

What's your legacy?



Outline: This session looks at how we would like to be remembered, exploring the things which contribute to the legacy we leave behind us. Whether that's after we leave a room, once we leave school or a job, or even the legacy we leave behind us when we die.

What do we want other people to remember us for, and how do we go about becoming that sort of person?

Prep: Post It Notes (3 per person – depending on the size of the group)

Pens

Need to download the following videos:

- Alpha Clip – 'There must be more to life than this'
- Charlene's Story – All three for a longer session, or just the last one for a shorter session.
- These can be downloaded from the Charlene's Project Website.

Be Aware: If your group is larger than 10 – 12 people, then the post-it game should be altered to just one per person.

Time needed is 55 minutes, or an hour 7 minutes if watching all three videos of Charlene's Story.

Intro Game:

Takes 15 minutes

- Give each person three post-it notes and ask them to do the following:

'Write on each post-it note one thing (habit / trait / interest) people would say that describes you.'

Hint: Keep the words about their personality and interests as much as possible. Steer them away from writing about what they look like or how clever they are.

- Take all of the post-it notes back into your possession once the young people have completed them, and then ensure you mix them up so that they are not in any particular order.

Important: Ask the young people when they hear their own word or description, to not claim it, or make it obvious it is theirs.

- Read each post-it note out, and ask the rest of the room to allocate each post-it to another person. As the leader you should give each post-it to the person the group thinks it describes. You should ask them to stick it on their person and allow them to do this for themselves.

- Each person should end up with no more than three post-it notes, if someone has more than three, then someone will have less, so reallocate the post it's as necessary.
- The post-it notes should not be changed or swapped at this point. This is important because the more observant young people will notice the hand writing, and may try to match it up.
- Once the game is complete and everyone has three post-it notes, go around and ask each person if they got their own words. It will be unlikely that they have,
 - If they have got something which is obviously not them – ask them how they feel.
 - Similarly if they have something positive which has been given to them (like generous, caring, friendly) ask them how they feel about that too.
 - Ask them to get their own post-it's back and hold on to them till the end.

Explanation: The game aims to do two things.

1. It allows the young people the opportunity to reflect on how they think other people see them, it gives them a chance to write those thoughts down and articulate them. Some young people may struggle with this, however it is not that important what they write, more that they put something down.
2. It gives the young people a chance to see what others in the group would say about them.
IE: the word 'funny' comes up – where will it end up?

In other words are we seen by others, the way we think we are seen by others?

Turn Attention to PPT:

Takes 5 minutes



Play video: Alpha – There must be more to life than this.

Explain that life can very easily just happen around us – we fall into the cycle of life which everyone else lives.

Make a point that getting a good education / marrying someone you love / raising children etc. are all good things and significant in their own right, but that life can be so much more than just going through a predetermined path.



Introduce the word 'Legacy':

At this point introduce the word 'LEGACY', and suggest that each of us has one life with which to make a difference. Sources tell us `107 Billion people have lived on earth up to this point in time – yet there are very few who have left a lasting legacy which we still know about today.

Think about your grave stone – what would you want written on it for everyone to see about you?

Case Studies:

Takes 10 minutes



Mother Teresa: Show image of Mother Teresa. Ask the young people if they recognise her, and if they do what they know about her. Help fill in some of the blanks they may have by reading here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_Teresa - however the key part to this is to highlight that she is best known for her love of the unlovable, her work with the dying and her heart for the poor.



Adolf Hitler: A sharp contrast with the previous picture, to illustrate the point that legacies are not always good. Ask the young people what they know of Hitler. Again you can read up more on him on Wikipedia, however the important point to note is his hatred of Jews and other minorities. His role in Concentration camps and how he is viewed today.

Make the point you don't really hear anyone called Adolf nowadays.



Steven Gerrard: A more light-hearted look at someone who has left a legacy. Ask the young people who he is, and what legacy he has left at Liverpool.

Inform them he played at Liverpool all his life; he never changed clubs and was loyal to his hometown club.

Scroll through three slides, highlighting

-  The Carling Cup
-  The FA Cup
-  The Champions League

Remind the young people in 2005 in the Champions League Final, Gerrard nearly single handedly got his team back into the game after being 3-0 at half time to AC Milan. His role in midfield brought the game back to 3-3 and Liverpool won it on penalties.

The one trophy he wanted more than anything was the Premier League title, and in 2013/14 season Liverpool were in prime position to win it, just needing to beat Chelsea, who were in second place, and the only team that could catch them - when this happened.



Show the clip of Steven Gerrard slipping to allow Djemba Ba in to score a goal which meant Chelsea won the match, and ultimately the Premier League Title. Who was it who made the big mistake? Only their wonder captain – Steven Gerrard.



Show the next slide of all the honours Steven Gerrard has won

For many Steven Gerrard's legacy will not be all the trophies he DID win, more the one trophy he DIDN'T win, and his infamous slip.

Introduce Charlene

Takes 2 minutes



Introduce Charlene Barr at this point using the slide with her photo on it.

You can say or adapt this:

'Charlene was 18 in this photo taken in 2008, on a trip to Uganda with her family. She went there to meet other young people, trying to help them with their education and health. Her dad, Dr Dickie Barr worked with a charity called Love for Life (Ask the young people if they have heard of it? Ask them if they know them from school and talks on relationships?).

The Barr's went to Uganda to deliver talks on relationships, health and HIV awareness. Charlene went too, however she also suffered from Cystic Fibrosis. Has anyone ever heard of Cystic Fibrosis?

Take answers, and explain that it is a genetic and life limiting disease which usually severely restricts the sufferer, impacts on their ability to breath and without lung transplant can result in death. Most sufferers only live to about 40 years old without intervention.

Charlene passed away aged 20 on 30th October 2010, having been on the waiting list for a double lung transplant. Her life was cut short, however knowing the possibility was very real that she would not receive a transplant did not hold Charlene back, or make her pity herself. Instead she took the challenge she was faced with and turned it into a massive opportunity.

The very day she was told she needed her operation was the day she committed to building a school in Uganda. There was no time for self-pity!

Charlene dedicated her life to helping those who she met in Uganda, to get a good education. She said if she couldn't go to school anymore, then she was going to help others to go.

Let's watch Charlene's story as told by her family. '



Watch video (all three if there is time)

Takes 6 minutes (or 18 minutes)

After the video is over it is worth bearing in mind that the video talks about the moment Charlene dies, from a first-hand perspective. It can be very emotional and may trigger memories within the group of similar scenarios. For this reason it is good to go straight into a reflective thought, ending on a positive note.

You can say or adapt this:

'Charlene was a young girl, given up for adoption, struggled with her own identity, was severely limited by her illness in what she could do and plan for, spent a lot of time in and out of hospital, and ultimately died aged 20.

She really had all the excuses in the world to not achieve much, or leave a legacy behind her.

Yet in the middle of her own troubles and worries. In the middle of knowing she may die very soon – she used her influence – small as she thought it was – to do something for someone else.

She made a choice, to do something for children in Uganda. In that moment she did not know where it would lead. She did not know if she would succeed or fail – she didn't know if she would ever see the school built. Yet she still decided to go for it.




24 hours after the contract was signed to build the school, Charlene passed away. She saw the first step of her project become a reality, and today Charlene's Project has two schools built – another on the way, two partnerships developed, one with youth sports and the other with young women who make beads to help them escape poverty and make a better future for themselves. You can see more about these projects on the Charlene's Project website – www.charlenesproject.org.

Over 100 children are sponsored, over 20 teachers are supported in the schools and countless hundreds of children are being educated.

Why? Because one young girl saw past the limitations of her own body, and abilities and dared to dream.'

Optional follow-up questions

Takes 10 minutes

-  **1. What things held Charlene back in life?**
 - Identity issues / Cystic Fibrosis – Hospital stays / medication / ill health.
-  **2. What was her attitude to her condition throughout her life?**
 - She was optimistic and never wanted to be pitied, she wanted to be strong for her family.
-  **3. What do you think motivated Charlene to build a school?**
 - Her visit to Uganda in 2008 undoubtedly opened her eyes to the need in the world for young people to access education. How many things which go on in the world do we ignore, because we are unaware they are happening?

- Charlene wanted to give others the chance to go to school when she couldn't.



4. **A wise Rabbi once said the most powerful one line prayer he ever read was: "Let me not die while I am still alive."**

Charlene knew that her life could have ended within a matter of days, how do you think she showed the world that she was determined not to 'die while she was still alive'?

- She focussed on using her influence and story to inspire others to help her achieve her dream.
- She was aware that many people knew about her illness – and she wanted to use that awareness for something other than herself.
- The easiest thing in the world would have been for Charlene to have created a 'bucket list' of selfish things – who would have blamed her? Instead her bucket list had one item in it, to build a school for those who couldn't go.



5. **Do you think her positive and selfless outlook made it any easier for her to manage her illness or health issues?**

- This is an interesting question, her positive outlook would certainly have helped with her coming to terms with her illness, however it would not have meant it was easier to live with the pain or questions she must have had about it all.
- In a situation like Charlene was facing, she had two choices – Drown or Dream. Many people when faced with similar personal tragedies talk about a choice they face. Either you can give in to the void, the emptiness that fills your heart, your lungs, constricts your ability to think or even breathe. Or you can try to find meaning.
- This does not mean there will not be doubts or worries or pain and despair, it does not mean that sorrow or sadness must be avoided or ignored – rather it simply means when the choice presents itself and you feel able to make it – the option of choosing life and meaning is available to everyone.



6. **It is unlikely Charlene could have imagined Charlene's Project would grow to two schools, with another on the way, providing teaching accommodation, community halls and fresh drinking water to whole communities. She would not have imagined over 100 sponsored children, 20 teachers supported, and hundreds of children gaining an education would be achieved in 5 short years.**

In light of all that, what do you think Charlene's role in it all has been?

- It's simple really - she just planted the seed, watered it with her short life, and then passed away just over a year after it all began.

Closing Action

Takes 5 minutes

Give each person one more post-it note and pen.

Ask them to write on it, one word which they would use to describe Charlene.

Ask them to read their words out without much comment, perhaps only to nod and affirm their answer.

Then when they are done, ask them to look at the post-it notes they wrote about themselves. Do not ask them to respond or ask for feedback, rather ask them to reflect on the words they used to describe themselves, and to consider if they are the words they would like to be remembered for.

Encourage them that they can change the legacy they leave behind. They have the power to do something amazing every day, with the things and situations that are put in front of them, and the gifts and talents they have been entrusted with.

If Charlene Barr who was restricted to a hospital bed, didn't finish school, struggled with health issues, was left alone as a baby and died aged 20 can do something amazing, then how much more can we who do not struggle with such things do – if only we would shift our focus.

Closing Reflection

Takes 2 minutes

Close with prayer / reflection / silence – depending on the setting

Suggested prayer / feel free to adapt:

Dear God,

Thank You for the gifts and talents you have entrusted to me. Thank you for the opportunities you give me every day to do good things for You. I know I don't always do the right things, so help me to open my eyes and my heart to take the chances which come my way everyday to be a better person, and to become someone who loves my neighbour more and more.

Thank You God, for people like Charlene who show us how to use our lives well, and not to waste a minute, even when we have every right to feel sorry for ourselves or sit in our own self pity.

Give us bravery and self-belief to know that we are loved and wanted by you to be world changers, and it starts right here, right now with the next person we meet, and every single person after that.

In Jesus name,

Amen.