

Shine as the Flame travels

An Invitation to join a 70-day Cascade of Prayer

Background

The Olympic Torch is to be run throughout the UK for the 70 days leading up to the opening of the 2012 Games.

The route takes it through more than 1,000 communities and within ten miles of almost the whole of the UK's population.

For more details of where the Torch will travel –

- At www.morethangold.org.uk/torchplaces you'll find the route the Torch will take
- At www.morethangold.org.uk/torchrelay there's a fuller picture of More Than Gold's response to the Relay

The goal

Our longing is to see –

- The Olympic Torch Relay used as a catalyst by hundreds of churches to mobilise united and creative prayer for their communities and the Nations
- This cascade of prayer preparing the way for all the service, mission and hospitality taking place in thousands of communities during 2012 and beyond

Being developed is a separate prayer initiative for the Paralympic Torch Relay, which has its focus on the UK's capital cities.

Prayers where the Torch stops

The way the prayer relay will work is as follows -

- When the Torch starts its journey, from Lands End on Saturday 19th May, Christian leaders will launch the cascade of prayer. They will then travel to the next main Torch stopping place (Plymouth). Here they will bring prayers of blessing and hand on a symbolic prayer baton to Christian leaders there.

- That simple process will continue day by day. That means, the next day, Plymouth leaders will travel to Exeter – and so on through the 70 days.
- This means each community receives and releases prayers of blessing.

It will up to the churches in each place that receives the Torch to decide when and how the prayer chain of blessing is moved on. The More than Gold local link person can be contacted through torch@morethangold.org.uk

We ask for the focus to be on praying for the release of God's blessing and light among our communities and the Nations. And the approach used to include all Christian traditions

Pray as the Torch passes by

As the Torch Relay passes through communities we encourage them to mark the event with prayer. This can be by –

- ***Individuals and small groups*** - praying outside homes, offices, along streets, in parks and in workplaces
- ***Churches or groups of churches*** - holding short prayer times in public spaces along or near the route

Praying during the 70 days

With the needs of our communities and the Nations in mind, there is good reason to pray when the Olympic Torch is not in the locality. This could involve –

- Prayer walking on every street
- Holding prayer vigils, evenings, days or weeks of prayer – some churches are organising weeks of prayer ahead of the Torch Relay in their deaneries.
- Being creative - one denomination has set up a 'design a prayer baton competition'

The help you need to be part of 'Shine as the Flame Travels'

On the way from More Than Gold are a set of creative ideas for personal and united prayer times, prayers of blessing, prayer service outlines and prayer walking guidelines for all age groups.

They will be ready to download free of charge from the More Than Gold website by February 2012.

In addition, there is a **free 48 page publication** to help churches engage with the Torch Relay and the period of the Games. It has –

- **Ideas** for large screen festivals, barbecues, street parties, picnics, breakfasts, children's games, sports quizzes and competitions.
- **Resources** for church activities, including an all-age sermon outline, sketches, prayers and outlines for small groups. To help churches publicise their activities there is a sample press release and a church magazine article.

Details of this and other free resources from More Than Gold can be found at www.morethangold.org.uk/free-resources

The next step for churches

We are asking every church, in all of the 1,000 communities through which the Torch will pass to –

1. **Raise the idea** at the next meeting of leaders, Churches Together or whatever network best serves Christian unity in your area and start to make plans
2. **Co-ordinate your involvement** in conjunction with whatever else is being planned during the Torch Relay programme in or near your community
3. **Let us know your plans** as they emerge and link with your local More than Gold Torch representative, so events can be locally publicised. Just email us at torch@morethangold.org.uk
4. **Share your ideas**. We will use our website and our Facebook to highlight the creative ideas being planned so ideas and resources can be shared. Please just talk to us on our Facebook page – there's a link to it from our website home page.

We look forward to hearing from you.

More than Gold Prayer Team December 2011