

## CHAIN REACTION BIBLE SUNDAY 2006

**AGE 13+ INTERACTIVE YOUTH ACTIVITY*****Introduction***

This is an interactive and reflective meditation activity for use with young people. It has been designed as a large event giving you the opportunity to draw together a number of youth groups in your area. However, you could adapt the material for a youth section in an all-age service or for a normal youth group night. In these cases, you would probably just do one or two of the following stations.

For the full activity, you will need a room or hall with dedicated space where the young people can move around and engage from station to station with the challenge of being a part of the chain reaction God begins in us.

We have mentioned possible follow-up plans for you to build on the event.

***Background and venue***

These are very important elements. The aim is for young people to be free to move around, unhurriedly, at their own pace, and to use the various stations as starting points to inspire them to pray and seek God individually and then maybe in small groups.

An ideal venue would have few if any chairs, but would have cushions and bean bags around each of the stations. Lots of space would be really good too.

This is not a meditation for young people to sit quietly and “do”, it is a meditation that they can engage at their own speed and in their own way. It should be backed by loud music so that they do not feel self-conscious.

The young people will be taken on a journey designed to involve them sonically, visually and actively as they realise their part

- in a journey that has engaged such people as William Wilberforce and Martin Luther King
- in the journey and story of Jesus and his mission to “proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners”.

***Sonically***

We suggest playing the track “*You Got The Love*” (Extended New Voyager Mix) by The Source featuring Candi Staton on your PA system or CD player. The track length is 6 minutes, 5 seconds. Download it from Itunes (just search for “*You got the love*”). The standard New Voyager Radio Edit (also on Itunes) is only 3 minutes, 13 seconds if you don’t have time for the full version.

This track is in the pop field and will connect to a large number of young people covering the pop, dance and soul genres. We also believe young people will engage with a secular song more readily than a Christian song and that this reinforces the challenge for us to continue the chain reaction from God to us and on into our culture.

All material © Bible Society 2006. Permission is given to reproduce and print off text for leader and congregational use within a Bible Sunday service that highlights the work of Bible Society. Otherwise, prior permission should be sought from Bible Society before this material is reproduced or circulated in any form other than for personal use.



The song is euphoric and uplifting. Whilst expressing the need for God's unfailing love, it acknowledges our struggles "to sing the Lord's song" in a sometimes hostile or alien land. It would be great if this track was then mixed into another track if you have the time and technology. Or it could lead into a time of sung worship where the young people are free to leave the meditation and join in as and when they are ready.

Suitable tracks can also be found on albums like *Chilled Euphoria*, a fairly old chilled dance music album. Track 2 onwards is great for background atmosphere. You could also use some of *Exodus* by Andy Hunter and *Brooklyn and Beyond* by DJ Kenny Mitchell.

Alternatively, use a modern worship CD and try not to have any silence between tracks if possible. Or perhaps have a guitarist or pianist playing, at times dipping into one or two worship songs. The idea is to allow your young people to meet God as they wish without feeling in a spotlight.

### **Lighting and visual elements**

It is important to plan the overall visual effect. It needs to be engaging and welcoming, peaceful at points and faster moving at others. How the venue is lit can help paint the picture of God we look to convey – welcoming, passionate, mysterious yet engaging, challenging and sending. All of these can be aided or hindered by our use of lighting and visual effects.

This is a very important tool in enabling young people to engage. When the lighting of a venue is good, it changes everything. Whilst everyone faces difficulties with creating that environment in their churches, it is important to remember at all times the motto "Simple but Effective" – as a general rule, simple *is* effective! So think through what may help to create a meditative atmosphere, such as:

- Avoid the room's normal lighting (probably too bright and not very welcoming or conducive to the right atmosphere)
- Try spotlights or uplighters to create mood
- If you have the budget, experiment with other "intelligent" lights and lighting effects
- Also if budget allows, get some "dry ice" or a fog or smoke machine to add extra textures to the room. Foggers are easily affordable now
- The use of candles, either large or tealights, can be very effective
- Consider using coloured slides on an OHP or televisions etc to cause extra effects



## Stations

These should be set up around the venue with enough space for them not to overlap with each other – the idea is that these will practically engage young people and help them see their part in this chain reaction.

1. **NEWTON'S CRADLE** – A Newton's Cradle is an executive toy with five metal balls hanging on strings, as pictured below:



### Aims:

- To explain the chain reaction that begins with God and leads us to go out and live out what God has shown us.
- To help young people to realise their place in the chain reaction – how will they let God impact their future? Will they be the next person after God's heart to bring about amazing change?

### You need:

You can create this station in a number of ways

Firstly you could make your own large Newton's Cradle! This may be a big project to take on but is possible if you have the time, inclination and young people to help! If you do this, write a different word on each of the balls. For instance, on the left hand one write "God the Father", on the next one write "Jesus", on the next one "Holy Spirit and God's Word" (or simply Word and Spirit), on the next one "You" and on the last one a question mark "?".

Alternatively, buy a cradle (there are many suppliers on the Internet) and stick small numbers 1–5 on the base of the cradle below the appropriate balls.

Create some printed explanations for this station, saying that the cradle represents the chain reaction that God has started and we have a part in. (Ideally have a picture of each ball to match each part of the explanation).

Explain the following:

Ball 1) God made everything good

Ball 2) Things went wrong when people turned from God to run life on their own (picture could show scissors held as if to cut the wire supporting the God ball). God sent Jesus to pay the price for us and reconnect us to him.

Ball 3) Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit. As we read of God's character in the Bible the Holy Spirit shows us the truth and enables us to connect to God.

Ball 4) In turn, God gives us the passion and power to pursue the things that matter to him.



Ball 5) The question is where will this chain reaction go next? When you lift the God ball and let it hit the others, the only other ball that flies out is the question mark ball – God sets going the chain reaction that spreads out to the world.

You could also introduce one or two well-known champions of God in your explanation – they would be the “you” – and say how they lived out the chain reaction and changed the world. For example, Moses, who led God’s people to freedom; Esther, who saved the lives of her people from a racist who wanted them all killed; Paul who had revelation from God and went on to plant churches around the Mediterranean; Martin Luther King who worked fearlessly for equal rights for black people in the USA; William Wilberforce who was instrumental in ending the slave trade in the British colonies; Jackie Pullinger who followed God’s call to Hong Kong and has impacted the lives of thousands of drug addicts and gang members.

There are common threads of communicating God’s truth and God’s heart for justice in these few examples and in many others you could come up with.

As an alternative to the cradle, you could use 5 dominoes (make large ones?) or large jenga blocks. Perhaps label separate ones “God, Jesus, Holy Spirit and Bible, You, ?” and ask people to put them in the order they think they should go – to show the chain reaction of how God works in our world.

## 2. BAKING SODA

### Aim:

To show what God wants to happen as we allow him and his Word to live in and change us – there should be a reaction so that we overflow with God to those around us.

### You need:

You need Baking Soda (AKA Bicarbonate of Soda) *not* powder, vinegar, small empty plastic drink bottles and bowls or something to cover the floor and clear up the mess! You can also add red food colouring if you feel daring! **Important:** Ensure you try this out first to determine the right quantities of each of the ingredients (this depends on size of bottle etc.).



You will only need small amounts for this demonstration. Check beforehand so that you know what will be enough to work but not so much that you have Mount Etna in the middle of your meditation! The baking soda goes in the bottle first and then the vinegar is added. If you are using food colouring, add this before the vinegar.



Print out explanations with the following key verse at the top and make the points below:

“For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of” (Luke 6.45, GNB).

The empty bottle symbolises the heart. How ready for God is your heart? If there is mess and grime there (hurtful comments, unhelpful images or stories, etc.), take time to bring this dirt to God and be cleaned up. Let him clear out your heart so that when it overflows it overflows with God’s transforming power and not with bad stuff! The vinegar represents the Bible and the baking soda represents the Holy Spirit. When we ask God to clean us up, the Holy Spirit (Baking Soda) goes to work. Then as we read more of God’s words to us in the Bible, things begin to happen! As the Spirit and the truth combine, there’s a reaction everyone can see – an overflow that effects everyone around us.

For a more dramatic version of this experiment you can use a 2-litre bottle of fizzy drink (the bottle must be plastic and it’s best to use a 0% sugar drink to avoid sticky results later) and a packet of *Mentos*. **Warning:** This can result in an explosion of liquid several feet high and be very messy indeed!

3. PLASMA BALL – A Plasma ball is a very effective lighting effect that looks like an electrical pulse in a globe as shown below:



**Aim:**

To give a visual demonstration of how God’s power flows through us to the rest of the world.

**You need:**

A plasma ball – available at low prices online and in high street shops and some 20 pence pieces.

As the young people approach the ball, have some writing explaining that they are to think of this light source as the power in God’s heart, i.e. his love for us. As they touch the ball, that power focuses on their hand – on them. There is enough power there to connect to everyone no matter how many people touch the ball, they will each have some of the power travel to them.

Scatter some 20-pence pieces in this area. Print an explanation to say that these represent humans. The young people take one 20p, imagining this is themselves. They place the 20p on the top of the ball and are connected to God’s love. They take another 20p and are asked to think of someone that they would like to find God and build a relationship with him. Then they pass the 20p edge over the flat 20p on the top of the ball. They will see a beam of power transfer from one 20p to another (it doesn’t cause any damage!) In a similar way, God uses us to transfer his heart to the world. Invite the young people to pray that God’s love will travel through them to the person they were thinking of and that they would find the truth and connect to him.



#### 4. CANDLES

##### Aim:

To show that each of us can only do so much on our own, but with the rest of God's people, we can achieve much more.



##### You need:

One large candle – maybe with three wicks to represent the Trinity – and a large number of tealights. Make sure that the candle has already been used.

Each of the young people receives a tealight candle that represents themselves. They then light the candle from the big single candle or one with three candle. Explain that as Jesus came as the light of the world, so that light is passed onto each of them.

You can follow on in a number of ways. You could either simply get them to move their candle to join with all the other candles and then they can see that one light overcomes some of the darkness but 10, 20 or 30 together can scatter so much more of the darkness in our world. If you have enough young people, why not mark out circles on the floor representing each of the local schools and colleges and get them to place their light in the school or college that they attend? Once they are in groups, invite them to pray to be Jesus' light to the school and for spiritually dark or hopeless situations to be changed as God's people humble themselves to pray. Link this in with the chain reaction theme – prayer, unity and holiness equal change. (You could use 2 Chronicles 7.14 as a reference.) It is important to get the young people connected to others and praying.

#### 5. GLOW STICKS

##### Aims:

- To reinforce the theme of light breaking the darkness
- To commission the young people to go as salt and light in the world that needs them to be Jesus' heart, hands and voice.

##### You need:

A quantity of Glow Sticks. Packs of these can be bought very cheaply especially if you buy in large numbers. Sizes vary from small approx 1" ones to larger 4" sticks.



Just search for Glow Sticks on the internet and you will find many varieties in varying shapes and sizes.

Either hand out the sticks and pray with the young people individually or in small groups as they snap their stick to create the reaction, or distribute the sticks to everyone, cut the music and lights, and see the visual display of God's light in the venue. This can be very powerful with a corporate prayer of commissioning. You could use the spoken prayer below:

Leader: Light of the world, you did not leave us in darkness but gave us the power to shine with your light into a dark world

**All: I will let my light shine**

Leader: You did not give us this light so that we would bury it, hide it or be ashamed of it. You gave us this light to shine in the darkness

**All: I will let my light shine**

Leader: May this light show people your goodness and your love. May many come to believe in you as we shine the light that you have given us

**All: I will let my light shine**

Leader: At the end of time there will be no more darkness and all light will shine from you God. Until that day

**All: I will let my light shine**

### ***Follow up***

Good ideas for follow-up would be to follow on from Station 2 with a session on what it means to keep our hearts pure – how does stuff get in our hearts? Why are our hearts important? Looking at these questions through the lens of Jesus' teaching on where your treasure is, there is your heart. Challenge the group as to what their treasure is – where do they invest most of their free time, money and dreams? Jesus calls us to love the Lord our God with all our heart – it is out of that place that we want our hearts to overflow and our mouths to speak. Possible resources to use include the song "God-shaped hole" by Plumb which features in the film *Bruce Almighty*. Use this as a meditation. As a funny opener, you could also use the clip in the film *Dumb and Dumber* where Lloyd slips laxative into Harry's tea before his big date – what goes in eventually has to come out!

You could also follow-up Station 3 by getting the young people into prayer triplets who focus on praying for the individuals whose lives they wanted to see God break into. You could do a session on prayer and why God seems to answer some prayers but not others. Why are some healed whilst others are not? This is a session that you may want to look into over a term rather than crammed into one. Perhaps highlight elements both of lament/complaint and praise in the Psalms, to show there is struggle in the life of faith and God wants us to be open about this in our praying. You could invite the young people to write their own psalms and put them to music or rap if you have the resources. A good meditation song would be "God is God" by Steven Curtis Chapman from his album *Declaration*.



The best follow-up for Station 4 would be to get groups who have prayed for their schools to meet and pray for them regularly, ideally at the school or college. It may be that this would grow to including staff and even into becoming a larger group, such as a Christian Union if one doesn't currently exist.

All of these sessions should aim to reinforce the message that young people have a part to play in the chain reaction of God that changes lives and brings freedom.

**This meditation activity has been prepared for Bible Sunday by Jamie Hill, Bible Society Events Officer**

