

SESSION FIVE:

EDUCATION

CAN WE BE CONSTANTLY LEARNING?



EDUCATION IS SOMETHING WE CAN ALL RELATE TO IN SOME WAY OR ANOTHER, AND YET FOR MANY CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD, GOING TO SCHOOL UNFORTUNATELY REMAINS SIMPLY AN ASPIRATION.

We would encourage your groups to think about how you could take action together, being generous with our education and championing those who currently can't go to school. This could involve everyone working together around one action, or working together as a group using a combination of actions. You choose whatever will be most helpful for your group. If we all make changes together in our own lives, we begin to see a bigger shift among our peers, our town, our generation.

You can use this session with a large group or in a smaller, more informal social setting. There are sections that are relevant to both, and any activities or discussions include two options depending on your context – pick and choose what works for you. Look out for these symbols:



BEST SUITED TO SMALLER GATHERINGS INCLUDING FRIENDS ENJOYING A MEAL TOGETHER OR A SMALLER GROUP OF STUDENTS.



BEST SUITED TO A LARGER GROUP SUCH AS A YOUTH GROUP, CHRISTIAN UNION, OR SCHOOLS WORK.



Most schools in the UK look very similar. We know the routine: get up early, go to class, enjoy lunch with friends, come home and do homework and do it all over again tomorrow. But studying doesn't look the same all over the world as it does here.

Test your knowledge about school around the world with this quiz.



GET INTO PAIRS, AND MAKE SURE EACH PAIR HAS A PEN AND A PIECE OF PAPER.

YOU WILL NEED ONE QUIZMASTER WHO CAN READ OUT THE QUESTIONS. COUNT UP YOUR CORRECT ANSWERS AT THE END TO SEE WHO ARE THE WINNING PAIR.



STICK A 'TRUE' SIGN ON ONE SIDE OF THE ROOM AND A 'FALSE' SIGN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM.

READ OUT EACH STATEMENT TO THE GROUP. AFTER EACH STATEMENT THE GROUP HAS 10 SECONDS TO RUN TO THE SIDE OF THE ROOM THAT REPRESENTS THE ANSWER THAT THEY THINK IS CORRECT.

Questions

1. The City Montessori School in Lucknow, India, is the largest school in the world, with more than 32,000 students.
2. Children in Finland don't start going to school until they are 7 years old.
3. Schools in Japan have a five minute break every hour to allow students to run around the playground five times to help them concentrate.
4. Students in Norway are used to luxury school dinners where they have three courses everyday, all provided by the school.
5. In Brazil, school starts at 7am and finishes at noon, so that children can go straight home to have lunch with their parents, an important cultural tradition.
6. Children in Germany receive a special cone called a Schultütem which is filled with pens, pencils, books and snacks for school.
7. All Russian schools start on 'Knowledge Day', which is 1st September, even if it's at the weekend.
8. In Albania, all students learn how to knit and crochet, to provide warm clothes for grandparents in the winter.
9. On average, school students in China receive the most homework.
10. In Turkey, once a year the head teacher dresses up as a Turkey to lead assembly on their national holiday.

Answers:

1. True 2. True 3. False 4. False 5. True
6. True 7. True 8. False 9. True 10. False

DISCUSS: WHEN YOU GROW UP

When you were a kid, remember when your parents, friends would ask you what you would like to be when you grew up?



SIT DOWN WITH A CUP OF TEA AND HAVE A WANDER DOWN MEMORY LANE TOGETHER. CHAT ABOUT WHAT JOB YOU WANTED TO HAVE AS A CHILD, AND WHAT JOB YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE NOW.



TURN TO THE PERSON NEXT TO YOU AND ASK EACH OTHER THE QUESTIONS. YOU HAVE ONLY HAVE 30 SECONDS TO ANSWER EACH QUESTION.

Questions

1. When you were in primary school, what did you want to be when you grew up?
2. Now that you're a bit more grown up, maybe in secondary school, studying at uni or working away, what would you say if someone asked you today what you want to be when you grow up?
3. What would you like to do when you dive into the world of work?



Even if we didn't know what we wanted our long-term career to look like when we were asked 'what do you want to be when you grow up?' we knew the sort of answer they were looking for – a teacher, a doctor, a ballerina, a policewoman. The answer was something you were sure you would enjoy, that you thought you might be good at and something that you could work towards.

More often than not, as we go through careers classes, select subjects and choose what to do after school, it doesn't quite resemble the career that we dreamed of as a five year old. We discover what we're good at, where we want to develop and how we might fit in to the world around us. Our education has incredible potential to set us up for working life and adulthood.

Because of where we have been born, we have the amazing privilege of going to school and making the most of the opportunities that our education will give us. The question is, how can we be generous with our education? How can we take what we learn, what we're good at and the job we'd like to do and 'place it before God as an offering'? (Romans 12:1)

It can be hard to think of school as an amazing opportunity at times but our education opens lots of doors for us as we look towards our future. How can we aim for a kingdom focused, globally minded future? How can we use our education to live ethically and encourage those around us to do the same?

This doesn't mean we all have to be missionaries or open a Fairtrade chocolate shop (although how cool would that be?). We can choose to pursue a career that suits our skills and what we have learned while also acting ethically in a way that loves our global neighbours. We need chemists who will develop planet-friendly chemicals, inventors who will come up with new sustainable materials, product designers who design to avoid waste, teachers who choose to reduce their classroom paper usage and chefs who use local and Fairtrade products. Together we are a generation who can choose to live differently and take our education into a kingdom focused career.

If poverty is caused by broken relationships, how can we restore the relationships between ourselves and our global neighbours, between ourselves and the planet, and between ourselves and God, through how we choose to use our education?

DISCUSS: HOW DO SCHOOL AND POVERTY ADD UP?

One of the biggest contributors to global poverty is lack of access to education. It's a vicious cycle because living in poverty can make it very difficult to go to school. On the continent of Africa, less than 50% of children are able to read and write, whereas in South American and European countries, 90-100% of children are able to read and write. And 39% of the worldwide poor have no formal education at all.

For people living in poverty, there are lots of complications and limitations that prevent kids from being able to go to school. Think through some of the reasons why living in poverty makes it harder to get to school, and why not going to school contributes to poverty.

We're attaching some clues and statistics to help your discussion.



GET SOME PAPER AND A PEN, AND, AS A GROUP, COME UP WITH AS MANY REASONS WHY POVERTY AFFECTS EDUCATION, AND VICE VERSA.

ONCE YOU HAVE COME UP WITH ALL THE IDEAS YOU CAN THINK OF AS A GROUP, CHECK OUT OUR CLUES AND CHAT THROUGH ANY AREAS THAT YOU HAVE MISSED.

THINK BACK OVER YOUR TIME AT SCHOOL, COLLEGE, OR UNIVERSITY, AND SPEND SOME TIME REFLECTING ON HOW YOUR EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THOSE WHO ARE LIVING IN POVERTY.



TOGETHER AS A GROUP, DISCUSS WHY POVERTY AND A LACK OF EDUCATION ARE LINKED. YOU MAY WANT TO WRITE THE GROUP'S IDEAS DOWN ON A BIG PIECE OF PAPER AT THE FRONT.

ONCE YOU HAVE COME UP WITH ALL THE IDEAS YOU CAN THINK OF AS A GROUP, CHECK OUT OUR CLUES, AND ADD IN ANY AREAS THAT YOU HAVE MISSED.

SPLIT OFF INTO SMALLER GROUPS, AND GIVE EACH GROUP A DIFFERENT CLUE, OR AN AREA YOU HAVE COME UP WITH, TO THINK ABOUT. RE-READ THE INFORMATION IN YOUR GROUP AND DISCUSS WHAT THE GROUP THINKS. YOU COULD USE THESE QUESTIONS TO HELP GUIDE YOUR CONVERSATION:

- Can you ever imagine this being an issue in your school, and why?
- How does this make you feel about your school experience?

Clues

1. Gender: *In many places around world, if you are a girl you are much less likely to have the opportunity to go to school. 15 million girls of primary school age will never have the opportunity to learn to read and write in primary school, compared to about*

CONTINUED...

10 million boys. At least one in five girls around the world can't go to school because of conflict, poverty and discrimination. Poverty forces many families to choose which of their children to send to school, which means girls often miss out. Instead of going to school they have to work or stay at home to care for siblings and run the house.

2. Money: For families who are living in poverty, other basic necessities may have to be prioritised over school. Although some governments have taken away school fees to help families who are living in poverty to send their kids to school, other necessary items like school uniforms and exam fees can still stop some children from going to school.

3. Hunger: Imagine not having anything to eat for 48 hours and then trying to walk 5 kilometres with your little brother or sister to get to school. For children who are living in extreme poverty, hunger isn't just a growling tummy before dinner. Hunger is not having anything to eat all day. Hunger makes the walk to school unbearable and concentration in class impossible.

4. Jobs: For many families who are living in poverty, it's essential that the children help to earn money and so they have to work during the day rather than go to school. They might work with their parents in the family fields, in the quarries or go out on their own to sell snacks or work in factories. Extreme poverty forces families to only think about how they will survive the next day rather than being able to look ahead to the long-term benefits of going to school.

5. Illness in the family: People who are living in poverty generally have a higher risk of becoming sick and are also likely to have limited access to hospitals and doctors. When parents become ill, it's often their children who care for them. Older siblings can take on more of a parental role for younger brothers and sisters, running the house and providing for the family. With all this going on it's really hard to fit school in as well.

6. Difficult to reach areas: Did you know that a child living in an urban area is almost five times more likely to complete secondary school than a rural child? Of the 59 million primary school aged children who are still out of school, the majority of them are in the poorest and hardest to reach areas in the world. Poor communities often live in areas where there are no roads and that don't have any public transport. The only way to travel is to walk and for some communities the walk to school is just too far.

7. Conflict: Conflict disrupts everything about normal day to day life, including school. Buildings are destroyed, people are killed and normal systems stop. The school system can completely shut down when a community is hit by conflict. Families sometimes have to flee from their home village to escape fighting, meaning they end up living temporarily in a new area. Going to school in this context is extremely difficult and quickly becomes less of a priority.



Even for those who are enrolled in school, keeping on top of the work can be really difficult if you are living in poverty. The immediate necessities and challenges faced make it nearly impossible to look ahead to the long-term opportunities that school can open up. Sundip has found it a struggle to study for school because he and his family are living in poverty.

Sundip lives in Bhorle in northern Nepal. He and his family had very little light in their home, which made it difficult to do his homework in the evening. He could only read by the dim light of a kerosene lamp, which is a dangerous and expensive form of power. Did you know over a billion people around the world have no access to electricity?

But now the lives of Sundip and his family have been transformed by just one solar panel. A solar panel like this can power up to six light bulbs and charge a phone. Sundip can now study for school in the evening by bright, safe light. He says he feels very good about this.

When we tackle poverty, people have more space to be able to learn. We know that helping more people to access education gives them a greater opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty.



Inequality means that millions of people around the world are living in poverty and, as we've seen, living in poverty can make it very difficult to go to school. The Bible has lots to say about inequality, how we treat people who are living in poverty and about loving our global neighbours.

When Jesus started his ministry, he had an important announcement to make: something that would affect his work while he was alive on earth and would affect our lives as we follow him. It was big news.

- **Luke 4:14-21**

Jesus is telling everyone that a big part of what he was here to do was to show us how important it is to help people who are living in poverty and show us some ways that we can do that. Jesus was helping us understand that he came to restore relationships and, as we follow him, to do the same.

- **What does the passage say that Jesus came to do?**
- **What does it mean to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour?**

Jesus was using the scriptures to point back to something that is talked about in the Old Testament, in Leviticus 25. The year of the Lord's favour is also known as the year of Jubilee. Jubilee was the time when God made provision for those who, for one reason or another, had become poor. It was a time when debts were cancelled and those living in poverty were given a chance to get back on their feet again. Land was returned to people. Slaves were set free. This was God's way of making sure that the inequality gap, the gap between the rich and the poor, didn't keep getting bigger.

The year of Jubilee happened every 50 years but there were other laws in place as well that meant that debts were cancelled more regularly, every seven years. These laws from God were to encourage an ongoing and deeply committed involvement in helping people who were living in poverty. When Jesus started his ministry by reading out this scripture, he was telling everyone that caring deeply for the poor and taking action to tackle inequality is a main priority and a key characteristic of the kingdom of God.

So from way back in the Old Testament, to the start of Jesus' ministry to now, tackling inequality is foundational to following Jesus. What better motivation to use our education and the opportunities it brings to love our global neighbours and to champion education for those who can't go to school because they are living in poverty.

VIDEO: WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH WHAT YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN?

Whatever we end up doing with what we learn in school, whatever job we work towards, we can decide now to intentionally restore relationships with our global neighbours through our actions.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAkjktPO3Ow>



ACTIVITY: PRAYER PLEDGE

What will you learn in the next year? Where will you be? Will you be starting a new job, or a new course? Whatever you're doing, choose now to dedicate the next year of learning to God. Think about how you can love our global neighbours through how you use your own education. Place your education before God as an offering.

Decide what this will look like over the next year, and write down a prayer as a pledge to love our global neighbours this year. Be specific. What will you do to make this happen?

Now, keep your prayer pledge safe and open it in a year's time. Put it in an envelope and store it somewhere safe, like in your Bible or your diary. Or take a photo of it and keep it in your photos, or upload it to your social media (you can mark it to be seen only by you if you like). Put a reminder in your phone for one year from today.

TAKE ACTION FOR EDUCATION

Remember when you discovered your persona using the quiz in the previous session? Knowing your unique skills can help you respond effectively to issues impacting people living in poverty. Let's join together, make a stand against poverty and help our global neighbours.

On the next few pages you'll find suggested activities for your persona. If you were a combination of two or more personas, choose which one appeals to you most.



ACTIVITY: TAKE ACTION – THE MOBILISER

It's time to spread the word on education and gather your friends to pray. Invite your friends to pray with you for 30 days about poverty and how it's affecting children's education. Gather as many people as possible to pray with you for 30 days, and get them to 'sign up' to receiving a text message or a message on social media from you each day to help them pray.

Get started:

1. Ask your friends and family, ask to make an announcement at church, ask your CU leaders if you could do it together as a CU activity or anywhere else you know you have peers who would like to pray.
2. Collect up 30 pieces of information – just a sentence or two – one for each day. Check out the statistics and information in this session and do some research of your own.
3. Make a contact list, and start messaging. Set yourself a reminder on your phone to send a message each day.



ACTIVITY: TAKE ACTION – THE MAKER

Were you surprised to find out just how many people in the world today don't have access to education? How could you spread the word and tell others what you have learned?

Show your friends, church or community how poverty affects education. Come up with your own creative way to communicate the message. You could run an event, write up your own message, develop an action; go wherever your creativity takes you.

If you're stuck for ideas, check out some of ours below:

- Record a video or write a blog and share it online.
- Run your church service or youth group / house group completely in the dark.
- Start your own hashtag and create some conversation on social media.



ACTIVITY: TAKE ACTION – THE ACTIVIST

One of the biggest challenges for people living in remote or low-income areas is that they aren't in an area that has access to the electricity grid. This means electricity isn't available for them, even if they were able to afford to pay the bills.

The World Bank is an international financial institution that tries to help people who are living in poverty. They are trying to help people who are living in poverty to gain access to electricity. But less than 3% of what the World Bank spends on energy in developing countries supports the kind of local, renewable energy that can best help people who are living in poverty and that doesn't harm the planet.

Remember how much of a difference the solar panel made to Sundip and his family, and helped Sundip be able to study for school?

We'd love you to send a message to the World Bank asking them to invest in local, clean and renewable energy; shifting the balance of their funding away from supporting fossil fuels. Not only will this benefit families like Sundip's, but it also helps to develop energy systems that are good for the planet.

Help us collect 50,000 signatures to send to the World Bank to make a big noise about renewable energy for people who are living in poverty. Who could you get to sign the petition?

Your challenge is to collect 50 signatures on the petition. If you think this is too easy, give yourself a bigger target.

You can sign the petition online: www.tearfund.org/wewontstop or drop us a message to order petition cards that you can hand out to your friends. Contact us on youth@tearfund.org



ACTIVITY: TAKE ACTION – THE ADVOCATE

Sundip's story tells us about the difficulty of studying without any electricity, but, as we've discovered, studying and education leads to a better chance of employment in the future, and being able to tackle poverty. Did you know that one in seven people has no access to electricity?

Discover the challenges of not having any electricity for yourself. Invite some friends over for a weekend sleepover or organise a youth group lock-in. But here's the catch: for 24 hours, you're not allowed to use electricity. That means no lights, no TV, no phone charging. You'll have to come up with some old-school activities and games to play.

If you have any weekend homework, why not give it a go when it starts to get dark, to really experience how challenging it can be to have to study without any electricity.

If you don't have any weekend homework, sit down together once it gets dark and make a list of how not having any evening light would make it more difficult to do well at school.

KEEP IN TOUCH



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