

## Youth talk/activities

The following talk outline and suggested activities can be tailored for years 6-8 (11-14 years old) or years 9-12 (15-18 years old) students. Please use this material to spark ideas and make them relevant for your own group of students.

### NOTES

### Title: Good things start small

#### MATERIALS NEEDED:

Enough biscuits for your group to have one each and a Compassion Child Information Folder (if available)

#### SCRIPTURE:

Story of the loaves and fish, John 6: 3-11

Key verse: "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" John 6: 9 (NIV)

#### TALK IDEAS

**OPENING:** Have you ever noticed how good things in life can start small? How about the smile that starts a great friendship, the grain of wheat that ends up in your favorite biscuit (you can have someone hand out biscuits at this point) or one prayer that changed your whole life?

**GET FEEDBACK:** You could ask a couple of people for other ideas of good things that started small for them.

**BACK TO GOD:** Talk about Jesus' story of the loaves and fish. How the disciples had seen plenty of miracles by this point but were still worried about how to solve the problem of feeding people because **they were still looking to themselves for the solution rather than to God.**

How the answer came from a young boy who was willing to help and how his small lunch bag saved the day. How God loves to take something little and make it into something miraculous. What Jesus was trying to teach his disciples – and what he wants you and I to learn – is that it doesn't take a great faith to produce great results. Why? Because the results don't depend on us, they depend on God.

**LIFE EXAMPLE:** You may want to spend a few minutes talking about something that God has done for you/someone you know that is a 'good thing that started small'.

**INTRODUCE COMPASSION:** Compassion International is a big organisation that began small, with the idea of releasing the world's most vulnerable children from poverty in Jesus' name. In short, changing the world 'one child at a time'.

Through Compassion, someone (like you or me) agrees to sponsor a child in need; their sponsored child begins to flourish with improved health, education, and nutrition. Most importantly, a child is able to grow in their knowledge and love of the Lord Jesus.

Each Compassion child is helped and cared for by a local church: this way sponsorship plants the seeds of a brighter future in a child's life, both practically and spiritually. Good things start small. Here are some numbers for you:

### NOTES

#### THE SCALE OF THE CHALLENGE

- A child dies from hunger every five seconds
- One in every six children aged between five and fourteen years of age is involved in child labour
- More than one billion (one in five) people live on less than \$1 US a day
- Approximately 15 million children under the age of 18 have lost one or both parents to AIDS

#### THE COMPASSION RESPONSE

- There are more than 1.2 million children in Compassion programmes today
- 75,000 children are coming to Christ each year
- Tens of thousands of children “graduating” each year and becoming a positive influence in their families, churches, and communities
- Whole communities are being transformed by God’s love

From the day of Compassion’s original small idea to now, **over a million children** are being sponsored in 26 countries. Everyone who decides to become a sponsor is part of an awesome and growing response to the challenge of global poverty.

**SO WHAT ABOUT US?** Sponsoring a child is something many of us can do. To us, it’s the cost of a weekly pizza or a trip to the cinema. It is something we can do that Jesus can stretch so that it nourishes the lives of one child and then the child’s family, church and wider community. It is truly a miracle – all we have to do is take the step!

Today, we have the opportunity to transform the world for one boy or girl. Like the boy who offered his lunch to Jesus, do we have faith to step out?

#### LET’S PRAY

Heavenly Father,

We know that you can make miracles happen from small beginnings.

Today we pray for children who feel forgotten, hopeless, sick, hungry or in danger.

Children who feel unwanted and unloved.

We ask that you would be the miracle they need and let us help to be the answer by using our time and talents on behalf of the world’s poorest children.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

#### MAKE IT PERSONAL

Here are some ideas to help you get involved and make Compassion Sunday a time to remember!

##### SPONSOR A CHILD AS A GROUP:

Consider sponsoring a child together as a group. It costs £21 or €30 a month – less than the cost of one take away pizza a week. Find out how many people want to get involved, and then agree how much each person will give, when and how.

Continue to involve your youth in the sponsorship process every week by writing letters together, sending group pictures, and updating them on how your sponsored child is doing.

##### INDIVIDUAL SPONSORSHIP:

If someone in your group wants to sponsor a child individually, make sure that they have their parent’s permission. Help them to get started using one of the Child Information Folders sent with your Compassion Sunday Event Kit.



### NOTES

#### GET ACTIVE FOR COMPASSION

- Hold a pizza and movie night OR get some local bands to play a concert
  - sell tickets, soft drinks and snacks at your event with all profits to Compassion
- Organise a bake sale or a sponsored car wash for Compassion
- Offer volunteers from your group to baby-sit a family's kids for a night, money goes to Compassion
- Set up a Coin Jar to collect your loose change—you'll be amazed how quickly you fill it. Small coins added together make a big difference to the lives of children in need
- Run a Compassion Café after one week's church services
  - hot drinks, biscuits, cake and Child Information Folders available – profits to Compassion
- Host a Compassion event at your church – drama, worship, prayer
  - either take up a collection for Compassion or talk about sponsoring a child

#### MORE IDEAS

##### PRAYER MOVES MOUNTAINS

Create a 'mountain' from boxes in the centre of the room. Attach a prayer point to each box (use the information, statistics and stories in your Compassion Sunday Planning Guide to make your prayer points); then as a prayer activity, each person selects a box and prays as indicated. The box is removed and the mountain begins to shrink until it is gone. A simple visual aid to remind us that praying in faith can move mountains!

##### LOAVES AND FISH DISHES

Put on an event that offers people a simple meal of bread and fish (or a simple equivalent – e.g. hotdogs for those that may not like fish!). Get people to sit in groups of five or ten and then serve the meals in baskets. Each group raises money as a donation for their meal. This could be a great setting for a Compassion Sunday presentation and DVD screening.

##### TRASH POVERTY

Get together a 'work party' to transform an area that has become run down: this could be anything from decorating a room in church to tidying someone's garden; from getting rid of rubbish to planting flowers in a disused part of town. Get sponsored to transform a space and use the donation to transform lives through Compassion.

##### SMALL MOMENTS

Use your smart phone to take an image or video small things that make a big difference. Create a collage either on your church's website (with permission) or print out the images and make a poster for church. Use the Compassion Sunday verse as your inspiration to create a montage of images around the theme of 'Start Small. Think Big.'

##### 24-HOUR ACTION CHALLENGE

Get your group to come up with 24 hours of non-stop sponsored action. For 24 hours, keep the group moving – you could rollerblade, use Wii fitness games, play football, maybe even create an indoor skate park – just don't stop moving! With enough people taking part you could put together an action team that rolls through the whole day. The simple point is that the fight against poverty needs perseverance and dedication, and people that are willing to take up the challenge! Make sure everything is supervised, safe and supported by leadership and helpers – and have 24 hours of non-stop sponsored activity for Compassion.

Sources: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org), [www.one.org](http://www.one.org)