

Decisions, decisions, decisions

Think global, act local

This resource will help young people to prepare for government elections and to understand how local decisions can have global impact.

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Leaders Notes

Parliamentary elections in Scotland and Wales, and local elections throughout the UK take place in May 2026. These are likely to herald a change in our political and decision-making spaces as lots of new candidates are elected to different parties. In Scotland and Wales, young people can vote when they are 16. In England, the voting age is 18.

This resource will help young people to explore ways to exercise their voices at a vital moment of UK political life. They will reflect on their role as global citizens and explore how the UK's actions link to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

You'll find a range of elements in this resource including games, information about national and global decision-makers, reflective content and some actions. Pick and choose which of these elements will work best for your group in the time you have available. You might want to run this theme over a number of weeks.



Campaigners stand up for climate justice at COP 26 in Glasgow

Games



Jenga - if I ruled the world (15 mins)

Play Jenga in the usual way. As each person takes a turn to build the tower with a block, name one thing you would change if you ruled the world.



Big world treasure hunt (10 mins)

Discover how interconnected you and your young people are with the world. Get a large map of the world and take some time to mark - with sweets, perhaps - places where people you know live, and where your food, clothes and tech come from. You might want to come back to the map at the end of the session to pray for each place marked on the map. If you have used sweets, you could eat a sweet as you pray for each place.

Decision-making: think global, act local



Activity: What is an Election? (10 mins)

Create three signs with the words 'agree', 'disagree' and 'not sure'. Hang the 'agree' and 'disagree' signs on opposite sides of a room large enough for the young people to move about in. Hang the 'not sure' sign in the middle.

Gather all the young people in the middle of the room and explain that this activity will involve a bit of moving around. You will read some statements and they will have 10 seconds to think about their answer and move to the relevant space in the room.

Between each statement, ask volunteers to share why they have chosen to stand where they are standing. If you discover that your young people have little knowledge of elections, you might want to have a short discussion about:

- what activities local candidates and parties do to win votes
- what a manifesto is
- how votes are counted.

Statements:

1. I know what an election is.
2. I know who the main political parties are.
3. I know who I would like to vote for
(*Note: there are no right or wrong answers here and young people should not be asked to say who*).
4. As citizens of the world, we should think about other people's needs when thinking about who to vote for.
5. What the UK does as a country has an impact elsewhere in the world.
6. The UK has a role to play in supporting other countries.



Activity: What does an MSP do? (10 mins)

People vote for the person who they want to represent them in their local constituency and region. During the election campaign the candidates standing for election will distribute materials in the local area which explain their policies and why they want people to vote for them. Once an MSP is elected, the theyworkforyou.com website records almost everything an MSP does on their constituents' behalf. Understanding your MSP better is one good way to plan how to engage them.

Read out the statements on page 7 and ask the young people if they are true or false.



Activity: The world's to-do list (10 mins)

We all know that we face big global challenges such as war, poverty, hunger, inequality and climate change. In 2015, world leaders agreed to 17 Global Goals which would build a greener, fairer, better world by 2030.

Play the video to your group and have a short follow-up discussion.

[The world's to-do-list video](#)

- Which tasks do you remember from the video?
- Which goals feel most difficult to achieve?
- Which goals could we help meet?
- If we had to choose 2 goals to work on first, which would they be?

You'll find more information on [The Global Goals](#) website.



Activity: World Cup of global and local decisions (30 mins)

This activity creates a tournament of global and local priorities using a knock-out tournament format. You'll find a tournament bracket template on page 6.

Ask the young people to come up with a list of things that they would fix or change if they had the power to do so. Ensure that there a mixture of local, global and national changes. Some silly suggestions may creep into the list! Enjoy debating those but try to steer the young people towards a mixture of interesting global and local priorities. Examples:

- Everyone should have access to fresh water
- Free university places for everyone who wants to study food science
- There should be more streetlights.
- Everyone should have somewhere safe to sleep
- Everyone should have to do volunteering.

How to play

1. You will need at least 16 different manifesto ideas.
2. Note down the ideas into the tournament sheet. These will form two sides of your World Cup draw.
3. Divide your young people into pairs. Each pair will be a debating team. Together they will meet other debating teams to discuss the merits of each idea in just 60 seconds. The 'winner' of each group will progress to the next round of the tournament.
4. At the end of your session, you should have identified the top 4-8 priorities for your group. You will use these to write a mini Manifesto. You might set up this tournament one week and finish it off the next week.



Activity: Mini Manifesto (30 mins)

Take a look at the priorities which your group came up with in the World Cup of Decisions. Try to ensure that you have a good mix of global and local priorities. Turn these into a manifesto which you could share with your new MSP.

Guiding questions:

- What are your group's shared priorities?
- Which 4 priorities made it into the semi finals of your World Cup game?)
- Why are these important to your group?
- How do they reflect your values as individuals and as a group?

Create a poster or a [zine](#) to present your group's manifesto.



Belinda and her family at their farm in Nairobi

Christian Aid stories and Bible bits



Christian Aid stories (5 mins)

The damage, caused by those of us living in richer nations, costs huge amounts of money to repair. Christian Aid campaigners protested and wrote letters to the MSPs to tell them about the impact of climate change on people in the global south. MSPs listened and at COP26 Scotland was recognised as a global leader in how it addresses climate change damage. Since 2021, it has pledged over £10 million to help vulnerable communities in developing countries.

Watch these videos to understand the impact the climate crisis is having on people's lives. [Loss and Damage Testimonials](#)



Go and do the same (10 mins)

We're going to take a close look at the story known as the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. You might want to read the text through in full once to remind your group of the story. Read it again and this time pause to ask the young people why the characters make the decisions they make. Your group might enjoy acting out the story as you read it a second time. The aim of this activity is to uncover practical and empathic answers to the repeated questions rather than theological insight or 'right' answers! You'll find the text and the questions on page 5.

Christian Aid resources

Websites for more information

[Where we work](#)

[What we do](#)

[Games for young people](#)



Prayer

God of all creation,
God of decision-makers and dung beetles,
God of MSPs and midges,
we can feel very small in the world around us.
We can feel silent as the adults shout:
about wars and power and rights and responsibilities.
But we have lots of thoughts:
about food and poverty and peace and climate.
We have lots of feelings:
about fairness and kindness and love and dignity.

Show us how we can act fairly for your world.
Show us how we can love well in your world.
Show us how we can walk alongside all sorts of people, for the good of your world.
Amen

So what? What next

Hopefully you've had some great conversations about decision-making globally and locally. Here are some suggestions about what to do next.



Contact your MSP

Since you've spent some time thinking about how you would like the world to look, why not share them with your MSP? You could send them your manifesto by email. Or you could invite them to pop into your youth group to say hello.



Register to vote

Don't forget to register to vote. It doesn't matter if you haven't got the world figured out yet. It's important that you work out which party might help you live in the world you hope for. And then let them know by voting for them.

[Register to vote - GOV.UK](#)

Go and do the same

The Men on the Jericho Road

Luke 10:25-37

Just then a religion scholar stood up with a question to test Jesus. "Teacher, what do I need to do to get eternal life?" Jesus answered, "What's written in God's Law? How do you interpret it?"

He said, "That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence—and that you love your neighbor as well as you do yourself."

"Good answer!" said Jesus. "Do it and you'll live."

Looking for a loophole, he asked, "And just how would you define 'neighbour'?"

Jesus answered by telling a story. "There was once a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half-dead.

Why did they do that?

Luckily, a priest was on his way down the same road, but when he saw him he angled across to the other side.

Why did he do that?

Then a Levite religious man showed up; he also avoided the injured man.

Why did he do that?

"A Samaritan traveling the road came on him. When he saw the man's condition, his heart went out to him. He gave him first aid, disinfecting and bandaging his wounds. Then he lifted him onto his donkey, led him to an inn, and made him comfortable.

Why did he do that?

In the morning, he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take good care of him. If it costs any more, put it on my bill—I'll pay you on my way back.'

Why did he do that?

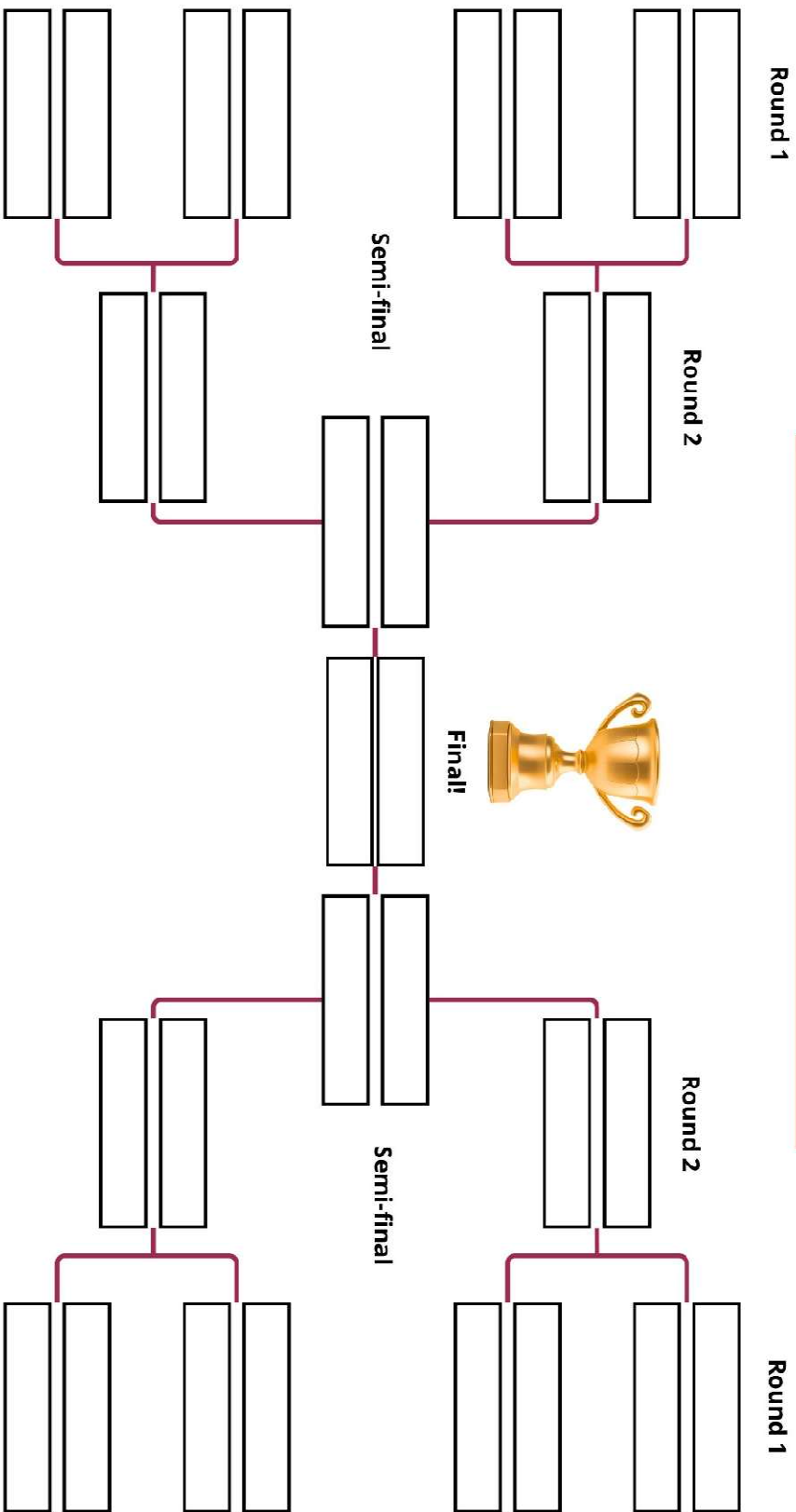
"What do you think? Which of the three became a neighbour to the man attacked by robbers?"

"The one who treated him kindly," the religion scholar responded.

Jesus said, "Go and do the same."

Could you do the same?

WORLD CUP OF DECISIONS



christian-aid.org.uk

What does an MSP do?

Read the following statements and see if young people think that they are true or false.

- **MSPs represent all members of their constituency in the Scottish Parliament.**
True. The job of an MSP is to represent all constituents, not just the people who voted for them.
- **Local constituents are not allowed to influence MSPs.**
False. Engaging with your local MSP is an important part of participating in democratic life.
- **You have to be over 16 to vote and engage with your MSP.**
False. While you do have to be 16 and over to vote, under-16s can and should still engage with their MSPs.
- **MSPs have to do what you tell them to do.**
False. MSPs should listen to the concerns of their constituents, but they are not obliged to vote the way we want them to.
- **I can write a letter to my MSP or meet with them in person.**
True. Writing to or meeting your MSP can be a really useful way to engage with them.
- **The only time to participate in democratic life is during an Election.**
False. While elections mark an important moment, it is important to stay informed and engaged in democratic life on an ongoing basis.
- **MSPs don't get to make all the decisions affecting their constituency.**
True. While MSPs can have influence in what happens locally, many decisions are made by the local council (eg, organising bin collections, how much money to spend on local parks, etc)
- **MSPs often get told how to vote by their party.**
True. While MSPs represent local people, there are a lot of other people that influence how an MSP will vote. Their party expects them to vote for/against certain issues. Charities, businesses and special interest groups will also be trying to influence how an MSP votes on particular issues.
- **MSP decisions only matter in Scotland.**
False. MSPs make laws about devolved issues such as education, tax and housing. The UK Government makes decisions about visas for refugees and asylum seekers, but the Scottish Government decides how to best welcome New Scots to their new home. The Scottish Government can and has made policy decisions on climate justice and international debt which are much more ambitious than the UK Government's policies.

caid.org.uk

