

- 6 *Exodus 16*  
The chapter sets out the need to have one special day each week when we try to slow down, dedicating it to worship, spiritual refreshment and the enjoyment of God's creation. Is this something you manage to do?  
What are the pressures that prevent this from happening?  
How can these be overcome?
- 7 *Exodus 16-17*  
Complaining came easily to the Israelites in the desert. It does to us too. How do *you* manage to combat this all too familiar tendency?
- 8 *Exodus 20*  
The Ten Commandments. Can you remember all ten?  
Do you think they are still relevant in today's world, or are some of them old-fashioned and outdated?
- 9 *Exodus 21-22*  
Even if you consider that the Ten Commandments *are* still relevant, other Old Testament laws may seem out of place in modern society. However, do you think the twin principles of 'the crime fitting the punishment' (ch.21) and 'restitution' (ch.22) that are embedded within many laws might make it easier for victims to forgive, and perpetrators to be restored?
- 10 *Exodus 27*  
Does the design and appearance of a worship building have an impact on your ability to worship there?

### **Closing**

*Light a candle, silently watch the flame flicker, reflect on the discussion you have had, and pray for God's help in addressing any specific matters that have arisen for you personally.  
After a few minutes, end by saying together the Lord's Prayer.*

# SACRED

## Group Resources

## Month 5

## Opening Prayer

O Brother Jesus, who as a child was carried into exile,  
remember those who are deprived of their home or country,  
who groan under the burden of anguish and sorrow,  
enduring the burning heat of the sun, the freezing cold of the sea,  
or the humid heat of the forest, searching for a place of refuge.  
Cause these storms to cease, O Christ,  
move the hearts of those in power  
that they may respect the men and women  
whom you have created in your image;  
that the grief of refugees may be turned into joy.  
Amen.

*(An African prayer for Refugees)*

## General Questions

- 1 Has God spoken to you in any particular way from what you have read in this month's readings?
- 2 The prayer above was chosen to remind us that, initially at least, God's people were refugees without a place to call home. Even Jesus, as an infant, spent some time as a refugee in Egypt. Contrast this with how we like to be in control of our surroundings. Is it easier to sense the presence of God when we are less 'in control'?  
And is there any sense in which we are like 'refugees', spiritually if not physically?

## Activity

Download a copy of the painting *The Crossing of the Red Sea* by Rosselli (1482, Sistine Chapel) and the more modern depiction by Chagall (1966, Jewish Museum, New York) with the same title. Quietly contemplate the two works of art. What do you see? What fresh insights do they give you to the story?

## Further Ideas

*As usual, you shouldn't aim to go through all these questions but to spend time on just a few of them as you see fit.*

- 1 *Exodus 3*  
Do you have any special, sacred places that you like to visit? Reminders, perhaps, of times and places where you have felt especially close to God?
- 2 *Exodus 3*  
The notes talk about seeking a balance in our worship between reverence for God and familiarity with him? Is it important to have such a balance, and how do you manage to achieve this?
- 3 *Exodus 7-14*  
The story of the Exodus is the story of the supernatural intervention of God into the affairs of his people, through signs and wonders, plagues and the raising of the sea itself. Yet many are unconvinced – alternative natural explanations abound for all the events described.  
What do *you* think?  
And, if you believe it happened pretty much as handed-down, do you think can God work similar wonders today?
- 4 *Exodus 7*  
It is God who hardened Pharaoh's heart (v.3; also vv.13,22). In terms of the actions Pharaoh subsequently did or didn't take, does this mean he had a free choice?  
How about us in the actions we take?
- 5 *Exodus 12*  
There are several profound links between the story of the Passover and the story of the Cross. What are they?  
Had you made these connections before?