

# human security

*This session will encourage your group to consider issues of human security as a factor when choosing who to vote for. It examines the variety of ways in which we seek to make ourselves secure, and compares and contrasts these motivations with Jesus' teaching in the Beatitudes. It will open discussion around human worth, and encourages an active response, both in the 2010 Election and in an ongoing way.*

*Depending on the size of your group, this session will probably last between 90 and 120 minutes. If you would like to run an abridged version, you should omit "They Say What?" and "Building a Secure World", although you may wish to print out some of the quotes and stick them around your meeting space. Alternatively, you might like to use the material over two sessions.*

## introduction



### **ACTIVITY: MY VALUE AS A PERSON**

*This activity introduces the theme of human dignity and worth which underpins all questions of human security. The young people are asked to group themselves in three different ways using a variety of criteria. These each reflect a way in which people may organise themselves within society. You can use these grouping to encourage the group to reflect on how our behaviour towards others can be life-affirming or de-humanising.*

Before you begin the activity, check to see that there is a good variety of footwear! If everybody is wearing similar things, you can use other visible differences too. Try eye colour, hair colour, height, coats/jackets or anything where you have a few different groupings!



1. Ask the young people to arrange themselves in groups defined by their shoe type (boots, shoes, heels, trainers, flip-flops etc).
2. Next the young people should arrange themselves in groups defined by shoe colour. Once they have done this, find a "reasonable explanation" why the smallest group should join up and become part of the largest group.

*During the exercise it is important to keep asking questions, identifying what defines the groups and exploring what the young people are thinking and feeling at each stage. It's likely that the last grouping is the one in which young people feel most comfortable*



Stress how much this small group won't like being isolated and identify a reason why they should join the largest group. They might have a little of the dominant colour on the shoe or you may have to pretend to spray paint the shoes.

*You can encourage a bit of competition between the groups – shoes are better than trainers etc...!*

3. Finally ask the young people to arrange themselves in groups defined by something they have in common. If they can't think of anything, you might like to suggest something such as 'people who like shopping', or 'people who play for the same sports team'

Once the group have experienced all three different types of groupings, remind them about some of the ways they felt during the different exercises. Pick up on the three different ways in which they were grouped, and explain that they demonstrate three different categories of ways in which humans group themselves:

The first grouping exercise is an example of SEGREGATION: People separated and categorised by trivial matters.

The second grouping exercise is an example of INTEGRATION: Minority groups being forced to abandon what makes them unique in order to fit in with what is considered normal.

The third grouping exercise is an example of INCLUSION: People are able to live life to the full free from constraints defined by outside agencies or issues of disability, race, sex, sexuality, religion etc.



*Here you'll invite the group to explore the concept of human security. In what circumstances do we feel secure? And how are our experiences and understanding of security reflected in the political arena?*

*Questions to consider are: When do I feel safe and secure? When do I feel threatened? At risk? Unsafe? How do governments try to make us feel safer? Is this the best way? What can we suggest as another way? What can I do? How do my choices uphold the dignity of each other?*



### **ACTIVITY: A BUDGET FOR HUMAN SECURITY**

*With the current difficult financial situation, the way the political parties plan to spend money and relieve national debt will come under severe scrutiny in this time of campaigning. Priorities for both spending and spending cuts will vary from party to party. In this activity the young people are asked to reflect on what their priorities would be for spending in order to promote the kind of society in which they wish to live.*

**You will need:**

**A set of budget cards (Appendix A) for each small group**

**Large paper and marker pens (at least two colours)**

Write the word "SECURITY" in the middle of a large piece of paper. Ask the group what words or images come to mind and have these added to the sheet.

Now ask them to think of times and places when they have felt secure. Record these on the sheet in a different colour.

Divide the group into smaller groups and give each group a set of budget cards. Explain that now they have considered what kind of things make them feel secure, they will have a chance to explore how they would help others feel secure if they were in control of the national budget. Ask the groups to select their five most important areas for spending and also the five areas of least concern.

Invite the groups to reflect on the following questions:

What are their spending priorities?

How will this affect people's lives?

What are the least important things to spend money on?

How will this affect people's lives?

How will your ideas make the world more secure?

In what ways will your ideas make the world a better place to live?

Once they have decided their priorities, invite the groups to present their ideas to each other.

In the light of the exercise invite the young people to consider the following thought from Sr Mary Evelyn Jegen. What do they think of her idea?

***"A budget is a plan of the way we intend to use our money and resources.***

***A budget is a spiritual, an acid test of where our heart is."***

***(Sr Mary Evelyn Jegen)***



*Having a young person scribe on the sheet will help keep the group engaged in the activity*



## DISCUSSION: THEY SAY WHAT?

*Use these quotes – and any other political party manifestoes or policy documents you can provide – for the group to explore where the priorities of the various organisations might lie.*

Print off a set of quotes from Appendix B, one quote on each sheet of paper. Ask for volunteers to read the different quotes, and then ask the group what the quote may tell us about the priorities for that particular group. After you have read all the quotes, ask what priorities would the young people want to see in a party that was to get their vote.



*This is an opportunity for young people to critically reflect on the response of ordinary people to issues of security, the teaching of Jesus and Christian tradition. It will help them to explore human security from an aspect of the 'common good'.*



## CREATIVE: “BLESSED ARE THE SECURE?” – THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

*You will need:*

*Paper for writing and pens*

*A Bible to read from (You might want to use a Bible which has language more readily understandable– the 'New Living Translation' as well as the 'Goodnews' Bible are both in more simple language. 'The Jerusalem' or 'New Jerusalem' Bible is readily available in many Catholic schools and parishes.)*

Read the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)

Explain that these sentences of Jesus are collectively called the 'Beatitudes' because the Latin word for 'blessed' or 'happy' is 'beatus'

What do these sayings tell us about how society should be organised?

What does the passage tell us about how we should treat one another?

How does it encourage us to live?

Challenge the each person to write a new Beatitude for one of their chosen top five budget priorities, for example:

If a young person had prioritised spending on the Armed Forces their beatitude might be:

***Blessed are those who serve to protect the poor and oppressed;  
they will be celebrated for their sacrifices***

Or selecting youth work might lead to:

***Blessed are those who keep young people off the streets;  
Safer communities will be your legacy***

Or

***Blessed are your young people;  
They shall be given the opportunity to flourish***

Invite the young people to share their new beatitudes and receive feedback from the rest of the group. Remember to thank them for their contribution and encourage the group to be positive to one another!

Once the group have shared, reflect on the following questions:

How easy was it to come up with a beatitude that was positive?

If it was difficult why might that be? Does it say something about what you have as your priorities?

Is your beatitude fair? For example, in the 'Armed Forces' beatitude above, one could be challenged for glamorising one aspect of the situation and ignoring the violence and killing that is also part of the work of a soldier.

*The learning comes when this activity is not clear cut! Perhaps this might reveal our priorities as not being wholly justifiable? Even the more straightforward examples can face challenge. For instance, the first of the youth work beatitudes given above stems from a contentious understanding of young people as a threat which needs dealing with.*



## DISCUSSION: BUILDING A SECURE WORLD

**You will need:**

**A printout of 'Security for the Common Good' (Appendix C)**

**A laptop with internet access and speakers.**



Print out and look at the quotation from 'Security for the Common Good' (Appendix C) with the group. Try and encourage them to think about practical ways in which this principle could affect their lives. You might like to ask them:

- What does this vision of security look like?
- How would society and government change if this were implemented?
- Would it work?

Using the laptop, watch the video in which ordinary people in London have responded to the threat of violence on their streets:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SS-KaJjQrpg>

Alternatively look at the response of a group of East London young people when an Arms Fair came to town. See the video Where is the Love at [www.filmakersagainstawar.org](http://www.filmakersagainstawar.org) and reflect on this.

Ask the group for their reaction:

- What is your reaction to what you've watched?
- What vision of Security is being presented here?
- Might it work?
- What are the issues that affect your community/school/parish/area?
- Could we implement something similar in our communities? Develop a plan for this – you could even produce a video if you have access to equipment.

*For a larger group, you may want to use a data projector and project onto a wall so that the whole group can see the material. Alternatively, if you don't have access to a projector, split the group between two (or more) leaders, and show them the clips a smaller group at a time on a laptop.*



*This is a chance for your group to consider what their response to the issues raised about human security might be. There are options for them to consider as part of their engagement with this election, as well as ongoing engagement with the political process and wider ranging questions for your group.*



## DISCUSSION: WHAT CAN I DO?

Have a discussion with your group about what things have struck them from the session. Ask them how they will react to some of the things you have discussed. You can generate ideas as a large group, or you can split into smaller groups and write ideas on large sheets of paper, feeding back to the whole group.

Either way, when feeding back, ensure that the ideas mentioned below come out of the discussion... if nobody mentions them first!

### Engagement as an individual or a group

**Help:** Do you know someone – or a group of people – who you can support? Is there any existing community action that you can get involved in?

**Tell:** How can you raise awareness of these issues? What can you do in your school, parish or community get others thinking about these issues?

**Stand-up for:** How can you stand in solidarity with others? What protest can I make? How can your school, parish or community protect the equal value of all people? What can you do to help this happen?

### Engaging with the Political Process: Before and During the Election

**Ask:** Be prepared with a question for a hustings, if a candidate knocks on your door or is campaigning on the streets of your locality. Make note of a question based on this session.

**Turn up:** When there are community meetings or consultations to discuss local issues, turn up. Local authorities are obliged to take note of the opinions of local people in local decision making – have your voice heard and make your local area more just.

**Persuade:** Not old enough to vote yet? Nag others – make sure people who can vote are aware of the issues that matter and the consequences of inaction or a misguided vote.

**Vote:** Make sure you are registered, know when polling day is and cast your vote.

## **Hold your MP to account!**

Getting involved in the General Election is only the first step in political engagement. You also need to ensure that the MPs you elect at the General Election are held to account for what they do on your behalf in Parliament. And this is not something to be done only once every five years! Real accountability requires a commitment to regular and ongoing dialogue.

Fortunately, there's a resource available to help you do this. Please consider whether your group (or your church or school) could join the MP Accountability Network.

Visit [www.church-poverty.org.uk/2010election](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/2010election) to find out more about the network and sign up – it's free!

Groups who are members of the Network make a commitment to meet regularly with their MP. You'd need to ask all your PPCs to pledge that if they're elected, they will meet with you again six weeks after the election, and then again on a regular, ongoing basis in future.

As a member of the Network, you'll receive a briefing three times a year to help you continue your engagement with your MP. Each briefing will include background information and suggested questions to help you explore particular issues with your MP. The content will be supplied by Church Action on Poverty, members of the livesimply youth network, and other partners of the MP Accountability Network.

## **Ongoing Engagement with the Political Process**

**Keep turning up:** This is just the start, keep engaged, keep turning up and keep asking questions.

Someone has to keep the politicians true to their promises and commitments: It may as well be you

**Write:** Let your representative know your concerns whenever new legislation that poses a threat to the common good.

**Meet:** Turn up for your Member of Parliament's surgery and make your point face-to-face.

**Organise:** Whether through Facebook, a petition, demonstrations or direct action then promote your concerns alongside other likeminded souls.

**Stand:** Be prepared to stand for election at any level of government in order to draw attention to the need for a fairer world. (As a general guide if you can vote you can be a candidate)

**Invent:** There is little need to stick to the standard methods of political engagement – be creative and use your own skills to get your views heard or make your protests.

**Join:** Find a party the aims of whom you broadly concur with and join – you can still campaign for policy change from the inside on those points you are less sure of.



*Pax Christi is an international Catholic movement for peace. During election 2010 Pax Christi, with their ecumenical partners the Fellowship of Reconciliation, are calling all parties to promote security for the common good. This call is for a sustainable security strategy that puts people – and especially the poor – at its centre by tackling inequality in the world rather than security based on narrow self interest and military might.*

Further details are available online:

[www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)

[www.for.org.uk](http://www.for.org.uk)

**HUMAN SECURITY SESSION  
APPENDIX A - BUDGET CARDS (sheet one)**

**THE ARMED FORCES**

**STUDENT FUNDING**

**NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

**NATIONAL SECURITY**

**AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING**

**EDUCATION AND  
SCHOOLS**

**PEACE BUILDING  
AND CONFLICT  
PREVENTION**

**DRUG  
REHABILITATION**

**OVERSEAS AID  
AND DEVELOPMENT**

**YOUTHWORK**

**NATIONAL HEALTH  
SERVICE**

**PENSIONS AND  
CARE OF THE  
ELDERLY**

**HUMAN SECURITY SESSION  
APPENDIX A - BUDGET CARDS (sheet two)**

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**FARMING AND  
INDUSTRY**

**CRIME PREVENTION**

**PRISONS**

**CULTURE AND  
THE ARTS**

**POLICE**

**GREEN ENERGY**

**TACKLING YOUTH  
CRIME**

**SURVEILLANCE  
AND CCTV**

**ID CARDS**

**COUNTER-TERRORISM**

**IMMIGRATION**

**HUMAN SECURITY SESSION  
APPENDIX B - "THEY SAY WHAT?" QUOTES (sheet one)**

**But too many politicians focus on talking tough, instead of doing what works. They're determined to spend billions on new prison cells instead of making prison effective... We would address the underlying social causes of crime and cut repeat offending by ensuring prisoners get help with drug addictions, mental health problems, and life skills.**

**Liberal Democrat Policy**

**HUMAN SECURITY SESSION  
APPENDIX B - "THEY SAY WHAT?" QUOTES (sheet two)**

**Tough on crime and tough on the  
causes of crime.**

**The Labour Party Policy**

**HUMAN SECURITY SESSION  
APPENDIX B - "THEY SAY WHAT?" QUOTES (sheet three)**

**We will introduce a series of early intervention measures, like grounding orders, to allow the police to use instant sanctions to deal with anti-social behaviour. This will help them intervene early to keep young people off the conveyer belt to crime.**

**The Conservative Party Policy**

**HUMAN SECURITY SESSION  
APPENDIX B - "THEY SAY WHAT?" QUOTES (sheet four)**

**The Green Party strongly believes that policies on crime should go hand in hand with those on education, social care, health, economics and housing.**

**The Green Party Policy**

**HUMAN SECURITY SESSION  
APPENDIX B - "THEY SAY WHAT?" QUOTES (sheet five)**

**Young people are particularly vulnerable to street crime and are disproportionately more likely to be victims. But children and young people are also seen as the problem. Policy makers and sections of the media need to portray positively what it means to be young today. Young offenders need opportunities to turn their lives around and develop the practical and emotional skills to make a positive contribution to society.**

**Churches together in Britain and Ireland (2010) Faith in Politics**

**HUMAN SECURITY SESSION  
APPENDIX C - BUILDING A SECURE WORLD QUOTE**

**“Genuine peace and security will only emerge if we commit ourselves to a common security. That means devoting resources to measures designed to seriously tackle inequality and injustice in the world ... rather than investing in ever more lethal technology.”**

**Security for the Common Good (2010)  
Pax Christi/Fellowship of Reconciliation**