

Be Empowered International Focus 2017



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WELCOME TO THE “BE EMPOWERED” RESOURCE 2017!

In 2017, The Girls' Brigade Worldwide is celebrating 124 years of Mission to transform the lives of the Girl Child. At ICGB in 2014 we were challenged to 'Grasp the Vision: Live the Mission'. In 2015 we learnt to 'Be Expectant' as we listened to God and in 2016 we were reminded of how we needed to 'Be Courageous'. We enter the year 2017 with the theme
'Be Empowered'.

So what does this phrase “to empower” mean? The dictionary tells us it is to make someone stronger and more confident, to delegate or give authority to someone to do something, to accomplish something or to become something. However, if we turn to God's word we discover the key for us, the source of this power, is God's Holy Spirit! Jesus told His disciples, those He had charged with the Great Commission:

'You will receive power (Be Empowered) when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses.' Acts 1:8

In this year we desire not only to 'BE EMPOWERED' but also to EMPOWER the young people we work amongst. The following points by Asnat Greenberg may help us as we strive to do this:

Empowering others means giving constructive criticism.

Empowering others means not judging them.

Empowering others means not being cynical toward them.

Empowering others means praising the struggling student on her progress.

Empowering others means curbing your ego.

Empowering others means connecting to the best elements that lie within you.

Empowering others means being happy for them.

Empowering others means praising them on their accomplishments.

Empowering others means identifying with them.

Empowering others means smiling when someone else approaches.

Empowering others means giving them the feeling that they are loved.

Empowering others makes the world a better place.

Empowering others also empowers us.

We pray that this **Be Empowered Resource 2017** will encourage Officers/Leaders to be intentional in our programmes and to be empowering in our attitude towards one another. As we allow God's Holy Spirit to empower us and as we build one another up, may we release a new generation of leaders and influencers in His Mission.

GBI Team

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INTRODUCING THE 'BE EMPOWERED' RESOURCE 2017!

This Resource is designed to help GB members worldwide to make a positive impact as they work with girls and young women all around the world seeing our amazing vision unfold into reality.

The theme has been divided into 6 sub-themes:

- BE EMPOWERED:** For Mission in the 21st Century
- BE EMPOWERED:** To Make Disciples
- BE EMPOWERED:** To Make the Right Choices
- BE EMPOWERED:** To Overcome
- BE EMPOWERED:** To Speak Out/Advocate
- BE EMPOWERED:** To Make a Difference

We also want to encourage girls, officers, friends and family to join together to remember GB around the world with specific emphasis on our five fellowships and with a focus on our International Theme 'Be Empowered'. Some will be able to meet on our International Day of Prayer - June 10th - others will choose different dates to focus their prayers and worship. This resource gives a suggested format that you might like to use if you have a special gathering, service or worship event (Appendix 2), but be creative and use whatever structure suits your need. Join together as we call on the Holy Spirit to empower us, to open our hearts and minds, to encourage and build each other's God given gifts so that we can see:

'GIRLS' LIVES TRANSFORMED: GOD'S WORLD ENRICHED'

Each sub-theme has four sections:

Thoughts and questions to get us talking
May be you could spend time in your leaders' meeting, executive committees or board meetings to engage with these questions.

Bible Texts to centre us on God's word
These Bible verses can be used to stimulate personal reflection, as ideas for devotional sessions at leaders' meetings or as focus for worship or bible study times with your girls.

Prayer Points to give us power
As well as using these prompts in your private prayers, include some of them in your church prayer focus or post some of the Bible verses and challenges on your GB Facebook or website page.

Creative Ideas to bring the theme to life
Incorporate some of these ideas in your devotional sessions or programmes throughout the year.



SECTION ONE

BE EMPOWERED FOR MISSION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

THOUGHTS & QUESTIONS TO HELP US GRASP THE

THEME: A mission is an important assignment given to a person or group of people, a commission, expedition, journey, undertaking or operation. More specifically the dictionary tells us that it is 'the vocation or calling of a religious organization, especially a Christian one, to go out into the world and spread its faith'. This focus seeks to help create and foster a shared understanding of what it means to be a mission organization in the 21st century. We need to be clear that GB is a missionary organization. We have been called to go out to girls and young women in our world with the message of love and compassion that is central to the gospel. As disciples we are called to join God in His mission to the world. However, as we were reminded by Ms Hee Piang at ICGB 2014, we need to "rewire our thinking to align with God's Mission" in a culturally and environmentally relevant way. This may require us to change the way we approach and understand the world we work in today. Below are some questions that we need to ask ourselves:

WHAT IS OUR MISSION AND IN WHAT WAYS DOES 'OUR' MISSION ALIGN WITH GOD'S MISSION?

HOW DO WE DEMONSTRATE TO THOSE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF GIRLS' BRIGADE OUR PASSION FOR THIS MISSION?

WHAT DOES GB NEED TO DO TO EMPOWER OFFICERS AND GIRLS TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN JOINING GOD'S MISSION TO TRANSFORM LIVES?

BIBLE TEXTS TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

Acts 9:17 "Brother Saul the lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." When God wanted to use Saul to grow His church He had to go through a process. 'Being empowered' is a process not an event. May we allow God to use, equip and empower us for mission in the 21st Century in whatever way He sees fit.

Paul's story prompts us to realise that we all go on a journey with God. Encourage everyone to share their stories remembering that for some their stories may not be dramatic like Paul's story, but they are equally special!

Revelations 12:11 "By his blood we are sanctified and no longer condemned". It is BY HIS BLOOD that we can be empowered. Our sin was paid for. We are empowered THROUGH HIM alone (John 17:17 - 21) by His word. His word must be activated in our lives so that we are able to proclaim the Gospel to others.

Share together how we can ensure we regularly use God's word to equip us for His mission.

Acts 17:28 "It is In Him, that I live, move and have my being." This means that the power for every act, thought and sensation in our lives should come from Him. This includes our passions, emotions and intellect.

Talk with the group about how prayer can be the conduit through which God can empower us.

Acts 20:24 "...my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me - the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace." God's purpose is for us to bring His Good news of salvation to others who need to know. *Share with your group who it is that God wants you to tell about Jesus. Is it a friend at school? A colleague at the office? A group of young people in your neighbourhood? A relative? Pray that He will empower you to do this.*

Romans 12:6-8 "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us." God has empowered us all with spiritual gifts which He wants us to use to make a unique contribution in our sphere of influence.

Explore the different gifts that each member of your group have been given and see how they can be used to God's glory

Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." This is God's mission for Jesus. God called Him (commissioned him for the task) The Spirit of the Lord was upon him (He was qualified for the task). God anointed Him (He was empowered for the task).

Let's think of our mission as members of GB. What is it that God has called and empowered us (whether we are leaders or girls) for?



PRAYER POINTS TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

PRAY for an ENCOUNTER WITH GOD: Peter went to the rooftop to pray and there he had an encounter with God that changed his life and opened the door for the message of Jesus to be spread across the world (Acts 10). Pray that we may each have a 'God encounter' so that we understand His mission and are able to share God's passion for transforming the world

PRAY that we may ENGAGE WITH THOSE WHO DO NOT YET KNOW HIM: Peter's vision and his engagement with Cornelius shows us that for our vision to become a reality we will need to engage with girls and young women outside our circle of friends and relatives - people who are different from us in terms of culture or life style. Pray that Girls' Brigade's attitude towards people different from us may be one of inclusion and acceptance.

PRAY that we may UNDERSTAND THE TIMES: For us to be properly equipped to make disciples, we need to ask God to help us understand the times. As a faith-based ministry, let's pray that we may know what is happening in the world spiritually. Let's also pray that we may respond to the circumstances and cultures of the age so our programmes and approaches remain relevant!

PRAY that we might have the RESOURCES WE NEED FOR OUR MISSION: To be effective in our mission we also need practical and logistical support. Pray for the release of appropriate financial resources, for the right people to do the job (human resources) and for partners to work with to help us achieve our aim.

CREATIVE WORSHIP ACTIVITIES TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

These activities may be used with different age groups to help explore the theme.

An Encounter with GOD: Go to a special place - may be a quiet/high/peaceful place or by a window overlooking a street. Sit quietly and be ready to encounter God. Depending on the age and understanding of the group read Acts 10 or explain how on the roof Peter realized that God saw things in a different way from Peter. Ask everyone to write or draw as you direct their thoughts. Ask God to open your hearts to look at the world with His eyes. Think of all the girls and young women in the part of the world you are looking at, or in your community, who God loves but who do not yet know the Lord. Write, doodle or draw the things you feel God has impressed upon your heart during your time of meditation -

include the people who live there, the places they live, the challenges they face.

Mission Call: In pairs give the girls scenarios where one person is ringing the other asking them to do something for them e.g. a mother asking her daughter to go to the market on the way home from school: a friend asking if she can borrow your best jumper: an aunt asking her niece if she would look after her baby. Ask each pair to enact the phone call. The person receiving the call may accept the mission or they may find excuses and explain why they can't do it. Discuss some of the responses. Finally get the girls to imagine that God is calling them, giving them a mission for Him e.g. I want you to make friends with X at school: I want you to invite Y to your GB meeting: I want you to show your mum and dad more respect and love. Invite each person to share or write down what mission they think that God might have for them.

What's The Difference? Ask for two volunteers. Ask the group to identify differences between the two volunteers and record these - the colour of their eyes, the school they attend, their height, what they like to do, their favourite food, their age, their family size, the clothes they are wearing etc. Look at the list and ask the group what they would think if you were to tell them that because person A has 'blue eyes' and not 'brown eyes' God doesn't love them. Or He doesn't love person B because she likes fish not vegetables. Use this activity to emphasise the inclusivity of God. He loves everyone - even the bully, the girl who comes from a different part of the world or the one who wears tatty clothes. Challenge the members of your group to invite the 'odd balls' the 'outcasts' the people who are 'different' to come along to GB to hear of God's love.



SECTION TWO

BE EMPOWERED TO MAKE DISCIPLES

THOUGHTS & QUESTIONS TO HELP US GRASP THE

THEME: This focus seeks to help us be the best disciples that we can be and to explore how God can empower us to fulfil His commission to ‘make disciples’. Disciples are defined as followers, believers, learners or adherents. As disciples of Jesus we have a responsibility to live our lives as Jesus would, as pleases God. Our purpose is to ensure that others are attracted to our way of life and thereby to our faith. If our lifestyle were the only lifestyle that society could depend on to demonstrate God’s unconditional love, would they be compelled to pursue a relationship with Him? If those who see our conduct, hear our conversation and witness our character on a daily basis were placed on the witness stand to verify our commitment to the person and principles of the One we claim to serve, would there be enough evidence to convict us? We need to be empowered to be the best disciple that we can be and to go make disciples of Christ. Engage with the following questions:

WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND BY THE WORD ‘DISCIPLE’?

HOW CAN WE ENSURE THE METHODS WE USE ‘TO HELP GIRLS BECOME FOLLOWERS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST’ ARE RELEVANT IN THE 21st CENTURY?

IN WHAT WAYS CAN WE EQUIP OUR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN TO BE DISCIPLE MAKERS?

BIBLE TEXTS TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

Mathew 28:19: “Therefore, ‘Go and make disciples...” This is one of the greatest commands given by our Lord Jesus. It is our mandate and it applies to every believer irrespective of gender or age. If the Kingdom of God is to expand, it is vital that we respond to His call and go and make disciples.

Explore with your group WHERE it is they are called to disciple others. Where is their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth? Is it their family, their friends, their school, their workplace or their neighbours?

Mark 16:15 “He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” One of the key words in this the Great Commission is ‘GO!’ Now is the time for us to be partakers of this Great Commission. Our lives are busy but we

must learn not to separate our “Church life” and ‘normal life’.

Take time to think about all the things that may stop us from spreading the word - our busyness, our insecurity, our fear of what others may say or think etc.

Acts 1:8: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you: and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth.” The Bible clearly states that when the Holy Spirit comes upon us, we shall be empowered to make disciples. No boundaries were set but to the uttermost ends of the earth.

As a GB group where are you in this Great Commission? Have we received the Holy Spirit and the Power? If so where do you need to go next to tell the good news - a new school? a different region?

Acts 8:4 “Those who had been scattered preached the world wherever they went” Even in the face of persecution, and they were scattered in all Judea and Samaria, the early converts continued preaching wherever they went because they were empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Discuss the challenges that our girls/we are facing today that can deter them/us from proclaiming the Gospel? How can these barriers be overcome?

Luke 5:10b “Don’t be afraid from now on you will fish for people.” We have been mandated by Christ to bring lost souls to join in this Great Commission.

Think how different fish need different types of bait. What are the different ways we can attract others to the gospel message? Reflect on the truth that it is God who ‘makes disciples’ not us.

PRAYER POINTS TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

Pray for BOLDNESS AND COURAGE TO WITNESS:

After her encounter with Jesus at the well, the Samaritan woman was bold enough to go into the city and tell everyone that she had met Jesus. (John 4:7-29). Pray that we may have an encounter with Jesus which will empower us to witness mightily to the girls and young women we serve.

Pray that we may WORK HARD AND NOT BE

GUILTY OF LAZINESS: The servants were each given talents at different levels and the wise ones quickly set to work. (Mathew 25:14-32)

This implies we have work to do. Pray that we may learn to invest our God given talents wisely and not waste them as the third servant did.

PRAY for WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE TO KNOW

HOW TO 'MAKE DISCIPLES': Jesus says He has appointed us so we might "go and bear fruit, much fruit, fruit that will last" John 15:1-6&16. Pray for the wisdom that will show us how to bear fruit for Him, recognising that we don't have to "organise" outreach programmes to reach such people for Christ. We meet these people in school, at college, in the gym or in the work place.

PRAY for RIGHT ATTITUDE AND WORDS:

We need to know what to say and how to say it. In addition we need to remember that our lives must draw people to Christ (Colossians 4:3-6). Pray that all we say and do may attract our girls and young women to Jesus.

Pray for a SENSE OF SELF WORTH/SELF ESTEEM FOR OUR GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN:

Empowering means building the self-esteem/confidence of our girls. Pray that we may enable them to meet Jesus who sees them as priceless treasures!

CREATIVE WORSHIP ACTIVITIES TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

These activities may be used with different age groups to help explore the theme.

Face the Challenge: Set up a simple obstacle course. At the end of the course place an object to symbolize faith e.g. a cross, a Bible, a text. Let everyone try the obstacle course, either against the clock or as a team race. Afterwards discuss how some people find it hard to become a Christian. Like in the game they have to overcome 'obstacles' Highlight and discuss the possible challenges/obstacles that they might meet - lack of knowledge, peer pressure, family culture, and big questions about life.

Pass It On: Play a pass the parcel game or a game where you pass a message on from one person to the next in a line. Talk with the group about how important it is that the parcel/message is passed on. If one person held on to the parcel/message many people may never be part of the game or never get the message. Encourage the group to pass on their knowledge/love/ experience of God. Remind them that God has promised to give us the courage (empower us) to do this.

What's the Message? Get everyone to stand in a circle. Take a large ball and throw it across the circle from one player to another. As the ball is thrown they must say one thing about Jesus. Depending on their age/stage of development/ experience this may vary "He was born in Bethlehem" "He died on a cross" "He is there when you are feeling nervous" "He is God's son" "He died for us." "He loves you" "He wants to be your friend" Some people find it hard to know what they should/could tell others about Jesus. This game helps them to begin verbalizing their thoughts so they can be disciple makers.



SECTION THREE

BE EMPOWERED TO MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICES.

THOUGHTS & QUESTIONS TO HELP US GRASP

THE THEME In life each and every one of us is confronted daily with choices and decisions that we must make. Our lives are the sum of all our choices. The kind of people we are is determined by the ultimate decisions we make. As Christians, we should be seeking daily to grow spiritually, in order to be able to make the right choices. The Bible is full of stories about choice. The wide or narrow way? The house built on sand or rock? The sheep that is lost or found? Our choices often result in eternally significant consequences. But the reality is that the world we live in, the expectation of the society of which we are a part and the pressures of those with whom we live and work sometimes makes it hard to make right choices. This is why we need the power of GOD to make choices in line with God's principles! Give some time to reflect on these key questions:

WHAT FACTORS MAY INFLUENCE US WHEN WE ARE TRYING TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF GIRLS' BRIGADE IN OUR AREA?

WHAT BARRIERS MAY HINDER OUR YOUNG PEOPLE FROM CHOOSING TO COMMIT THEIR LIVES TO GOD?

IN WHAT WAYS DO WE ENSURE THAT THE GIRLS & YOUNG WOMEN WE MEET ARE CHALLENGED AND EQUIPPED TO LIVE GODLY LIVES?

BIBLE TEXTS TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

Gen 13:11 "So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan" Lot made his choice based on material gain and ended up financially and spiritually bankrupt. Abraham, trusted in the unseen promises of God, and chose by faith. He ended up spiritually and financially blessed. As Christians, it is important to make our choices based on God's principles.

Share times when you have been faced with difficult decisions. Talk together about how you can seek God's leading in such times. How do you know what is right to do?

Joshua 24:15 "As for me...I will serve the LORD." Joshua knew the previous generation in Egypt had succumbed to manmade gods and had influenced the present generation. A choice had to be made between God's will and man's will. Joshua made the right choice and asked the people to do the same.

Consider the many pressures in the modern world which may tempt us/our young people to depart from our moral Christian values and embrace ungodly actions because it's "cool".

Daniel 6:13 "Daniel... pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decrees you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." Daniel made the choice to serve the one true God even in the difficult times of captivity. We need to learn early how to serve God and choose to stand up for God even when loyalty means unpopular results or death. We must dare to be a Daniel.
Make a list of the wise choices Daniel made - faithfulness in daily prayer, seeking Gods guidance when faced with difficult choices, witnessing to his God.

Ruth 1:16 "Where you go I will go and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God." Ruth had every right to have walked away like Orpah, but she made a choice not to abandon Naomi even though it meant leaving her people and going to a foreign land. Ruth chose to cling unto that which was right, neither circumstances nor past experiences were able to hinder her from holding on to 'the more precious thing'. As Christians, we have to make a commitment to trust in our inheritance in Christ. *Identify the circumstances and experiences that sometimes take us away from our service to God.*

PRAYER POINTS TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

Pray for COURAGE AND BOLDNESS TO GO AGAINST THE CROWD: Sometimes fear is our normal human reaction when we are faced with a seemingly impossible decision. The story of Esther tells us a lot about courage and boldness. Acknowledging our reliance on Christ is the first step to overcoming our fear. Pray for courage to be able to go against the crowds and to not succumb to peer pressure, remembering that it's only in Him we can make the right decision. (Deuteronomy 30: 15).

Pray for GUIDANCE IN OUR DECISION MAKING: As leaders and girls, we need wisdom from God to make right life decisions (James 1:5). God's will for us is that we develop discernment in light of His word through which He empowers right choices. Pray that we may embrace God's word and so develop a biblical outlook that penetrates



the deceptive and distorted thoughts of the world (Proverbs 3:5-6, Philippians 1:9-10a).

Pray for FAITH: Faith is defined as complete trust or confidence in something. Abraham, the father of Faith (Genesis 12:1- 4) had unquestioning faith. When you do what God asks you to do and you see Him bless you because you obeyed, your faith grows. Ask God to help you grow in faith so you can better serve Him, confident that whatever path you choose He will go with you.

Pray for WISDOM to MAKE RIGHT DECISIONS

IN GIRLS' BRIGADE: As we seek to continue our ministry in the 21st century there are many routes we could take. Pray that God will lead us to make right decisions about the programmes we offer, the partnerships we make, the places we work and the people who lead us.

CREATIVE WORSHIP ACTIVITIES TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

These activities may be used with different age groups to help explore the theme.

Choosing Teams: Choose two team leaders. Let them pick teams and play a simple team game. At the end of the game get the young people to think about what might happen if each person had been allowed to choose the team they wanted to be in. If that were the case they could have chosen the best team! In Joshua 24:15, Joshua asked the people to choose whose side they wanted to be on. Listen to his words: *"But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day that you will serve"* Explain how this is a choice we all have to make. With some groups you could spend time individually writing out a declaration on why you might make a choice to serve the Lord today.

Gift Time: Have three or four parcels of different sizes available. Wrap them differently e.g. one in beautiful gift wrap, one in newspaper, one in plain brown paper. Place gifts in each parcel ensuring the most valuable gifts are not necessarily in the best looking or biggest parcels. Allow the girls/ young people to say which gift they would choose. Open the gifts and discuss how their choices were not necessarily based on the right criteria. According to the age of the group, give examples of how we can make wrong choices in life - going to a party where alcohol is being served, getting involved with a group of friends who use bad language, joining in when others are teasing a member of their class, telling a lie to avoid getting into trouble.

Which Way? Find or create your own 'maze'

<http://www.kidspuzzlesandgames.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/FlowerMaze.pdf> .

Give everyone a copy and invite them to try to track their way through the maze. Discuss with the group how easy/hard they found it to make the right choices about the path they should take. Remind them that life is like a maze. We have to make all sorts of decisions and choices about the path that we take or the decisions we make. As appropriate to your group develop this. They have to make major decisions about the subjects they study, the career they follow, the friends they make, the life partners they choose. It can also be about everyday things: Do we do what our parents say or choose to disobey? Do we stand up for what is right or follow the crowd? Of course the biggest choice is: Do we follow Jesus or choose our own way?



SECTION FOUR

BE EMPOWERED TO OVERCOME

THOUGHTS & QUESTIONS TO HELP US GRASP

THE THEME: From early in human history, God helped His faithful servants to withstand religious persecution, resist harmful peer pressure, overcome barriers and endure all kinds of other adversities. It is just the same today, the Holy Spirit can empower us to 'overcome'. It is one thing to know that we are empowered, it is another thing to appropriate that power, to become that which we are supposed to be. Donar M. Williams in an article in February 2016 says: "I can only be empowered by the Word when I activate it in my life, when it becomes my mission, my daily mission to live it out loud." This has to be more than an emotional response; it has to be a determined, intentional, conscious, conscientious decision: This is what should be in our minds:

I am an Overcomer.

I will be an overcomer.

I can overcome.

This is our Mission: To help girls to activate the Word of God in their lives, to live it out loud every day. We need to guide them to make a conscious and intentional decision to 'overcome' and get rid of all negativity from their minds.

WHAT ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES THAT GIRLS IN OUR GB FAMILY HAVE TO OVERCOME?

AS OFFICERS/LEADERS IN GIRLS' BRIGADE WHAT ARE THE THINGS WE NEED TO 'OVERCOME' TO MAKE US EFFECTIVE?

WHAT MISCONCEPTIONS AND BARRIERS DO WE NEED TO OVERCOME IN ORDER TO ENGAGE MORE CHURCHES, PARENTS, AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE WORK OF GB?

BIBLE TEXTS TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

Mathew 10:1 "He called His twelve disciples to them and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness." Before the disciples could go out to heal and drive out demons, Jesus called them and gave them authority. He empowered them.

Consider any difficult task you may have to do this week. Take time to pause and pray for God's authority, His empowerment for the task.

Isaiah 41:10 "So do not fear for I am with you.... I will strengthen you and uphold you with my righteous right hand." Throughout scripture God gives this assurance to His people. We need to hold fast to this promise.

With a friend, or in a small group, encourage one another by sharing times when you have truly felt the presence of God empowering you.

Acts 1: 8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witness in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." Despite the persecutions, the disciples preached and shared the Gospel without fear because they were empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Consider what pressures facing our girls today, need to be overcome. How can we help them to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be able to face up to them?

Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me "Jesus knew He was empowered to accomplish His mission.

Reflect on the mission you have been called to accomplish. What is this mission? In what tangible ways do you feel empowered to accomplish your task?

Ephesians 6:11-18 "Put on the full armour of GOD so that you can take your stand." When a soldier is going into battle, he has to be specially clothed and equipped. Our battle attire is detailed by Paul in Ephesians.

Consider each part of the armour. Which parts do you wear with pride and which parts do you sometimes forget to put on?

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Paul explains how despite the circumstances he finds himself in he has confidence to know that God will empower him.

How do we change our mindset to be overcomers in the face of the opposition that accosts us in the world today? How do we build confidence that we can be victorious?

PRAYER POINTS TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

Pray for COURAGE TO ACCEPT THE TASK THAT GOD HAS LAID BEFORE US. When God sent Moses to Egypt, he felt inadequate for the Mission and started making excuses. But God empowered him and he led the Children of Israel from their



bondage in Egypt (Exodus 12:31-42). Pray that God will give you the skill you need to do the tasks to which He has called you

Pray for a sense of SELF-WORTH/SELF-ESTEEM:

We must value ourselves as worthy to go into battle. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). Pray that we may empower our young people with this understanding so that with His power within they, too, can be overcomers.

Pray for STRENGTH OF CHARACTER TO FIGHT AGAINST THE NEGATIVE INFLUENCES IN OUR LIVES

"For God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of power and love and discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7) It is only by the Holy Spirit that we can have the Spirit of power, love and discipline that will enable us to overcome. Pray that we may sow seeds of Christ values in our girls and young women so that they can overcome opposition, wrong priorities, bad choices and negativity

Pray for a SPIRIT OF DISCERNMENT TO KNOW THE BATTLES WE MUST FIGHT:

We need to know what battles to fight and how to approach them for we wage war "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm" (Ephesians 6:12). God will always give us instructions and lead us through. (Proverbs 3:5 Philippians 1:9-10).

CREATIVE WORSHIP ACTIVITIES TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

These activities may be used with different age groups to help explore the theme.

David & Goliath: Ask the girls to prepare a drama of the story of David and Goliath. Encourage them to verbalise what could have been in David's mind as he went in to face Goliath and also what was in Goliath's mind. Alternatively have two teams - the Israelites and the Philistines. Choose one person from each team to do battle - David & Goliath - this could be any kind of challenge e.g. arm wrestling, a race. Draw out the lesson that in life's battles God will 'fight' for us and with us. Notice that David faced Goliath without fear because he was seeing him from God's perspective. What adversities are we facing, as a nation/group/individual?

Mission Accomplished! Have some cards with the names of Bible characters (known to your group) that God called e.g. Peter and Andrew, Moses, Esther, Ruth, Paul. Take each card in turn and ask them what MISSION God gave them and what

problems they had to overcome in order to do it e.g. Moses was called to lead the Israelites out of Egypt - but he had to cross the Red Sea. Peter and Andrew were called to be fishers of men but they had to be prepared to leave their families etc. Depending on the age of your group ask them to think of their own Mission Statement!

"God wants me to (purpose) He will empower me to overcome in order that I might" (the Impact)

Paper, Scissors, Rock: Play this game in pairs. Each player simultaneously forms one of three shapes. These shapes are "rock" (a simple fist), "paper" (a flat hand), and "scissors" the index and middle fingers together forming a 'V'. Rock beats scissors because rock blunts scissors. Paper wins over rock as paper wraps up the rock. Scissors can cut paper. Play the game for a while with different partners. Point out how the game is dependent on choosing the right 'move' to overcome your partner. Discuss some of the life scenarios where they have to make a plan to 'overcome' e.g. when a friend is trying to persuade you to do something wrong; when someone has annoyed you and you want to get your own back; when you desperately want to do something but your parents have asked you to do something else. Talk about how Jesus can help them to 'overcome'.



SECTION FIVE

BE EMPOWERED FOR ADVOCACY/TO SPEAKOUT

THOUGHTS & QUESTIONS TO HELP US GRASP

THE THEME: Speaking out against something or in support of something can be really difficult. However, there are times when it is simply the right thing to do. The world is a challenging place at the best of times and that can mean it is difficult to find the courage to speak out. We need to speak up for girls in different parts of the world where society still views women as inferior or where girls do not get equal opportunities to rise up and be heard. We need to be advocates. What does it mean to be “an advocate”? To advocate means to “support something publicly” or “a person who supports or speaks in favour of somebody or of a public plan or action”. The Girls’ Brigade should be a forum encouraging girls and young women to be able to speak out for themselves against all the evils and unfairness of society and be a voice for others that cannot speak out due to various circumstances. Give some thought to the following:

HOW CAN THE GIRLS’ BRIGADE PROGRAMME PROVIDE GIRLS WITH THE SKILLS TO IMPACT THOSE BEYOND THE ORGANIZATION?

GIRLS’ BRIGADE BELIEVES IN A ‘JUST SOCIETY WHERE ALL ARE EQUALLY VALUED’ IN WHAT WAYS MIGHT GB INFLUENCE SOCIETY’S VIEWS AND/OR SPEAK UP FOR THE YOUNG WOMEN IN OUR WORLD WHO ARE TREATED UNFAIRLY?

HOW CAN OUR MEMBERS SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER THROUGH THEIR INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE CHALLENGES OF BEING A TEENAGER WHEN PEER PRESSURE IS AT ITS HEIGHT?

BIBLE TEXTS TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

Acts 18:9-10 - “And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.” This verse encourages us to speak out for Christ and His lifestyle and to watch out for, and take heart from others who share our passion and beliefs. Consider: Who are the Christian friends, role models and supporters who God has placed beside you to encourage you in your service to Him?

Proverbs 31:9: “Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.” Proverbs is full of simple clear maxims for Godly living, but they are not as easy to live by. We

need God’s power to enable us to respond *those how are homeless or hungry or living in poverty.*

Amos 5:24 “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

An ‘ever flowing stream’ gives a picture of something that is free and generous in its availability.

Think of your role as a leader or GB member how do you ensure that fairness and righteousness flows out of you as you engage with others?

Amos 5:15 “Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.” In simple terms justice is about fairness. In many parts of the world opportunities are available for people to buy Fairtrade goods which have been produced in fair and just ways. Is this something you could engage with/advocate for?

Numbers 14:7 “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good.... Do not be afraid of the people” When the twelve spies went to spy out the land they all saw the same thing but two of the twelve spies, Joshua and Caleb, brought news of hope and courage. They stood up against the rest who saw danger and opposition.

Share together times when you have/should have stood up against the crowd to do or say the right thing in the face of opposing views

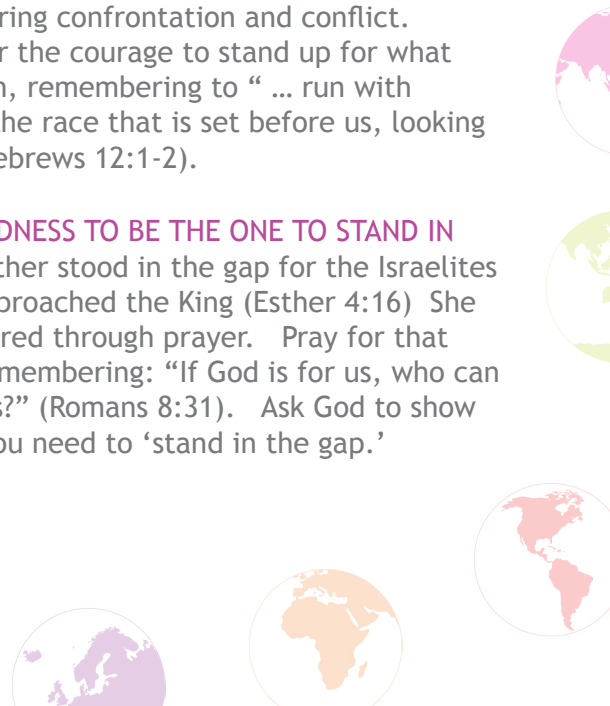
PRAYER POINTS TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

Pray for COURAGE to face CONFRONTATION

& CONFLICT: Advocacy and speaking out can sometimes bring confrontation and conflict. Let’s pray for the courage to stand up for what we believe in, remembering to “... run with endurance, the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Pray for BOLDNESS TO BE THE ONE TO STAND IN

THE GAP: Esther stood in the gap for the Israelites when she approached the King (Esther 4:16) She was empowered through prayer. Pray for that assurance remembering: “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31). Ask God to show you where you need to ‘stand in the gap.’



Pray for WISDOM TO DISCERN WHAT WE NEED TO

SAY: We do not speak out in our own strength. We need to understand that an all-powerful, all-knowing God has designed a moral universe. He is the only one who can help us to see the immorality and speak against it. (2 Cor. 5:4-6) Pray for the ability to be that discerning.

Pray for GIRLS AROUND THE WORLD: In many parts of our world, society still views women as inferior and there are not equal opportunities for girls and young women. Pray for the various organisations that advocate for them - that their voices may be heard.

CREATIVE WORSHIP ACTIVITIES TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

These activities may be used with different age groups to help explore the theme.

Malala's Story: Read the story of Malala in Appendix A. We have no guns pointed at us today, but we still lack courage because of fear of going against the crowd. Display a map of the world. Show Pakistan, where Malala lived. Ask the girls to choose a country outside their Fellowship to find out what specific issues affect girls in that particular country. Write some prayers to share.

Nobel Peace Prize: Allow the group to design and make medals - use ribbons and other collage materials as available. Tell the story of how Malala was awarded the peace prize for her willingness to speak up for the underprivileged. You may be able to find a picture of her with her medal. Ask if there are any people they know who deserve, albeit in their own small way, to be presented with their very own medal for the way they have stood up for a friend, spoken out about a problem, raised money to help those in need. Is there someone in the group who deserves to be acknowledged? Is there something the whole group could do/has done to make them deserving of the medals they have created? Share the importance of starting with small actions that show we care.

Media Challenge: Find some teen magazines and make a collage of pictures which give the popular/media image of what is important in life. Read Psalms 139 and find and copy out verses which give God's perspective. Stick these verses over the collage. Display your collages to demonstrate to those who see it God's perspective on the whole question of image. Display your collage to speak out against the common erroneous view of image and life values.



SECTION SIX

BE EMPOWERED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

THOUGHTS & QUESTIONS TO HELP US GRASP THE

THEME: Christ implores us to make a difference, to wield a good influence over the world, allowing others to witness our commitment and to see the radiance of God through our lives. The ripples of our influence should extend far and wide, impacting the lives of all we encounter. Just as salt is possessed of purifying and perpetuating qualities, Christ urges us to be refreshing fountains of good in the current generation, bringing messages of hope to those in the relentless, unsatisfying pursuit of inner-peace. Our faith is revealed and made complete by what we do. To be effective, our faith must be consistent, communicable, and convicting. In the absence of a bible under our arms and a cross around our necks, it should be clear to the world, wherever we go, that ambassadors for Christ are on the scene. Give some consideration to these questions:

IN WHAT WAYS DOES/SHOULD GIRLS' BRIGADE MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF THE GIRLS WE TOUCH?

WHAT ACTIONS DO WE, AS AN ORGANISATION, NEED TO ENGAGE WITH IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THIS WORLD?

HOW DOES OUR GB PROGRAMME ACTIVELY EQUIP THE YOUNG WOMEN WE SERVE TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD TODAY?

BIBLE TEXTS TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

Mathew 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth” A tiny pinch of salt diffuses its savour far and wide in an otherwise savourless and unappetizing batch. Seasoning food with salt brings a different taste to the food, in the same way our lives should bring a different dimension to the circumstances we meet. If we are not willing to stand up for God and make an impact on the lives of others, we are like salt that has lost its saltiness.

Decide on one small action you, as an individual or as a GB group, can do that will ‘savour’ or ‘make a difference’ to the people in your locality.

Matthew 5:14 “You are the light of the world” When light is placed in a dark room it lightens up. It can show up the dirt, it can light up a path for you to follow, it can reveal dangers, it can reveal hidden treasures.

It is often said of some people that they ‘light up a room’. In what ways can we, as Christians, bring light to others?

Daniel 1:8 “Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food.” Ignoring a royal decree Daniel got down on his knees and prayed three times a day. Despite those around us who have different moral codes we must stand firm. Life presents us with many challenges that sometimes force us to compromise our beliefs or principles. Let’s choose to remain steadfast. God will come through for us

Think of the context in which you live and work. In what ways may your faith lead you to behave differently from those around you?

John 6:8 “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?” The boy had two fish and five small loaves of bread and after Jesus blessed the food, 5000 men were fed. We may not have enough money, education etc. but God can use whatever we have to make a difference.

Think about the small things that God has given you that could make a difference if used to the benefit of others.

Esther 4:14. “And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this.” Esther used her position of Queen to save the Children of Israel. We can use our positions in life to make a difference.

Often God places us in a specific place so we can serve him. Think about your classroom, college lecture hall, work place, home or church. How does God want you to make a difference in that place?

Acts 9:36 “In Joppa there was a disciple named Dorcas; she was always doing good and helping the poor.” Dorcas used her God given talent to make a difference to the lives of the widows and elderly people in her community.

Consider what you can do to make a difference for those in your local community?



PRAYER POINTS TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

Pray for LOVE AND COMPASSION: The world must see our faith in action. Our service to others cannot be half-hearted, but must be sincere and always hopeful. Pray that we may see the world with the eyes of compassion that Jesus had. Pray, too, that we will be filled with God's power to live by the greatest commandment of all LOVE.

Pray for RESILIENCE WHEN FACED WITH OPPOSITION: Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to re-build the walls. Mocked and ridiculed by local Persian officials who vowed to intimidate him and soil his reputation, he relied on the joy of the Lord for strength, contending "The God of heaven will ensure our success." Despite discouragements, persecution or difficult situations in our work in GB, let's ask God to help us to never give up doing good things.

PRAY that GB may help to RAISE UP GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN INTO POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY: The Story of Deborah (Joshua 4), the only female Judge mentioned in the Bible, is an inspiration. Pray that we may encourage girls to see that in Christ, they can be whatever God wants them to be: leaders in their homes, in GB, in church, in their local community, in business, in the work place, in national governance.

Pray for READINESS TO RESPOND TO GOD'S CHALLENGE TO US: Deborah raised the crushed spirits of Israelites, enslaved for 20 years and led them out of bondage. She was ready despite all the odds against because the mighty hand of God was with her. Pray that you may be ever ready to respond when God calls.

CREATIVE WORSHIP ACTIVITIES TO HELP EXPLORE THE THEME

These activities may be used with different age groups to help explore the theme.

The Tree of Difference: Find a branch with plenty of twigs to hang things from and plant it in a pot. Provide pieces of coloured paper shaped like leaves with a hole punched in the corner of each one. Read Matthew 5:13-16 and discuss how salt and light 'make a difference' Give each person a leaf and ask people to write a commitment to be an instrument of change where they are - a practical way they can make a difference- at home, in school, amongst their friends. If you have younger girls the leader can write the commitments for them. Use string to tie the leaves on the tree. Finally give each person a second leaf and ask them

to write a prayer relating to the theme. Hold hands surrounding the "tree" sing a worship song and pray for The Girls' Brigade around the world, for all the officers and girls that God may use them to make a difference wherever they are and in whatever circumstances.

Circles of Influence: Find a child's paddling pool or, if that's not possible, a large bowl or basin. Fill it with water. Throw a pebble into the water and watch the rippling affect as the pebble falls. Consider how 'good deeds' can create ripples. If someone does something kind to you, you may be prompted to do something for someone else etc. Give everyone a pebble. Invite members of the group to think of one good thing they could do to make a difference in their home or community. Gather everyone round the bowl of water. Ask people in turn to throw their pebble in the water saying what their good deed would be and watching the ripples spread. Sing a suitable worship song e.g. Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. Pray that we may all be agents of change.

Change Me: Play a simple word game. Take any word e.g. CAT. Change just one letter e.g. BAT. Repeat the process changing just one letter at a time e.g. cat, bat, bet, but, rut, rum, run, bun. This game can be played in a circle with each person in turn changing one letter. Alternatively, give everyone a piece of paper. Let them all start with one word and give them one minute to see what word they end up with. Point out how by making small changes (just one letter at a time) the word was changed to something quite different. Discuss, or share, how this can be the same with our attitudes, or our actions, or our environment. We may be young, small or ordinary but we can make a difference changing one small thing at a time.



APPENDIX 1

To be used in conjunction with Creative Activity Malala's Story:

MALALA YOUSAF






Malala's story provides us with a model for having the courage to speak out, no matter our age or stage.

Malala Yousafzai was born in 1997 and campaigned against the Taliban in Pakistan to be allowed to continue her education. Malala's father was passionate about girls receiving an education and from 2009 Malala wrote a blog for the BBC (using a pseudonym) highlighting the importance of the right to education.

In 2011, Malala was awarded Pakistan's First National Youth Peace Prize and was nominated for the International Peace Prize. However, this added to her popularity and the threat she posed to the Taliban. Shot in the head whilst travelling home from school, Malala survived partly due to being moved to a hospital in the UK dealing with military injuries. Two of Malala's friends were also injured in the attack. After being discharged from hospital early in 2013, Malala continued to campaign for girls' education despite death threats being issued by the Taliban.

In 2014, Malala received the Nobel Peace Prize and she donated the prize money to funding a secondary school for girls in Pakistan. This was opened on Malala Day 2015. Malala continues to campaign for the right of girls across the world to attend school. She has also become a spokesperson for women's rights.

Malala wrote on her 18th birthday: "The shocking truth is that world leaders have the money to fully fund primary AND secondary education around the world - but they are choosing to spend it on other things, like their military budgets. In fact, if the whole world stopped spending money on the military for just 8 days, we could have the \$39 billion still needed to provide 12 years of free, quality education to every child on the planet." (<http://www.biography.com/people/malala-yousafzai-21362253#after-the-attack>)



APPENDIX 2

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER or “BE EMPOWERED” CELEBRATION

We want to encourage girls, officers, friends and family to celebrate the mission of GB around the world with specific emphasis on our five fellowships and with a focus on our International Theme, ‘BE EMPOWERED’. Some will be able to meet on our International Day of Prayer - June 10th - others will choose different dates to focus their prayers and worship. This resource gives a suggested format that you might like to use, but be creative and use whatever structure suits your need.

Welcome (Setting the scene)

Focus Time (Including a call to worship)

Prayer Time (Acknowledging God’s presence)

Worship Time (Opening song or hymn)

Fellowship Time (Prayers for Girls’ Brigade around the world)

Praise Time (Songs and hymns of praise)

Bible Time (A sermon, children’s talk or young people’s address)

Creative Prayer Time (An interactive prayer for empowerment)

Story Time (A testimony reflecting God’s desire to empower)

Response Time (Songs and hymns of response)

Blessing



MODEL ORDER OF SERVICE

The notes below give one way the worship time may be developed.

Welcome Time: (Adapt the following according to the age group present).

Turn off all the lights and the projector if you are using one. If the person leading has a strong enough voice also turn the microphone off. Welcome those present and point out that you are having a problem - no light, no visuals, no sound. Prompt the group to identify that what's missing is POWER! Point out that sometimes in life we are a bit like that we have no POWER to get us going. Our GB theme for the year is **BE EMPOWERED**

Call to Worship

Use Acts 1:8 as a call to worship:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Prayer Time

Acknowledge the presence of God and ask God to send His Holy Spirit to bless you and fill you.

Worship Time

Select two or three worship songs which celebrate the fact that God is with us

The King is Among Us	Graham Kendrick
How Great Thou Art	Stuart K Hine
Come Now is the Time	Brian Doerksem

Fellowship Time

Remind those gathered that they are part of our worldwide GB family. Prepare five volunteers and ask each one to pray for a different GB Fellowship - Africa, Caribbean and Americas, Asia, Europe and Pacific. Ideas for prayer will be available in our 2017 prayer resource. If possible show pictures from GB around the world or show an image of a globe or world map.

Praise Time

Sing a hymn or worship song reflecting God's rule over the whole world.

All Over The World	Roy Turner
Far And Near Hear The Call	Graham Kendrick
We've a Story To Tell	Colin Sterne

Bible Time

Choose a Bible focus relevant to the age group present. (A range of possible texts and bible stories are to be found in the resource). In this example we will use Exodus 3:1-4:17.

Tell the story of Moses at the burning bush in an interactive way engaging the young people in the story. As you tell the story divide the congregation. Half can be Moses. Get them to say 'Oh no I can't!' - every time God calls him. The other half can be God and say 'Oh Yes you can!' Draw out the message that:

Moses was called by God/How does God speak to you? God calls us, may be not at a burning bush, but through a church service, through the words of a Christian friend, through an inner conviction, through a 'sign'.

Moses was given a specific task. /What task has God called you to? God had a special job for Moses to do. God has a job for each one of us. It may be big e.g. to lead your nation! or it may be small - to invite a friend at school to GB.



Moses made excuses/ Do we make excuses too? Excuses can be related to our lack of experience or skill, our age or our attitude.

Moses needed God's power/ We need His power! God promised Moses His power the PLUS practical support of someone to help him.

Creative Prayer Time: POPCORN PRAYERS

Show some popcorn kernels. They look very plain and insignificant and unsavoury. Use the illustration of a popcorn maker (actually have one to use if possible), showing how the heat helps to transform the hard kernels into something we'd like to eat. Without the heat nothing would have happened. Likewise we can ask God to help us and His power can help us to do more than we ever could alone- something to remember when we are facing difficult times in our lives! Give everyone a small bag or handful of popcorn (check that no-one has an allergy). Ask everyone to sit quietly, to think of what God may want them to do for Him. Then as they eat their popcorn pray for His power to make it happen.

Story Time

Invite someone to share a personal story of how they learnt that, when they asked, God empowered them for the task to which they had been called.

Response Time

Close your time together by singing a praise and worship song that reflects God's power

Great In Power	Russel Fragar
Power Of The Cross	Kelly Getty & Stuart Townend
Empower Me	Claire Cloninger & David Clyd
All Hail The Power	Edward Perronet
The Power Of Your Love	Geoff Bullock
These Are The Days of Elijah	Robin Mark
Nothing's Too Big	Doug Horley
My God Is So Big	Unknown

Blessing

As we go out into the world: Lord, Grant us your power
As we listen to your voice: Lord, Grant us your power
As we follow your leading: Lord, Grant us your power
As we seek to do your will: Lord, Grant us your power
As we strive to make a difference: Lord, Grant us your power
As we try to overcome difficulties: Lord, Grant us your power
As we speak out for all that is good and right: Lord, Grant us your power AMEN.

