

Listen, observe, act – in step with God Group reflective activities from MULO

If your branch or group hasn't participated directly with the MULO process (our global conversations to prayerfully inform the way forward for Mothers' Union) then you may like to engage with it by using these resources.

Group Bible Reflection: Blind Bartimaeus

Objective: Reflect on Mothers' Union's calling to the 'outsiders' and the impact we can have

Mark 10: 46-52 (NIV)

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means "son of Timaeus"), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

⁴⁸ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." ⁵⁰ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."

⁵² "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

To consider:

THEN

- *What was it about Bartimaeus that drew Jesus to him?*
- *What different reactions came from the crowd and how did they change?*
- *What changes took place in Bartimaeus as a result?*

NOW

- *Who does Bartimaeus represent in our own locality?*
- *If Mothers' Union is the crowd today, how do we react to the vulnerable and marginalised?*
- *From this learning, what changes in lives should Mothers' Union be helping to bring?*

Group Bible Reflection: The Feeding of the 5000

Objective: to see that God wants to use us and our resources to bring about transformation in our own lives and the life of our community.

Mark 6:30-44 (NIV)

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. ³³ But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

³⁵ By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. ³⁶ Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.”

³⁷ But he answered, “You give them something to eat.”

They said to him, “That would take more than half a year’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?”

³⁸ “How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.”

When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.”

³⁹ Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² They all ate and were satisfied, ⁴³ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴ The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

To consider:

- *What was the need in this story? What were the resources?*
- *What did Jesus answer his disciples when they told him that people were hungry?*
- *What steps did Jesus take to perform the miracle? Why do you think he used those steps?*
- *What does this mean for the way Jesus wants us to work with our community?*
- *What resources do we have that we can put in God’s hands?*

Monologue: Peter walking on water (Mark 6: 45-56)

Have a confident volunteer deliver the monologue

If there is no-one available to act it out, it can be read – but by someone who can convey the feelings of Peter and draw others into the story. It may be helpful to repeat certain phrases during the monologue that stand out as important.

This was one of the worst storms ever. We were all terrified. And then I saw the Lord. I couldn't believe it – I thought it must have been a ghost but no, it was Jesus walking on the water. When I saw him, nothing seemed to matter, the storm, the fact that I couldn't swim - nothing. It was Jesus and he was calling me. It was the Lord and I just wanted to be with him, so I said – “tell me to come to you.” And he told me to come. The others muttered “don't be stupid” - I think some of them still thought it was a ghost.

Well I started walking and it felt really strange - it was water after all and yet I just thought – Jesus has said come so it must be ok. And I realised my feet weren't going under the water – the water felt somehow firm – it was so weird but so exciting too.

Half way there now - and I was still feeling good. I wished Jesus was closer but hey I was doing it - I was walking on water. The others were still telling me to come back. I could hear my brother Andrew, and his words stung me a bit – but he's normally right about me – I do bite off more than I can chew. Why wasn't Jesus getting any closer? I took my eyes off him for just a second and looked around me.

And oh my goodness – look at those waves – who do I think I am? I'm not Jesus – never will be – I'm a fisherman and sensible fishermen go back to shore when the weather gets like this. Jesus still wasn't getting any nearer – in fact he seemed to be getting further away. The wind was so strong and it seemed to be pushing me back. I'm not going to make it – I'm not!!

I felt my feet go under – oh no, so far to Jesus – so far to the boat - Should I turn back what should I do? I could feel the water over my ankles now then my knees. The cries of the others were getting louder. I was going under – there was nothing I could do. Lord save me, please save me.

As the water reached my neck I threw my hands up in desperation and suddenly there it was – his hand on mine – strong, incredibly strong. It sent a pulse of power through my whole body and then in a matter of seconds I was up out of the water again, - he supported me back to the boat. The storm still raged but it didn't matter because he was with me now - asking me why I had doubted. I was too tired to think about that – and feeling too much of a failure. Maybe later. Of course as soon as we were back in the boat the waves died down. Part of me wondered why he couldn't have done that a bit sooner.

We talked about it later – “You took your eyes off me” he said – “Never do that. I'm bigger than anything else you have to deal with.” Of course he's right. I've learnt that lesson the hard way, but, I think I can safely say – I'll never let him down again.

Spend some time in quiet and then share responses in pairs:

What part of the monologue most struck/ touched you? How did it make you feel? How does that encourage and inspire us as we go forward?