Session 4
Challenges I face

The United Reformed Church Children

Like every country Jamaica has had its fair share of challenges, from environment and climate issues to slavery and colonisation and violence and racism. But Jamaica is also a resilient country which has stories of triumph and heroes which are celebrated.

Climate change – a challenge for everyone

Climate change is affecting people and communities around the world, including in Jamaica. Hotter weather, changing rainfall, storms and floods can affect people's homes, food, water and everyday lives. In October 2025, Hurricane Melissa hit Jamaica, with many communities badly impacted and families having to leave their homes because of the damage. The URC launched an appeal to help people and communities recover and rebuild.

Climate change is a big challenge, but we can all do something to care for our planet and help each other.

Hurricane Melissa

Hurricane Melissa was a catastrophic Category 5 hurricane that struck Jamaica on 28 October 2025, becoming the strongest hurricane ever recorded in the country. Sadly 95 people died, 141 were injured and 27 are still missing. The hurricane was devastating. Research what has happened since this tragic day and what Jamaica has been doing to rebuild?



The United Reformed Church were pleased to hand over a cheque for £44,610.25, this money was raised to help with the rebuilding after the hurricane hit.

https://bit.ly/4rRhobW

God places people in the world who become heroes for other people. They can be everyday people, and they can be people who become well known. These heroes can give us strength. The Bible contains many encouraging stories and verses which can also give us strength and help us to feel fearless.

There are seven national heroes of Jamaica, people who helped to give a future and the power back to the Jamaican people. Two such heroes are Sam Sharpe and Nanny of the Maroons.

Samuel Sharpe (1801–1832)

Samuel Sharpe is one of Jamaica's National Heroes because he stood up for freedom and justice. He was part of the Baptist church and believed that everyone is equal in God's eyes and should be treated with kindness and respect.

Samuel helped lead a movement for freedom from enslavement in Jamaica. In 1831, around Christmas time, many enslaved people bravely stood together and took action against the unfair system they were forced to live in. Freedom was not simply given by those in power; enslaved people like Samuel Sharpe had to be brave, work together, and fight for change.

Today, Samuel Sharpe is remembered for his faith, courage, and belief that everyone deserves to be free.

Nanny of the Maroons

Nanny was a brave leader of the Maroons in Jamaica a long time ago. The Maroons were people who fought for their freedom. Nanny helped lead and protect her people when they were in danger. She was very strong, smart, and brave. During a war against the British, Nanny helped the Maroons hide in the mountains and use clever tricks to stay safe. The British soldiers found it hard to catch them because Nanny planned so well.

People told stories and sang songs about Nanny because they admired her. She became a symbol of courage and unity for the Maroons.

In 1982, Jamaica honoured Nanny by naming her a National Hero, one of the country's greatest heroes.

Bible link Psalm 46:1 – 3

"[1]God is our protection and source of strength.
He is always ready to help us in times of trouble.
[2] So we are not afraid when the earth quakes
and the mountains fall into the sea.
[3] We are not afraid when the seas become rough
and dark
and the mountains tremble. Selah"

Prayer

Loving God,

When things are difficult,
help us remember that we are not alone.

Help us to learn from the past
and remember the people who came before.

Help us to care for each other
and look after our world.

Show us how we can help,
even in small ways to bring hope to others.

Amen.

Active Prayer Wax painting

Another word for working through challenges is resilience. Resilience is when difficult things can happen in our life but yet we learn how to live with them and live life to the full. Wax crayons and paint don't mix well. Draw or write a prayer to do with challenges and resilience in white wax crayon or candle. Using slightly diluted paint, paint over the wax design. Watch as the wax is resistant to the paint and your prayer still shows through.





Greta wonders:

- why Nanny of the Maroons is one of Jamaica's National Heroes?
- who your hero is, and why do you admire them?
- what brave thing you would do to help someone?

Action point

I wonder what sort of things you and your group might be able to do to help raise awareness for this fundraising. Perhaps you could have a bake sale or spend an evening making bracelets to sell.

Activity 1 Recognising our strengths

Strong communities are built when we recognise and value the gifts and strengths each person brings. Sit in a circle and lay out a set of cards in the centre. Each card has a different strength or characteristic written and drawn on it (you may want to have multiples of the same card), such as:

- Hope
- Being brave
- Creativity
- Good listening
- Kindness
- Friendly
- Being fair
- Working as a team
- Encouraging
- Caring

You could also include blank cards, allowing people to add their own ideas for a characteristic.

Choose a card and think of someone in the group who shows that quality. Give them the card and explain why you chose them. Make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be recognised. Chat about what was surprising in this activity. I wonder how these strengths help build stronger communities.

Activity 2 Climate Action Charades

Write or draw different climate actions on small cards. Take turns picking a card and acting it out without speaking. Can everyone guess the action?

Ideas for cards:

- Plant a tree
- Grow food
- Save water
- Turn off lights
- Walk or cycle
- Reuse things

After the game, talk about how these actions could have a positive impact on our planet.

What actions could you take to help care for God's creation?

Here about how Claudettes faith helps her to stay resilient **https://bit.ly/4j1jZO8**