

* Other Resources

See the back of the Faith Sharing - a Simple Guide leaflet.

Leading the Way is a resource produced by the Diocese of Truro Discipleship Team. It is designed to help individuals, congregations and communities to explore the way of life which will enable them to flourish in Jesus Christ.

LEADING THE WAY

Way of Life - a pattern for Christian Living

**Journeying Out
Sharing- our faith.**



“Door. Bridget Macaulay. Used with permission

Leaders Guide.



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These resources undergird and expand the principles identified within the ‘Way of Life’ framework for discipleship. Whilst the ‘Way of Life’ booklet was intended for individual use and development, we have come to recognise the need for churches to consider the same framework for themselves as a body. Equally, we have come to recognise the need for individuals and churches to look beyond themselves, and see how this framework for discipleship might lead to the flourishing of their local community.

This material might be used by a house-group, a working-party, a PCC, or even a whole congregation. The need to consider this particular area might have arisen through Accompanied Ministry Development, through a perceived need within the congregation, or through a concern of the PCC/Ministry Team. There is probably more material here than can be used in one session, so tailor it to your context, or let it spill over into another time.

* Prayer

To draw together all that you have done in this session, pray together either the following or another of your choice.

Almighty God,
By your grace you have given us new life in Jesus Christ,
who called your Church to witness that through his death
and resurrection you were reconciling the world to your-
self.
Awaken in us such a love for you and your world that we
will boldly share the good news of your love;
That all who hear it may be drawn to you, come to know
you as Saviour and follow you as Lord; to the glory of your
Name.

Jesus Christ, Son of God,
make yourself known through me.
Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
speak through me to others.
Amen

⇒ What opportunities do we have within our community to speak about our faith (or to model it)? Do we make the most of these opportunities, or could we make more use of them?

(You might like to ask people what they make of the church and what they understand the Christian faith to be about. This can be a difficult exercise, but can teach us a lot about how we are perceived by those beyond the church, as well as providing opportunities to speak out).

⇒ What are the messages we wish to convey to our community and what are the best ways to do that?

(How might you encourage your congregation(s) to make use of the 'Christianity an Introduction' Diocesan leaflet?)

If people expressed an interest in the Christian faith as a result, what would then be offered to them? - courses like Essence, The Y Course, Alpha, Christianity Explored, Emmaus or Pilgrim, might be suitable).

* Beginning where we are

Light a candle and place it on a table (or devise another focus for attention) and then lead a prayer, such as the one below.

Heavenly Father,
you reached out to the world in your Son Jesus Christ.
Help us to reach out in faith and love and witness to all.
Lord Jesus Christ,
you send your Holy Spirit to empower and gift your Church. By your Spirit help us to grow in unity, to grow as your followers, and to grow your kingdom in this world.

Amen.

* Icebreaker

In a few moments of silence think about how long you have been a Christian and whether you can remember the moment you registered this.

What does your faith mean to you?

In pairs share this with each other.

* Introduction

"Journeying out" in our faith is about sharing the love of God through acts of service and through our words.

As disciples of Jesus we are called to share the Good News of his story (and our story) with others. We need to do this with enthusiasm and with humility, making sure we listen to others as well as share our beliefs. But how? We will need sensitivity, confidence and clarity, making sure that our lives bear witness to what we say, that our actions speak as well as our words.

When doing this it's helpful to remember that Jesus always seemed to meet people "where they were". In other words his words and actions were just right for the person or people he was with. He did it naturally in response to their needs in ways, or with words, that he perceived would be helpful for them. This means that we don't need to worry about following set patterns or remembering formulas - although it's always helpful to be able to bring to mind useful Biblical stories or quotes. We can most often share our faith in ways which come naturally to us as a part of conversation. As we listen to someone we can pray that the Holy Spirit will provide opportunities for us to weave into our conversation something which speaks about our faith and could be relevant and helpful to that person. It's also useful to remember that we are not responsible for converting people - that is the work of the Holy Spirit so we need not worry if our conversation doesn't seem to lead anywhere and sometimes our prayer is equally that we should sense when it is time to stop speaking!

The above material is taken from and supplements the information in 'Faith Sharing—a Simple Guide' leaflet- give each participant a copy if they don't already have one, and encourage reading (again). If you feel that more teaching is needed in this area, you could go through the simple guide leaflet in more detail - but don't just read directly from it!

⇒ Think about, identify and list how your Church weaves Faith sharing activities or events into your Church diary. This can be as a part of social as well as special events/activities?

- **Community**

Paul encouraged the Colossians to " Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone".

⇒How do we communicate with our Community?

What conscious ways to we use to communicate - magazine/ posters/local papers/ social media/personal contacts etc.? How effective are they? In what subconscious ways might we also communicate - in the ways we treat each other/in the priorities we have/in our involvement in community activities beyond the church etc.?)

⇒Is our communication 'full of grace' and what might that mean anyway?

(You might like to explore the ways in which negativism or gossip or similar behaviours can work against our faith-sharing?)

Would I consider going on a training course or joining a Faith sharing team? Who would I contact?

- **Congregational.**

Paul suggested that the Colossians pray for each other that they would have opportunities to share their faith and when they did so, they would do so clearly.

⇒ How can we encourage one another in Church to devote ourselves to praying evangelistically,

- to listening to God and watching for where he is opening doors for our message

- to learning how to proclaim it clearly? (*Reading the Introduction to Christianity leaflet might help your confidence*)

⇒ What training or resources might we use to help us improve on this? (*Reading 'Faith Sharing a Simple Guide may give you some pointers.'*)

Consider some of the following:

Courses like Leading your Church into Growth, or inviting a member of the Diocesan Evangelism group to come to talk to you or train you. Hold a Faith sharing event or weekend with a visiting speaker or pair up with a neighbouring parish to share resources.

* **Bible 'conversation'**

We are going to spend some time now listening to God through a passage from the Bible.

Text: **Colossians 4: 2-6**

Participants will find the full text in their booklet

Explain to the group the full process for this Bible conversation before you begin. Ensure people know that they will not be made to say anything if they don't want to. The process is this:

Have someone read the passage aloud, followed by a time of silence (at least long enough for people to read it again for themselves).

People are encouraged to note a word or phrase that particularly strikes them, and to stay with that word/phrase, being open to what God might be saying to them through it.

Give everyone an opportunity (by going around the group) to say what their word/phrase is (and no more). People can 'pass' if they wish.

Have a different person read the passage again, followed by a time of silence, in which people can consider further the meaning of their word/phrase.

Going around the group, invite people to say something briefly about what it was in the word/phrase which struck them. Again people can 'pass' if they wish.

Have the passage read for a final time, followed by silence, during which people are invited to make a personal (silent/written) response to God if they wish.

Now that you have explained the process, use an opening prayer and go through each step.

Holy Spirit of God;
open our ears and our minds,
our hearts and our spirits,
that we may hear you speaking to us
through these words of Scripture.
May we be ready to be encouraged and challenged,
guided and changed.
For the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

* Questions

In the light of this Bible passage, and what it has been saying to people, consider one or more of these groups of questions (also in participants' booklet).

It would be possible to split the participants into 3 groups, to consider one category of questions each, and to report back to the rest.

Alternatively, you may wish to allow people to consider the personal questions themselves later, alone or with a spiritual guide.

If the people of the church are struggling to know what they are about, perhaps it would be best to focus on the congregational questions.

Or if you feel your congregation needs to learn to look beyond themselves, perhaps the community questions will be most appropriate.

These resources are here to be used by you in whatever way feels most appropriate for your particular context.

• Personal

St. Paul encourages the Colossians to be "devoted to prayer being watchful and thankful".

⇒ What might it mean to pray evangelistically?

i.e. for people to come to faith.

⇒ Am I watchful for God to open a door for my message and for opportunities to share it? How?

⇒ What do I think about that? How do I feel about it?

⇒ How thankful am I to God and how do I express that in my life? In words? In deeds? In public?

The Christian faith, for most, is the very real story of doubts and questions, struggles and failures that can speak to people.

⇒ What doubts and questions remain with me?

⇒ What am I most sure about in terms of my faith?

⇒ How could the way I express myself in little ways in everyday life tell people that I am a Christian without actually saying so?