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.