

Together we're **POWERFUL**

All-Age Worship and Group Activities

Introduction

This worship and group activity sheet is for church leaders to use with adults and young people. Take your pick from these fun ideas, and encourage your church to support Christian Aid's Harvest Appeal.

You'll need:

- a stopwatch
- a pile of hymnbooks, Bibles or other books (make sure there are too many books for one person to carry, but enough for a few people to carry together.)
- a photo of Aster, projected on a screen or printed out – download from the accompanying PowerPoint at caid.org.uk/harvest
- willing volunteers!

1. Pick one of these introductory challenges

Work it out

Invite a group of about four or five volunteers of all ages to come to the front for a few lifting and balancing challenges. First, set one of them (perhaps the youngest) the task of standing on one leg, and time how long it takes for them to put their leg down or fall. Then tell everyone that in a few moments, the same person will be able to hold it for double that time!

For the next challenge, ask the whole group to put 23 fingers and thumbs in the air. They will soon realise that they can't do this individually and must raise the right number of fingers between them.

Next, challenge them to pick up the pile of books you've prepared (giving appropriate health and safety instructions about lifting from the knees not the back). Again, they should have worked out by now that they need to work together. You might need to tease this out from the group.

Ask the congregation – how might the first volunteer do better this time at balancing on one leg? The answer you're looking for is by working together – the others could support that person so they don't overbalance. Ask them to repeat the one-leg challenge with people helping this time. Make sure to time them until they've done it twice as long!

Creative kitchen

If your church gathers food offerings as part of your service, invite two people who've contributed food to take part in a 'Ready, Steady, Cook'-style challenge. Ask both participants to plan a menu for an imaginary church lunch. Pick one person to go first, but limit him/her to using only the food they've brought with them. When they've come up with their menu, invite the second person to have a go, but tell them they can use any of the foods they can see.

Have the congregation vote on which menu they'd prefer – the second one probably sounds tastier! Explain that using only our own resources can leave us struggling, but when we combine resources and work together, the possibilities are much greater!



2. Tell the stories

Jesus and his friends

For a longer talk, read or retell Luke 8:1-15, and begin by considering the parable of the sower.

The seedlings in the story faced challenges from birds, lack of water, and weeds. Jesus says these remind us of the challenges we can face as we try to follow him: spiritual challenges, struggling with worry and difficult times, and being distracted by all the other good things in life.

Carry on to talk about the women who followed Jesus and overcame the challenges by supporting each other, as below.

For a shorter talk, read or retell Luke 8:1-3.

A bit like the volunteers we have just seen, Jesus and his followers faced challenges as they went about sharing the Good News. But they overcame those challenges by supporting each other. No one was left to fend for themselves! Jesus was friends with a group of women, including Mary, Joanna, and Susanna. Each of them brought the bit that they had, and they clubbed together to help Jesus and each other on their journey. It's easier to keep going when we're doing it together!

Aster and her friends

Show the photo of Aster from the accompanying PowerPoint and introduce her.

Aster lives in Ethiopia. As a woman, Aster had a difficult life. No matter how hard she worked, she could never save enough money to support her family.



Aster with her children at home with their solar lamp.



Aster and her friends sell water at the solar shop.

But Aster has a special group of friends who are very important to her. They are called the Women's Group, and they work together to help each other.

The women run a shop together, which is powered by the sun. They sell goods, like water and soap, for the whole village to enjoy. Aster and her friends are now able to make more money for their families. They're proud of what they're achieving together.

'Coming together as a women's group, it's like adopting sisters; another family. We share happiness and sorrow together. They share my burden and help me face my challenges.' Aster

Aster's daughter, Agar, feels more powerful now too. There was no electricity at Aster's house. Agar, 11, had to rely on dirty fuels like kerosene lamps to do her homework. This filled her house with smoke and was damaging her health. But thanks to kind people like you, Agar now has a solar lamp. She says: 'Now we are able to do our homework at any time and there is no problem with our eyes.'

This new solar lamp has given Agar the power to reach her potential. She's determined to finish school. Smiling, she says: 'I want to be a teacher and teach maths.'

3. Join in

Aster and her friends are already working together to overcome all kinds of challenges – and we can stand together with them. The money we give this Harvest will help many more women to support one another – and more children like Agar can get their homework done by solar lamp light!

Explain how your church will be supporting Christian Aid this Harvest, so that everyone knows how to join in.

4. Even more to do!

These activities can work with all ages, but they work especially well with youth groups.

You'll need:

- **A3 white paper and a pencil**
- **a mixture of tissue or coloured paper**
- **glue**
- **equipment for a relay course**, such as hula hoops and bean bags
- **solar-powered torches.**

Get cooking

If your church has a kitchen and you're planning to have a shared meal following the service, try the 'Creative kitchen' activity for real: don't just invent your menus, cook them! Send the chefs off to their challenge at the beginning of the service, and have them bring their creations back in at the end. Be sure to have one chef cooking with only the food the first person has brought, and give the other free rein over many ingredients.

Colour perfect

Draw the outline of some Harvest produce, such as a basket of vegetables or a bowl of fruit, on a piece of A3 paper. Cut out lots of small, square mosaic 'tiles' from coloured paper or tissue paper. Give each member of your group one mosaic square, and have them work together to colour the picture by gluing on their coloured tiles.

Sitting comfortably?

Ask your group to stand in a close circle, and then all turn 90 degrees to the left. Count to three, then all sit down on the lap of the person behind at exactly the same time; everyone's weight should be supported. Notice that everyone is in a position they wouldn't be able to sustain by themselves. Talk about how Aster and her women's group give support to each other too. Make sure to stand back up all at the same time!

Relay run

Set up two simple, identical obstacle runs across your space – for instance, it might include stepping through a hula hoop or throwing bean bags into a bucket. Challenge the groups to complete it 10 times. Have one person volunteer to do every run alone on one course, and have a team run on the other course as a relay. Let the solo runner race against the team: who's faster?

Solar solutions

Ask your group to bring in anything solar powered that they have at home, and have a show-and-tell time. Ask if anyone has solar panels on their roof. Talk about how harnessing the sun's energy means people like Aster and her daughter don't have to burn fossil fuels, which are dirty and dangerous, to get light. Turn off the lights and use the light of solar-powered torches to pray for children like Agar, who do their homework by a solar lamp.

