

## Faith And Society Files: Re:focus - Action Plan and Resources

Re:focus is an updated, more flexible version of the BUGB Mission Consultancy scheme developed in 2003. It has been developed in modules to make it suitable for a wide variety of churches. User-friendly, it assumes two external facilitators will work with each church on the re:focus journey that may take 6 to 12 months. This resource contains the modules to assist churches draw up an Action Plan following the main re:focus meetings.





celebrating who you are and  
developing your **crossing**places

# Module 9: Developing an Action Plan

**re:focus** is a journey to help your church:

- focus on its life as a Christian community
- develop new and existing *crossingplaces*
- share the Christian message in actions and words.

Using a selection of the **re:focus** modules, the church will:

- listen to each other and to God
- be guided by experienced external facilitators



## Developing an Action Plan

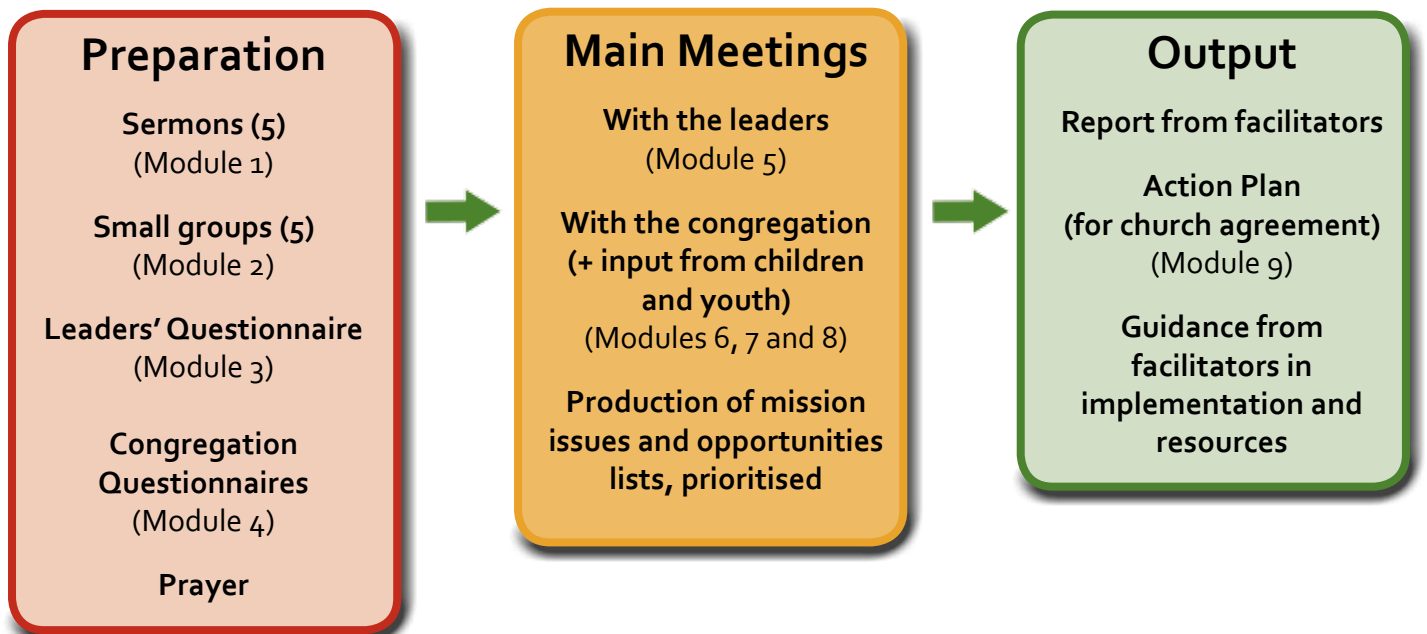
To help the church leaders and facilitators in creating an Action Plan that will guide the church through the next three to five years.

### Introduction

From the **re:focus** journey, and the report to the church meeting, the church will be left with at least one specific objective to be put in the Action Plan. The steps required in reaching that objective need to be worked out, and a timeline agreed for it. If there is more than one objective, then this exercise will need to be repeated for each, and on the overall Action Plan priorities will probably need to be made.

This exercise will normally be worked on by the facilitators with the leaders, who may require different degrees of guidance depending on the nature of the objectives. For some objectives, one or more of the **re:focus** modules 10 - 15 may be useful steps in achieving them. Other resources may be suggested. After making priorities, a realistic timetable will to be set for the steps to reach each objective, and a success criterion decided upon. This should be recorded in charts such as the one at the end of this module. It is the responsibility of the church leaders to present the Action Plan to the church meeting for agreement, and to implement the plan. The facilitators will be available for an agreed number of months for further guidance on implementing the Action Plan and to check on progress.

### The Action Plan stage of the re:focus journey



# Outline to structure discussions when creating an Action Plan

This is a simple tool which helps to establish precisely what actions need to be taken to achieve the objectives.

## When to use...

- When a situation has been thoroughly diagnosed, priorities established and a clear understanding of what needs to happen is required.
- If there is no detailed plan, quite frequently the action just will not happen.

## Strengths

- Simplicity
- The questions provide a clear structure for plan
- It can be used in a multitude of situations - at any level (individual, team, organisational, etc)
- Language is simple

## Limitations

- Can take more time to complete than you think!
- Limited use in complex projects

## How to use

- Use in one group (eg the leaders) or break people up into appropriate sub-groups to tackle different issues.
- Hand out the list of questions and get people to write their answers on a flipchart (or use 'post-it' notes then stick on a flipchart).
- If done in sub-groups, ask each group to present back.
- Take each of the findings outlined in the facilitators' report one at a time and use the questions below to come to a list of actions that will become your Action Plan.

### Action Planning Questions:

- What do you want to achieve?
- How will you move forward?
- What help do you need, and from whom?
- What are the obstacles you may encounter?
- How will you overcome each one?
- What timescale will you work to?
- Who will be responsible for what?

### Resources:

- **re:focus** Module 10: Sowing, Reaping, Keeping
- **re:focus** Module 11: Local Community Research
- **re:focus** Module 12: A Welcoming Place
- **re:focus** Module 13: Resources
- **re:focus** Module 14: Evangelism Resources
- **re:focus** Module 15: Discipleship Resources

### Weblinks:

- BUGB Faith and Society Team  
[www.baptist.org.uk/faithandsociety](http://www.baptist.org.uk/faithandsociety)
- Various Faith and Society Files  
[www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=114364](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=114364)

### Books:

*Consultancy Skills for Mission and Ministry* p 191,  
by David Dadswell. ISBN: 978-03340 4373 7  
Published by SCM Press (2011)



..... Baptist Church

Action Plan ..... 20\_\_ to ..... 20\_\_ Priority no .....

Objective	Target Group(s)	Steps to achieve objectives	Who?	Success Criteria	Time Scale	Resources Required	Cost
Success Criteria		•					
		•					
		•					
		•					
		•					



celebrating who you are and  
developing your **crossing**places

# Module 10: Sowing, Reaping, Keeping

**re:focus** is a journey to help your church:

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Using a selection of the **re:focus** modules, the church will:

- listen to each other and to God
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## Sowing, Reaping, Keeping

To provide a way of developing a framework for mission in the church, enabling evangelism.

### Introduction

This module is designed as one that may be recommended by the facilitators as a follow-up exercise - a step in the Action Plan. It is based on the revised edition of Laurence Singlehurst's book *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping*. Many churches have found this to be a valuable tool, both in demystifying evangelism today, and in setting in place a structured and focused mission strategy that includes evangelism. Our thanks go to Laurence and to IVP for their assistance and co-operation.

Evangelism can seem intimidating, but *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* helps in telling others about Jesus by simply exploring what it means to sow the seed of faith, to reap the harvest and to nurture the faith as it grows: sow, reap and keep.

*Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* fits well with the work already done on individual and church *crossingplaces* earlier in the **re:focus** journey.

### Process

It is important for the church leaders, and perhaps the mission group, to grasp the principles of *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* so that they can share them effectively with the whole church or perhaps with a large group, eg everyone involved in family ministry or some other aspect of the church's local mission.

For the **leadership** group, it is recommended that

- 1 the PowerPoint with notes offered in this module should be worked through together to gain a thorough understanding of the principles
- 2 the book *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* should be read.



When that has been completed, then two of the leaders can take, preferably, the whole **congregation** through the training materials. Some of this will reinforce what was done early in the **re:focus** journey in the group sessions (Module 2). Other parts will be new. This process should help individuals see evangelism more positively. Also it will enable everyone to help develop a strategy for the mission of the church that is focused rather than fragmented and is owned by everyone, as each sees the part they have to play in it. This strategy should be realistic and it may be that something else in the life of the church will have to be stopped. The desire in using these training materials is to mobilise everyone to contribute to the mission of the church in some way, and to have an overall strategy that is understood by everyone.

Some churches have developed missional cells or clusters, where each group has responsibility for an aspect of the mission life of the church, eg family life or seniors' work. The training material would also work well in these groups.





# The PowerPoint notes for leaders



These PowerPoint slides are available to download free of charge from the Baptist Union website at: [www.baptist.org.uk/refocus](http://www.baptist.org.uk/refocus)

## SLIDE 1

### re-focus: Sowing, Reaping, Keeping

Four changes to shape a strategy for evangelism.



## SLIDE 2

### A Paradigm Shift

Seismic cultural changes in a now globalised world, advancing secularisation in the West and postmodern relativism mean that God's people have had to have a rethink about evangelism. Laurence Singlehurst describes four changes that have been needed to take place in our thinking about evangelism.

But first of all, what is 'SRK'?

- It's not a programme.
- It's not a strategy.
- It's a framework for thinking about how, as individuals and as churches, we might tell those who don't know Jesus – all about him.



## SLIDE 3

### Change 1

Evangelism is not so much 'telling the truth' as the **outworking of love**.

It's been said, "People don't care about what we know until they know we care!" We live in an age where people do not accept one 'big picture' ultimate truth. What's 'true' for you may be different from what is 'true' for me! People are cynical about truth claims and therefore it's much more important for people to **see** the truth as well as **hear** it. How?

By loving people, Jesus was incarnational in his approach to evangelism. People encountered and responded (some of them!) to his deeply practical, powerful and unconditional love.

**In a world which is cynical, truth has to be bumped into.**







## Change 2

Evangelism is not so much about requiring people to 'make a decision' as **being part of a process and what the Holy Spirit is doing in a person's life over time.**

### SLIDE 4

#### Change 2 in our thinking

Evangelism is not so much about requiring people to 'make a decision' as **being part of a process and what the Holy Spirit is doing in a person's life over time.**

Disappointment may set in if, despite all our efforts, we don't see people saved – especially if we see evangelism as decisions reached and commitments made. However, if we view evangelism as a process – and one that we might be involved in at the beginning of someone's faith journey, in the middle or at the end – we can enjoy the part that we've been called to!



## Change 3

Evangelism is not so much about making converts **as about making disciples.**

### SLIDE 5

#### Change 3 in our thinking

Evangelism is not so much about making converts as **about making disciples.**

In the past, as long as someone had made a commitment, it was thought that the main work had been done. But evangelism is about telling people who don't know ALL about him. It's about keeping hold of them as they take their first steps as believers and continuing to do so to bring them to maturity and abundant life.



## Change 4

Evangelism is not so much about a few gifted evangelists proclaiming 'the truth' as **about every Christian being good news in their neighbourhood.**

### SLIDE 6

#### Change 4 in our thinking

Evangelism is not so much about a few gifted evangelists proclaiming 'the truth' as **about every Christian being good news wherever their neighbourhood is.**

If enthusiastic Christian leaders were going to change the world, it would have happened by now! Now the call is for every Christian to live an authentic Christian life, seeking to love the people who are their neighbours (at the next desk at work, on the same team replacing rail tracks, at the same toddler group, on the same golf fairway!) and for every Christian church to witness God's love in their community.

**The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood.**

So those are the principles behind the framework. In summary then:





## Evangelism is about:

- the outworking of love
- being involved in what the Holy Spirit is doing over time (process)
- making disciples
- everyone being involved

## SLIDE 7

Evangelism is about:

- the outworking of love
- being involved in what the Holy Spirit is doing over time (process)
- making disciples
- everyone being involved

## Faith is a Journey (Sowing and Reaping)

The framework of *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* rests on understanding that faith is a journey that starts with love, continues with love and has love as its final destination!

**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son.  
John 3:16**

But it is a **journey!**

This journey has been described as stages of faith and was first used by a man called Engels. Simplified, it looks like this:



## SLIDE 8

### The lift

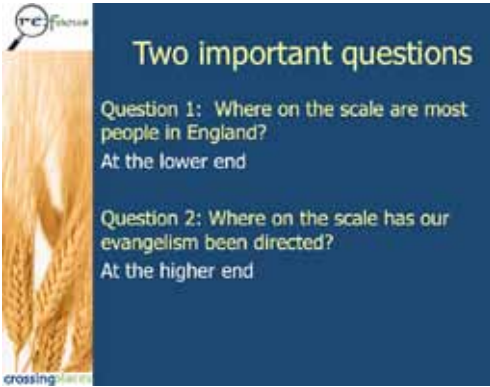
In the diagram, the illustration of a lift has been used:

- G – 1 – 2 - 3 are stages when a person might have no idea about God
- 4 – 5 - 6 they are just becoming aware of another dimension to life
- 7 they might have some grasp of the Christian faith
- 8 they are quite close
- 9 on the brink!
- 10 there is a decision and personal commitment to following Jesus
- Above 10 deepening relationships with God / others / learning obedience

The stages are not time-limited.

We might be part of someone's faith journey at any of the stages; it is rare for us to be there through them all (although it's nice when it happens!)





### SLIDE 9

#### Two important questions:

Question 1:

Where on the scale are most people in Britain?

Answer 1:

At the lower end.

Question 2:

Where on the scale has our evangelism been directed?

Answer 2:

At the higher end.

A high proportion of the population either do not believe in a personal God or if they do, they have a very negative view of what this God might be like (impervious to suffering, very boring and worshipped by those who are either hypocrites or fanatics). And yet much evangelism has been directed as though people were close to or on the brink of making a commitment. An illustration will serve to show how this might then be ineffective!



### SLIDE 10

If you wandered into a car showroom and a salesman came up and stuck an order form under your nose, urging you to sign, you'd be a little put out. Buying a car is a major decision – you'd want to know a good deal about the car, discuss it with your partner, go away and count your savings. You might even have dropped into the showroom only because you were at a loose end and may not be contemplating buying a new car for another couple of years!

Back to evangelism, some people are close and ready for a serious conversation and will make a decision quite soon. **But most people are not ready, and many have a long way to go and they will need to see and hear about a different way of life before they are ready to change course.**

Our job is to help them wherever they are.

Helping someone at stage 1 get to 3 and realise that God is good and Christians are OK – is as much evangelism as seeing someone give their life to Jesus. However, the kind of evangelistic activity will be different at different stages. Jesus (in John 4) used an agricultural illustration and talked about sowing and reaping. But we could use a financial illustration and talk about investing and seeing a good return.

One thing's for sure - without investment, we'll never see an increase!





The Engel Scale: Sowing and Reaping	
Steps 1 - 3	"God is good and Christians are OK."
Steps 4 - 6	Basics of the gospel message
Steps 7 - 10	Counting the cost and making a response



## SLIDE 11

### The Engel Scale and Sowing and Reaping

#### **Sowing 1 Steps 1-3**

First things first! The first things to communicate are that God exists, is alive, is good and that he hasn't abandoned the universe and left it running! He is intimately involved, knows each one of us by name and loves us deeply. They also need to know that Christians are reasonably OK people and pleasant people rather than fundamentalist odd-balls. This is the '**God is good and Christians are OK**' news.

#### **Sowing 2 Steps 4-6**

This is the basics of the gospel message. Bear in mind:

- People may not find the word 'sin' helpful; possibly 'selfishness' would be a more modern day way of communicating the problem that Jesus came to fix.
- The word 'repent' might be better communicated as 'finding a better way to live' or 'changing values'.
- People seem to be able to understand that addictions are powerful (for money, sex, power, substances, work, self-harm) and be open to a message about liberation – more than a message about feeling guilty (that may come later).
- In a fractured society, people seem to be open to help with relationships and healing – and the ministry of Jesus as reconciler.
- It seems to be important to acknowledge that while we are guilty of hurting others, we are also victims of others' selfishness and so it is important to talk about forgiveness and healing together.

#### **Reaping Steps 7-10**

This is when people become aware of the implications of following Jesus and how to receive him as Lord and Saviour. Please bear in mind that this is not a one way street; people have been known to go back. See later the notes on keeping!



An evangelistic strategy needs to include:
Sowing 1 activities
Sowing 2 activities
Reaping activities
Keeping activities



## SLIDE 12

An evangelistic strategy needs to include:

**SOWING 1 activities**  
**SOWING 2 activities**  
**REAPING activities**

Any church's activities need to have a balance of these. In times of high mobility in the population it may be that someone is helped at S1 stage before going somewhere else where they may now be open to S2.

All this happens of course through the work of the Holy Spirit. We co-operate with him and make available the stepping stones.



Another way of putting it is to think about the church having different doorways. Some may be open to coming in through the Alpha (S2) doorway. Someone else may be open to the mums and toddlers group (S1). It's not about processing people but about being attentive to how we might be able to help people at particular points on their journey into God's love.

**A cautionary note!** Even if people attend a S2 or R activity, it's in the conversations in those places that people ask their questions and get as far as praying. It doesn't happen in a vacuum! It happens in relationship!



re: focus

### Having a Strategy

Paul's basic strategy is clear in Acts

- 1 Go first to the Jews or God-fearers
- 2 Establish an evangelistic church plant

Having an evangelism strategy is *not* unspiritual

crossing

#### SLIDE 13

It isn't unspiritual to have an evangelism strategy in your church. Paul had one!



re: focus

### Examples: Sowing 1 activities

- ✓ Be a secret pastor
- ✓ Offer practical help
- ✓ Hold a party for your neighbours (The Big Lunch)
- ✓ Family Fun Days
- ✓ Become a school governor
- ✓ Play sport for a local team

crossing

#### SLIDE 14

##### Sowing 1 Activities

- Be a secret pastor (ask God who's in your congregation! Ask him who you are called to love and do two things that a pastor does – love them unconditionally regardless of their response or lack of it and seek their spiritual welfare).
- See where / when you could be helpful by offering your equipment or labour.
- Host a party for the neighbours and show generosity.
- Have your church, on a dark November day, hire a huge inflatable that all the family can go on. Make a quiet space available with home-made cakes and the Sunday newspapers and give it all away free.
- Offer your time to a local school.
- See what's going on locally – to play or to support some youngsters in playing sport.

**NB** There may well need to be several sowing activities over time in order to build relationships





**Examples: Sowing 2 activities**

- ✓ Family 'café style' services
- ✓ Alpha / Journeys / Wellsprings
- ✓ Fair Trade / Christian Aid concert
- ✓ Prayer Spaces in schools
- ✓ Songs of Praise
- ✓ 'Fresh Expressions' eg Messy Church

✓ Make the most of Christmas, Easter etc

## SLIDE 15

### Sowing 2 Activities

Make these times of the Christian year available, make them fun, show hospitality, include food, explain what's going on, let people participate as much as they want to / feel able to. Build on these to extend into monthly café style – so that people have the opportunity to have a sense of belonging and community. Whatever else happens is up to the Holy Spirit.

People may well be open to attending a concert to raise money for a 'cause'; a good singer / representative of a charity may, during the evening, have an opportunity to communicate some good messages about a caring God and a compassionate community.

There is a good deal of openness to prayer spaces, labyrinths etc at particular times of the year when children / young people / students can be guided into an understanding of prayer and participate as they wish to.

Songs of Praise, followed by cream teas are a popular way of communicating positive messages about the faithfulness of a loving God and these can often be events where people are able to access some of their spiritual heritage through the nostalgia awakened by familiar hymns and readings.

'Fresh Expressions', such as Messy Church – an event for all the family – can awaken spiritual desire, strengthen families, build community and make 'church' accessible, especially to those who are afraid of being embarrassed by noisy church in 'real' church!

**Examples: Reaping activities**

- ✓ Retreat (Quiet Day, large Christian event)
- ✓ Pointing people in the right direction
- ✓ Alpha
- ✓ ALF Club

## SLIDE 16

### Reaping activities

We can never be sure what has been happening during Sowing 1 and 2 activities! But there may well come a point when people seem thirsty for 'more' and then they can be invited to one of these. The important thing is providing a creative space in which God can work, being open to answering questions, being alert as much as possible to what is happening for them and whether or not you need to be involved or just to pray.

It is essential that each person / child is able to respond in their own time, in their own way.





## Keeping strategies

What helps people stay?

- ✓ a sense of belonging, small groups KEY!
- ✓ a place to serve and grow
- ✓ healthy, open and trusting relationships
- ✓ leaders able to lead, motivate and equip

## SLIDE 17

### Keeping strategies (Making Missionary Disciples)

Lionel Fletcher: "All churches grow but we must stop them leaking."

1000 people leave UK churches every week!

What helps people stay?

- a sense of belonging, good communication and small groups are KEY!
- a discipleship track and opportunities to serve and grow.
- healthy, open and trusting relationships.
- consideration of the needs of different groups of people.
- leaders who are able to lead, motivate and equip.



## What next?

Encourage leaders to read  
*Sowing, Reaping, Keeping*

Share with the church members

Use the training materials to  
involve the whole church

## SLIDE 18

### What Next?

The leaders should read *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping*, then share the outline at a church members' meeting and use these training materials with the whole church.





## Training Materials

These training materials have been designed to enable a church as a whole to understand the *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* principles and begin implementing them. Their aim is to help mobilise the church.

The training materials are based on the following assumptions:

- 1 that the principles of *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* have been worked through by the leadership of the church and presented to the membership.
- 2 that as many members as possible will work through the training materials, either in small groups or in a central meeting at the church.
- 3 that the church has an understanding of their personal and church *crossingplaces* which feeds into these *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* principles.

***Occasionally, a little help is supplied for the leader's benefit. This material is printed in bold italics.***

The units are in a given order but are not divided into sessions, as different groups will want to work at different speeds. They could be dealt with in two sessions, or in as

many as six: the leader of the group will have to judge what is best for the particular group.

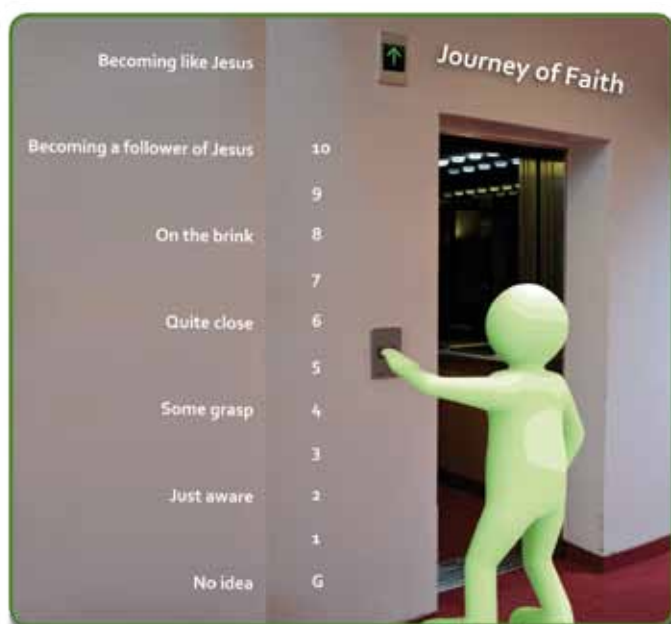
### Personal Reflection

Think about your own journey of faith and the developing steps you have taken:

- 1 What did you know and understand about the Christian faith before your conversion?
- 2 How did this prepare you for your conversion experience?
- 3 How did Jesus open the conversation with you?
- 4 How did your relationship develop?
- 5 Share your experiences / answer with someone else (or the whole group).

Help the group to understand that coming to faith has been a **journey** which is reflected in the Engel Scale and the 'lift' diagram.

***(You may need to remind people briefly about the Engel Scale, which plots a person's closeness to conversion on a scale of one to ten.)***



## UNIT ONE : THE JOURNEY TO FAITH

### a Read: John 4: 1-30

#### Setting the Scene:

Imagine the scene!

What type of well was it?

... a hole in the ground?

... a walled well?

- 1 Where was Jesus in relation to the well?
- 2 How did the woman approach the well?
- 3 How did Jesus open the conversation?
- 4 How did the relationship develop?
- 5 How did this work as a *crossingplace* for Jesus?

What were the stages taken by the woman on her journey to faith?

*The conversation began with water, moved on to the subject of her home life, then the realisation that Jesus was a prophet, and then that he was the Messiah.*

### b Read: Acts 22: 3-13

Paul's is often held up as an example of a dramatic conversion but ask what were the steps that had brought Paul to the point in his life where he met Jesus. His conversion was certainly sudden, but there had been a long period of preparation!

- 1 What did Paul know and understand about the Christian faith before his conversion?  
*(Must have known a lot: scholarly Jewish background; would have heard Christians preach and weighed up their teaching before rejecting it)*
- 2 How did this prepare him for his Damascus Road experience?

## UNIT TWO : THINKING ABOUT EVANGELISM

- a Using the following quotes, ask the group how many of these ring true in their experience of evangelism.
- "We put in a lot of effort for little fruit."
  - "Our organisation was superb, but the attendance was disappointing. Something is going wrong somewhere."
  - "At the end of the week, nobody had responded to Christ."
  - "All our training seemed to get us nowhere."
  - "We are at a loss to understand why it worked for other churches but not for us."
  - "I almost dread suggesting any new evangelistic venture to the church because we are so discouraged"
  - "We feel guilty about our failure to reach the lost for Christ."

*Encourage group members to be honest in expressing their feelings about evangelistic activities in the past. Without being negative, draw out disappointments as well as successes.*

- b Compile a list of the recent or current evangelistic activities that the church is engaged in (including ecumenically).

Decide together where on the Engel Scale a person would have to be so as to benefit from each activity.

**What conclusions can be drawn?**



## UNIT THREE : SOWING

### a Read John 4: 34-38

The focus in this passage tends to be on the **reaper**, but what does Jesus say about the **sower**?

*(His work is essential; he may not be the same person who does the reaping; he is entitled to share in the rejoicing at harvest time.)*

### b Read Matthew 13: 1-9 and 18-23

- 1 What do you understand by the word evangelism?
- 2 What does this story tell us about evangelism?
- 3 What do you understand by the task of sowing the seeds of the Gospel?
- 4 What has been your experience of being a sower?
- 5 How can we ensure that the task of sowing is well done?

***It is easy for us to 'sow' in ways that presume a level of understanding that is simply not there. We need to develop methods of sowing that meet people where they are.***

Look again at (v19) and (v23): what is the essential difference?

***Both people hear the message but only the second understands it! The messenger may be at fault for presenting the message in a way that is incomprehensible.***

How can the Engel Scale help us ensure that we sow in an intelligent way that reflects where people are starting from?

## UNIT FOUR : HAVING A STRATEGY

### a Read Romans 15: 17-24

What was Paul's long-term strategy in evangelism?

### b Read Acts 14: 1-4; 16: 13-15; 17: 16-17; 18: 4-8; 19: 8-10

What was Paul's strategy in each place he visited?

### c Does having a clear evangelistic strategy hamper the Holy Spirit?

Has your church got a coherent strategy for helping people towards faith in Christ?

## UNIT FIVE : WHAT ARE WE DOING, AND NOT DOING?

Remind the group of the concept of the Engel Scale and of the distinctions between events and activities that could be classified as **Sowing One**, **Sowing Two** or **Reaping**.  
*(The chart on page 15 will help.)*

Hand out photocopies of the grid (page 16) and invite the group to enter the current evangelistic activities of the church on the grid. Reach some agreement about where they all belong. *(This grid is also available at the end of the PowerPoint).*

- 1 Discuss together the current evangelistic activities of your church and where they fit on the grid.
- 2 What do the results tell you about the church's activities?
- 3 Are they spread across the Engel Scale or clustered at one end?
- 4 Are there any significant gaps, or duplications?
- 5 Are there obvious priorities to work on?
- 6 Are these priorities achievable, and how?
- 7 What resources, human and material, would be required?

***Encourage brainstorming along these lines and get someone to write up the ideas - before the group on a flipchart or OHP.***



***What emerges should be the raw material of an evangelistic strategy, but it will need much prayer, thought and hard work to turn ideas into practice!***

### **Two Warnings**

- 1 It would be a mistake to imagine that the church could or should immediately act to fill every gap. (Should you start by listing activities for closure?)
- 2 There are some significant events of the church's life that may not be reflected on the Engel scale (eg Pastoral care; Social Action).

#### **Suggested books:**

*Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* - Laurence Singlehurst, IVP (2006 - 2nd edition)

#### **Other resources:**

re:focus Module 7: *crossingplaces*

Appreciation is expressed to Jacky Storey who developed this *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* exercise.

## **UNIT SIX : KEEPING**

- a Most of the group will know people who once came regularly to church and no longer do so.

***The PRESENTATION MATERIALS talked of all churches leaking people. One thousand people who attended a church in Britain last Sunday will not be back next Sunday.***

Ask the group to list as many of the factors as they can for people leaving.

***Avoid unhelpful references to individuals (in or out of the church)!***

Does the list indicate any re-thinking that the church ought to do?

- b List the kind of things we all need in order to keep us spiritually alive and a part of the Christian community.

***This could include bible reading, prayer, worship, membership of a small group etc, but friendship with Christians, especially those like ourselves, is essential.***

- 1 What makes a Christian community attractive to people?
- 2 Why do people leave?
- 3 What can we do in our own lives to reflect the attitude of Jesus?
- 4 Are there any gaps in what the church provides? What can we do about it?

### **Now that you've Done the Study, What Happens Next?**

The next stage is to draw on *Sowing, Reaping, Keeping* principles in order to draft a coherent outreach programme for the church. This might be done initially by a team set up by the leadership but there should be an opportunity for the whole church to contribute and comment. This way, they will 'own' it.



# The Engel Scale ... and Sowing and Reaping

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

	<b>SOWING ONE</b> [positive signals] God is good and we're OK	<b>SOWING TWO</b> [the message] Content of the good news	<b>REAPING</b> [commitment] The cost and the call
<b>SRK Adult</b> <i>This person may have had some Christian heritage and therefore took steps more quickly.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a secret pastor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invitation to a Fair Trade event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alpha</li> </ul>
<b>SRK Adult</b> <i>This person might be more resistant because of previous experience or personal circumstances and therefore more sowing needed.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer practical help</li> <li>• Invite to neighbourhood party</li> <li>• Be a secret pastor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite to Christian Aid concert</li> <li>• Invite to Carols by Candlelight service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a spiritual book to read that includes a prayer</li> <li>• Invite to 'Journeys' course</li> </ul>
<b>SRK Children and Families</b> <i>Serving the families as well as the children is important. There needs to be more than one kind of activity in each category. Trust is gained over time.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disco for children</li> <li>• Family-fun days</li> <li>• School governor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holiday club</li> <li>• 'Open the Book' assemblies</li> <li>• Prayer space in school</li> <li>• Invite family to 'cafe' church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'ALF' club</li> <li>• Invite family to 'Journeys' course</li> </ul>
<b>SRK Young Mum / Grandma</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mums and Toddlers or Grans 'n' Tots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crib service</li> <li>• Wellsprings (pamper course for mums with spiritual component)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ladies' Weekend away</li> </ul>
<b>SRK Dads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who let the Dads out?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Men's breakfast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pub Night: Any Questions</li> <li>• Men's walking weekend</li> <li>• Alpha</li> </ul>

	Sowing One (Network)	Sowing One (Pioneer)	Sowing Two	Reaping	Keeping
Children					
Teens					
Adults					
Baby Boomers					
Seniors					
Family					
Other					



celebrating who you are and  
developing your **crossing**places

# Module 11: Local community research

**re:focus** is a journey to help your church:

- focus on its life as a Christian community
- develop new and existing *crossingplaces*
- share the Christian message in actions and words.

Using a selection of the **re:focus** modules, the church will:

- listen to each other and to God
- be guided by experienced external facilitators





## Local community research

**Aim**

To offer ways to understand the community better through research.

### Why should we do Community Research?

It sounds surprising but sometimes we don't know as much about our own communities as we think we do. Often the things we perceive are just those that happen to be the most visible, while the real needs remain hidden. Many churches have planned one course of action, such as a children's project, and have only much later discovered that the overwhelming local needs are those of another group within the community, those of older people, for example. There is no substitute for community research and there are no shortcuts. It is a necessary part of the foundation upon which good effective church activities are built.

The purpose of community research is to discover more of the truth about a particular area, the people, their needs, their feelings, their attitudes, their relationships and about the environment the people inhabit; the housing, the public space, the facilities and so on.

Any agency which wishes to provide a worthwhile service to a community is well advised to carry out some community research. This applies as much to the church as to any other group. And it applies equally to all kinds of church activities; evangelism, church planting, youth work, local campaigns and social action projects. It is not a substitute for reflection and prayer but is complementary to them; they should inform one another. Together, they help the church to ensure that all its initiatives are appropriate and sensitive. They help it to see its own efforts in the context of the community as a whole.

There are other reasons for carrying out some research.

Firstly, it may help you to assess the effectiveness of your work. It will provide some base line data about conditions before your activities commenced. When the new activity has been going for a while, you can repeat the research exercise to find out what real impact is being made through your efforts.

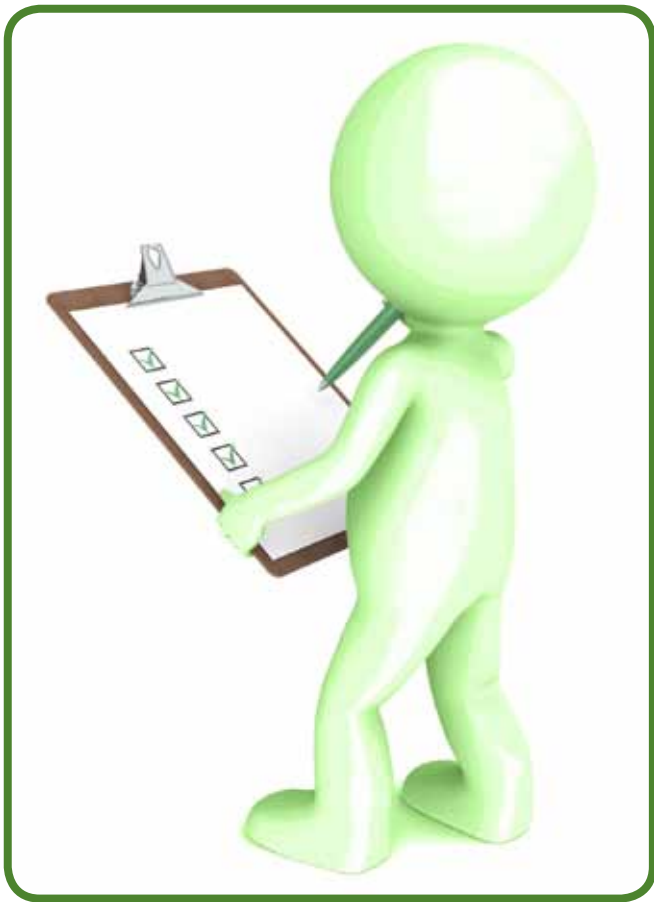
A second reason for doing research is that it can help you to campaign effectively. If you hope to put pressure on the local council to fund a playgroup or to put a pelican crossing on a busy road, then some facts and figures and a survey showing popular support may help persuade the authorities to take your proposal seriously.

Thirdly, engaging in research can help to demonstrate your resolve to relate appropriately to the local community and can help you gain the goodwill of other local agencies.

Finally, you may find that you need financial support from outside your own church in order to carry out the activities you have planned. Nearly all donors will want evidence that you have carried out research and will be meeting a proven need before they will consider making a grant.

Appreciation is expressed to Chris Brockway who developed this module.





## Don't be put off, or try to shortcut Community Research

Many people feel intimidated when they are first advised of the importance of community research. It can sound rather daunting, but it needn't be. In fact it can be an extremely rewarding activity in its own right and need not be seen simply as a means to an end. It is important to remember that what needs to be done is not something that requires special talent or training. There is no need to carry out anything so thorough as a full census or to seek the statistical accuracy of a national opinion poll. What is required are some straightforward activities that bring in helpful and usable information about the neighbourhood concerns and the way local people feel about the area where they live. The summary page of this document will help you conduct your community research in five simple steps (see page 8).

## Two types of Research

Research may be of two different kinds. The first is **quantitative** or 'hard' data. In theory this type of data is objective. It states the facts about any given area. It might include, for example, the number of churches, pubs, community centres, health clinics, schools or playgroups that serve a given neighbourhood. Census data and other statistical information is usually regarded as falling into this category.

The second kind of data is **qualitative** or 'soft' data. This information tells you about the impressions people have of their neighbourhood and of the services that are provided within it; it will tell you how people feel about living where they do.

It is a good idea for any report of community research that is produced to contain elements of both these different types of information.

This module is designed to lead you step by step through researching a local area. It offers some suggestions about how to get both quantitative and qualitative data. Remember that this information is vital to all the work of local churches. What is more, obtaining it can turn out to be a very interesting process. You will meet new people, visit new places and you may find yourself looking at your own community through different eyes.

## Five things to do



It is important for responsibilities to be shared out among a number of committed people. This will prevent the entire burden from falling on one person. Ensure that group members understand the tasks they are given and why those tasks need to be done. It is helpful if the group reflects the community which is to be surveyed as closely as possible. In addition it should include people with a range of the necessary skills and abilities.





Before you begin you will need to decide what area, or what group of people, is going to be the object of your research. For example, it might be a good idea to define it as all the people who live within the parish boundary, or you might use the boundaries used by the local

government. Another possibility is to use major physical boundaries to define the area; railway lines, rivers, major roads etc. Then again, some housing estates are very clearly defined and one or more of these could be regarded as the area to be researched.

You should also bear in mind that some areas contain significant numbers of people who don't actually live in them. For example, city centres attract people from elsewhere who come to work and to shop. These people may have needs that could be met by local churches. If you do a house-to-house survey, you may only speak to residents, and you will not discover the needs of the whole daytime community. On the other hand, this daytime community may be the most visible one while the residents themselves remain hidden.

So, before you begin it is important to decide which community you wish to serve. You will need to think about the geographical area and about whether you are interested in residents, or in the other people who, for whatever reason, come to the area for part of each day. Of course, you might decide to research all these groups.

There's a lot of talk nowadays about 'cultures' - ways of belonging which are not geographical. It would be helpful to do some preliminary quantitative research on who is 'out there' in the area you can feasibly reach, then narrow it down to a group you have a heart for. This could be done initially from the Census data<sup>1</sup>.

1 [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)



This sounds straightforward and it is. It involves going to see people and talking to them about their work, experiences and perceptions. **It will help you as you prepare an activity and it will also help build a network of relationships that may prove useful in the future.**

Anybody and everybody is worth talking to. All have a story or an anecdote that sums up their feelings about the area. However, there are certain individuals or groups that you should make a special effort to see because they usually have a particular knowledge of the area and are especially aware of the neediest groups.

- **Other local churches:** A good place to start is with the local clergy, ministers and other leaders of Christian groups and missions that meet in the area. They may have useful experiences to share and they may be, or have been, involved in activities similar to those you are planning. They may be able to suggest other people to whom you should talk. They may even want to be involved in your project, perhaps in a supportive, advisory or even collaborative capacity.
- **Caring agencies:** The statutory and voluntary agencies that serve local areas have valuable experiences to share and may be able to identify gaps in existing provision.

The statutory bodies, like the local council social services, housing and education departments are working more and more closely with local voluntary organisations. They are a vital source of support and information. All sorts of formal groups are worth consulting; playgroups, schools, clinics, surgeries, the police, the probation service, community centres, youth clubs, housing offices, advice centres, social services, meals on wheels, plus the local branch of Relate, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, the local Community Service Volunteers' office, and the many other agencies that may serve your area. Ring up those that seem most appropriate and ask for an appointment to discuss your work, especially if



you are planning a project of some kind. Links built now will be of service later. Do not neglect those which already have a link with your own church.

[www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk) is the local crime and policing website for England and Wales. By typing your postcode into the search engine, you can instantly access street-level crime maps and data, as well as details of your local policing team and beat meetings.

[www.upmystreet.com](http://www.upmystreet.com) provides a wealth of information about your local area (including schools, transport, crime, council tax and articles related to the area) by simply typing your postcode into a search box.

- **Elected Representatives:** All the political parties are keen to promote work by voluntary agencies. Your local councillor should be prepared to meet you and advise you about his or her perceptions of the area and its needs. If the councillor is sympathetic to your proposals, he or she may be able to help when you negotiate with the local authority in the future.
- **Informal Networks:** It is always worthwhile getting to know the key informal networkers within an area. These might include people like the lollipop man or woman and the landlord or landlady of the local pub. They tend to know a lot of people and to see what is happening in an area from a different perspective. It might be worth asking local people who you should tell if you want word of something to get round: this might help you discover who the key people are in the local networks.



#### Census Statistics:

Your local library will have the results of the local returns from the most recent national census, or these can also be easily obtained on the internet<sup>2</sup>, using your postcode to obtain local information. It is possible that you may be able to get the

same information from your council's planning department. The data from the local enumeration districts is detailed and wide-ranging. It will help you to identify local needs and to work out what kinds of projects and activities would be most needed and most appropriate. Of course, you should bear in mind how many years it has been since the last census; this can make a big difference if your area has a high turnover of population. Nevertheless, the figures should give you a good overall impression of your area.

The BUGB Faith and Society Team has an excellent File called, *Obtaining Demographic Data From The Office For National Statistics*<sup>3</sup>. It's well worth a read and gives a step by step description for using the internet to gather National Census statistics.



If you want to compare your area with the nation as a whole, you can either do this online as above, or for more details on the whole nation refer to the current edition of *Social Trends* which should be in your local library. It is a collection of social statistics published by HMSO for the government's Office for National Statistics.

**Local Authority priorities:** Most local authorities publish their priorities intended to make your town, city or community a better place to be.

<sup>2</sup> [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Download free of charge from [www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/366574/Faith\\_And\\_Society.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/366574/Faith_And_Society.aspx)



Often they will have been negotiated between all the main public sector organisations in your area, your local authority and central Government. Researching the priorities in your area will enable you to find out whether they include areas that you could help to deliver on. Local authorities often have loads of other valuable information on their websites too.

You can also find out who to email about different aspects of the area, and council officers are generally very willing to help you find out information about their area.

**Local survey:** A community survey can be carried out in a number of different ways and can have a number of different purposes. They may not be statistically accurate or wholly scientifically objective, but they can give useful information, especially in areas with a quick turnover of population which can mean that the census data are quickly out of date. They can also give useful factual data on issues not covered by the census, including information on the possible role of the church. In addition they can give helpful qualitative information, such as an assessment of the feelings of local people about their own community and the things that they perceive as local needs.

You will usually need a form of some kind with a series of questions. Examples are available from the BUGB Mission Department. The most obvious way to use these is to go door-to-door and either ask people the questions and make a note of their replies on the doorstep, or leave the form and a stamped addressed envelope. The former is probably more effective. Another method is to set up a stall near the local shops and canvass opinions from passers-by. Such a stall might also be set up in the local library or community centre. However, make sure your method matches your target group – for example, if you're asking elderly people how often they get out, then standing outside the shops will omit many housebound people who your project could be trying to reach!

These methods provide useful information and also help to raise the profile of the church. Remember that if people have helped you by providing information or completing questionnaires, it is courteous to inform them of the final results of the survey.

In addition, all church members should be encouraged to listen to what their neighbours, and others who live in the neighbourhood, are saying. The way people feel about their neighbourhood may be just as important as the factual data; it is a most significant factor and should always be borne in mind.

All these methods can produce helpful information for you to take into account when planning and when praying.

**Other activities:** There are other things that can be done as a part of this activity. It is a good idea to collect local publications such as books, community magazines, pamphlets and newsletters.

Also, you can search on the web, either by the name of your area or the need you are seeking to meet, to see what other information it can give you. These provide useful information on the activities and perspectives of other local groups.

Draw a flow diagram of the ways in which different community groups or groups within the community relate to one another. Don't forget to include your church's *crossingplaces* in the local community. The result should be a graphic representation of who talks to whom within the area and this may prove to be a useful tool in understanding the way in which the local community functions. This exercise should help you to appreciate the fact that communities are dynamic and not static things.

Another good idea is to take some photographs of the local area. These will be useful when you come to compile reports and to create exhibitions.







## 5 Spiritual preparation

It is very important that community research is not seen as something unspiritual. Good community understanding should be a spur to our individual and shared prayer life and should be incorporated into it. The church lives in tension between the world as it is

and the world as it has the potential to be. Our understanding of both these aspects of the world is what motivates our prayer for the world. Prayer is also a means by which we can be prepared by God to serve in the world. This can be done in any number of ways and listed below are exercises that some have found to be helpful.

- **Prayer walks:** It is often a good idea to walk through the neighbourhood of the church in ones, twos and threes (bigger groups might prove intimidating). This is especially helpful if done on days or at times when those walking are not normally in the area. Take the opportunity to walk slowly and take in the sights and the sounds, the people and their needs, the problems and the possibilities. Stop and look more closely at the buildings that you normally hurry past. Share the impressions gained and use them in prayer and reflection.
- **Making a map or model:** Work together as a group to draw a map or make a model of the neighbourhood in which your church building is situated. It should be large and bright so that all can see it. Put on the key local landmarks, significant buildings and places. It is not supposed to be to scale but to sum up the church's perception of the area which it serves. It can then be used as a visual aid for learning about the area and for worship and prayer. It can also be displayed and used as a talking point with other local people.

These are some basic suggestions about approaches to community research. They do not pretend to be exhaustive. You may have lots of other ideas. It bears saying again, those who have been involved in church work have found that their work has been more rewarding and more effective when they have prepared themselves using the kinds of approaches described in this leaflet.

## Next Steps

Once you have gathered all the relevant information, two things remain. The first is to present your findings to all the people who might be interested. These may include the members of your own church, other churches, other local agencies and the community as a whole. You may want to send a summary of your findings to everyone who helped you, including the agencies you consulted and the individuals who completed questionnaires.

It is a good idea to take some good quality photographs of the local area and to use them as part of a presentation of your findings to be put on display in the local library or community centre. The second thing to do is to use your findings as a basis for an activity: evangelism, social action, prayer or all three!

### Other Resources:

*The Discovery Pack* produced by Tearfund and Livability, from: [www.communitymission.org.uk/resources/courses/discovery.aspx](http://www.communitymission.org.uk/resources/courses/discovery.aspx)

Livability questionnaire pack which you can buy: [www.communitymission.org.uk/resources/printed\\_publications\\_for\\_purchase/default.aspx](http://www.communitymission.org.uk/resources/printed_publications_for_purchase/default.aspx)

Faithworks community audit pack to buy: [www.faithworks.info/Standard.asp?ID=2536](http://www.faithworks.info/Standard.asp?ID=2536)

Faith and Society File 'Obtaining Demographic Information from the Office for National Statistics' available for download from: [www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/366574/Faith\\_And\\_Society.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/366574/Faith_And_Society.aspx)



## 1 Engage other interested individuals, agencies and groups

- Identify other individuals and organisations who should be involved: eg local churches, local authority, statutory and voluntary groups, charitable groups, etc.
- Discuss with other parties how they might participate and even contribute practically towards research. Share your motives for researching community.

## 2 Focus

- Form a small research team
- Prayer walk in your local community
- Define purpose and goals of research
- Define research breadth and depth
- Determine method and approach
- Allocate tasks to team and other interested parties
- Define and map your geographical 'parish' for research purposes
- Identify sources and write questions for qualitative research
- Pilot qualitative questions/questionnaires

## 3 Collect Data

- Identify sources for quantitative information
- Census statistics: [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk) (see BUGB Mission File: 'Obtaining Demographic Data From The Office For National Statistics')
- Local crime statistics: [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk)
- Summary of various local statistics: [www.upmystreet.com](http://www.upmystreet.com)
- Search your Local Authority website
- Identify and map all community groups, organisations and assets
- Visit local library/internet to see existing reports on area
- Conduct formal and/or informal qualitative survey/questionnaires with local community.
- Observe the community on different days and at various times of the day
- Network widely and gather the thoughts of everyone and anyone

## 4 Analyse

- Collate, process, analyse and interpret data
- Identify what new information has been learned
- Reflect upon the limitations of the data collected
- Identify how the data affirm/challenge previous assumptions
- Determine how the quantitative data and qualitative data agree/disagree
- Identify how data demonstrate gaps or duplication in provision
- Identify potential new partnerships with other individuals, agencies and organisations already working in the area
- Produce a report telling the story of your community including: a summary, acknowledgements, a list of contents, an introduction, profile of the area, conclusions, recommendations and appendices

## 5 Use

- Share findings and lessons learned with church and other interested parties
- Use research for decision-making
- Prayerfully determine next steps whilst considering other factors identified within the **re: focus** journey (especially modules 4-6)
- Motivated and aided by research results, nurture new partnerships, campaign and even source funding





celebrating who you are and  
developing your **crossing**places

# Module 12: A Welcoming Place

**re:focus** is a journey to help your church:

- focus on its life as a Christian community
- develop new and existing *crossingplaces*
- share the Christian message in actions and words.

Using a selection of the **re:focus** modules, the church will:

- listen to each other and to God
- be guided by experienced external facilitators



## A Welcoming Place

To ensure that the building used by the church is welcoming and accessible, suitable for the mission of the church.

### Introduction

Throughout the UK, cafes, pubs, restaurants, hotels and shops are investing in the redecoration, redesign and redevelopment of their premises because first impressions count. Psychologists tell us that it takes just five seconds for a person to form that first impression – for better or for worse! Church buildings and the physical space contained within them are a significant factor when it comes to your church making a good first impression on guests.

Churches throughout the UK are increasingly recognising that their buildings are a precious resource that can be vital in reaching out to their surrounding communities. So, they too are beginning to invest in their buildings. We know the church is not a building, but buildings are important in God's mission of building his kingdom. In using and caring for our buildings we should be good stewards of all the gifts God has given us, and this includes property. Church buildings must help enable the mission of the church, and not disable that mission. A little common sense in this area goes a long way, but it's often the obvious which gets overlooked.

Churches that do not own their buildings also need to consider the way the premises they use appear to visitors. It will be worthwhile going through the rest of this module picking out the areas where it is possible to make improvements.



The importance of a good welcome for guests applies to any location being used by the church. As well as the surroundings, a good welcome also includes the human factor. This module also gives advice for a welcoming team and about the welcoming attitude that needs to be taken on board by all the church members.



Appreciation is expressed to Chris Brockway, Linda Holder and Mark Hope-Urwin who developed this module.



## Seven Simple, Cost-effective Ways to Ensure your Church Building is 'Mission Ready'

Go through these seven areas and questions with the whole church or a group, including regular users of the buildings that come in for a variety of purposes.

### **1 Help people find you**

Are your buildings well sign-posted and easily identifiable? Are your notice-boards attractive, clear and up-to-date? Are your contact details and web address displayed?

### **2 Keep your premises tidy**

Are the rooms you are using free of chairs and equipment that are not in use? Are you using your storage space efficiently? When did you last 'de-clutter' and throw away items that are broken or no longer useful?

### **3 Ensure your buildings are clean**

Is your church building as inviting as the people who gather in it? Does the building look clean and dust-free? Are the toilet facilities well-kept and always well-supplied with soap, towels, toilet rolls and air-freshener? Do you have good regular cleaning arrangements and an annual spring-clean?

### **4 Stay on top of maintenance**

Are there flickering lights, deteriorating paintwork, broken fittings, leaky gutters or other routine defects which need attention? What visual images does the exterior of the building paint in the mind of the passer-by? Do flowerbeds and other garden areas (even the occasional burial ground) look well-kept?

### **5 Make access easy**

Is it obvious which doors visitors should use for any given activity? Is there a convenient route for wheelchairs and pushchairs? Are access points well-lit and uncluttered? Where a door needs to be kept locked, do you have a good system for admitting people?

### **6 Check that navigation is easy**

Is it clear where visitors should leave cars, pushbikes, pushchairs or aids to mobility? Can people easily find toilets, emergency exits, refreshments, crèches, meeting rooms, etc without needing to ask too many embarrassing questions? Is it easy to see who is available to answer questions and offer help?

### **7 Create a welcoming place**

Is the meeting place well-lit, heated and ventilated? Do the walls have positive signs of activity or are they empty? Is the seating as comfortable as possible? Is the seating arranged in such a way to encourage community and belonging? Can every voice be easily heard? Is the audio and video system working well when used?

Is the place welcoming to people with particular needs? Think through the particular requirements of babies, toddlers and children, as well as people who are infirm, regarding suitable seating, toilet facilities and other special needs. When in doubt, ask! Many commercial companies will supply catalogues of suitable furniture etc that may inspire you.



## Clean, Tidy and Well-Maintained

Most people will have seen the TV programmes DIY SOS or Grand Designs. The difference between a dilapidated property and a newly renovated building is obvious. Looking at any lifestyle magazine will reveal the way properties can be transformed with good decoration, and cleaning, and some gardening.

If you want to know how your church looks to outsiders why not ask a neighbouring church to visit and offer feedback. You could also ask individuals who are relatively new to the church what it was about the building that attracted them – or put them off! How does your building match up to the standards of cleanliness and tidiness in local shops and Building Societies?

Some decorating firms offer advice on colour, but you would need to check what was available in your area. There are also some online resources<sup>1</sup>.



There is help for churches in dealing with maintenance. Ideally each church should obtain a professional report on their premises at least once every five years. The leaflet *PCo3 Five Year Inspection Reports – Church Buildings*<sup>2</sup> is a guide to the kind of report that is needed. The surveyor should highlight areas that require urgent attention and suggest a programme of work in priority order.

1 For example [www.dulux.co.uk/index.jsp](http://www.dulux.co.uk/index.jsp)

2 [www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368769/BUC\\_Guideline\\_Leaflet.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368769/BUC_Guideline_Leaflet.aspx)



You could also obtain a book from The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)<sup>3</sup> entitled *The Good Maintenance Guide* - a practical handbook to help volunteers care for and preserve our historic places of worship. Your building may not be old – but this book, moderately priced at £5 is a useful handbook for anyone caring for any building. There are plenty of illustrations. These are mainly of Anglican buildings but do not let this put you off. The book is a useful guide for anybody who needs to deal with maintenance but has no experience.

Also look at the various Guideline Leaflets, especially:

- PCo7 Burial Grounds<sup>4</sup>
  - L10 Health and Safety and Fire Precautions<sup>5</sup>
- or contact the Baptist Union Corporation (Tel: 01235 517747) if you need help.

The National Churches Trust website<sup>6</sup> provides information about grants for the restoration and modernisation of places of worship in the UK

After addressing each of these more basic matters, is it possible that there is more mission potential that can be released through the use of your church premises?

3 [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)

4 [www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368775/BUC\\_Guideline\\_Leaflet.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368775/BUC_Guideline_Leaflet.aspx)

5 [www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368692/BUC\\_Guideline\\_Leaflet.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368692/BUC_Guideline_Leaflet.aspx)

6 <http://nationalchurchestrust.org/home.php>



# Using your Church Building to Serve the Needs of the Community

The Baptist Union is committed to supporting churches in local mission. Many churches are familiar with our Faith and Society Files<sup>7</sup> and training resources and the practical guidance in the Guidelines Leaflets<sup>8</sup> prepared by the Baptist Union Corporation. These resources offer help to churches with ideas, practical tips, and information on legal, property, finance and charity law. Several of these are specifically mentioned through the rest of this module.

Some simple research will help you discover the needs of your local community (see Module 11). Make contact with organisations in your area who work with the groups you are seeking to reach. Talking to other community networks in your area will help you understand what provision already exists and may unearth ideas for new projects which can be provided in your church premises. BUC leaflet Lo1<sup>9</sup> gives guidance for churches wanting to make partnerships with organisations.

Churches are sometimes invited to work in partnership with Local Authorities or Primary Care Trusts. These strategic partnerships can be very helpful but need to be negotiated carefully. Again, the Guidelines Leaflet Lo1 Churches and Community Partnerships is a useful guide.



Don't underestimate the impact of allowing your buildings to be used to host externally organised projects or events, especially if there are attractive notice boards inside the building publicising church activities. Many churches have raised their profile in the local community by hiring their premises to outside organisations but need to make careful arrangements. There should be suitable safeguards for the church's reputation and any hiring charge should cover the actual costs of the additional heating, lighting and cleaning. The management of the arrangement is important. It

is usually best to start on a business-like basis. If things work out well you can relax the practical arrangements later on. BUC leaflet PC10<sup>10</sup> gives guidance on hiring out church premises. New Forest District Council have published a community toolkit<sup>11</sup> which helps to assess the use and viability of community buildings.

- 7 [www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=114364](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=114364)
- 8 [www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220864/The\\_Baptist\\_Union/Resource\\_Library/Free\\_Resources\\_and/BUC\\_Guidelines/BUC\\_Guidelines.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220864/The_Baptist_Union/Resource_Library/Free_Resources_and/BUC_Guidelines/BUC_Guidelines.aspx)
- 9 [www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368680/BUC\\_Guideline\\_Leaflet.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368680/BUC_Guideline_Leaflet.aspx)

**PC10: Hiring of Church Premises**

These notes are offered as guidelines by The Baptist Union Corporation Limited to provide information for Baptist churches.

These notes can never be a substitute for detailed professional advice if there are serious and specific problems, but we hope you will find them helpful.

If you want to ask questions about the leaflets and one of the Baptist Trust Companies are your property trustees, you should contact them. They will do their best to help.

If your church property is in the name of private individuals who act as trustees they may also be able to help.

**GENERAL**

The majority of churches at one time or another allow other organisations or individuals to use the church premises. Arrangements vary enormously from very informal and unrecorded understandings to a formal lease of part of the church premises. Whether or not the arrangement is recorded in writing, legal obligations arise by reason of permission being given for the use of church premises. These notes are intended to assist churches in making the most effective arrangements, bearing in mind that it is generally sound management of resources for church premises to be used by others when not required by the church.

**BUSINESS LIABILITY**

Many Church Trustees (in a Baptist church this is usually the minister, deacons, elders or a Leadership Team) are unconsciously fearful about entering into arrangements for letting in the belief that letting their premises will result in the church being subject to some liability. However, the church is a registered place of worship, not a business, and the liability and risks are borne by the church in connection with the place of worship, not by the business. The church's trustees are not liable for business risks.

**THE CHURCH'S TRUST DEEDS**

Questions are sometimes raised as to whether the terms of the church's trust deed allow the premises to be used by other organisations or individuals. Unless there is some special prohibition in the church's trust deed or other side deeds of the church there is no reason why the church should not allow other organisations or individuals to use premises provided the deed does not interfere with the church's own work.

A church's trust deed may also impact on the church's ability to hire out its premises for specific purposes. Please see the later section of these guidelines on charitable use.

**TAXATION**

Some churches believe that they must only accept 'donations' for the use of the premises for fear that in some way the church will be taxed if they receive an income from letting. This, like the belief that the church will become liable for business risks, is a misunderstanding. Where the church offers no other services as part of the letting arrangements, the church, as a charity, is entitled to receive income from the use of its premises without being liable for tax.

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10 [www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368778/BUC\\_Guideline\\_Leaflet.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368778/BUC_Guideline_Leaflet.aspx)

11 [www.newforest.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6651](http://www.newforest.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6651)





Finding your way through Local Authority structures can be complicated but the Church of England have produced an excellent resource *Churches and Faith Buildings: Releasing the Potential*<sup>12</sup>, which you should find helpful. Research from Coventry University<sup>13</sup> shows that the added value churches offer the community is significant.



Small churches can make a difference, as may be seen in the story of Upper Edge Baptist Church in Rastrick, that used its premises for the local library for a while. This story is included on week 1 of the *LIFEsize* video. Electronic copies can be obtained by contacting the Faith and Society Team on [faithandsociety@baptist.org.uk](mailto:faithandsociety@baptist.org.uk)

Many churches use their premises for pre-schools or coffee shops. There are two Guidelines Leaflets that outline the arrangements that might be made: Lo2 Pre-Schools<sup>14</sup> and Lo3 Churches and Coffee Shops<sup>15</sup>. Further information about pre-schools is available in a Church and School: Early Years File<sup>16</sup> and there are several stories about churches with coffee shops, some of which have received Mission Project grants<sup>17</sup> to set them up.

Churches have opened their doors for community projects, cafés, concerts, exhibitions and essential services such as post offices, while still remaining primarily places of worship. Such extended and additional use provides a sense of community, revives the church building itself, attracts new visitors and contributes to the regeneration of neighbourhoods. The church building itself benefits from more frequent use, regular heating and additional funds and volunteers.



- 12 [www.churchofengland.org/media/984022/realising.pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/media/984022/realising.pdf)
- 13 *Building Better Neighbourhoods*, [www.coventry.ac.uk/surge](http://www.coventry.ac.uk/surge)
- 14 [www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368681/BUC\\_Guideline\\_Leaflet.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368681/BUC_Guideline_Leaflet.aspx)
- 15 [www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368682/BUC\\_Guideline\\_Leaflet.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368682/BUC_Guideline_Leaflet.aspx)
- 16 [www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/366575/Faith\\_and\\_Society.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/366575/Faith_and_Society.aspx)
- 17 Contact your local association for details: [www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220608/Baptist\\_Regional\\_Associations.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220608/Baptist_Regional_Associations.aspx)



## Rebuilding and Redeveloping

For churches who are contemplating rebuilding, the story of Finchampstead Baptist Church<sup>18</sup> demonstrates the potential of partnering with others to use church buildings as a significant mission resource.

If your church is thinking of redeveloping or rebuilding their property you will need ideas and professional advice. Look at other church buildings. What features do you like, or not like? The book *Re-Pitching the Tent* by Richard Giles is an excellent resource for any church seeking to reorder their church buildings for worship and mission. The writer is an Anglican clergyman so there are differences in approach to worship and liturgy. However it is an excellent resource including a series of bible studies for the local church, guidance on organising the project, ideas and suggestions, as well as special notes on matters such as floor surfaces, lighting, art, landscaping and music. Sometimes this book is available from the local library.

The Guidelines Leaflet PCo4 Redeveloping Church Premises<sup>19</sup> gives an overview of the steps to be taken when redevelopment is being considered. It is important to appoint a suitable Architect and to look at a range of ideas before settling on a final design.

The process can be difficult but is an opportunity for the church to consider its life and mission. The church must work out their mission priorities, because this will affect the design. Changing a building has long-term results – with successes and mistakes set in stone for many years! A video giving top 10 tips for Baptist churches considering a building project<sup>20</sup> may be helpful.

<sup>18</sup> See: Be the Centre [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpMPBtICIEA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpMPBtICIEA)

<sup>19</sup> [www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368770/BUC\\_Guideline\\_Leaflet.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368770/BUC_Guideline_Leaflet.aspx)

<sup>20</sup> Top 10 Tips for Building Projects [www.youtube.com/watch?v=tu7vyiscwC8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tu7vyiscwC8)

## Listed Buildings and Buildings in a Conservation Area

If your church has a building that is listed there are some very important things that you must remember.

- 1 The listing applies to the whole of your church site, including any boundary walls and fences. It is the whole of the site that is listed, not 'just the windows' or 'just the front door'.
- 2 It is against the law to make any changes to a listed building without formal consent.
- 3 There are Guidelines Leaflets about listed buildings. The best one to start with is LBo1 Introducing the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee.
- 4 If you are considering work to a listed building you must contact staff at Baptist House. They are used to helping churches through the process, but can also sometimes arrange for a member of the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee to visit your church to offer general guidance.
- 5 For Baptist churches the consent can normally only be obtained from the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee. The Local Authority does not have jurisdiction, although they will have jurisdiction in relation to Planning Permission and Building Regulation Approvals.
- 6 The Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Baptist Union Corporation have a surveyor who is appointed by them to help local churches, and can give initial guidance. If you need contact details please get in touch with the Baptist Union Corporation Office. Telephone 01235 517754 and speak to Steve Wing. Alternatively please contact your Association.
- 7 Although it is important for churches to consult the Local Authority and speak to Conservation Officers, the guidance should be evaluated and considered carefully. A local Conservation Officer will always encourage churches to use the very best materials and methods, and sometimes this is necessary. However there are occasions when churches have been told work cannot be done, when there is nothing that legally prevents them from carrying through their proposed project. Please seek guidance from the staff at Baptist House if you are unsure.





## Being Welcoming: Relating Well to Visitors

In our churches, we believe we are good at giving a good welcome; that we are welcoming and friendly to each other and to any visitors or newcomers in our midst. But are we really as good as we think we are? UK research from Tearfund a few years ago revealed that 90% of those who visited a church for the first time wouldn't go back because they weren't made to feel welcome! It is so important for us all to make our first contacts meaningful, whether we are welcoming someone into our church service, a hall or meeting place, or our house. We should treat everyone the same, regardless of age, ability or culture. Remember that many people will feel unsure about coming to church today, uneasy as they approach an environment strange to them. So the quality of your words and your smile should both overcome their nervousness and create a sense of real warmth in the heart and mind of your visitor.

From the first meeting your visitor is probably longing to feel they belong. The need for being part of a community is a fundamental need for each and every one of us, and is lacking for many people. So building relationships from the first contact is essential. Your welcome then must be more than a greeting: a genuine smile and word of welcome. It should also include an exchange of names, a reassurance as to where the facilities are located, an outline of what to expect, an enquiry into their journey, and locating a seat for them. An introduction to someone appropriate who will stay alongside them is really helpful. Consider how you might feel if you were in their shoes and aim to exceed their expectation. The reason why we join any club, society or church is because we see similar people to ourselves, we gain an immediate impression that we are going to like this and within seconds our minds are made up. Your role then is to make that good impression in those opening seconds, you rarely get a second chance.

Remember that the time when the service or event is over is also a key time for a visitor. Including that person in conversation over refreshments is important. Giving some written information about the church and its activities, presented in a good quality form, is helpful. And of course a smile and a friendly word 'see you next week?' all help towards the newcomer feeling welcome.

Once those initial meetings are over then look for every opportunity to cement and deepen the friendships. Whether inside or outside your religious space, look for ways to acknowledge that you share something in common - your church community. For new people who have had no previous Christian contact, remember that research shows it takes four years to reach the point on a faith journey for a person to become a follower of Jesus Christ. For new people who come who have attended other churches in the past, remember that it is more often the sense of welcome and being accepted that decides whether they stay, rather than matters of doctrine.

### For Ten Top Tips for Welcome

Mark Hope-Urwin is the Director of Hospitality and Welcome at Birmingham Cathedral and believes that a culture of welcome should pervade the church. He suggests that "Creating a good impression is the responsibility of everyone."

Watch a film about Mark's Top Ten Tips for Welcome<sup>21</sup>.



21 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od1-x13DMn4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od1-x13DMn4)



## Welcoming People with Special Needs

Guidelines Leaflet L12 Churches and Disability Issues<sup>22</sup> gives an outline of the legal position and also offers guidance about making changes to buildings to improve access and facilities for those people with a disability who have mobility problems. Remember that there are a range of difficulties, so even if you cannot change your building you may be able to help more people to participate in the church's activities by very simple changes. These include:

- the training of your welcome team
- providing large print versions of service sheets and songs
- offering the appropriate support to individuals and their carers.

The leaflet refers churches to the charity Through the Roof<sup>23</sup>. They have developed outstanding resources to help churches improve the welcome offered to all people with disabilities.



<sup>22</sup> [www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368694/BUC\\_Guideline\\_Leaflet.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/368694/BUC_Guideline_Leaflet.aspx)

<sup>23</sup> [www.throughtheroof.org/info-and-resources](http://www.throughtheroof.org/info-and-resources)

## Further tools to use to improve your buildings for missional purposes

These exercises help you look at your church premises in new ways to ensure that the buildings are welcoming to all and the most effective tool possible to aid the mission of the church.

### Exercise 1:

In small groups, dream together. What might it be possible to do with your church premises if you were suddenly given £1million? Which of these ideas would benefit the local community and which would benefit the gathered church community?

### Exercise 2:

Create a short questionnaire designed to gather the passer-by's opinion about your church premises inside and outside. Ask a wide group of people to gather a variety of opinions.

### Exercise 3:

Complete a building survey to assess its appropriateness for people with disabilities. The charity, Through The Roof has an excellent resource available from their website for this exercise called 'Come In'<sup>24</sup>. For a much more comprehensive audit, see the Diocese of London's, 'Disabled Access Audit Form'<sup>25</sup>.

### Exercise 4:

In pairs or small groups, try making your way around the church premises and role-play the regular activities of church life with restricted sight, restricted hearing or restricted mobility.

### Exercise 5:

In small groups, walk around your local community and note which buildings are most attractive and which are most unattractive. Why? Discuss your church premises together in the light of these factors.

### Exercise 6:

Check how family-friendly your premises are by taking various groups around and asking them to comment on the appearance, the seating, the floors, the toilets and other facilities. Do this with

- a family with a baby and young children
- a family with older children and
- teenagers

### Exercise 7:

Repeat exercise 6 with retired people, including some who have limited mobility.

<sup>24</sup> [www.throughtheroof.org/shop/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=34](http://www.throughtheroof.org/shop/product_info.php?products_id=34)

<sup>25</sup> [www.london.anglican.org/resources/Blocks/8209/DDA%20Audit.pdf](http://www.london.anglican.org/resources/Blocks/8209/DDA%20Audit.pdf)



**Resources:**

The videos about Finchampstead, Be the Centre:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpMPBtlCIEA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpMPBtlCIEA)  
Ten Top Tips for a Building Project:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=tu7vyiscwC8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tu7vyiscwC8)  
and Ten Top Tips for Welcome:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od1-x13DMn4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od1-x13DMn4)  
explain about *crossingplaces*.

**BUC guidelines:**

PCo3 Five Year Inspection Reports – Church Buildings  
PCo4 Redeveloping or Altering Church Premises  
PC10 Hiring of Church Premises  
Lo1 Churches and Community Partnerships  
Lo3 Churches and Coffee Shops  
L10 Health and Safety and Fire Precautions  
L12 Churches and Disability Issues  
L14 Licensing for Entertainment and Copyright  
Download from: [www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220864/The\\_Baptist\\_Union/Resource\\_Library/Free\\_Resources\\_and/BUC\\_Guidelines/BUC\\_Guidelines.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220864/The_Baptist_Union/Resource_Library/Free_Resources_and/BUC_Guidelines/BUC_Guidelines.aspx)

**Faith and Society Files**

Including:  
Welcoming a school to your church  
Supporting ChurchToddler Groups

Download from: [www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220861/Sharing\\_and\\_Living.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220861/Sharing_and_Living.aspx)

**Books:**

*Re-pitching the Tent*, by Richard Giles, Canterbury Press (2004)  
*The Good Maintenance Guide*, The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)

**Magazine:**

Church Building - [www.churchbuilding.co.uk](http://www.churchbuilding.co.uk)

**Other Organisations:**

Through the Roof - a Christian charity working with people with disabilities in the UK and overseas. [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org)

BUild - the Baptist Union Initiative with people with Learning Disabilities.  
Contact: [buildtogether@northern.org.uk](mailto:buildtogether@northern.org.uk)





celebrating who you are and  
developing your **crossing**places

# Module 13: Resources

**re:focus** is a journey to help your church:

- focus on its life as a Christian community
- develop new and existing *crossingplaces*
- share the Christian message in actions and words.

Using a selection of the **re:focus** modules, the church will:

- listen to each other and to God
- be guided by experienced external facilitators



## Resources

To suggest sources of useful information to help churches and individuals to develop their *crossingplaces*.

*crossingplaces* are those occasions when individual Christians and/or the church together intersect with the community and make a difference. In *crossingplaces* we create opportunities to show and share the Gospel.

The Baptist Union of Great Britain's Mission Department has created a number of resources which will help you to develop the opportunities you have throughout the week, at work, in your home and neighbourhood, to help others along their faith journeys. The resources equip men and women to make a difference wherever they are, so that lives and communities are transformed.

The following pages contain information and links to these resources, and to other useful information produced by other organisations.



## Faith and Society Files

A range of Files has been produced on a variety of topics to help churches and individuals in mission.

These can be downloaded free of charge from the Baptist Union website:

[www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220851/Being\\_a\\_Baptist.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220851/Being_a_Baptist.aspx)

Download an Index with links to each of the current titles from:

[www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=114364](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=114364)

## Wellsprings

### An evangelism course for women

Wellsprings is an eight-week course of refreshment and pampering, looking at issues women face today from a Christian perspective. It offers a 'pre-Alpha' evangelism course suitable for single and married women - and might be ideal for those who come to your parent and toddler groups. For more information, see

[www.baptist.org.uk/Wellsprings](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Wellsprings)





## Resources from other organisations

### Using the seasons for mission

Seasonal events in the year give you many opportunities to connect with your community.

#### Creative Mission

This book from BRF contains over 50 ideas for special days, celebrations, festivals, community-based projects and seasonal activities. It sets out to demonstrate that mission is fun, practical, easy-to-do and, above all, possible. The book contains a wealth of ideas to help churches, large and small, urban and rural, to connect with people who have occasional contact with the church, as well as suggestions for the church family to join in community events.



Author: Rona Orme

ISBN: 978 1 84101 806 5

RRP: £8.99

Publisher: BRF - Barnabas for Children (2011)

#### Hope for Easter

*Hope For Easter* is a 64-page resource that offers a stream of ideas to help congregations make the most of this all-important Christian festival. The book includes:

- more than 20 mission ideas;
- small group studies from Church Army;
- youth group materials by Soul Action.



Copies of *Hope For Easter* can be ordered by phoning 01788 542 782 or through the website [www.hopetogether.org.uk](http://www.hopetogether.org.uk)

## Working with children and families

Many churches offer events and support for children, young people and their families already. These serve communities well, and also offer *crossingplace* opportunities to share the good news.

#### Care for the Family

Care for the Family is a national charity which aims to promote strong family life and to help those who face family difficulties. Motivated by Christian compassion, its resources and support are available to everyone, of any faith or none. It provides resources and runs events on the following areas of family life:

- Marriage
- Parenting
- Relationships
- Money
- Work
- Living with Loss



[www.careforthefamily.org.uk](http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk)

#### Church-based toddler groups



It is estimated that in the UK there are about 27,000 church-based toddler groups. Research has shown that 52% of the UK's under-5s attend a church-based toddler group. That's around 2 million children who regularly go somewhere warm and safe to play, but they are not the only ones who benefit. Obviously this is also of benefit to the parents and carers who attend with them. To this end a consortium of churches and agencies has come together to support church toddler groups and help release the mission opportunities that exist through toddler groups. The consortium is called 1277 as, on average, a UK child has just 1277 days between birth and starting nursery education. Together, we want to 'make them count' for the children, for their families and for the toddler groups that they attend.

To find out more go to [www.1277.org.uk](http://www.1277.org.uk)



### Sorted magazine

Sorted is a good, wholesome alternative magazine for blokes.

It looks at success, faith, finance, fitness, passion and purity, motoring, movies, tons of football and other sports, good books, DVDs, addictions, accountability, mentoring and encouraging each other. It also has a Gadgets expert and a motoring correspondent as well as a '60 Second Life Coach' and a 'Sex Doc'.



Sorted is published bi-monthly, retailing at £3.50 an issue, £21.00 for a year or £35.00 for a two year subscription with huge savings for larger orders. It is perfect for special outreach events, Father's Day, men's breakfasts, sports events or just any time you want to spoil a bunch of blokes. A special offer price of 40 copies for just £50 post paid is available.

See [www.sorted-magazine.com](http://www.sorted-magazine.com) for details.

### Street Pastors: Making a positive difference in the lives of young people

Street Pastors is an inter-denominational Church response to urban problems, engaging with people on the streets to care, listen and dialogue. It has seen some remarkable results, including drops in crime in areas where teams have been working. There are now some 9000 trained volunteers in over 250 teams around the United Kingdom.



For details: [www.streetpastors.co.uk](http://www.streetpastors.co.uk)

### The Christian Nightlife Initiatives Network



CNI is an umbrella group to enable, equip and inspire people and organisations to create a better culture at night than the traditional

binge image that is often seen in many towns and cities. For details: <http://cninet.weebly.com>

### Mainly Music

'mainly music' equips churches to run pre-school music groups with an emphasis on fun and a focus on relationships. These are not music classes, although there are many learning opportunities, but rather a place for parents and carers to enjoy music together with their young children. Started by a mum in New Zealand in 1990, 'mainly music' has spread to Australia, South Africa, the United States, and is just getting established in the UK.



For further information and an information pack contact the Area Coach, Barbara Last:

Tel: 01651 843693

Email: [areacoach.scotland@mainlymusic.org](mailto:areacoach.scotland@mainlymusic.org)

[www.mainlymusic.org.uk](http://www.mainlymusic.org.uk)

### Who Let the Dads Out?

This national initiative is all about creating space where dads and their young children can have fun together. It is founded on the Christian principle of wanting to demonstrate God's love to communities.



Who Let The Dads Out? comprises:

- Toddler sessions,
- School's Out, Dad's About (SODA) sessions for 4 - 7 year old children and their dads,
- Daddy Cool! parenting programme
- Soul Man? discussion group for dads
- Football for dads.

For more information, and to discover how your church can apply to become a member of Who Let The Dads Out? go to:

[www.wholetthedadsout.org](http://www.wholetthedadsout.org)



## Sharing our faith

Many of us need some help when it comes to sharing our faith, and the following resources may be useful in giving you the confidence to talk naturally about the things that really matter.

### Bible Society Reel Issues

Bring meaning to the movies with free film discussion notes.

**Reel Issues** gives you free resources to help you discuss links between big-screen themes, everyday life and the bible in a relaxed setting. Ideal for church outreach, home groups or to enhance a sermon, Reel Issues is packed full of ideas to help you discuss the latest films in the light of the bible, with friends from in and outside your church.



- **Reel Issues Epic** – for small groups with in-depth notes to help connect the bible with life's big issues.
- **Reel Issues Clip** – bite-sized summaries of current films to start a discussion or to complement your message in a sermon.
- **Reel Issues Scene** – for youth groups. Topic-based activities and creative discussion starters to help young people see life and film through the bible's lens.

See [www.biblesociety.org.uk/reel-issues](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/reel-issues)



### Café Church network training

cafechurch brings communities into the relaxed café atmosphere of Costa Coffee and other coffee shops to deal with issues from a faith perspective. At cafechurch you'll tackle issues such as fair trade, the environment, stress, adoption, parenting, debt and divorce, together with quizzes, interviews, round table discussions, live music with great coffee and great chat!

Would you like to run a cafe church in your local Costa Coffee or other coffee shop? To find out more about the training available from the Cafechurch network, see [www.cafechurch.net](http://www.cafechurch.net)

# INSIDE OUT

## Inside Out

Inside Out is a six-session course designed to be used with church groups. Throughout these sessions you explore just how big God's mission really is and discover what part we all have to play within it. By the end, you and your church will be inspired and equipped to take a fresh look at integrating words and actions to help bring change to your community, locally and globally.

In each session you will be encouraged to think, to talk and to take away theology and actions. Inside Out is an opportunity to focus your discussions, your prayers and your plans for serving your community. It's a great tool for transformation, an essential guide to your own unique journey. For more information, see: [www.communitymission.org.uk/insideout](http://www.communitymission.org.uk/insideout)

### John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*: an interactive guide for seniors

John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is a wonderful story about a pilgrim called Christian and his adventures as he tries to find his way to the City of Gold (heaven). Liz Stacey has developed an interactive study guide which she's used with some 80 and 90 year old seniors to help them gain a greater understanding of what the Christian life is all about, especially the wonderful provision of eternal life God has made through Jesus. Many found faith, and all experienced comfort.



The study guide costs £25 + p&p and is full of interesting ideas, dramas, and relevant artwork for each session.

To order a copy, or find out more, contact Liz Stacey on [e.stacey@talktalk.net](mailto:e.stacey@talktalk.net) or 01962 808783.





## Just Walk across the Room

Author Bill Hybels reveals a highly successful evangelism approach based on trusting Christ's guiding spirit and sharing friendship's transforming love:

- Offering radical acceptance and love to people God places around us, regardless of their appearance and lifestyle
- Learning their life stories
- Enveloping them in grace-filled community



Just Walk Across the Room will inspire everyone in your congregation to share Christ's love - wherever they are, whoever they're with, and whatever they do. As well as the book, a church kit (with small group DVD, participants' guide and other resources) is available. For details, see: [www.willowcreek.org.uk/resource.php?r=8](http://www.willowcreek.org.uk/resource.php?r=8)

## More Ready than you Realize

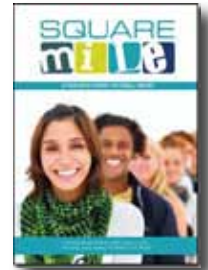
This book contains fresh, encouraging, challenging, groundbreaking, and doable ideas and encourages you to engage in disciple-making through conversation and friendship.

Author: Brian McLaren  
Publisher: Zondervan (2002)  
ISBN: 978 03102 3964 2



## Square Mile

Square Mile is an Evangelical Alliance initiative which aims to catalyse and equip Christians to take a truly integrated approach to mission, expressed in four dimensions:



- Mercy:** demonstrating God's compassion to the poor
- Influence:** being salt and light in the public life of the community
- Life Discipleship:** equipping Christians for missional living as workers and neighbours
- Evangelism:** faithful and relevant communication of the gospel

Square Mile resources include a four-week DVD-based course for small groups and tools to put what you've learned into practice.

For more information, see: [www.eauk.org/squaremile](http://www.eauk.org/squaremile)

## TableTalk



Wouldn't it be great to be able to have meaningful conversations with our family and friends about the things that really matter in life? To get together around a table to talk, laugh, be understood and get to know another's point of view?

Some of us will be better at this than others but often the problem is knowing how to start! The aim of Table Talk is to provide a safe place for people to begin to have these kinds of conversations about the important questions in life. The hope is that as you get together over six sessions, conversation will flourish and relationships will be built and strengthened.

**Table Talk with Friends** (available in English and Welsh versions) and **Table Talk for Blokes** are the first two titles in a series of nine. Each pack costs £24.99 (including UK p&p). For more information, see [www.table-talk.org](http://www.table-talk.org)

For a 30 second video about Table Talk for Blokes, see the 'Courses' section of [www.table-talk.org](http://www.table-talk.org)



## Talking of God

A faith sharing course from the Methodist Church to help individuals and congregations to talk about their faith journey. The course will give people more confidence when it comes to sharing the stories of their faith in everyday life.

All the material you need is free to download from: [www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentoworld.content&cmid=3400](http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentoworld.content&cmid=3400)

A red speech bubble containing the text "Talking of God" in white.

## Training courses

### Baptist College and Association Courses

Most colleges and associations offer a variety of lay training courses.

For Colleges, see [www.baptist.org.uk/colleges](http://www.baptist.org.uk/colleges)  
For Associations, see [www.baptist.org.uk/associations](http://www.baptist.org.uk/associations)

### Crucible

Crucible is a training programme for Christians with courage and imagination, who suspect:

- We live in a mission context and need to think like missionaries.
- We need to think creatively about church in diverse and changing cultures.
- We serve the God who constantly does new things on the margins.



Crucible consists of three intensive training weekends each year. Find out more at: [www.urbanexpression.org.uk/crucible/crucible-course](http://www.urbanexpression.org.uk/crucible/crucible-course)

### Mission Shaped Ministry

This is a year's course to prepare a pioneer, or preferably a church planting team together, in setting up a new church or congregation, re-imagining the church for our time and contexts.



The MSM course is running ecumenically in over 30 centres across the UK with more than 1500 students enrolled and a significant amount of Baptist involvement.

Details of all the courses can be found at: [www.missionshapedministry.org](http://www.missionshapedministry.org)

### Toolbox

Toolbox is London Institute for Contemporary Christianity's (LICC) training programme, helping Christians engage with today's rapidly changing world by equipping them with skills in biblical interpretation and contemporary cultural engagement.

See: [www.licc.org.uk/engaging-with-culture/licc-toolbox](http://www.licc.org.uk/engaging-with-culture/licc-toolbox)



Further evangelistic and discipleship resources are available in Module 14.

A logo for "re: focus" featuring a magnifying glass over the word "re:" and the word "focus" in a green, lowercase font.



celebrating who you are and  
developing your **crossing**places

# Module 14: Evangelism Resources

**re:focus** is a journey to help your church:

- focus on its life as a Christian community
- develop new and existing *crossingplaces*
- share the Christian message in actions and words.

Using a selection of the **re:focus** modules, the church will:

- listen to each other and to God
- be guided by experienced external facilitators





## Evangelism resources

To suggest resources suitable for evangelism for different stages of the faith journey.

The purpose of this module is to signpost different evangelism resources. Initially we will consider some of the issues connected with sharing the gospel with the people you have in mind. The bulk of the module is taken up with describing those resources that are available to you.

There is a growing body of research that suggests that there is a growing interest in spiritual things<sup>1</sup>. If this is the case, and the research points us in that direction, then the church should be well-placed to engage people. John Finney in his book *Finding Faith Today*<sup>2</sup> reports that people come to faith after a prolonged period of time and that relationships are a significant factor in their faith development. There are a number of courses that are available to the church which facilitate the development of relationships and engage people with the good news of the gospel at the same time.

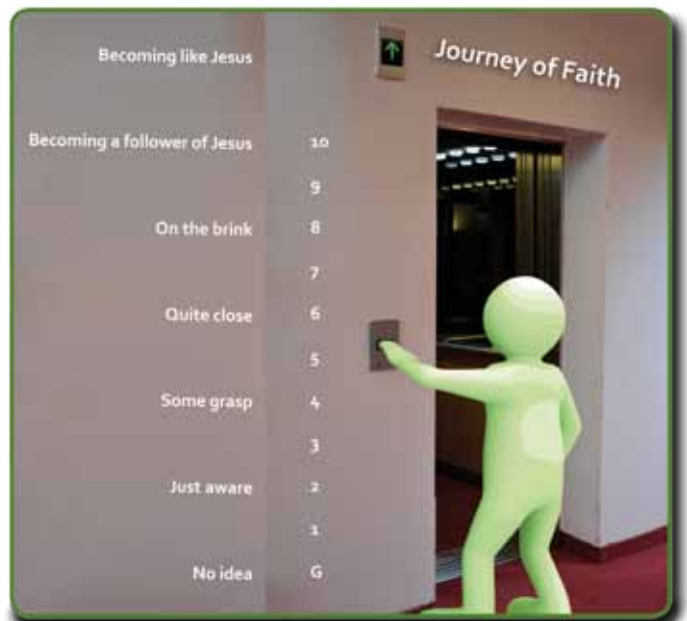
However in deciding on the resource that you are going to use you will need to make some assessment of the kind of course that might help the group you are trying to reach. Imagine two different people. Sarah has grown up in a home where religion was rarely spoken about. She has gone through life and rarely given a second thought to the possibility that there might be a spiritual dimension to life. Phil did go to church as a child and although his parents were not devout they occasionally accompanied him to church. Phil started occasionally attending church after

- 1 Richards points to a number of studies in *Evangelism in a Spiritual Age* (2006) London: Church House Publishing (p57-58). Heelas and Woodhead report a growing interest in spiritual matters in *The Spiritual Revolution* (2005) Oxford: Blackwell
- 2 Finney, J (1992) *Finding Faith Today*, Swindon: Bible Society

the birth of his first child.

The approach you take with Sarah and Phil is going to be different. Sarah might need an approach that engages her with deeper issues of life and spirituality (perhaps something like Puzzling Questions or Table Talk). Whereas it might be appropriate to invite Phil along to something that encourages people to look deeper into Christian themes and ways of thinking (perhaps something like Alpha or Christianity Explored).

The Gray Matrix<sup>3</sup> can be a helpful tool in trying to evaluate the kind of spiritual and gospel awareness of your target audience. It helps you picture your target audience and the kind of spiritual and cognitive journey towards the gospel and Christian maturity that they may need to take.



- 3 <http://thegraymatrix.info>

Appreciation is expressed to Graham Doel who developed this module.



## Resources

The resources presented are in four groups:

- 1 Those aimed at people with little knowledge of the Christian faith,
- 2 Those aimed at people who are more comfortable with the church and some Christian themes,
- 3 Those who have made an initial Christian commitment and are in need of some further Christian education and discipleship,
- 4 Those aimed at encouraging the congregation into evangelism.

The resources listed here are a snapshot of the kind of material available and is by no means exhaustive. Most comments are sourced from someone who has used it, but where that is unavailable there is a brief description from the author or publisher.

None of the resources outlined in this module will be a magic solution to evangelism. There is no such thing as easy evangelism! We have to be prepared to step out and to take some risks. The experience of many people who have contributed to this module is that God uses what we put into his hands.

### 1 Resources for people with little knowledge of the Christian faith

#### Table Talk:

[www.table-talk.org](http://www.table-talk.org)

This resource provides discussion starters for informal groups. It can be used in various contexts and comes with questions targeted at different types of people. 'Every session has a two minute introduction that is read to the group. Once the question has been read, people are invited to select a question and start the conversation. With no leader or teacher everyone is invited to contribute to the discussion.'<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> [http://web.me.com/rpaulgriffiths/Table\\_Talk/The\\_Knowledge.html](http://web.me.com/rpaulgriffiths/Table_Talk/The_Knowledge.html)

Carl Beech says: "*Table Talk for blokes* is fantastic; it's about capturing that moment in the pub when the debate kicks off. You know what blokes are like, they are all experts and what this does is get under the skin of a bunch of issues that men tend to talk about and tries to lead them to thinking a bit more about what life is all about from a bloke's perspective.'<sup>5</sup>"

#### Growing Through:

[www.growing-through.org](http://www.growing-through.org)

The *Growing Through* materials are designed to help Christians work with those people who are beyond the church or on the fringes of the church.



They use biblical themes and ideas but the courses focus on the felt need rather than what the bible says about it. Amongst their material they have two helpful ways of engaging people:

- A Stress Management Course: <http://growing-through.org/stressmanagement.html>
- Providing support groups for the recently bereaved and divorce recovery: <http://growing-through.org/asupport.html>

Steve Doel reflects on their materials saying "It's about working with people in pain, seeing the gospel as their ultimate need, but introducing it gently."

<sup>5</sup> Beech, C May 2010 <http://vimeo.com/12116690>

## The Y Course:

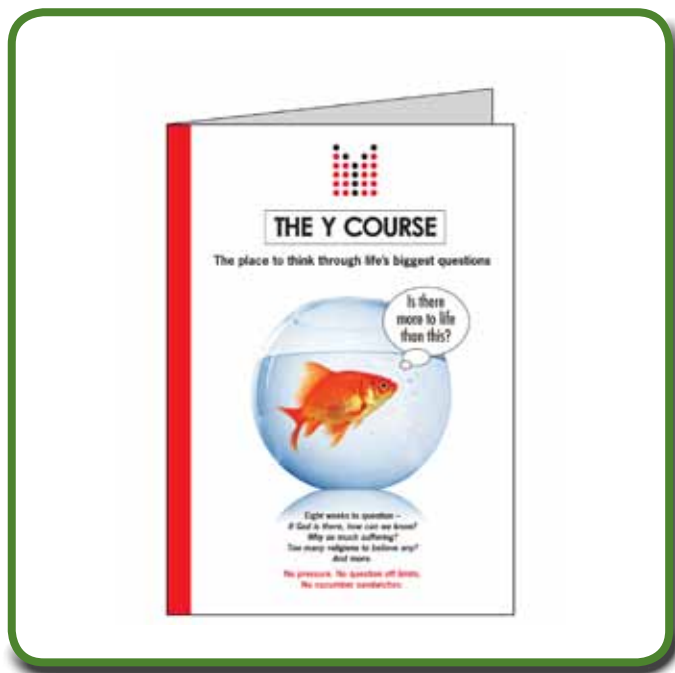
[www.ycourse.com](http://www.ycourse.com)

This is described as an eight-week course to help people face life's biggest questions and to introduce them to Jesus. It is highly discussion-based and uses short (6 minute) video clips to bring comment and focus to the topic. The producers provide a raft of resources for the leaders including 100 starting questions that help stimulate discussion.

The publisher describes the advantages of the course in the following ways:

- Its guests need no knowledge of the bible or Christian language
- It includes issues like 'Why does God allow suffering?' and 'What about other religions?'
- It talks today's language, uses stories that relate, and doesn't rush people to a decision.

Danielle Leigh commented that the "DVD provides discussion starters quite well, but participants get much more out of the course if they read the *Book of Y* that goes with it. There are two chapters for each week (one for each section of the evening, but both linked), and they provide many more helpful illustrations and examples of the issues being discussed."



## Essence:

[www.sharejesusinternational.com/essence/4532523558](http://www.sharejesusinternational.com/essence/4532523558)

*Essence* is aimed at people who are familiar with New Age spirituality. It has six sessions and aims to give 'an experiential introduction to the Christian faith in a culturally relevant way. The overriding objective is to help people who may view themselves as 'spiritual' to journey towards the Christian faith.' Each session of the course involves an activity to help the participants reflect on the subject.

Richard Jevons has run *Essence* in Hull. "I found *Essence* needed some adapting as some of the activities are a little complex. The part that seems to affect most people who come is the mini labyrinth on week 5 out of the 6."

## Glad You Asked:

[www.innovista.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=145&Itemid=195](http://www.innovista.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=145&Itemid=195)

*Glad You Asked* provides a framework for small groups of people to explore seven questions: Does God matter? Does God exist? How can God allow pain? Do the differences in religions matter? Can the bible be trusted? Why is religion full of hypocrites? What was Jesus really like?

Each session uses a video to introduce the question and provide some discussion starters. The description for the 'Does God Matter?' session of the course states: 'Together with a world-class philosopher and your group, you'll explore whether or not God's existence is relevant for your life.'



## Wellsprings:

[www.baptist.org.uk/wellsprings](http://www.baptist.org.uk/wellsprings)

*Wellsprings* is an eight-week course of refreshment and pampering, looking at issues women face today from a Christian perspective. Developed by Baptist minister Leesa Barton, and published by the Baptist Union, the course aims to:

- strengthen the relationships that exist between members of the group
- explore practical ways to treat and look after themselves
- address key issues that affect women today
- share relevant Christian truths.

Each session includes a brief talk on a topic relevant to women today: Rest and Relaxation, Acceptance and Security, Worry and Anxiety, Failure, Beauty / Self Image, Healing and Forgiveness, Influences, Self Image and includes a 'pampering' experience in which each participant is offered a professional treatment relevant to the evening's discussion, such as a foot massage or makeover.



## Puzzling Questions:

[www.puzzlingquestions.org.uk](http://www.puzzlingquestions.org.uk)

This course is designed to help people think about the deeper issues of life. It is formed around six questions: Who am I? What is God like? What happens after I die? How can I be happy? Why is there suffering in the world? What is the spiritual realm and how does it impact my life?

A typical session will include the following elements:

- Eating Together: The session starts with everyone enjoying eating and chatting to each other.
- Listening Together: A moment to open up the question that will be explored in the session.
- Pondering Together: With a drink in your hand this is the time to have your say. This is the time to listen to the views of the others in your group and express your own opinions.





## 2 Resources for people familiar with some Christian themes

### Beyond Ourselves:

[www.resource-arm.net/pub.html#courses](http://www.resource-arm.net/pub.html#courses)



'An alternative to the Alpha course, based on informal discussion and shared activities, and accessible to those with no church background, *Beyond Ourselves* invites participants to develop a living relationship with God.' The course aims to start with big questions and

sensitively to introduce a perspective from the bible. The materials look accessible and easy to follow.

### Christianity Explored:

[www.christianityexplored.org](http://www.christianityexplored.org)

This seven week course is designed to help people engage directly with the Jesus they meet in Mark's Gospel. I have used this on a number of different occasions and have found the material helpful. It is accessible by a wide variety of different people. The course works better when the participants read a portion of Mark's Gospel in the days between the course sessions.

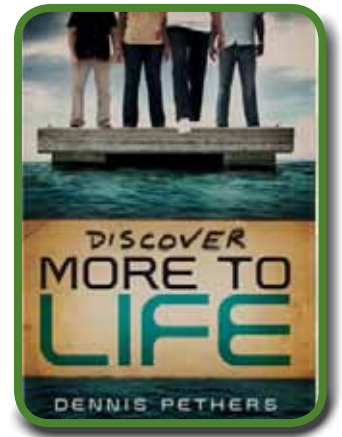


The course is reasonably adaptable to different contexts but if you follow the plan a typical evening would consist of: a meal, talking through the reading that the participants did in the week, a talk, a discussion based around the talk.

### Discover More to Life:

[www.mtlresources.org/discovermoretolife.htm](http://www.mtlresources.org/discovermoretolife.htm)

This is one of the shortest 'courses' that exists. It is built around an introductory DVD and encourages the participants to journal their experiences as they work through the four weeks. The course aims to show how Jesus interacted with ordinary people.



Each of the 'get-togethers' is based on an encounter with Jesus, taken from the gospel of John that resulted in the person's life being changed:

- The woman at the well – Meaning
- The man born blind – Purpose
- Thomas – Security
- Nicodemus – Decisions

The Journal provides an opportunity to write about your own spiritual journey and what kind of decisions you are making to discover more to life. Use this Journal along with the *Discover More to Life* DVD to hear the stories of Jesus' interaction with four very ordinary people and what it means for us today.





### Journeys:

[www.willowcreek.org.uk/resource.php?r=7](http://www.willowcreek.org.uk/resource.php?r=7)

*Journeys* is a five-week course that examines the Christian faith through real people's stories, video clips and discussion.

"It can be held any time of the day. We advertised and ended up with a group of about 12 people who came to a taster evening. They all came back! We began the evening with some cakes / desserts and coffee and conversation at 19:30. Then at 20:00 we'd just give a brief intro to the title of the evening, emphasising that afterwards people could comment, ask questions or simply listen to others chat. Each week's DVD included two or three people telling their stories." Jacky Storey

### Start Course:

[www.start-cpas.org.uk](http://www.start-cpas.org.uk)

The *Start* course is a six-session course with an accompanying DVD to help instigate discussion. It progressively introduces the life of Jesus leading towards a discussion about the cross and its implications. The DVDs are presented in a quirky and engaging style. It has been developed in an



Anglican context and is aimed at engaging those people who have been in contact with the church through its fringe activities .

### Alpha:

<http://uk.alpha.org>

*Alpha* fits somewhere between a course for people who are interested in the Christian faith and those who have made an initial commitment<sup>6</sup>. The 'Meal, Message, Mingle' approach of the *Alpha* Course has provided a helpful framework for evangelism and discipleship. The 12-week course includes a weekend or day away where the participants are invited to experience the work of the Holy Spirit. The course content is provided by the *Alpha* Organisation who allow modifications to suit the context.

After observing the course and the way it was delivered in three different British contexts, Nigel Rooms concludes that it 'would be very difficult to access the course with no background understanding of Christianity'.<sup>7</sup>

Emma Maggs says: "My own feeling is that the content of the course is nowhere near as important as the community created around the dinner table."



6 Hunt, S The Alpha Program in *The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, Vol 27, No 1, 2005, P65

7 Rooms, N Nice process, shame about the content in *The Journal of Adult Theological Education*, 2.2, 2005, P141



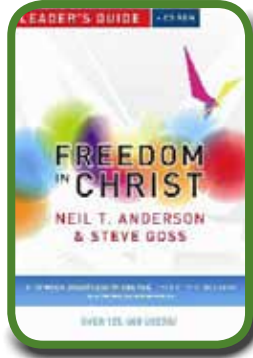


### 3 Resources for those people who have made an initial Christian commitment

#### Freedom in Christ discipleship course:

[www.ficm.org.uk/the\\_fic\\_course](http://www.ficm.org.uk/the_fic_course)

The *Freedom in Christ* course is co-authored by Neil Anderson and Steve Goss and aims to help people find their identity in Christ. Although the organisation has roots in America, the 13-session discipleship course has been developed in a British context. One youth leader who has used the youth version comments:



"It's great to have a resource that has some real meat to it and I really rate the *Freedom in Christ* for Youth course and have already recommended it to other youth workers. I currently run it in my 11-14 group on a Sunday morning. Different volunteer leaders take the sessions each week and I have had good feedback from all of them."

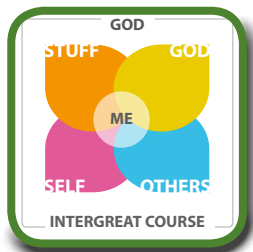
– Keefe, Youth Leader

#### Intergreat:

<http://churchfromscratch.org/section/6-intergreat-course>

*Intergreat* is open to everyone interested in exploring four relationships that bring life:

- our relationship with God,
- our relationships with others,
- our relationship with ourselves
- our relationship with stuff.



It provides an opportunity for participants to relax, eat, share their thoughts and explore a Christian faith for life today. The course is nine weeks long with each session lasting around two hours. You can expect a meal or refreshments, followed by a short talk exploring one of the relationships, then a time of discussion where everyone is welcome to share an opinion and ask questions.

#### The Way:

<http://churchfromscratch.org/section/4-the-way-programme>

*The Way* course has been developed by Church from Scratch. The big idea behind the programme is to help people relate to some of the words of Jesus. The introduction is slow and gentle, helping the group to begin to talk about their life story. As the weeks progress the participants are invited to reflect on the words of Jesus. Whereas courses like *Christianity Explored* or *Alpha* invite you to engage on an intellectual level with the words of Jesus, *The Way* course invites the participants to reflect on how Jesus' words make them feel and what they are going to do about it.



#### Foundations 21:

[www.foundations21.net](http://www.foundations21.net)

This is the only online discipleship course that has found its way into this module. It uses the power of the internet to facilitate both learning and interacting with others through personal relationships. The material links you with others who are doing the course. It has been designed in a way that it can be used by individuals but a church can encourage and network its members to be part of the course.



#### 4 Courses to encourage the congregation into evangelism

##### Connect4Life:

<http://connect4life.org.uk>

*Connect4Life* seeks to inspire and mobilise the church, and equip each member to reach out to friends and contacts – to the 'disconnected' and the 'unconnected'.

All people seek for a sense of identity, value and purpose to bring them feelings of security, happiness and motivation – these come through connection to Christ's person, power and mission. *C4L* helps people find connection.

Committed church members need to grasp afresh the person, power and mission of Jesus Christ. They are motivated and inspired as they gain insights into why their friends have drifted away and why non-believers are further from faith than ever.

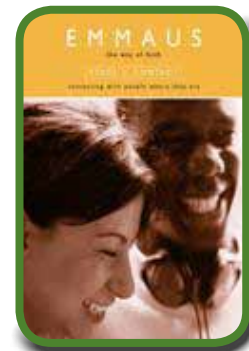
"We have piloted *C4L* and found the materials to be excellent and versatile with the genius of being tailor-made for folks at different places and stages of their spiritual journeys. There are materials which can be for disconnected as well as unconnected folks.... and, of course, those who are already connected to Christ." the Revd Clive Burnard, Senior Minister of Andover Baptist Church

"*Connect4Life* is an unusual - and welcome - resource. It is a small collection of booklets about being 'connected' to Christ. What makes it particularly welcome is that it aims to help Christians who have left church to reconnect." Jim Currin, Church Army, CTE Secretary for Evangelisation

##### Emmaus:

[www.e-mmaus.org.uk/emm\\_index.asp](http://www.e-mmaus.org.uk/emm_index.asp)

If you are looking for a way to engage the whole church in the process of evangelism then *Emmaus* might provide a framework for you to do just that! The course has three dimensions: Contact, Nurture and Growth. The contact section is designed to help the church think about ways in which it can reach beyond its existing borders. Nurture helps develop a basic Christian understanding. The growth section is about enabling a deeper understanding of some Christian themes.



CONNECT  
4LIFE

re: focus



celebrating who you are and  
developing your **crossing**places

# Module 15: Discipleship Resources Life MOT

**re:focus** is a journey to help your church:

- focus on its life as a Christian community
- develop new and existing *crossingplaces*
- share the Christian message in actions and words.

Using a selection of the **re:focus** modules, the church will:

- listen to each other and to God
- be guided by experienced external facilitators



## Discipleship Resources: Life MOT

**Aim**

To offer a personal discipleship scheme to be promoted in a church, alongside a reflector.

### Intro: The Life MOT takes you through six steps:

Cars have an annual MOT test to ensure they are roadworthy; this Life MOT helps you get in shape as a follower of Jesus. It can be undertaken as a one-off or on an annual basis.

On your own work through steps 1 to 5 as best you can, then meet with your reflector to go through it again with them, adding further notes of your own and more fully completing the end of steps 3 and 4. There's more information to help you understand the reflector's role in the appendix.

**1 Intro** – you are reading this step now!

**2 Self Assessment** - this step is based on the understanding that your life is at the intersection of four relationships. These relationships are with:



**God**



**Other People**



**Yourself**



**Stuff**

(things around you)

In this step you reflect on the state of each relationship.



**3 Diagnostics** - using tools to assess:

- pressure points
- areas of growth and struggle
- where you stand in relation to the outrageous words of Jesus
- sharing the Gospel (good news about Jesus)

**4 Action Points** - with God's help and your reflector you identify practical action points. These help you make the changes needed to affect your today and tomorrow.

**5 Prayer** - the whole process needs to be immersed in prayer, and it is Jesus who makes the change possible.

**6 Review** - make a date with yourself to review how you are doing in living the new life and transforming the four relationships.

Discipleship: learning to listen to the recognisable voice of Jesus and responding to him today.

You may use, adapt and distribute this resource on a not-for-profit basis if Church from Scratch is credited. This and other free resources are downloadable from [www.churchfromscratch.org](http://www.churchfromscratch.org)

**Church from Scratch**





## Intro: The Life MOT is rooted in these truths

Before you go any further get a bible out and look them up.

- **Jesus is rescuing you from your sin and shame.** It is the enormous power of Jesus' death and resurrection that frees you in a new life of serving him. *Romans 3: 21-24.*
- **You are a new creation in Jesus.** Jesus is in the business of restoring relationships. Your relationship with God, with yourself, with others and with the stuff around you. *2 Corinthians 5: 17-19*
- **Jesus wants to transform your life.** Jesus said, "A thief comes only to rob, kill, and destroy. I came so that everyone would have life, and have it in its fullest." *John 10: 10*
- **Jesus is the way.** His way is the best way and brings truth and light. *John 14:6*
- **You have a part to play in the transformation process.** It takes time and energy to work out what God wants to do in and through you. *Philippians 2: 12-13*
- **God knows and is interested in every detail of your life.** *Psalms 139:3*

Did you get your bible out to drink in those verses or are you skim reading?

## Intro: The Life MOT works if you to choose to:

- **Put Jesus in charge.** He made you and he is God. You declare "Jesus is Lord".
- **Follow Jesus.** Whether you have done this for days or years, you know that Jesus lived the perfect life. You want to live with Jesus living in you and live his way.

- **Be filled with his Holy Spirit** to make this new life possible. Jesus' Spirit lives in you here and now.
- **Make space for you and Jesus.** This is about taking time out and relying on him.
- **Be encouraged by others in your church community.** Jesus can build you up through relationships.

## Intro: As well as this manual, you need these tools:

**Time** There are no short cuts. You need time on your own to complete the MOT manual. Allow an hour or two. Make sure you are comfortable, with no distractions.

**Prayer** This isn't asking God to fix all the problems in your life, but rather being prepared to stop and listen to God. Find out where he is at work, what he is saying and doing and get involved in whatever that is. As you go through the questions keep your heart and mind open to the Holy Spirit. Two helpful prayers:

"Lord what are you doing?"

"Lord please help me to join in with what you are doing."

**The Bible** The bible is the word of God. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, these words written hundreds of years ago speak into our lives today and transform us. What we need is a ready heart and sense of anticipation. Expect God to change you through his word. To start with you looked up the verses already mentioned.

**A Reflector** Sitting down with someone you know and trust – your 'reflector'. Do not expect them to provide the answers – their job is to act as a mirror and show you more of yourself. Reflection normally leads to action. It may mean you alter the rhythm of your life, write someone a significant letter, take up a responsibility, adjust your finances, develop your spiritual discipline in prayer or fasting, or work on a habit or hang-up. They will go through your MOT manual and help you decide on your 'action points'. But it's you that makes the decision. The reflector's guide is at the end of this document.





## Self Assessment: Relationship with God



At present, what are the good things about your relationship with God?

When and how did you become a Christian?

What is hampering or getting in the way of your relationship with God?

What have been your most difficult or testing times so far?

What would be the most exciting thing(s) that you can imagine God asking you to do?

Write down one or two milestones or significant times in your journey of faith and why they are important?

What would be the hardest thing you can imagine God asking you to do?







## Self Assessment: Relationship with Others

Home, Friendships, Family



In what way do your friends/friendships hinder your relationship with God?

How settled is your life at home?

Are there broken relationships now or from the past that need dealing with?

What parts of your home life you would like to be different?

Who are your closest friends?

Who have you invited to your table in the last month?

In what way do your friends/friendships help your relationship with God?

How do your relationships reflect God's love for ALL people, including the broken, the poor and marginalised in your community?





## Self Assessment: Living as part of a church



What gets in the way of you contributing to the life of your church?

What parts of belonging to your church do you most appreciate?

In what ways has Jesus equipped you to serve his church more?  
(consider your gifts, abilities, experiences, passions and personality)

In what ways do you contribute to the life of your church?





## Self Assessment: Relationship with Yourself



Where does your confidence and identity come from?

How would you describe yourself to a stranger?

How much do you feel loved, accepted and forgiven by God?

How do you think others describe you?

What prevents you fully experiencing the truth of God's love for you?





## Self Assessment: Relationship with Stuff work



## Hobbies/Interests/Relaxation

If you had a whole day just for yourself what would you do?

What work do you do?

*(we all have a working life: looking after the home, shopping, unpaid work, paid work, volunteering work, etc)*

To what extent do you have the right balance of work and relaxation and sleep?

How satisfying is your work? Why is this?

Is there a new thing you would like to try in your life?

How does your faith make a difference to your work?





## Self Assessment: Money and Time



What is hampering or getting in the way of you using your time and money as Jesus wants?

Are you richer in time or money?  
*(this means, which do you have more of?)*

What are the positive things about your use of time and money?

Is there clutter in your life which gets in the way of you living life to the full with Jesus?







## Self Assessment: Habits and Hang ups



What do you find yourself repeatedly asking forgiveness for?

What are the things in your life that you find difficult to let go of?

What are you addicted to? Think of an addiction as being enslaved to a habit or practice or to something that is psychologically or physically habit forming.

*(Your addiction might be around your work patterns, sexual activity, desire for status or control, exercise, drug taking, shopping, eating, seeking approval from others in how you look or what you do, use of alcohol, pursuit of money, use of media like TV and the internet, etc)*





## Diagnostics: Pressure Points

Underline any of the following that cause you anxiety or negative pressure.

Try and think of things you can do to change the situation and positively affect these pressure points.

Health

Relationships

Time

Money/Debt

Work

Fear

Family

Opinion of yourself

Opinion of other people

...what other things do you want to add to the above list?





## Diagnostics: Word cloud

You need a red and a green pen for this.

- Put green pen round words where you're experiencing growth and improvement.
- Put red pen around words where you are stuck or struggling.

Quite a few words you will probably leave blank. Add extra words as you need to.

Self-image	Hang-ups	Negative attitude to life
Confidence	Habits	Positive attitude to life
Lonely	Habits	Gossip
Faith	Addictions	Hurt
Kindness	Gentleness	Guilty
Generous	Peace	Shy
Love	Self-control	Aggressive
Content	Teachable	Envious
Hope	Sharing your faith	Undecided
Fear	Money	Useless
Prayer to God	Squabbles	Jesus-centred
Hearing from God	Impatience	Stress
Bible reading	Selfishness	Anxiety
Bible understanding	Compassion	.....
Bible change you	Exhausted	.....
Forgiving others	Purpose in life	.....
Not forgiving yourself	Alcohol	.....





The Outrageous Words of Jesus	Are you living out these words in your life? 1=Not at All <span style="float:right">10=Wholeheartedly</span>
Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Matthew 22:36	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Treat others as you want them to treat you. Matthew 7:11	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Forgive others, and God will forgive you. Luke 6:37	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
If you want to be perfect, go sell everything you own! Give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come and be my follower. Matthew 19:21	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
So if you .... remember that someone is angry with you, ....make peace with that person. Matthew 5:23-24	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I tell you to love your enemies and pray for anyone who mistreats you. Matthew 5:44	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
When you give to the poor, don't let anyone know about it. Matthew 6:3	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Don't store up treasures on earth! ....Instead, store up your treasures in heaven. Matthew 6:19-20	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
But I tell you not to try to get even with a person who has done something to you. Matthew 5:39	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
I tell you not to worry about your life. Don't worry about having something to eat, drink, or wear. Isn't life more than food or clothing? Matthew 6:25	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Now I tell you to love each other, as I have loved you. John 15:12	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
You cannot be the slave of two masters! You will like one more than the other or be more loyal to one than the other. You cannot serve both God and money. Matthew 6:24	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Matthew 28:19	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10





## Diagnostics: Sharing the Gospel (the good news of Jesus)

Go and preach the good news to everyone in the world. Mark 16:15  
Circle a number between 1 and 10 for each of the below (10=very often and 1=not at all)

Sharing the Gospel through words, which you are **saying**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Sharing the Gospel through your presence, by who you are **being**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Sharing the Gospel through deeds, by what you are **doing**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Something to think on:

- Just sharing the gospel through **saying** words can be hollow
- Just sharing the Gospel through who you are **being** is passive
- Just sharing the Gospel through what are **doing** is ambiguous

Write down some thoughts on how can you rebalance and increase the frequency of all the above.







## Diagnostics: What are the issues?

This is where you start to draw together what has been emerging as you have gone through the Life MOT. Let Jesus lead you to give his perspective on what is important, it may be different from your own!

As you read through your notes on the previous pages, write your major concerns and significant excitements. These are your first thoughts and you can hope to gain more insight as you share later with your reflector.

Stuff that Concerns	Stuff that is Exciting





## Action Points: helped by your reflector

You can jot down a few things here in pencil but it's good to leave lots of space to write things when you meet with your reflector.

When you meet with your reflector, first go through this Life MOT manual, sharing what you wrote and adding additional things as you gain insight. Then allow yourself to dream and look ahead - are there things in your life that you would like to be different?



- What issues and opportunities surfaced as you thought about your life and your relationship with Jesus, others, self and stuff?
- What are your dreams, goals and ideals?
- What are the first small steps you can take?

As you fill in the below, try to keep the action points simple, realistic and specific.

<b>The issue or opportunity</b>	<b>The dream</b> (What is it going to look like in the future?)	<b>The Action Points</b> (What you are going to do about it)





## Prayer:

A prayer to say and linger over as you finish this part of The Life MOT before you're meeting with your reflector.

Jesus, you made me and you are my Lord.  
You are in charge of all my life.

Jesus, you want to remake and renew me.  
I want to be remade and renewed.

This process is showing up my shortcomings.  
I am deeply sorry.  
I accept the forgiveness that only you give and so I forgive myself.

This process is showing up opportunities and possibilities.  
Thank you.  
I want to walk into your positive future for me.

The road stretches ahead. It is a long road.  
I don't look for shortcuts but rather to walk it closely with you  
and with my brothers and sisters who follow you.

Please continue to speak with me.  
Please make my meeting with my reflector a significant time with you.

I want to live life to the full.  
I know that you offer that life when I live it with you and for you.

Please take this prayer to Father God.  
Amen.





## Review: make a date with yourself

Put a date in your diary to meet with yourself on your own or with someone else. We suggest about three months but you will know how long you need first to start putting your new life in place.

Location

Time

Date

Month

Year



## Appendix: Reflector's Guidelines

These notes are for those acting as a reflector for someone who is doing The Life MOT. A big thank you for doing this!

This may be a new experience for you, but don't worry - you are not being asked to be an expert. You are one who listens, asks questions to create further understanding and says what they see.

### The foundations to being a reflector:

- You are working with Jesus to help a brother or sister in their discipleship ...wow!
- You will undertake or have undertaken your own Life MOT with a reflector. All are followers in need of discipleship!
- You are not spending half the time with them as your reflector and half with you as their reflector. It doesn't work well to be the reflector for the one who is your reflector.
- You are the same sex.
- As a reflector you agree to meet with the other person once for a single meeting of up to two hours.
- Agree a time and place to meet when you will be free from interruptions and phone calls.
- When you meet by all means use your common sense and also be open to the Holy Spirit speaking to you through other ways as well.
- Think of yourself as a mirror. You are not there to provide answers but rather to help the other person think and reflect. Tell them what you factually see and hear, and ask questions so they can see more clearly. Forget about trying to find out information for yourself, rather ask questions to help them see.
- Some people are not used to paperwork and will have made little progress with the questions on their own, which is fine. Now, simply work through it together. Adapt the process if you need to, it is a tool and not a straitjacket.

- The other person is free to tell you as much as they wish. If they feel more comfortable being open with you it is more likely to help them.
- You have agendas and passions about the Christian faith. This is a time to bury. Watch out for your own things colouring the conversation. A good mirror does not distort the image!
- Confidentiality. Normally, what you hear in the room stays in the room. The Life MOT may not be used as a tool to report on someone to church leadership.

### Doing it:

Keep an eye on the clock so you go through it.

- 1 First get a common understanding of what you are doing and talk about things that might concern them, like if they can trust you to be on their side and confidential.
- 2 You have a blank copy of the questionnaire. They have a completed one. Help the other person work through their responses in order as they tell you what they wish of what they have written. You don't have a right to see it all. As you go through it, ask additional questions to help them see more clearly. And tell them what you see.
- 3 Help them to review and change what they have written on the last page of the diagnostics section: "Diagnostics: What are the issues?"
- 4 Help them to work out what they are going to do in the section called Action Points.
- 5 Pray together.

If someone in your church is the co-ordinator for Life MOT then let them know that you have completed the process. They don't need to know any more than that unless the other person wants more information passed on.

Thanks again!

There are further discipleship resources in Module 14.





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