tools – David Brazier, Christian Aid

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Man with Commitment for Life bag – Kevin Snyman, 2023

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Bible References

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Welcome to the Republic of Zimbabwe!

Welcome to URC Youth 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.

#Connect2 is for the 11 to 14 age range. It emphasises the increasing focus on our inter-connected world as we aim to build and explore the relationship between each of the Commitment for Life 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. Greta Global 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.



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 in our world. 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 four 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.urb.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. This video is most suitable for the under-11 age group.



It will be noted that this booklet focuses primarily on current life in Zimbabwe without looking too deeply 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 is primarily in establishing a sense of empathy and commonality between the young people of the UK and those of Zimbabwe through their day to day lives, while maybe stimulating the curiosity to dig more deeply into the politics and history through personal research. The United Reformed Church also produces materials, training and resources on the themes of the legacies of slavery, anti-racism, and the effects of colonialism and imperialism. Please contact the Mission department to find out more.

Session 1



Here we are



‘ This God made us in all our diversity from one original person, allowing each culture to have its own time to develop, giving each its own place to live and thrive in its distinct ways. ’ (GW) Acts 17:26

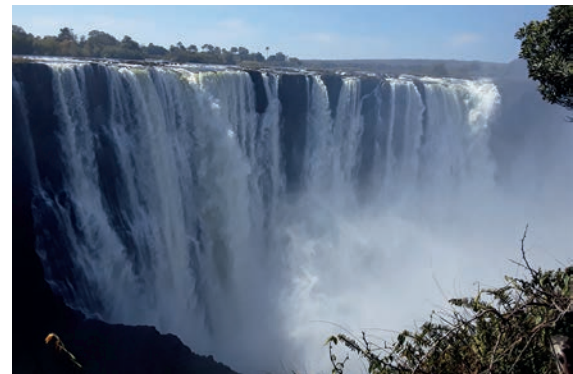
Unlike the island of Great Britain, Zimbabwe (officially called The Republic of Zimbabwe) is a land-locked country (it has no coastline) in southern Africa. It shares borders with Mozambique, Botswana, Zambia and South Africa.

Discuss What difference do you think it makes to a country not to have a coastline? Or, like the UK, to be surrounded by sea?

In African terms, it is quite a small country (the 26th largest country in Africa), However, it covers 390,757 square kilometres, which is nearly twice as big as Great Britain (209,331 square kilometres) and three times as big as England (132,938 square kilometres).

The population of Zimbabwe is just over 16million, and about ten per cent of them live in the capital city, Harare.

Zimbabwe is located between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers and is home to some of the most spectacular waterfalls – including the Victoria Falls, the largest curtain of falling water in the world, based on its width of 1,708 metres and height of over 98 metres. 650 million litres of water every minute drop over the cliff. Almost all of Zimbabwe lies over 300 metres above sea level.



The first people in the country were the Bantu-speaking Iron Age farmers in about 300CE – although there is evidence that Stone Age people inhabited the area up to 500,000 years ago. Nowadays there are three main languages: Shona, Ndebele and English – although there are actually another 13 official languages (Chewa, Chibarwe, Kalanga, Khoisan, Nambya, Ndau, Shangani, Sign Language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa.)

Discuss Why do you think there are so many official languages? What issues do you think this might cause and how might you overcome them? Can you find out how to greet people in any of the languages spoken in Zimbabwe?



Zimbabwe’s main industries are related to mining (platinum, iron ore, gold, diamonds and coal), agriculture, energy and tourism.

The country is known for its wealth of precious resources. In the Bible, King Solomon received a shipment of gold, silver, sandalwood, pearls, ivory, apes and peacocks every three years from the port of Ophir. Although many places have claimed to be the ancient port of Ophir, some scholars suggest that it is in Zimbabwe. You can read about King Solomon’s wealth and what he received from Ophir in 1 Kings 9:28-10:22.

Zimbabwe is home to the ‘Big Five’, so called by the hunters who came from abroad to Africa to hunt down these animals as trophies. These animals are now also threatened by climate change and loss of habitat and are the target of conservation projects, though some people argue that the money raised by the sale of hunting licenses is important to fund these projects. The big five are the African elephant, the Cape buffalo, the black rhino, the African lion and the African leopard. The Sable Antelope (left) is the national animal.



Some of the most famous landmarks in Zimbabwe are the 'Balancing Rocks'.

Activity

'Balancing rocks' is an activity that some people use to aid their mental wellbeing in the UK. Can you try and balance pebbles into a structure that doesn't look as though it should stay upright?

Zimbabwe used to be called Southern Rhodesia (and later Rhodesia) and was a British colony ruled by a minority white government in which the indigenous black African people were treated as though they were less important than white people. You can read about colonisation and its effects here: www.bit.ly/3rqRNvD

Cecil John Rhodes was one of the British imperialists who colonised the area now called Zimbabwe and there is a lot of controversy about him. There is a statue of him outside one of the Oxford University colleges and there has been a campaign to have it removed. This news report from CMN will explain a little about why: www.bit.ly/3PR5tcy. What is your opinion? He donated a lot of money to the university – is it right that they have a statue of him there?

Rhodesia declared independence from the UK in 1974 – but the country was still ruled by a white minority government which was not internationally recognised. It finally gained independence from white minority rule in 1980 after a civil war that cost 30,000 lives, and renamed itself Zimbabwe. The name is derived from the Shona phrase "Dzimba dza mabwe", which means "great houses of stone". It refers to the stone structures of Great Zimbabwe or Dzimbahwe, which were included in the World Heritage List in 1986.

Robert Mugabe was elected President and he ruled with an increasingly iron fist for 30 years until he was forced out of power following a coup in 2017.



The Zimbabwe flag includes a black stripe that represents the ethnic majority, red for the blood shed during liberation, green for agriculture, yellow for mineral wealth and white for peace and progress. There is also a red star for socialism and a depiction of the Zimbabwe bird that appeared on carvings in Great Zimbabwe.

About 50% of the population in the country profess to be Syncretics (part Christian, part indigenous beliefs), 25% are Christians and the rest follow indigenous beliefs. There is no official state religion (such as the Church of England).

Research

What is meant by indigenous beliefs and what are the indigenous beliefs in Zimbabwe? Do you ever mix other beliefs (e.g. superstitions) with your Christian faith?

Zimbabwe is a very 'young' country – with nearly 50% of the population being under 20 years old. Life expectancy is much lower than in Great Britain, with men living until 62 and women living until 65 (on average).

Discuss Can you imagine living somewhere where half the population is under 20 and very few people live beyond their mid sixties? How would the UK be different if that were the case here?



Session 2

A day in the life



‘Youth reveal their true natures by their actions, whether they do what is pure and right or not.’ (VOICE) Proverbs 20:11

Activity

Create a photo collage or draw a storyboard to identify the key points of your life. What would you share with someone from a different culture to your own?

Blessed (14) and her younger brother, Courage, came to the UK from Zimbabwe in 2022 with their mother and their father, who is a pastor. Their two elder brothers stayed behind in Zimbabwe to complete their university studies and develop their careers.

Blessed reflects on her life in Zimbabwe and the changes she has noticed since coming to the UK.

“In Zimbabwe, I would get up early before school to do house work. I am the only girl in the family. During weekends, my brothers would be working outside the house, getting fuel or food, and in the garden – so I didn’t mind so much. I would also help my mother, doing laundry, house cleaning and preparing the meals. Evenings would be spent doing homework.

“School is very different in Zimbabwe. I was surprised when I came to school in England because the students are more cheeky and disrespect the teachers much more than happens in Zimbabwe. This is not just because we respect the teachers more in Zimbabwe, but also because we can be physically punished if we don’t!

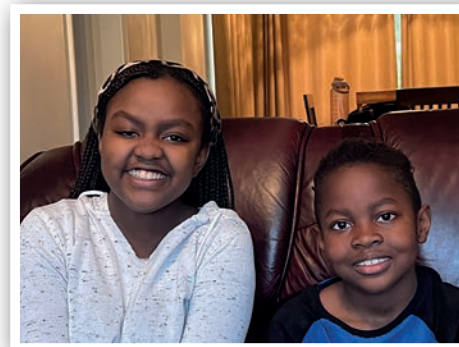
“There are three types of school in Zimbabwe: Private, Church and Government. Everybody has to pay to go to school. A private school can cost \$1,600 a term while a government school might cost \$40 per term. A church school will cost a little more than a government school but it is OK because if a parent can’t afford to pay for their child, they can often get help from a charity or grant – and the church schools are more generous to people who can’t afford it.

“We are able to study the same subjects in Zimbabwe as we do in England – but the big difference is that we are told what subjects we will learn and take exams for. It doesn’t matter what we like, it is all based on what we are good at. If you like drama but are good at geography – you will study geography.

“In England I am able to wear my hair in braids (which takes my mum about five hours to do!). In Zimbabwe schools we all have to wear our hair cut short like Courage’s hair (look at the photograph). It is also the law that all schools have to have a school uniform. If you do well at school you can go to university. Courage wanted to join the army but he has changed his mind now. I am not sure what I want to do yet.

“Zimbabwe can be a violent and dangerous place and many children have to walk to school along the road. Our parents try and organise so that we can walk with other children in groups to keep us safe.

“We had a big house in Zimbabwe with four bedrooms and it had a very big back yard. It was owned by the church. Many people do not have houses as nice as ours. Some people have a house in the city or town but also build a much cheaper house in the countryside where they grow crops or raise livestock that they can sell in the towns.



“Church is very important in Zimbabwe and we are all expected to go, especially if you are the children of the Pastor – but we want to go, anyway. Almost all my friends from school went to church – although they went to different churches, not all to the church I went to. The services are a bit different to the United Reformed Church. Lots of people take part: saying prayers, reading the Bible; the preacher just gives the sermon. Music is very important and churches usually have a choir. A service can last a long time – up to three hours and, after it is finished, there is often a chance to eat together.”

Discuss What are some of the similarities between Blessed’s life in Zimbabwe and your life in the UK?

Debate Think about the pros and cons of the Zimbabwean education system where young people study the subjects they are good at rather than the ones that they like, and discipline ensures they show respect to their teachers and work hard, compared with the UK education system where young people choose before GCSEs the subjects they want to study and there is no corporal punishment.

Activity

Many churches eat together as part of their worship. Can you think of examples in the Bible where people gather for a meal? John 21:1-17 describes one example. Prepare some food together as a group, maybe a breakfast or, if you have access to the outdoors, a picnic to share together. If you have people from different cultures in your group, why not each bring something to eat from your own culture.

Prayer

Thinking about the five hours Blessed’s mum spends braiding her hair, slowly plait together three strands of wool, one to represent the young people of Zimbabwe, one to represent yourself and one to represent God. As you plait the wool, thank God that we are all part of God’s family and interconnected. We all have things that bring us joy and things that challenge or upset us, but God is with us in all things. Say the words from Jeremiah 29:11, either out loud or in your heart as you plait. Finally tie the plait off. Make it into a bracelet, keyring or bookmark to remind you of God’s promises and of the people of Zimbabwe.

Blessed and Courage were able to go to school due to their family’s circumstances but this is not the case for all children and young people in Zimbabwe. Changes in the economy in Zimbabwe meant that the country experienced an economic crisis and now 72% of the population live in poverty. Only 14% of girls in Zimbabwe complete secondary education, and only 1% of girls from the poorest families do. This is often because families cannot afford to send all their children to school, so will just send the boys. Thirty four per cent of girls are married by the age of 18, 5% before they are 15 (UNICEF 2020). Children with disabilities are also marginalised and often unable to access education.

Period poverty can also affect girls’ education. If they are unable to afford proper sanitary protection, girls may skip school during their periods because they are embarrassed, especially as it is not really acceptable to talk about periods in Zimbabwe. This means they can miss on average 40 days a year, sometimes even more. Period poverty affects people in this country too and many schools take action to ensure that girls can access sanitary protection whenever they need it.

Activity

Research Tererai Trent (pictured right) and find out her story.



Action

Many young people in Zimbabwe do not have access to computers or mobile phones. In poorer areas, even the schools are unable to provide equipment for IT lessons. Try going for a whole day without using your mobile phone. If nothing else, it is good for the environment. Think about how often you use your phone and what different things you use it for. Discuss with your group the advantages and disadvantages of having 24/7 access to social media, the internet, games etc.

Session 3

Celebrating my country



‘Be full of joy in the Lord always, I will say again, be full of joy.’ (GW) Philippians 4:4-7



Zimbabwe is a beautiful country which counts tourism as one of its assets, with visitors flocking to see the wildlife (the nature reserves are home to at least 400 bird species and a hundred species of mammal), to visit the beautiful scenery at places like Mosi-oa-Tunya (known to us as Victoria Falls), which is a world heritage site, and to explore the rich historical culture at Great Zimbabwe or the ancient rock art at Motobo Hills. The people of Zimbabwe are generally recognised as being a particularly welcoming and friendly people.

Activity What do our cultures have in common?

Learning about other cultures helps us understand others better. We can recognise and celebrate our diversity, different backgrounds and shared values.

- What foods have you tried from other cultures? What are your favourites?
- What films or TV programmes do you watch from other cultures?
- What music do you listen to from other cultures? What are the names of some the artists?

Activity Researching Zimbabwean culture

Do some research into Zimbabwean culture. What is the country like for people who live there?

Split into small groups and give each group a different category to research.

E.g. Food & Drinks, Clothing, Music, Dance, Games, Places of interest, Religion.

Invite each group to feed back on what they learnt from their research.



Discuss the questions below:

- What are the similarities between Zimbabwe and other cultures that you are aware of?
- What do we in the UK have in common with Zimbabwean culture?
- What hobbies and interests might you share with young people from Zimbabwe?
- How could you learn more about other cultures such as Zimbabwe?
- How can you be sure that what you are finding out is authentic? Who are the best people to talk to?

Traditional Dance and music

The Mbede Jerusarema is a popular dance style that is practiced by communities from eastern Zimbabwe. Watch this short video from UNESCO to learn more about this dance and its cultural significance.

www.bit.ly/48vzKVx

Music and dance is important in Zimbabwe and linked both to culture and religion. There are many different cultures and ethnic groups within Zimbabwe and each has its own dances and music styles. Instruments such as the mriba and ngoma or ingungu drums are probably the best known. Mriba means “voice of the ancestors” and is often referred to (inaccurately) as a thumb piano. You can find YouTube videos which will talk you through how to make a Mriba using hair clips and a block of wood – why not have a go?



Modern Zimbabwean music is often influenced by traditional music styles and instruments and can be used to challenge society and raise awareness of issues. Listen to some of the music by Jah Prayzah, currently very popular on the Zimbabwe pop music scene, and by Oliver Mtukudzi, who performs internationally.

Traditional music also influences church music in Zimbabwe, both Catholic and Protestant. A style of gospel music is popular and one of the best known singers/bands is Machanic Manyeruke and the Puritans. One of their songs, 'Jesus is risen', can be heard here: www.bit.ly/3PUeJg6

In the UK, one of the songs we might hear in church settings is 'Jesu Tawa Pano' (Jesus, we are here), which was written by Zimbabwean Patrick Matsikenyiri. Try singing it together, maybe with a drum accompaniment. www.bit.ly/tawapano. The words are 'Jesu, tawa pano' (x3) 'Tawa pano, mu zita renyu.'

Research and Prayer activity Great Zimbabweans

'Great Zimbabweans' is a project by photographer Hannah Mentz featuring portraits and interviews with 40 inspirational Zimbabweans, highlighting their diversity, talents and achievements. The website below features photos and a short summary for each of the participants.

<https://www.greatzimbabweans.org/>

- look at the gallery of the 40 pictures
- Choose a face that interests you and spend a few moments looking at the portrait
- then read the short description of the person – how might they inspire you and other young people?
- 'Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.' (1 Cor 11:1 NKJ) – do you think that your chosen person (knowingly or unknowingly) is acting like Christ?
- Thank God for this person, the inspiration they offer, and ask God to bless them

You can read more about some of the inspiring woman from this project here:

www.bit.ly/ZimWomen

Crafts

Traditional crafts in Zimbabwe include beadwork, weaving of baskets and sleeping mats out of dried grasses, stone sculpture, wood carving, pottery and wall painting (painting designs onto the outside walls of the house using fingers to create traditional patterns, with earth pigments for colouring). Several of the craftsmen that create the Shona stone sculptures are known internationally. The carvings are made in a variety of materials, from soapstone to the highly esteemed Zimbabwean Verdite, a semi precious stone over 3,500 million years old.

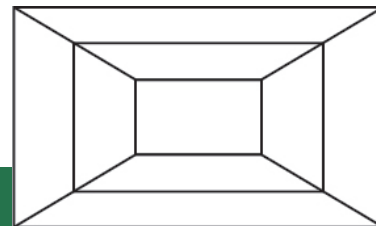
Look online at some of the designs of Zimbabwean pottery. Use air-dry clay to create a pot and decorate it in a typical Zimbabwean style.



Games

One Touch is a game similar to football but played one-on-one, each player only making contact with the ball once in each turn. Each player has a goal area and the ball starts with the person who wins the toss of a coin kicking the ball from their goal area. Wherever the ball lands, that is where their opponent can kick from. Head or chest can be used to defend the goal, though this is instead of a kick. The ball must not be touched with a hand. The first to reach three goals wins.

Play **Fuva**. This is a game for two players, each having twelve counters. Take it in turns to place a counter on the board (pictured right) at the intersection of at least two lines. The aim is to get three of your counters in a row.



Pray together

Thank God for a world of diversity, for the wonders of creation, for all we can learn from the past and hope for in the future. Pray for justice and hope for all God's family, wherever they may be. Amen.

Session 4

Challenges facing young people in Zimbabwe



‘Defend weak people and orphans. Protect the rights of the oppressed and the poor. Rescue weak and needy people. Help them escape the power of wicked people.’

(GW) Psalm 82:3-4

Health (and access to health services)

The NHS in the UK is funded by the government, from the taxes that people pay to them, and provides free and accessible healthcare to all, though some choose to pay privately for aspects of their healthcare. Many people have to pay towards things like prescriptions and dental care, but these are subsidised heavily by the government.

Zimbabwe once had a health sector that was the envy of many African countries. Well resourced and well staffed, the health of the nation was a top priority. However, financial pressures led to major cuts in funding and, although it is very slowly recovering, there is still a shortage of skilled professionals and healthcare staff, hospitals and healthcare centres, and a lack of equipment and medicines, laundries and canteens.



The health service in Zimbabwe is made of four separate parts: public sector (available to all, a bit like our NHS), private health (less than ten per cent of Zimbabweans have private health insurance), mission hospitals run by the church and non-governmental organisations (both fee paying). Even public sector healthcare is not free for everyone, only for those under five, over sixty, and women who are pregnant or breast feeding – and this varies from place to place. So many people in Zimbabwe struggle to afford or access healthcare.

HIV, tuberculosis and malaria are the most serious health threats and are responsible for many maternal and childhood deaths. Every year, one in every 11 children in Zimbabwe dies before their fifth birthday.

Much of the funding for Zimbabwe’s health services is from grants and loans from other countries.

- Is it right that the best healthcare is reserved for those who can afford to pay for it? Does your faith influence your opinion about this in any way?
- Why do you think mission (church run) hospitals might charge for their services rather than providing them free of charge?

Research and activity

Use the NHS website to find out more about how the top three health threats in Zimbabwe (HIV, tuberculosis and malaria) are treated in the UK. Create an educational poster, infogram or short reel that could be used to inform people about one or more of these diseases.

Recipe

Find out what fruits grow in Zimbabwe and use them to create a healthy fresh fruit salad or a tasting platter.

Climate Change

Climate Change impacts communities throughout the world. In Zimbabwe, temperatures are rising and rainfall is decreasing. There are more droughts and also more floods. Sixty seven per cent



of people in Zimbabwe work in agriculture, which is severely affected by climate change, and this leads to food insecurity. Lack of water affects sanitation and the droughts and floods increase the spread of water-borne diseases such as cholera. Christian Aid believes that climate change is a social justice issue, as the communities that are being impacted first and worst are the countries that have contributed the least to cause the issues. Every child in Zimbabwe (43% of the population or 6.6 million children under 18) is exposed to at least one climate/environmental hazard and at risk of climate change impacts such as flooding, drought, heatwaves, cyclones, and air pollution, yet they are the least responsible.

Activity

Explore Christian Aid's Damage and Loss resource pack www.bit.ly/CA_loss_damage. Use the prayer activity and then use the guidelines to write a letter to your MP about the impact of climate change.

The Zimbabwean Government is working with UNICEF to tackle climate change within the country to reduce its impact on under 18s. Look at the targets on their report: <https://uni.cf/46h9eh4> How green is your school/learning environment? What about your church? Why not investigate what is already being done and whether maybe there is something else that could be tried? Who would you need to talk to? Even the smallest changes can make a difference. Look at these surprising facts www.bit.ly/Green-Age

Game

Give each player five beans. Label three areas of the room and ask players to choose where they will stand. One area is for planting rice, which needs plenty of water to grow and is flood resistant. Another is for planting cassava, which does not do well in watery conditions and will fail in flood conditions. And the third area is for growing maize, which is flood resistant. To choose rice or cassava costs each player two beans. To choose maize costs four beans. Participants pay these fees to the banker who then rolls a dice. 1-2 is a dry season, 3-4 is average rainfall, and 5-6 is flooding. Those people whose crops would survive the allocated weather receive four beans. Keep playing for a while and see what happens to the number of beans each player has. You could adapt it by giving half the group (representing female farmers) fewer beans than the other half (representing males). (Game based on an idea developed by Janot Mendler de Suarez and Pablo Suarez for the Red Cross.)



Gender Equality and Gender Based Violence

➤ **Content Warning** – this section explores issues of gender-based violence and domestic abuse. Support for those affected is available: www.bit.ly/Women-Aid and www.bit.ly/Dom-Abuse-Line

Gender-based violence is a global issue, which exists and impacts individuals in societies around the world, including in the UK where, on average, the police in England and Wales alone receive over 100 calls relating to domestic abuse every hour. (HMIC, 2015) In Zimbabwe one in three females report experiencing gender-based violence before the age of 18. (Zimbabwe National Baseline Survey of Life Experiences of Adolescents Report, 2011)

Ammara Brown is a musician from Zimbabwe. In 2022 she released a single called 'My Protector' www.bit.ly/A-Brown-protector as part of a national campaign in Zimbabwe called **#LoveShouldntHurt**. The campaign aims to “teach men and women in Zimbabwe knowledge, motivation and the urgency needed to eliminate violence in relationships and in the community”.

Christian Aid's 'In Their Lifetime' programme works with partners and with faith leaders from the Zimbabwe Council for Churches to promote equal rights of men and women and to try and understand why the violence happens and what can be done to address it www.bit.ly/CA-gender.

Discuss

- Where do you see gender inequalities in society?
- The Christian Aid material talks about “positive masculinity”. What do you think this means?
- Does your faith make any difference to the way you treat other people, especially those of a different gender or who are different to you in any way?



Prayer

Use this prayer from Compassion UK www.bit.ly/48wP5oX



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.

