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.



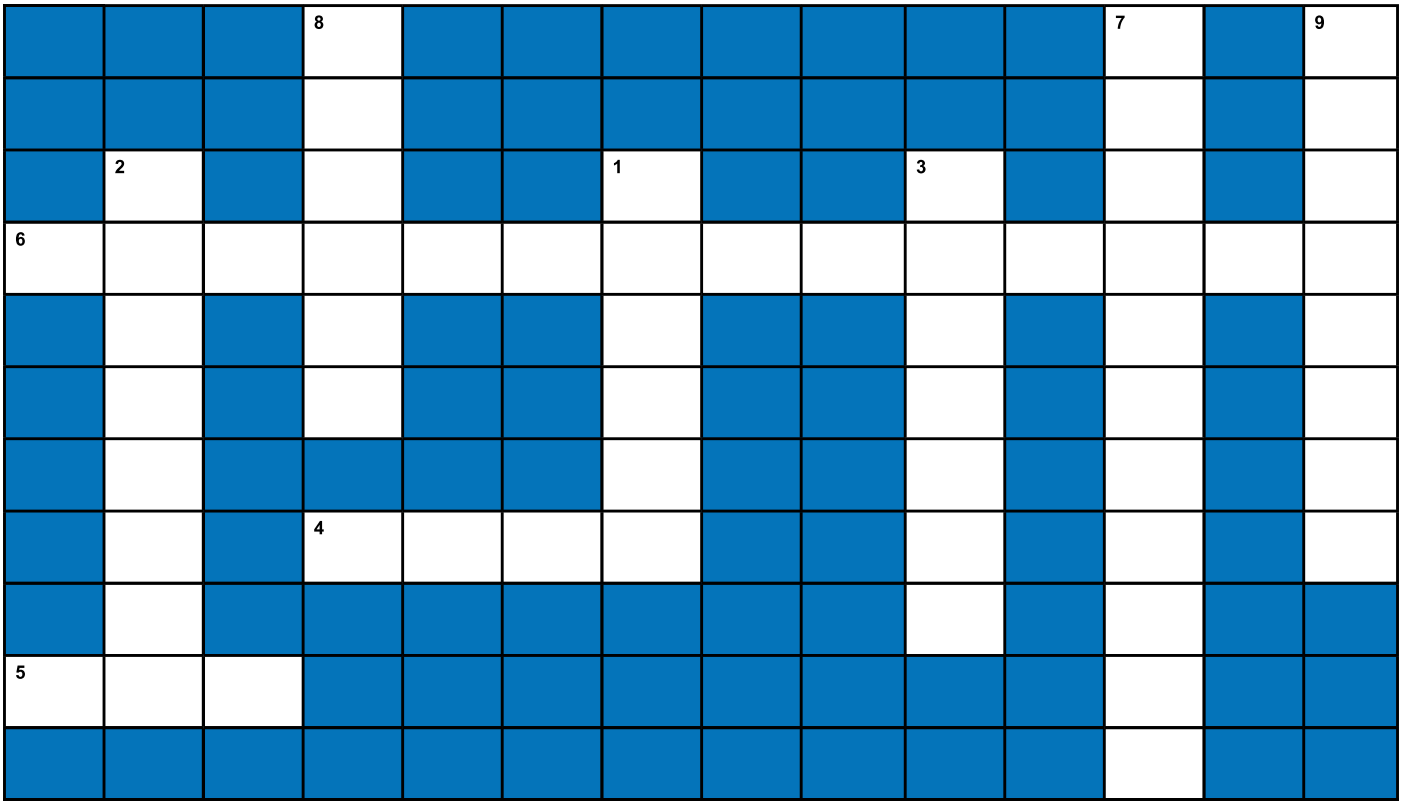
Open the zip: Lord God open our hearts and minds, help us to build people up,
Shut the zip: rather than to knock them down and silence them.
Open the zip: Let us be people of compassion and courage,
Shut the zip: who rather than ignore or stay quiet when injustice happens,
Open the zip: speak out.

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