

RESTORATION STORY: PLAY YOUR PART

This handout goes with the *Restoration Story* film to help you reflect on the issues it raises, discuss with others and consider how to respond. You can view the film at www.tearfund.org/jointhestory

The discussion is in several parts: brief quiz, a Bible reflection, a chance to watch the film and a series of questions to hold a discussion – so use the different parts of this guide as much or as little as you like. You can print off copies of this handout for everyone to fill out their own commitments, or they could do this on a separate piece of paper.

LEADER'S GUIDE: *In 2050, what kind of world will we, or our children and grandchildren, see around us and leave for future generations? What kind of world do we live in now? You could use the quiz at the end as an ice-breaker and to test your knowledge.*

BEST OF TIMES

Over the past 50 years we have seen huge progress. In addition, life expectancy is increasing. There are more children in school today than ever before, and diseases such as malaria and measles are retreating. Best of all, more people have escaped poverty in the past 50 years than at any other time in history.

WORST OF TIMES

But at the same time, the way we live now cannot continue. God has created a world of plenty and yet many people still go without. Most pressingly, a billion people remain trapped in poverty, the gap between rich and poor is growing wider, and the earth's resources are being stretched to breaking point. As we've followed Jesus together, we have seen poverty retreat and people set free, but if we don't take action on inequality and climate change, there is a danger it will all unravel.

RESTORATION STORY

Our faith gives us hope for a different story. God has a plan to restore our broken relationships – with him, with one another and with creation. Jesus came to reconcile all things and by following him we can each play our part in this *Restoration Story* – as individuals and as churches. In God's strength we can change trajectory – addressing the root

causes of poverty, confronting extremes of inequality and tackling climate change.

The Bible has an overarching story unfolding from the creation and fall in Genesis, through Jesus' death and resurrection on the cross, to the arrival of God's kingdom on earth in Revelation: a story about mending broken relationships. It's all about restoring relationships with God, with each other and with creation. It's all about dealing with sin and about bringing healing, reconciliation and peace in the fullest sense. The mission of the church is to continue Jesus' work of restoration until his kingdom comes.

READ THE FOLLOWING BIBLE PASSAGE TOGETHER

'For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.' Colossians 1:19-20

- What do we think of when we hear the word 'reconcile'? What does it mean to you to seek reconciliation with someone or something?
- What does 'all things' refer to? (See also Colossians 1:15, and Romans 8:20-21)
- How do we feel as we consider the extent of God's creation and his plan for salvation?
- Christ's reconciling work brings peace. Can you think of some examples of what this peace might look like in the world around us?
- What does it mean for our discipleship as Christians if the gospel is about reconciling and restoring all things – including our relationships with each other and with creation?

WHAT'S THE STORY?



Watch the Restoration Story film together.

LEADER'S GUIDE: *If each of us played our part in this unfolding story, living differently, praying and speaking out together, we could see a movement of Christians following God and seeing lives restored and a different future for our children. We can all be part of this Restoration Story.*

Once you've watched the film, use the questions below to discuss together (or reflect on your own) about how you can respond as Christians – with your lifestyle, your church and your voice – and to share your story. There's space for you to make a note of any commitments you make.

OUR RESPONSE AS CHRISTIANS

Christians around the world are already responding to the challenges around them and answering the call to 'love your neighbour' in word and deed.

Reverend Ezra from Tanzania talks in the film about how Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom and met people's physical needs – for example, healing their diseases and feeding the five thousand (Matthew 9, Mark 6).

- Can you think of other examples of Jesus' ministry where he met people's physical needs while talking to them about God's kingdom?
- What would it look like for us to live more like Jesus today, in terms of our response to poverty, inequality and living within the world's environmental limits?



LIFESTYLE

THE STORY FOR MYSELF

LEADER'S GUIDE: *Dora's story speaks about our individual response, how we live our lives day by day. Tearfund has identified the following four areas as key to our lifestyle choices: food (what we eat and what we throw away), travel (especially in terms of using a car and flying), our homes (how we power and heat them), and stuff (buying less, consuming less).*

- What choices do you make in your daily life to try to live more justly, especially in these four areas?
- Do you see your individual response to injustice as part of your discipleship?
- What else could you do to take this further?
- What help would you need to do this?

MY STORY: commit to making one change in your individual daily life in response to the *Restoration Story*

Note your commitment here...



CHURCH

THE STORY FOR US

LEADER'S GUIDE: *Caroline talks about what our churches can do to respond to poverty, inequality and climate change, to live out our faith, in a more restorative and generous way.*

- What do you think is the role of the local church in responding to poverty, inequality and climate change?
- How does your local church already play a part in the *Restoration Story*?
- What else would you like you and your church to do? How could you be involved?
- What is the role of the global church in responding to these challenges? How can we connect with and work together more with our brothers and sisters around the world?

OUR STORY: commit to seeking one change as part of your church in response to the *Restoration Story*

Note your commitment here...



SPEAKING UP

THE STORY FOR NOW

LEADER'S GUIDE: Gerry reflects on climate change as an urgent issue and the need for us to use our voices to speak out to political leaders and others. The Restoration Story describes the way we live and the way we organise our economy now as pushing the planet to its limits. To change trajectory we believe we need to speak out prophetically, as Christians have done throughout history.

Tearfund is calling for countries to stick to the global promises they have made to address climate change, to stop people being pushed further into poverty. We're also excited about countries shifting to a 'circular economy' where everything is reused over and over, rather than going to landfill. And we want to see measures to tackle extreme inequality such as fairer taxation and generous international aid spending.

- What do you think are the most pressing challenges of our time? Do you agree with the analysis in the *Restoration Story*?
- What do you think is the role of the church in using its voice to call for change on poverty, inequality and climate change?
- What are you and your church already doing to speak out on these issues and what else could you do?

TODAY'S STORY: commit to making one change to speak out on the challenges set out in the *Restoration Story*

Note your commitment here...

WHAT'S YOUR PART IN THE STORY?

LEADER'S GUIDE: Hannington shares his testimony of how his personal experience of poverty led to his involvement in campaigning against poverty and injustice. There is power in telling our stories and learning from one another as we come together to seek God's call on our lives. Discuss with your group your own story.

- What was it that first sparked your interest in issues of poverty and caring for creation?
- How has God's love for the world inspired you to take action on these issues both at home and around the world?
- How do you respond to poverty, inequality and climate change – in living your daily life, as part of your church and by speaking up?

PLAY YOUR PART: commit to sharing your story with one other person or group in order to inspire them

Note your commitment here...

God invites each of us to play our part, wherever we are, whatever our background. Tearfund is gathering stories from around the world to show how a movement of Christians is coming together to bring about the kind of generational change we need to see.

Will you sign up to be part of the *Restoration Story*?
www.tearfund.org/jointhestory

YOU CAN SHARE YOUR STORIES AND JOIN WITH OTHERS IN THE MOVEMENT AT WWW.TEARFUND.ORG/JOINTHESTORY

BEST OF TIMES

How did the percentage of the world's population in extreme poverty change between 1990 and 2015?

- A. Almost doubled
- B. Stayed roughly the same
- C. **More than halved**

During the same period, by how much did the percentage of the world's population with access to clean drinking water increase?

- A. 45% to 79%
- B. **76% to 91%**
- C. 32% to 73%

In 1990, 91 of every 1,000 children born would die before their fifth birthday. What is that figure now?

- A. 76
- B. 52
- C. **43**

WORST OF TIMES

What was the percentage of the world's wealth that went to the richest one per cent of the world's population in 2017?

- A. 53%
- B. **82%**
- C. 67%

Each year we are using and consuming more of the earth's resources than nature can replenish. In 2017 we consumed the equivalent of how many planet earths?

- A. 1.2 planet earths
- B. 2 planet earths
- C. **1.7 planet earths**

Can you guess how much greater the average American's carbon emissions are compared with the average citizen of a least developed country?

- A. **More than 50 times as much**
- B. More than 20 times as much
- C. More than 70 times as much

How did you do? Has the quiz helped you understand how we're living in the best of times as well as the worst of times?

TACKLING
POVERTY

CLIMATE CHANGE,
INEQUALITY

