



WAY OF LIFE

A PATTERN FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

Exploring: Way of Life

A Pattern for Christian Living

A resource for Home Groups



DIOCESE OF TRURO
DISCOVERING GOD'S KINGDOM
GROWING THE CHURCH

Exploring: Way of Life

This six session course was written by Bridget Macaulay as a resource for the Way of Life programme in Truro diocese. The course is available on the diocesan website to download for use as a course for small groups (see www.trurodiocese.org.uk). Some of the images, poems and prayers have been written and painted by Bridget Macaulay and you are respectfully requested not to print or otherwise reproduce this material (other than for use as part of this course) without prior permission from Bridget who can be contacted by email: bridgetbraybrooks@googlemail.com

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Way of Life: Getting started

A resource for Home Groups

Session 1: The central hub: Responding to God's love

“Way of Life begins with God’s overwhelming love for us, expressed in creation and in Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. We love God because he first loved us. How are we to respond to so great a love? “

 **Group leaders make sure that everyone has a copy of the ‘Way of Life’ and give a few minutes for everyone to look over the booklet. If your group doesn’t know each other well, you may want to give some time at the start of the session for people to say a bit about who they are and why they wish to be part of the group for this course about Way of Life. There is quite a lot of material here and you may decide to leave a section for people to do at home. If you do so it may be important to start the following session with a review of the material people took away to do so that it doesn’t get lost!**



Check in:

- What do you think ‘Way of Life’ is all about? What have you heard about it?
- What are you drawn to and what are you unsure about?
- Spend a few moments sharing in twos or in the group as a whole.



Read and reflect:

Way of Life begins with God's overwhelming love for us. It offers a practical tool to help us respond to God's love. In the way that a hub is the central and driving point of a wheel, we need to reconnect to God's love for us as the central and motivating force for our response to him in every area of our lives.

Read **1 John 4:7-21**.

- We are created to be in a loving relationship with God and we respond to his love with our own.
- We read in scripture of God's nurture and care of his people and we want to show the same care of those around us and ourselves.
- We see God's initiative and action in his world and we respond with our own simple acts of commitment.
- We recognise that God is a communal Trinity and we acknowledge our need of one another on the journey of faith.

In your Christian life do you feel:

Driven?  **Called ?**

We may feel driven perhaps by duty, guilt, a desire to please God or as a reaction to the overwhelming need we see around us in the world, our local community or our congregations. Or perhaps we have a sense that God is drawing and calling us into a particular way of expressing our love for him, using our unique gifts and abilities.

Most of us are (and will always be) a mixture of driven-ness and calling! Our personalities, our particular journey of faith, even our church tradition will influence where we are on the 'driven-called' spectrum. There are no right or wrong positions to be in; responding to God is usually a combination of an internal push and external pull. However, it may be useful to reflect on your life of faith (past and present). You may wish to ask how much of your Christian life is a *reaction* (driven perhaps by the expectations we or others place on us or by external circumstances which seem to dictate or shape our behaviour) and how much is the inner drawing out of a *response* of freedom to what you have received from God? Spend a few minutes discussing these ideas in the group.



Group leaders, in order to help people unravel a bit their

thoughts about discipleship and inner motivations, you may like to invite people to reflect on how they feel about this sense of being driven/called; in particular what kind of emotions they associate with it. Are the feelings positive or negative and why? You may have to handle this with sensitivity and it may be dependent on how well your group know each other and feel ready to share.



Write and review:

Way of Life gives us a means to reflect on the shape and balance of our lives as we seek to respond to God's love and grace and to live out that response in our day to day discipleship, as followers of Christ. At the start of this Way of Life course it is important to take stock and see where we are and what we are already doing and being in our lives as followers of Christ.

The diagram below gives us a way to see the balance of our response to God and one another and the world we live in. Thinking about each of the four journeys in turn, you might like to mark with a cross where you feel you are in each area with 0 being: 'I haven't given this area any thought' to 10 being: 'I feel I am aware of God's call in this area and am actively responding'. When you have marked each section join up your crosses and see what shape your wheel is!

- How is the shape of your wheel a reflection of your life circumstances just now?
- Does it highlight for you a particular area or journey that you are drawn to developing?
- Discuss in twos or threes or in the group as a whole.



Remember that each spoke has its starting point and dynamic set in the hub at the centre (God's generous love and grace for each one of us) and the final part of this first session will bring us back to this point in prayer:



Ponder and pray



Group leaders will need to print a large copy of this image for everyone to see in the session, or enough small copies for one each, or be prepared to project the image for all to see.

Pablo Picasso La Soupe

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/mbell1975/6227456093/>

Spend some time looking at this painting.

Note the rootedness of the taller figure, how securely the feet are planted on the ground creating a firm foundation from which to offer service. In contrast, see also the lightness of the child's feet which help her to reach up to receive (or give?) the bowl. This combination of earthed rootedness (rhythm and discipline) with light-footed freedom (spontaneous grateful response) is a life-giving dynamic that 'Way of Life' seeks to move us into. We need a rooted balance in our life of faith but equally a lightness of touch and a child-like open-ness to receive all that God is leading us into, a balance of work and play in our response to him. Sometimes we feel the weight of discipleship and work hard at our life of faith and service while at other times we are more adventurous and need to be creative with forms and patterns of following Christ. The commitment of discipline and the freedom of spontaneity are both part of our response to God. As these two figures are in a beautifully balanced relationship (it is not clear who is giving and who is receiving the bowl), so too we need one another as travelling companions on the journey of faith, even when it doesn't feel a very beautiful or balanced relationship!

God invites each one of us into a relationship of mutual giving and receiving, with him and one another. In a few moments of quiet you may like to imagine yourself as each of the figures in this painting in turn.

- How does it feel? Is one figure easier to relate to than the other?
- If one of these figures was a picture of what God is like, which would it be for you? Can you say why?
- What does it feel like to be the one giving? or receiving?
- What are you carrying or offering in the bowl of your life at this time? Are there things you need to pick up and perhaps others that you need to put aside?

- Perhaps you might like to pray with your hands cupped like the bowl in the painting, ready both to receive what God has to give you and to offer back to God your response.

You may wish to share with each other one thing that has challenged, encouraged, confused or inspired you from this session. Draw this session to an end by praying for one another in the group, perhaps sharing some of the concerns or hopes you have for the coming week.

Conclude by praying together the **Way of Life prayer**:

Eternal God

your Son Jesus Christ

is the way, the truth and the life

for all creation;

grant us grace to walk in his way

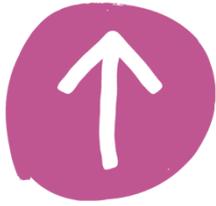
to rejoice in his truth

and to share his risen life;

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God now and forever.

Amen.



Session 2: Journeying UP

“Journeying UP is about our love of God and our response to his overwhelming love for us. It’s about living for God and not for ourselves. Journeying UP means acknowledging that he comes first in our life. And it means we truly are a living sacrifice”.



Check in:

- Spend a few moments settling into this particular time and place. What thoughts, concerns, questions or hopes are you bringing to this meeting? You may like to make a bowl of your cupped hands. Let them rest on your lap and look at them. What are you carrying just now? What is your life full of?
- Now close your eyes and see if you are able to lift your attention from the ordinary concerns of daily life, work, family, church business, relationships and re-orientate yourself again under the loving gaze of God who has your times and all your concerns, in his hand.
- Think back over the days or weeks since you last met. Have you been aware of recalling any of the discussions or insights you may have gained from the last session?
- Share your reflections in twos or in the group as a whole.

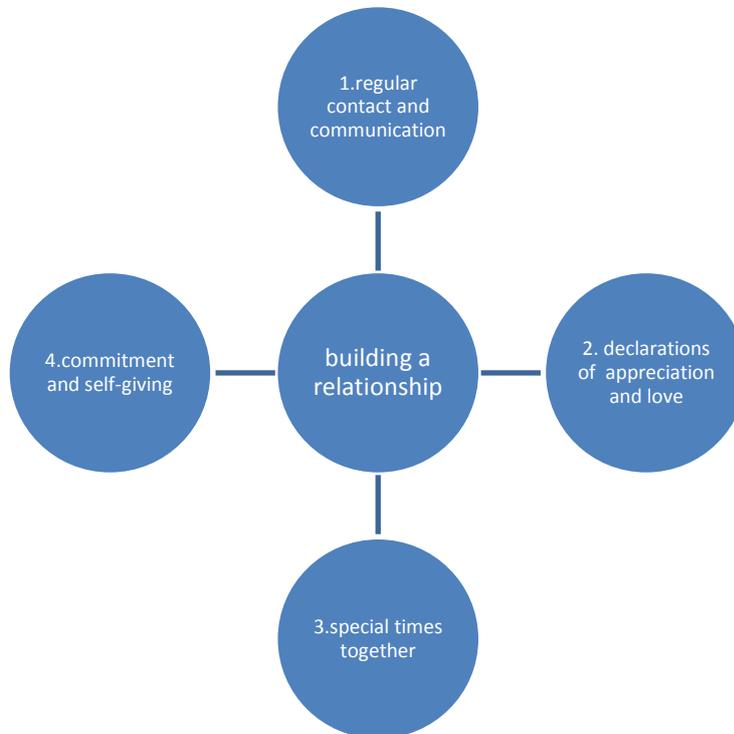


Read and reflect:

This second session focuses on the first of the four journeys in ‘Way of Life’: the Journey Up. This begins with an invitation to think about our relationship with God. We think of this as the Journey Up not because God is somehow ‘up there’ but because in this part of ‘Way of Life’ we are invited to look up from the circumstances of our life and to look into the face of the God whose loving gaze is always turned towards us as he seeks our company and we seek to deepen our relationship with him. Making the Journey Up we lift our heads, raise our gaze to the God who is Lord of creation and Lord of our lives. **Read Psalm 63:1-4 and Hebrews 10:19-25**

What does it take to form a friendship or relationship? What do we need to do to maintain and deepen a relationship once it has been embarked upon? We will

probably be able to name a few key factors from our experience. The diagram below may give us a starting place to think about how we might invest in our human relationships and our friendship with God :



1. Regular contact and communication



As the old advert said “It’s good to talk”. There are lots of different ways to ‘talk’ but no relationship survives long without regular communication. Think for a moment about your closest relationships:

- What are the patterns of communication and contact between you?
- What are the different ways you have found to ‘talk’?

Even a daily monosyllabic conversations over the morning cornflakes or a quick phone call to a friend are valid forms of communication. It isn’t always deep and meaningful and often will focus on the practical realities of our daily lives. What is important is that there is regular contact. Rather like a rhythm or beat gives shape to a piece of music, regular contact maintains the direction of a relationship.

- Do you have any patterns in the way you talk with God?
- What helps you to stay in contact?
- What do you find difficult about communicating with God and listening to Him?

‘Way of Life’ encourages us to build our relationship with God through daily prayer which may take a variety of forms, including non-verbal ways. Spend some time discussing the joys and challenges of reaching out to God and listening for the ways he may be reaching to us. It may be helpful to share where, when and how you pray, including any resources you use.

 ***(Group leaders may like to download some of the resources or contacts listed in the ‘Way of Life’ booklet as ideas and examples).***



2. Declarations of appreciation and love

While regular contact helps to maintain a relationship, in order for a relationship to deepen there is a need to express what we mean to one another. Friendships grow through mutual appreciation, being grateful for what we can give and receive, for the ways in which we ‘see’ who we are through the eyes of those who love us and are honest with us.

In our acts of corporate worship (whether Service of the Word or the Eucharist) we are helped to look up again and see God and the way he seeks to be in relationship with us. In these services we deepen our relationship with God; through the liturgy we declare who God is and what he has done for us. ‘Eucharisteo’ means thanksgiving (see Luke 22:19 - 20) and the service of the Eucharist includes us in an intentional speaking out of the truth of Christ’s action for us here and now, and for all God’s people across the ages.

 ***(Group leaders have copies of one or more of the Eucharistic prayers or Service of the Word so that everyone can have sight of one).***

Spend some time reading over the words of the service(s). In twos and threes and discuss together either:

- How does the liturgy enable us (through the ordinary stuff of daily life: bread, wine, a meal shared with friends, laying the table and

washing up) to look up and see God who is reaching out to meet with us?

- What words, phrases or actions in the Eucharist give us a Way, a form to respond and speak out our appreciation and thankfulness to God?
- Are there particular ways, personal to you, that the Eucharist might help you make the Journey Up to God?

Or:

- If you regularly use a Service of the Word rather than the Eucharist, how does that give you ways to give thanks and 'look up' to see God?

The Eucharist is a focus for our giving thanks to God but there are many ways that we might express our gratitude to God and be moved to lift our heads to worship him. You might like to look at other forms of worship that are used in your church community but spend some time also sharing together other activities or situations that draw you to give thanks to God eg a walk on the coast path, playing with grandchildren, visiting an art exhibition, watching a film.....



3. Special times together

All relationships benefit from some intentional time together, perhaps out of the normal routine and contexts of everyday life. We may go on holiday with family members or friends or plan some time out together. Relationships are maintained and deepened by some deliberate face to face contact where we may need to say we're sorry or listen more attentively or just remember again why we love each other.

A Franciscan once said that our prayer life can be likened to getting our daily nutrition through the discipline of regular meals; if we are in the habit of eating a balanced meal and veg most days we can then enjoy a special day when we just grab a Mars Bar and go. Daily prayer does benefit from the rhythm and routine of time, place and content but we are also free to 'take days off together' with God; to change the routine and do something different. It is possible to plan such special times together with God through some reflective time, a new or different way of praying, a Quiet Day, retreat or conference.

 ***(Group leaders gather some of the information related to the suggestions in the 'Way of Life' booklet under this section in order that the group can discuss resources or experiences they have had).***

4. Commitment and self-giving

We will all have experienced the challenges of sticking with those we care about through thick and thin, when we understand them and when we don't. Most friendships reach a point where they ask us to show our commitment to the other person and this usually involves some cost to our time, our emotional investment, even our own security. It can be a costly business to really be seen and known by other human beings, and as Christ's disciples.



Read together Philippians 2:1-14

In this passage we are encouraged to follow Christ's example to give ourselves, to commit to living out God's purposes and call even when obedience is costly and humbling. Discuss together how we might respond to Christ's self-offering for us in practical giving of our self and our resources, including our finances and possessions.



Write and review:

Now spend some time quietly reading back through this last section and using page 9 in the 'Way of Life' booklet to make a practical response. As a group you may like to find ways of making a commitment together (for example to go to a quiet day or diocesan event as a group, or to read a book on prayer together).

 ***Group leaders: Be prepared to be selective about the different sections in this session as there is a lot of material to work through. For example you could suggest that this 'Write and Review' section be done individually at home before the next session. If so it will be important to give some time at the next session to allow people to share how they got on or to remind people to revisit it.***



PONDER AND PRAY:



Group leaders will need to print a large copy of this image for everyone to see in the session, or enough small copies for one each, or be prepared to project the image for all to see.

Ruby Green Singing, James Chapin

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/inconstanti/23391944/>

We began this session with some quiet, seeking to lift our gaze from the concerns of our daily lives to look again at God who is Lord of the universe and yet gives himself sacrificially to be in relationship with us. From there we went on to explore the Journey Up, responding to God's overwhelming love for us. The image above may give us a way to return to that stance of prayer. There is a single-heartedness poise and clarity of purpose about the figure in this picture. You may like to prayerfully find a similar spiritual stance. Perhaps this can be an image for us of the Journey Up in which we shift our focus to live for God, committing ourselves to growing in relationship with him, offering our prayer, our attention, our practical resources, ourselves to him as Lord.

Pray for each other and conclude with Psalm 63 as a prayer with refrain

Refrain: *My soul is athirst for God, even for the living God.*

O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; •
my soul is athirst for you.

My flesh also faints for you, •
as in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.

So would I gaze upon you in your holy place, •
that I might behold your power and your glory.

Your loving-kindness is better than life itself •
and so my lips shall praise you.

I will bless you as long as I live •
and lift up my hands in your name. *Refrain*

My soul shall be satisfied, as with marrow and fatness, •
and my mouth shall praise you with joyful lips,

When I remember you upon my bed •
and meditate on you in the watches of the night.

For you have been my helper •
and under the shadow of your wings will I rejoice.

My soul clings to you; •
your right hand shall hold me fast. *Refrain*



Session 3: Journeying IN

'Journeying IN is about being transformed into the likeness of Christ; growing, developing and maturing as a Christian as we build our lives on Christ our corner-stone and foundation. Journeying in is also about knowing and loving ourselves so that we can love others.'



Check in:

- Think back over the days or weeks since you last met. Can you recall any of the discussions or insights you may have gained from the last session?
- You may like to go back and look again at the image of the wheel from the first session and remind yourself what shape your wheel was in the Journey In section.
- Read back over the Review and Write section from the last session and in particular the commitment and response on page 9 of the Way of Life Booklet.
- Share your reflections in twos or in the group as a whole, feel free to be honest about the things you have struggled with as well as the things you have found helpful about Way of Life so far.



Read and reflect:

In our last session we spent some time thinking about the nature of relationships, how we deepen them and show our commitment to them. In this session we shall think about how we might develop as followers of Christ, deepening our understanding of ourselves and the God we are in relationship with. The best of relationships are not static, they are dynamic and they change as we change and grow as people. The same may be said for our relationship with God. Our internal journey concerns our personal growth and maturing as a Christian. The New Testament shows a clear expectation that we should mature from being spiritual babies to being spiritual adults. This means learning and changing through our engagement with scripture, tradition, reason and human experience until we gradually take on the likeness of Christ. We will look at two gospel stories which describe individuals' encounters with the person of Jesus and reflect on the impact these meetings had on them:

Read : The man born blind (John chapter 9) and Rich Ruler (Mark 10:17-31)



Group leaders have bibles ready or have copies of the two passages printed out so that they can be read side by side.

Discuss in your group as a whole or in small groups:

- How did the individuals and those watching the encounters with Jesus have their understanding of righteousness challenged by Jesus' response to each?
- How did Jesus use scripture to teach them and invite them to grow/be changed?
- When and how did the encounter with Jesus move from academic discussion to life changing encounter?
- How did Jesus pay attention to and value the human needs each character had?
- How might the individuals' image of themselves and of God have been challenged and shifted as the stories unfold?



Review and write:

The gospel passages we've just looked at reveal that at some sort of level as people met and talked with Jesus their understanding of God changed. Jesus again and again challenged the people's view of what being people of God was all about. He called people to a bigger, life-giving and challenging understanding of who God is and what He calls us to be as his people. He taught from scripture and the traditions and history of the people of Israel to invite people into a life-changing encounter. Engaging with scripture and the living traditions of our faith, under the guidance of God's Spirit, can still be life-changing today!

For both the man born blind and the rich ruler there was an invitation to a more whole (and holy) life. For the rich ruler there was a challenge to show a practical commitment to following God by engaging with the human needs of the poor around him. For the man born blind there was the gift of sight which would have had an impact on every area of his life. For the rich ruler there was an invitation to share more of himself; to give out of what he had been blessed with; to investigate in deeper ways what following God and inheriting eternal life might mean. The man born blind, experienced restoration in receiving all that Jesus had to give him, at the point of his need. Both these gospel characters began to see themselves and God with new eyes. Jesus called them to a life of faith that shaped every area of their lives; he offered healing and wholeness.

- Do you have a sense that God is inviting you to give yourself in a new way to deepen your understanding of your faith through scripture, learning and practical care of those around you? If so can you think of one simple way that you might live this out?
- Might the account of Jesus' response to the man born blind (both in the initial encounter of healing and Jesus' subsequent going out to find him) give a clearer indication that God is concerned with us as whole people (body, mind and spirit) and that an important part of the Way of Life commitment is to care for ourselves, allowing ourselves to be given to in order that we in turn can love and serve others. The human need of the man born blind was to see. On your own journey to faithful wholeness what do you want to ask Christ to give you at this particular time in your life?
- Using page 11 of the Way of Life booklet spend some time writing your own response or commitment.

 ***Group leaders have resources and examples of courses and study aids for people to look at. See reference points 10 -17 on page 18 and 19 of the Way of Life booklet.***



Ponder and pray

 ***Group leaders will need to print a large copy of this image for everyone to see in the session, or enough small copies for one each, or be prepared to project the image for all to see.***

Healing of the Blind Man, Brian Jekel

<http://brianjekelfineart.com/gallery:14822/show/id:15188/>

'When he had found him Jesus said to him 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him'. Jesus said to him 'You have seen him, and the one speaking to you is he.' He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him.' John 9:35-38

Using the image above as a prayer, spend some time becoming aware of the ways in which you long to see the person of Christ more clearly.

 ***Group leaders: The following may need to be given as 'homework' if time is short. Encourage the group members to***

think about different ways that they might reflect with the material from these sessions: perhaps with a friend or in a prayer triplet or with a spiritual director.

You may like to begin to reflect with these questions and continue to in the coming week or until you next meet as a group.

- What are the areas of the Christian life that you have questions about?
- What situations in the world or in your own life cause you to ask questions about how God is present and active in his world today?
- What parts of the bible or church tradition do you find confusing or interesting?
- What do you want to understand better in your relationship with God? Where would you like to grow in insight, wisdom and holiness?
- What do you want to reach for and take hold of in your journey of faith?
- What is life-giving and energising for you and what do you find draining?

Spend some time sharing with members of the group one aspect or insight from this session that has challenged and encouraged you and one response that you wish to make. Conclude by using part of the Way of Life: a Form of Prayer



Group leaders have copies of the Form of Prayer available for each group member (available on the diocesan as Appendix 1 pg. 42 of this resource). If time is limited you may wish to just use either the psalm and Way of Life Prayer or the canticle and Way of Life Prayer.



Session 4: Journeying With

'We are not called to be disciples on our own, but to journey together with others as members of the Church. We understand God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit living together in a community of love, and we are called to live in God's image, reflecting this community of love. Jesus commanded his disciples to 'love one another as I have loved you'.



Check in:

- Spend a few moments getting settled and quiet at the start of this meeting
- Think back over the past 24 hours and bring to mind all the conversations or encounters you have had with different people during that time.
- As you remember each encounter, how do they affect you? Are some nurturing and others draining?
- Have you been conscious at all of God in, through or even in spite of these encounters?
- In the quietness hand over to him all the experiences you have had of relating with others over the last day.
- Be aware now of God present with each one and seeking our company as we gather together.



Group leaders you may want to make reference to the reflection questions from last the last session if people took them away to work on.



Read and reflect:



Group leaders have bibles ready or have copies of the passages printed out. You will also need some large sheets of paper and marker pens.

Read together: 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13 and 27, Ephesians 1:22-23, 1 Peter 2:9, Ephesians 2:19-22

The image of the Body of Christ is a familiar one while the passage in Ephesians chapter 2 gives another (perhaps slightly less well known) picture: that of a household or dwelling. We will use this picture of the household dwelling for our group exercise.

Discuss together what you consider to be the essential components of a household or dwelling. Brainstorm your ideas and write them on one of the sheets of paper or even better you can draw a large house or dwelling on one of the sheets. Include all the features required for a dwelling to function well (door? windows? roof? different rooms for different activities? garden? boundary fence? basement storage? solar panels?). Discussion about essential or non-essential elements may prove interesting in itself!

Once you have decided on the structure of your household dwelling you can move on to thinking about the different functions or roles attached to the different components and see if you can see this as an expression of the household or community of faith. It is important to remember that the 'church' is not the building but the *people* of God that gather together to build the kingdom of God in a particular place.

So for example:

- The door may require a door-keeper, the person who makes sure the door is kept open to welcome people in. The door is a threshold, a place of connection between what is 'in' and 'outside' the dwelling....it is a meeting place. This may represent someone in your church community or fellowship that likes to be on the edge, keeping contact with people 'outside' the church, a bridge builder perhaps?
- Or the windows may represent someone who stops the house getting too stuffy by opening up the windows and letting in some fresh air, perhaps through humour or creative ideas about how to be church. Windows also let in light and enable us to see more clearly.
- The solar panels or greenhouse may be someone who is passionate about prayer, spending time in God's presence to absorb and then share the energy of the Spirit; the spiritual power source perhaps?
- The kitchen may represent the person who creates nurturing or comforting spiritual food perhaps through teaching, preaching or pastoral care.
- The walls both contain and protect. Are there people in your 'household of faith' that keep us right, perhaps calling for clear doctrinal positions, or health and safety procedures, or child protection practices.

Hopefully you can have some fun with this but also use it as a way to reflect on what your dwelling is for and therefore the gifts and energies, passions and personalities that can contribute to it being a welcoming and nurturing space. Ask each other which roles or areas of the household you feel drawn too as well as which roles irritate you or feel unnecessary!



Write and review:



Group leaders: the exercise below requires a certain level of knowledge and trust between group members and may need to be handled with some sensitivity in order that it is used to build one another up. There is an alternative exercise to use if the group doesn't know each other well.

If you are a group that knows each other well you may like to offer encouragement to one another in the following exercise:

- Each person has a piece of paper and writes their name clearly at the bottom of the page.
- The page is then handed to the person on your right. They write at the top of the page a comment that completes the sentence 'I value you because.....' as it relates to the person named at the bottom of the sheet. This is an anonymous way of recognising each other's unique gifts and personalities and the part we might play in the body of Christ. It may be that you can use some of the imagery you have explored in the exercise above to say something about the gifts you see in each member of the group.
- Once you have written your comment, fold over the top of the sheet twice and pass it to the person on your right.
- Repeat this until you have written your reflection of each person present.
- Once you have completed the exercise, spend some time sharing what was difficult, surprising or affirming about the exercise.
- Pray now for each person in turn, giving thanks for them and asking God that they might grow in understanding of how to play their part in the Body of Christ and in the building of God's kingdom through the offering of their prayers, time, gifts and talents.

Alternatively, if the group don't know one another they may like to spend some time looking at the picture below and reflecting together about what it might say as an image of the Body of Christ, a community of God's people.

Picasso La Ronde

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/lecolibri/261361960/in/photolist-7oMBPo-6bqtTQ-bzZ8CV-p6xNG-2UvENA-m1UMRi-d4YB7u-7xderr-cmr7ZG>



Group leaders will need to print a large copy of this image for

everyone to see in the session, or enough small copies for one each, or be prepared to project the image for all to see.

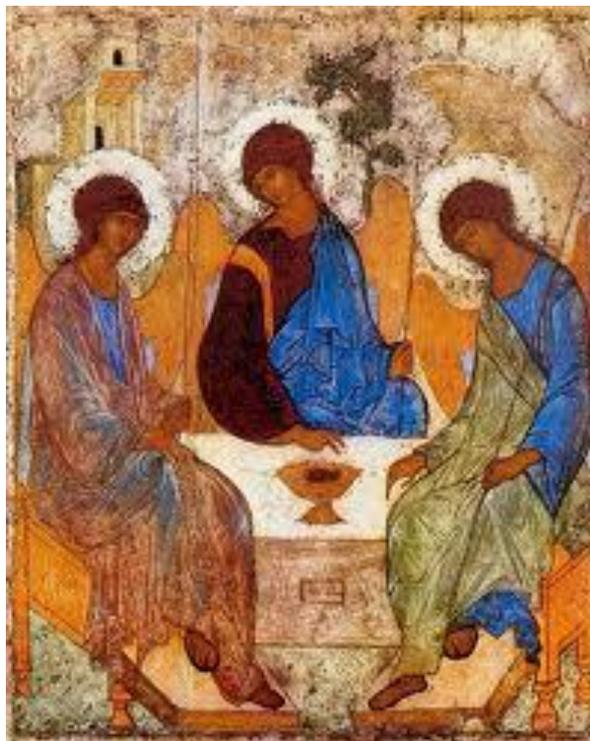
- Now turning to page 13 of the Way of Life booklet, spend some time in quiet writing your responses to the possible areas of commitment listed.



Group leaders have copies available of some or all of the resources listed in points 24 and 25 on page 19 of the Way of Life booklet.



Ponder and pray



Icon of the Trinity Andrei Rublev

This much loved icon gives us a window through which to look to understand and experience something of the generous hospitality of God. Its form and detail relate to the story of the visitation of Abram at the Oaks of Mamre (see Genesis 18: 1-19). There is a gentleness and deference between the figures and a circular dynamic to their relationship, a unity in diversity.

Spend a few moments seeing the quiet invitation in the image. The fourth side of the table is open and we as the viewers are uniquely placed to take our seat at the table here.

There is a quiet welcome, the Being of God as Trinity reaches out to us and draws us to him, to be in his presence, to share food and wine at the table. In your imagination allow yourself to respond to the invitation into God's presence.

- How does it feel to enter God's presence and sit at the table? Is it comfortable or do you feel hesitant?
- As you sit here with the Persons of the Trinity is there anything you find you want to say or do?
- Is there anything God says to you?
- Now think about people you know, perhaps at church or work, maybe even family or friends that you struggle with. Perhaps it is hard to be open to them or to understand the way they are. Can you see God's welcome extended to them?
- If you are able, you may now like to imagine that you are moving over a little, to create another space beside you at the table. Can you turn and extend a welcome to that person you find difficult, so that you can sit together in God's peaceful and loving presence?
- Read **1 Peter 1:22** and **1 Peter 4:8**. Offer yourself and those you find difficult to 'bear with in love' to God in prayer and spend some time enjoying the hospitality that God offers.
- Perhaps you might practically re-create the scene of the icon by inviting the person or people you have been thinking about to your home to share a meal.

Draw the meeting to a close by saying (or singing) the hymn, All are Welcome. See below:



Group leaders have to hand copies of the music if appropriate (tune 'Two Oaks')

See this song sung on Songs of Praise:

<http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=let%20us%20build%20a%20house&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&sqi=2&ved=0CCoQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bbc.co.uk%2Fprogramme%2Fp00jlxp7&ei=jpRIUKS7L6G30QWR64H4AQ&usq=AFQjCNE0uQTThBkibtwCTgHGQuSwKaj6w>

Title: All Are Welcome Author: Marty Haugen Copyright: 1994 GIA Publications

For the sheet music:

<http://lectionarysong.blogspot.co.uk/2015/08/songs-hymns-music-for-proper-16b.html>

'In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you are also built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.'
Ephesians 2:2

All Are Welcome

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
built of hopes and dreams and visions;
rock of faith and vault of grace;
where the love of all shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome,
All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat.
A banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God through Jesus
is revealed in time and place.
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us,
All are welcome, all are welcome
All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger

bear the image of love's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
All are welcome, all are welcome,
All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace;
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
All are welcome, all are welcome,
All are welcome in this place.

Amen



Session 5: Journeying OUT

'God is involved in our lives and so we are called to be involved in our community, our society, and all life around us. Just as God reaches out to us, so we are called to reach out to others to share God's love with them. Journeying OUT is about discovering God's kingdom in our midst and joining in. It is about sharing the love of God with others in both word and deed, seeking to change the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves'



Check in:

- Spend a few moments getting settled and gathering yourself into this time and place.
- Think back over the last week and bring to mind all that you have done for others in different ways. Remember all the different contexts and situations you have been in and what each has required of you.
- As you think back over the week can you see God's presence in the different situations and contexts you are involved in?
- As we come to the fourth and final of the 'Way of Life' journeys you may want to look back over the previous notes and in particular remind yourself of how you plotted your response in the Journey Out section on the wheel diagram in the first session.



Read and reflect:



Group leaders have bibles available or print out the passages below.

Read John 13:1-15, Matthew 25:37-45, Matthew 5:13-16

How might these passages help us think about the Journey Out (as described above)?

With regards to the call in Matthew 5 to be salt and light in the world, it may be useful to remember that in the time of Jesus salt was connected with four important qualities:

1. Purity (product of just sun and sea and white in colour, salt represented purity and it was included in some Jewish sacrifices);
2. Preservative (used to keep food from going bad, holding putrefaction at bay and keeping things fresh) and
3. Adding flavour (food without salt is bland; salt adds something alternative bringing out the true flavour of food and giving bite!).
4. Healing (put on wounds to sterilise and aid healing).

Being called to be the 'light of the world' may involve further qualities relevant to the Journey Out which you may like to discuss. (Ref 'The Daily Study Bible Matthew Volume 1' by William Barclay and 'Matthew for Everyone: Part 1' by Tom Wright).

You may find the following approach to studying these passages of use (*The Spaghetti Junction checklist as described in Let's Do Theology by Laurie Green Mowbray 1990 page 84*).



LIGHT: what things in these passages illuminate or inspire you?



QUESTION: what things don't you understand?



SURPRISE: what things in these passages surprise you?



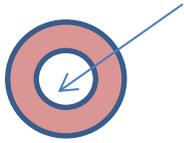
APPROVAL: what things do you agree with? Is there anything that particularly resonates with you?



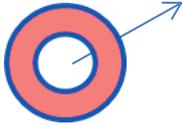
REJECT: what do you find difficult to accept?



PARALLEL: can you think of passages from elsewhere in the Bible that seem to connect or relate to this one?



INPUT: can you name something from your own experience that relates to these passages? In what ways do these passages connect to your own experience?

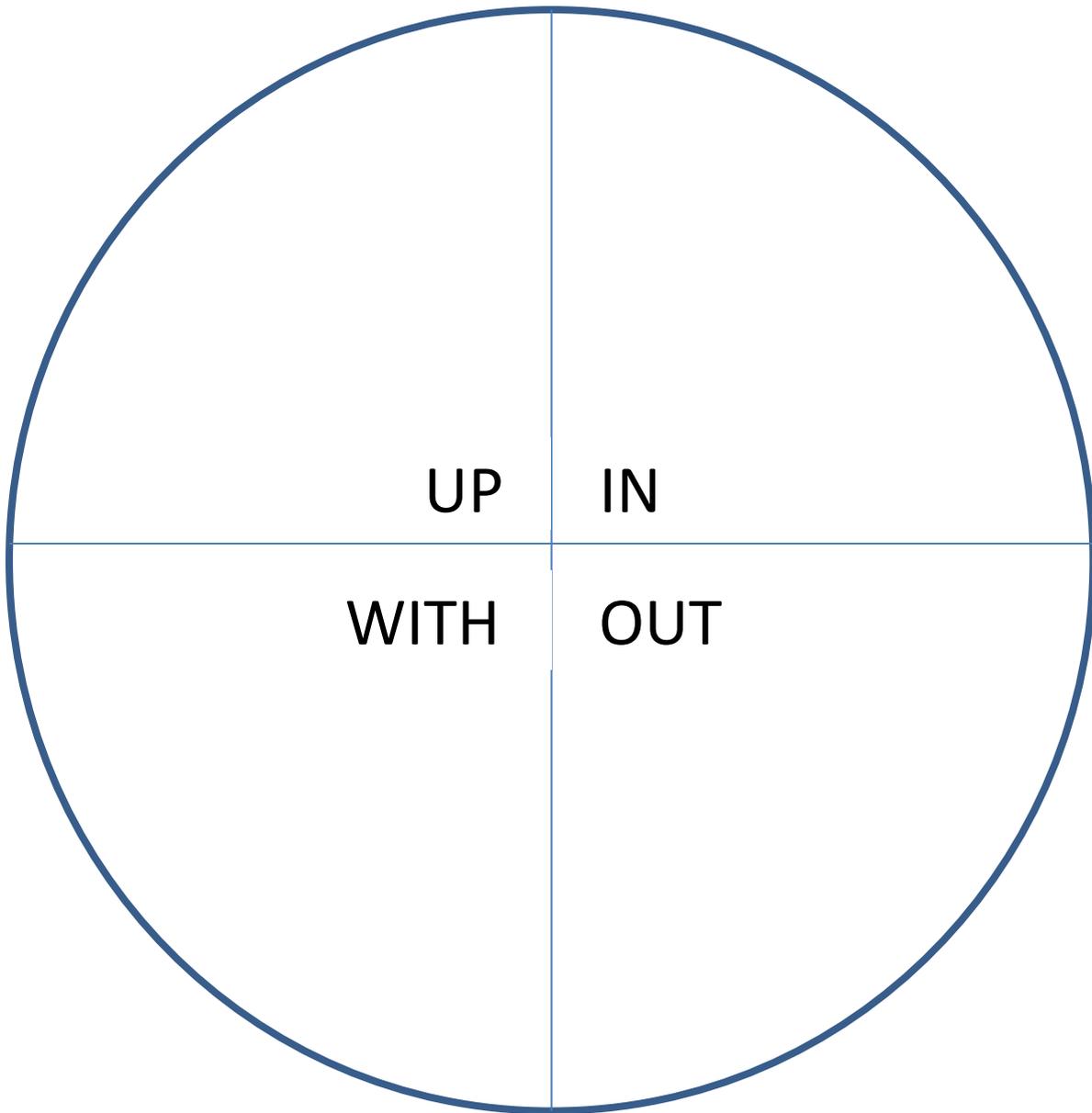


ACTION: What are you now prompted to do in response to these passages?



Review and write:

Give some thought now to your weekly activities. Remember all the different components of your life eg work, volunteering, church, time with family and friends, looking after relatives, hobbies, physical activity/exercise, prayer and bible reading, household chores etc. Can you see these activities as expressions of one or more of the four journeys of Way of Life? See if you can allocate each activity into the pie chart below. Rather like the wheel diagram of the first session, this may give you a sense of the balance of activity in your life. Is one segment of the circle fuller than the others?



Now focus on the activities you have put in the Journey Out segment of the circle. Reflecting on these activities, what drives them and shapes the way you approach them? You might like to take each activity in turn and ask the following questions:

In this activity:

- Am I being a careful steward of God's creation and the resources at my disposal?
- Am I mindful of the way this activity may have an effect on those I live closest to?
- Am I conscious of my power as a consumer and my responsibility to the well-being of fellow human beings, close to home and across the globe?
- Am I living out a political standpoint that reflects the message of God's kingdom?
- Am I sharing in word and deed the Good News of God's love?
- Am I being just and merciful?
- Am I using my gifts and abilities to build God's Kingdom through the mission of the church?
- Am I showing hospitality of heart and home to the spiritually, relationally, socially or financially poor?
- Am I being salt in the world? (bringing flavour, preserving purity, healing wounds?)
- Am I being light in the world? (exposing darkness and duplicity, providing warmth, light and clarity and insight?)

This list is not intended to make us feel bad that we can't answer 'yes' to all of them! Rather it can give us a way of reflecting on the activities we are engaged in, through the lens of the Journey Out (and the gospel principles undergirding it). Over the next month or so you might like to take one of the questions each week and write it out large enough for it to catch your attention as you go about your day to day activities. Perhaps stick it to the fridge or the bathroom mirror or the back of your front door and let it remind you to reflect on the purpose and the source of motivation for all you do.

You may now feel you can fill in the commitment section on page 15 of the Way of Life Booklet with a deeper clarity about how all our activities might reflect the gospel principles expressed in the questions above.



Ponder and pray

The Washing of the Feet by Fr Sieger Koeder

<http://contemplativecottage.com/2010/04/02/art-for-good-friday/>

Scroll down the page to find the image



Group leaders will need to print a large copy of this image for everyone to see in the session, or enough small copies for one each, or be prepared to project the image for all to see.

Spend a few moments looking at this image together as a group.

- What do you notice about: Peter's hands? Jesus' feet? The bowl? The different colours used?
- Because Jesus' head is hidden the two figures seem almost to be an extension of each other. What does the painting say to you about serving and being served? You may like to discuss this as a group.
- Now take your discussion as a group into prayerful reflection. There is such humility in Jesus' stance...how does that make you feel?
- Imagine that you are the figure of Peter and so become part of the scene. How does it feel to have your feet washed by Jesus?
- What might Jesus say to you as he kneels at your feet?
- What do you want to say to him?
- Give thanks in prayer for the way God reaches out to us and meets our need in Jesus. Offer yourself again in his service that you might be Christ's hands and feet in the world. Make your commitment (in whatever way is appropriate for you in your own personal circumstances) to being part of the cleansing, healing, just, merciful and active presence of God in his world.

Conclude the meeting with the following responses:

Leader: From where we are to where you need us,

All: CHRIST BE BESIDE US

Leader: From what we are to what you can make of us

All: CHRIST BE BEFORE US

Leader: From the mouthing of generalities to making signs of your kingdom

All: CHRIST BE BENEATH US

Leader: Through the streets of this world to the gates of heaven,

All: CHRIST BE ABOVE US

Leader: Surround us with your presence inspire us with your purpose, confirm in your love

All: THAT WE MIGHT SHARE THE GOOD NEWS WITH A WORLD IN NEED. AMEN.

From A Wee Worship Book Wild Goose Publications 1999

Session 6: Putting it all together

'What does it mean to you that you are a baptised person? This is really what 'Way of Life' is about: helping us to find a structure in our lives by which we ensure that we live out our calling as baptised people and followers of Christ In our place of work (whatever that may mean).... in the place where we live.... in the places where we relax and find refreshment and enjoyment, as well as in the place where we worship each week'.



Group leaders, this session is based on Archdeacon Audrey's talk on baptism and Way of Life. Read the notes for this talk in appendix 2 pg. 49 You will need a central visual focus for this session which includes a candle, jug of water, container of oil, wooden cross and sign saying 'welcome'. In this session there is more space for sharing and discussion and looking back over the previous sessions. Ideally this final session would be explored informally together within the context of a shared meal.



Check in:

- Spend some time in quiet together
- Using the approach to prayer (hands cupped like a bowl) that was used in Session 1 become aware of your breathing and being present in this time and place. Be aware too of those sitting beside you and the group that has journeyed through these weeks together.
- Now using the imagery of your cupped hands, ask yourself what it is that you carry into this final session. What is your mind and heart full of today?
- Either in silence or spoken out you may like to offer up to God prayers of gratitude....
'You anoint my head with oil, my cup brims over' Psalm 23:5
- Either in silence or spoken out you may wish to bring petitions to God also....



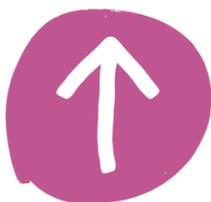
Read and reflect:

In this final session of this 'Way of Life' course we will attempt to bring the four journeys together by reflecting on what it means to be baptised people, followers of Christ. **Read Matthew 28:16-20** and then discuss the following points together:

- In verse 16 we are told the disciples left one place to go to another and they did this in response to Jesus' direction. They acted on Jesus' call to follow him. Their journey had started.
- In making a start on this journey, they encounter Jesus (verse 17). This draws out a mixture of responses: some worship and some doubt. Perhaps it is important that this is recorded in the gospel account. The first disciples were ordinary people with conflicted reactions to this journey of discipleship. What are the circumstances or experiences that enable you to worship God? And how do your doubts express themselves? We too are called first and foremost as ordinary people and the journey we are on is a human one as well as a spiritual one.
- Verse 19 links baptism with the journey of making disciples. How do you think about your baptism? Is it a photograph and a certificate, maybe even a distant memory? Or is it a present reality undergirding your on-going journey of discipleship?
- Verse 20 reassures us that we do not make the journey of discipleship alone. The disciples were commissioned together. But even more importantly we are promised God's company. In responding to Christ's call to be his disciples, we are promised the presence of God himself as our travelling companion. What do you think this might mean? How do you experience this?



Review and write:



The Journey UP

relates to the water of baptism. The water of baptism (either by sprinkling or by full emersion) shows our entering into Christ's life and death. We sometimes use the term 'christening' which means 'making Christ-like'. Entering into the waters of baptism is a response to our calling to live 'in Christ'.

Being 'in Christ' is something that takes working at just as a committed marriage or friendship takes working at - this is what we mean by the 'up' direction of journeying.

This direction is about things which feed our relationship with Christ/with God, which deepen that relationship - it is about our life of prayer and worship. It is important that we have both individual and corporate elements within this direction. We shouldn't seek to hide from God by only ever coming into his presence with other people, hiding behind them and letting them talk and sing and pray on our behalf. But equally we shouldn't simply walk as a lone pilgrim - there is something very powerful about praying and worshipping with others - as though what is happening is far greater than the sum of the individual parts - you can only prove this by experiencing it for yourself. What do you find easier: the journey alone or the journey together? Walking alongside others is also important because we all have times when we find it hard to pray and worship (either because we are ill, or going through a time of particular stress, or through a time of dryness in our relationship with God). To be part of a corporate discipline allows us to rely on the prayers of others during those times, knowing that we are still part of that life of prayer even if unable to participate ourselves.

In this 'UP' direction we might put:

- Our quiet time, our remembered prayers we have said since childhood,
 - Set forms of prayer we might use - such as Iona or Taize.
 - Times we set aside for contemplation or meditation.
 - The triplet we pray with regularly, morning or evening prayer in church, compline we pray with our spouse before we go to bed, an intercessory prayer group we belong to....
- **Look back at Session 2 and your responses on page 9 of the Way of Life booklet. Is there anything you'd like to add or change? Share with the group or in twos or threes your written commitment in this journey and how you feel about living it out.**



The Journey IN

relates to being signed with the cross at our baptism. It is a reminder of our calling to take up our cross daily and to follow Christ. Belonging to Christ means that we should live by different priorities, different rules and different standards. We are called to follow in Christ's footsteps, not just follow our own hopes or desires.

The 'IN' direction reminds us that we need to know our scriptures if we are going to aim to live by them and we need to know how the community of the baptised have sought to live down the centuries. We need to use our intellect and our experience as we seek to put our faith into practice, and above all that we should expect to live differently as a result. The sign of the cross is made at our baptism as we are anointed with oil. This

recalls Jesus' anointing with the Holy Spirit at his baptism - we do not seek to do this on our own, in our own strength, but in the power of and through the inspiration of, the Holy Spirit of God.

In this 'IN' direction we might put:

- The house group we belong to, or the study group we attend during Lent,
- the books we have been reading, the bible commentaries we've been using or the correspondence course we've been taking,

We are not looking to collect a series of badges or awards, but rather that we want to be **changed** as a result of making this Journey In to a deeper understanding of ourselves and the faith we are seeking to live.

- **Look back at Session 3 and the responses you wrote on page 11 of the Way of Life booklet and discuss the practical outworking of these commitments with others in the group.**



The Journey WITH

relates to the welcome we receive at our baptism. It reminds us that we are baptised into the body of Christ, baptised into a church, baptised not as an individual to follow an individual path, but baptised into a fellowship of believers that together we might walk the Way of Life.

In this 'With' direction you are encouraged to think about how you express that belonging. This may include:

- Praying for others not just those we like and know but also praying for those we don't get on with, people who are different perhaps Christians further afield than the parish boundary. It may also mean being prepared to become the answer to your own prayers.
- Making an effort to express our relationship with people in the church - by forgiving - by offering hospitality - by bearing with one another in love.
- Playing our role in the life of the church and perhaps doing those jobs that no-one can be found to do.
- Thinking about how we can contribute to the wider body of Christ - by being involved in ecumenical matters or through the deanery, the Diocese, even the national church.

Look back now over Session 4 and review your commitment and response on page 13 of the Way of Life booklet. Discuss in twos and threes or in the group as a whole and make any changes as you see fit.



The Journey OUT

relates to the lit candle given to the godparents or person being baptised. It reminds us that we are called out of darkness into God's marvellous light - to shine as a light in the world. We aren't called to bring our candles into church once a week and to marvel at the lovely light it makes when they are all together - we are called to take those lights out. To take them out into our place of work, to the street or the hamlet in which we live, to the places where we belong through our leisure pursuits - and to allow others to see the light.

We're called to enable others to catch glimpses of how good it is and to be challenged to live in the light too. We are called to do this through the things that we do, the things that we say, the ways in which we live our lives. The journey of faith and discipleship of each one of us will have been influenced by the faithful prayers of parents or godparents or the family of the church; through the examples of people's lives; the teaching we have received in Sunday school or sermons, even the challenge of others who have journeyed a few steps ahead of us.

This is what we are now called to do with this light which has been passed on to us, rather like the Olympic torch. We have our light to carry as part of the faithful witness of God's people.

So in this 'OUT' journey we might think about:

- Particular people to pray for that we might get the opportunity to share something of God with them,
- Services we might encourage friends to attend, books that we might lend to people to read, perhaps a film and faith night we might attend with them,
- Sharing God's love through our acts of service - perhaps through helping pupils to read at school, mentoring a difficult teenager, doing behind the scenes work at the food-bank, being a street pastor, a tea maker at the toddler group...
- Thinking of the ways in which we live in this world which God has created, and which he has asked us to be stewards of.....

And if we are no longer able to be as active as once we were then we can take the light of Christ out to others in our prayers - as we pray for individuals, as we pray for events, as we pray for those who serve as street pastors or messy church organisers, as Sunday school teachers or churchwardens.

Look back at Session 5 and your response and commitments on page 15 of the Way of Life booklet. Discuss together the practicality of the responses you have made and make any necessary adjustments. It is very important to help one another to take realistic steps initially. We can always add more as we incorporate certain practices as part of our daily, weekly, monthly or annual rhythms and routines. What matters is that we have a balance between the four journeys rather than over-activity in one or all of the journeys. Don't forget to encourage each other to build in rest and Sabbath time!

Being a follower of Christ means living the life of the baptised, fulfilling the calling we received at baptism. Way of Life helps us to be organised and intentional about how we do this, it is deliberately open and unstructured enough so that all sorts of people can be committed to this Way, without having to be constrained to a tradition which is not their own, or a commitment which simply isn't practical in their life as it is at the moment.

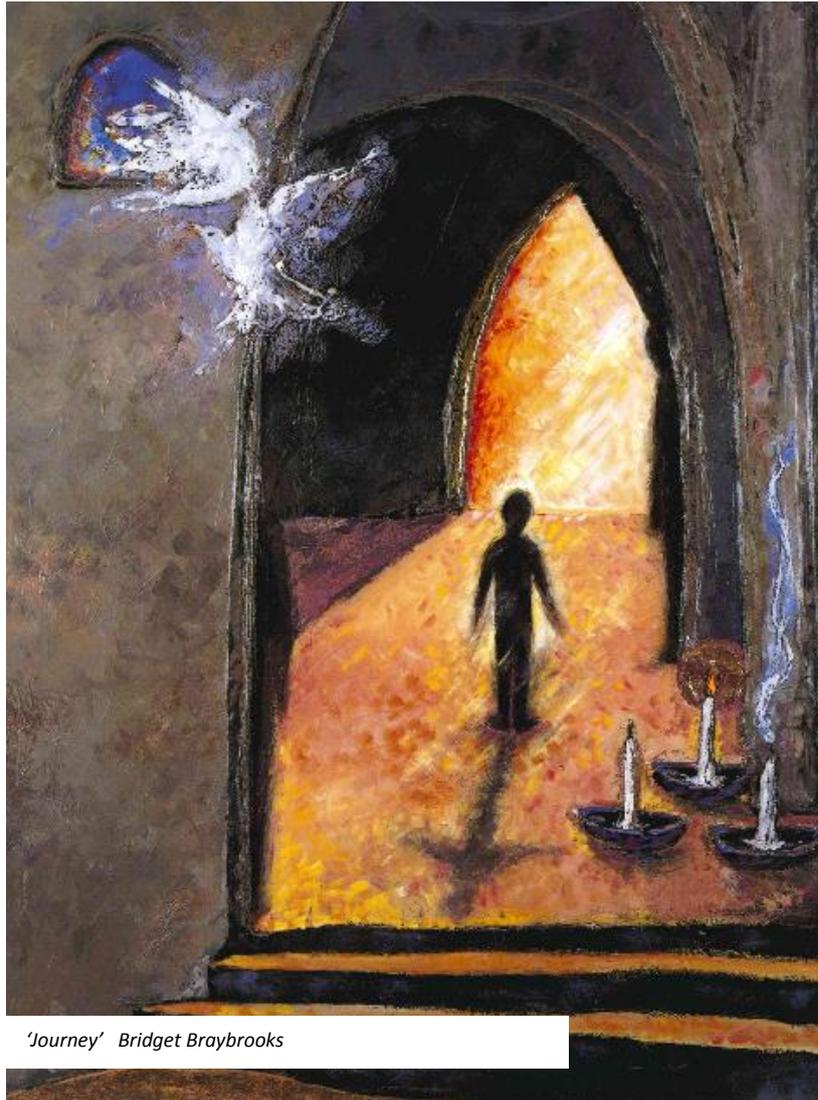
Way of Life is meant to be flexible and to be developed - we don't just stop by filling in what we already do - that's a great place to start - but then we each need to think and pray about how we may need to be developing in our journey with God.

There is great value of sharing with others where we are, where we're aiming to go.



Ponder and pray:

Spend a few minutes with the image below. This picture relates to the gospel account (in Luke chapter 2) of the presentation of the infant Jesus at the Temple by Mary and Joseph and the encounter with Simeon and Anna. It also refers to the twelve year old Jesus in the Temple when his parents feared he was lost, after the Feast of Passover. Both accounts describe a journey of transition and transformation. Simeon as an old man asks to be released into a new stage in his journey 'Lord now let your servant depart in peace, my eyes have seen the salvation of our God' and Jesus as a young man declares his intention to make his own journey to 'be in my Father's house' and prepare for his earthly ministry. The child stands between two figures in the doorway; he does not make his journey alone but is shaped by the figures of past and future; both where he has come from and the call that he hears ahead and responds to. The three candles on the right represent the past, present and future. The extinguished candle of the past leaves its effect in the air; the unlit candle of the future stands full of potential and the lit candle of the present glows gold. Here in the present moment God dwells. Not simply encased in the past and historical tradition nor merely hoped for in a prophetic or aspirational future but here and now....in this moment; the only moment we can truly live.



'Journey' Bridget Braybrooks

Spend some time in quiet prayer:

- Give thanks to God for those who have shaped your spiritual journey so far and for those who perhaps now look to you for guidance in the faith.
- Offer to God your journey of faith to date. You may want to say sorry for missed opportunities to deepen your life in God; for ways you have not lived the abundant life we are offered as God's children. Receive God's forgiveness and hear your name called again.
- Stand as the child does in the picture, on the threshold of a new stage in your journey with God as you make your practical commitment to live your Way of Life.
- Give thanks to God that he offers his loving presence to each one of us here and now in this moment in the varied circumstances of our lives, as we make our journeys individually and together.

If the group feels able, you may like to give an opportunity for individuals to say one action they wish to take to as they seek to live out their Way of Life as a way of commitment of intention and accountability and support. Conclude with the **Way of Life** prayer said together as a prayer of commitment and intention:

Eternal God

your Son Jesus Christ

is the way, the truth and the life

for all creation;

grant us grace to walk in his way

to rejoice in his truth,

and to share his risen life;

who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God now and forever.

Amen.

Appendix 1

WAY OF LIFE - A FORM OF PRAYER

Archdeacon Audrey Elkington.

Preparation

We commend ourselves and our prayers to God as we say

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

That this day and all our days may be full of God's praise,
let us pray with one heart and mind.

We keep a short time of silence to recall God's presence with us.

Almighty God,
by whose grace alone we are accepted and called to your service:
strengthen us by your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Word of God

Psalmody
Psalm 119.1-8
Rejoicing in God's Way

This or another section of Psalm 119 is read with the following refrain

Refrain: Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes.

Blessed are those whose way is pure,
who walk in the law of the Lord.
Blessed are those who keep his testimonies
and seek him with their whole heart,
Those who do no wickedness,
but walk in his ways.
You, O Lord, have charged
that we should diligently keep your commandments.

Refrain: Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes.

O that my ways were made so direct
that I might keep your statutes.
Then should I not be put to shame,
because I have regard for all your commandments.
I will thank you with an unfeigned heart,
when I have learned your righteous judgements.
I will keep your statutes;
O forsake me not utterly.

Refrain: Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Refrain: Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes.

Canticle

***Isaiah 43 (selected verses)
God makes a Way for us***

**I will make a way in the wilderness,
and rivers in the desert.**

‘I am the Lord, your Holy One,
the Creator of Israel, your King.’
Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
‘Remember not the former things,
nor consider the things of old.
‘Behold, I am doing a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
‘I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
‘The people whom I formed for myself,
that they might declare my praise.’

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**I will make a way in the wilderness,
and rivers in the desert.**

Reading

Following the Way

A passage of Scripture is read.

This may be from a daily scheme of readings, or you may read through one of the Gospels gradually over a series of days.

Short passages from the Old Testament around the theme of following God's Way can be found on pages 47 and 48.

After the reading, the following responsory may be used

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
and be not wise in your own sight.**

In all your ways acknowledge him
and he will make straight your paths.

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
and be not wise in your own sight.**

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
and be not wise in your own sight.**

Prayers

Reflecting on the Way

*A time of quiet may be kept for reflection on the Way of Life. It is suggested that one section of the Way should be examined - **Journeying up**; **Journeying in**; **Journeying with**; or **Journeying out**.*

Some suggested questions for reflection:

What progress have I made in this direction of my Way of Life?

Are there particular areas of growth for which I want to give thanks to God?

Are there ways in which I have fallen short in my journey that I should acknowledge, and ask God for new strength?

Before ending the time of reflection, remember to pray for those who have helped you on your journey, and for others within the Diocese seeking to follow the Way of Life.

Affirming the Way

At the end of the reflection, the following affirmations are used.

As we follow the Way of Life,
we affirm the presence of God among us,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God calls us to journey 'UP', sharing in worship and prayer.
Jesus said, God is spirit and whoever worships must worship in spirit and in truth.
Jesus, you are the Way: guide us on our journey.



God calls us to journey 'IN', sharing in the transformation of Christ.
Jesus said, Remain in me, and I will remain in you.
Jesus, you are the Way: guide us on our journey.

God calls us to journey 'WITH', sharing in love and fellowship.
Jesus said, Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.
Jesus, you are the Way: guide us on our journey.



God calls us to journey 'OUT', sharing his love in deeds and words.
Jesus said, go and make disciples of all nations.
Jesus, you are the Way: guide us on our journey.

Eternal God,
your Son Jesus Christ
is the way, the truth and the life for all creation:
grant us grace to walk in his way,
to rejoice in his truth,
and to share his risen life;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

As followers of the Way, let us pray
with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and lead us in the Way of Life.
Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, *and* Common Worship: Daily Prayer, *material from which is included in this service, are copyright* © The Archbishops' Council 2000, 2005.

Bible Readings from the Old Testament about following God's Way.

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was nearer; for God thought, "If the people face war, they may change their minds and return to Egypt."

So God led the people by the roundabout way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea.

The LORD went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night.

Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. *Exodus 13.17-18, 21-22*

"Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods;

for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed;

and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God." *Joshua 24.14-18*

The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he recompensed me.

For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

For all his ordinances were before me, and from his statutes I did not turn aside. I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from guilt.

Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in his sight.

This God--his way is perfect; the promise of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all who take refuge in him.

For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?

2 Samuel 22.21-25, 31-32

"Where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?

Mortals do not know the way to it, and it is not found in the land of the living.

The deep says, 'It is not in me,' and the sea says, 'It is not with me.'

It cannot be gotten for gold, and silver cannot be weighed out as its price.

Where then does wisdom come from? And where is the place of understanding?

It is hidden from the eyes of all living, and concealed from the birds of the air.

God understands the way to it, and he knows its place.
For he looks to the ends of the earth, and sees everything under the heavens.
When he gave to the wind its weight, and apportioned out the waters by measure;
when he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the thunderbolt;
then he saw it and declared it; he established it, and searched it out.
And he said to humankind, 'Truly, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.'
Job 28.12-15, 23-28

Hear, my child, and accept my words, that the years of your life may be many.
I have taught you the way of wisdom; I have led you in the paths of uprightness.
When you walk, your step will not be hampered; and if you run, you will not stumble.
Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life.
Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evildoers.
Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on.
For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong; they are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble.
For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.
But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.
Proverbs 4.10-18

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight--indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.
But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?
For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap;
he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness.
Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.
Malachi 3.1-4

Although the title '**the Way**' was the first one used to describe the new Jesus movement (see Acts 9:2), the New Testament doesn't use this imagery to the same extent. When Jesus taught people about this idea he tended to use the phrase 'the Kingdom of God' or 'the Kingdom of Heaven'. You could read gradually through one of the first three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, or Luke) and see what you can learn about the Kingdom (or the Way) which Jesus came to establish.

APPENDIX 2 Introducing Way of Life - thinking of our baptism

Notes for a service by Archdeacon Audrey Elkington.

This is too long for a standard sermon - it can be reduced to a general introduction by simply working through the elements of baptism, and the 4 directions of Way of Life.

Further sermons can work through the more detailed material relating to the directions.

If you do not have access to powerpoint facilities you can use appropriate visual aids (a jug of water, a bottle of oil, a palm cross, a welcome sign etc) instead.

Feel free to edit this in any way which is appropriate - for example using your own personal details and documents, speaking about your own Christian journey, how you seek to journey in the 4 directions given....

First slide 'Way of Life', click to bring up text:

The end of Matthew's gospel (28.19): Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Shows the link between discipleship & baptism.

Discipleship = living as followers of Christ, as baptised people....

But I wonder what it means to you that you are a baptised person?

'D&I have been married N yrs - we know this because we have a photo & marriage cert (slide) - but is that the only reason I know we've been married N yrs?

If all our marriage of N yrs means to us is photo & cert - are we missing out?

But the reality is that we know we've been married for N yrs - because that's how long we've lived together and sought to live out our marriage vows.

We've worked at keeping our relationship alive, we've expressed our love for each other, enjoyed the love we've received in return. We've been there for each other on the best as well as the worst days, - when we've had little and when we've been blessed with plenty. We've rejoiced with each other in success, in wholeness, and in achievement.

In other words - we've sought to live out those promises we made to each other so many years ago.' (Adapt to suit your situation)

So what does it mean that we are baptised people? Surely it means more than a certificate and a photograph from years ago? (slide)

- just like marriage, should we think of baptism as something that we have to work at, a calling we need to seek to live out - during the week as well as on a Sunday. Perhaps a way to help think about this is by thinking of the different symbolic elements of a baptism service

Use slides/images or visual aids.

SYMBOL	POINTING TO	OUR CALLING	LITURGICAL LINK
WATER	Washing, new start, entering into Christ's death (dying to sin) and life (rising to C'st),	To live 'in Christ' - as Christ himself would live, in relationship with God as Father	Decision Do you turn to Christ as Saviour, Do you submit to Christ as Lord, Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth, and the life?
CROSS, SIGNING	Jesus' death for us	To take up our own cross daily & to follow Christ 'Christening' = making Christ-like	Christ claims you for his own. Receive the sign of his cross.
OIL, ANOINTING	The seal of the Spirit	To live empowered & inspired by the Holy Spirit	Prayer 'may you daily be renewed by his anointing Spirit'
WELCOME	the body of Christ	not as an individual, but as someone who belongs	"will you welcome these children & uphold them in their new life in Christ" and "we welcome you into the fellowship of faith"
CANDLE	God's light in a world of darkness	Out of darkness into God's marvellous light To shine as a light in the world	Decision intro "God calls us out of darkness into his marvelous light" Giving candle "Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father"

This is really what 'Way of Life' is about *(slide)*

- about helping us to find a structure in our lives by which we ensure that we live this out in our place of work (whatever that may mean),
in the place where we live,
in the places where we relax and find refreshment and enjoyment,
as well as in the place where we worship each week.

Let's think for a bit about what we mean by this, by thinking through the four directions of journeying in Way of Life :

(UP) *(slide)*

Water - entering into Christ's life and death - also 'christening' = making Christ-like

→ our calling to live 'in Christ'.

Being 'in Christ' is something that takes working at just as a marriage takes working at - this is what we mean by the 'UP' direction of journeying.

This direction is about things which feed our relationship with Christ/with God, which deepen that relationship - very much about our life of prayer and worship.

It is important that we have both **individual and corporate** elements within this direction.

We shouldn't seek to **hide from God** by only ever coming into his presence with other people, hiding behind them and letting them talk and sing and pray on our behalf.

But equally we shouldn't simply **walk as a lone pilgrim** - there is something very powerful about praying and worshipping with others - as though what is happening is far greater than the sum of the individual parts - you can only prove this by experiencing it for yourself.

Walking alongside others is also imp. because we all have times when we find it hard to pray and worship (either because we are ill, or going through a time of particular stress, or through a time of dryness in our relationship with God), to be part of a corporate discipline allows us to rely on the prayers of others during those times, knowing that we are still part of that life of prayer even if unable to participate ourselves.

In this direction we might put:

Our quiet time, our remembered prayers we have said since childhood,

any set form of prayer we use - Iona, Taize, CW,, the times we set aside for contemplation or meditation.

We might also put the triplet we pray with regularly, morning or evening prayer in church, compline we pray with our spouse before we go to bed, the intercessory prayer group we belong to....

Also consider what commitment we make to Sunday worship, and whether we make that commitment to go to services even if they are not the ones we particularly like, or in places that are out of our way.

(IN) *(slide)*

Signed with cross - reminder of our calling to take up our cross daily and to follow Christ

- belonging to Christ means that we should live by different priorities, different rules, different standards
- we are called to follow in Christ's footsteps, not just follow our own hopes or desires
- 'Christening' = making Christ-like

The 'IN' direction reminds us that we need to know our scriptures if we are going to aim to live by them, that we need to know how the community of the baptised have sought to live down the centuries, we need to use our intellect and our experience as we seek to put our faith into practice, and above all that we should expect to live differently as a result. But also.....

Anointing - recalling Jesus' anointing with the Holy Spirit at his baptism - we do not seek to do this on our own, in our own strength, but in the power of, through our inspiration by the Holy Spirit of God.

In this direction we might put:

The house group we belong to, or the study group we attend during Lent,

the books we have been reading, the bible commentaries we've been using or the correspondence course we've been taking.....

Not that we want to collect a series of badges or awards, but that we want to be changed as a result.

(WITH) *(slide)*

Welcome reminds us that we are baptised into the body of Christ, baptised into a church, baptised not as an individual to follow an individual path, but baptised into a fellowship of believers that together we might walk the Way of Life

- here you are encouraged to think about how you express that belonging.

Perhaps easiest way is through praying for others

- people we know and like do concern us, but what about praying for those you don't get on with, people who are other than you, Christians further afield than parish boundary?
(Diocesan prayer diary/ of Missionary organisations)

Harder still is the challenge to be prepared to become the answer to your own prayers

- to make an effort to express your relationship with people in the church - by forgiving - by offering hospitality - by bearing with one another in love.

Also being prepared to play our role in the life of the church and do those jobs that no-one can be found to do.

You may even be challenged to think about how you can contribute to the wider body of Christ - by being involved in ecumenical matters or through the deanery, the Diocese, even the national church.

(OUT) *(slide)*

Candle - called out of darkness into God's marvellous light - to shine as a light in the world.

We aren't called to bring our candles into church once a week and to marvel at the lovely light it makes when they are all together - we are called to take those lights out.

To take them out into our place of work, to the street or the hamlet in which we live, to the places where we belong through our leisure pursuits - and to allow others to see the

light. We're called to enable others to catch glimpses of how good it is & to be challenged to live in the light too.

We're called to do this through the things that we do, the things that we say, the ways in which we live our lives.

This is what we are now called to do with this light which has been passed on to us (cf. Olympic torch).

So here we might think about

Particular people to pray for that we might get the opportunity to share something of God with them,

Services we might encourage friends to attend, books that we might lend to people to read, film & faith night we might attend with them..

We will also want to think about the ways in which we share God's love through our acts of service - perhaps through helping pupils to read at school, mentoring a difficult teenager, doing behind the scenes work at the foodbank, being a street pastor, a tea maker at the toddler group,

Here we'll also want to think of the ways in which we live in this world which God has created, and which he has asked us to be stewards of.....

And if we are no longer able to be as active as once we were then we can take the light of Christ out to others in our prayers - as we pray for individuals, as we pray for events, as we pray for those who serve as street pastors or messy church organisers, as Sunday school teachers of churchwardens.

What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ? **(slide)**

It means living the life of the baptised, fulfilling our calling we received at baptism.

Way of Life helps us to be **organised and intentional** about how we do this,

it is deliberately **open enough** so that all sorts of people can be committed to this Way, without having to be constrained to a tradition which is not their own, or a commitment which simply isn't practical in their life as it is at the moment.

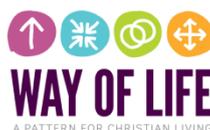
Way of Life is also meant to be **developed** - don't just stop by filling in what you already do - that's a great place to start - but then we each need to think and pray about how we may need to be developing in our journey with God.

There is great value of **sharing with someone** where we are, where we're aiming to go.

At this point you can include information about ways in which people can take this forward:

- *Complete the commitment sections of the booklet (available on the website as a single page sheet which can be saved to their computer) and consider how they may want to grow/change/journey further*
- *Send contact details to Shelley Porter at Archdeacon's House (Bodmin) to be kept in touch with future events and resources*
- *Get involved with whatever is taking place in the parish (your details.....)*
- *Attend a day's workshop: 'Tree, Well, Bowl, Door' or 'Monastic Rhythms for busy lives' (Waymark events, on Diocesan website)*
- *Join the Facebook site for Way of Life*
- *Join or set up a group working through 'Exploring Way of Life'*
- *Ask to meet with you to talk through their Way commitments (or ask to meet with a trained Way Guide - contact Archdeacon's House for details)*
- *Other options.....*

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.



Way of Life resources are produced by the Diocese of Truro Discipleship Team. They are designed to help individuals, small groups, and congregations explore their faith and enable them to flourish in Jesus Christ.