Session 3
Celebrating my country

The United Reformed Church Children



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.

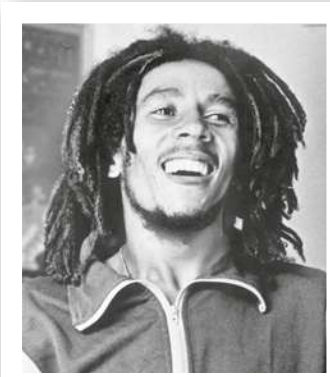


Beauty, Pride, and Belonging

Jamaica's 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. You can find out more about Rose's experience here: https://bit.ly/3VfMduH 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, Jamaica 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.

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 the 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.

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.

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.

Bible Link Psalm 104:24

Lord, you created so many things! With your wisdom you made them all.

This Psalm reminds us that God created all things. When Jamaica gained independence in 1962, the people wanted symbols that showed their strength, history, and amazing food. They decided the **Ackee** was the perfect choice, it tells the story of how the Jamaican people turned a difficult history into something beautiful, delicious, and uniquely their own.

Prayer Dear God, thank you for Jamaica, for its natural beauty, for its music, joyful and colourful culture and for its people who have inspired so many. Help us to celebrate your world with love, respect, and thankful hearts. Amen

Active Prayer Jamaica Prayer Leaf

Just like leaves are part of one tree, we may be different but are all part of God's creation.

Inspired by Jamaica's natural beauty, create a colourful paper leaf with a short prayer written on it.

Draw a leaf on a piece of paper. Colour it using Jamaican flag colours, Write a short prayer celebrating Jamaica in the centre. Add drawings around the edges. Put all the leaves together to make a 'Prayer Tree for a Jamaica' display.

Dear God, thank you for Jamaica for its beauty, music, joy, and colourful culture. Help us to love and celebrate your world. Amen

Action point Research the story behind the Ackee fruit.

Greta Wonders:



- what is your favourite food? How is it like something from Jamaica?
- whether you enjoy any sports?
- what is your favourite music? How does it bring people together?

Activity 1 Music

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 Recycled Jamaican Cup Drum

You will 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.

What you do:



Decorate the base. Invite the children to cover the outside of the cup with paper or paint with either the Jamaican Flag or vibrant 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 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. The children can use their fingers, hands, or unsharpened pencils as drumsticks to practice making traditional Jamaican beats.

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.
- Think about how you can celebrate and respect diverse cultures in your everyday life.