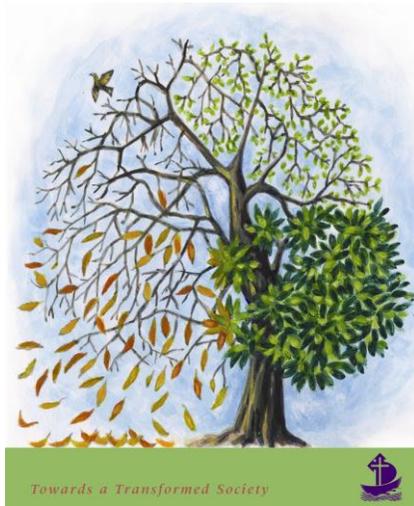


Diakonia Social Justice Season 2011



YOUTH EDITION

JOIN THE ADVENTURE!

Our bible adventure this year focusses on transformation. So, I thought we should start with some definitions...

trans-for-ma-tion *n.*

- 1.a. The act or instance of transforming.
- 1.b. The state of being transformed.
2. A marked change as in appearance or character, usually for the better.

trans-form *v.*

trans-formed; trans-form-ing; trans-forms *v.tr*

1. To change markedly the appearance or form of.
2. To change the nature, function, or condition of; to convert.

So, transformation has to do with change, especially change towards something better. The theological phrase for this change is *to convert*.

And, well, that started me thinking...

Has anyone seen the science fiction movie trilogy? You know, the Steven Spielberg movies? The ones starring Shia LeBeouf?

Transformers came out in 2007; that was followed by *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* in 2009; and – wait for it – *Transformers: Dark of the Moon*, which is due for release at the end of June 2011!

[You can read plot outlines in the Appendix, at the back of this booklet.]

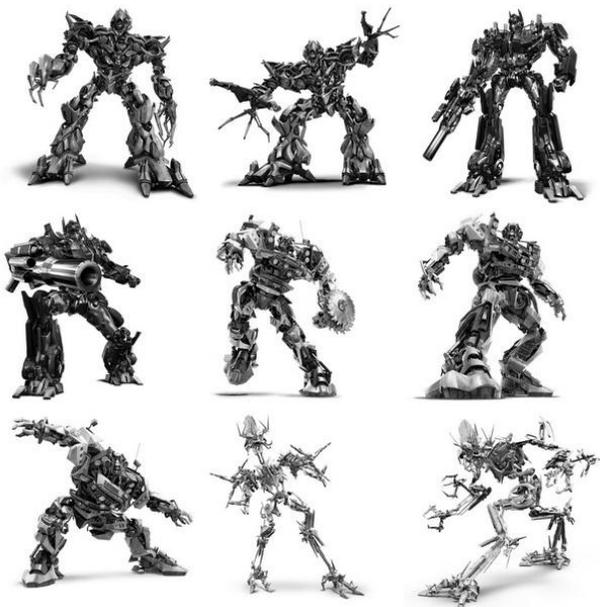
Anyway, the movie trilogy – like the animated TV series, and the comic book series – is a spin-off, based on a toylines that originated in Japan.

The premise behind the Transformers toylines is that an individual toy's parts can be shifted about to change it from a vehicle / a device / an animal, to a robot action figure, and back again. The taglines "More Than Meets The Eye" and "Robots In Disguise" reflect this ability.

Actually, I think that those taglines also capture some of the characteristics of a Christ-follower... Like the Autobots, who fight heroically for good, without trying to snatch any glory for themselves, there is "more than meets the eye" to those of us who have been changed on the inside by the indwelling of the Christ-Spirit. Also like the Autobots, we "hide in plain sight" by appearing outwardly ordinary, all the while knowing we are anything but!

So, Christ-Transformers, a fabulous adventure awaits!

CHRIST TRANSFORMERS



**mAKiNg a DiFFeRenCe
in Jesus' name!**

TRANSFORMED ATTITUDES... COMING SOON!

In the Transformers Movies, Sam Wickity is protected by an Autobot called "Bumblebee". – He hides in plain sight as a car... a bright yellow Camaro, with black racing stripes! (I guess that is where the "bee" part comes from).

In today's adventure, we are going to study the BEEs of the Bible... That is: the BEE-ATTITUDES...



Go around the circle, taking turns, so that everyone has a chance...

1. Name ONE thing that makes YOU happy.
2. Name ONE thing that makes YOU unhappy.

TALK



THINK

Have you ever watched a bee buzzing around in a garden? As you watch that bee, you will see that he isn't worried about a thing in the world. He is too busy enjoying all of the beautiful flowers that God has provided for him. He is as busy and as happy as a bee can be.

We all want to be happy, don't we? Does it surprise you to know that God wants you to be happy? Well, God does... but you might be surprised to find out that what Jesus actually said about happiness.

Most of us think that to be happy means having a lot of money, or plenty to eat, or someone to take care of us, or being "popular".

BUT, that isn't what Jesus taught us... Happiness is not a feeling that is brought about by the things that happen to us; it IS an attitude that we have because of what we have in our heart.

We need to have BEE-ATTITUDE! - We must be like the bee, buzzing happily through life because of what God has done for us.



TALK

In Romans 12v2, we read: *Be transformed by the [daily] renewing of your mind and your understanding.*

1. Have you ever changed your mind? Tell us about it...
2. What does it mean to "renew" your mind? How is this different from changing your mind?

HINT: To "renew" has to do with "making new again".

In Matthew 5v1-12, we read that... One day, Jesus went up onto the side of a mountain. He sat down, gathered his followers around him, and began to teach them about happiness.

Even though these are not the exact words Jesus used, I think they will help us to understand what he taught...



READ

&



TALK

- ★ Be happy when you are poor in spirit, because then you will find that your riches are in the kingdom of heaven.
- ★ Be happy when you feel you have lost what is most precious to you, because it is then that you will feel the love of the One who is the most precious to you.
- ★ Be happy with what you have, because then you will find that your heavenly Father provides everything that you need.
- ★ Be happy when you are hungry for the things of God, because then you will find that only He can satisfy.
- ★ Be happy when you are caring for others, because it is in caring for others that you will find that you have a heavenly Father who cares for you.
- ★ Be happy when your heart is right with God, because it is then that you will see that God is at work in the world around you.
- ★ Be happy when you help others to get along peacefully with one another, because it is then that you will know the peace that comes from being a part of the family of God.
- ★ Be happy when others treat you badly because you follow me, because your reward will be great in heaven.



The first 4 star-bullets tell about the inner changes that need to happen... The last 4 star-bullets tell about the changes in behaviour that need to happen... If you are going to have BEE-ATTITUDE.

1. What do you think it means to have BEE-ATTITUDE?
2. What does God need to transform or change in YOU, if you are going to “make like a bee”?



DO

1. **Pray** together, asking God to show you where your attitude needs adjustment... IOW, where your mind needs to be renewed?
2. What ONE thing that we have spoken about today do you want to take away, to **think** about some more?
3. **Practise** having a positive outlook; Can you commit to not complaining or criticising at all, for the next 7 days?

TRANSFORMED ACTIONS... COMING SOON!

In the Transformers Movies, Optimus Prime is the leader of the Autobots – the Transformers who were sent to earth to protect us from the evil Decepticons.

There comes a point where a fragment of the AllSpark – the creative force that brings life to Transformers – needs to be disposed of, so that it cannot be used to destroy Earth. And, Optimus Prime volunteers to have it inserted in him – even though this will destroy him. He is willing to lay down his life, for the good of all.

In today's adventure, we remember Jesus... who also laid down his life. And, in turn, calls us to be transformed and to offer transforming leadership.



TALK

Go around the circle, taking turns, so that everyone has a chance...

1. Name ONE thing that you are thankful to God for today.
2. Where have you shown bee-attitude this last week? Have you been able to buzz about, doing things with a positive attitude?



THINK

Have you ever watched a celebrity arrive at a red carpet event? Limousines. Cameras. Waving. Applause.

Most of us think that this is what happens when you are important. And so, we think that a leader is someone who sits on a podium or gets special treatment or is your elder or wears a prefect's badge.

BUT, that isn't what Jesus taught us... Leadership is not about status; **it IS about serving others because of what we have in our heart.**

Our *prime* calling and *optimal* desire ...[geddit?]?... is to be like Jesus!



TALK

Timothy was a teenager who was leading a church. He was having a tough time, with no-one wanting to listen to him. So, one day, Paul wrote to him saying: "*Don't let anyone make fun of you, just because you are young. Set an example for other followers by what you say and do, as well as by your love, faith, and purity.*" (1Tim 4v12)

1. Do the grown-ups listen to the young people in your church? – What one thing would you ask for, if you had the chance?
2. What advice does Paul give Timothy? How could that advice apply to you, and your church situation?

In John 13, we read...

And during supper ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands... ⁴got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

¹²After he had... put on his robe, and returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.



READ

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TALK



The kind of leadership that Jesus offered is servant-leadership. It's not about "lording it over" others, and telling them what to do. It IS about showing a little *bee-attitude* and getting busy with practical loving and helping.

1. In v15, Jesus says that he has "set an example" for us... What do you think it means to have to **DO LIKE JESUS** in your context?
2. "If it walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it probably is a duck" (Dr Phil). - What does God need to transform or change in **YOU**, if you are going to "make like a duck"... i.e. Do like Jesus, and **ACT** like a disciple?



DO

1. **Pray** together, asking God to help you to set an example for other followers of Jesus, in the way that you love... and live out your faith... and pursue holiness...
2. What **ONE** thing that we have spoken about today do you want to take away, to **think** about some more?
3. **Practise** serving those who are "less important"; Can you commit to practically helping someone, each day, for the next 7 days?

TRANSFORMED RELATIONSHIPS... COMING SOON!

In the Transformers Movies, there is a secret alliance of Autobots and humans (NEST) who work together to protect Earth from the evil Decepticons.

In today's adventure, we are going to think about how we are called to work together with others, and to share our resources, so that our relationships with one another are transformed...



TALK

Go around the circle, taking turns, so that everyone has a chance...

1. Name ONE thing that you are thankful to God for today.
2. Where have you acted like a disciple who follows Jesus' example in this last week? Who have you been able to practically help... to serve? - Tell us about it...



THINK

Have you ever been having a really bad day, when everything that could go wrong did? Maybe your Mum or Dad is sick? Or, a friend died? Or, your family is going to be evicted? A really BAD day.

And, while you are having a bad day, have you ever had another Christian say to you: "Never mind, God is with you"? – I mean, it's a lovely thought, but it doesn't really help, does it?

I once heard a story about a little girl who was having a really bad time, and someone said just this to her. - Do you know how she responded? (Very clever, I thought.) She said: "I know that God is with me. God is never very far away. But, today, I just really need **GOD WITH SKIN ON.**"

And isn't that the truth? There are some days when even the most faith filled person needs "**God with skin on**"... Another person who will sit with us, and hold our hand. And, show us, through their presence and actions that God really does care and IS with us.



TALK

In Ruth 2, we read the story of Ruth gleaning – picking up the left-overs. And, Boaz, who owns the fields, notices her and tells his workers to deliberately leave whole stalks on the ground for her.

1. Has anyone ever been generous in sharing with you? How did it make you feel?
2. Where is it easy and hard for YOU to be generous?

In John 6v1-14, we read that... One day, Jesus went up onto the side of a mountain, with a large crowd following him. He saw that they were hungry, and so asked his disciples to work with him to feed the massive crowd...



READ

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TALK

They tried, but without much success. Andrew, however, spoke up... He said that there was a boy with 5 small barley loaves and two fish. Jesus took the small boy's lunch, and blessed it... and there was enough food for 5000 men and their families to eat, and be satisfied. And still have basketfuls of left-overs. It was a miracle!

But, this is the thing: no-one would have eaten if that unnamed boy was not willing to share the little that he had.



Jesus makes community with us; Jesus makes community between us, especially when we, as his followers...

- ★ Share what we have – however small it is – with others. Remember the little boy with his lunch?
 - ★ Choose to be generous in our sharing... i.e. Not holding back, to be sure that “my” needs are met first.
 - ★ This is not just about “stuff”; it also has to do with our willingness to share ourselves... i.e. to give of ourselves. - Remember the little girl, who just wanted someone to be “God with skin on”?
1. How does God have to change your “insides” so that you can be “God with skin on” for others?
 2. How will those around you recognise that God has changed the inside of you? [*Hint: Think about your attitudes, and behaviours, and relationships.*]
 3. What does God need to transform or change in YOU, if you are to work together – or, SHARE - with others to make a difference?



DO

1. **Pray** together, asking God to change your “insides” so that you want to share, and to be “God with skin on”...
2. What ONE thing that we have spoken about today do you want to take away, to **think** about some more?
3. **Practise** sharing with generosity; Can you commit to sharing your lunch with someone who is hungry, each day, for the next 7 days?

TRANSFORMED TRANSFORMERS... COMING SOON!

In the Transformers Movies, the AllSpark is a great force that has power to bring to life, or to destroy. Even a small shard of the AllSpark has tremendous potential.

We too, each one of us, are “enlivened” or transformed by a sort of AllSpark – the Christ Spirit – who dwells in us, and helps us to become Christ Transformers... and make a real difference in the world!

Today’s adventure is all about HOPE... The hope we have, yes, but also the hope that we represent to our world.

Today, we are going to summarise where we have been in our thinking over this last month... and to talk about “where to, now”?



THINK
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TALK

We begin with anagram of the word “hope”...

H is for... “Heaven on Earth”. The hope we have is not for some future time and place; it is for here and now. We are to be the change that we seek. We are to make a difference in our part of the world.

O is for... “Outlook is positive”. The Christ Spirit changes us from within, and we grow in bee-attitude! We are thankful for all God has done for us, and because of that we buzz happily through life.

P is for... “Practise our faith”. The Christ Spirit transforms frozen hearts (and cold behaviours). The “ice” – solid and unyielding, becomes “ise” – a verb... and we become servants like Jesus.

E is for... “Everyone together”. The Christ Spirit transforms, not just individuals, but whole communities. We are made for each other ...for relationship, and for helping and sharing.



Go around the circle, taking turns, so that everyone has a chance...

1. What ONE thing has most excited or encouraged you from this study series?
2. What ONE thing have you most struggled with from this study series?
3. In 1Peter 3v15, we read: *Always be ready to give an account of the hope that is in you. (1Pet 3v15).* – Do you think you are able to do this now? Have a go...



THINK

For the first Christians, the clearest sign of inner transformation, and the world to come, was the existence of churches made up of people of different backgrounds and languages. Because of Christ, these tiny communities sprang up everywhere in the Mediterranean world.

Going beyond divisions of all sorts - that kept people apart from one another - these men and women lived as brothers and sisters, as God's family, praying together and sharing their possessions according to the needs of each person (cf. Acts 2:42-47).

...This is what we are called to... TO LIVES OF HOPE... To lives that are both transformed and transforming!



READ

Read the following passage from Colossians 1...

Each time we pray for you, we thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have heard of your faith in Christ and of your love for all of God's people, because what you hope for is kept safe for you in heaven. You first heard about this hope when you believed the true message, which is the good news.

The good news is spreading all over the world with great success. It has spread in that same way among you, ever since the first day you learned the truth about God's wonderful kindness... [What love God's Spirit has given you!]

We have not stopped praying for you... In fact, we always pray that God will show you everything he wants you to do and that you may have all the wisdom and understanding that his Spirit gives. Then you will live a life that honours the Lord, and you will always please him by doing good deeds. [And] you will come to know God even better.

His glorious power will make you patient and strong enough to endure anything, and you will be truly happy.

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DO

Pray together...

1. Thank God for God's kindness and generosity.
2. Thank God for the faith and love of this group.
3. Thank God for the transformation that has already happened in this group... And pray for continued transformation.
4. Pray for each member to be stirred by the Christ Spirit... so that attitudes and behaviours and relationships will be transformed.
5. Thank God for the GOOD NEWS, and that it is spreading.

Appendix – Transformers trilogy

Plot of Transformers

Optimus Prime, heroic leader of the benevolent Autobots, describes in a voice-over the shutdown of the Transformers' home world, Cybertron. It was destroyed by the malevolent Decepticon leader Megatron in his quest to get hold of the All Spark. - The Autobots want to find the All Spark so they can use it to rebuild Cybertron and end the war between the Autobots and the Decepticons, while the Decepticons want to use it to obliterate the Autobots and take over the universe.

Megatron had managed to locate the All Spark on Earth, but crash-landed in the Arctic Circle and froze in the ice. After stumbling upon his frozen body in 1897, explorer Captain Archibald Witwicky accidentally activated Megatron's navigational system and his eye glasses were imprinted with the coordinates of the All Spark's location, an incident that left him blind and mentally unstable.

Sector 7, a secret government organization created by President Herbert Hoover, discovered the All Spark in the Colorado River and built the Hoover Dam around it to mask its energy emissions. The still-frozen Megatron was moved into this facility and was used to advance human technology through reverse engineering.

In the present day, a group of Decepticons have landed on Earth and assumed the disguise of Earth vehicles. - They attack the U.S. SOCCENT (Special Operations Command Central) base, and try to hack into the U.S. Military network to find the location of Megatron and the All Spark. Their mission is thwarted. So, they infiltrate Air Force One, trying to again hack into the military network, so as to plant a computer virus. Again, it does not work.

Meanwhile, Sam Witwicky – grandson of Captain Archibold - unknowingly buys the Autobot scout Bumblebee (also on Earth disguised as a 1976 Camaro) as his first car. After Bumblebee helps Sam woo his crush, he leaves at night to transmit a homing signal to the rest of the Autobots. Sam pursues Bumblebee, thinking someone is stealing his car, but is shocked to find his car is actually a giant robot.

Bumblebee and Sam and Micaela meet up with the rest of the Autobot team, who have landed on Earth and taken the forms of Earth vehicles as well. After a major battle between the Autobots and the Decepticons, Sam rams the All Spark cube into Megatron's chest. The All Spark disintegrates, and its power obliterates Megatron. Optimus takes a fragment of the All Spark from Megatron's corpse, but admits that with its destruction, their home world Cybertron cannot be restored.

The President orders the closure of Sector 7 and has the destroyed Megatron and other Decepticons dumped into the Laurentian Abyss.

Optimus transmits a message to all surviving Autobots in space, telling them that they have a new home on Earth. During the credits, Starscream - a surviving Decepticon - escapes into space to tell the true leader of the Decepticons, The Fallen, of what has happened.

Plot of Revenge of the Fallen

Thousands of years before the events of the first film, the Dynasty of Primes travelled the galaxy to create Energon, creating sun-absorbing machines called Sun Harvesters, but only in uninhabited systems. However, one of them felt hatred towards the human race and tried to destroy it. The Dynasty stopped him and named him The Fallen, and hid the Sun Harvester's key.

Two years after the fight in Mission City, the Autobots have created NEST (Network Elements: Supporters and Transformers), a joint military organization from multiple countries, led by Optimus Prime, Major William Lennox and General Morshower.

While hunting Decepticons, Optimus learns of the Fallen's return. Reporting to NEST, the Autobots are patronised by the US National Security Advisor, who recalls the location of Megatron's corpse in the Laurentian Abyss and the presence of an Allspark shard in the base. The Decepticon communications officer eavesdrops on the conversation, and decepticons then dive into the Laurentian Abyss and resurrect Megatron, who flies to the Decepticon flagship *Nemesis*, where the Fallen rests. The Fallen instructs Megatron to kill Optimus and capture Sam Witwicky.

Sam is off to college, but beforehand finds a shard of the Allspark which, unknown to him, uploads its knowledge into his mind. Sam gives the shard to his girlfriend for safekeeping, and leaves his guardian Bumblebee behind.

At college, Sam meets his roommate Leo Spitz who runs a conspiracy website, and a girl named Alice who repeatedly flirts with Sam. Sam experiences a flash of Cybertronian symbols in his mind, has a meltdown in class and starts graffitiing the symbols all around his room. Alice arrives, revealing herself to be a Pretender and attacks Sam. Mikaela and Leo arrive. The Decepticons capture the trio. Optimus and Bumblebee arrive, and there is a big fight.

The Fallen reveals the Transformers' existence to the human race and asks them to surrender Sam to the Decepticons, while Sam's parents are kidnapped. Leo suggests they go to his online rival "RoboWarrior" for help, actually Agent Simmons from the now defunct Sector Seven, who reveals the Transformers have existed on Earth for millennia. They then work with an ancient Transformer, a Seeker, who leads them to the Tomb of the Primes in Petra. Simmons contacts Lennox who flies over with his troops and the Autobots. The Decepticons arrive and fight the Autobots.

The Sun Harvester is dug up from inside a pyramid. Sam is mortally wounded by an attack from Megatron, but is revived by the spirits of the Primes. Sam resurrects Optimus Prime, and the Fallen arrives to retrieve the Matrix to start up the Sun Harvester. But, the Sun Harvester is destroyed.

The film ends with Sam returning to college.

Plot of Dark of the Moon

When the war on Cybertron between the Autobots and Decepticons appears lost to the Autobots, their leader, Sentinel Prime, attempts to launch the Ark from their planet, containing technology that could have saved his kind.

Attacked by Starscream, it crashes on Earth's moon in 1961. President John F. Kennedy makes his famous promise to the nation to put a man on the moon. The 1969 NASA moon landing is actually an investigation of the wrecked spacecraft.

As Sam Witwicky goes into adulthood, the Autobots are busy as they learn of a Cybertronian spacecraft on the Moon and must race against the Decepticons to find it and learn its secrets, which could turn the tide in the Transformers' final battle.



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