



Weekly Resources for Schools

**PHASE: SECONDARY**

**How do we  
get back on track?**





## KEY CONCEPT/MESSAGE:

*Inventor and businessman Thomas A. Edison said:*

*“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up.*

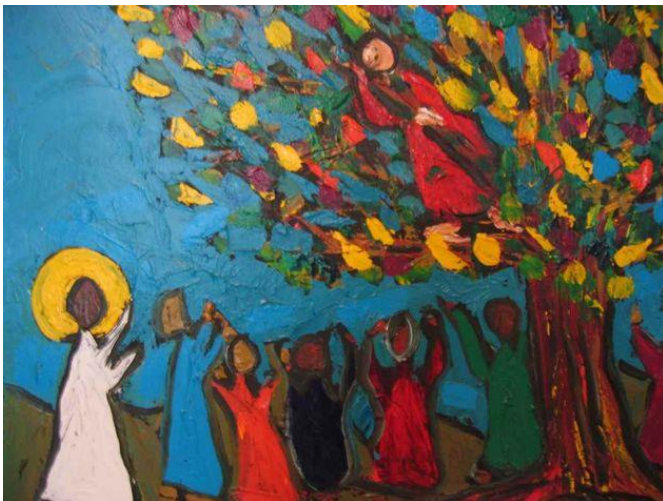
*The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”*

***The Bible is full of Second Chances or third or fourth...for God’s people: Moses, Rahab, Elijah, Mary Magdalene, Zacchaeus, a Woman at a well, a man that couldn’t walk, Peter, Paul and many more. A chance to get back on track, a chance to be forgiven.***

***Christians believe in a loving God that supports people to get back on track, offers them forgiveness and calls them to find a new direction.***

***We too can have a second chance or a fresh start and get back on track if we are ready to look for it.***

## BIBLE PASSAGE OF THE WEEK:



Luke 19:1-9 - New Revised Standard Version

### **Jesus and Zacchaeus**

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone

to be the guest of one who is a sinner.” Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.

## Gathering

(You may want to try this as each student or any adult arrives to model how they can do it for each other)

Start your time together by saying something positive to each other as a greeting:

I like the way you...You are really good at...I always enjoy it when...It's good to see you today...

What difference does it make to our day when we start with something positive?

How does it make you feel? Does it make you wonder how you can do this more often?

Sometimes our first start goes well because we had a good start.

Our second try needs a positive start to keep us being positive.

Take a few moments to think about how positivity can help us get back on track or even how negativity can leave us feeling weakened or angry.

## Engagement

Print out or project some photos of a selection of celebrities or characters (for example):

*King David, St Paul, St Peter, Mary Magdalene. Britney Spears, Hugh Grant, Kanye West, Simon Cowell.*

*Kermit the Frog, Darth Vader, Moana...*

Who would you give a second start to? Who would you allow to get back on track and who would you not trust to try again?

Reflect/think about a time how we lose our way or forget our focus. How do we judge others who we think are not on the right track? How might others judge you?

How might we ask for help to get back on track? What words or phrases would we need to help us with our thinking?

In the Bible reading, Jesus meets with Zacchaeus and has a meal with him. In response to this love and compassion, Zacchaeus gets a second chance and redeems himself to the community and shows accountability.

## Response

Give each person (or pair) a character/celebrity. Ask them to plead their case for a second start to the class. What characteristics or personality traits will they pick up on to prove that they are worthy of another chance?

Listen to the song 'Beautiful things' By Gungor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ispkhp4Iig4>

How can you help make those around you 'Beautiful things' How could they get back on track and show the values you most want to develop?

or

Genelle Guzman-McMillan saw her rescue from the Twin Towers attack as a second chance-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqovmfZV3V4> what question does this raise about being given a second chance when all seems lost?

## Sending

Read the words of the Aaronic Blessing:

*The LORD bless you and keep you:*

*The LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you:*

*The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)*

Take a few moments to consider each line and what it would feel like for you if you could feel these things today...even if you are not on track...even if you have made mistakes...even if you need a boost...

Now listen to this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtl3mNj5U> and imagine that these people are singing this for you and calling you to get back on track before your day starts or before your week continues. ( you might not need to show the whole track)

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

*(practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home together)*

### EXPERIENCES that can help us ENCOUNTER:

How might these examples of forgiveness and second chances give us ways of us chances to get back on track or ways of us giving others a second start?

Watch this video. Quietly watch someone who needed to get back on track and how he was welcomed.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X\\_QCQ5i7NKs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_QCQ5i7NKs)

Project this picture of The Prodigal Son by Rembrandt.

Reflect on the love in his father's eyes. The warmth of his welcome.

Think about what the son goes on to achieve.



Read aloud John 21:1-19 – When Jesus talks to Peter about when Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. Slowly read through the verses 15-17.

- As you read out Jesus' question and Peter's answer and Jesus' response – stop after each one.
- Consider the times you have gone off track, made mistakes or needed forgiveness:
- Consider yourself forgiven.
- As you hear Jesus say feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep:
- Believe that God has a purpose for your life.
- Repeat for the three times Jesus and Peter talk.

### ACTIVITIES that can develop PRACTICES-HABITS:

Think of the things you want to do or the things you want to achieve.

- Write the goal, the target or the dream at the top of a page.
- Now draw a road towards them from the bottom to the top.
- Mark off the things you need to achieve along the way in order to reach your goal (the courses you might need, the experiences you want to have, the qualifications you will require).
- Use this as a way to talk to a trusted adult about the stages you need to complete and how they can help, resources they can show you, the opportunities they can help you find.

## **PRAYERS that can help us REFLECT and GET BACK ON TRACK:**

Use the Examen prayer to reflect on finding a direction and the stamina to stay on track:

It has 5 steps, so you might like to count them on your fingers.

1. GIVE THANKS ... for the skills and talents you have been blessed with, for the things that bring you a sense of achievement and the things that bring you positive energy.
2. ASK FOR HELP ... when you feel like you don't know which way to go, which decisions to take or when life-choices feel too overwhelming.
3. REFLECT ... on those people who help you with big choices to make, on how your life choices might benefit you but also bless others.
4. SAY SORRY ... for the times when you have made selfish choices that have brought sadness to you and to others and for when you feel you've gone off track.
4. DECIDE ... who you will talk to about your dreams and hopes for the future, ask them to support you and pray for you and to help you to seek a way forward.

Or, using your fingers, pray like this:

1. Your little finger: Pray for those who are smallest and weakest: young children who need care to grow, those who are left out, those without a say in decisions about them.
2. Ring finger – where people wear wedding rings – Pray for those we love and those who love us.
3. Middle Finger – the tallest – Pray for those with authority over you, for wisdom in their decisions.
4. Index finger – the one we point with – Pray for those who put us back on track, those who point us in the right direction – teachers, parents, mentors, pastors.
5. Thumb – isolated and separate – Pray for those who are far away from us, those who are isolated and alone, and then you could pray for those who encourage us (thumbs up!).

## **CONVERSATIONS which CONNECT COMMUNITIES:**

### Discussion starters for groups:

How common is it that we know what we want to do with our life?

What can we do to help each other find ways of exploring the path we are on?

How can we tell if someone – a friend or classmate – has gone off track?

What could we say to help them reflect on what they are doing?

Are we ready to hear those words said to us? Would we be defensive if we were challenged?

How would you know if you felt supported in the things you are achieving?

What could others do to encourage you more? Who are the best encouragers?

Would you know where to go if you needed to get back on track?

Do you know the people you could be vulnerable with to say – please can you help me?

Who can you see in the Bible who had second chances, who were put back on track by God?

How does God get people back on track – does this give us clues of how to help others?

### INVITATIONAL

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

### INCLUSIVE

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like:

'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?'

'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ...'

Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

### INSPIRING

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?