

# NANO

YOUTH  
SESSION  
MATERIAL

# CRED

1/2

## NANO?

**Open Doors Youth NANO** are a series of themed simple session outlines that focus on incredible stories from persecuted Christians. Whilst the sessions all highlight the context of persecution, you can use the material to work through key discipleship themes. We passionately believe the persecuted church has much to teach us about what being a Christian looks like - our persecuted family aren't just victims, but courageous and passionate followers of Jesus who can inspire and challenge us to a braver faith. And that's why we've put these ideas together.

**AIM: To help young people see that a relationship with Jesus is worth more than what people think of us and how they view us. When we know how God views us we can find freedom from the pressure of being liked or known because of the things we do or are into.**

### ACTIVITY IDEA: / Guess Who?

For this to work, you'll need to do a bit of prep before the session. Ask each of your co-leaders to submit an embarrassing story about themselves. The stories should not be well-known by the group (and obviously, the other leaders must be happy to share them publicly). If you don't have many leaders, you could ask other leaders in the church that the group know to submit some stories, or even Google some embarrassing celebrity stories.

At the start of the session, tell the group you are going to read out three/ four embarrassing stories. After they have heard each story, see if they can match the story to the leader.

Leave time for all the leaders to feel suitably embarrassed and make sure the group get to ask some questions.

**Explain:** In this session, we are looking at reputation, credibility and why we put so much value on what other people think of us. Don't panic, we won't ask you to share your most embarrassing moments (unless you want to)!

### WATCH:

**Soy's story:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3y0tYBz36y8>

**Explain:** Soy and her family left their former tribal religion to follow Jesus. This upset their neighbours, who worried the local spirits they worshiped would be angered because Soy and her family refused to take part in traditional religious rituals. As a result, Soy and her family faced abuse and were called all sorts of bad things. The family's reputation went downhill, and the rest of the village didn't want them around anymore.

### ASK:

*(Give the group time to respond and discuss, or reflect in silence):*

- What stands out to you from Soy's story? What do you remember?
- If the police were waiting outside the meeting you are in now, would you keep worshipping?



Soy, with a Bible given by Open Doors local partners

- Soy and the rest of the small church were given a choice: sign a document to renounce their faith and go home, or keep believing in Jesus and go to prison. What would you choose?
- How does it make you feel that the police didn't defend Soy and the other Christians but put them in prison?

**Explain:** This all happened to Soy when she was 14. Amazingly, instead of giving up her faith, she was imprisoned (illegally) for a week - and even then, she and her auntie spoke to other prisoners about Jesus. She realised that how Jesus viewed her - how much he loved her - was worth more than what others would think - even if that meant being excluded, mocked and put into prison.

### DISCUSS

Write down 2-3 words that describe how you would want some of the following people to see you?

- Your parents/guardians
- A teacher/lecturer
- Your friends
- Your wider social circle (other classmates/students/colleagues)
- The person you fancy
- Your youth leader / Church leader
- Your sports coach
- A police officer

### Ask the group to share their responses.

- Did anyone want everyone to view them in the same way?
- Were there any patterns - e.g. did everyone want their parents to think they were loving and kind, or want teachers to think they were studious and helpful?

**Using elements or all of this session?**

**We'd love to get your feedback.**

[youth@opendoorsuk.org](mailto:youth@opendoorsuk.org)

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**Explain:** We've made what other people think of us really matter. Like never before, we live in a culture where we're willingly being judged and evaluated. Through social media we present edited clips of our lives to the world and wait for likes, shares, and comments. We place a high value on what others think of us, and it is easy to find our identity and meaning in those things.

But that also comes with its own pressures.

**ASK:**

*(You can let people reflect on these questions in silence, rather than ask people to share their answers)*

- Have you ever compared your own life to someone else's social media profile?
- Have you ever felt bad, jealous, or not good enough after spending time online?
- How long do you spend editing clips or images of yourself before posting them?
- Have you ever used apps that are designed to make you look better/thinner/cooler?

Even influencers struggle with the pressure to keep their content and feed looking perfect. Check out these quotes from people who run accounts with big followings:

*"The standard is so high that I get frustrated when I can't achieve the perfect feed."*

**Tamu McPherson of All the Pretty Birds**

*"People think what they see on my Instagram is really my life. To some extent it might be, but I'm not going to post a picture of me on a Sunday morning with food poisoning. Relatable, sure, but not so inspiring."*

**Lainy Hedaya**

- Why does what other people think matter to you?

**Explain:** The answer will be different for everyone, but maybe there is a core simple answer: that we were made to be loved. And, as followers of Jesus, we know there is only one place where we will find unconditional love, and it is not in likes, or what other people think of us. When we know how God views us, then the pressure to be liked and loved by others becomes less important.

**Ask someone to read out this quote from Soy:**

*"It does not matter what people say to judge me because they do not read the Bible... they do not believe that He is real. Because of this, I ignore what they say and how they act towards me. I know Jesus is almighty."*

**BIBLE BIT:**

**Ask someone to read: 2 Corinthians 12: 9-10**

**Explain:** Paul had a big reputation. He had an incredible encounter with God, was a powerful preacher, a theological heavyweight, had planted loads of churches and seen many come to faith in Jesus. But his ministry got him into trouble with Jewish and Roman leaders. He was imprisoned, chained, shipwrecked and eventually killed by those opposed to his faith.

**ASK:**

- What does it mean for God's power to be made perfect in weakness? In our weakness, God gives us strength to go through the hard times. If we do things in our own strength, there is more room for you and less room for God.
- How you found God's strength in your weakness? Can you explain?

**Explain:** Like Soy, Paul was captivated by Jesus' unconditional love. He knew it deeply, so much so, that his life was geared around sharing it. And like Soy, when he faced hardships, persecution, insults – things that would make him seem weak – he relied not on his strength, but on God's.

**THINK:**

- Social media isn't bad. Neither is wanting to be liked by others. But do you value what others think more than knowing that you are already loved unconditionally by God?

**ACTION:**

Go back over your list of how you want different people to see you. Are you being yourself with all of them? Challenge yourself to become more of the person God has called you to be with these people as you go forward. Share some of your plans with a friend or leader and ask them to check how you are doing with it next week.

**PRAY:**

*Have a time of quiet prayer and finish by asking someone to pray this prayer out loud:*

*Father God, thank You for Soy's brave faith. Thank You that she inspires us to see what you think of us as more important than likes, shares or our reputation. Help us find freedom and strength in Your love for us. Be with Soy and many others like her whose choice to follow Jesus means people want to exclude or even hurt them. Help them find Your strength in times of weakness. Amen.*

**Using elements or all of this session?**

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