

SMALL GROUP WEEKLY
DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

GIFTING CHRIST'S HOPE

TO CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



Week 1
4 - 10 September 2022



YOUTH MONTH -
SUSTAINING HOPE
AND HEALING!

CONTENT:

Weekly: Sunday sermon Bible readings, worship song, reflection, small group questions and family time

Daily: Bible readings, a memory verse and a prayer for individual contemplation

Gifting Christ's Hope to Children and Young People

Sustaining Hope and Healing

September is Children and Youth Month in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. Winter has withered the plants and trees and life seemed to be dull. September is the beginning of a new season: Spring. Nature starts to bloom with new life and as a result the church sets the month of September aside to this blooming generation to inspire the church not only for the future but to focus on youth today so that we can revive the energy of the church through various activities.

Spring is a time for renewal, new hope, and new life as we witness flowers grow and bloom, the world around us becoming greener and brighter! At this time of year, we begin to feel less sluggish, and become more open to inviting change – both big and small – into our lives.” Spring is often met with optimism. Sunlight, movement, and warmth increase our overall satisfaction. The church looks forward to the energy that is brought forth by the young, the breath of fresh air the young people bring and the everlasting hope that the church will exist in future through the youth of today.



The children and young people of our country (like the adults) are facing various challenges, i.e.: crime and violence, unemployment, financial/political corruption, poverty and social inequality, and education. This series is then designed to look at our challenges afresh with youthful eyes, and thus align with the Presiding Bishop's theme to offer Christ's Hope especially to Children and Young People. May we all re-generate our hope in God and re-imagine our healing to sustain us through the other seasons.

Week 1: Choose life

Life is all about the choices we make. The decisions we take every single day, whether small or big, impact our life in one way or another and determine how our coming years would unfold. God wants us to choose life in every season.

Week 2: Everyone is included

Children and Young People are often overlooked in society because they seem young and inexperienced. Creating an intergenerational church comes with children and young being loved, respected, and embraced. Everyone is included in God's healing plan.

Week 3: Everyone is influential and responsible

Society we live in has become a dangerous place for children and young people. Children and young people are experiencing harm and abuse at home, in schools, in shopping centres, in the church and literally everywhere. But God is shouting amid this evil happening against his precious young people. We will all be held accountable for those that are vulnerable in our society and in our sphere of influence. We need to re-imagine and be the change we want to see.

Week 4: Grateful in faith

Challenges are part of life, sometimes they even make us question our faith. Some days are harder than others. Amid all challenges, we are called to hold on to the faith we have in Jesus Christ, for the faith we have doesn't disappoint. Being grateful for what we have generates hope.

Week 1: Sunday – 4 September 2022

CHOOSE LIFE

Life is all about the choices we make. The decisions we take every single day, whether small or big, impact our life in one way or another and determine how our coming years would unfold. God wants us to choose life in every season.

BIBLE READINGS

Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Matthew 22: 34-40
Psalm 139: 1-6



WORSHIP SONG:



Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7owFiihXgg>
Tasha Cobbs Leonard - You Know My Name ft. Jimi Cravity

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION WRITTEN BY:

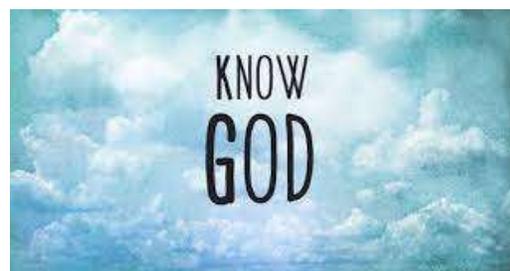
Lusisipho Badi – Local Preacher

Psalm 139: 1-6

I have observed that Psalms take the form of a personal reflection and would love to reflect on Psalm 139 in a month dedicated to youth. As we read the writings of David and verses 1-6, we see a personal relationship between God and the psalmist. In the first 6 verses he prominently uses the words “you” and “I” repetitively. God is being directly addressed: it shows us that when it comes to our place and relationship with God, we need to approach him ourselves! We need to have a deep, intimate relationship with him: our life-giving source.

If we are tasked to choose life, we need to know who LIFE is! In these verses it is clear that God is known, David, identifies with him, and trust Him. Do you know God's character? Is he your safe-haven, friend, parent, counselor? Have you ever thought of how do you identify with God?

The author says “you know me” to God, which is a sense of awareness and affirmation to God's intimate knowledge of him. It doesn't end there he says at every stage, phase, corner of my life “you are there” – a constant presence. The God of our salvation is also the God of our pitfalls – always life-giving no matter the circumstance. Choosing life transcends through all seasons and it does not



end at the act of picking, it is a daily (sometimes hourly) choice. It is very easy for us to make choices but to stick to them is a different matter; we can only do this through the grace of God.

My plea to all of you: let us be a live-giving force! Where you have authority or power exercise it with kindness, where you are hopeless and giving up in life just know the God that knows you, is aware of your situation, and is still the keeper of Israel that doesn't slumber he surely won't sleep on us.

Life Application

Let's give enough room for God to work in us and for us. I invite you to re-awaken your friendship with the Lord – get to know Him - for He knows you. Do at least one live-giving act towards someone this week!

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Do you feel like your relationship with God is at a satisfactory place? Do you want to be personal with God but you not sure how to? Share ideas of how you can get closer to God and get to know Him better.
2. I invite you to reflect on who God is in your life and if you were to introduce him in a sentence who would he be?
3. The word "life" has multiple meanings to many, when we you hear "choose life" does God take a center role?
4. When life throws you curveballs who do you reach out to first and why? How has this worked for you?



DAILY MEMORY VERSE AND PRAYER

DAY	VERSE	PRAYER
MONDAY	<u>Deuteronomy 30:19</u> "This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live"	From the time you awaken us we are faced with big and small choices, some have a great impact some are insignificant, but they are all awarded to us by you. I pray that in my life choices I always seek life. Amen
TUESDAY	<u>John 1:4</u> "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind."	The blood of your son brought us to everlasting light and life, ignite your awareness in us as we live lives that show we have been saved through the blood of your son Jesus Christ Amen
WEDNESDAY	<u>Joshua 1:5</u> "No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you."	In our battles, mighty and generous God, continue to stand with us. Remind us that we are the branches and you are the vine. If we are not connected to you, we won't produce fruits. Remove the barrenness in our hands and give us enough fight to succeed. Amen
THURSDAY	<u>Mark 4:19</u> "but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful."	Make us vessels as pure as snow, so that in our life choices we do not close out your words to us. Blot out our transgressions and receive us as a perfect and pure gift from you. Amen
FRIDAY	<u>2 Timothy 1:9</u> "He has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time."	You remain mindful of people like me, you continue to give us undeserved love each day. We remain eternally grateful in your name we pray. Amen

SATURDAY	Mark 9:43 <i>“If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out.”</i>	I pray to never to let go of the bigger picture: to carry your cross with total humility, to suppress my needs and desires and to be open to your will to be my fuel at all times Amen.
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BY JENNY BLAKE – CHILDREN’S PASTOR
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Week 1 Reading: Psalm 139: 1-6

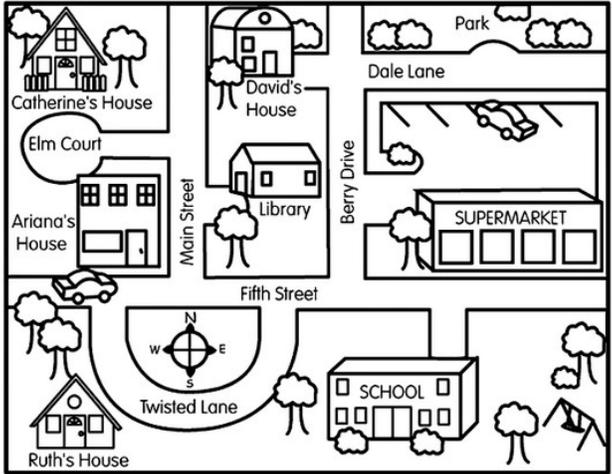
As a family discuss what this reading means to you. Do you think we can ever surprise God? Why?

Print out or draw a map of your neighborhood.

On your map using the following key.

-  Home
-  friends or family’s home
-  school
-  church

NEIGHBORHOOD MAP



Use a colour pencil or highlighter to trace the roads your family uses. Read Psalm 139: 1-3 out loud again.

God always knows where you are, what you are up to and how you are feeling or what you are thinking. Our God knows and understands everything you think, feel and have been through. God understands and loves you very much.