



SESSION 11: WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS BASED ON?



Aim

To consider the origin of the concept that humans have inherent worth, dignity and rights.



Starter

Option 1

Play a game of 'Animal, Mineral, Vegetable'. The first player thinks of either an animal, mineral or vegetable. The rest of the group have 20 yes/no questions to guess what it is. If you want to make the game more fast-paced introduce a timer for each round.

Option 2

Print out the cards on page 3-4 and distribute them amongst the group. One at a time, ask them to lay their cards under the heading 'human right' or 'human desire' depending on whether they think the item on the card is something we have a right to, or just something we want. Ask them to explain their decision and invite others to agree or disagree.

This session will consider human rights and where they come from.



Video

Watch the video [What Are Human Rights Based On?](#) (Running time 4:41)



Questions

Encourage pupils to write any questions on sticky notes as they occur to them.

Answer questions of understanding about the video straight away unless these will be answered later in the session. If there is not time for a question, confirm you will answer it another time. Consider using the 'car park' so pupils know you will not forget.



Exploring the Bible

We might disagree on what things should be human rights and what are things we would merely *like* to have, but most of us would probably agree that humans have value. In the video, Andy Bannister argues that this is not obvious if we have no belief in God. Historical records indicate that before Jesus Christ it was not automatic that all humans had worth and dignity. Instead, those in power had more worth and could dictate what happened to those without power. Mark's biography of Jesus gives an example of this.

Read Mark 6:17-29

Discuss

Who decided if John should live and why?

In the video, Andy Bannister described human rights as a big circle, and said that different people would have different views about which parts of the circle apply to which people. **If there is no God, who decides what human rights we should have?**

There are many examples in Mark's biography of how Jesus treats others, stopping to care for and heal those society completely ignored. Here is one of those examples.

Read Mark 14:17-20, 43-46

Discuss

Jesus predicts that one of his closest friends is going to betray him and hand him over to be executed. **How does he treat this man?**

Although Jesus knows Judas will betray him, he does not use any of his considerable power to harm Judas. In fact, he still treats Judas as a brother and allows Judas to approach and kiss him.

Jesus' treatment of others completely changed history, and our country's laws are shaped by Christianity. Andy Bannister suggested it is impossible to believe in human rights as an unbeliever, because there is no way of agreeing who is entitled to rights and who is not. **What do you think of that?**

Allow group members to express their thoughts – be sure to affirm and thank everyone for their contribution to the conversation.



Reflection

Allow a time of reflection that is most appropriate to your group.

You may wish to reflect quietly or discuss the following:

- ◆ Which rights do you feel passionately that all humans should have? Where do you think your views come from (e.g. parents, reading, TV)?
- ◆ How much do you agree or disagree with the idea that human rights originated with Jesus?
- ◆ What do you think of the way Jesus treated his enemies and what does that tell you about him?



Further resources

How to find to your **Member of the UK Parliament (MP)** or your **Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP)**



Starter Activity



Owning a mobile phone	Having your own bedroom
Being free from violence	Being able to say whatever you want to
Being able to marry/ not marry whoever you want	Having food
Being able to believe what you want without being treated badly	Being free from responsibility to look after others
Having internet access	Having friends
Being able to drive	Having clean running water

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Being able to have children	Being treated the same as others regardless of your skin colour
Having an education	Having access to feminine hygiene products
Being able to consent/refuse consent to sex	Being able to carry a gun or other weapon
Having access to essential medical treatment	Being able to change your body through cosmetic surgery
Being free from hurtful comments	Being able to think whatever you want to
Having access to music	Having privacy
Having access to orthodontic treatment	Having a nice house