

YCW

Be the Difference!

*“A New Youth
for a New World”*

Joseph Cardijn

YCW Handbook

YCW

A Publication of the Young Christian Workers

Gospel Enquiry

Jesus the young worker

Jesus lived in a working family

Jesus was a young Jewish worker who grew up in Nazareth a very ordinary town in what is now northern Israel. He lived with his parents, Mary and Joseph and probably an extended family of cousins, uncles and aunts following Jewish laws and traditions.

After the time his parents lost him in Jerusalem and then found him in the Temple St. Luke tells us: "He then went down with them then and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority," (Luke 2:51)

The Temple in Jerusalem, besides being the House of God is also a place of learning, wealth and power. It was considered a wonder of the world at that time. This story of Jesus in the Temple as a boy shows how God chooses to grow up in a humble home. After a "taste" of the Temple scene Jesus returns to Nazareth and lives with his parents.

Jesus is a man of work

Joseph and Jesus most likely found work together on local building projects as carpenters. There is archaeological evidence which shows the existence of such projects. As a members of the village they would also have helped with the harvest and other communal work.

See

Why do you think God chose to come into our world as an ordinary worker and not as a prince, or a priest or a rich person?

What do you imagine were Jesus' first impressions of the Temple in Jerusalem? How did he react?

Why do you think Jesus spent thirty years of his life on earth just living at home and working?

Do you picture Jesus as a young worker? How do others see him?

Judge

How are people judged by the kind of work they do today? Can you give any examples?

What should our attitude be?

When Jesus started teaching and working miracles the neighbours were surprised and said things like: "Where did the man get all this? This is the carpenter surely, the son of Mary?" (Mark. 6.2-3) and "Where did the man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? This is the carpenter's son, surely?" (Matthew 13. 54)

Is it important that Jesus was an ordinary working man? If so why?

Act

In what way can we show our appreciation of the ordinary things in life?

Is there someone to whom we can show our appreciation for the work they do?

How can we deepen our friendship with Jesus?

Gospel Enquiry

Jesus' Followers

Read through this explanation and note anything that stands out for you.

*Jesus associated with ordinary working people.
He drew examples from their lives for his parables:*

- the shepherd and the sheep (St. John's Gospel chapter 10.1-17);
- the workers in the vineyard (St Matthew's Gospel chapter 20.1-16);
- the sower and the seed (St Matthew's Gospel chapter 13.1-6, 18-23);
- fishermen and fish (St Luke's Gospel chapter 5.1-11);

Choose one of these and read it through either in the group or alone and pay special attention to the worker(s) in the story.

Jesus called fishermen (Peter, Andrew, James and John) to be his closest followers.

The people Jesus called to be with him as he went about teaching, healing and proclaiming the presence of the kingdom of God were not specialised religious people. They were ordinary, everyday people with family and working lives.

See

What did you notice about the worker(s) in the story you read?

What worker do you think Jesus would have chosen if he had told that story today?

Which of the following people do you think he would have chosen as his close friends: a footballer, a shop assistant, a pop star, a factory worker, a politician? Anyone else?

Judge

"As he was walking along by the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net in the lake - for they were fishermen . . . And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you into fishers of men.' -And at once they left their nets and followed him." Mark 1.16-18

Not everyone is called to leave their job - in what other ways can we still be followers of Jesus?

"Ordinary jobs can be important and dignified because of the way we do them". Do you think this is true?

What is important in choosing a job or deciding a career in life? What help is available for doing this?

Act

Being "fishers of men" means getting others involved. How can we be "fishers of men"?

What action can we take about our future working life?

Gospel Enquiry

Jesus' Mission

The Gospel of Luke 4. 16-22

“He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:

“The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me.

*He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour.*

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, ‘This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.’ And he won the approval of all. They said, ‘This is Joseph’s son, surely?’”

See

What do you think it was like for Jesus going back to Nazareth, his home town, where he grew up? How did the people react?

What does the passage tell us about Jesus’ mission?

What is “good news” for the poor? How did Jesus preach good news to the poor? What did he do that gave hope to the poor?

Judge

Who are the oppressed in our world today?

Is Jesus’ mission still needed? Who can carry it on? Are we called to bring good news to people?

Act

In what way can we share in Jesus’ mission?

Who else is engaged in this work? Can we work with them in any way?

What practical action can we take either personally or as a group?

Gospel Enquiry

The Story of the Lost Son

The Gospel of Luke 15. 11-24

“Jesus told this parable: “A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, “Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me”. So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery.

When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. ~Then he came to his senses and said, “How many of my father’s paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants.” -So he left the place and went back to his father.

While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.” But the father said to his servants, “Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found.” And they began to celebrate.”

See

Can someone tell the story in their own words? Are there any further details anyone wants to add? Why did the son leave home do you think? Why did he decide to go back to his Father’s house? What did the Father think of his son’s proposal that he become a servant instead of a son? The Father has his son dressed in the best robe with a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet? What did this mean, what did it show everyone?

Judge

Do you think the Father’s reaction was unusual? Why or why not? The Father represents God. What does the story teach us about how God sees us and how he will treat us? Is there any way we waste what we have been given? The son in the story “came to his senses”. Is there something in life about which we can come to our senses?

Act

After thinking and talking about this story is there anything we should do? Is there a way we can seek forgiveness and show compassion to someone else? What can we do to restore young peoples’ dignity and sense of worth when needed?

Gospel Enquiry

The Sheep and the Goats

The Gospel of Matthew 25.31- 46.

'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations' will be assembled before him and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me." Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you drink? "When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome: naked and clothe you; -sick or in prison and go to see you? "And the King will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me". Next he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. -For I was hungry and you never gave me food; I was thirsty and you never gave me anything to drink; I was a stranger and you never made me welcome, naked and you never clothed me, sick and in prison and you never visited me." Then it will be their turn to ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, a stranger or naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" Then he will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me". And they will go away to eternal punishment, and the virtuous to eternal life.'

See

Explain in your own words the difference between the goats and the sheep in this parable.

Who is the stranger, the prisoner, the hungry and thirsty person in today's world?

Is there a stranger, a prisoner, a hungry and thirsty person in your life, someone whom you come into contact with now and then, or often?

Judge

Do you think people around you appreciate the importance of the practical help they give to others?

How do Jesus' words affect how we think?

Do the words "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me", affect the way you think of others?

Does the promise of eternal reward or eternal punishment have any impact on people today? Does it affect you?

Act

Who are the people in whom we are asked to see the Lord?

As an Impact member is there anyone in your "Friendship Circle" whom you could help this week?

Is there a way you could welcome a stranger? Speak to a prisoner? Encourage a sick person? Feed the hungry?

Gospel Enquiry

A Samaritan stops to help

The Gospel of Luke 10. 25 -37

"There was a lawyer who, to disconcert Jesus, stood up and said to him, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? What do you read there?' He replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.' -'You have answered right,' said Jesus, do this and life is yours.' But the man was anxious to justify himself, and said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of brigands; they took all he had, beat him and then made off, leaving him half dead. Now a priest happened to be travelling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite who came to the place saw him, and passed by on the other side. .But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him on to his own mount, carried him to the inn and looked after him. Next day, he took out two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said "and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have." Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbour to the man who fell into the brigands' hands? 'The one who took pity on him' he replied. Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself'"

See

Could someone tell the story in their own words?

Why did the teacher of the law question Jesus?

Why did the priest and the Levite not stop to help?

Jesus' listeners would have been shocked to hear that the person who helped the injured man was a Samaritan. Why do you think this would have been the case?

Judge

Do you think the priest and Levite should have stopped to help? Why or why not?

If Jesus had been telling the story today, who would have been the Samaritan?

What does this teach us about being a good neighbour?

Act

How can we "go and do the same"?

Should we try and change attitudes to people who are different? How could we do this?

To whom could we show more kindness?

Gospel Enquiry

Light and Salt

The Gospel of Matthew 5. 34-36

“Jesus said to his disciples: “You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men. ‘You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.”

See

What characteristics does a lamp have?

What is needed for it to light up the house?

Has there been a moment or time in your life when something happened to strengthen your faith and keep it alive?

Judge

How easy is it to keep our faith alive and strong? What threatens it or makes it more difficult?

How does being part of a group help?

Can you see a connection between “You are the salt of the earth” and the words “Make a difference!”

Act

What do you think you could do to let the light of your faith shine more strongly?

Where could you make a difference, even in a small way?

Is there someone else you could encourage?

Contact Page

If you are a new YCW group please make sure you let us know at YCW HQ. Once we receive confirmation from you we can send you a welcome pack with a certificate of affiliation and other items.

Once you have a group established you are part of the wider YCW Movement across the world. One of the benefits of being part of a national movement is the contact that your group can have with other young people from across England and Wales. The National Team will organise events for YCW members and leaders either in your region or nationally where you are given the opportunity to do this. The National Team will inform you of these events.

Outside of these events we always want to hear from our groups; what you are discussing and what actions you have taken. There are many ways you can contact us. You can write to us at our YCW Headquarters which are located at:

Young Christian Workers

St. Antony's House

Eleventh Street

Trafford Park

M17 1JF

Email: info@ycwimpact.com

Tel: 0161 872 6017

Website: www.ycwimpact.com

Follow the activities of the YCW and Impact across England and Wales on our social media accounts:

Facebook: 'Young Christian Workers'

Twitter: YCWImpact

Instagram: YCWImpact

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Acknowledgements

Composed by Philip Callaghan and Fr John Marsland based on YCW and Impact resources.

Design by Chris Knowles

Registered Charity No. 306149

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Published by

YCW, St Antony's House, Eleventh St, Trafford Park, Manchester M17 1JF