



# THE IRON LADY



## Leaders' Guide

For use with clips and special videos on the accompanying DVD or downloadable from [www.damaris.org/theironlady](http://www.damaris.org/theironlady)

*The Iron Lady* (Cert 12A) is in UK cinemas from 6<sup>th</sup> Jan 2012

## Film & Focus: *The Iron Lady*

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Special thanks to the Trago Lounge and Highfield Church in Southampton for permission to film on their premises

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## INTRODUCTION

*The Iron Lady* tells the compelling story of Margaret Thatcher, a woman who broke through the barriers of gender and class to be heard in a male-dominated world. The story concerns power and the price that is paid for power, and is a surprising and intimate portrait of an extraordinary and complex woman whose legacy still polarises opinion to this day.



As well as providing a glimpse at a piece of recent history *The Iron Lady* also offers the chance to think more deeply about questions that affect us all. The film delves into some of life's most challenging topics: overcoming prejudice; balancing family and career; making a mark; coping with change; celebrating achievement and dealing with regret. This resource is designed to help you and your friends think through these themes. We hope that you'll get a group together, head out to see the film, then settle down for an evening of fun and reflection.

In these pages, and on the accompanying DVD, you will find everything you need to organise your own event around *The Iron Lady* (these are also available from the website [www.damaris.org/theironlady](http://www.damaris.org/theironlady)). We've provided you with posters and invitations, recipe suggestions for food and drinks, fun and games, and questions to help you get the conversation going. You'll even find clips from the film and special videos to remind you of key scenes. All you need to do is find a cinema that's showing the film, find a group of people and get organised. And enjoy yourselves.



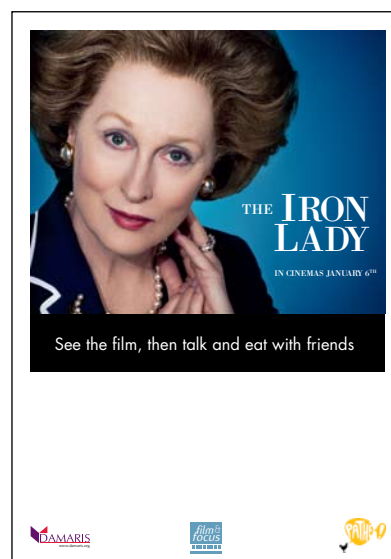
## BEFORE THE EVENT

Margaret Thatcher was nothing if not thorough. Her long working days are the stuff of legend. While we're not suggesting that you limit yourself to only a few hours' sleep in promoting your event, it is vital that you make sure that people know about it well in advance.

If you are part of an organised group, ask your group leader if you can give or send a notice to members to invite them along. Keep your notice brief, but aim for communicating the important details – the 'what, where and when' of the event. The thing that is most likely to make people want to come is your enthusiasm, so don't hold back on that. You can also show them a trailer from the film, which is on the accompanying DVD and can be downloaded from [www.damaris.org/theironlady](http://www.damaris.org/theironlady)

At the back of this booklet you will find posters and invitations for your event. Simply add your own details – time, location and date – as well as a contact name and phone number, then produce copies and let everyone know what's going to happen.

This kind of publicity is vital, but it isn't the only way to let people know what you are doing. Encourage group members to invite their friends and to reinforce paper invites with a phone call. If you or any of your group use social networking, get tweeting and posting on Facebook to spread the word as far as it will go. Be enthusiastic and persistent and help people to see that if they don't come along, they will be missing out on something special.



Template posters and invites on pages 26-27.





## THE EVENT

*Film & Focus:* *The Iron Lady* consists of three sections: film; food and fun; and focus.

### Film

Central to making use of this resource is watching the film *The Iron Lady* together. It ought to be showing at a cinema near you, so get a group together and book some tickets. You could even contact the manager of your local cinema to arrange a special screening if you have enough people.

Make sure you've got the practical arrangements covered. How many people are coming to your event? Do you want to meet at the cinema, in the place where the rest of your event is being held, or somewhere else (perhaps someone's house)? Will you need to arrange lifts to and from the cinema? Don't leave things like this until the last minute. Plan ahead so that nothing gets in the way of everyone having a great time.

### Food and Fun

Come back to your meeting place after the film for something to eat and drink. This can be as simple or as elaborate as you want it to be, but it does need planning. All of the food we suggest below can be prepared in advance so nobody will miss out on the film.

While everyone is enjoying the food, talk informally about the film. Encourage people to say what they thought of the characters, how the historical scenes compared with their own memories of that time, which scenes made the biggest impression on them, and so on. Alternatively, give out copies of the quizzes provided here. In this part of the event, the emphasis is on relaxing and enjoying each other's company in the light of the film, rather than on in-depth analysis of the issues.

### Focus

The main event – after the film itself – is the organised discussion of the film. Choose one or more of the six themes from *The Iron Lady* covered here, enjoy the clips and special videos on the accompanying DVD or downloadable from [www.damaris.org/theironlady](http://www.damaris.org/theironlady) and use our guide to lead your group in discussion and reflection. Everything you need for a thoughtful end to an enjoyable event.



## FOOD AND FUN - RECIPES

Who knew that as well as being a history-making Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher also left her mark on the world of cuisine? Discover one of her favourite desserts, as well as a politically-apt pastry and Margaret's pre-parliamentary gift to the world of soft confectionary. The following selection of desserts and drinks should enable you to hold an Iron Lady-themed pudding party before moving on to the more structured part of the evening.

### The Lady's Not For Churning Ice-Cream Sundae

Before entering Parliament, Margaret Thatcher worked for J. Lyons & Co. as a food research scientist at their Manningtree laboratory. During that time she wrote a research paper on 'the elasticity of ice cream'. Sadly, the precise nature of her dairy-related discoveries have been lost in the mists of time, but we've created this patriotic dessert in honour of her labours.

#### Ingredients:

- Broken amaretti or other suitable biscuits (digestives will work perfectly well)
- Soft vanilla ice-cream
- Blueberry syrup
- Fresh blueberries
- Crushed hazelnuts
- Glazed cherry

Serve in individual glasses or transparent bowls. Put a base layer of broken biscuits into the glasses and pour on some blueberry syrup. Cover with a generous serving of the ice cream. Add a layer of fresh blueberries. Top with crushed hazelnuts and – to complete the patriotic red, white and blue colour scheme – a glazed cherry.

## Iron Lady Lemon Mousse

According to the book *Margaret Thatcher: The Woman Within* by Andrew Thompson (her constituency agent from 1982-1987), Lemon Mousse was a particular favourite of the Prime Minister.

### Ingredients (for 4 people):

- Juice and rind of 2 large lemons
- 1 level tablespoon powdered gelatine
- 3 eggs
- 115g (4oz) caster sugar
- 150ml (¼ pint) double cream
- Single cream or whipped cream to serve

Sprinkle the gelatine over 2 tablespoons of water in a small pan and leave to soak for 5 minutes. Separate the eggs, putting the yolks into a large bowl and the whites in another. Finely grate the rind from the lemons and mix it into the egg yolks together with the sugar. Squeeze the lemons and strain the juice into the soaked gelatine. Place the saucepan over low heat, stirring continuously. Do not allow to boil, and as soon as the gelatine has dissolved remove the pan from the heat.

Whisk the egg yolks and sugar until pale and creamy. Slowly pour in the dissolved gelatine, whisking all the time. Continue to whisk the mixture until it is cool and beginning to thicken. Lightly beat the double cream and fold into the mixture. Beat the egg whites until stiff, then blend them in evenly and lightly.

Spoon the mixture into a serving dish or individual dishes and chill until set. Serve with a jug of single cream or pipe whipped cream over the mousse.

## Apple U-Turnovers

The Lady may not be for turning, but we bet she wouldn't be able to resist these turnable treats.

### Ingredients (for 4-6 people):

- 2 large cooking apples
- 15g (½ oz) unsalted butter
- ¼ teaspoon grated lemon rind
- 55g (2oz) caster sugar
- 1 level tablespoon sultanas
- 340g (12oz) prepared puff pastry
- 1 egg
- Icing sugar

Peel, core and thinly slice apples. Melt butter in a saucepan, add the apples and lemon rind. Cover with a lid and cook over low heat until apples are soft. Beat the apples to a puree, add sugar and sultanas. Set aside until cold.

Roll out the puff pastry to a thickness of about 6mm (¼ inch). Using a 7.5cm (3 inch) round fluted pastry-cutter, stamp out circles from the pastry, gently roll each circle with a rolling pin to form an oval about 4mm (⅙ inch) thick. Spoon the apple mixture equally over half of each pastry shape. Brush the edges with beaten egg and fold the pastry over. Press the edges firmly to seal. Slash the top of each pastry with a knife, brush with beaten egg and leave for 15 minutes.

Bake the pastries on wet baking trays above the centre of an oven pre-heated to 425° F (mark 7) for 10 minutes. Lower heat to 375° F (mark 5) and continue baking until golden brown. Dust with icing sugar and serve warm or cold with cream.



## FOOD AND FUN - DRINKS

### Blue Lady

#### Ingredients:

- One part Blue Curacao
- One part vodka
- Three parts pineapple juice
- Dash of lemon juice

Put ice in a shaker, add all of the above ingredients and shake. Transfer to a serving glass with a twist of lemon.

### Non-alcoholic Blue Lady

#### Ingredients:

- One part Blueberry juice drink
- One part lemonade
- Dash of lemon juice

Put ice in a shaker, add all of the above ingredients and shake. Transfer to a serving glass with a twist of lemon.

If cocktails (alcoholic or otherwise) don't seem the right thing for your group, then there's nothing more British than a nice cup of tea, which we're sure Mrs Thatcher would approve of heartily.



## QUIZZES

On the following pages you will find some quizzes for use during the Food and Fun part of the event. You could conduct the quizzes formally, with a question master addressing the whole group, but it's probably more appropriate to simply photocopy the pages and distribute several copies of the quizzes around the room. Encourage your people to quiz one another in smaller informal groups as they eat and chat.





## CAN YOU REMEMBER?

1. What was Margaret Thatcher's maiden name?
2. From which University did Margaret graduate?
3. In her family home, during the bombing raid, what had Margaret's dad forgotten to cover?
4. What was Denis doing when the Brighton bomb exploded?
5. What was Denis most concerned about straight after the Brighton bomb?
6. What did the staff at No. 10 Downing Street give Margaret as a present as she left?
7. What did Margaret call her favourite pearl necklace, and why?
8. What was in the Lady Members' room in the Houses of Parliament?
9. What sport did Denis love but Margaret couldn't play?
10. What useful item did Margaret take out of her handbag during the cabinet meeting power cut?
11. Once Airey Neave and Gordon Reece had told Margaret Thatcher to drop wearing hats she is seen in two more – what were they?
12. What is Margaret washing up at the end of the movie?

1. Roberts
2. Oxford
3. Butter
4. Cleaning his teeth
5. His shoes
6. A Roberts radio
7. Her twins - because Denis gave it to her on the birth of her twins
8. An ironing board
9. Golf
10. A torch
11. Ice cream server's hat and a hard builder's hat
12. A teacup

**Answers**



# MARGARET'S MISSING WORDS

Each question in this round is a quote from Margaret Thatcher, with one or more words missing. What words complete the quotes?

1. Any woman who understands the problems of running a h\_\_\_\_\_ will be nearer to understanding the problems of running a country.
2. Being p\_\_\_\_\_ is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you aren't.
3. Being Prime Minister is a lonely job... you cannot lead from the c\_\_\_\_\_.
4. I am extraordinarily p\_\_\_\_\_, provided I get my own way in the end.
5. I owe n\_\_\_\_\_ to Women's Lib.
6. If my critics saw me walking over the Thames they would say it was because I couldn't s\_\_\_\_\_.
7. If you just set out to be liked, you would be prepared to c\_\_\_\_\_ on anything at any time, and you would achieve nothing.
8. If you want something s\_\_\_\_\_, ask a man; if you want something d\_\_\_\_\_, ask a woman.
9. No one would remember the Good Samaritan if he'd only had good i\_\_\_\_\_; he had m\_\_\_\_\_ as well.
10. Standing in the middle of the r\_\_\_\_\_ is very dangerous; you get knocked down by the traffic from both sides.
11. There can be no liberty unless there is e\_\_\_\_\_ liberty.
12. There is no such thing as s\_\_\_\_\_: there are individual men and women, and there are families.

1. home
2. powerful
3. crowd
4. patient
5. nothing
6. swim
7. compromise
8. 'said', 'done'
9. 'intentions', 'money'
10. road
11. economic
12. society

## Answers



## WHO SAID IT?

Match the quote with the person who said it about Margaret Thatcher.

### Here are the quotes:

1. Margaret Thatcher is the greatest living Englishwoman.
2. She was a tigress surrounded by hamsters.
3. The Prime Ministers who are remembered are those who think and teach, and not many do. Mrs Thatcher... influenced the thinking of a generation.
4. I've never known a man or woman faintly like her, she was as tough as they come, and anything that required guts and will she could do for you. Anything that required sensitivity, she couldn't, she had none.
5. Margaret Thatcher always gave me headaches.
6. She is so clearly the best man among them.
7. Reality hasn't really intervened in her life since the seventies.
8. This woman is headstrong, obstinate and dangerously self-opinionated.
9. Do you know what Margaret Thatcher did in her first budget? Introduced VAT on yachts! It somewhat ruined my retirement.
10. Everyone likes to win arguments. She likes to win them more than most.
11. She cannot see an institution without hitting it with her handbag.
12. She is a heady mix of whisky and perfume.

### Here are the people who said them (in alphabetical order):

- a) Tony Benn, former Labour cabinet minister
- b) John Biffen, former Conservative cabinet minister
- c) Barbara Castle, former Labour cabinet minister
- d) Julian Critchley, former Conservative politician
- e) Edward Heath, former Prime Minister and Mrs Thatcher's predecessor as Conservative leader
- f) Helmut Kohl, former leader of Germany
- g) Charles Moore, Mrs Thatcher's authorised biographer
- h) David Owen, former Labour cabinet minister and leader of the Social Democratic Party
- i) Personnel report accompanying Margaret Thatcher's application to work for ICI in 1948
- j) Carol Thatcher, Margaret Thatcher's daughter
- k) Brian Walden, political broadcaster
- l) William Whitelaw, former Conservative cabinet minister and Mrs Thatcher's Deputy Prime Minister until 1988

1:g; 2:b; 3:a; 4:k; 5:f; 6:c; 7:i; 8:l; 9:e; 10:h; 11:d; 12:h

**Answers**



## FOCUS

The Focus section is where you and your group start to talk together about the issues raised in the film. We have split this into two separate parts, each of which tackles different issues using different approaches.

**Part A** is intended primarily for younger (pre-retirement) groups. It includes three clips taken from the film *The Iron Lady* (available on the DVD that accompanied this guide or downloadable from [www.damaris.org/theironlady](http://www.damaris.org/theironlady)). We have provided discussion questions to accompany the clips, along with reflection material to help you to round off each of three themed sections. Choose as many questions as you want, in whatever order you want, according to the needs and preferences of your group.

**Part B**, which is intended primarily for older (post-retirement age) groups, is also split into three themes. Each theme here includes a special video (available on the DVD that accompanied this guide or downloadable from [www.damaris.org/theironlady](http://www.damaris.org/theironlady)). Each of these videos, presented by Clare Carson, includes a number of excerpts from *The Iron Lady* as well as interviews with ordinary people. Each video finishes with a question to start your group's discussion. In addition to the question on the video, we offer some suggestions for how to keep the discussion going if it needs any help, as well as suitable material providing a focus for reflection to round things off.

Of course, there is nothing to stop older groups from using the material in part A, younger groups using part B, or anyone from mixing and matching the two. Whichever sets of resources you use, feel free to explore as many or as few different themes as you think is right for your group. We don't expect people to necessarily tackle three themes (or even all six!). You know your group far better than the writers of this resource, and you are best placed to determine the scope and direction of your discussion. It almost goes without saying that you should watch all the clips and videos you might use ahead of the meeting and make sure that whatever technology you intend to use to play them is ready for you to press 'play' the moment you need it.



## FOCUS - PART A

### 1 Overcoming obstacles

#### Give an Introduction

Getting where you want to be is not always easy. Margaret found that the world expected her to behave in a certain way, and it's not a way that suits who she really is. Because she's a woman, the people around her often don't expect her to speak out or stand up for herself. Following her aspirations means entering a man's world, challenging prejudices about who ought to hold power. For us, too, it might mean facing the obstacles put in our way by our gender, class, colour, or many other things. Show the clip detailed below, then ask some or all of the questions that follow.

#### Play the clip

Introduce the clip by explaining that it shows Margaret entering the House of Commons for the first time as an MP.

**Clip: *Welcome to the madhouse* (til003)**

Play clip from DVD 

#### Lead the discussion

- How do you think Margaret might have felt as she entered the House of Commons for the first time? Can you identify with feeling like that from any situations you have faced in your own life?
- What other historical figures have broken down barriers in a similar way? What motivated them to fight for change?
- What do you think 'equality' meant for Margaret, and what does it mean to you? If you have ever been held back by others' views of you, how did it make you feel? Why is equality so important?
- Do you think that we now live in a fair society? What assumptions might still need to be challenged? What is the best way to go about changing attitudes?
- What is the most difficult obstacle that you have faced, either in the past or present? How successfully have you tackled it? What qualities and resources might help us to overcome obstacles in our lives?
- Margaret had the support of her husband Denis, but she often seemed to face obstacles alone. What role does the support of others play in helping us overcome difficulties? How can we act as a support to the people around us?
- The Bible says that 'God's power works best in weakness' (2 Corinthians 12:9). This means that we can call on his help when we confess we're not strong enough to face challenges alone. Why can it be so hard for us to admit when we're struggling? Would you ever consider asking God for help?

## Invite reflection

After an appropriate time, call the conversation to an end and invite people to reflect, quietly on their own, about overcoming obstacles.

You may find it helpful to read this out to the group:

*William Wilberforce was a politician and social activist. He changed the face of society, campaigning tirelessly for the rights of the poor and vulnerable. Most famously he was a leader in the campaign for the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. That campaign was eventually successful, but transformation didn't happen overnight.*

*When Wilberforce first had his attention drawn to the issue of the slave trade, he recognised how important it was. However, he also felt conscious of his own weakness, saying how unequal he felt to the task. It took encouragement from others, and the motivation of his Christian faith, to persuade him that he was the man for the job.*

*For eighteen years, Wilberforce introduced anti-slavery motions in parliament. Against great opposition, he finally saw Britain abolish its slave trade in 1807. But there were still more mountains to climb. It was not until 1833, after a lifetime of battling, that Wilberforce heard a bill would be passed abolishing slavery itself in the British Empire. He died just days later, in the knowledge that it had all been worthwhile. His life and legacy demonstrate that we need courage and perseverance to overcome obstacles. And even if we feel inadequate, that doesn't mean we can't be part of something great.*

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## 2 Different duties

### Give an Introduction

Working her way up the ladder, Margaret had to make some difficult decisions. Did wholeheartedly pursuing her ambitions mean that her family inevitably had to come second? Whether or not we have or had high-flying careers, many of us will be familiar with this painful and contentious dilemma. We want to use our gifts and talents, and to make a difference in the world through our work. But we also want to build quality family relationships. We may wish we could have it both ways, but the reality is that sometimes we need to prioritise one over the other. Show the clip detailed below, then ask some or all of the questions that follow.

### Play the clip

Explain that this clip takes place in 1974. Margaret has just told Denis that she has decided to stand for the leadership of the Conservative party.

#### Clip: *I have a duty* (tl004)

Play clip from DVD 

### Lead the discussion

- Margaret's approach towards career and family is a major focus of the film. Can you identify with the dilemma that she faces? What is your reaction towards her choices?
- How important is (or was) your career to you? If you work, what impact does your working life have upon your family and your friendships? How do you go about balancing work with relationships?

- How do you think that full-time parenthood is viewed by society? Why might the role of parents sometimes be overlooked or undervalued? What does it take to build and maintain good relationships in a family?
- Do you have any regrets about decisions you have made regarding work and family? Have you ever experienced conflict or prejudice because of these decisions? What advice would you give to somebody at the beginning of their adult life?
- Denis challenges Margaret about confusing duty with ambition. What do you think is the difference between the two? What are the positive and negative aspects of being ambitious? Who – if anyone – do we have a ‘duty’ towards?
- The Bible says that we should ‘work willingly at whatever (we) do, as though working for the Lord rather than for people’ (Colossians 3:23). What motivates you in your work, or in your role as a parent? What is it that gives value to our everyday activities, even when they seem mundane?
- Jesus once said that people ‘cannot serve both God and Money’ (Matthew 6:24). Do you think the same is true of trying to serve both career and family?

### Invite reflection

After an appropriate time, call the conversation to an end and invite people to reflect, quietly on their own, about the different calls of career and family.

You may find it helpful to read this out to the group:

*Susanna was an ordinary woman, born in 1669 and married to a clergyman. She never had the option of having a career, and family life was difficult. She gave birth to nineteen children, nine of whom died at a young age. Her husband often behaved irresponsibly, abandoning his family for months at a time. But despite the constraints of her life, Susanna was determined to be the best mother that she could be. She made time for each of her children individually, and ensured that all of them – including the girls, unusually for the time – were well-educated.*

*Though she never officially preached a sermon or wrote a book, Susanna’s example had a profound influence on her children’s lives. Two of her sons, John and Charles Wesley, grew up to start the Methodist movement. Schools, hospitals and orphanages were founded, and lives changed forever, because Susanna just did the best that she could, right where she was.*

## 3 Purpose and meaning

### Give an Introduction

As Margaret looks back on her life, she recalls her ambitious early years, fighting to get on track for her chosen career in politics. Despite the limitations that are placed on her, she’s determined not to be silenced or sidelined. She wants to be significant. It’s an urge we can identify with, whoever we are. We’re all searching for a purpose that’s bigger than what we experience every day. Perhaps we want to be remembered long after we’re dead, to make a real difference in the world. Or maybe we want to see and do all the amazing things we can, while we’re here on earth. Whatever our point of view, we’re all faced with the same question: what makes a life matter? Show the clip detailed below, then ask some or all of the questions that follow.

## Play the clip

Explain that this clip occurs early in Margaret's adult life. She has just lost a parliamentary by-election, and Denis has been consoling her.

### Clip: *One's life must matter* (til005)

Play clip from DVD 

## Lead the discussion

- As a young woman, Margaret feels that a career in politics will bring purpose to her life. What were your biggest dreams and ambitions in early adulthood? How have they worked out so far?
- In this scene, we see Margaret in a moment of failure, worried that she may end up living an insignificant life. Have you ever experienced similar worries? How might you feel if your own personal dreams were never realised?
- Margaret says that 'one's life must matter'. Why do you think we all have a sense that our lives need to mean something? Where does this urge come from, and do you think it can really be fulfilled?
- Do you agree with Margaret that 'one's life must matter, beyond the cooking and the cleaning and the children'? Is it necessary to prioritise career ahead of family for your life to matter?
- What does our culture tell us we need to be or to do in order to be 'significant' people? How do these claims influence our lives, and how true do you think that they are?
- The Bible says that God has 'planted eternity in the human heart' (Ecclesiastes 3:11). This means that we long for a bigger purpose because we were made for a life with God. What do you think of this claim? What might God have to do with ideas about meaning and purpose?

## Invite reflection

After an appropriate time, call the conversation to an end and invite people to reflect, quietly on their own, about the purpose and meaning of their lives.

You may find it helpful to read this out to the group:

*Eric Liddell was fast. His talent for running took him to the 1924 Paris Olympics where, after famously refusing to run on a Sunday because of his Christian convictions, he won gold for the men's 400 metres. But following his victory, Eric didn't pursue the stardom that seemed to be beckoning.*

*He had always made it clear that racing wasn't about the medals. He ran because, as he put it, 'When I run, I feel God's pleasure.' For him, it was all about his relationship with God. And it didn't matter whether that relationship took him to the winner's podium or to a life of hardship. He chose to travel to China, where he worked as a teacher, and served the poor. When the Japanese invaded China, Eric was interned in a camp. It was hardly the fate that anybody would have predicted for an Olympic winner, but Eric believed that he was there for a reason. 'Uncle Eric' became a sign of hope and comfort, organising games and lessons, and setting an example with his selfless behaviour. His death in 1945 from a brain tumour left the whole camp bereft, as he was known and loved by so many there. When he turned his back on the prestige and glamour of athletic success, he found real significance in the lower profile work of a missionary and prisoner of war.*



## FOCUS - PART B

### 1 Coping with change

#### Play the video

Play the video called *Coping with change* (tit006)

Play video from DVD ▶

In this video, presenter Clare Carson talks about the changes experienced by Margaret Thatcher and interviews Gwen Griffin and John Benwell about their own experiences of change. It ends with the question 'How can we make the most of change in our lives?'

#### Encourage the conversation

Leaving the question on the screen, invite your group to share their thoughts and ideas with one another. This could be all together, in a formal discussion which you lead, or you could simply invite people to talk to the person next to them.

To encourage the conversation you could offer other questions at various points, such as:

- What has changed most in your life over the past few years?
- What advice would you give to someone who is about to go through a change that you have recently experienced?
- If you were to sum up in one sentence the best way to make the most of change, what would that be (just one sentence)?

#### Invite reflection

After an appropriate time, call the conversation to an end and invite people to reflect, quietly on their own, about change.

You might find it helpful to read this out to the group:

*In the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Anna Maria Milles was the housekeeper in the home of Lady Spencer. As Anna got older she could no longer do her job. Lady Spencer let her continue to live in the house and Anna wanted to be useful in some way. But as each year went by she became weaker and weaker. She had so little energy there was only one thing she could do, and that was to sit the young son of Lady Spencer on her knee and read to him. So she did. Every night she read to the little boy from the Bible. This little boy's name was Anthony but when he grew up he was known as Lord Shaftesbury, one of the greatest reformers of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. He became an active politician and stopped the exploitation of children in factories and mines; he set up schools and founded the YMCA. History records that Lord Shaftesbury changed the nation. He devoted his life to the poor. And he said that it all began when he heard the Bible stories read to him by Anna. He said, 'God be praised for her and her loving faithfulness'. She could no longer work, or do anything much at all. But what she did changed the nation.*

## 2 Valuing the past

### Play the video

Play the video called *Valuing the past* (til007)

Play video from DVD 

In this video, Clare Carson talks about the power of memories to shape our lives today. She interviews Meg Lapworth about her family life in Africa, and how she stays in touch with her sons now that she has retired. It ends with the question 'Are we building relationships in the present, for the future?'

### Encourage the conversation

Leaving the question on the screen, invite your group to share their thoughts and ideas with one another. This could be all together, in a formal discussion which you lead, or you could simply invite people to talk to the person next to them.

To encourage the conversation you could offer other questions at various points, such as:

- What kind of memories do you treasure the most?
- What kind of memories could you be creating now?
- What is the best way to stay in touch with family and friends? How can these relationships help us to embrace the present?
- How can we value the past whilst still making the most of today?

### Invite reflection

After an appropriate time, call the conversation to an end and invite people to reflect, quietly on their own, about valuing the past and building memories for the future.

You might find it helpful to read this out to the group:

*There is a story told of a father and son in a South American town. The son was called Pablo and, when he was young, he followed his father everywhere. Whatever his father did, Pablo wanted to do. They had wonderful times together. But, as Pablo grew older, things began to change. Gradually, he wasn't so keen to be with his father, and was even less keen to do what his father did. In fact, Pablo became rebellious, disobeying and disrespecting his father. This hurt Pablo's father very deeply.*

*One night, Pablo exploded in a rage and shouted at his father 'I hate you. I hate being your son. I hate being here. I don't want to be your son any more. I am going away and I am never coming back.' With that he opened the front door and ran away. Pablo's father stood at the open door, looked down the street and wept. Hours passed, and turned into days. The days turned into weeks and the weeks into months. Each day Pablo's father stood at the door hoping that, today, his son would come home. But he never did.*

*Time passed and all the buildings in the area where Pablo's father lived were demolished to make way for a new development. As Pablo's father moved house, all he could think about was the fact that Pablo now wouldn't know where to find him. So he got some paper and made posters on which he wrote 'Pablo, I love you so much, I miss you so much. Will you come back and be my son again? Please meet me in the town square at 10 o'clock on Thursday. Dad.' He put these posters all around the town, and throughout the surrounding villages.*

*Thursday came and Pablo's father was nervous. Had Pablo seen the posters? Would he care? He summoned all his strength and set off into the town. Would Pablo be there? How would he cope if the square was empty? His throat was dry and his heart was pumping as he walked down the road that led to the square. In the distance he could hear a noise. As he approached it grew louder. And as he turned into the square he saw that it wasn't empty. In fact it was full. Completely full with boys and young men. All of them called Pablo. And all of them desperately hoping that the posters were put up by their father.*

### 3 Achievements and regrets

#### Play the video

Play the video called *Achievements and regrets* (til008)

Play video from DVD 

In this video, Clare Carson talks about the mixture of fulfillment and regret we may feel looking back at our lives. She interviews Rev David Croad about his experience, as a vicar, in helping people through their life journeys. It ends with the question 'How can we find peace for our past and hope for our future?'

#### Encourage the conversation

Leaving the question on the screen, invite your group to share their thoughts and ideas with one another. This could be all together, in a formal discussion which you lead, or you could simply invite people to talk to the person next to them.

To encourage the conversation you could offer other questions at various points, such as:

- Looking back at your life, which were your most fulfilling achievements? Is there anything that you regret?
- What advice would you give to somebody at the beginning of their adult life? How should they go about making good choices?
- How do you deal with disappointment and regret? What gives you hope for the future?

#### Invite reflection

After an appropriate time, call the conversation to an end and invite people to reflect, quietly on their own, about finding peace as we look back into our past and hope as we look forward to our future.

You might find it helpful to read this out to the group:

*Once upon a mountaintop, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up.*

*The first little tree looked up at the stars twinkling like diamonds above him. "I want to hold treasure," he said. "I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I will be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!"*

*The second little tree looked out at a small stream trickling by on its way to the ocean. "I want to be a strong sailing ship," he said. "I want to travel mighty waters and carry powerful kings. I will be the strongest ship in the world!"*

The third tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and busy women worked in a busy town. "I don't want to leave this mountaintop at all," she said. "I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me they will raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world!"

Years passed. The rains came, the sun shone, and the little trees grew tall.

One day three woodcutters climbed the mountain.

The first woodcutter looked at the first tree and said, "This tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the first tree fell. "Now I shall be made into a beautiful chest," thought the first tree. "I shall hold wonderful treasure."

The second woodcutter looked at the second tree and said, "This tree is strong. It is perfect for me." With a swoop of his shining axe, the second tree fell. "Now I shall sail mighty waters," thought the second tree. "I shall be a strong ship fit for kings!"

The third tree felt her heart sink when the last woodcutter looked her way. She stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven. But the woodcutter never even looked up. "Any kind of tree will do for me," he muttered. With a swoop of his shining axe, the third tree fell.

The first tree rejoiced when the woodcutter brought him to a carpenter's shop, but the busy carpenter was not thinking about treasure chests. Instead his work-worn hands fashioned the tree into a feed box for animals. The once-beautiful tree was not covered with gold or filled with treasure. He was coated with sawdust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals.

The second tree smiled when the woodcutter took him to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ships were being made that day. Instead the once-strong tree was hammered and sawed into a simple fishing boat. Too small and too weak to sail an ocean or even a river, he was taken to a little lake. Every day he brought in loads of dead, smelly fish.

The third tree was confused when the woodcutter cut her into strong beams and left her in a lumberyard. "What happened?" the once-tall tree wondered. "All I ever wanted to do was stay on the mountaintop and point to God."

Many, many days and nights passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams.

But one night golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the feed box.

"I wish I could make a cradle for him," her husband whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth and sturdy wood. "This manger is beautiful," she said. And suddenly the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveller and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveller fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake.

Soon a thundering and thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered. He knew he did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through the wind and rain. The tired man awakened. He stood up, stretched out his hand, and said, "Peace." The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. And suddenly the second tree knew he was carrying the King of heaven and earth.

One Friday morning, the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the

*forgotten woodpile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man's hands to her. She felt ugly and harsh and cruel. But on Sunday morning when the sun rose and the earth trembled with joy beneath her, the third tree knew that God's love had changed everything.*

*It made the first tree beautiful.*

*It had made the second tree strong.*

*And every time people thought of the third tree, they would think of God.*

*That was better than being the tallest tree in the world.*

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## AFTER THE EVENT

Make a point of following up any newcomers. If you or your group have any other suitable events coming up, make sure to have invitations ready to give out. At the very least, try to get contact details so that you can invite newcomers along to any later events that you don't yet have details for. Try to build on friendships that come out of this meeting, so that its value can go beyond just the things that have been discussed and thought about here.

### Find out more

If the meeting has raised any issues concerning the fragility of old age, or if you want more information about organisations for women, you can find a list of relevant organisations at [www.damaris.org/theironlady](http://www.damaris.org/theironlady)





THE **IRON  
LADY**

IN CINEMAS JANUARY 6<sup>TH</sup>

See the film, then talk and eat with friends



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