



World Day of Prayer Youth Resource 2021

Vanuatu

'Build on a strong Foundation'

World Day of Prayer is an international prayer movement in more than 180 countries and over 1000 languages. Every year, Christians of many traditions and all ages celebrate a common, global day of prayer on the first Friday in March. Worship services and prayer events are held all around the world on this day, which this year is Friday 5th March.

Each year a different country is chosen to produce the material that we use for worship services, informing our prayers for that country.

The idea of this leaflet is to inform and resource you for World Day of Prayer, so that you as the young person or leader of a youth group or session can use this to engage with the country of Vanuatu and to pray for the people who live there.

What is this year's country?

The Republic of Vanuatu is a Pacific islands country located in the South Pacific Ocean, about 2,300 miles east of Australia.

Some important facts about this country are:

- Population - 307,145 people
- Languages - Bislama, English and French
- Employment - the main jobs are agriculture, raising cattle, tourism and offshore financial services
- Religion - Christianity



In the news

On April 6, 2020, the people of Vanuatu experienced the devastating winds and heavy rain of Cyclone Harold. The Guardian reported:

“The cyclone, which formed off Solomon Islands and led to the deaths of 27 people who were swept off a ferry in rough seas, went on to flatten buildings and cause severe flooding in Fiji and Tonga. But it passed through the north of Vanuatu when it was at its strongest.”

Efforts to bring relief to the country after the cyclone were badly affected by Coronavirus because of fears of spreading the virus. People also had to gather in evacuation shelters, making it harder for any social distancing or preventative measures to be in place.

Prayer points

- For the healing and mending of the country
- That Coronavirus does not spread far on the islands
- That World Day of Prayer 2021 will be able to go ahead
- That the people of Vanuatu will continue to have a strong foundation in Jesus and will continue to trust and believe in him, no matter what storms in life come their way

Extra materials (For small groups or conversation starters)

Use these extra materials to inform young people or use them to have a time of prayer with your young people.

The team of women in Vanuatu who wrote the worship material for 2021 chose a parable Jesus told as their Biblical basis for worship. The theme ‘Build on a strong foundation’ comes from this parable, which comes at the end of a long collection of Jesus’ teachings about how we should live:

Matthew 7:22-33 Wise and Foolish Builders

Jesus concluded, “Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise person who built their house on rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish person who built their house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Reflection

Over the past year our lives have been disrupted by the Coronavirus pandemic. Schools, shops and workplaces were closed; events were cancelled; all our familiar freedom was lost. It was a really strange time for most of us. We probably had to come up with a lot of things to entertain ourselves with, or have projects to do around our homes. We couldn't even go and see our families or friends which made it so difficult for us all.

In his story about the house builders, Jesus is encouraging us to have a strong foundation in our lives. When the storms of life come, just like the coronavirus pandemic, we can become windswept and broken inside. We need a strong foundation to base our lives upon. Jesus can be that foundation for our lives if we discover more about what he said and did, trust him more deeply, and build our lives with him at the centre.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. How did you feel during the time the pandemic was at its worst? What worried you or reassured you? What helped you to get through the pandemic?
2. What is important to you in your life at the moment? Do you think of your life as having a "foundation"? What would you like to say to Jesus as he encourages you to build your life on his example?
3. What other stories or teaching of Jesus have you already found helpful and worth remembering? What do you think is his best advice? What do you wish he had said more about?

For the people in Vanuatu, we pray that they will also have that strong foundation in Jesus as they try to rebuild their homes and continue to deepen their faith.

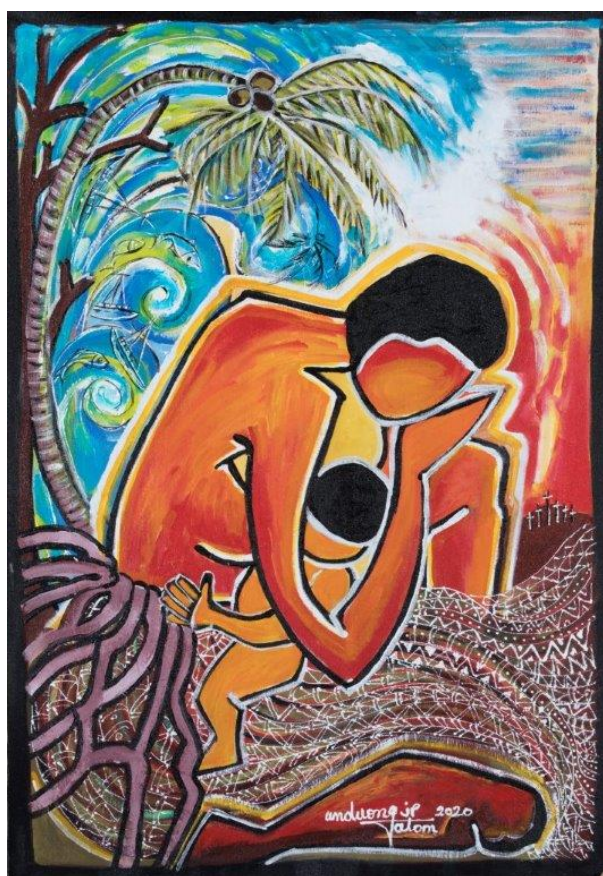
Prayer activities

Use these to help focus your prayers for Vanuatu and for yourself.

- Perhaps you would find it helpful to do a construction activity in some way while you pray. You could use Lego, bricks or arts and crafts materials to symbolise the rock and the house wisely built there. Pray that God will continue to help you to strengthen that foundation in Jesus.
- Perhaps you could write a prayer for the people of Vanuatu. It could take the form of an acrostic poem, using the word 'foundation' or 'wisdom' or 'rebuilding'.

- Perhaps you could spend some time in quiet reflection, listening to some music, praying in your own words and thanking God for what you already know and love about Jesus, and telling God what more you'd like to know.
- Perhaps you could read some more of the collection of teachings in Matthew chapters 6 & 7. Copy out a verse you find meaningful, or even a verse you find puzzling, and decorate it in some way. Display it somewhere at home for a week or two, so that you'll be reminded of it.

“Cyclone Pam II: 13th of March, 2015”



Vanuatu artist Juliette Pita's painting is inspired by her experience during Cyclone Pam.

It shows a mother bending and praying over her child. The waves crash, but a palm tree bends protectively over them. On the horizon, small crosses represent the lives lost due to Cyclone Pam.

During the cyclone, Juliette and her neighbours took refuge in a container. They could see nothing and could only pray. In the morning they climbed out to see that almost everything was destroyed. A hut behind Juliette's studio, built traditionally using palm trees, withstood the cyclone with big trees above it deflecting the wind. Juliette believes God heard their prayers and that nature protected them that night.

We hope that you have found these resources useful and we pray that you continue to build your life with Jesus Christ as your foundation.

For further information and resources, together with details of services in your area, please see the World Day of Prayer Scotland website www.wdpscotland.org.uk