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/3TpoI1H** 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