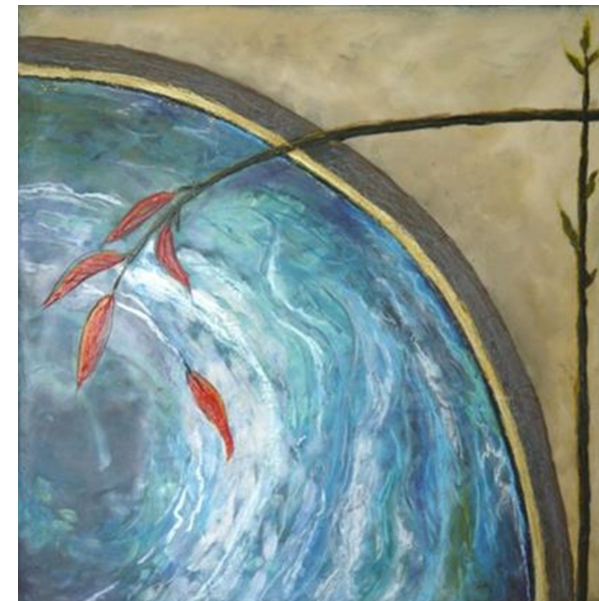


# LEADING THE WAY

Way of Life - a pattern for Christian Living

## Journeying IN Reading—God's Word



“Well.” Bridget Macaulay. Used with permission

### Leaders Guide.

**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.



## CONTENTS

- \* Beginning where we are
- \* Icebreaker
- \* Introduction
- \* Bible ‘conversation’
- \* Questions
  - ◇ personal
  - ◇ congregational
  - ◇ community/communal
- \* Prayer
- \* Other resources

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.

## \* Other Resources

There are lots of resources designed to help us in reading and understanding the Bible, the following is just a selection:

- \* “IN 2 The Bible” 2017 Bishop’s Lent Challenge (<http://www.trurodiocese.org.uk/in2thebible/>).
- \* The SPCK guides to the NT books by N T Wright e.g. “Matthew for Everyone”
- \* SPCK guides to the OT books by John Goldingay e.g. “Psalms for Everyone”  
Both of these series are very accessible, include up to date translations and comments on the full text of the relevant book of the Bible.
- \* A variety of printed and online resources (particularly daily reading notes) are available from the Scripture Union and the Bible Society websites.
- \* “How to read the Bible without switching off your brain” by Simon J Taylor
- \* “Encountering the Bible” by Andrew Village
- \* “Making Good Sense of the Bible together” - The Bible Society—a 6-session course, highly recommended. (With foreword by Paula Gooder).
- \* “The Bible” from the Pilgrim Course series.

## \* Prayer

To draw together all that you have done in this session, pray together the prayer on the front of Reading the Bible – a Simple Guide. It could be done responsively like this:

*Lord, inspire us to read your Scriptures*

*and to meditate upon them day and night.*

*We beg you to give us real understanding of what we need,  
that we in turn may put its precepts into practice.*

*Yet we know that understanding and good intentions are  
worthless,*

*unless rooted in your graceful love.*

*So we ask that the words of Scripture may also be not  
just signs on a page, but channels of grace into our  
hearts.*

*Amen*

*(Attributed to Origen)*

## \* Beginning where we are

### • Focus and prayer.

Open the Bible at Psalm 119:18 and place it on a table and then lead a prayer.

Merciful God, anoint us with your Holy Spirit.

**As we read your word, let us hear your voice speaking  
from within.**

Give us wisdom to understand your message to us.

**Let your word be the joy of our hearts and the lamp to  
our feet.**

Give us strength to build our lives on your word.

**May we rejoice and be blessed in hearing your word and  
keeping it.**

Speak Lord, your servants are listening...

**Praise you Lord. Amen**

## \* Icebreaker

Ask the participants to think about the following 2 questions. Give them adequate time and then ask them to discuss their answers with their neighbour.

⇒ If you could perform miracles, what would you do?

⇒ What is your favourite book of the Bible? Why?

## \* Introduction

Read a short précis from 'Bible Reading—a Simple Guide.

- \* Give each participant a copy of the Bible Reading a Simple Guide' leaflet 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!

## \* Bible 'conversation'

We are going to spend some time now listening to God through 2 passages from the Bible.

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 passages aloud, followed by a time of silence (at least long enough for people to read them again for themselves).

Psalm 119:103-106

2 Timothy 3:10-17

## • Community

- ⇒ What would it be like for the church to make more knowledge and learning regarding faith and spirituality available to others?
- ⇒ Is there a fear that means people are not confident in their knowledge to come to learn and share their thoughts regarding faith and spirituality? If so, how might confidence be grown?
- ⇒ How might our understanding of the Bible enable us to engage with, speak into and serve our communities as Christians?

- **Congregational.**

*Bible reading and study..... leads to growth and maturity in a Christians life.*’ Reading the Bible—A Simple Guide.

- ⇒ In what ways do we explore and share the Bible as a congregation?
- ⇒ What opportunities do we regularly make available to study and learn together?
- ⇒ How seriously do we take developing ourselves as disciples?
- ⇒ Many have been engaged in study groups that help us grow as disciples (e.g. Alpha, Emmaus, Living Faith, Pilgrim). How do such courses help us to grow as the body of Christ where we are? Are there any such courses running at present or planned for the near future?

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 passages 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 passages 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 these Bible passages, 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

*'Bible reading is one of the building blocks of our 'Journey IN', and the core text through which Christians encounter God's wisdom and guidance.'* Reading the Bible - a Simple Guide.

- ⇒ How easy do I find it to read my Bible regularly? What are the difficulties I encounter?
- ⇒ Where do I find helpful input, clarification or encouragement?
- ⇒ What might help me to 'encounter God's wisdom and guidance.' and then act upon what I have learnt? For example keeping a journal, talking with a friend, starting a blog etc.
- ⇒ Can I prayerfully identify someone with whom I might meet, on a regular basis, to read and discuss the Bible?
- ⇒ What personal incentive do I have for growth?