#connect2: Jamaica



Commitment for Life

The United Reformed Church Youth

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Illustrations

Illustrations (photo accreditations)

Bible References

Bible References – Unless otherwise indicated, scripture in Go with Greta is taken from the Easy-to-Read Version (ERV). Copyright © 2006 by Bible League International

Welcome to Jamaica

Welcome to URC Children's mission magazine from the United Reformed Church (URC) Children's, Youth and Intergenerational Discipleship, produced in collaboration with URC Commitment for Life is collaborating with CRAF on active reparative justice work with a particular focus on the "New Free Villages" initiative.

Greta Global is the mascot of Commitment for Life, and each year will invite children aged between five and ten to 'Go with Greta' to one of the regions that Commitment for Life supports. 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.

Regions visited so far are Central America (Nicaragua), Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Zimbabwe and Transcarpathia – a region of Ukraine. This year's resource is all about Jamaica and Legacies of Slavery.

Why Jamaica

The URC has been on a focused journey of engaging with the legacies of transatlantic slavery since 2019. That is when our Legacies of Slavery Task Group was formed, to look at our history - the role played by our forebears in transatlantic slavery, but also to look at the present – the ways in which that history continues to shape lives today. **https://bit.ly/4rK4vjl**

After much consideration, research, and biblical reflection, the task group recommended that the URC *should* issue an Apology regarding transatlantic slavery and the URC's failure to dismantle the continuing injustices of racism and racial inequities today. It further recommended that we *should* offer some form of 'reparatory justice– practical outworking of the Apology, seeking to address at least some aspects of that which remains broken in our Church, communities, and world. Following a positive URC-wide consultation, General Assembly 2022 adopted a statement of



Confession and Apology and committed the URC to concrete acts of repairing justice. Assembly 2023 agreed a 3-strand approach to repairing justice:

1. Local (within the URC) - anti-racism training,
2. Regional (within the UK) - mentoring of young Black men,
3. Global - working with partners in the Caribbean and Africa to address issues they identify for themselves, in the ways they determine for themselves.



Welcome to Jamaica



Revd Dr Gordon Cowans, Chair of the Reparations Task Force of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI), reached out to accept our Apology and offer to support us in our journey. Through Gordon, we were introduced to the Churches' Reparations Action Forum (CRAF) Jamaica, with its 7-Point Plan for practically addressing the prevailing legacies. A close partnership has since developed between the URC task group and members of CRAF, and more broadly between the URC and UCJCI – hence, the joyful focus on supporting justice efforts in Jamaica.

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, exploring the programmes offered by CRAF, 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**

CRAF: **www.crafja.com**
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 **https://bit.ly/3Tpol1H** where you will also find additional resources. A video to kick-start your exploration of Jamaica is also available on this page at **www.bit.ly/Greta_Connect_Youtube** This video is most suitable for the under 11 age group.
These two videos are intended for background information for leaders and those over 18.

You can find out more about the legacies of slavery here: (Please be aware that this video touches on gender violence and sensitive issues). https://bit.ly/4j5WgfB

This video is shorter but is less graphic in its descriptions: https://bit.ly/4jEqtTd

Session 1
Here we are

The United Reformed Church Youth

Greta is off to Jamaica. Jamaica is an Island and can be found between North America and South America and is surrounded by the Caribbean Sea.



The island is about 146 miles long and varies from 22 to 51 miles wide, its landscape includes golden sandy beaches, rolling hills and busy towns. Kingston has been its capital city since 1872. Nearly half of the island is covered in mountains with the Blue Mountain Peak being the highest point. Have a look at a map to see what other towns you can spot and what other terrain it has.

Jamaica has a varied and complex history. Before Christopher Columbus claimed the island for Spain in 1494 several different groups of people had lived and claimed the land as their own. In 1655 British naval forces captured Jamaica from the Spanish creating many difficulties for those who lived there including the introduction of slavery, this was eventually abolished in 1834 and Jamaica became an independent country once again in 1962. The original Indigenous people of Jamaica were the **Taíno** (often historically called Arawaks), who migrated from South America around 600–900 AD and named the island *Xaymaca.*

Activity 1 – Move into groups of three or more, explain that each group is going to create a tableau, a freeze frame picture of a slavery scenario. It might be people being captured and enslaved, it might be ill treatment of a slave, it might be a slave begging to be let go. Once everyone has had a few minutes to decide on their tableau take it in turns to show it to the rest of the group. Invite each of those watching to physically change one thing in the tableau – it might be turning someone's fists into a welcoming gesture; it might be removing the slave altogether. Once everyone has had a turn in showing their tableau and in changing something in the tableaus move into a time of discussion about the activity and how it made them feel.



Action point – There have been many people through history who have fought for the rights of others, Sam Sharp and William Wilberforce are two examples. I wonder who you would consider to be the modern-day people who are fighting for the rights of the oppressed and the marginalized? I wonder how you can get involved?

Jamaica is regarded as a bilingual country where Jamaican English and Jamaican Patois are the most widely spoken languages.

Jamaica is hot all year round, but it can get chilly at night and at certain times of the year though it doesn't tend to get colder than 20° and often reaches into the mid-thirties in the daytime. The tropical climate is influenced by the sea and the northeast winds, which are strong throughout the year. Coastal breezes blow onshore by day and offshore at night. During the winter months, from December to March, colder winds known locally as "northers" reach the island from the North American mainland. Rains are seasonal, falling chiefly in October and May, although thunderstorms can bring heavy showers in the summer months, from June to September. The average annual rainfall for the entire island is about 82 inches.



The Jamaican flag features a distinctive design consisting of a gold diagonal cross that divides

the flag into four sections: two green triangles at the top and bottom, and two black triangles on the hoist and fly sides. The flag was officially adopted on August 6 1962, coinciding with Jamaica's independence from the United Kingdom. The colors symbolize resilience (black), hope and agricultural wealth (green), and the natural resources of the country (gold).

Activity 2 – Create your own Hama bead Jamaican flag

You will need:

- Hama beads – green, yellow and black
- an iron
- greaseproof paper
- Hama bead boards – rectangular or square shaped



What you do:
Use the board as your base, copy the design of the Jamaican flag using the Hama beads. When happy with the design place a piece of greaseproof paper over the top and iron gently for 15 second bursts (you do not need to press the iron) until the beads have melted together.

Bible Link Acts 17: 26

"*God began by making one man, and from him he made all the different people who live everywhere in the world. He decided exactly when and where they would live*."

It can be difficult to read this Bible passage and live in a place that has difficulty and conflict however we can be reassured that wherever God has put us, God is with us and never leaves us.

Discussion:

- What do you like best about where you live?
- If you could change one thing about your hometown what would it be?

The people of Jamaica are warm and hospitable, its history is rooted in the resilience, creativity, and spirit of its people and has a vibrant and diverse culture. From the sounds of reggae to the vibrant art, dance, and culinary traditions, Jamaican culture promotes unity and embraces life.

Jamaica and the people who live there have had to find a way through many challenges, from having their independence taken from them, living through the atrocities and tragedy of the slave trade and more recently the devastation which Hurricane Melissa brought when it hit in October 2025 – the repercussions of which will be felt for many years to come.

Game - Dominos
Playing dominoes can help children enhance thinking skills, recognize patterns, practice counting, and develop social skills like patience, sharing, and fair play.

Getting Started

- Players: two-to-four players can play. With two players, each draws seven dominos; with three-four players, each draws five dominos.
- Setup: Shuffle all dominos face down and place them in a pile. Each player keeps their tiles hidden from others. Do not show your dominos during the game.

Starting the Game

- The player with the highest double (e.g., [six|six]) goes first. If no doubles are drawn, the player with the highest total number on a domino starts.
- Place the first domino face up in the centre of the table. Play proceeds clockwise.

Playing Your Turn



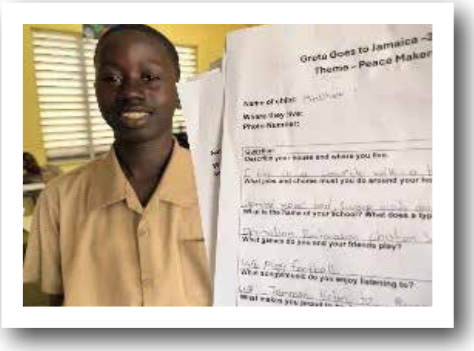
- On your turn, place a domino that matches one end of the domino chain. For example, if the chain ends with [four|three], you can play a domino with four or three.
- If you cannot play, draw a domino from the pile until you find a match. If no dominos remain, pass your turn.
- The first player to use all their dominos wins. If no moves are possible, the player with the lowest number of combined dominos wins.

Homemade dominos
Dominoes Game - Planning Playtime
DIY Dominoes for Kids (Easy Homemade Game Craft)

Prayer – Ensure everyone has access to a slip of paper which will help to create a paper chain. On the paper chains write or draw prayers which focus on being in chains either physically, mentally or spiritually. Join the chains together to make a long chain. Sellotape the chain from one end of a room to the other, you may need to add chain links to make it long enough. Offer the prayers to God and as all shouts Amen run/walk quickly through the chain to break it.

Session 2
Growing up in Jamaica

The United Reformed Church Youth



The Jamaican education system is very similar to the UK, and lessons are taught in English. The system is divided into several levels: early childhood education (one-to six-year-olds), primary education, (six- to twelve-year-olds) secondary education, (12- to 17-year-olds) and higher education (17–19-year-olds). Education is compulsory for children between the ages of six and 17. Students study a wide range of subjects including English, Mathematics, Science, Religious Education, Physical Education, Art, and often Spanish, have lots of homework and are tested regularly, with many having extra tuition if affordable. Rather than GCSEs which are taken in UK schools in Secondary education, those in Jamaica take CSEC exams, Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate. Extra-curricular activities are offered in many schools. Although almost all children in Jamaica now attend school many families struggle to afford uniforms, books, transportation, lunches and examination fees and not all have access to IT resources and are able to afford extra tuition which puts them at a disadvantage. Thankfully there are charities and organisations which help to meet this need.

Food For The Poor - **https://www.foodforthepoorja.org/** Jamaica supports vulnerable families, schools, and children with educational materials and meals. UNICEF Jamaica - **https://www.unicef.org/jamaica/** works alongside the Jamaican government to improve education, child welfare, and access to opportunities for disadvantaged children and many local churches run feeding programmes, homework clubs, and school-support schemes for children in their communities.

In February 2026, Kevin Snyman (Head of World Justice) visited Kingston in Jamaica and the Operation Restoration Christian School (ORCS). He interviewed the children asking them about their home life and schooling. Those interviewed were between the ages of 13 and 16 and so would have been in secondary education.

Home Life
The students that were interviewed lived in Kingston and in nearby Trench Town and Waterhouse. Kevin learned from them that their homes are typically built of concrete and that family life is important and central to the children's identity.

He learnt that many families struggle financially, and access to water can sometimes be an issue, showing how climate with an increase in heat affects daily life.



Many of the children contribute to family life through chores in the home such as washing dishes and clothes, sweeping, cleaning, cooking and helping with siblings.

The children described their school as supportive and encouraging, and where students build each other up.

Game - PUNCHINELLO
Recess circle game

Played mainly by girls (sometimes boys joined in)

Form a circle: Children stand in a circle holding hands, one person stands in the middle, they are Punchinello.

Sing the opening lines: The circle sings the first two lines while circling or clapping.

Perform an action: Punchinello performs any action they like, such as hopping or spinning.

Copy the action: The circle sings the “we can do it too” lines and copies the action exactly.

Swap places: On the last verse, Punchinello points to or taps another child, swapping places with them.

These are the song words:

What can you do
Punchinello little fellow
What can you do
Punchinello little dear

We can do it too
Punchinello little fellow
We can do it too
Punchinello little fellow

We can do it too
Punchinello little dear
Who does it best
Punchinello little fellow
Who does it best
PUNCHINELLO Little Dear!

Discussion: What kind of experiences have you had from people you encounter? Have you ever considered yourself to have been bullied or discriminated against?



Rose who was born in Abuka, St Ann, Jamaica remembers a childhood shaped by family, faith, discipline and the natural beauty of the island. She grew up in a large family and described life as simple: walking long distances to school, going to church several times each Sunday, and living on land full of fruit trees such as mangoes, breadfruit, oranges, and tangerines. Just before her 18th birthday in 1960, Rose came to live in England. Rose faced serious challenges after arriving in England. She experienced racism and discrimination, especially in housing, where signs openly said, “No Blacks, No Irish, No Dogs.” Living conditions were cramped and difficult, and she often had to share overcrowded accommodation. She also found the cold weather and snow difficult, especially without proper heating or clothing. Despite these challenges, Rose proved resilient: she found office work, built a career, studied hard, and kept pushing back against being underestimated.

You can find out more about Roses story here:**LINK**

Leisure Interests
The most popular sport played by the group of children spoken to was football, although other games included tag, hopscotch, Roblox, and Free Fire. Dominoes is also a very popular game that is played.

Listening to music such as Reggae, or dancehall after school helps children and young people to relax and feel connected to friends and family.

What makes you proud to be Jamaican?
When questioned about what makes them proud to be Jamaican, responses included, culture, food, music, creativity and family. Jamaicans are described as being strong, talented and resilient.

Action Point - What can you or your church actively do to help with bullying or discrimination in your community? If you have a church window, notice board or similar then it can be used to display posters, slogans, bible verses showing that your church is for all. Have some fun creating something colourful.

Activity 1 - Recycled Jamaican Cup Drum
What you need:

- paper or plastic cups (or clean plastic tubs work too)
- strong balloons (one per drum)
- rubber bands or tape
- craft supplies for decorating: construction paper, markers, or paints. Ideas for colours include black, green, yellow, and red.





What you do:
Decorate the Base. Invite the young people to cover the outside of the cup with paper or paint with either the Jamaican Flag or vibrant geometric patterns.

To make the Drum Skin, take a balloon and use scissors to cut off the narrow neck part, leaving the wide bowl of the balloon. Assemble the Drum by

Prayer – Dear God, help our hearts and ears be open to your voice Lord. Thank you for those people you that you have placed in my life, parents, grandparents, teachers and other caregivers that help and guide me. Thank you for teaching me how to be loving, kind and to follow you. Encourage me to be the best I can be, compassionate, loving and courageous – willing to stand up for others when it is needed. Amen.

gently stretching the remaining wide piece of balloon tightly over the open top of the cup.

Use a rubber band or strong tape around the rim to make sure the balloon stays firmly in place. Young people can use their fingers, hands, or unsharpened pencils as drumsticks to practice making traditional Jamaican beats.

Bible Link - **Proverbs 22:6**
Easy-to-read

Teach children in a way that fits their needs, and even when they are old, they will not leave the right path.

There are many loud voices in our community, the internet, youtubers, tv, books, other people and even our own doubt. The Bible can teach us a lot about how we can live together in harmony, how we can be the sort of person in the world that makes God smile.

Activity 2 - Fruit punch
The recipe serves 10

You will need:

- 10 strawberries sliced
- ½ orange sliced
- ½ lemon sliced
- handful of mint leaves
- ice
- 500ml pineapple juice
- 300ml orange juice
- 300ml lemonade

What you do:
Put the fruit, ice and mint leaves in a jug. Pour in the juices – stir and then add the lemonade. Enjoy.



You can find out about a young person's experience of living in Jamaica here: **LINK**



Session 3

Celebrating my country

The United Reformed Church Youth



Although it is a small island in the Caribbean, its influence around the world is enormous. Jamaica is known worldwide for its rich colour, creativity, pride, food, music, cultural influence, and breathtaking natural beauty. Its national motto, "Out of Many, One People," reflects the way different histories and cultures have come together to shape one nation.

Beauty, Pride, and Belonging

Jamaica's natural beauty is another reason it is so widely loved. The island is known for its stunning beaches, waterfalls, rivers, and the lush Blue Mountains. Its flag, first raised on Independence Day in 1962, symbolises strength, creativity, hope, and the beauty of the land. For many people, celebrating Jamaica is also about honouring roots, remembering family stories, and keeping traditions alive. For example, Rose, who grew up in Jamaica, remembers walking through the countryside as a child, surrounded by mango and breadfruit trees, and feeling free and happy with her family and community. Celebrating Jamaica means recognising a nation whose people have made a powerful contribution to the world while holding on to deep pride in who they are and where they come from.

One student that attends the Operation Restoration Christian School in Kingston described visiting a waterfall for the first time and feeling amazed by the cool water and beautiful surroundings. Moments like these help people appreciate the world around them and feel close to nature.



Discussion: What helps you to feel close to nature?

Music and Culture



Music and culture are particularly important. Jamaica is the birthplace of reggae music, the Rastafari movement, ska, rocksteady, and dancehall.
Reggae became a global voice for hope, justice, peace, and resistance, and **Bob Marley** helped carry that sound across the world.

On a visit to Operation Restoration Christian School in Kingston, many of the young boys said that they liked listening to reggae after school as it helps them relax and feel connected to their friends and family. Other music enjoyed by young people included Dancehall, a version of reggae Music, it's not just for entertainment in Jamaica; it is also a way of expressing feelings and bringing people together.

Jamaican culture is also expressed through language, storytelling, faith, dance, and festivals. The island's creative spirit has helped shape fashion, performance, and identity far beyond its shores.

Discussion: I wonder how you like to express yourself?

Food and Everyday Life

Jamaican food is another important part of celebration because it is full of flavour, memory, and family tradition. The national dish, Ackee and saltfish, is a strong symbol of Jamaican identity. Other much-loved foods include jerk chicken, curry goat, rice and peas, fried dumplings, patties, and escovitch fish.



Fresh produce also plays a significant role, including mangoes, breadfruit, oranges, coconut, and tangerines. Food often brings people together at home, at church, and at community events. For example, a class or family

Prayer – Dear God, help us to be good caretakers of the world, especially of the town where we live. Remind us that you called us to care and nurture not to destroy and hurt. Amen

celebrating Jamaica might create a simple Jamaican menu, taste tropical fruit, or talk about how recipes are passed from one generation to the next.

Rose remembers helping prepare dumplings with her family and picking fresh fruit straight from the trees. Another child described how proud he felt serving homemade Jamaican patties to visitors. Food brings people together and helps keep traditions alive.

Discussion: I wonder what traditions you follow in your family or in your life?

Sport and Achievement

Jamaica is also celebrated for its extraordinary achievement in sport. The country has produced some of the fastest runners in history, including **Usain Bolt**, **Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce,** and **Elaine Thompson-Herah.** Their success has made Jamaica a world leader in sprinting and has inspired young people everywhere to dream big.

Many children grow up dreaming of becoming athletes like Usain Bolt. One girl shared that she practises running every day in her neighbourhood because she wants to represent her country one day. These stories show how sport inspires confidence, determination, and big dreams.

In **cricket** Jamaica has produced some of the most dominant and iconic cricketers in the history of the sport namely **Chris Gayle, Courtney Walsh, Michael Holding, George Headley and Jeff Dujon** all who have helped in the success of the West Indies Cricket team.

The Jamaican **bobsleigh team** became famous in 1988 in the four-man team in the Calgary Winter Olympics. They became famous through the film 'Cool Runnings,' which is loosely based on the true story of how the team came to show courage and determination in a sport not usually associated with a Caribbean island.

Derrick Errol Evans MB, originally from Manchester Parish, Jamaica is better known as **Mr Motivator.** He rose to fame in 1993 through appearances on a UK breakfast show performing live fitness session and offering tips and advice to viewers in how to stay fit.

This reminds us that celebrating Jamaica also means celebrating perseverance, talent, and the confidence to do the unexpected.

Bible Link - Psalm 104: 24

"Lord, you created so many things!
With your wisdom you made them all.
The earth is full of the living things you made."

Growing up in a country so rich and vast in colour and music can be a blessing. Psalm 104 was written to celebrate the earth, the harmony of the natural world, and people's essential role as stewards of the world rather than its master. We can be stewards of the world whatever our age, we can all do something to keep the world looking good and to be a healthy place to grow up in. I wonder how you can best look after the place where you live.

Blow some bubbles, as you do watch one of the bubbles as it floats right up until it pops. As you watch it pray for a part of the world whether it be the people, environment, plants or creatures. Keep repeating with bubbles for as long as you wish.

Game - You may be familiar with the game Ludo – in Jamacia there is a variation of this called Ludi – the difference is that each corner of the board depicts a different place in Jamica; Kingston, Negril, Clarendon, Ocho Rios. Make your own board and have fun playing!

Action point - Sam Sharpe is considered a national hero in Jamaica, he is one of seven national heroes. Nanny of the Maroons, Marcus Gravey, Sir Alexander Bustamante, Paul Bogle, Sam Sharpe, Norman Washington Manley, George Gordon.

I wonder what you could find out about them?

Activity 1 - Play a short reggae or dancehall track (e.g. Bob Marley). Did you know that rhythm brings people together.
Ask children to clap, tap, or use simple instruments (sticks, drums, shakers) to copy the beat. Why not try and create your own reggae-style rhythm pattern.

Activity 2 - Jamaica Themed Film Night. Watch the Film 'Cool Runnings.' While watching it, try some typical fruit from Jamaica e.g. Mango, ackee, coconut or serve some Jamaican patties, and play some Reggae music.

Action Point - Choose one way to celebrate Jamaica this week, for example:

- Listen to a reggae song.
- Try a food or fruit that is found in Jamaica.

Session 4
Challenges I face

The United Reformed Church Youth

Building safer communities: Violence affecting young people



Violence affecting young people is a challenge faced by communities in many parts of the world, including Jamaica and the UK. It is connected to wider issues such as inequality, lack of opportunities and the impacts of past and ongoing injustices.

In November 2025, the URC's Standing Together programme brought together participants from Jamaica and the UK, including the Revd Kevin "Nana Moses" Calvert, Minister of Visual & Performing Arts within the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, and Dr Joanna Simpson, Educator of Community Social Workers at the University of the West Indies. Together, they explored how churches and communities can work together to create safer, more hopeful futures.

This learning connects with the URC's Legacies of Slavery work, including exploring mentoring for Black young men to help develop confidence, identity, self-worth and hope.

Discussion:

- What challenges do young people face in your community?
- What helps young people feel valued, supported and hopeful?
- What can we do to support young people and create safer communities?

Activity 1 - Listen to "God is!" by Nana Moses

Listen to the song **"God is!"**
by the Revd Kevin "Nana Moses" Calvert.

YouTube Link: https://bit.ly/4zAazyb

- What words, phrases or images stood out to you? Why?
- The song opens by talking about "misconceptions" people might have about God. What ideas or assumptions do people sometimes have about who God is?
- Nana Moses sings:
- *"God is self-existent, immortal, way beyond your wildest imagination, not limited to your biased traditional views…"*
- What do you think this means? How might this challenge the way people think about God?
- What words or images would you use to describe God?

Game - Stucki is a game often played in Jamacia; it is more familiarly known as stuck-in-the-mud in the UK. It's easy to 'get stuck' in a negative frame of mind when we are facing challenges, but part of resilience is the trust that God can help you live life to the full. Have some fun playing this game, but when someone is caught shout 'Stucki'

Prayer -

Loving God,

Thank you for the stories, struggles and hopes we have shared today.

Help us to remember the past with honesty, work for justice and healing, and build communities where everyone is valued and able to thrive.

Give us courage, hope and wisdom to use our gifts to create a fairer world.

Amen.

There are seven national heroes in Jamaica, Let's find out about two of them.

Samuel Sharpe (1801–1832)

Samuel Sharpe is one of Jamaica's National Heroes because he stood up for freedom and justice. He was an enslaved Baptist deacon who believed that everyone is equal in God's eyes and should never be treated as property.

In 1831, Sharpe helped lead a large movement for freedom. Many history books call this the "Baptist War" or "Christmas Rebellion", but many people today, especially those working for reparatory justice, prefer the term "Emancipation Wars" because it focuses on the fight for freedom and avoids describing people seeking justice as rebels.

Samuel Sharpe was executed in 1832. His courage inspired change. The movement for freedom helped bring about the abolition of enslavement across the British Empire. Today, he is remembered for his faith, bravery, and belief that justice and freedom belong to everyone. His story reminds us that freedom was not simply given by those in power; it was fought for through the courage and determination of people who resisted the injustice of enslavement.

Nanny of the Maroons

Nanny of the Maroons was an important leader and freedom fighter in Jamaica during the early 18th century. The Maroons were communities of formerly enslaved Africans who escaped and created free communities in Jamaica's mountains and fought to remain free. Nanny was respected by both the Maroons and the British for her strong leadership and courage.

In recognition of her achievements, Jamaica named Nanny of the Maroons a National Hero on March 31, 1982, alongside Sam Sharpe.

Discussion:

- Why is Nanny considered a national hero?
- How did Samuel Sharpe's faith inspire him to seek justice?
- What challenges do you think Nanny faced as a leader?
- What qualities make someone a hero? Who is a modern-day hero, and what makes them heroic?
- Why does the language we use to describe history matter?
- What justice issues do we see in our world today, and how can we help make a difference?

Activity 2 - Resilient bands

You will need:

- resistance bands or towels



What you do:
Spend some time using resistance bands. If you do not access to them a towel will work. Roll it up, hold each end and pull away from each other. Discuss the effort needed to use the bands but also what the rewards are. How might they make you resilient. How can we be resilient in life?

Bible link - Psalm 46:1 – 3

"[1]God is our protection and source of strength.
He is always ready to help us in times of trouble.
[2] So we are not afraid when the earthquakes
and the mountains fall into the sea.
[3] We are not afraid when the seas become rough
and dark and the mountains tremble. Selah"

It must be very difficult to read this Bible passage if you have ever actually experienced an earthquake, hurricane or any natural disaster. Fear is an emotion that can be hard to control. However, this passage does remind us that no matter what is happening to us we can be resilient because God is always with us.

Hurricane Melissa

Hurricane Melissa was a catastrophic Category 5 hurricane that struck Jamaica on October 28, 2025, becoming the strongest hurricane ever recorded in the country. Sadly 95 people died, 141 were injured and 27 are still missing. The hurricane was devastating. Research what has happened since this tragic day.

Discussion:

- What has Jamaica been doing to rebuild?
- How did the UK help in the effort?
- I wonder if there are enough safeguards around when a hurricane is going to hit a country?

The United Reformed Church were pleased to hand over a cheque for £44'610.25, this money was raised to help with the rebuilding after the hurricane hit.

https://bit.ly/4ysdgl3

https://bit.ly/3Vu77Gp



Action point - I wonder what sort of things you and your group might be able to do to help raise awareness for this fundraising. Perhaps you could have a bake sale or spend an evening making bracelets to sell.

Prayer - Use Lego or similar construction materials to make the shape of a house or church with open doors. As you place each brick, think of someone who may need the church's help or welcome, or someone you've heard about who offers that to others. You may want to think of places where apology is still needed and where relationships still need to be rebuilt.

Leader Note: Language and History
The words we use to describe history shape how we understand the past. The movement Samuel Sharpe helped lead is often called the "Baptist War" or "Christmas Rebellion" in many history books. Many people today, especially those working for reparatory justice, prefer the term "Emancipation Wars" because it highlights the struggle for freedom from enslavement and avoids describing people seeking justice as rebels. The term "Emancipation Wars" recognises the courage, faith, and determination of enslaved people who took action to challenge the injustice of enslavement and fight for freedom.

Here about how Claudettes faith helps her to stay resilient **LINK**

Session 5
Peacemakers

The United Reformed Church Youth

Building a future of justice and hope

Jamaica is rich in culture, creativity, faith and community. Yet the legacies of the enslavement of African people and colonialism continue to shape life today, including inequalities in land, housing, education and opportunity.

The URC is exploring these legacies through its **Legacies of Slavery** (LoS) work and commitment to repairing justice. In Jamaica, CRAF brings churches and communities together to work for reparatory justice through its seven-point plan.

Churches' Reparations Action Forum (CRAF) – 7 point plan

The Churches' Reparations Action Forum (CRAF) brings churches and communities together to work for reparatory justice in Jamaica and across the Caribbean. Its seven-point plan outlines practical ways to address the continuing impacts of the enslavement of African people and create a fairer future.

https://bit.ly/4htKbj9

Discussion:

- Why is it important to remember the past when working for a fairer future?
- What similarities do you see between the challenges faced in Jamaica and challenges in your own community?
- What is one action you could take to help create a fairer world?

New Free Villages: Building a fairer future

After liberation, many formerly enslaved people in Jamaica did not have access to land, homes or resources to build secure futures. This created a legacy of landlessness that continues to affect some communities today.

New Free Villages are a way of responding to this injustice by creating opportunities for people to access land, safe housing and resources to build stronger communities.

Building New Free Villages is a key part of CRAF's 7-point plan. Through its Legacies of Slavery work, the URC is supporting this work alongside churches and partners in Jamaica.



"Jamaica and the UK have a shared history – but we are on different sides of that history. Slavery has divided us. Reparation is not first or most importantly about money, but about repairing…"

The Revd Dr Collin Cowan (Moderator of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI), and one of the seven CRAF Principal Officers

Activity 1 - Imagine a community where everyone can thrive

New Free Villages are about creating communities where people have opportunities to build secure and hopeful futures.

Working in groups, imagine you are helping to shape a new community. What would help people feel supported, valued and able to thrive?

Think about:

- **Community needs:** (Homes, buildings and shared spaces)
- **Opportunities:** (learning, working, growing food and support)
- **Fairness:** (Values and rules)

Create a map or drawing of your community and share your ideas with the group.



Game - Playing marbles is a classic, nostalgic childhood game in Jamaica. Peace-making sometimes means celebrating difference and moving forward and leaving prejudice

behind. As each marble is knocked out, think of it as a difficult situation being resolved and a move towards peace. Children draw a circle on the dirt, place marbles inside, and take turns using a larger shooter marble to knock the others out of the ring to win the marbles themselves.

The Windrush Generation

The Windrush Generation refers to people who moved to the UK between 1948 and 1971, mainly from the Caribbean. After World War two (1939-1945) Britain was badly damaged. Many people had died, and lots of homes, buildings, and cities had been destroyed. The country needed workers to help rebuild and to support important services like the National Health Service (NHS). To help solve this problem, the British government invited people from Commonwealth countries to come to the UK. The British Nationality Act of 1948 gave people from these countries the right to live and work in Britain and become British citizens of the United Kingdom if they chose to.

One of the most well-known ships connected to this history is the Empire Windrush, which arrived in the UK on 22 June 1948.

According to records from the British National Archives, there were 1,027 passengers on board the Empire Windrush. Of these, 802 people listed a Caribbean country as their last place of residence. The largest number of passengers came from Jamaica.

The Experiences and Impact of the Windrush Generation

The Windrush generation made important contributions in many areas, including; The armed forces, construction and rebuilding, public transport, such as buses and trains, the National Health Service (NHS), postal services, factories and industry.

However, life in Britain was not always easy. Many people from the Windrush generation faced racism and discrimination. Their professional skills were often not recognised, which made it harder for them to get good jobs, find places to live, use some shops and services, feel accepted in certain communities, even attend some Churches!



Discussion:

- Why is it important to recognise the contributions of the Windrush generation?
- Can you think of a time you felt rejected? Who was there to support you? Who listened to you?

Despite these challenges, they showed great strength, resilience, and determination.

Windrush Day
Windrush Day takes place every year on 22 June. It is a time to celebrate British Caribbean culture and communities, remember the sacrifices these pioneer people made and to recognise the important contributions of the Windrush generation and their descendants.

Watch For older Children

What is the Windrush Generation? – BBC Newsround **https://bit.ly/4AIWdN3**

Windrush 75 – What is it and why do we celebrate it? - The Independent **https://bit.ly/4i2RiPJ**

I was 19 when I came here. My reason for coming was to train as a nurse following a call from UK due to a shortage of people to work in the hospitals. I came to a town in the North of England called Harrogate. Because we were in hospital accommodation and there were mostly foreign nurses we were looked after quite well. The work was another story, the hours were long (42 hours a week), and the pay was poor. My first wage was £28 for the month. I hated being here! I was so homesick I just wanted to go back home to my family. I was in unfamiliar surroundings, and I had never worked in my life. It was a big adjustment.

Find out about Pat's experience of the Windrush generation here **https://bit.ly/3VrKz9q**

Bible Link - Numbers 6: 24-26

"[24]May the Lord bless you and take care of you;
[25] May the Lord be kind and gracious to you;
[26] May the Lord look on you with favour and give you peace."

*Good News Translation® (Today's English Version, Second Edition) © 1992 American Bible Society. All rights reserved. For more information about GNT, visit **www.bibles.com** and **www.gnt.bible**.*

Christians find this passage very comforting. To know that God will fill them with peace. Some people describe God's peace like being in the eye of a storm. While the storm is raging around them, the middle of the storm is calm and peaceful.

Discussion: Being blessed by God or by another is one element to achieving peace. But peace can also be felt in other ways. How can you feel Gods peace when chaos or difficulty is still touching your life.

Did you know?
At the 2022 General Assembly the URC adopted a statement of Confession and Apology concerning the role of our ancestral bodies in transatlantic slavery, and our complicity with the continuing legacies today. Find out more about the URC Legacies of Slavery work here: **https://bit.ly/3TpG3aO**

During 2024, 161 URC personnel have undergone anti-racist training, after a commitment made by General Assembly 2023.

Did you know the URC is a member of JPIT (Joint Public Issues Team) who help churches work together for peace and justice. Check out their resources: **https://bit.ly/3TEuJaE**

Action Point - Consider celebrating Windrush Day (22nd June) by going for a meal at a Caribbean restaurant. Visit a museum, exhibition, or archive to learn more about Jamaica.

Prayer - Windrush and Legacies of Slavery are examples of resilience and peace-making coming out of tragedy or injustice. We can choose to build people up or knock them down. Use some zips to aid your prayer.



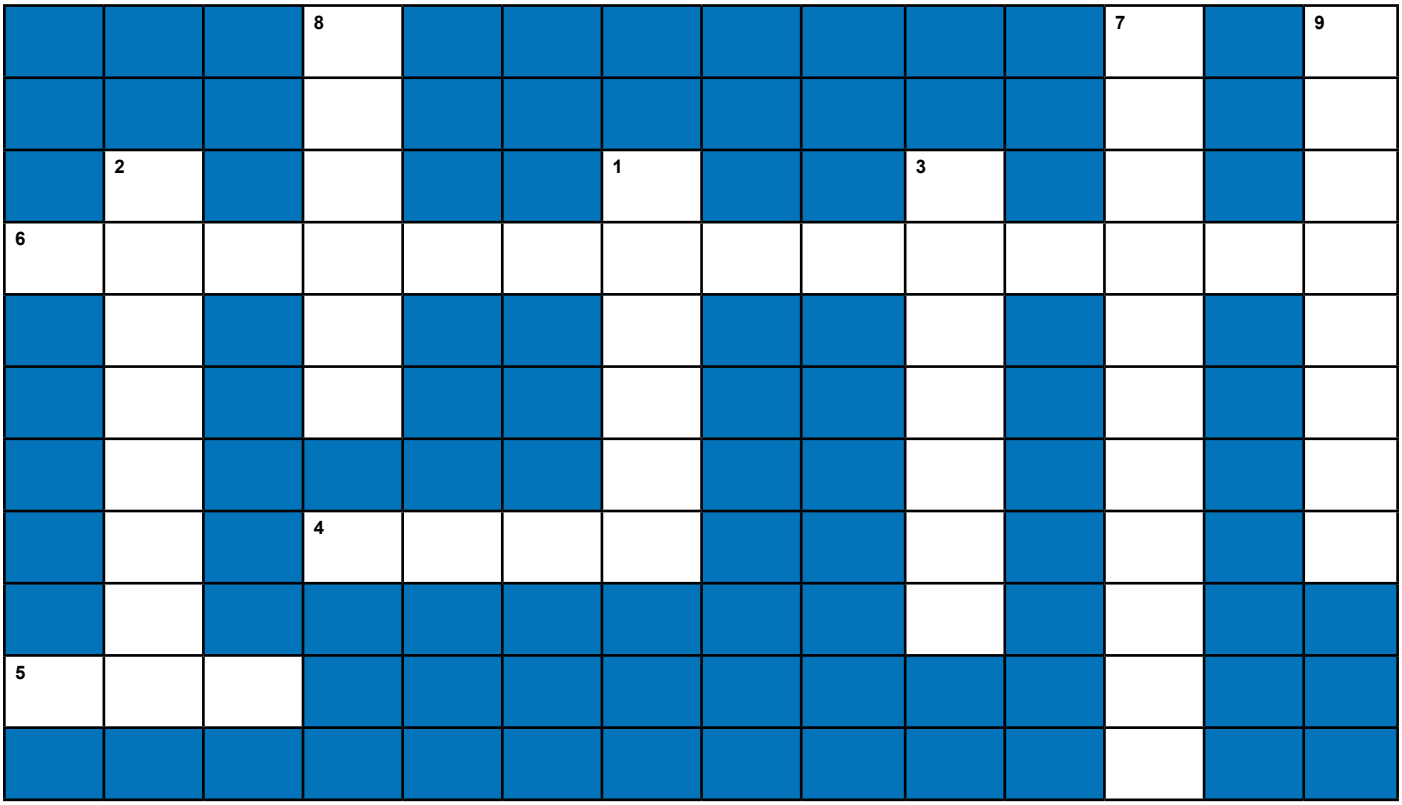
Open the zip: Lord God open our hearts and minds, help us to build people up,
Shut the zip: rather than to knock them down and silence them.
Open the zip: Let us be people of compassion and courage,
Shut the zip: who rather than ignore or stay quiet when injustice happens,
Open the zip: speak out.

Amen

Activity 2 - Crossword Activity - Fill in the crossword using the clues below.

Clues

1. The ship that arrived in 1948 (8 letters)
2. The group of people who came to the UK (8 letters)
3. Country many passengers came from (7 letters)
4. Month Windrush Day is celebrated (4 letters)
5. The health service they worked in (3 letters)
6. What people faced when treated unfairly (13 letters)
7. The Act that allowed people to come (11 letters)
8. Where had many men and women from the Caribbean already served (6 letters)
9. These people had to sacrifice a lot (8 letters)



Answers:

1. Empire 2. Windrush 3. Jamaica 4. June 5. NHS 6. Discrimination 7. Nationality 8. Forces 9. Pioneers