



Uniting Church Of Australia
Queensland Synod

presents



A short group-based course aiming to equip and encourage Christians to grow and share their faith.

A RED EARTH FILMS PRODUCTION

Faith Stories

Prepared by Graham Beattie and Duncan Macleod.

© 2009 Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod



Acknowledgements

This is a Vision for Mission funded project developed for the Pilgrim Learning Community

Film production: Red Earth Films

Narrator: Peter Armstrong

Consultants: Jason Bray and Bruce Mullan

Thanks to the people of Logan Uniting Church, Redcliffe Uniting Church and all who have shared their stories.

Further copies of this resource may be ordered from

Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod

GPO Box 674 Brisbane 4001

07 3377 9777

The logo for 'FAITH Stories' is centered at the top of the page. It consists of a dark horizontal bar with a circular emblem in the middle. The emblem has a metallic, 3D effect and contains the words 'FAITH' and 'Stories' in a bold, sans-serif font, with 'FAITH' on the top line and 'Stories' on the bottom line.

FAITH Stories

Welcome to ***Faith Stories*** – a small group based journey to equip and encourage you in sharing your faith naturally through your friendship networks. The course consists of eight sessions, each lasting between about 1½ to 2 hours. Throughout this journey you’ll watch some stories, share experiences, study the Bible, pray together and discuss ideas. Between each session there are set ‘homework assignments’ where you’ll get a chance to read and put your learning and discoveries into practice.

The titles of the different sessions are:

Session 1 – **An Introduction to Faith Stories**

Session 2 – **Why Share Faith?**

Session 3 – **Relationships – The Key to Faith Sharing**

Session 4 – **Relationship Skills – Listening & Dialogue**

Session 5 – **Identifying the Divine Clues**

Session 6 – **Connecting Stories with Friends**

Session 7 – **Coaching for Faith Response**

Session 8 – **Discipleship in Community**

COURSE GOALS

- To encourage, motivate and equip Christians to be proactive in communicating their faith in Jesus with their non-Christian friends.
- To inspire Christians to grow their relationships with non-believers in their relational networks.
- To motivate and equip Christians to develop personal lifestyles and practices that facilitates authentic evangelism
- To develop communities of support and empowerment for relational evangelism.



Most groups find it important to have someone lead or facilitate the group meeting. It doesn't have to be the same person every week. People may take it in turns. But always start with a more experienced leader to show others with less experience how it is done.

Facilitation is very important given the diversity of people within a group. There is likely to be a range of ages, a mix of spiritual experiences and a variety of viewpoints. Some people may also have better interpersonal skills than others (e.g. some will be better listeners; some may have more empathy than others.)

People move through three stages in developing their participation in a group:

- Inclusion (how can I feel part of the life of this group?)
- Influence (how can I have some say in what happens?)
- Intimacy (how can I feel close to the other people?)

The facilitator is a person who will help other people in a group participate more fully.

The facilitator of a ***Faith Stories*** group needs to find ways to:

- Welcome people.
- Invite each one to participate.
- Value each one's contribution
- Encourage each one to offer their own contribution while still being open to the ideas of others.
- Encourage people to exchange differing viewpoints in a spirit of humility (building each other up) rather than merely debating opposing positions (and tearing one another down);
- Challenge people to help each other step out of their comfort zones, and take small but significant moves to embody their learning in their daily lives.

Structure of Each Session:

Each session has a video introduction, with material presented by Peter Armstrong alongside personal reflections and role plays.

Each session includes Biblical reflection and opportunity for personal and group prayer.

Each session invites people to talk about their own experience, relating to 'homework' and life experience in general.

Each session invites people to reflect during the week on a reading and some kind of action research. Check at the beginning of each session on how people went. If necessary, catch up with the concepts introduced in the readings.

Most sessions include time for personal reflection and journaling.

Allow time at the end of each session to brief the group on homework for the week. We recommend that the group celebrates with food and drink, particularly in the first and eighth sessions.

Support Group:

If the group is larger than six, we encourage you to form smaller support groups of four people, preferably with continuity from session to session. This enables a level of mutual accountability and provides time for all to tell their story.

Materials Needed for Each Session:

A DVD video is used in each session. Participants will need access to Bibles. Large sheets of paper and marker pens are needed in Session 3 and 8. You will need a large candle in Session 6.

The video in the introduction session can be used for promotion. The Participants Workbook should be printed and made available to each person. Instructions for the group can be led by any of the members of the group.

INTRODUCTIONS

 **15 MINUTES** Introduce yourself to the group using four ways of describing yourself:

- My name
- Something I might have in common with other people here
- Something that is unique about me
- Why I'm here for this course

**VIDEO INTRODUCTION**

 **20 MINUTES** Peter Armstrong introduces the course.

- Any response to Peter's introduction?
- What questions do you have in response to the video?
- What do you think of Peter's description of the course as not being about how to convert your friends, but being about bringing your best to your relationships?

Because of the rhythms of our lives we don't always see our friends and family on a regular basis. While this course is designed to help us be more proactive in sharing faith, it is not intended to send us out on "artificial hunts for prey".

The goals of the **Faith Stories** course are:

- To encourage, motivate and equip Christians to be proactive in communicating their faith in Jesus with their non-Christian friends.
- To inspire Christians to grow their relationships with non-believers in their relational networks.
- To motivate and equip Christians to develop personal lifestyles and practices that facilitate authentic evangelism.
- To develop communities of support and empowerment for relational evangelism.



DISCUSSION

 30 MINUTES

- Any questions or comments about the aims of the course?
- Are there any phrases or concepts that you want to talk about before we start?
- What have you learned from other courses that you want to build on?
- Take a look at the titles of the seven sessions. How might this course be different to other courses you have done on sharing faith?

Session 2 – Why Share Faith?

Session 3 – Relationships – The Key to Faith Sharing

Session 4 – Relationship Skills – Listening & Dialogue

Session 5 – Identifying the Divine Clues

Session 6 – Connecting Stories with Friends

Session 7 – Coaching for Faith Response

Session 8 – Discipleship in Community

As a group we need to agree on how often we meet, starting and finishing times. To do justice to the process we need to allow for 90 minutes for each session, and at least a week in between sessions to provide time for reading, conversation and reflection. Do we want to include refreshments each time we meet for the course?

LEARNING GOALS

 **2 MINUTES** This session is designed to help us be honest about our own experience and feelings in sharing faith, understand what the **Faith Stories** course is about, and reflect on ways in which people are changed by a relationship with God.

**VIDEO STORY**

 **20 MINUTES** Lu Senituli talks about the conversation he had with a taxi driver that gave him hope and pointed him in the direction of exploring a relationship with God. Reflect and share your responses.

- What are your first reactions after watching Lu's story?
- What difference did the conversation with the taxi driver have on Lu's life?
- Has anyone in the group been introduced to the Christian good news by a stranger or friend?

- Could you imagine yourself being the taxi driver in the story? Why? Why not?



SUPPORT GROUP

Get into small groups of 4 people each.

GETTING REAL

 **20 MINUTES** How confident are you in sharing your faith? Tick a box and share your response:

- I do not have faith, so the question is not applicable
- I do not talk about my faith; my life and actions are sufficient
- I find it hard to express my faith in ordinary language
- I mostly feel at ease talking about my faith and do so if it comes up
- I feel at ease talking about my faith and seek opportunities to do so

What are some of the factors that make faith sharing a challenge for you?

What would you describe as inappropriate approaches to sharing faith?

If you could use this course to develop an approach to sharing faith you feel good about, what would it look like?

What are ways we can support each other during this course?

This support group will be meeting each session to talk about our stories and explore our questions together. What are ways we can support each other during the course?



DISCUSSION



20 MINUTES

“Proclaiming the Good news” in the New Testament is often translated in English Bibles as “Preaching the Good News”. However many of the stories about Jesus and his followers indicate that the good news was often shared in conversations, one to one, or in group settings. Jesus seems to have a different way of relating to each person he meets.

Read Matthew 9:9-10

“As Jesus was leaving, he saw a tax collector named Matthew sitting at the place for paying taxes. Jesus said to him, “Come with me.” Matthew got up and went with him. Later, Jesus and his disciples were having dinner at Matthew's house. Many tax collectors and other sinners were also there.”

Reflect and share your responses with the group.

What difference do you think meeting Jesus might have made for Matthew and his friends?

In what ways has your experience of Jesus affected your life?



PRAYER TIME

CONFIDENCE IN THE GOSPEL



5 MINUTES

A PRAYER LITANY BASED ON ROMANS 1:16

Choose four people to read the prayer below, with everyone joining in the parts in italics.

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel...” (Everyone)

Who are we kidding, Lord? There have been times when we’ve been ashamed to be seen as followers of Jesus. Christians are often put down in our culture. Seen as wusses or God-botherers, we’re often the butt of jokes in the media and wider society. That hurts. There are times when we see examples of Christianity that we’d rather not be associated with. And yes, we confess there’ve also been times when we’ve been ashamed to be identified with you and your Gospel.

“... it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith...” (Everyone)

But God we know that there's power in the good news about you. Power to bring hope, to give life, to know freedom – the ability to begin again, no matter what life has been like before. Thank you Lord for the ways we've experienced your power in our lives. And thank you too that this same life-giving energy is freely available for all people, including the people we know in our circles of life.

“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith...” (Everyone)

Loving God we know that in Jesus we see you as you truly are. A God who always acts out of justice and mercy. Lord we pray that our friends may come to know the reality of your loving kindness in their lives too.

“... as it is written, ‘The one who is righteous will live by faith’”. (Everyone)

Our prayer is that through the way we live, love, listen and relate our friends may come to discover for themselves faith in the Christ who gives fresh starts to people's lives.



HOMWORK ASSIGNMENT

1. List the networks that you connect with.

Family/Relatives	Work/Vocational
Neighbourhood/Community	Sports/Hobbies/Interests
Internet	Other

2. What is it about our experience of Jesus that people in your networks could connect with?

Write out your response to the question on the next page, and be prepared to share your response in your support group in no more than 3 minutes next week.

The focus is on your experience of Jesus whatever that has been (e.g. guidance from Scripture, answered prayer, via Christian community, spiritual support in time of need) in a way that connects with your specific friends' searches and concerns.

Write your response for Question 2 here:

LEARNING GOALS

 **2 MINUTES** This third session is designed to help us explore the potential of our personal networks, work on a lifestyle of friendship, identify our own network map of non Christian friends and associates, and pray for non Christian friends to come to know Jesus.

**VIDEO STORY***CONNECTING FRIENDSHIP & FAITH*

 **15 MINUTES** As we watch today's video, note the networks and friendships that are talked about by each person.

People at a church picnic talk about the ways in which they were first connected with Christian faith.

Note the impact of networking on the people telling their faith stories. Who were the people who connected with them? Share your answers with the group.

 **5 MINUTES** Research into what helped people connect with and belong to a church highlights the role of friends and relatives.

A survey, polling 8000 active church members in South Australia, identified the factors responsible for members actively belonging to a church.

Walk-In	5%	Crusade or TV	.0001%
Minister	7%	Church Program	3%
Door-to-door Visiting	1%	Friend/Relative	80%
Sunday School	4%		

*Dean Hampton, "Down the Track", Ruminations
Rural Ministry Unit, UCA, NSW Synod*

National Church Life Survey results have shown that 64% of unchurched first time newcomers in Australia first came to church via personal contact.



DISCUSSION

 **10 MINUTES** What factors in the survey above first influenced your first connection with the church?

 **10 MINUTES** What does the story of Andrew and Peter in John 1: 35-42 say to us about the potential of friendships and networks for sharing faith?

NETWORKING LIFESTYLE

 **10 MINUTES** It's through our lifestyles that we can connect with people. For effective witnessing a Christian's lifestyle needs to include:

- **Accessibility** – being available and accessible – taking time to connect with non church-goers developing understanding, friendship and trust.
- **Empathy** – taking time to walk in their shoes, coming alongside, listening and seeking to understand where they're at from their perspective before speaking yourself.
- **Service** – seeking to genuinely serve them and be useful – evangelising is about actions as well as words.
- **Prayer** – mission is God's work first and foremost. Learn to evangelise in a collaboration with the Holy Spirit that is born of prayer.

Discuss: How do these elements of lifestyle relate to the stories we saw in the video?



SUPPORT GROUP

NETWORK IN IMAGES

 **20 MINUTES** As a group, draw a large diagram or picture that picks up the elements of networking in the stories and the lifestyle of networking described above.



TIME OUT

MAPPING OUR NETWORKS



15 MINUTES

Take some time out for personal prayer and reflection. In the grid below, list (first names or initials only) relatives, friends and associates within your own relational network who, as far as you can discern, are not actively practising Christian faith.

Family/Relatives	Work/Vocational
Neighbourhood/Community	Sports/Hobbies/Interests
Internet	Other

Identify each name according to the following code:

- X = Those you see as currently closed to personally exploring Christian Faith;
- O = Those you see as currently open to personally exploring Christian Faith.
- ? = Those you're not sure about

Pray for the Holy Spirit to lay on your heart 3 people from your Network Map for you to specifically journey with in helping their spiritual growth. Write their names in the space below (unless you sense God indicating otherwise, we recommend not including more than 1-2 'X's' on your list):

Names:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



SUPPORT GROUP

 **10 MINUTES** As a small group, share your grids and names with each other and discuss ways of supporting one another as you journey with your non-Christian friends. Conclude with prayer for each other in the adventure of sharing faith stories.



DISCUSSION

 **10 MINUTES** As a large group compare the small group posters of pictures, symbols or flow charts.

What questions have arisen from the processes and content used in this session?

Take a look at the two homework challenges:



HOMWORK ASSIGNMENT

1. Read Graham Beattie's article, **"Where do we meet?"**
2. In the light of the article, choose at least one person from your **Network Map** and intentionally share an act of mutual friendship with him/her before the next session.

WHERE DO WE MEET?

"As Jesus was leaving, he saw a tax collector named Matthew sitting at the place for paying taxes. Jesus said to him, "Come with me." Matthew got up and went with him. Later, Jesus and his disciples were having dinner at Matthew's house. Many tax collectors and other sinners were also there."

(Matthew 9: 9-10)

This story about Matthew's dinner party for his non religious friends raises for me the question: "What's the best space for connecting our friends with Jesus?"

What's the best space for meeting people, connecting with them, getting to know them and sharing faith and life with them?

How can we get to know other people at a level where we can connect at a depth that is appropriate and meaningful.

Let's consider four kinds of 'space' in which we connect with others.

Public Space

Public space refers to those places that are freely available to all members of the public. Positive public spaces are those where people feel welcomed, not threatened, and can find their way around. In a neighbourhood environment, the public space would be the street or pavement, where anyone can drive or walk.

Conversation in the public space is usually expected to stay on the surface. A conversation in the supermarket generally touches on topics anyone could listen in on without offence.

Social Space

Social spaces are those places where relaxed conversation can happen in a shared environment, without the pressure to move on.

The social space is where we invite the other person to pull up a chair and have a chat. It's that space where we can get to know one another through exploring ideas and sharing stories.

In the traditional local neighbourhood, social space would be the front verandah or over the fence. Most Australian homes are now being built with outdoor living in the back rather than front of the property. Social space is more likely to be found in cafes, bars and clubs.

Personal Space

The personal space is where we invite those with whom we have developed relationships in the social space to come deeper into our lives.

It's welcoming people from the 'verandah' into the 'dining or lounge rooms'; into those places where we reveal more of ourselves and accept and encourage others to be truly themselves as well.

This is what is happening in Matthew's party. After meeting Jesus in the public space of his tax booth, Matthew responds to Jesus' call to follow him by inviting him into his home for a meal.

It's in the personal space relationships move beyond the social and superficial to the authentic, the personal, where faith is tested and stretched.

Private Space

The private space is the most intimate space in our lives into which we invite very few others, usually just our spouse, family members and very special friends. This is the place of intimacy.

Again using the analogy of a home it would be the kitchen table where the family shares meals together, or the bedroom where husband and wife sleep together.

In the private space we communicate at the deepest level of all. This is where we share ourselves spiritually and with deep transparency and vulnerability with the people we're closest to. It's also the space we use for communicating with God.

We're more likely to connect with each others' private lives during times of crisis

such as illness and bereavement, and in celebrations such as the birth of a child.

Connecting Spaces

Experiencing Jesus can happen in any space.

Jesus met Matthew in the public arena and gave him a challenge for discipleship that changed his life.

Matthew knew that his home was a social space where Matthew's friends could safely spend time personally meeting Jesus.

Jesus was living in a time when religious leaders strongly advised their followers to avoid eating and drinking with people who were disreputable or who did not take dietary laws seriously. Inviting Matthew's friends to the local synagogue would have set them up for rejection. Instead Jesus broke the taboos of his time and connected with these new friends in their space.

Jesus' conversation with Matthew and his friends would have helped connect faith and action with public and personal aspects of life.

My experience is that it's in the personal space that sharing both life and faith stories comes naturally. Sometimes this personal space can be opened even for a few minutes in a social space.

For example, a few months ago at a party associated with my wife's work I got into a conversation with someone I'd never met before and he asked me to share with him my call to ministry.

Conclusion

What does it mean for you to connect your friends with faith, in public, social, personal and private spaces?

We all have the challenge of deliberately spending time in our community's social spaces. Where would that be for you? Work places, sports clubs, community groups, sporting networks are some obvious possibilities.

Who are those people with whom we're connecting regularly at a social or work related level that seem potentially open to going further; who could be open to moving into a social or personal space?

Have you found ways to help people move from the public through the social to the personal where together you can explore those aspects of faith and life that give hope, belonging and meaning?

And what would be the next step for you to invite them into that space? Into your home for a meal, watching a football game with them, playing a game of cards around at their home or yours?

Remember to intentionally share an act of mutual friendship with someone in your network map before the next session.

SESSION

4

Relationship Skills – Listening & Dialogue

LEARNING GOALS

 **2 MINUTES** This fourth session is designed to help us value the priority of listening and respectful dialogue, evaluate our own strengths and weaknesses in listening and dialogue, and find clues about God-given quests present in our lives.



SUPPORT GROUP

NETWORKING & LISTENING

 **15 MINUTES** Talk about the acts of mutual friendship from the week.

How would you respond to the questions in the last column of the article, “Connecting Spaces”?



DISCUSSION

Talk about people who have listened to you during your life. How did it make you feel?



VIDEO STORY

 **10 MINUTES** Note the impact of listening and dialogue on the café conversation. What difference did it make in the second time round?

What did the Christian woman do that helped her friend respond to Jesus?

What do you think of Peter's CURE: Connect, Understand, Respond, Engage and Evaluate?

LISTENING AND DIALOGUE

 **10 MINUTES** Read quietly or together the following section "Is Anyone Interested?"

IS ANYONE INTERESTED?

Listening is one of the central practices in connecting friends with faith. Effective listening isn't just about getting information from someone else. It's also about strengthening a relationship and giving space for the other person to truly be themselves.

Active listening, listening with empathy, means paying attention to what is really being communicated, encouraging another person to express what is being thought and felt. It involves paying attention to body language, tone of voice, and what's not being said.

This kind of listening is sometimes called 'active listening' because it involves concentration, awareness and talking in a way that encourages trust and continued dialogue.

Without self-discipline, our listening can turn into lecturing, defending, interrogation, moralizing, analysis or changing the subject.

Some important skills in active listening are:

- **Body Language that demonstrates interest and respect** – facing the other person, eye contact (where appropriate), open posture, leaning towards.
- **Paraphrasing** - Responding with the essence of what you believe they're thinking, feeling and needing, in your own words.
- **Checking perceptions** – asking if you're hearing correctly.
- **Giving feedback** – sharing your perceptions of the other's ideas and feelings, and sharing relevant.
- **Being quiet** – giving the other person time to think as well as talk.

What other skills would you add to this list?

When you've worked on your listening skills, you have the opportunity to express the other half of dialogue, revealing who you are and what you are thinking, feeling and needing.

Your beliefs, values and behavior patterns are more likely to have impact on others when you're prepared to listen respectfully to others, sharing your own perspective without putting others down.

Dialogue involves gradually revealing the thoughts, feelings, values and beliefs that go with your actions. It involves being vulnerable enough to talk through why you see things the way you do, and being prepared to learn from the perspectives of others.



DISCUSSION



25 MINUTES

How would you recognise a genuine two-way conversation?

What does each person need to do to make this happen?

What other listening skills would you add to the list on page 25?

In James 1:19 we read “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry”.

In light of that advice, **read Acts 8:26-40**, the story of Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch.

Do you see any evidence of active listening in the story? If you were Phillip, what other active listening skills could you have used?

How do you think that active listening encourages dialogue about faith?

 **TIME OUT**

 **10 MINUTES** Complete the following personal assessment of your own skills in listening and dialogue. This is for your personal reflection only.

S for strong, **M** for medium, **W** for weak.

- Using supportive body language _____
- Listening empathically (listening from the other’s perspective) _____
- Listening to whole person (tone of voice, body language, words) _____
- Ability to rephrase content _____
- Ability to reflect feelings _____
- Personal credibility (matching words with actions) _____
- Ability to communicate logically _____
- Ability to stay on track with what the other is saying _____
- Discerning the nudging of the Holy Spirit (eg Acts 8) _____
- Asking questions that lead to further dialogue _____

 **PRAYER TIME**

When all have finished, have one person pray through all above ten elements, one at a time – giving thanks for those who are strong and praying for those who need to develop further in each particular area. For example, “We give thanks for those who use supportive body language, and we pray for your help for those who need to develop this skill further.”



HOMWORK ASSIGNMENT

1. Try out active listening skills in your every day conversations this week. Use the assessment chart to look at the ways you are entering into dialogue with others.
2. Read the article, **“Listening for Spiritual Interest”**.
3. Identify, eg. from newspapers, magazines, books, films, TV, personal conversations you’ve experienced over the week, examples of a spiritual quest in the wider culture to share next week.

By Graham Beattie

Can you recognise the signs of Spirit inspired thirst in your relational network?

One way to see these signs is recognizing spiritual experiences that don't neatly fit into Christian names or church environments.

David Hay and Kate Hunt wrote a study in the UK on understanding the spirituality of people who don't go to church, the Adults Spirituality Project, University of Nottingham. Their survey covered experiences such as awareness of a patterning of events, God's presence, prayer being answered, a sacred presence in nature, the presence of the dead, and an evil presence. What they found was that awareness of the spiritual had increased significantly between 1987 and 2000. The most common kind of experience reported was the recognition of a transcendent providence: a patterning of events in a person's life that convinces them that in some strange way those events were meant to happen.

From our discussion we've reflected on the importance of coming alongside, developing a relationship and listening to the other person. Relationships grow and develop through the two way flow of listening and dialogue with one another. Particularly through listening we can begin to discern what the Spirit of God is doing in the other person's life.

Listening then helps us to identify 'the next step questions' – the best questions to ask that will encourage your friend to take the next step in their spiritual journey.

Sometimes, as with Philip, the questions will be obvious. Here was a foreigner, an Ethiopian, reading Hebrew scripture that was written in a language that wasn't his mother tongue. "Do you understand what you are reading?" was a fairly obvious question.

Other times, next step questions are not so obvious.

We can see hints of a spiritual quest in Spirit-inspired searches for freedom, fulfillment, friendship and future.

- **Freedom** – from addictions, destructive behaviors, anxiety, fear, oppression, abusive relationships
- **Fulfillment** – finding a sense of purpose/meaning in life, core values to live by and the power to do so, truth, connecting with creation and with a power greater than oneself, a sense of significance, or hope for the future – we might also describe this as ‘freedom for’.
- **Friendship** – experiencing forgiveness and reconciliation with others, peace with God, belonging to an authentic community, loving relationships.
- **Future** – moving through transition times, facing loss and limitations, finding hope for new beginnings, dealing with the end of significant relationships, dealing with death, considering life after death.

All these are indicators or signals of the likelihood that your friend is engaged in a spiritual quest, although often they may not realise it.

So what questions will encourage them to take the next step? For example, you discern your friend is seeking an inner source that will nourish their desire to live a life of integrity in a work context where integrity often gets compromised. Your ‘next step questions’ could be, “So what would being true to who you are look like for you in that context?” and/or “Do you know others who stick to their values? What do you sense empowers them to live with such integrity?”

LEARNING GOALS

 **2 MINUTES** This fifth session is designed to help us think about how people first connect with Christian faith, describe at least three different approaches to sharing the good news of Jesus, and see ways in which the Christian gospel, along with relevant aspects of our experience of Jesus, means good news for people in our networks.

**DISCUSSION**

NETWORKING & LISTENING

 **20 MINUTES** Reflect on homework assignment 3 (Session 4). Discuss the indicators you've seen of God-given quests in your community.

How did people go with trying out their listening skills?



VIDEO STORY



15 MINUTES

Listening to the stories on the video, how did people first connect with God?

How did you first connect with God? What helped you? What didn't help?

In 1 John 4:19 it is written, "We love because God first loved us." In Romans 5:8 we read, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still **sinners**, Christ died for us."

How does this change the way we relate to others?

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 2: 1-5, focuses his message only on Jesus Christ and him crucified. What is the good news about Jesus that you think is helpful for people in your network?



SUPPORT GROUP

CASE STUDIES



30 MINUTES

What was your response to the article on God-given Quests in last week's homework? Referring to the article if need be, consider at least two different God-given quests using the following scenarios and questions.

- What's happening here at a deeper level in my friend's life?
- Is there anything here that makes me feel vulnerable? Any feeling it might generate that would get in the way of my responding positively?
- What would Jesus say or do here to respond authentically?
- What questions could I ask or what could I say or do that would help my friend take the next step in their spiritual growth.

1. **Freedom** – from: addictions, destructive behaviors, anxiety, fear, oppression, abusive relationships

Scenario:

Your friend Megan is unhappy in her job. She finds it dull, repetitive and boring. Megan would really love to work in the travel industry but that would mean a one- year full-time TAFE course to get the required qualification. Although she's an intelligent person, Megan lacks the inner confidence that she would succeed. She's afraid of burning her bridges behind her if she resigns from her current job.

2. **Fulfillment** – finding: a sense of purpose/meaning in life, core values to live by and the power to do so, truth, connecting with creation and with a power greater than oneself, a sense of significance, or hope for the future – we might also describe this as 'freedom for'.

Scenario:

Chen Li has just won a fantastic scholarship to study the violin overseas. While she is excited about this wonderful opportunity Chen Li is also beginning to raise with you her good friend whether there is more to life than just being a successful musician.

3. **Friendship** – experiencing: forgiveness & reconciliation with others, peace with God, belonging to an authentic community, loving relationships

Scenario:

Greg is the new guy at work that you (another guy) have been getting to know during lunch breaks over the last couple of weeks. He's recently moved from interstate and has shared with you that he's recovering from a messy divorce and doesn't really know anyone outside work.

4. **Future** – moving through transition times, facing loss, finding hope for new beginnings, dealing with the end of significant relationships, dealing with death, considering life after death.

Scenario:

Ryan has recently been diagnosed with liver cancer and has been informed there is little hope of a cure. He's started attending church.

Talk about your answer to the question, "What is it about my experience of Jesus my friend could connect with?"



TIME OUT



10 MINUTES

In the light of these case studies could you reshape the way you talk about your experience of Jesus so that it helps people in your network connect with good news? If so, what would you change?

Write a prayer for yourself and each of the three people in your network, to be read aloud in your support group. Try and include what God is doing in their lives already, and wisdom to see how they might experience God.



DISCUSSION

Share together the insights that came from working through the case studies.



HOMWORK ASSIGNMENT

1. Identify examples of a God-given quest in your own life, and in the lives of your family and friends.

2. **Read the article on Entry Points to Good News.** Which entry point do you think would best connect with your friends' personal journey and address their spiritual needs in light of the above?

3. **Read through John 4:4-42,** or watch it on the Gospel of John DVD – the story of the Samaritan woman at the well.

By Duncan Macleod

How do you begin to explain the good news about Jesus to someone? What are the entry points through which people connect with the life, death, resurrection and ongoing life of Jesus today.

One way of describing 'entry points' is imagining that the cross is surrounded by a wall with a number of gates or doors. Over time a person has the opportunity to walk around and see the cross from different perspectives.

Someone may first start following Jesus, taking his lead as a servant, before discovering a reassurance of forgiveness of sin. At what point is that person a Christian, a disciple of Jesus? Does it matter? What does matter is that we help people access the good news of Jesus without requiring them first to adopt our interpretation of the cross.

1. **The Forgiveness Gate** speaks of the new relationship we have with God when we accept that the death of Christ has dealt with the impact of our sin. God doesn't treat us according to a list of our virtues and faults. Instead God regards us with grace, undeserved mercy. There is nothing we can do to earn that unconditional love. Romans outlines this approach to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, reminding us that God's acceptance is received through an attitude of trust in Jesus.
2. **The Release Gate** speaks of Christ bringing freedom to the captives. Colossians 2.15 says that Christ defeated all powers and forces, letting the whole world see them being led away as prisoners when he celebrated his victory. For an example from the life of Jesus see the story of the man with many spirits (Legion) in Mark 5.1-20. People who are struggling with issues of sin, addiction and the power of evil, (personal or corporate) may find this gate relevant to them.
3. **The Cleansing Gate** takes the sense of forgiveness and goes deeper, dealing with a sense of uncleanness or shame. The Jewish scriptures include actions of animal sacrifices that symbolize the removal of uncleanness. 1 John 1:7 to 2:2 introduces us to the symbolic offering of Jesus as a way of dealing with sin and shame. Another more accessible symbol of

cleansing is baptism, as expressed in I Peter 3. 20-21. Perhaps the most powerful stories of cleansing from the gospels would be Jesus' interactions with lepers, people whose skin diseases led to them being shunned as 'unclean'. Those struggling with shame and rejection can find in Jesus the chance for a new start, a clean page to begin again.

4. **The Suffering Gate** focuses on Christ's suffering for us, and meeting us in our times of suffering. I Peter 2.21-25 talks about Christ setting an example by suffering for us. Mark 5.24-34 illustrates Jesus bringing healing for a sick woman. In John 11 we read about Jesus grieving with those who were lamenting the death of Lazarus. It's through this gate that people who are experiencing personal suffering in their lives may first connect with Jesus.

5. **The Leadership Gate** holds Jesus out to us as a representative person, pioneer, forerunner, leader and firstborn, as I Corinthians 15.20-22 teaches. Luke 7.1-10 gives us the story of a centurion (Roman officer soldier) who is inspired by Jesus' capacity to lead. People who have a calling in terms of leadership may identify with this image of Christ.

6. **The Courage Gate** reminds us of how Jesus laid down his life for us, as Jesus says in John 15.13. Revelation 12.11 shows people who were given courage to give up their lives, inspired by the sacrificial death of Jesus. For those who are fearful for their lives in a violent society the martyr-witness picture of Revelation 1.5-6 can show them how to live with courage in the face of violence - and even to die for their faith.

7. **The Change Gate** connects our new Christian life with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Zaccheus, according to Luke 19: 1-10, was transformed by his meeting with Jesus, in a way that changed the lives of those around him. Romans 12:1-2 reminds us that we are to go on being transformed. Our experience of God in Jesus can give us new goals, new hopes, and new dreams, helping us transform the world around us, praying "Your Kingdom come, on Earth as in Heaven".

8. **The Service Gate** captures the life of service we owe to the One who purchased us from the slave-market of sin, as Galatians 4.5 teaches. Philemon gives a practical example of a slave who was learning what it meant to be a follower of Jesus. The earliest creed of the early Christian community was "Jesus is Lord". The life, death and resurrection of Jesus shows us the true nature of religion – service! See also James 1:27 and Isaiah 58 for what constitutes real religion – the religion God approves of. The Service Gate may be good news

for people who are searching for purpose, direction, calling, and affirmation of their commitment to serving others.

9. **The Reconciliation Gate** reminds us of how God turns his enemies into friends – as Colossians 1.20-22 teaches. Don Richardson, a Canadian missionary, found that the Sawi people of Irian Jaya responded to Jesus as the sacrificial peacemaker, because of their custom of ‘peace child’, in which warring chiefs would exchange their sons as ‘peace child’. Jesus lived this out in his life as he crossed boundaries to make friends with people who had been excluded as outsiders. The early Church discovered the good news that following Jesus was available to people from different cultures. Christ has broken down every wall, says the writer of Ephesians. People struggling with broken relationships, or who feel alienated from God, may find this aspect of the cross the most powerful to begin with.

10. **The Belonging Gate** focuses on the wonderful family privileges we now enjoy through the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Galatians 4.3-7 reminds us that we have been adopted as God’s children. The parable of the prodigal son, told in Luke 15.11-22, reminds us that even if we have wandered far from God, we are welcomed back into God’s family. This is the gate most attractive to people who long for a sense of belonging, community and acceptance. It’s the gate that means the most when it is backed up by a loving Christian community.

There are many other gates of the cross found in the New Testament and through the life of the Church today. For example we could talk about the Truth Gate, remembering that Jesus talked about being the Way, The Truth, and The Life. We could talk about the Eternity gate, used throughout the Gospel of John, in which Jesus introduces us to everlasting life that begins now.

We have traditionally emphasized that “it is by grace that we are saved, through faith in Jesus Christ”. That certainly applies to the forgiveness gate, although Jesus did teach us to pray, “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us”. Each of these ways of connecting with the life of Jesus is a gift that inspires and calls for a personal response.

Some people relate to God first as Father. Some initially focus more on Jesus. Others relate most to the Holy Spirit. The Christian gospel provides entry points for good news that start people on a journey of discovery and growth, learning to relate to God more fully throughout their lives.

Which of the above gates was the one that you first related to in your experience of God? Through which gate are you now relating most to God? Which other gates can you identify that are not in the list here?

Some Christians identify the moment of becoming a Christian with the “sinner’s prayer”, a prayer expressing trust in the forgiveness shown in Jesus. If we take seriously that people enter a life-long journey with Jesus through many entry points, we need to find other prayers as well. What would they be called? The forgiver’s prayer? The prayer of an advocate for justice? The prayer of the suffering? The peacemaker’s prayer? What would they include?

For further reading read “**Understanding the Atonement for the Mission of the Church**”, by John Driver, 1987 and 2005. Thanks also to Gordon Miller, Leadership Letter, World Vision NZ.

LEARNING GOALS

 **2 MINUTES** This sixth session is designed to help us identify our own personal support needs for developing a faith sharing lifestyle, discern ways the Gospel could connect with our non Christian friends, and choose language that might help our friends connect with faith in God.

**VIDEO STORY**

 **15 MINUTES** Watch to see how Jacky Matthews shares her faith, helping her friends discover connections with God.

What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of Jacky's five pointers:

1. Prepare
2. Connect
3. Use Prayer
4. Use discussion starters
5. Be selective

What do you think of Jacky's question, "What if my testimony seems boring?" and "What if they don't relate to my story?"



DISCUSSION

SCENARIOS

 **30 MINUTES** As a group review the Entry Points to Good News article.

What do you find helpful from the article?

What questions does it leave you with?

Which of the gates from the article do you think you might have related to first in your life?
Through which gate are you now relating to God most?

Refer the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4:4-26.

How did Jesus help this woman connect with the Gospel? How did her response influence those in her network?

In your small group consider at least two of the following scenarios identifying:

- The Quests foremost in this person's life – e.g. friendship, fulfillment, freedom, future (pp. 29-30)
- The Entry Points that could be most relevant to them (see pp 38-41)
- The aspect of your **Faith Stories** and experience of Jesus could be most relevant to the person at this time (pp 12-13)
- Are there people's stories of faith in your network that relate?

Scenario 1

Your friend Paul has been sharing with you the deep pain he's been experiencing following the relationship breakdown between him and his wife. "I'd do anything", he tells you, "if only we could become friends again."

Scenario 2

Jill, a close colleague, has been telling you about her sense of dissatisfaction with her direction in life. She senses there is something more to life than material success and has dabbled in some new age spiritualities. But you sense that she's still unsatisfied within.

Scenario 3

Marco, a member of your sporting team, really would like to be able to make a genuine difference in his local community. But he doesn't know where to start or how to find the time to give to it.

Scenario 4

Your classmate, Melanie, confesses to you that she's a compulsive gambler. She wants to be able to put it all behind her but every time she resolves never to touch the pokies again, she gives in.

Scenario 5

You've developed a close relationship with your neighbour Lee, a second generation Australian from an Asian background. Although born and raised in this country, Lee still experiences from time to time the barb of racism and prejudice. In recent weeks you've been discussing with Lee his desire to belong to an authentic, accepting community.



SUPPORT GROUP

 **15 MINUTES** FEEDBACK FROM GROUP ON HOW TO ENCOURAGE MY FRIENDS
(HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT)

In Session two we discussed ways of supporting one another in our journeys of evangelism through this group.

In light of our experiences so far, are there any particular support or accountability actions we need from each other in the group? For example, phone calls, email, prayer.

Share with the group the results of your homework assignment.

Which 'gate(s)' of the cross (from last week's homework) do you believe would best connect with your friends' personal journey and address their spiritual needs in light of the above?

In light of all of that what personal response could you make to your friends to encourage her/him to consider a relationship with Jesus?



PRAYER TIME

 **10 MINUTES** Place a lighted candle in the centre and spread your network maps (from page 17) around it.

Name your network members aloud in an atmosphere of prayer.



HOMWORK ASSIGNMENT

1. During the coming week jot down the different ways you've observed people coaching or helping others make some response or make a decision. These can be from any area of life; from real life, TV, movies, books, etc.

Coaching might happen in giving road directions, showing a child how to tie their shoelaces, helping a friend stick to a diet or give up smoking, encouraging someone to apply for a job, encouraging a fellow diner to order a meal they've never tried before, challenging a colleague to enrol in a course that will develop new skills, motivating someone to see a film.

Note the different types of 'coaching' behaviors, positive and negative, and how people respond to them. Be ready to share your observations when we come together next week.

'Coaching' Behaviors I've Noticed:

Positive coaching behaviors	Responses	Negative coaching behaviors	Responses

2. Reflect on the names of the three people you chose from your **Network Map** (p 17). Why do you want to see them take the next step of faith in Jesus? Journal your answers in the space below.

3. Read **Coaching for Growth in Faith** (below)

COACHING FOR GROWTH IN FAITH

By Duncan Macleod

Jesus, in what is known as The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), gave his disciples the challenge of discipling people from all people groups, teaching them to do what Jesus did and talked about. We often forget the two words, “to do”, and focus on teaching people to believe everything we tell them. If we believe that God is connecting with people already our conversations will be teaching people to listen to God and respond in the best way they can.

I’m motivated to find ways to share my faith that are true to who God is, true to my own experience, without manipulation.

I want to be like Nathaniel, one of the disciples of Jesus – the one whom Jesus recognised as being ‘without guile or deception’. I want to relate to other people in ways that respect their dignity, and yet encourage them to take steps of faith and courage. I know from experience that it’s helpful to have someone to help think through my faith. Having friends alongside me has helped me work my next steps in responding to God.

Coaching for response is the best metaphor I can think of for that authentic approach to faith response.

The model I often use when coaching leaders, is the set of letters, “GROW”. G stands for Goals. R stands for Reality. O stands for Options. W stands for What Will You Do? Each of these is happening in an effective coaching conversation, though not necessarily in that order.

So how might authentic coaching work in a conversation about faith?

● GOAL

First of all, the Goal. What is God is doing in the person’s life. What is the good news to which God is calling this person to respond? What’s the entry point to a journey with Jesus that this person may be considering?

One starting point is the life of Jesus. What do people believe God is calling them to do in response to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus?

Maybe it is to front up to sin – a broken relationship with God, accepting the total forgiveness of God. Maybe there’s a relationship that needs to be restored.

Maybe God’s calling your friend to learn to trust again, like the disciple Thomas – trust the reality of God’s presence, God’s acceptance. Perhaps your friend has to start with trusting the acceptance of God expressed in God’s people.

Perhaps God is calling your friend to put their life on the line, like the rich young ruler, and give away a life focused on acquiring money and possessions.

You get the idea? There's a personal response that you may not be able to predict. It may take a lot of time and conversation to discover.

Maybe your friend already knows what needs to happen. Maybe they need to do a bit more thinking. It’s always good to stop talking and start listening, asking, “How does that all sound to you?”

REALITY

This is where most of a coaching conversation focuses. It's as we explore what is really going on in a person's life that we discover what they are motivated about. Hear the stories of everyday life. Listen carefully for the hopes and hurts behind the stories.

A lot of time in a coaching conversation is spent on refocusing the goal, in the light of current reality. An example in a faith-sharing conversation would be teasing out the realities behind trusting God.

What can we trust God for? Does faith in God makes us immune to suffering? Is it realistic to give up employment in the hope that God will provide an income?

This is also a way to explore the implications of making any kind of faith response. If they're ready to respond, what will that mean in reality? What might it mean for existing relationships? Will it change lifestyle? And what would happen if your friend puts off a response or decides not to respond?

The chances are that your friend's prepared to make a short-term response to God. "I'll go this far with you". That's OK. After all, the disciples of Jesus went on short trips with him before becoming life-long followers.

OPTIONS

This is where we spend time opening up possibilities together. Options rise out of goals that have been refocused in the light of reality.

Talking through options helps us avoid a "cookie cutter approach" that so often turns people off. Christians and non-Christians alike are prone to pre-judging what being a Christian is all about.

I've had people assume they'd have to believe in a six day creation and reject the theory of evolution. I've met others who assumed they'd have to give up certain kinds of music.

When it comes to how we respond I think it's important to go beyond a black and white, Yes or No response.

Saying 'Yes' to a distorted understanding of God can lead to distorted faith and action later on. So allow people to do their homework.

Some people are ready to give their whole life over to God right now. But others need to do that step by step.

Here's a few examples of actions that could help people explore a relationship with God:

- Watching a relevant DVD on world religions – how does Jesus compare?
- Attending a small group with you – what's it like to be a follower of Jesus?
- Trying a prayer experiment where over a month they make a conscious effort to talk to Jesus as though he's real for them,
- Getting to meet your Christian friends – they may want to know that they can be a Christian without losing their sense of personality.

- Reading a book on spirituality
- Reading the Bible or perhaps listening to it on CD. Maybe they could use an appropriate study guide to help them know where to start.
- Taking part in a service project
- Going on recreational activities with Christians

The key thing is to keep connecting with your seeking friend supporting them with whatever steps they need to take to get closer to Jesus. For most people who become and continue as Christ followers, coming to faith takes time and usually best happens in the context of a supportive and accepting relationship with others. You can help your friend take action by providing an experience of accepting, inclusive Christian community.

● WHAT WILL YOU DO, AND WHEN?

Options alone are not enough. Options need to lead to actions. An effective coaching conversation at some point will help the person move from what they could do to what they will do next. That's the W from **GROW**.

Jesus talks a lot about the importance of hearing his words and putting them into action. He talks about a person who builds a house on the rock. (Matthew 7:21-29) Having the building plans just wasn't enough.

Maybe there's a practical action that your friend has linked with following Jesus. Making a phone call to restore a relationship. Steps to face up to an addiction. When will they follow through with their intentions? Where will it appear in the planning diary? Would it help for you to ask later how they've gone?

Let's say your friend is ready to make a life-long commitment to Jesus Christ now, trusting in his offer of a new start and following his direction in their life. If so that's great. Celebrate the occasion with your friend and pray with them as they affirm the step taken.

If we take seriously the many entry points to the journey with Jesus we move beyond the one size fits all 'sinners prayer'. It might take longer, but it would be more meaningful to help someone write or say a prayer that expresses where they're at with God right now.

What we're talking about here is getting on board with what the Holy Spirit is doing. Remember to ask for the Spirit's courage, wisdom and compassion as you go."

Read more on the GROW model in *Coaching for Performance* by John Whitmore, 1996, 2002.

LEARNING GOALS

 **2 MINUTES** This seventh session will help us explain why we want our friends to come follow Jesus, describe steps we can take with integrity to encourage that to happen, communicate a dimension of Christian good news that calls for a response, distinguish between authentic and manipulative faith sharing processes, and develop a coaching framework to relationship-focused evangelism.

**VIDEO STORY**

 **10 MINUTES** Graham Keech talks about a friendship at the gym, in which he and his friend pace each other in steps of faith.

- What are the strengths of the approach that you see happening here?

- What drawbacks might there be?

Where have you seen these behaviors used in sharing faith?

Why do we find coaching for faith response difficult to do?



 **15 MINUTES** Share your journaling on why you want to see those on your network map come to follow Jesus.

“What do you think God is doing in your friend’s life at this time?”

Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-15.

What do you think is motivating Paul to continue to reach new people with the Christian gospel?

How does Christ's love (v. 14) as a motivator relate with 'fear the Lord' (v. 11) as a motivator to encourage our non-Christian friends to follow Christ?



 **10 MINUTES** Refer to the notes you made for the homework assignment for Session 4 (p 28). In the light of your answers, the feedback you received as you shared in Session 5 (p 31), and the further material we covered last Session (pp 42-46) how would you answer these two questions (record your answers in the spaces provided):

“What do you think God is doing in your friend’s life at this time?”

“What next step(s) do you sense would be helpful for your friend to take in light of that?”

Reflect back over your own life. Can you identify any stories from your own journey that could connect with what you sense God is up to in your friend's life and could encourage your friend to move on in faith? List those stories from your own journey in the space below.



PRAYER TIME

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

10 MINUTES As a group, bring before God in prayer the list of positive and negative coaching behaviors from the beginning of the session. You could write prayers as individuals first, and then share them as a group.

In the light of the list, reflect on your own approach to sharing faith.

Include confession for times when you have used too much pressure or manipulation, and times when you have been too timid or insensitive to pick up on opportunities for a faith conversation.

Write a prayer here, and if appropriate pray it out loud.

As a group, pray for boldness, love, and sensitivity.



HOMWORK ASSIGNMENT

1. Have a go at coaching this week, in any setting. Obviously you'll need to be careful to discern when it is appropriate to encourage someone else to work through their 'next steps', even if it's just learning a new skill in the kitchen or back yard.

If you have the opportunity, practice working through the Goals, Reality, Options and Will approach in relation to next steps of faith.

You'll be invited to share your stories next week.

2. Bring a symbolic object next week to help you share your time in the Faith Stories course.

3. **Read *Making Disciples*.**

● MAKING DISCIPLES

By Graham Beattie

“The goal of evangelism is not to get decisions but to make disciples. And being a disciple involves being part of a relational community as well as developing one's own personal spirituality. Therefore it's vital that new believers are resourced for their own spiritual growth, helped to discover their own mission in the world and become thriving, proactive members of the Christian community. The traditional approach to personal evangelism was to focus firstly on helping a person come to accept 'correct' doctrinal beliefs. Next, the emphasis was on developing appropriate values and behaviors that were consistent with their new belief system. Finally, encouragement was given to helping the person find a faith community (congregation) to belong to.

However we're now discovering that many who have come to faith had joined a faith community before developing Christian beliefs and practices. The culture of a healthy Christian community itself is an evangelising influence that shapes behaviour and encourages response.

So what we are now seeing is the importance of relationships in connecting people with faith. Emerging generations are not asking so much, “Is Christianity true?” , but “Does Christianity work? As we have found in this course the journey to faith is more often a process, than a one off event”.

“A person responding in faith to Jesus is not the end of evangelism – it’s the beginning of the journey of being a disciple. Here are some helpful ways a faith community can support a growing disciple:

A personal mentor

A mentor to walk alongside and guide the new Christian in their faith journey is indispensable. The role of the mentor is to serve as a soul companion to the new Christian during the first six to twelve months of their journey as a new disciple.

A mentor can support a new disciple by praying daily for them, listening, encouraging, supporting, and discussing their questions. A mentor can help them explore how faith connects with their everyday life – home, work, friends, money, society – particularly in developing life values & addressing behavioral/lifestyle changes. For some people, a one-to-one friendship is the best way to learn to study the Bible and pray, and work out rhythms of ‘time out’ for rest, reflection and recreation.

Small group

A small, weekly cell group of 6-10 people can be a great environment for discipleship formation. Small groups offer a supportive, challenging culture for growth, where participants develop friendships, discover their gifts, passions and callings. We’re talking about the kind of group that over time provides a safe environment for discussing problems, exploring the Bible and applying it to life, and learning to pray and receive prayer.

Spiritual practices and resources

A new disciple over time will be supported by the wide range of spiritual practices and resources available in the Christian community. Resources could include daily Bible reading notes, inspirational books and CDs, inspirational music and art. Spiritual practices can relate to social justice, holiness, prayer, gifts of the Spirit, approaches to reading Scripture, sharing

faith, communion. It would be easy to overwhelm anyone with new resources and disciplines. It's important to connect with, and be responsive to, the new disciple's personal and family life, work and community, work and lifestyle rhythms.

Course in Christian basics

Helping the new Christian become grounded in the basics of Christian faith and discipleship will be very important. There are many such courses available on the market or your congregation may have developed their own. Your minister will be able to offer guidance here.

Discernment of ministry gifts, passions & callings

Some churches offer workshops in this area as part of their discipleship formation ministries. Again, there are a number of resources available that the mentor would be able to check out and recommend.

Local church community

As we've already seen, a faith community plays a vital role in the growth and development of the new disciple. Look for supportive ways to help the new Christian connect and belong. Remember that entering into the culture of a local church can be disorienting at first.

LEARNING GOALS

 **2 MINUTES** This final session will help us talk about the value of the course, describe processes and resources we could use to help our friends grow as disciples, design a possible discipleship formation track for a new Christian, identify our own future actions in developing our efforts in evangelism, and express our commitment to praying for and witnessing to our non Christian friends.

**DISCUSSION***RECONNECTING & INTRODUCTION*

 **10 MINUTES** Did anyone try using coaching skills since the last session? How did it go?

What have we learned about how we share faith since the last session?



VIDEO STORY



15 MINUTES

What clues can you gather about discipleship from the video and the homework article, “Making Disciples”?

Which approaches to discipleship have you experienced? Which have been particularly helpful?



BIBLE READING



10 MINUTES

Read Ephesians 4:13-16

On newsprint, list the qualities and behaviors of a disciple.



SUPPORT GROUP

Imagine that one of the friends on the network map of a member of your group has, as a result of that member’s faith sharing, become a new disciple. Design, on paper, a discipleship formation process for the first four months of that new believer’s Christian life. Better still, if anyone in your group has helped their friend come to faith since commencing this course design the process with that new Christian in mind.

TEAM COVENANT

In your support groups of 4, what can you covenant together for as this course finishes and you continue your journey in faith sharing? For example, agree to pray for each other at least weekly, commit to pray regularly (daily? weekly?) for those on your own network map, commit to pray regularly (daily? weekly?) for those on the Network Maps of the others in your group of 4, establish an egroup to keep in touch with one another in your journey in faith sharing, meet together as a group in 6 week's time and check how you're doing (time/date/place)?

OUR COVENANT IS:

Pray for one another.



In the larger group, compare notes on the discipleship formation process developed in each of the small groups. Bring your symbols that express their growth through this course (see last week's homework assignment). Each person explains her/his symbol to the whole group. Opportunity is given for everyone to express their feelings, learnings and future actions as a result of this course. Leader closes with prayer.



CONCLUSION

Thank you for being part of this course in relational evangelism. Our prayer is that as a result you have come to feel better equipped, encouraged and inspired to communicate your faith among your friendship networks. May the Holy Spirit empower and guide you as you continue to witness to the love and goodness of God revealed through Jesus Christ the Lord.



COURSE FEEDBACK

1. What went well?

2. What could be better next time?

3. Before you came how confident were you to share your faith with a friend?

<i>Not Confident</i>		<i>Confident</i>		<i>Highly Confident</i>
1	2	3	4	5

4. As a result of this course how confident are you now?

<i>Not Confident</i>		<i>Confident</i>		<i>Highly Confident</i>
1	2	3	4	5

5. Overall how would you rate **Faith Stories**?

<i>Waste of time</i>		<i>OK</i>	<i>Highly Worthwhile</i>	
1	2	3	4	5

6. How will your life and ministry be different as a result of **Faith Stories**?

7. Additional comments: