

RELATIONSHIP NOT RULES – RATIONALE.

In this pack there are:

A rationale for our theme *Relationship not rules*.

Blessing and challenges chart.

Selected Prayers and reflections.

Reflection ideas on Rules and Laws in the Bible and in Mothers' Union.

Lent activity chart for 2010.

Selected Bible texts on the theme.

Selected Bible Studies.

A *God is our Ruler* bookmark

Forthcoming in 2010

We will also be producing a special *Relationship not Rules* Service.

A special focus on *The Prodigal Family* pack of resources.

Further Bible Studies throughout the year.

We are happy to be invited to talk on the theme in your dioceses.

Jesus was very clear that relationships are the most important reason for living and for the living out of our faith:

Our relationship with God

Our relationship with our families

Our relationship with our friends

Our relationship with our neighbours

Our relationship with our churches, workplaces, schools, communities

Our relationship with our governments and all those in power

Our relationship with the wider world

Through and in all these different relationships we have both an identity and a purpose. As Christians our identity and purpose are entirely defined by our values as given to us by God, through the Bible, in the history and traditions of our churches and in the societies in which we live daily.

Through and in all these different relationships we learn how to recognise and experience God's presence – right now, every moment, wherever we are. We believe that God is *always* present and active in our lives, whether or not we can see him. We also believe that God's presence is a positive good even if we do not always understand how or why, especially when life gives us many difficulties and tragedies.

Here are some ways in which we can be alert to God's presence in our lives, and focus on our relationships rather than just the rules:

- **To make time** to meet God in *this* moment, not in the future but *now*.
- **When God seems far away** for reasons I don't understand, to pray that in those moments I can learn new aspects about God and my relationship with him.
- **When I am in the depths of despair** remember that God is there with me too.
- **Whenever I fail**, I can always start again.
- **My desire for God** goes up and down, but I know that his love for me is constant.
- **Every aspect of my life** is of importance and genuine interest to God.
- **My path** to experiencing God's presence is unique to me.
- **I can see God in any human being** and they can in me but do I always acknowledge this to myself and to them?