



Christians
in Politics

youth resource



what's in this resource?

Christians in Politics provides resources and information for a variety of different groups. Christians can appropriately engage in politics in many different ways, including as churches, through campaigning groups and organisations, and as individual citizens.

This resources manual contains three sessions that will help young people start to engage with politics from an authentically Christian perspective. We are all called to be 'salt and light' in the world (Matthew 5:13-16), and this clearly includes the world of politics and government!

We need to start by understanding what it means to engage in public and political life from a Christian world-view. Young people often have little understanding of how politics works and the effect that it has on all of our lives. Those that do will probably have received it through an education system which increasingly presents the issues from a secular, atheistic viewpoint. Urban saints have produced a series of three youth meeting plans which cover God's perspective on politics and government, why it matters to young people, and culminates in a meeting with a local elected representative (such as your MP).

Many churches find that young people engage naturally with creative prayer.

Although the voting age in the UK is currently 18, young people do not have to wait until adulthood in order to get involved!

For loads more resources and information visit the Christians in Politics website at www.christiansinpolitics.org.uk



sessions

Youth group meeting plan 1: Politics and God

Youth group meeting plan 2: Politics and us

Youth group meeting plan 3: An inside view



youth meeting plan 1 'politics and God'

These youth meeting plans form a series of three, and are designed to help young people explore the connections between their Christian faith and the world of politics. They have been written aimed at older secondary school ages, but with some adaptation the material could also be useful for students or younger teens.

AIM:

To look at what God thinks about politics and government, to think about your own political beliefs and 'manifesto', and to find out who your local MP is.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

Proverbs 1:10–16, Proverbs 31:8–9, Isaiah 58:6–9, Ezekiel 18:10–20, Amos 1:9–15, Amos 2:6–8, Habbakuk 2:6–14, Zechariah 7:8–12.

INTRODUCTION:

While a separation between “the Church” and “the State” is undoubtedly a good thing in a diverse, modern society, that doesn't mean that God has no place in politics. In fact most political decisions have moral dimension, and the values and principles that we apply are always driven by an underlying philosophy, whether we are aware of it or not. So a secular humanist's choices and actions are informed and shaped by their particular worldview, as much as a Christian's life is shaped by a philosophy where a relationship with God is central.

The important matter is to be consciously aware of our philosophical perspective, rather than to be ignorant of it or to discard it.

In reality, a Christian worldview can bring an enormously positive contribution to the political world, as the Bible has much to say about governance, society and how people should live. This first session of three begins to explore what political engagement might be about. And God definitely has a part in this.

Two of the activities (the getting started activity, 'Our Local MP' and the response activity, 'Contacting Our MP') will prepare your group for meeting their MP in the third meeting plan of this series. If you hope to meet with your local MP in the third meeting then it is important you complete these two activities.

Note: in order to manage the group's expectations, it is advisable that the leaders make initial contact with your local MP's office before starting this series. Depending on your MP's schedule, arranging a meeting at a time which works for both of you can sometimes prove difficult. If this is the case, you may wish to approach another elected representative (such as a local Councillor) instead. You should reflect this in the relevant activities.

WARM UP: ADDING UP THE NEWS.

10 minutes: newspaper game

You will need: Four of today's newspapers and two prizes which can be shared.

Divide everyone into three groups. Ask each group to choose a newspaper (you have four, so each group will get a choice). Give the groups three minutes to tear out any article with reference to a politician or a political issue. Celebrities, sport and the puzzle pages don't count, unless it has a clear political slant! They should add up their total. (Note: if there is a dispute, they must justify why they think the article is political!)

Give a prize to the group with the newspaper that has the most political articles.

Then give them another two minutes to sort the articles they have found into mainly positive and mainly negative. They should now add the positive ones, and subtract the negative ones.

Give a prize to the group with newspaper that gets the highest score.

The Point: To assess the balance of political news articles compared to other articles and to look at the difference between positive and negative articles in politics.

GETTING STARTED: GOD POLITICS.

15 minutes: Bible verse card game

You will need: Index cards or equivalent in two different colours.

Write the following issues and Bible verses on index cards, one per card (use different coloured card for the verses). Scatter the cards on the floor in the middle of the group.

Proverbs 1:10-16	Corporate crime
Proverbs 31:8-9	Corruption
Isaiah 58:6-9	Economic exploitation
Ezekiel 18:10-20	Ethnic cleansing
Amos 1:9-15	Extortion Fraud
Amos 2:6-8	Homelessness
Habbakuk 2:6-14	Human rights
Zechariah 7:8-12	Immigration Injustice
	Oppression Poverty
	Slavery Robbery
	Mugging
	Single parent families
	Street crime
	Violence

Look up each of the verses in turn (ask for a volunteer to read it out), and see if you can match the issues on the cards to the verses. You might find some issues link with more

than one verse, or wish to add more issues not listed here, so have some extra blank cards to hand.

Invite members of the group to share their reactions to this exercise.

The Point: To think about some of the political issues that were relevant in Bible times

GETTING STARTED: OUR LOCAL MP.

20 minutes: internet research (preparation for Session 3) You will need: Access to the internet, several laptops or computers. Do you know who your local politician is?

You will need internet access for this. If you all live in different areas, divide according to postcode area. Otherwise divide into three groups. Ensure each group has a computer with internet access.

To find your local MP use www.christiansinpolitics.org.uk/resources/find-your-mp. Simply type in your postcode. Use the links to find out...

- What sort of things your MP can do for you
- How or where you can contact your MP

Now go to the website www.theyworkforyou.com to do a little more research. Pull up the page for your local MP (for ease, you can put in your postcode again).

Scan down and/or follow the links to find answers to the following questions...

- Is your MP on any committees which deal with specific issues?
- What is your MP's position on important issues? (Such as education, health, climate, war, etc.)
- Recent speeches that your MP has made in parliament.

Keep a copy of all your research, as it will be useful at your next meeting.

The Point: To begin to research your local MP.

DIGGING IN: GOD ON GOVERNING.

15 minutes: Bible search and discussion

Politics is about government, using power for the benefit of the people. Any political system has a philosophy behind it, which determines the underlying values and principles, and its effects are seen in the realm of economics (how money is valued) and the social sphere (how people are valued).

Look up the word “govern” (or “rule”) in a concordance. Approximately how many references are there? Find several references to God governing the world, and several references about how human rulers govern their nations and people. Try and find some in the Old Testament and some in the New. Look up these verses and find out what they say.

Now use the following questions as a basis for discussion:

- From these verses, what is your first impression of God's viewpoint on government and politics?
- Does God have any negative or critical things to say? What are they?
- Is this view balanced out with positive verses? What is God's ideal for good government?

The Point: To think about God's view of government and politics and to understand His ideal for good government.

DIGGING IN: HUMANIFESTO.

30 minutes: political party game and debate

Divide into three groups. Each group should appoint a spokesperson. Each group represents a party in government. You can give your party a name – try to be creative and original!

Each group must look down the following list, and decide as a group whether they will take a position for or against a particular issue. Some suggestions are offered, but be creative and come up with your own perspective! Then they must decide which three issues have the highest priority for them. (Allow 7 minutes for this.)

Note: this is just a taster – don't think you actually have to solve all these problems before your "party" agrees on its "manifesto"! This is a fun game – you have only seven minutes to prepare!

Issues list:

- Energy: Cheap nuclear power, or costly new 'green'-technologies?
- Health: Hospitals and surgeries (helping people once they are ill), or public health campaigns (telling people how to live a healthy lifestyle)?
- The Military: Enlarge, downsize, stay the same, replace old technology with new, freeze expenditure?
- Transport: Invest more in rail and local bus services, or build roads, perhaps congestion charges in towns, or improve routes for cycling?
- Environment: Set targets for reducing pollution, or leave it up to individuals?
- Crime and Policing: Lock up all criminals including young offenders (build more prisons), or use community sentences (where criminals work to improve neighbourhoods)?
- ...any other issue you choose!

Now consider, briefly, how you might pay for your policies, and what you might do with any income you raise. Again, you have just three minutes to think about this! (Allow 3 minutes only.)

Money list:

- Increase or decrease taxes on various items: such as inheritance, property, fuel, earnings, luxuries?
- Subsidise various services: public transport, health, primary education, university?

Now create a debate (you will need a chairperson): First allow each side to state their “humanifesto” in turn, with brief reasons for their choices and priorities. Then allow each side the opportunity to respond to the other’s priorities.

Note: keep the debate to the point, and remember - it is OK to agree on some things! You don’t have to argue about everything.

Voting:

At the end of the debate everyone gets four votes as “members of the public”. They must place one vote for the party they thought argued their position the most clearly (whether or not they agreed with it). In this case you cannot vote for your own party. The other three votes are to be placed against the policies you are persuaded are the most important.

Finally:

Ask the following questions:

Over the course of the game:

- Did you change your mind on anything?
- Were you persuaded by another’s point of view?

The Point: To explore your own political opinions and to test them by debating with others who disagree.

RESPONSE: CONTACT YOUR LOCAL MP.

20 minutes: phone calls (preparation for Session 3)

You will need to do this well in advance of the third meeting plan in this series. Together you should appoint two of the group to do this on behalf of all.

Use the website www.theyworkforyou.com to find out how to do this. Get in touch with your local MP and arrange a meeting. This may be for your group to visit their local constituency office, or for your MP to come to your local group. Alternatively you may wish to book a room at a public venue for a meeting.

Note that you may have to leave a message at your MP’s office, or at the House of Commons reception, and await a call back.

Tell your MP a little about your young people’s group. Explain that you want to learn more about government and getting involved in politics, hence you would like to meet to learn about being a politician and to ask some questions.

Once you have a meeting arranged, ensure everyone in the group knows when and where it will be.

The Point: To arrange to meet with your local MP at a later date.

RESPONSE: FLAMES OF COMMITMENT.

10 minutes: Sacred Act

You will need: Nightlights, lighter or matches, strips of paper and pens.

Place a circle of nightlights in the centre of the table, and with each nightlight you need a strip of paper. Also you should have some pens to hand.

Each take three minutes to think about an issue or concern that you want to change. It could be a local matter, such as bullying in school or gang violence. It could be a wider concern such as climate change.

Then each take a strip of paper, write on it the issue you have chosen and add your initials. It is OK if more than one person selects the same issue.

Now all stand around the table. Each take it in turns to light one of the nightlights and as you do, say: "I want to make a difference for..." and name the issue you have chosen. Place the nightlight back in the circle, with the strip of paper under it.

The leader should conclude by noting that we all have the power to make a difference in the world. And we can choose to use that power to influence others and to work for the good of our communities. You might like to pray that God will help you do this.

The Point: To think about some of the political issues that you would like to change and to ask God to help you do that.



youth meeting plan 2: politics and us

These youth meeting plans form a series of three, and are designed to help young people explore the connections between their Christian faith and the world of politics. They have been written aimed at older secondary school ages, but with some adaptation the material could also be useful for students or younger teens.

AIM:

To begin to think about how, together, we can make a difference in the world around us.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

Daniel 1:1-6

INTRODUCTION

Politics is about the governance of people. Its influence is felt in the shaping of communities and societies.

All political systems are human structures, and hence suffer the same failings of all things of human origin. All have power hierarchies which can be misused, and the system can only imperfectly represent the people whom it is supposed to govern. Politics is also about handling the resources which a society creates and uses (in other words the economy), and distributing resources to ensure that all citizens have sufficient to meet their need to thrive and flourish.

In this session we are going to look a little further at some of the issues that affect our world and the communities we live in. We will also begin to explore how we together can make a difference.

The digging in activity 'Ask Your Local MP' is preparation for meeting your MP in the third meeting plan in this series. If you are planning to meet your MP then it is important you complete this activity.

Note: in order to manage the group's expectations, it is advisable that the leaders make initial contact with your local MP's office before starting this series. Depending on your MP's schedule, arranging a meeting at a time which works for both of you can sometimes prove difficult. If this is the case, you may wish to approach another elected representative (such as a local Councillor) instead. You should reflect this in the relevant activities.

WARM UP: GOD CONNECT.

5 minutes: brainstorm

You Will Need: A large piece of paper, some pens and some Bibles.

Put a large piece of paper in the middle of the floor and brainstorm some hot political issues of today. These could be local, national, or global concerns. Now think: How do these things that affect our lives, directly or indirectly? Invite some comments.

Now if you're really up for a challenge, see if God has anything to say about these issues in the bible. Encourage group members to think of any bible characters, stories, or verses that might be relevant.

The Point: To think about some of the big political issues that affect you today and to find out if God has anything to say about those issues.

WARM UP: ELITES AND EXCLUDED.

10 minutes: political circle game

All to sit in a close circle. Each in turn select some characteristic (obvious or hidden) on which to exclude others from the circle. For example, the first person might say: "anyone who doesn't like peanuts". Those who fit the exclusion criteria immediately move out of the circle, and sit around the edge of the room. The second person might say "anyone who is wearing a green item". And so the process continues. Only those in the circle get to choose criteria. The aim is to be one of the last three remaining in the circle.

Now imagine these three in the circle (the elite) are to be the rulers of the whole group (the excluded). Ask everyone how they would feel about this. Then play the game again for a different outcome!

In the past - and even today, people have been excluded from politics on the basis of arbitrary divisions. For many years in the UK, women used to play no part at all in the political system. Young people here still cannot vote. Minority groups may not get a fair voice, as decisions are often taken by majority rule, which do not always have their interests at heart.

In any political system it is important to consider how all groups in society are represented. Not all systems work equally well for all people.

The Point: To think about how political systems can be biased towards certain groups of people and to think about how it feels to be excluded.

GETTING STARTED: POLITICAL VOICE.

10 minutes: discussion

This activity is a discussion based on the group's experience of the previous activity, 'Elites And Excluded'.

Here are some questions to get you started.

- How do you feel about being excluded from the decision making process, especially when the decisions affect your life?
- What people or groups do you know that do not seem to get a fair representation in the political system? Why is this?
- How can we ensure that the system works for all?

The Point: To discuss in more detail how it feels to be excluded and to begin to consider some of the groups of people that are excluded from our current political system.

GETTING STARTED: BE THE CRITIC.

20 minutes: video clip and discussion

You will need: Pens and paper. A short video clip of a politician speaking sometime in the last week.

For this you will need a short video clip of a politician being interviewed about some contentious topic, taken either from the news this last week, or from a programme about politics. The BBC and ITV news websites are good places to find clips from the news over the last week.

The challenge is to learn to think critically about what we learn of politics through the news media. Each person will need some paper and a pen to jot down any notes.

As you watch the short broadcast, keep in mind the following questions:

- Is the context of the story given?
- What angle or position does the politician take on the topic?
- Is the politician aware of their own prejudice or bias?
- Do they try to maintain an illusion of balance or neutrality?
- How does the speaker use words (for example: to cover up, twist or distort the truth or to evoke an emotional response)?
- Is the politician detached from the real consequences of their decisions and actions?

Also consider:

- Does the interviewer avoid the tough issues, and give the politician an easy ride?
- ...or does the interviewer insist on asking challenging questions, and press for honest answers?
- Is any in-depth analysis offered on the topic?

After watching the clip, compare notes with each other.

Ask yourself: If you had been the interviewer, what would you have asked the politician?

The Point: To look at how politicians are represented in the media and to think about whether we can trust the media portrayal.

DIGGING IN: DAN'S CREW.

20 minutes: bible study

Take a look at the book...

You will need: A “response gauge” on a piece of poster paper, or whiteboard, or using a projector, with an indicator you can move. The gauge needs to read: “none | some | much | total”.

Explain the context: it is a time of conquest and empire for Babylon, and the king's chief courtier selects smart young men from among the aristocracy of the nations they have subdued to be indoctrinated into the political system, and become initiates of the new ruling elite. Among these are four teenage boys, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. (Daniel 1:1–6)

Now read Daniel 1:7–21. You can get one person to read to the group.

Ask the questions: Do these four “go with the flow”, or do they choose to stick by their godly values and principles? Do they refuse to listen and learn about the political systems of the empire, or do they seek to understand with a critical mind?

Invite the young people to put responses somewhere on the spectrum for the following statements about the boys in the story. Ask them to comment on the rating they have chosen:

□ Change in personal convictions. core beliefs:

none | some | much | total

Is this a poor or good rating? Why?

□ Adaption to cultural expression of identity:

none | some | much | total

Is this a poor or good rating? Why?

□ Understanding of new political system:

none | some | much | total

Is this a poor or good rating? Why?

□ Acceptance of new political system:

none | some | much | total

Is this a poor or good rating? Why?

Select some words that express their engagement with the new political reality of the imperial power of Babylon. Invite the group to write the words up on the wall, or somewhere where all can see.

E.g. Uncompromising, adaptable, critical, engaged etc. (add your own words)

Ask yourself where along the spectrum you would fit.

Use these as the basis for a discussion about young people making a difference in today's world.

The Point: To look at the Biblical characters of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah and to discuss their responses to an important political decision.

DIGGING IN: ASK YOUR LOCAL MP.

20 minutes: thinking about issues (preparation for Session 3)

Preparing to meet your local politician.

You will need: A flipchart and marker pen.

Think up some questions to ask your local politician. At this stage all suggestions should be written down, with clarification if needed, but without critique or discarding any.

The questions should be divided into three areas:

1. Questions about the MP's own personal involvement in politics, their motivations, successes, failures, passions...

...for example: "How did you first get involved in politics?", "What are some of the worst and best aspects of your work?", "What motivates you when things don't turn out as you had hoped?" "What is the one key issue you would like to solve?"

(Why? Because it is important for you to get to know your politician as a person!)

2. Questions about your MP's opinion on political engagement for young people, and how they can make a difference...

...for example: "How can young people make their voice heard, even if we're too young to vote?", "Why do you think it is important for politicians to take note of young people's perspectives?", "How can politicians and young people work together on key problems?"

(Why? Because it is important to ensure that your views as young people are equally valued)

3. Questions about issues at local, national, and global levels...

...for example: "What is being done in our locality about the problems of gang violence and street crime?", "Why doesn't the government work harder to reduce the trade in armaments, which is a key factor in many ongoing wars today?", "Do you think more funding should be put into education?"

(Why? Because it is important to tackle the real problems that affect people and their communities!)

(Note: some of you may be interested in your local politician's view of the political systems and structures. However, these questions may be better kept for a second or third visit.)

Once you have a long list of ideas, start to sort them and select three key questions from the first area. Then choose two key questions for each of the other two areas. Pick a different member of your group to ask each question on everyone's behalf.

You should all keep other questions to hand to give some more options for the discussion, or to ask if there is time.

At the end of this activity you should have agreed some key questions to ask your local politician at a meeting that you (or your leaders) will arrange.

The Point: To prepare for meeting your local MP by discussing and short listing the questions you would like your MP to answer.

RESPONSE: PRAY IN.

10 minutes: prayer time

Spend some time talking to God about the things you have learned. Pray for your local politician and others involved in government. Ask God to give them wisdom, humility, integrity and courage.

Ask God: "What are your priorities?" Spend a short time in silence, and then write down anything you think God has shown you.

It may be useful to have Bibles to hand in case you feel God wants you to look something up.

The Point: To pray for your government and to ask God what his priorities are.



youth meeting plan 3: 'an inside view'

These youth meeting plans form a series of three, and are designed to help young people explore the connections between their Christian faith and the world of politics. They have been written aimed at older secondary school ages, but with some adaptation the material could also be useful for students or younger teens.

AIM:

To consider impact of effective engagement in your political system. To meet with your local MP and to think about what you want to do next as a group in light of what you have learned about God and politics.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

Daniel 3 and 4.

INTRODUCTION:

We can get involved in politics in a number of ways. We could be an insider and become an MP or other elected representative, working within the system for the benefit of society. Equally we could work as an outsider, such as an activist or lobbyist, signing petitions, writing letters, and protesting when things are not right. Each approach has its validity. The best political activists (on the outside of the system) will have a good grasp of their MPs perspectives (on the inside of the system) on any given topic. So we should seek wisdom as to how we can be most effective in using the limited power we have to the maximum impact.

Different styles and approaches are needed for different issues. However we choose to go about it, we need to build relationships with others working in politics, and to learn what we can to be well informed.

For at least part of this meeting you are going to meet with your local MP.

Some of the activities included in the first and second meeting plans in this series were to help you prepare. You will need to ensure you have completed the selected activities prior to meeting your MP (the relevant activities were highlighted in the 'introduction' section for the first and second meeting plan in the series).

Also, the response activities 'Chat Back' and 'Prayer Wall' are a good opportunity to reflect on meeting with your MP. If you do not have time to do them in this meeting it would be really good to complete them another time.

Note: if as part of the preparation for sessions 1 and 2 you have decided to meet with another elected representative (such as a local Councillor) rather than your MP, you should reflect this in the relevant activities.

WARM UP: POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

10 minutes: online quiz

Ask each member of your group to answer an online political philosophy quiz for themselves (e.g. www.politicalcompass.org/test) and then see where they fit on the political grid.

Compare each other's positions:

- Did you find any surprises?

The Point: To find out about the political philosophies of the group and to discuss differences of opinion.

GETTING STARTED: RECAP

10 minutes: revision time

As a group, take a look back at the research you carried out in your recent sessions together.

Specifically refresh your memory on the following:

- Who is your local politician?
- What issues are of importance to your MP?
- How has your MP voted in recent parliamentary debates?
- What questions would you like to ask?

Make sure that you are all agreed on the topics you wish to raise.

If you have not done so already, decide now:

- Who will welcome your local politician?
- Who will introduce the group?
- Who will ask each of your selected questions?
- Who will say thank-you on behalf of all afterwards?

The Point: To complete your preparation ahead of meeting with your Local MP.

DIGGING IN: OPPOSE OR PERSUADE?

20 minutes: bible study

Take another look at the book...

Two different scenarios; two different approaches.

One group to look at Daniel 3:

- Keywords: oppositional, confronting.
- Set the scene by reading Daniel 3:1-7
- Ask: What was at stake? What options are there to respond?
- Discover the action by reading Daniel 3:8-30
- Ask: What was the outcome (for the young initiates), what was the impact (on the king and political system)? One group to look at Daniel 4:
- Keywords: influential, persuasive.
- Set the scene by reading Daniel 4:1-18
- Ask: What was at stake? What options are there to respond?
- Discover the action by reading Daniel 4:19-37
- Ask: What was the outcome (for the young initiates), what was the impact (on the king and political system)?

Note: The influence of these new young members of the political elite continued through the reign of at least four kings (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus), as control of the empire shifted from Babylonian to Median to Persian.

What's the point?

Never underestimate the impact of effective engagement in the political system.

Ask the question: How do these stories give you hope for making a difference in political issues today?

The Point: To look at two very different approaches to political decisions you don't agree with. To learn from the story of Daniel and the way he and his associates influenced the Kings of their time.

DIGGING IN: MEET YOUR LOCAL MP.

40 minutes: conversational meeting

Ensure you are all ready to meet your local politician, as agreed and arranged in advance. Bring with you a copy of any questions that you will be asking, and a pen and paper, to take any notes.

Make sure your politician feels very welcome! Ensure at least two of the group are ready to give a warm and friendly greeting.

One spokesperson should then briefly introduce your group, and invite the politician to say a little about themselves. Following this, members of the group can take turns to ask some of the prepared questions.

Don't forget to keep it positive! You may have strong opinions on a contentious topic, or disagree with your MP's position on some issue, but always speak courteously and with respect, and allow you MP to explain their perspective and the reasons for it.

It is much more helpful to build a good relationship from the outset, especially as you may need to meet your politician again soon, perhaps to get their help in tackling some local issue of concern.

If you are respectful, you have a much greater chance of influencing your politician's decisions and actions on behalf of your local community.

The Point: To meet with your local MP to find out more about their sphere of influence and their opinions on key topics. To use this information to think about how you can influence political decisions in your local area.

RESPONSE: THANK YOU.

5 minutes: token of thanks

Say thank you for the time and energy your local politician has given to talk with you, and to help you learn more about politics today. One or two of the group should be prepared to do this on behalf of all.

Maybe you want to give your MP a small gift or memento to remember your group.

The Point: It is important to treat people with respect, regardless of their opinions and beliefs.

RESPONSE: CHAT BACK.

15 minutes: reflective discussion

After your meeting with your local politician, get together as a group and use the following questions as a discussion starter:

- How do you feel about the meeting with your local politician?
- What encouraged you? What might have discouraged you?
- How well do you feel your issues were heard?
- ...and how useful was the response?

Political systems are run by people. Building relationships with these people, talking about issues, sharing your perspectives, can all make a difference to the decisions and actions that are made.

What positives have you learnt about using your influence in politics?

The Point: To discuss your group's reactions to what the MP said. It is important to discuss things as a group because it helps you to put things in perspective and to form unified opinions of what to do next.

RESPONSE: PRAYER WALL.

15 minutes: prayer activity

You will need: large sheet of blank paper, pins, marker and highlighter pens, newspapers, glue or pritt sticks.

Cover a wall with large pieces of blank paper.

On the paper, use a bold marker pen to write some big headings of political issues which your group feels very strongly about. They may affect your community directly, or simply be bigger concerns for which you have a passion.

Under the headings, paste any newspaper articles that have a relevance to the theme. Use highlighters to identify any notable quotes or details. Next to these you can write any comments or questions you may have, or any insights God gives you about the topic.

Finally write some prayers about the issues on another piece of coloured paper, and add them to the mural.

Use this wall as a place for prayer and a motivation to keep getting involved in making a difference in political issues.

The Point: To remember to involve God in your thinking and political decision making.

RESPONSE: WRITE TO YOUR MP

20 minutes: activity

You will need: computers or paper and pens. Envelopes and stamps.

Write letters to your MP or other elected politician(s) on a specific issue. If you are well informed about the issue, and state your case clearly and to the point you will almost always get a written response.

For ease, you can use:

- <http://www.writetothem.com/> to find out names and contact details.
- Christians in Politics resource – **Making contact with your elected representative**

Once you get a response you can, if you wish, take the conversation further.

If you feel passionately about a particular issue, then why not join a lobby group or political campaigning organisation?

The Point: To work towards change in politics from a Christian perspective.

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Since 1906 Urban Saints (formerly known as Crusaders) has been reaching out to children and young people with the good news of Jesus Christ. Young people (aged 5 to 18+) connect with the movement in a variety of ways, including weekly youth groups, special events, holidays, community projects and training programmes. These meeting plans on politics plus many others are also available at www.urbansaints.org/energize.