



# Tune In Session Guide #1: Hearing God's Call / Calling and Vocation



## **What is 3Generate 365?**

3Generate 365 is a year-round process of engagement with children and young people in their local setting to enable them listen to God, discern what God is saying, deepen their faith and be confident in being evangelists sharing their faith with others.

Following 3Generate 365 the intention is that children and young people will attend the event in 2021, which they will have had the opportunity to co-create. This will be a culmination of their listening and discerning and their experiences of responding to God's call.

## **The 3Generate 365 Theme:**

3Generate 365 will explore topics of prayer, being one body in Christ, prophecy and covenant.

Tune In! God is always speaking and is always there and we are 'tuning in' to what God may be saying to us. We can only have an authentic prophetic voice by noticing what we are seeing and hearing from God.

We will then be 'in Tune' for the 3Generate 2021 Assembly, where we will explore what it means to be in tune with each other and with God and how we all have a part to play as members of the Body of Christ.

## How to Use these guides:

These 'Tune In' session guides are designed to be used within your own pattern of meetings with children's and/or youth groups. So, you will not need to organise and attend an additional meeting, just use this hours' worth of material, when you usually meet with your children's and/or youth groups.

I am producing six standalone session plans in total, with the first one being available to download from the beginning of March. With the second one coming out the beginning of April and so on for May and June. July's session will be linked to the London District Theme of Woven: God's Story, Your Story, Every Story. Plus, an additional session plan entitled 'On the Margins' where the young people explore what it means to be 'on the margins' of church and society, who is on the margins and what is God calling you to do about it? The idea being that each month you will run the 'Tune In' session with your children's or Youth group (or both) at a time suitable for you (they are crafted so they can be run online or face2face). If you would like me to facilitate one of the online 'Tune Ins' you are planning on running, then please do let me know and I'd be happy to attend.

They are created in such a way that you hear the voice of the children and young people. You then make a note of what the children and young people said during the session. these 'voices' are then e-mailed to me Brian Smith – [Brian@MethodistLondon.org.uk](mailto:Brian@MethodistLondon.org.uk) They are then forwarded to the 3Generate Planning team for use at the 3Generate 2021 Youth Assembly.

These guides are based on the material available in the Toolbox section on the 3Generate 365 website and can be found here: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/3generate/3generate-365/3generate-365-toolbox-for-group-leaders/>.

# Session #1: Hearing God's Call / Calling and Vocation

## Introduction:

Choose one of the games below that best suits your group. This session is all about hearing messages from God, in whatever way and form that happens. This starter activity will open up the idea that messages can be hard to hear or understand.

### Option 1:

Fasten two baked bean tins (or yoghurt pots) together with a long piece of string. (You may want to do this in advance). Each tin is held by a young person, with the string taut, if possible, the two ends should be in different rooms. One person speaks a message into the tin and the other person tries to hear what is being said through their tin. Try various messages with the string at different lengths. Although this may cause amusement it raises the point that often it is hard to hear a message clearly and correctly.

### Option 2:

If you are meeting online on a platform such as Zoom, this game will work well. Choose one person who has to say a sentence whilst on mute, direct message that person a sentence. The other people on the call must watch what they are trying to say and work out what the sentence is.

## Opening Discussion:

### Option 1:

TALKING MOVIES - Watch a movie that helps you to explore the theme of calling. This can be done in a previous session or as part of a pre-session activity/homework. Some suggestions for films include:

- *Arthur Christmas*
- *Disney's Moana*
- *Spiderman: into the Spiderverse*
- *Hacksaw Ridge*
- *Disney's Brave*
- *Disney's The Incredibles*

After watching the film, choose one or two of the following questions to discuss together:

- Which character do you relate to most and why?
- Do the characters always know what their gifts are/their purpose is? How do they discover what their gifts are/purpose is? How do they react to that discovery?
- Do all the characters have the same goal? How does this affect the way they work together? How do the characters work together to achieve their goal?
- What role does everyone play? Have you ever had an experience where you've worked with a group and everyone has used their gifts to achieve a goal? What role did you play? What gifts and skills did you use?

## Option 2:

Give people two scenarios and ask which one they are more likely to say yes to. Below are two example scenarios, but you can create your own to suit your group:

1. You have been asked to represent your school at a major national event, celebrating the work in schools. Only three people have been chosen from your school to attend and it will involve you meeting a number of celebrities from TV, music and sport. Will you do it?
2. You have been asked to spend Saturday helping to clean the house, starting with the bathroom, then your bedroom and finally the kitchen. Will you do it?

## Questions for follow up discussion:

- Which option was easier to say yes to? Why? Was it an easy decision?
- Does it make a difference **who** asks you to do something?
- What if God was asking you to do something? Would you do it?

## Biblical Characters and Their Calling:

There are many stories in the Bible where we see God's calling on individual lives. God calls in a variety of ways and gets a variety of responses. The three examples below, of Moses, Jonah and Peter, are stories where God calls individuals to a specific task or activity.

Below are some activities based around the specific passages of Moses, Jonah and Peter, but you could look at any Bible stories you feel appropriate here to unpack the different aspects of calling.

These three stories from the Bible show people being called to do something specific:

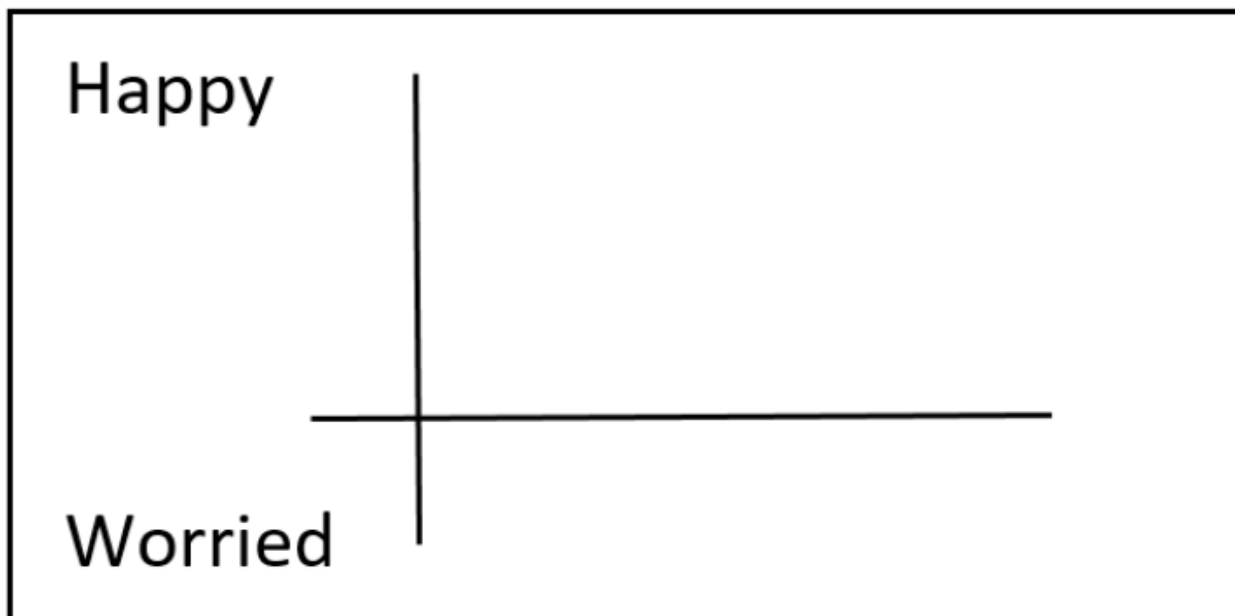
- Moses – Exodus 3: 1-12
- Jonah – Jonah 1-3:3
- Peter called to walk on water – Matthew 14: 22-31

The activities below help to explore these stories of calling in more depth; you may like to look at all three stories, or just focus on one. You may choose to do one or more of the activities, using whichever would work best with your group and context.

## Activity Option 1: Emotions graph

Give out paper and a variety of coloured pencils to each member of the group. Or if running this session online, use the Annotate Feature to do this. Read out one of the above stories. Whilst you are reading the young people will be making an 'emotions graph'. An emotions graph charts the feelings of the main character in the story. You may need to read the story twice.

Label one axis 'happy' at the top and 'worried/anxious' at the bottom. The other axis shows the duration of the story. As you read out the story the young people will draw a line on their graph to show how the character may be feeling at particular points in the story. They can also use their coloured crayons to match parts of the story and associated feelings with particular colours. The use of colour is very subjective, but an interesting way for the young people to express their responses to the story.



### Activity Option 2: Card Sort

Photocopy and cut up the cards in the Appendix at the end of this session plan. Mix all the cards up and get the group to work out which cards match with Moses, Jonah and Peter.

At the end make sure they have the correct answers (the master sheet has the correct order in the three labelled columns). By doing this they will begin to know the stories.

If running this session online, you could make up a mixed-up pack for every young person to have at home to complete.

### Further discussion:

Whichever of the (above) activities you have chosen, use the questions below to go a little further in your discussion:

- How does hearing these stories make you feel?
- If you were the main character in the story, how do you think you would have felt?
- What questions would you like to ask the main character in the story?
- Why do you think God asks people to do things that they don't understand or don't want to do, or are difficult?
- Why does God call individuals when he could do it himself?

## STORIES OF CALLING

See the four stories of calling in the Appendix at the end of this session plan. These stories show some of the different ways in which God calls people. Below are three possible ways of exploring the stories and how the young people respond to them. Choose the most appropriate activity for your group.

### **Option 1:**

Give each person a piece of paper and a pen. Read out two or more of the stories from the sheet but pause between each story. Whilst you are reading out the stories, the young people will note down one-word descriptions of their feelings about the story. For example: inspired, disbelieving, curious, ordinary, doubtful.

At the end of each story, they choose one of the words that they have noted down. They write it in large letters on their piece of paper. Count to three, and at the same time everyone holds their piece of paper up in front of them, showing their word to everyone else. Draw out why they have chosen that word to describe their feelings about the stories.

### **Option 2:**

Read out the stories to your group. Write the names of the people in the stories onto pieces of card/paper. Set up a washing line using string and peg the names of the people onto the line. The young people should then re-peg the names according to the instructions below (this may involve some discussion amongst the group).

- Arrange the stories in historical order.
- Group together those people who you think had similar callings.
- Arrange them in order of those you are most inspired by.
- Arrange them in order of those whose stories you find the most exciting.
- Arrange them in order of those you find the hardest to believe.

### **Option 3:**

Imagine you could interview one of the people from the stories. Make a list of the questions you would like to ask them.

### **Alternatively:**

If you or someone you know has a great 'story of calling' then do use that example

### **Further discussion:**

Whichever of the activities above you have chosen, use the questions below to go a little further in your discussion.

- Is your conscience the same thing as the voice of God?
- Does God only call Christians to do his work?

## What Do You Think?

Explain to the young people that there are many ways to experience God's call.

**Ask the young people:** How many ways can you think of?

It could be through visions, dreams, hearing a voice, sensing, through the Bible, or through what other people say to you. Christians believe that everyone is called to have a relationship with God and it is through that relationship we realise that our whole life is a calling to follow God's ways, in the ordinary, everyday events. However, sometimes God may have a very specific task for some people.

This first section will allow the young people the opportunity to reflect upon God's calling on their lives. You may choose to discuss the questions below or, if it suits your group better, the young people might like individual reflection time, using a journal to help them think through the questions.

### Questions for discussion:

- Have you ever heard/felt God calling you? Would you like to? If you have what was the calling?
- How would you feel if you were called by God to do something specific?
- Do you think it is easy to respond to God's call? Why?
- Do you feel called to have a relationship with God?
- How can the church help you to act on your calling?
- Does the church help you listen to God? What does help you?
- Do you think your church, family, friends, community would support you to follow a calling from God?

This second part borrows from the Japanese tradition of Ikigai. Ikigai is a Japanese term for 'a reason for being'. The word 'Ikigai' usually refers to the source of value in one's life, or the things that make one's life worthwhile.

Encourage your children and young people to draw their own Ikigai diagram for them to fill in, having a conversation with them about where value is in life as they do.





Please feedback the 'What Do You Think?' conversation back to me at [Brian@methodistlondon.org.uk](mailto:Brian@methodistlondon.org.uk)

**Closing Prayer:**

Using the completed Ikigai diagrams from the previous activity. Pray for each young person and their Ikigai or calling and ask God to show young people their calling and give them opportunities to discover or use their calling.

This resource was adapted, with kind permission, from Participate! (The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2012) and the Methodist Children & Youth Assembly 3Generate 365 website.

# APPENDIX 1: CARD SORT

MOSES	JONAH	PETER
He was looking after sheep in the desert and came to mount Sinai.	God said to the man 'Go to the city of Nineveh, and tell them that they are a wicked nation'.	The disciple got into a boat and started to sail across the lake.
He saw a bush on fire.	The man didn't want to do what God said so he ran away.	Jesus didn't join them; he went off to pray by himself
God called to him from the bush.	The man got onto a boat to escape, but there was a huge storm.	The boat was being rocked by a huge storm.
He said 'Here I am'.	The sailors threw the man overboard because they thought he had caused the storm.	Jesus walked out on the water towards the boat.
God said 'take off your sandals because you are standing on Holy ground'.	A big fish swallowed the man for three nights and three days.	The man was afraid and thought it might have been a ghost coming towards them.
God said 'I know that the Israelites, my people, are being kept as slaves in Egypt and are facing many difficulties'.	The man realised he should have done what God asked and he said sorry. The fish spat him out.	The man said, 'if it is really you, Jesus, then command me to come to you on the water'.
God told him to go to the King of Egypt and free the Israelite slaves.	God spoke to the man and again told him to go to Ninevah.	Jesus called him to come onto the water.
The man said he was worried about going as he was not a great speaker.	This time the man went to Ninevah.	The man stood on the water but was afraid and began to sink.
God said 'I will be with you'.	The people of Ninevah heard the man preach and began to change their evil ways.	Jesus reached out his hand and caught the man, saying 'Why did you doubt?'

## APPENDIX 2: STORIES OF HEARING GOD'S CALL

**Martin Luther King** lived in America during a time when black people were treated unfairly compared to white people. As a black man, Martin often faced discrimination and harsh treatment. Martin became a church minister in 1948. He said that he did not have a miraculous calling to the ministry but felt that God had placed a responsibility on his shoulders, and that he had an inner urge to serve God. In the 1950s Martin began to fight for equal rights for black people in America. This was a long, hard struggle and was often violent. One night after another threatening phone call, Martin felt like giving up. However, when sitting in his kitchen he felt he could hear an inner voice of God telling him to keep going and to “stand up for truth”, and that God would be with him. He spent the rest of his life campaigning for the rights of black people.

**Jackie Pullinger** was brought up as a Christian and from a young age felt that she wanted to be a missionary. However, she didn't really know what that meant or what she should do. As she grew up she was good at music and eventually became a music teacher. She still felt that she should be doing something else with her life. She prayed often to God as to what she should be doing, but God never seemed to give her a clear answer. One night she had a dream where she saw herself and her family looking at a map; there was one country that stood out in a different colour, which when she looked said Hong Kong. She still wasn't sure whether God wanted her to go to Hong Kong, so she applied for a teaching job there, but was told that there were no jobs. She continued to pray and struggle with what she should do. One day at a prayer meeting she heard someone speaking quietly; she knew the message was for her – it was “Go. Trust me, and I will lead you”. She did trust God, but she still did not know where to go or what she should do. A minister she spoke to said that if she had everything worked then she wouldn't need to trust God! He told her to get on a boat for the longest journey she could find and pray that she would know where to get off. She did just that and in 1966 got off the boat at Hong Kong. She eventually stayed there for many years, helping drug addicts and teaching people about Jesus. She made a difference to the lives of thousands of people and has become an inspiration to many.

**Lyn** was on holiday visiting her friend in September 2005 when she had three dreams. In her first dream she saw a man at the foot of her bed singing a song, the lyrics of which were “Take the shackles off my feet so I can dance”. Later, in a second dream she was walking down a pavement passing young people dragging chains and with their heads bent. She clearly heard a voice which said “Who will tell them of a God that loves them and a Saviour that cares.” The next night she had a third dream. She was in a car driving into a village. She parked the car, got out and could smell the sea. At the end of a row of shops and houses she saw a cafe it had a sign saying ‘Shackles Off’, with a picture of broken chains above the door. It was the only building with a light on. Inside were young

people in a café and her friend serving behind the counter. Lyn felt sure that these dreams were from God. On the Sunday she went with her friend to Seascale Methodist Church; as they drove into the village she recognised it from her dream. On the way home Lyn's friend pointed to the building at the end of the row of shops and said that she had always felt that God was going to do something there for the young people. This was the café that Lyn had seen in her dream. Eventually Lyn told her friend about the dreams and although initially Lyn felt a sense of panic she knew that God was calling her to do something specific to help the young people of that place. She later moved to Seascale, making the difficult decision to leave her old life behind, and set up the Shackles Off youth project in the place that she saw in her dream. It is now set up like a café, has many young people who visit the project and even has a sign above the door saying Shackles Off, exactly like she had seen in her dream.

**Reuben** tells his story of his calling: I left school at 16 with GCSEs and went to study A Levels at the local college. After my first year of A Levels I received my exam results to find that I had failed two of my exams. I spoke with my tutor and we came to the conclusion that I should start a new course in Health and Social Care, because I had just started a new job working with people who have learning difficulties. I started the course and loved it; but I still had no sense of direction. Then in November I was taken ill and had to go into hospital for a few days. After being in hospital I thought (and prayed!) about what God wanted me to do, and nursing seemed like a really good idea, so I applied for a new job working as a nursing assistant at the hospital. I loved it! It was the best job I ever had and I learnt loads! I then went forward and applied to university to study nursing, which is where I am today, studying at the original nursing school started by Florence Nightingale. Looking back on it I can see God preparing me to enter the world of nursing: from my first job through to starting University, everything just seemed right. I see nursing as my ministry among my patients. Whilst on the ward I carry a holding cross in the pocket of my scrubs to help me to remember to rely on God, even when things are tough.