



5 Marks of Growing – Children and Young People



Session 5 – Growing in Commitment

Introduction: (J, I, S)

People show their commitment to different things in many different ways eg: married couples give and wear rings; football supporters wear their team's kit or colours to show their support and commitment; Christians are baptised and some are confirmed as a sign of their commitment to Jesus;

ASK: I wonder if you can think of any more examples of the ways in which people show their commitment to something?

One common way we show our commitment to something is by spending our time or money on it. *I wonder what you spend your time or money on?*

You could read out the quote in the box (*see right*). Commitment can mean sticking with something, even when it gets hard to do so – can you think of any examples?

Bible reading:

Matthew 13:44,45

These parables mention people being so committed to something that they give up everything else in their lives to have it. This is how people feel about Jesus and God's kingdom. *What sort of things might people give up today in order to follow Jesus?*

Activity: What is important to you? (J, I)

What things are important to you? These are usually the things you are committed to. You might like to think about what you give your time to – or what you spend your money on – or what you think about most?

Make some badges, or draw on some sticky labels, to show the things that are important to you.

ASK: I wonder which is the most important to you?

ASK: I wonder which of these things might be important to God too?





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Activity: Who do you want to be? (I, S)

“Nothing shapes your life more than the commitments you choose to make. Your commitments can develop you or they can destroy you, but either way, they will define you... We become what we are committed to.” Rick Warren (author of the best-selling *The Purpose-Drive Life*)

ASK: *I wonder what you think of this quote?*

How might the things you are committed to (the things that you spend your time or money on) shape the sort of person you might be when you are older?

ASK: *I wonder if the things you are committed to now match who you want to be when you are older?*

Activity: How committed are you? (I, S)

Ask the group to make a list of different things they are committed to. You might like to prepare a list beforehand in case they find this hard (eg: friends; family; football team; a hobby or a sport; doing well in exams; reducing your carbon footprint; buying fairtrade goods)

Now draw a line on the floor (or lay out some string or wool) with the example at one end of the room and ask people to think about how committed they are to it by thinking about how much they would be willing to give up for it – the more you would be willing to give up, the further you move along the line.

Example 1: if you are committed to being a tennis player, how much time per week would you give up to train and enter competitions? One evening? Two evenings? Your whole weekend?

Example 2: if you are committed to Fair trade, how much of what you buy are you willing to make fair-trade? Only bananas? Tea and coffee? Chocolate? Your clothes?

Example 3: How much are you willing to give up for a friend? Or for a member of your family?

Activity: Methodist Covenant Prayer (S)

Every year members of the Methodist church renew their commitment to God and Jesus by saying this prayer (*see right*). Read it out slowly to the group.

Which bits of the prayer do you like?

Which bits of the prayer might you find difficult to pray?

I am no longer my own but yours.

Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;

put me to doing,
put me to suffering;

let me be employed for you,
or laid aside for you,

exalted for you,

or brought low for you;

let me be full,

let me be empty,

let me have all things,

let me have nothing:

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

you are mine and I am yours. So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified
in heaven.

Methodist Covenant Prayer

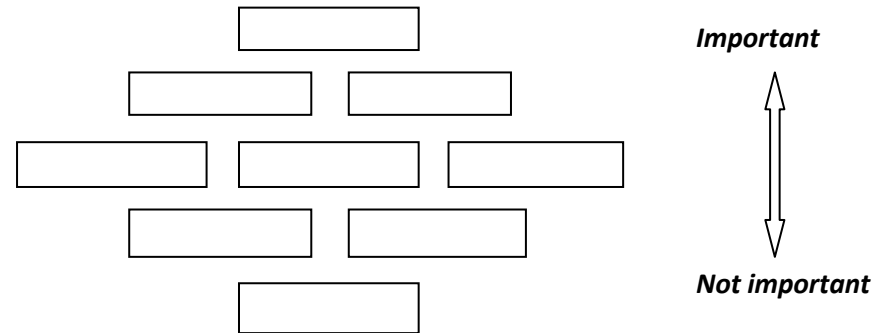


Activity: Committed to Jesus (I, S)

This activity is about considering what it means to have a sense of commitment to Jesus, God’s Kingdom and the Church in a way that should get some interesting discussion happening. There are no ‘right/wrong’ answers to be found, only opinions which will come from what the participants already know, think or feel.

WHAT TO DO

- Split the group into smaller groups of about 4 people (max. 6). Print the cards on the next page so that each group can have a set.
- Ask each group to lay out the cards in front of them and see if they can think of different categories that they can divide the cards into e.g: ‘something you do inside church or outside church’, ‘something a few people do or something everyone can do’. Only suggest these ideas if they are really stuck – the idea is that they will come up with their own categories too.
- Give people some time to discuss together in small groups. You can join in with each group to help if they get stuck.
- Ask everyone to share what they came up with and explain why. Their answers may give some insight into what they think.
- Now ask them to take the cards again and to rank them in order of how important they think each of these things are with the most important at the top. ‘Important’ = a sign of commitment to Jesus, God’s Kingdom and the Church.
- Try choosing only 9 of them and arranging them like this :



- Give them a few minutes to do this and then ask each group to talk about their list.
- They may discover that it is hard to do without first deciding on a ‘criteria’ e.g. most important to ME, most important for MY CHURCH. It might be interesting to have a go at both and see how their priorities compare.
- Conclude by discussing what they think are the key elements of commitment and why it matters.



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| praying regularly – at church and at other times and places | going to church services as much as possible | giving to charity/good causes | telling others about Jesus |
| reading the Bible, maybe as part of a study group. | getting baptised | getting confirmed | taking a role in the running of the church e.g. PCC, warden/steward |
| training to be a lay or ordained minister | giving money towards the running of the church or church-led projects | running or taking part in an Alpha course for those investigating the Christian faith | volunteering to work in or setting up a church project for the local community |
| taking part in leading/planning church worship | delivering Christian Aid envelopes | spending some time quietly with God each day | working with young people in the church or the surrounding area |



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Final reflection: (J, I, S)

ASK: I wonder what it might mean to be committed to Jesus?

For many Christians there will be a time, or even many times, when we want to make a commitment to Christ. We may have decided we want to be with Jesus for the rest of our life, or we may just want to show other people that is what we have always felt. We may also feel we have forgotten about Jesus a bit, and want to get back together with him.

If you would like Jesus to be with you in your life, all you have to do is to ask him to. A painter showed this by painting a picture of Jesus outside a door (see Holman Hunt's 'Light of the World' - right). You are inside and Jesus will wait for you to open the door to him.

You can do this anytime and anywhere. You can do it quietly on your own at home, or at the front of church with everyone on Sunday morning. Whatever you might do, talk to one of the leaders of your group or another leader in church about what you want to do so that they can help you.

You can also ask them if you are not sure what to do or say. You might also like to be baptized or confirmed if you haven't been already. Your leaders can help you with this too.

Methodist Covenant Prayer – you might like to use the Methodist prayer from the earlier activity. Can you pray it all? Are there some parts you aren't sure about?

I wonder what you might be willing to give up for Jesus?

When the going gets tough....

Sometimes following Jesus can be a hard commitment to stick with. Perhaps your group might like to pray for each other if they are finding it hard to be a Christian at the moment.

What are the things that you find difficult?

How would you like to ask God to help?

