

RULES AND LAWS IN THE BIBLE & IN THE MOTHERS' UNION

This reflection and discussion time covers two areas of our lives – how rules and laws affect us in society and how they affect us specifically within the Mothers' Union. You can either use these sessions together or at separate times.

THE BIBLE

Rules and laws are important in our lives when they are used to structure our societies fairly, to provide guidelines and frameworks in how we behave towards each other and in providing consistency, protection and trust in how we operate individually and collectively. They are like maps helping us to navigate throughout our daily lives. However, rules and laws can be used to oppress, exclude and subjugate people; rules can be used to deflect from issues that are more important or more difficult to address; rules can overlook more fundamental immediate needs; rules can be manipulated unjustly.

The Bible devotes many of its books to rules and the implications of rules observed and ignored: the conditions in and of the Garden of Eden, the 10 Commandments or Decalogue, the Deuteronomic Code and The Torah are but some of the Biblical models of behaviour in the Old Testament. In the New Testament these laws are not abolished but reach their fulfilment in the Sermon on the Mount and in the commandment to love. Love itself is raised to new heights by the perfect example of Christ.

You can pray and reflect on the Bible here using our prayers and readings from the Old and New Testaments on 'Relationships not Rules' or from your own collections.

GROUP DISCUSSION TIME: Choose any of the questions below to discuss in depth

1. As Christians how best can we understand rules/laws whether religious, ethical, civil, economic or political?
2. What part do our consciences play in determining and applying these rules/laws?
3. Can rules/laws be reversed or abolished or are they fixed?
4. How do we *know* when our rules/laws free or imprison us?
5. What do we understand by obedience and authority, subsidiarity and autonomy?
6. What are the differences between our rights and our responsibilities?
7. When should we offer service and when should we offer sacrifice?
8. How do we achieve balance in our relationships and rules?

RULES AND LAWS IN THE MOTHERS' UNION

In reflecting on the questions you have recently discussed together – what can you learn about your own Mothers' Union groups, (branch or diocesan)? What do you need to do throughout 2010 to model your Mothers' Union relationships and rules on Jesus' values?

You may want to have a group discussion on your different areas of work such as:

1. Relationship not rules in your Mothers' Union membership

What is effective and why?

What could be better and why?

2. Relationship not rules in your Action & Outreach work

What is effective and why?

What could be better and why?

3. Relationship not rules in your Faith work

What is effective and why?

What could be better and why?

4. Relationship not rules in your Policy work

What is effective and why?

What could be better and why?

5. Relationship not rules in your Finance & Central Services work

What is effective and why?

What could be better and why?

6. Relationship not rules in your Marketing work

What is effective and why?

What could be better and why?

7. Relationship not rules in your MU enterprises work

What is effective and why?

What could be better and why?

8. Relationship not rules in your local partnership work

What is effective and why?

What could be better and why?

Now make a simple plan to help begin to address some of the issues; celebrate the positives and end with a prayer(s) from the suggested Prayers' Pack or some of your own.