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.