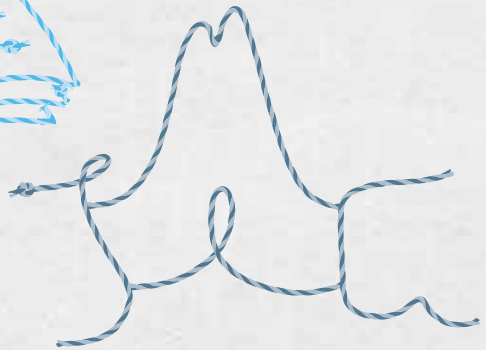
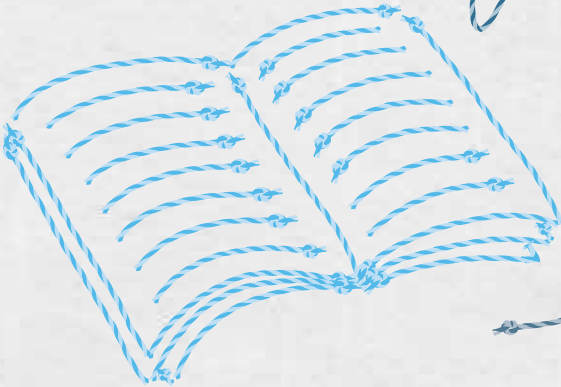




Reality
Bites
Youth

UNRAVELLING THE COMPLEX
issue of poverty



Anglicare

Why Reality Bites

Australia is sometimes known as the lucky country, and in many ways we are. Over recent years our nation has experienced a long period of sustained economic growth – but not everyone enjoys the fruits of this prosperity. The Australian Council of Social Services and Social Policy Research Centre have reported that close to 3 million Australians are living below the poverty line. Poverty and social isolation are big issues in our country and often don't get the attention they deserve.

Inspired by Anglicare's gospel-focused vision to care in Jesus' name, Reality Bites provides the opportunity to explore a little of what the Bible has to say about reaching out to our neighbours in need. The emphasis throughout this series is on how our Christian faith inspires us to live a life of care and generosity in response to God's great love for us. Each week consists of a Bible study, video, prayer and discussion.

Each video is designed to not only inform you of how Anglicare is seeking to engage with poverty in our Diocese but also inspire you to take concrete action! We hope this study will challenge you, your youthgroup or Bible Study to consider what practical difference you can make to the lives of those in your street, the next suburb or another part of our city who are experiencing great need.

We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19

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Week 2	Responding to God's love for us	Shift
Week 3	Loving your community	Mobile Community Pantry



Bible Study - God's love & example

A Christian's care and concern for others must start with the consideration of who God is. We worship a God who is not distant or removed from his creation, but who is personally involved in caring for what he has made and expressing his holy character through action. This was a central part of the experience of ancient Israel and has now been extended to the whole world because of God coming to live amongst us in Jesus. By recognising how God has acted towards us we see the principles by which we ought to act towards each other.

Read Deuteronomy 10:12-22. God has rescued the nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt and, after 40 years of wandering, has brought them to the edge of the Promised Land which they are to inherit. Moses is now giving a long sermon on the Law which God had given them and how they are to apply it in this Land.

1. What is it that God expects from Israel if they are to live as His people? What does it mean in practice to walk in His ways, and how can they know what these 'ways' are?
2. How did Israel come to be above the other nations? What would it look like for Israel to live in line with who they are and the identity that God has given them?
3. What does this passage tell us about what God is like? What sorts of things does God do/not do? How is his care and compassion for the vulnerable expressed? What does this mean for us?
4. How do you think Israel's God would have been different to the gods of the ancient world? How is God different to the 'gods' that people worship today?

Having seen more fully what God is like through the law, we must turn the spotlight onto ourselves and consider the kind of people God calls us to be.

Read Philippians 2:1-18. The Apostle Paul has been thrown into prison by the Romans for preaching the message that Jesus is Lord. Instead of seeing this as a sign of defeat, Paul writes to encourage the Philippian church that his imprisonment has in fact provided many opportunities for the gospel to spread and that they should continue to live as Jesus' witnesses despite hardship.

5. What sort of behaviour from the Philippians will make Paul's joy complete? What should be their priorities?
6. What does humility mean? What are the two ways in which Jesus shows us the pattern of humility? How can we have 'the same attitude as Christ Jesus'?
7. How does Paul expect the Philippians will 'shine like stars'? How will they look different and contrast to the world?

Video 'Going It Alone'

<https://youtu.be/7zjZ6WIDgQw>



Prayer focus: Christian care

As a Christ-centred organisation, Anglicare recognises that everything is about Jesus, and he enables us to love and serve our clients as people made in the image of God. Motivated and equipped for all that we do through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, we look for opportunities to share this good news wherever and however possible.

Pray:

- That Anglicare will continue delivering Christ-centred, professional and effective Christian care programs that help meet people's needs, communicates the gospel and makes the most of the passion and gifts of Christians in local churches.
- That Anglicare will continue to find new ways to help people who aren't having their physical needs met.
- That Anglicare will serve all our clients in a ways that reflects prayerful dependence on Jesus.

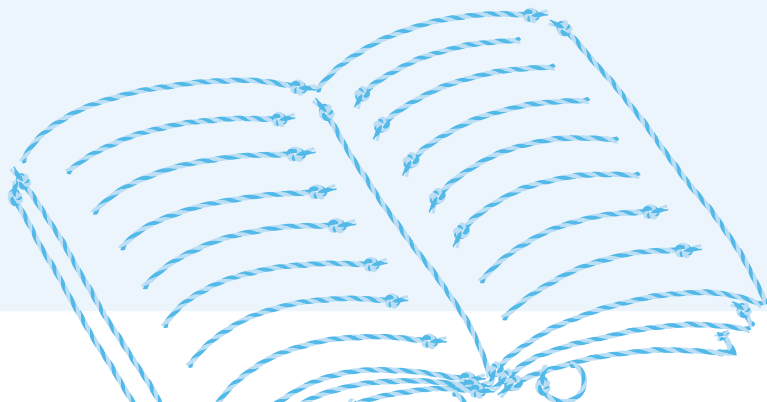
Mission Activity:

Have you ever worried about which outfit to wear on a Friday night? Yes? We've all been there! Sometimes there's just too many to choose from. There's nothing wrong with having clothing, but did you know there are people in our community that worry about basic clothing for their family? Anglicare has over 20 shops around Sydney that sell quality second hand clothing to those who need it.

You can help get involved by running a Take Love Clothing Collection in your school or youth group and your clothes that you dont wear could really help those fill those shops!

<https://www.takelove.org.au>

“A Father to the fatherless, a defender of widows is God in his holy dwelling.” Psalm 68:5



Notes

A series of 21 horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.



Bible Study - Responding to God's love for us

Last week we considered God's heart of love for humanity. We were left with a sense of just how big and deep the love of God is as expressed in the sending of his Son, Jesus. This week we will consider how the love of God through Jesus transforms us into living lives of love.

Imagine a setting in which you have felt loved. It might be receiving a thoughtful gift, being picked up when you were a child by a parent after falling and hurting yourself. It doesn't matter what action – if it is inspired by love it will cause some sort of reaction in you. It would be a strange situation in which no thanks or reciprocal love was expressed. Jesus, however, experienced this very thing.

Read Luke 17:11-19.

Jesus heals ten lepers and only one of them returns to thank him.

1. Jesus seems perplexed that the nine former lepers had not come back. What was Jesus expecting as normal behaviour? Why would this have been a fair expectation?
2. Has there ever been a time when someone forgot to thank you? How did that make you feel?
3. Do you think the one man's response – throwing himself at Jesus' feet – was too extreme? What level of impact would this healing have had on this man's everyday life?
4. What did Jesus mean in verse 19 when he said, "your faith has made you well"? Is this any different to the healing experienced by all ten men?

It seems from Jesus' questions to the returing leper that experiencing God's love requires a response, a transformation causing a person to live differently. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, picks up on this idea of God's love transforming us into people who respond, and as part of this response, love others.

Read Romans 12:9-21. In this letter so far, Paul has unpacked the sinfulness of humans but the overarching love of God who saves us by his grace. He opens chapter 12 with the word 'Therefore', which implies a new way of life. He then outlines ways in which we should respond to God's grace.

5. Which aspect/s of Paul's list stand out to you the most? Why do they stand out?
6. How does Paul say we should act towards fellow believers? How does he say we should act towards everyone else?
7. What do you think Paul means in verse 12? How does the following verse relate to his?
8. Can you think of any examples from history or people you know who do the things in this passage well? What are some specific ways you could improve at loving those around you in light of this passage?

Note: In verse 21, Paul is quoting Proverbs 25:11-12. Some have said that "heaping burning coals on his head" relates to punishment. Other Bible commentators have said it relates to a burning sense of shame, remorse or change of heart that takes place as a result of a deed of love.

Video 'Shift'

<https://youtu.be/HRHm2kgELbw>



Prayer focus – People in poverty

Anglicare seeks to respond to people experiencing poverty and loneliness (or social isolation) by meeting their immediate needs, and providing hope for the future.

Thousands of families living on the margins of society face constant stress as they try and balance the costs of foods, accommodation and bills.

Pray:

- That those experiencing stress related to finances will find the support they need to overcome their difficulties.
- That, in partnership with local churches and communities, Anglicare will work effectively to stop people from being socially isolated and disconnected from the rest of the community.
- For strength and wisdom for staff and volunteers as they deal with stressful situations every day.

Mission Activity:

Did you know that every six minutes someone comes to Anglicare for immediate food and financial assistance? One in every three of those people will have children under the age of 16. You can help by running a Take Love Food Collection in your school or youth group. Collect a whole heap of non-perishable food items and Anglicare will come and pick them up to distribute to people in need. Donating food may seem like a small act, but meeting peoples' immediate material needs can lead to opportunities to help them on a much deeper level.

<https://www.takelove.org.au>

Notes

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Bible Study - Loving your community

Over the past two weeks we have looked at the character and example of our God as the one who is love and models love for us. Our response is to be one of gratitude and seeking to reflect God's love in our lives to the world.

1. What sort of society do we live in? What are some of the challenges for us as Christians living in a broken world that has turned away from God? What are some valuable aspects of society that are rooted in our Christian heritage?
2. Why should Christians care for people who have rejected God?

Read Jeremiah 29:1-11. When God's people were overcome by the Babylonians they were sent as captives to live in Babylon. This is often referred to as 'the Exile'. God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah against the false prophets of his day. He brought a message of God's judgment. God's people would go into exile but Jeremiah also spoke of a future hope when God would restore his people.

3. What is God's promise to his people?
4. How does God instruct his people to live while exiles in Babylon? Why are they to do it?

Read 1 Peter 2:9-17. Peter picks this theme for Christians of living in a society that we are radically different from and yet still needing to engage with it.

5. How does Peter describe the Christians he is writing to?
6. If this is their identity how are they to live in their society?

7. Think about your local community. What are some of the needs around you? How might you, individually, as a group or as a church be able to help meet those needs and similar needs in our neighbourhood and across our city?
8. How has Reality Bites challenged you in thinking about the needs of people in Australia who are struggling?

Video 'Mobile Community Pantry'

<https://youtu.be/5eJCIEExTnc>



Prayer focus – Partnership with church parishes

An essential part of Anglicare's vision is to develop partnerships which benefit both local churches and Anglicare. While all partnerships look a bit different, each one aims to reach out with Christ's love and connect people in need with local churches.

Pray:

- That Anglicare's partnerships with churches will expand the potential for Christian love be shown to those in need.
- For Christians in local churches to be increasingly empowered and equipped to be change-makers in their communities.
- That Anglicare's services will make a real and eternal difference to the lives of people in need.

Mission Activity:

Five dollars doesn't seem like a lot, but if you and ten friends all gave five dollars – fifty-five dollars could really help someone in need.. Imagine if you got your whole school involved?

You can make a difference in your community or youth group, a car wash during church or in the school car park, a bake sale at school, any fundraising event; if we all do something little, the little adds up to lots and we really can help to change someone's life.

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially those who belong to the family of believers.”

Galatians 6:9-10



Notes

A series of 20 horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

Reality Bites – what now?

Participating in Reality Bites challenges us to think about the impacts of poverty and what life is like for people in difficult circumstances.

If you or your church is interested in discussing this further Anglicare can help to identify ways to increase your involvement in this area.

Please contact us at partnerships@anglicare.org.au



Lisa's story

Lisa is married with two children, a daughter aged 14 and a son aged 13. Her husband injured his back and neck so badly that he had to leave his job.

Lisa had to give up her part-time job and her volunteer work to become his carer meaning the only income they had was through Newstart payments.

Suddenly, their lives had completely changed. With a greatly reduced income, Lisa and her family were struggling to pay all their expenses – rent, bills and the extra costs associated with her husband's health problems. Some weeks they just didn't have enough money left for food.

As a mum, Lisa felt awful that she couldn't provide food for her children but there wasn't much she could do as she had to support her husband and look after him properly. That's when she turned to a local Anglicare Food and Financial Assistance program for help. Through this program the family has received ongoing assistance with food and payment of essential bills such as electricity and water.

While this relief has helped alleviate the immediate crisis, Anglicare's

approach to integrated service delivery has helped Lisa's family in many more ways. Anita, their Anglicare Case Manager, referred them to the Anglicare Family Support service so a range of issues contributing to their difficulties could be addressed. This included assistance in paying specialist fees for her husband's treatment, which they otherwise could not have afforded, and helping Lisa to apply for the Carer's payment – a long and complicated process.

Not surprisingly, Lisa was suffering from anxiety and depression as she was very concerned for her husband's health and worried about the family's financial situation. She was referred to an Anglicare Counselling program for help in dealing with everything that was happening in her life.

The house they were renting was in very bad condition. No repairs had been done for years and although it leaked in a number of places during rain the owner refused to address the problems. Lisa knew the family would have to move but was worried that they wouldn't be able to afford a removalist – or to pay the bond for a new place.

Anglicare advocated to the Department of Housing on behalf of the family and also provided help

with the bond and the removalist costs when housing was made available for them.

A few weeks after they moved to the new place their fridge died – and as they couldn't afford to fix or replace it this meant they were spending extra money on food and were limited in what they could buy. Anglicare was able to assist with a fridge to alleviate this problem.

Lisa was eventually approved for Carer's payment which meant there was a bit more money coming in.

Now, when Lisa's husband is well enough to be left alone for a short time she comes along to the Anglicare Mobile Community Pantry Fresh Food van hosted in partnership with a local Anglican church where she can buy a bag of fresh fruit and vegetables for just \$2.

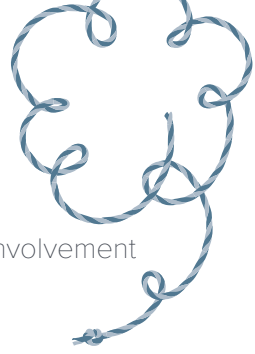
This is a great help with the weekly food budget – especially with two growing teenagers to feed.

Her husband is now on the waiting list for surgery.

Lisa has told us how much she and her family have appreciated all the help Anglicare has provided at the time they have needed it the most.



Further Reading



Good News To The Poor – sharing the gospel through social involvement
by Tim Chester IVP 2004

Generous Justice – How God’s grace makes us just
by Tim Keller Hodder & Stoughton 2012

When Helping Hurts – How to alleviate poverty without hurting the poor or
yourself by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert Moody 2012

Neither Poverty Nor Riches – A biblical theology of possessions
by Craig Blomberg NSBT IVP 1999

Other Anglicare videos

Edison’s Story – Winter Appeal Dinner 2018

<https://youtu.be/7zjZ6WIDgQw>

Aged Care Partnerships – helping those 55 and older who are homeless or
at risk of homelessness

https://youtu.be/avjmvWV_poA

Invisible to the World? Not to us.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5n_osAixc_Y

Take Love Collection

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PellYwmOm4>

Nobody is Nobody

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRMCQBr6LYU>

