Faith Hope Love
A Resource for Young People

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Introduction to this resource

This resource has been designed to provide tools for adults to work with young people from their churches exploring the themes of Faith, Hope and Love and the implications they have for the corporate life of their church. There are a range of different activities and sessions to cater for a variety of groups and uses.

Designed for use with in a church setting the presuppose a level of Christian understanding

1. There are 4 sessions, designed to take 60-90 minutes, one each on faith, hope and love and one on feeding back thoughts and reflections to the wider church community. They can be used with groups meeting for a longer time, such as mid-week or the full length of a Sunday service. These four sessions are designed to be used consecutively. Not all activities need be used. The programme can be selected according to what will most suit the group or the sessions could be split in two and each theme covered over two occasions of meeting.

2. There are 3 sessions designed to take 15 minutes, one each on faith, hope and love. They can be used with groups who meet for only a short time, such as during the sermon section of a Sunday service, or to form one longer session if the youth group’s programme does not allow for the use of the 4 longer sessions. They can also form a “youth workshop” to be used as part of church away-day/quiet day.

3. There is a 30 minute session covering all three themes, designed to be used with groups where the programme can only accommodate one session or as a youth slot during a church away-day/quiet day.

We hope you find this resource helpful and that you enjoy working with the young people in your church towards being a community of greater faith, hope and love.
60-90 minute sessions

**Session 1 - Faith**

**Icebreaker** -
In advance, prepare a list of ‘messages’ (e.g. something silly/funny, bible verses or well-known phrases) and bring some pens and paper and some coloured counters. Explain to the group that each person is going to try to communicate a message to the others. You will give them the message they have to communicate and they will pick a coloured counter to determine how they will communicate it: red means they will draw it (like Pictionary, using no letters, numbers or symbols), blue means they will use the ‘Chinese Whispers’ method (they can decide which order the whispering will happen) and green means they will act it out, like Charades. At the end, ask the group: which do you think was most effective?

**The Mission** -
Ask the group: if you had a message you wanted to get to the whole world, how would you do it? Depending on what the group is like, you may want to do this as a whole-group discussion, split into pairs to discuss it or have each young person write down/draw their own response and then share it with the group. Some possible responses might be: make a film; hold a mass TV broadcast; use Twitter/Facebook to reach your own friends/contacts and get them pass on the message; etc. After the group have shared some ideas, ask them to consider how effective they would be at reaching everyone in the world: would their ideas reach people in remote places, or people with no access to technology, or people who are blind or deaf? What kind of budget might they need to communicate globally? Suggest to the group that one possible way of getting your message out might be mobilising a group of people to tell others - both those people who they naturally come across in their everyday lives and people they have to intentionally go to meet. Explain that this is one of the main ways God wants to share His message with the world - you might find it helpful to use the diagram below. God has a plan to get His message to the world. He has called a group of people to be and tell that message - the church. He has asked each of us as individuals to be part of that group.

**The Faith, Hope, Love Call to Mission** -
If necessary, remind the group about the Faith Hope Love initiative and explain that this stage is about looking at what it all means for our church and local community. Everybody is being asked to think about it and make suggestions about how we can share God’s message more effectively, and that includes young people.
Show the group 1 Timothy 4: 12 (you may want to write it out and display it throughout the sessions). “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” Make clear to them that this doesn’t mean that older or more experienced Christians should not set an example for younger people as well - they can and they do. But what it does mean is that we share responsibility for helping our faith community to make the right choices. This passage even mentions faith and love specifically! So as we reflect on faith, hope and love, we’ll be thinking about what we might want to feedback to the rest of our church.
The Message -
This activity is about reflecting on the content of the message - what is it our mission to share? Provide Post-its in 3 different colours (or same coloured Post-its and different coloured pens). Ask the group to write down everything they know about: what God is like on one colour, what God wants us to know on another colour and the kind of life God wants us to have on a third colour. Put each different piece of information on a different Post-it. Once they have a pile of Post-its, or exhausted their ideas, ask them to put them into some order of priority: What are the most important things to communicate to people? What are the core aspects? What is the essence of our message?

(If your group are not likely to be confident in identifying their own understanding, you may want to prepare some statements in advance and use them for the second part of the activity. For example, God is love, God is like a shepherd, God is forgiving, God is on the side of the poor, God wants us to know that we are precious, God wants us to know that nothing can separate us from his love, God wants us to live life fully, God wants us to be just, God wants us to be free.)

Church Island -
Introduce/remind the group of the concepts of church as a worshipping community and a learning community. Talk with them about what faith is (trusting in God) and what a life of faith is (how we live as a result of trusting in God).

Get the group into pairs/small groups and give each a large sheet of paper and some pens. Say to the group: Imagine that our community was moving to an island. In your pairs/small groups, have a go at designing an island that reflects a community that trusts God. Give them a little while to design and then ask them to think of the principles that people on this island would live by, or to describe the way the people on their ideal island would behave. They could look back at the Post-its from the last activity to help with ideas.

Give each pair/small group the opportunity to present their thoughts. As they feedback, try to draw out what they think faith-filled worship and faith-filled learning look like. How close do they think their group/their church as a whole comes to their ideas and ideals? How do we actually help each other to grow in faith and have lifestyles that are more and more shaped by our faith?

Bible Study -
Read these passages: Isaiah 58 (about the nature of worship/fasting), Micah 6:8 (about what the Lord requires of us) and Philippians 4:8 (about how we should focus our attention). Ask the group: What do these passages tell us about how our relationship with God shapes our relationship with the wider world (beyond the church community)? Who and what do these passages highlight for special attention? What are those things and who are those equivalent people in our everyday lives and in our local area? Have you learned/realised anything that makes you want to add to/change any aspects of the design and lifestyle of people on your island?
Trying It Out -
The eventual aim of the Trying It Out section is to identify some actions or activities which the young people can suggest to their church as corporate responses to the Faith Hope Love initiative. As part of sessions 1, 2 and 3 the young people will come up with some ideas about how a group of Christians could respond to the theme and pick one or two of those ideas to try out, ideally in groups, before the next session. In sessions 2, 3 and 4 the Feedback section gives the young people the opportunity to report back and to explore which of the ideas they tested would be most appropriate to recommend to their church for corporate response. In session 4 the young people will collate their feedback and recommendations for their church so that their suggestions can be factored in to wider church thinking and decisions about making corporate responses to the Faith Hope Love initiative.

Ask the group to use their imaginations and come up with some ideas about how a group of Christians could:

1. Help another Christian grow in faith
2. Worship in a faith-filled way (e.g. using Isaiah 58 for some ideas)

Challenge the group to pilot or “test drive” their ideas during the next week and see what happens. Ideally this would be done collectively, as the idea is to identify some corporate responses to recommend to their church. If there are a lot of suggestions and/or young people, perhaps they could work in a number of small groups or in pairs.

Explain that there will be time next week to feedback on what they tried and what happened. Encourage them to take photos/bring mementoes if appropriate.

Dedication -
Show the group this picture (below) - a Chinese symbol for the word ‘trust’. It shows a symbol for man next to a symbol for words - a man standing by his words (for more information, go to: http://teachmechinese.wordpress.com/tag/chinese-word-for-trust/). Take a few minutes to think about whether you try to live like that - standing by your word, living in a way that shows your trust in God. Pray for one another that God will help you to be people of faith, both in action and on the inside.
Session 2 - Hope

Icebreaker/introduction -
In advance, print off lists of incomplete sentences, such as “If I were a car, I would be a …”, one copy for each person in the group. Ask the group to complete the sentences with the car/animal/meal/etc. which they feel is most like them in some way. (The idea is that they will compare their characteristics with items in these categories, not choose things simply because they like them.) They should not show other people what they have written.

After everyone has finished, collect their papers and read them out, one or two at a time. The rest of the group should try to guess which paper belongs to which group member.

Feedback on Faith -
Give the group the opportunity to reflect on their Trying It Out ideas from last session. What happened? How did they get on? Help them to identify: What was positive? What was difficult? What did they learn? Thinking about both their ‘test drives’ and the activities they did last time, what feedback and suggestions would they like to make about how their church could respond to the faith theme of the Faith Hope Love initiative? Would they like to include anything visual in their feedback to their church (e.g. their island designs or any photos of them in action)?

Recognising Hope -
Write out the definitions below or separate sheets of paper, or arrange to display them in some way. Show them to the young people and ask them which they would pick as a definition for the word ‘hope’.

- The opposite of despair
- A belief in positive outcome
- A wish for something with expectation of its fulfilment
- To look forward with confidence/expectation
- Someone or something that is a source/reason for hopefulness
- The desire for and search for future good
- A thing, situation or event that is desired
- Something hope is born of activism, engagement and a stubborn determination to improve the world

There is no right answer - all of these are offered as definitions online. Hope can mean different things when we use the word in slightly different ways. We’re going to look at a few.
Craft: What We Hope For -
Remind the group of the discussion last time about what makes up our message. Discuss together or in small groups what good, positive things Christians hope for (see Matthew 5: 3-12 for some suggestions if you need them). Think about the people who make up your church - do you know what good, positive things people hope for your church in the future? What do you hope for? What about people who live in the local area? What might they be hoping for? Do you know of any situations of despair where people need hope (e.g. injustice, poverty, abuse, loneliness, unemployment)?

Sometimes it feels like there is a locked door between the ways things are now and how we would like them to be. However, sometimes just recognising the possibility that things could be different can be the first step to unlocking the door.

Using cardboard, metallic paper, pens, paint, glue and any other craft materials you have, make some door keys, each representing something that you as a group would like to see change, a hope that is waiting to be unlocked. On the round part of the key which you would hold to open the door, draw the thing you hope for or a symbol to represent the issue.

Discussion: Why We Hope -
(You may wish to have this discussion while making the keys in the above activity.)

Say to the group: The definitions we looked at used words like ‘confident expectation’, which is very different from some people’s idea of hope as something vague and unrealistic - what we might call ‘blind optimism’. Ask the group: Has anyone ever wished or dreamed that something would happen or work out in a particular way even though they didn’t really believe or expect it too? If so, why didn’t they really expect it to happen? Has anyone had a hope they were confident about and expected to see happen? If so, what gave them that confidence?

Perhaps the key to unlocking hope is seeing things clearly, seeing things as they truly are. If we can see and understand ourselves, our church and our community as we/they truly are, we can understand much better what is really needed to change situations and make them positive. For example, if we just know someone is sad, we can wish for them to feel happier. If we know that they are sad because they are lonely, we can have a real hope that real friendships will make them happier.

Think back to the game we played at the beginning. Did people guess correctly who had written each list? It can be hard to see ourselves and to see other people truly and clearly because we only see part of the picture. Give the group these 3 descriptions and ask them which they think sounds like the best choice for a leader.

A. A man associated with crooked politicians and who consults with astrologists. He’s had 2 mistresses. He also smokes and drinks 8 to 10 Martinis a day.
B. A decorated war hero. A vegetarian. He doesn’t smoke, drinks an occasional beer and never committed adultery.
C. A man who was kicked out of office twice, who sleeps until 11am or noon. He used opium in college and drinks an excessive amount of whiskey, champagne and/or brandy every day.

A is Teddy Roosevelt, B is Hitler and C is Churchill. These descriptions are true and factual, but they only tell part of the story.

Discuss: How can we help people see themselves clearly? How can we get better at seeing the world/our community/people around us more clearly?
Bible Study: Causing or Being Hope -
Read the stories of Noah (Genesis 6-9) and Elijah (1 Kings 18) - 2 people who prepared for and expected rain. They both made choices based on what could (and would and did) happen rather than what they could see in front of them.

Look at this quote together “Nothing in the world is the way it ought to be. It’s harsh and cruel. But that why there’s us. Champions. It doesn’t matter where we come from, what we’ve done or suffered, or even if we make a difference. We live as though the world were as it should be to show it what it can be.” (Joss Wheedon, Deep Down)

Ask the group: Can you think or anyone (people in the bible, throughout history, in your own lives) who made others aware that there were alternatives, different possibilities, different ways of living by the choices they made and the way they lived? Does anyone do that for you? Do you think you have that role in anyone’s life? Does the church help people in the area see other possible ways to live? Why or why not?

Trying It Out -
Ask the group to think of ways that a group of Christians could help build hope by:

1. Being encouraging
2. Seeing people or situations clearly and acting accordingly
3. Demonstrating new possibilities by the way they are living

Challenge the group to try out their ideas together. Remind them that there will be time next week to feedback.

Dedication -
Sing ‘Rain down’ (by Delirious) together, or use the lyrics as a closing prayer (you can find the lyrics at either of these links: http://www.lyricstime.com/jesus-culture-rain-down-lyrics.html and http://www.newreleasetuesday.com/lyricsdetail.php?lyrics_id=47104).

OR Reflect on the words of Mother Teresa’s Do Good Anyway (which you can find here http://www.dbooth.org/guat2000/small/teresa.htm and http://bethjones-bethj.blogspot.co.uk/2009/05/do-good-anyway-mother-teresa.html).
Session 3 - Love

Icebreaker/introduction -
Before the session, make a list of 2-person relationships (e.g. teacher and pupil; bully and victim; mother and child; married couple). Tell one young person one of the relationships and ask him/her to create a ‘pose’ so that the rest of the group can try to guess what the relationship is between the 2 people in the pose. The ‘poser’ can use him/herself or other group members, but mustn’t tell anyone else involved in the pose what relationship they are representing. Take it turns to be the ‘poser’ or pass it on to the person who correctly guesses the relationship they are looking at.

Shortly before Jesus died, he told his disciples that people would know that they were his disciples because of the love that was visible between them. When Paul talks about faith, hope and love, he says that “the greatest of these is love”. Hopefully today will help us get a little closer to understanding why.

Feedback on Hope -
First, however, give the group the opportunity reflect on their Trying It Out ideas from the Hope session. What happened? How did they get on? Help them to identify: What was positive? What was difficult? What did they learn? What feedback and suggestions would they like to make to their church about how they church could respond to the hope theme of the Faith Hope Love initiative? Would they like to include anything visual in their feedback to the church (e.g. the keys they made)?

Bible Study: Love Evaluation -
Read Paul’s description of love in 1 Corinthians 13 and do a church audit! How many marks out of 10 would they give their church for how well it shows each of these qualities? How many marks out of 10 would they give their church for creating opportunities to demonstrate these qualities? (E.g. do people not have to demonstrate patience with one another because they don’t work closely with people? Or because they will only work with people who agree with them?)

Remind the group about the verse from Timothy which tells us we should be setting an example in how we love. How are we doing as a group? What does the rest of the church see when they look at us? What about people who aren’t part of the church (e.g. school friends), what do they see?

‘Better People’ Challenge -
Get out the diagram from the faith session again. Remember that the church is God’s main method for sharing his message. This thought is echoed by E. M. Bounds, who said:

“We are constantly on a stretch, if not a strain, to devise new methods, new plans, new organisations to advance the Church... God’s plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than anything else. Men are God’s method. The Church is looking for better methods: God is looking for better men.”

Acknowledge the un-inclusive language, then ask the group to get into pairs and talk together about what makes it difficult for them to be ‘better’ people: maybe people they find difficult, things they struggle to believe, things which distract them. How might they be able to support and challenge one another to become ‘better’?
**Trying It Out**

Ask the group to use their imaginations and come up with some ideas about how a group of Christians could show **love** both to one another and to others in their local area. For example, how could they:

1. Help one another - or other Christians - to become ‘better’ people?
2. Show **love** to the groups of people highlighted in some of the passages we looked at in session 1 (Isaiah 58 and Matthew 25: 31-46)?

Challenge the group to be Angels of Blessing! Give them a time frame in which to do as much blessing as possible. You could add a twist. For example:

- They must bless people secretly.
- Their goal is blessing/giving back to God (e.g. by helping another Christian - or other Christians - to become ‘better people’).
- Link it to Bible passages - e.g. read Isaiah 58 and Matthew 25: 31-46, identify groups of people highlighted as priorities for blessing and go and bless those groups of people!

Don’t forget about feeding back at the next session!

**Dedication**

Use the words of Point of Difference or Solution (by Hillsong) or the prayer of St Teresa of Avila to reflect on what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus. You may want to anoint one another’s hands and feet in preparation for the lives you will touch and the relationships you will walk into.

Find the words here:

- **The Difference**
  - [http://www.lyricstime.com/hillsong-united-point-of-difference-lyrics.html](http://www.lyricstime.com/hillsong-united-point-of-difference-lyrics.html)

- **Solution**
  - [http://www.lyricstime.com/hillsong-united-solution-lyrics.html](http://www.lyricstime.com/hillsong-united-solution-lyrics.html)

- **Prayer of St Teresa**
  - [http://www.journeywithjesus.net/PoemsAndPrayers/Teresa_Of_Avila_Christ_Has_No_Body.shtml](http://www.journeywithjesus.net/PoemsAndPrayers/Teresa_Of_Avila_Christ_Has_No_Body.shtml)
  - [http://www.rc.net/southwark/ashfordstteresa/St%20Teresa%20of%20Avila.htm](http://www.rc.net/southwark/ashfordstteresa/St%20Teresa%20of%20Avila.htm)
Session 4 - Feedback

Feedback on Love -
Give the group the opportunity reflect on their Trying It Out ideas from the Love session. What happened? How did they get on? Help them to identify: What was positive? What was difficult? What did they learn? What feedback and suggestions would they like to make to their church about how they could respond to the love theme of the Faith Hope Love initiative? Would they like to include anything visual in their feedback to the church?

Collating the Feedback -
Using your feedback discussions from previous sessions, gather together all your important points, the learning you want to share and the ideas you’ve had and put them together into a presentation. This could be on PowerPoint. You could make a video. You could create a display board. You could write a letter. It doesn’t matter how you go about it as long as you feel your thoughts are clear.

Presenting the Feedback -
Depending on your church and your group, you might want to arrange for the whole group (or some representatives) to make their presentation during a service or at a PCC meeting. You might present feedback on behalf of the young people (if they are happy with that). Another possibility would be to invite some of the church leaders and/or PCC members to attend the young people’s group to receive feedback from them in their own environment.

Mark the Occasion!
Celebrate the reflections, learning and ideas that have come out of the last few weeks and the fact that we are able to live in faith, hope and love. Whether that’s a cake, a trip somewhere, being awarded a certificate, building a cairn or a closing prayer activity: find a way which is appropriate for your group to mark what has been learned, thank them for getting involved and serve and encourage them.
15 minute sessions

15 minute session - Hope

Option 1: The Message -
This activity is about reflecting on our message to the world - what is it our mission to share? Provide Post-its in 3 different colours (or same coloured Post-its and different coloured pens). Ask the group to write down everything they know about: what God is like on one colour, what God wants us to know on another colour and the kind of life God wants us to have on a third colour. Put each different piece of information on a different Post-it. Once they have a pile of Post-its, or exhausted their ideas, ask them to put them into some order of priority: What are the most important things to communicate to people? What are the core aspects? What is the essence of our message? How effective is our church at communicating this message to one another and to the local community? What else could we be doing, either in addition or as an improvement? What suggestions would we like to make to our church about how they could respond to the faith theme of the Faith Hope Love initiative?

(If your group are not likely to be confident in identifying their own understanding, you may want to prepare some statements in advance and use them for the second part of the activity. For example, God is love, God is like a shepherd, God is forgiving, God is on the side of the poor, God wants us to know that we are precious, God wants us to know that nothing can separate us from his love, God wants us to live life fully, God wants us to be just, God wants us to be free.)

Option 2: Church Island -
Introduce/remind the group of the concepts of church as a worshipping community and a learning community. Talk with them about what faith is (trusting in God) and what a life of faith is (how we live as a result of trusting in God).

Get the group into pairs/small groups and give each a large sheet of paper and some pens. Say to the group: Imagine that our community was moving to an island. In your pairs/small groups, have a go at designing an island that reflects a community that trusts God. Give them a little while to design and then ask them to think of the principles that people on this island would live by, or to describe the way the people on their ideal island would behave. (You could provide statements such as those suggested in the Option 1 activity to help with ideas.)

Give each pair/small group the opportunity to present their thoughts. As they feedback, try to draw out what they think faith-filled worship and faith-filled learning look like. How close do they think this group/the church as a whole comes to their ideas and ideals? How do we actually help each other to grow in faith and have lifestyles that are more and more shaped by our trust in God? How does this trust shape the way we connect with our local community? What else could we be doing, either in addition or as improvement? What suggestions would we like to make to our church about how they could respond to the faith theme of the Faith Hope Love initiative?
**15 minute session - Hope**

**Icebreaker: Recognising Hope** -
Write out the definitions below or separate sheets of paper, or arrange to display them in some way. Show them to the young people and ask them which they would pick as a definition for the word ‘hope’.

- The opposite of despair
- A belief in positive outcome
- A wish for something with expectation of its fulfilment
- To look forward with confidence/expectation
- Someone or something that is a source/reason for hopefulness
- The desire for and search for future good
- A thing, situation or event that is desired
- Something hope is born of activism, engagement and a stubborn determination to improve the world

There is no right answer - all of these are offered as definitions online. Hope can mean different things when we use the word in slightly different ways. We're going to look at a few.

**Option 1: What We Hope For** -
Discuss together or in small groups what good, positive things Christians hope for (see Matthew 5: 3-12 for some suggestions if you need them). Think about the people who make up your church - do you know what good, positive things people hope for your church in the future? What do you hope for? What about people who live in the local area? What might they be hoping for? Do you know of any situations of despair where people need hope (e.g. injustice, poverty, abuse, loneliness, unemployment)?

Sometimes it feels like there is a locked door between the ways things are now and how we would like them to be. However, sometimes just recognising the possibility that things could be different can be the first step to unlocking the door.

Using cardboard, metallic paper, pens, paint, glue and any other craft materials you have, make some door keys, each representing something that you as a group would like to see change, a hope that is waiting to be unlocked. On the round part of the key which you would hold to open the door, draw the thing you hope for or a symbol to represent the issue.

What suggestions would they like to make to their church about how they could bring and be hope where hope is needed?

**Option 2: Causing or Being Hope** -
Read the stories of Noah (Genesis 6-9) and Elijah (1 Kings 18) - 2 people who prepared for and expected rain. They both made choices based on what could (and would and did) happen rather than what they could see in front of them.

Look at this quote together “Nothing in the world is the way it ought to be. It’s harsh and cruel. But that why there’s us. Champions. It doesn’t matter where we come from, what we’ve done or suffered, or even if we make a difference. We live as though the world were as it should be to show it what it can be.” (Joss Wheedon, Deep Down)
Ask the group: Can you think or anyone (people in the bible, throughout history, in your own lives) who made others aware that there were alternatives, different possibilities, different ways of living by the choices they made and the way they lived? Does anyone do that for you? Do you think you have that role in anyone’s life? Does the church help people in the area see other possible ways to live? Why or why not? What suggestions do you have about how our church could bring and be hope for people?
15 minute session - Love

Option 1: See the Love -
Before the session, make a list of 2-person relationships (e.g. teacher and pupil; bully and victim; mother and child; married couple). Tell one young person one of the relationships and ask him/her to create a ‘pose’ so that the rest of the group can try to guess what the relationship is between the 2 people in the pose. The ‘poser’ can use him/herself or other group members, but mustn’t tell anyone else involved in the pose what relationship they are representing. Take it turns to be the ‘poser’ or pass it on to the person who correctly guesses the relationship they are looking at.

Shortly before Jesus died, he told his disciples that people would know that they were his disciples because of the love that was visible between them. When Paul talks about faith, hope and love, he says that “the greatest of these is love”.

When people look at our church, what do you think they see? What evidence of love might they see in the way we behave towards one another? How could we be more loving to one another and the world around us? What suggestions could we make to the wider church about how we could respond to the love theme of the Faith Hope Love initiative?

Option 2: Love Evaluation -
Read Paul’s description of love in 1 Corinthians 13 and do a church audit! How many marks out of 10 would they give their church for how well it shows each of these qualities? How many marks out of 10 would they give their church for creating opportunities to demonstrate these qualities? (E.g. do people not have to demonstrate patience with one another because they don’t work closely with people? Or because they will only work with people who agree with them?)

Remind the group about 1 Timothy 4: 12, which tells us that we should be setting an example in how we love. How are we doing as a group? What does the rest of the church see when they look at us? What about people who aren’t part of the church (e.g. school friends), what do they see? How could we, as a group and as a church, become more loving?

Option 3: ‘Better People’ Challenge -
Show the group this quote from E. M. Bounds:

“We are constantly on a stretch, if not a strain, to devise new methods, new plans, new organisations to advance the Church... God’s plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than anything else. Men are God’s method. The Church is looking for better methods: God is looking for better men.”

Acknowledge the un-inclusive language, then ask the group to get into pairs and talk together about what makes it difficult for them to be ‘better’ people: maybe people they find difficult, things they struggle to believe, things which distract them. How might they be able to support and challenge one another to become ‘better’? How could we as a church help one another to become ‘better’?

Have a look at Isaiah 58 and Matthew 25: 31-46. How could we be ‘better’ at showing love to the groups of people highlighted in these passages?

What suggestions do we want to make to the wider church?
30 minute session - Faith Hope Love

Icebreaker -
In advance, prepare a list of ‘messages’ (e.g. something silly/funny, bible verses or well-known phrases) and bring some pens and paper and some coloured counters. Explain to the group that each person is going to try to communicate a message to the others. You will give them the message they have to communicate and they will pick a coloured counter to determine how they will communicate it: red means they will draw it (like Pictionary, using no letters, numbers or symbols), blue means they will use the ‘Chinese Whispers’ method (they can decide which order the whispering will happen) and green means they will act it out, like Charades. At the end, ask the group: which do you think was most effective?

Sum up by reminding the group about the Faith Hope Love initiative and explain that this stage is about looking at what it all means for our churches and local communities. Everybody is being asked to think about it and make suggestions about how we can share God’s message more effectively, and that includes young people.

Show the group 1 Timothy 4: 12 (you may want to write it out and display it). “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” Make clear to them that this doesn’t mean that older or more experienced Christians should not set an example for younger people as well - they can and they do. But what it does mean is that we share responsibility for helping our faith community to make the right choices. This passage even mentions faith and love specifically! So as we reflect on faith, hope and love, we’ll be thinking about what we might want to feedback to the rest of our church.

The Island -
Get the group into pairs/small groups and give each a large sheet of paper and some pens. Say to the group: Imagine that our community was moving to an island. In your pairs/small groups, have a go at designing an island that reflects a community that trusts God, that is hopeful and that is loving.

Give them a little while to design and then ask them to think of the principles that people on this island would live by, or to describe the way the people on their ideal island would behave. You may want to suggest that they look at Isaiah 58 (about the nature of worship/ fasting), Micah 6:8 (about what the Lord requires of us) and Philippians 4:8 (about how we should focus our attention) for ideas.

Give each pair/small group the opportunity to present their thoughts. As they feedback, try to draw out what they think faith, hope and love look like. How close do they think their group/their church as a whole comes to their ideas and ideals? How do we actually help each other to grow in faith, bring hope into desperate situations and show love to all people?

Doing It -
As the group compares their ideal with reality, help them to identify or draw out some actions or activities which they would like to suggest to their church as possible corporate responses to the Faith Hope Love initiative. Record their ideas, on flip chart paper for example, ready to feed back to other groups in your church.

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