



# 40 Missional Ideas

## For Small Groups



## Introduction

How can each one of us live out Christ in the context of where we work, where we live and in our families? Cell UK has brought together 40 fantastic ideas for use in small groups.

These ideas will take about ten minutes and give practical ways to encourage and empower each other as we seek to love those around us. The cards break down into eight themes each taking your small group on a journey, renewing minds and creating new rhythms for life.

- Preparation – how we prepare our hearts to make a difference
- Hospitality – being big hearted in our local community and at work
- Neighbourhood – the environment around our homes or local church
- Work – the place we are between 7am and 7pm
- Third space – creating safe environments for people to encounter Christ's love
- Prayer – how we call upon God to impact friends, neighbourhood and work
- Big church – looking at the partnership between small groups and the bigger church
- Gospel words – words that work within the context of our culture today

Some activities use items you are likely to have around the home and are marked with a house symbol. Others require some advanced planning and are marked with a shopping basket symbol. Many of the cards however, are 'ready to use'.

Our thanks to Liz Low, Laurence Singlehurst and Trevor Withers who have created these ideas. Also our thanks go to Georgie Low, Peter Kinahan, Jonny Foulger, Trevor Withers, [www.publicdomainpictures.net](http://www.publicdomainpictures.net) and [www.morguefile.com](http://www.morguefile.com) for the use of their pictures.

A circular speed limit sign with a hole in the center, mounted on a post next to a tree stump in a rural landscape. The sign is weathered and has the text "SPEED LIMIT" at the top and "10 M.P.H." at the bottom. The background shows a green field and a line of trees under a clear sky.

**SPEED  
LIMIT**

**10  
M.P.H.**

## Restrictions

When travelling by car the open road lies before you, but the progress you make on your journey is governed by the speed limit.

Life also imposes restrictions on us. Circumstances appear to limit our response to Jesus' command to "Go!" (Matthew 28: 19)

Job, family and caring commitments keep us tied to specific locations and limit our time. Are we, then, unavailable for the Great Commission?

Consider the things that 'restrict' you.

Pray together in twos/threes, asking God to open your eyes to the opportunities available to you in this current season of your life.





## Friend of sinners

Jesus was a friend of sinners.

They asked him, “John’s disciples are well-known for keeping fasts and saying prayers. Also the Pharisees. But you seem to spend most of your time at parties. Why?” Luke 5:33 The Message

If we, too, are to learn how to become friends with those around us, we need to examine what we think are acceptable standards of behaviour for Christians. Opinions have changed over time and still vary widely within the Christian community.

Ask some provocative questions in your group to bring this issue into the light - our attitudes have often been caught from others.

Jesus demonstrated no need to be separate or clean. In Mark chapter 5 he meets a violent man, a bleeding woman and a dead child. In each case a touch



from Jesus makes the unclean whole. Jesus demonstrates love that gets involved – Jesus has dirty hands.

Write down the names of not-yet-Christians that you spend over an hour with each week. What does this say about you as a ‘friend of sinners’?



## One step at a time



Place a pair of shoes in the centre of the group.

In his book 'Sowing Reaping Keeping', Laurence Singlehurst highlights that people go on a journey of discovery towards God. We can think of this journey having steps as shown below

	God is good and we are OK	Content of the Gospel	Implications	Receiving Jesus
Steps	1---2-----3	4-----5-----6	7-----8	9-----10

Discuss as a group where your friends are on the steps and what you can do to help them move forward. Pray for each other and the ideas that you have shared.







## Light carriers

Read John 1: 1-5



Light a candle

We are going to focus on verse five.

‘The light has come into the world and the darkness has not overcome it.’

Light always overcomes darkness. To demonstrate this, use a small box. (A shoe box is ideal.) Lift the lid slightly and peek inside. It’s dark in here. Tell the group that you are going to let the darkness out so they had better watch out! Lift the lid and watch the darkness in the box be overcome by the light.

Reflect on the illustration and talk about the fact that we are light carriers.



Pray for a specific situation where you can bring light this week.



## Using our talents

Read the parable of the talents together from Matthew 25: 14 – 30... perhaps read round the group, one verse each.

It is often difficult for us to see what talents God has given us. It can be more obvious to others. Spend a few minutes sharing with each other the things that you see God has given each of you as gifts in your character or skills.

Talk about how these can be used more effectively as we share our faith with others and discover through your conversations how each of you will do this slightly differently because of your gifts.

Pray prayers of thanks for the gifts you have unearthed together and bless one another as you do so.





## All you need is love



Play the Beatles track with the above title  
(available on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com))

Read John 3: 16-17

In what ways have we experienced God's love recently?

Give time for the group to reflect and share.

How could we share these experiences with our friends or colleagues and how would we change the way we share to be appropriate?

Pray for one another and encourage each other to share the experiences of God's love with someone this week.





## Your journey

Read Luke 24: 13–35

These two friends chatted together and shared their grief at the death of Jesus.

Ask the group if they are walking along side anyone who is experiencing loss of some sort at the moment. This could be bereavement or the loss of a job or children leaving home etc.

Use the picture on this card as a prompt.



Share the situations briefly and pray for each other. Be expectant that Jesus will draw alongside and accompany you on this journey. Ask him to reveal himself at this time of loss.





## Asking good questions

Jesus asks a considerable number of questions. He does this not because he doesn't know the answers, but rather to get the listener thinking.

He asks them in all sorts of different situations.

One of our challenges in our more secular culture is to stimulate spiritual hunger. One of the ways we can do this is by asking good questions; questions that stir people to think outside their normal world view.

Discuss as a group what sort of questions you could ask that would stir people to think about spiritual things.

Pray for each other that you will take the opportunity to use a question this week.





## Who has a dream?



Many of us have dreams of doing things that will see our friends discover Jesus. The problem is they often just stay as dreams.

Spend a few moments talking about the sort of things people in your group have imagined might happen to help people discover Jesus. Give some time to this as it often takes a few minutes for people to connect in this way.

Ask the group to share their ideas and encourage a space where any ideas are valid and not up for criticism or debate at this point. You may want to use some post it notes and ask them to write their ideas down and post them on a central sheet.

Discuss as a group ways in which you might encourage some of these dreams to come to reality.



Pray together to discover the next steps you need to take to help perhaps just one person see their dream fulfilled.



## Practical hospitality

Hospitality looks different for each of us depending on personality, practical resources and the people around us.

By reading this card you have already embraced the value of hospitality and now it is time to make it practical. Who could I invite to my house or take out for a cup of coffee or tea? You can think geographically (neighbours) or, alternatively, you can think relationally (who do I know?)

Discuss whether you are an 'invite people to your house' person or a 'take them out for coffee / down the pub' person.

Take a moment to consider who you could invite 'in' or take 'out'.



Share your practical hospitality strategy with the group and pray for God's blessing.



## Prayer walk

This involves literally walking and praying for the area around the house that you meet in.

You will probably need to devote the whole time of your meeting to do this.

Go out in pairs or threes together and pray as you walk. Spend time when you return sharing what you prayed for with each other.

You might find it helpful to use the following three headings, taken from the Old Testament, as a focus for your prayers:

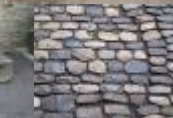
Prophet.....What does God want to say to us about this area?

Priest.....In what ways can we intercede for this area?

King.....How can we see God's Kingdom come in this area?







## Hallowe'en

It's gaining popularity every year around the world and it's quite likely that some of your neighbours and their children will dress up on 31<sup>st</sup> October, knock on your door and call, "Trick or treat!"

In their eyes, it's just harmless fun but many Christians feel uncomfortable and conflicted over how to respond. They want to be friendly and welcoming, but they don't want to condone the trivialising of spiritual issues.

To discuss...

- Why might you reject Hallowe'en?
- How may this be perceived by your neighbours?
- Is there a way to receive Hallowe'en?
- Can you **redeem** the opportunities presented by the way Hallowe'en is celebrated today?



Pray together. Express your concerns to God. Commit neighbours and their children, by name, to God's care. Ask the Holy Spirit to enable you to be bold witnesses in any redemptive plans you've made.



## Love your street



Can you imagine what would happen if on every street there was one Christian who was committed to loving people on that street unconditionally? Someone who would build community and have their neighbours' spiritual welfare at heart? Someone who would look out for each person, and who would be their secret Pastor? This is the vision of [www.loveyourstreet.org](http://www.loveyourstreet.org)

Explore this together in your group:

- Individually, sketch a map of where you live.
- Add the names of your neighbours to the map.
- Are there any 'gaps' on the map? What can you do to fill them?
- Do any of your neighbours have needs that you know of?  
Can you help in anyway?



Put your map up in a prominent place during the coming week and use it to pray for each of your neighbours.

If you are excited by the idea of being a secret Pastor to your neighbours you may want to explore this more by visiting [www.loveyourstreet.org](http://www.loveyourstreet.org)



## God knows where you live

Read Acts 17: 26-27

'...he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him...' (New International Version 1984)

Paul reminds us, in these words, that the social and political environment into which we are born and the physical location where we live and work is no random event. We are deliberately placed where we are now by God who 'is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.' 2 Peter 3: 9



Have you ever considered that friends and relations, colleagues and classmates, neighbours and even the providers of your local services, are in your life by divine appointment?

As you walk through a normal day tomorrow, take note of who you meet. What do others see in you?



## A Helping Hand



Design a postcard offering a 'helping hand' to neighbours who have non-specialist jobs that need doing around the house or in the garden. Include a return address or contact telephone number.

Make it clear on the card that the service is free and will be provided by local Christian volunteers. You could choose a specific date when help will be available or you could begin an open-ended initiative.

Post the cards through your neighbours' doors.



The members of your small group will provide a pool of willing volunteers to respond to any requests you receive for a helping hand.

Use time in your small group to pray for your neighbours' spiritual well-being.





## Priorities



Many of us would like to take time to meet people who don't yet know Jesus, but we can't imagine how we'd fit it in - life is so busy.

Take an empty jar to represent 24 hours of time. What goes into a day?

Add several rocks to represent working, eating, sleeping.

Add smaller pebbles: chores and family commitments.

Add shingle: leisure, hobbies and friends.

Add sand for anything not covered so far!

How do we develop a lifestyle that creates space for people and relationships?

Fill a second jar in exactly the same way, but pause and allow time for the members of your small group to pray at each stage and give their priorities to

God. Ask the Holy Spirit to highlight the relationships and opportunities he wants each one to pursue.



Conclude by pouring in a small bottle of beer: "You can always find time for a beer with a friend."



## Redemptive Gifts

In his book 'Velvet Elvis', Rob Bell says, "Evangelism is showing people the God whom they were experiencing all along but did not understand."

Christians can build bridges in people's thinking to Jesus.

The Bible says each human being is crafted in the image of the Creator to share his world, working with him to draw out what's good and to end what's destructive. Each person is equipped to be a unique reflection of God's nature and character. See Genesis 1: 27-28.

A personal trainer finds that clients frequently talk about what's bothering them during an exercise session. A Christian friend has told him that he is one of the ways that God helps people in trouble. The Christian has bridged a potential barrier. The trainer is no longer thinking that God is distant and uninterested in him.



Try identifying echoes of the Creator or 'redemptive gifts' in family members and work colleagues who do not know Jesus yet. God is already at work, and just waiting to be discovered.



## Whose hand are you holding?

We are all connected to others in our lives. Take time to discover whose hands the members of your group are holding at work.

Choose one member of the group. Ask the person 3 questions.

- Where do you work?
- What issues do you face in the course of a normal day?
- Whose hands are you holding at work?

Pray for the person to be an effective witness in the workplace environment. Ask for God's intervention and support in the issues that have been raised. Pray for the person's contacts by name.

Next week choose another group member and repeat the questions and the prayer support. Continue in this way until every member of the group has had a turn.



It is very encouraging to do this at regular intervals, re-visiting members and asking for an up-date on their life at work.



## High value of people

When we think about being missional in the workplace, we might ask ourselves what this looks like in practical terms. 2 Corinthians 5:14 tells that 'one has died for all' and if Jesus has died for every person it gives us a very real sense of how valuable every individual is no matter of their background, colour, success. This is central to the Christian message as demonstrated by Christ's death and resurrection.

So when we go to work we could take this Christian value with us, a high value of people and we treat people in a way that corresponds to this value by being hospitable, polite and respectful. We are demonstrating the very essence of the Christian message. For example, Jane started work in a new office and the seven or eight people in and around her corner seemed remarkably unfriendly. A high value of people was a part of her life so whenever she made coffee she made one for whoever would like one. She brought in cakes, she shared kindnesses, and slowly but surely that corner of the office was changed and there was a new caring, one to another that had never been there before.

**Action 1:** discuss what this value would look like for you and your group at your place of work

**Action 2:** pray and encourage one another to take this value to your workplace environment





## Luke 10:2 – praying

In Luke 10:2 we are told ‘the harvest is plentiful pray therefore for the labourers,’ the workers. Many times when we think of being missional, we think of praying for our colleagues at work or our neighbours but this scripture encourages us to pray for ourselves because we are the workers.

**Action:** perhaps in every quarter in the year in our cell meetings we could take five minutes at the end and pray for one person around these questions:

1. What are the pressures you face in your work place life as a Christian?  
Let us pray that God would sustain them at work as we know that the work environment is more pressured than ever before and pray for them that they can take a high value of people to work with them.



2. Who are their friends in their local neighbourhood? Use the metaphor we have seen in a previous card, ‘whose hands are you holding’ and pray for that person in the context of the local relationships that they may or may not have.



## Small group big church partnership

We can see in the New Testament in Acts 2:46 that the church met in 'the big' for leadership, inspiration and teaching, and in 'the small' for accountability, fellowship and making the teaching a reality.

So most of us will meet together on a Sunday in larger gatherings and during the week in the smaller groups.

This partnership of big and small is still relevant today. Through our small groups we empower one another to be good neighbours, to reach out and take action, whether as individuals or as a group. As we think about being missional, we want to explore how the big group and the small group can serve one another.



So let us begin this series of cards by praying for the partnership of big and small.

Let's pray for those responsible for the big church and for our small groups, that there would be creativity and interaction.



LETTERS

## Invitations

How does the small group/big church partnership work together? Most of our churches run carol services at Christmas - an ideal event for us to attend with friends and local acquaintances. Many of our churches run Alpha courses - ideal for those who have been in relationship with us for a while and are showing some spiritual interest.

What more could our churches do? Does our church have guest services that we feel confident to bring our friends to? Are there social action projects the church is doing that small group members could volunteer to be a part of?

1. List the things your church is doing that might support your missional endeavours, e.g. carol service, Alpha, other ideas.

2. Do these events really work for you as individuals and as a small group?

Are there suggestions that would make them more dynamic or work better?

3. Are there projects or events being run by the big church that we at cell could pray for and get involved in? Discuss and formulate action.





OPEN

A wooden sign with the word "OPEN" in large, hand-painted letters. The letters are filled with a vibrant orange-red color and have a thick, light-colored outline. The sign is set against a background of dark, textured wood, possibly charred or stained, with circular patterns and small, light-colored dots scattered throughout. The overall appearance is rustic and artistic.

## Guest services

It is a recognised fact that many of us do not bring friends to services because we are uncertain of what might take place and are concerned that a friend might be embarrassed or have a negative experience.

The Willow Creek and Back to Church Sunday initiatives have been encouraging churches to have effective guest services. They help churches to create a safe environment with some spiritual content where church members feel comfortable and are enthusiastic about inviting their friends along.

Does your church have guest services? If so, discuss in your group if you have confidence to bring people and what would make such services safer and better?



If your church does not have a guest service, what kind of guest service would work for you?

Discuss and make suggestions that could be given to church leaders.





## Make the most of Christmas

Christmas presents a unique moment in our culture where there is an openness to Christian events and ideas. Small group members can work in effective missional partnership with Big Church activities during the festive season through:

A Christmas carol service

Carol singing in local pubs

Children's nativity plays and musicals

Practical support for vulnerable and needy people in the locality

Participating in local events that town or parish councils might be putting on

1. Draw up a list of what your church is doing over the Christmas period.

2. Decide which of these activities your small group could get involved in.



3. Let your church leaders know what commitments your small group is making. They will be encouraged.

4. Pray for God's blessing over the Christmas period.



*Alpha*

## Alpha in 'the big'

Every now and again an idea is born, often in a local church, which is an expression of creativity and inspiration. This idea is not only dynamic for the people who originally thought of it, but it multiplies around the nation and works in many different situations, amongst a variety of cultures and backgrounds.

Alpha is such an idea. Since 1995 over half a million people have found faith through this simple combination of input, discussion, and food.

Alpha is such an important gift to the church that we, as a small group, need to plan how we can partner with a church based Alpha course.

Prayerfully consider if your group members could invite anyone to Alpha. Do you have members who could serve on an Alpha team?

Could you contribute in other ways?

Approach your church leaders with your ideas.





*Alpha*



## Alpha in 'the small'

As well as being a part of Alpha in the big church, many small groups have been experimenting with Alpha in their own setting.

For a period of eight weeks you suspend what your small group is doing and invite a few unchurched friends to Alpha in your small group. You can still choose to have an icebreaker over food and then follow the Alpha format with your three or four guests.

Some groups use the Alpha DVDs while others choose to deliver the teaching themselves and encourage interaction and questions as they go along rather than after the talk has finished.

It is good if different people in the group are happy to teach different weeks \_\_\_\_\_ and perhaps pick up a particular topic that they are interested in



Why not try it and see what God does!





## The kind of questions Jesus asked

Can a Christian have authentic spiritual conversations with others without it sounding like 'preaching' at them? Jesus demonstrates the way to do it in Matthew 16: 13-16.

Q: "Who do **people** say I am?"

His question is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person and, because of its general nature, Jesus gets an unguarded and honest response from those listening.

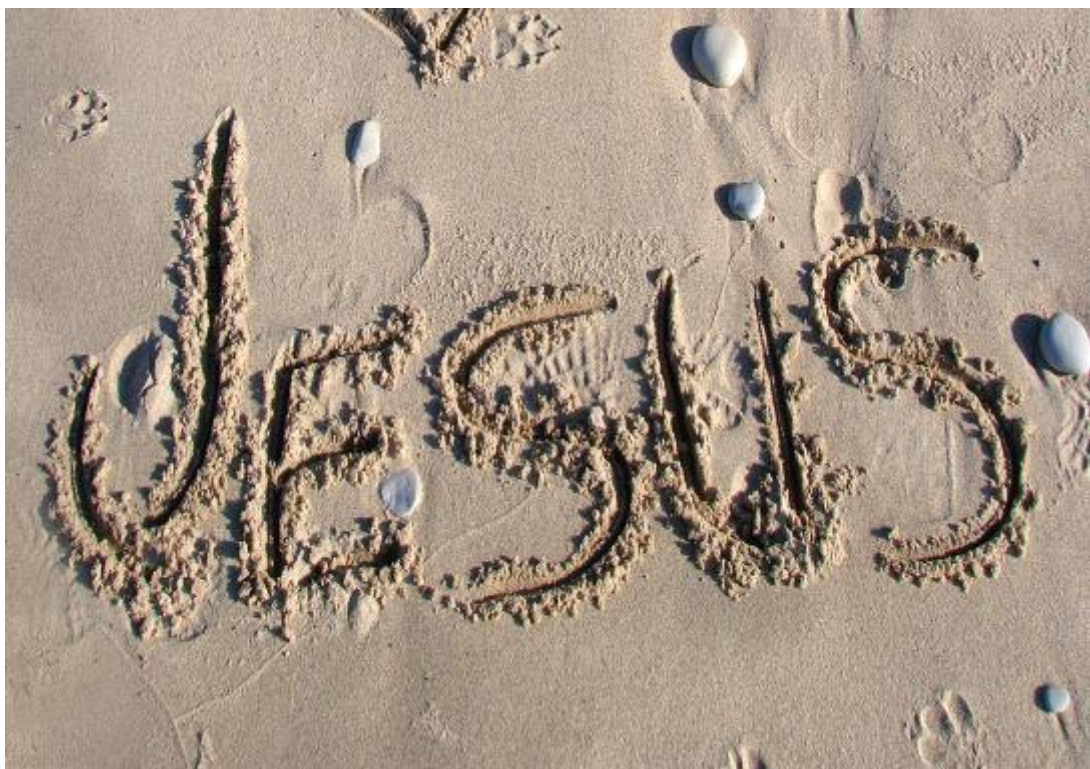
Q: "Who do **you** say I am?"

This question challenges his listeners directly but follows so naturally from the first question that, once again, Jesus gets straight to what they think.



Try it now. Take a current subject in the news. Pose a general question. Follow it up with a direct one. How does it feel? Like 'preaching' or like a conversation?





## Jesus stories

Laurence Singlehurst suggests that one way for ordinary church members to share their faith is to talk about Jesus. Around the world there is a growing momentum behind the realisation that putting Jesus forward is the best evangelism we can do today.

People are surprisingly ignorant of what Jesus said and did. This means that our 'Jesus stories' come across with a freshness and a power.

Ask the members of the small group to think of a story about Jesus in the Gospels that has been meaningful and impacted them personally. Ask people to think how they might retell that particular incident or story and how they might explain its personal resonance to someone else.

Trial run some of these stories in your small group. You could ask one or two people each week to share one of their favourite Jesus stories from the

Gospels. Pray for one another as you look for opportunities to share these stories with your friends.

An example of such a story can be found at [www.celluk.org.uk/jesusstories](http://www.celluk.org.uk/jesusstories)





## Your Story

In the book of Acts, Paul's testimony (his story) is recorded on a number of occasions and Paul uses it as a basis for his defence of faith. There is something very powerful about your story. It carries a passion and sincerity because you are impacted by it. Previous generations looked to see if something was 'true' or not. Our post-modern culture listens to and validates experiences in a totally different way. Because it is your story and your experience it has an innate validity to it.

Ask each member of the group to think about their story. This could be their initial conversion or maybe how God was with them through a particular life event. Ask two people in the group to share their stories. When you have listened, share back what has impacted you from that story.



Think about your story. Can you bring it down to just a two minute conversation?

Pray that each group member will have an opportunity to share their story over the next month.



## **Metaphor** *Figure of speech - a type of analogy or comparison*

In the New Testament Jesus uses metaphors. He tells his disciples to be 'salt and light'. He refers to the Holy Spirit as 'water'. He says, 'I am the vine'. Jesus uses a word which people understand as a vehicle to contain a deeper, hidden truth.

When we are in conversation with people, a metaphor can explain who we are and what we believe. For example, one Christian leader spends time with a group of people who understand what 'church' is, although they don't go to church themselves. When asked what he does, he says he helps churches understand the post modern culture and how to communicate their message in the language of the day. He is using 'church' as a metaphor and a bridge.

The people he is talking to are really happy to talk about church and its relevance. Talking about 'church' is objective. Talking about the Christian faith would be too direct and the conversation would close down.



Think about your context. What metaphor could be useful in your situation?

Share ideas within the group and get feedback.



## What is the third space?

One of the challenges we face as Christians is that people see us as religious and not spiritual. The third space idea is a place between our spiritual atmospheres in church and the people outside. In other words, how can we create intentionally spiritual spaces outside the church where people can connect with and encounter God? The set of cards under this heading are designed to help us think this through.

Read John 4: 1-26

Look at how Jesus brings spiritual answers and challenges to the Samaritan woman's questions and situation. Pay attention to the language he uses and where he directs her focus.

To discuss:



What makes us look religious to outsiders?

How is spirituality expressed in our culture?

Pray that you will have insight to see the potential for spiritual connections within our culture.





## How spiritual do we appear?

The online Oxford English Dictionary defines spiritual as....

*Relating to, or affecting, the human spirit or soul, as opposed to material or physical things*

In what ways do we see Jesus affecting the human spirit or soul, as opposed to material or physical things?

Reflect on some of the Gospel stories and see how this happens. You might like to make a list as a group of the things you find on a large sheet of paper.

So how do we as Christians appear to be spiritual? Think about national as well as local and personal areas to help get your thinking going.

What sort of things might make us look unspiritual?



Pray using the words of Romans 12: 1-2 as a prompt for prayer together.

LISK<sup>D</sup> LOST<sup>L</sup>

## Creating intentionally spiritual spaces

Are there things that we can do in our small groups to engage with our spiritually open friends or to encourage those who are not yet spiritually open to move in this direction?

Spend a few moments as a group reflecting on how each of you encounters God. Think particularly how this happened for you in the early days of your faith development. Share your insights with each other. Think about the things you could do together to create similar opportunities for your friends.

One way in which small groups like yours have successfully created spaces where people can encounter God is by using the Essence material developed by Rob Frost. This is available free on the web at [sharejesusinternational.com](http://sharejesusinternational.com)

The six sessions are as follows

- the journey so far
- the journey within
- the journey to a better world
- the journey to wholeness
- the journey to spirituality
- the journey to the future



Pray, asking God if you could run something like Essence as a group and invite others along.



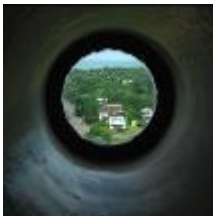
## Initiating spiritual conversations

For many of us, raising spiritual issues in a conversation can feel uncomfortable and somewhat confrontational. Sometimes this is just our stuff. Perhaps we have had experiences in the past that have unsettled us. With the recent rise in interest in spirituality we can afford to be a bit bolder. Often, our friends are expecting us to be more Christian and spiritual than we are prepared to be. But how do we get started?

Let's look at what Jesus did.

In many situations, Jesus asked questions. These questions had the effect of opening up a person's world view, challenging the way they saw things and encouraging them to think differently.

Look at Mark's Gospel to discover some of the questions Jesus asked and to see what happened.



What questions can you formulate that will help you start intentionally spiritual conversations with your friends? Make sure the questions are open i.e. not yes and no answers.

Pray for each other to use the questions when appropriate over the coming week.



## Creating encounter opportunities

Are you ever prompted to pray with someone during the course of everyday life, but by the time you weigh up the consequences or stir the faith to do so, the moment has gone? What would it take for us to find the courage to step out?

In most of these situations the person we might offer to pray with, even though they are not a Christian, will respond favourably. They are often touched that we would be concerned enough to offer.

Share situations where you have prayed for people in the past and how they have responded.

Think of situations where you might consider praying for someone in the coming week and make a commitment to each other to be open to God's prompting and step out and offer to pray.







## Magnifying Glass

Have you ever wondered how prayer works? Many years ago my friend Barry Austin told me this. At school you may have owned a two inch magnifying glass. This glass was not used to help you see things better but on a hot sunny day you could use it to focus the rays of the sun on small creatures and sundry other objects. The magnifying glass does not make the sun hotter, but it focuses the sun's rays and in this way creates the desired impact.

When we pray we are like a magnifying glass. Our prayers do not make people love God more but they focus the love of God into a situation. Our prayers can burn away hindrances to the Christian message, making it easier for people to experience the love of God.



### Action

Bring a magnifying glass to the group. Imagine the sunlight pouring through it. Discuss where you would like to see the love of god focused into a person or a situation.



CIRCULAR  
ROUTE

## Resistance to the Christian message

1. Ask each member of your group what they think holds their friends back from becoming a Christian. Share those things and have an open time of prayer where you call out to God that his love might begin to change and overcome those barriers.

2. What atmospheres in your community might hold people back?

- Maybe it is affluence.
- Maybe it is poverty.

What is it about your neighbourhood that might make it difficult for people to be interested in Christianity?

Discuss and pray.





## Persistent prayer

Read Luke 18:1-8. When we pray for people or situations in our nation and where we work, we might need to come to a realisation that a prayer is not enough. There are many situations, environments and people which have resisted the love of God for many years. This resistance is like a strong castle, a thick wall and it is not broken down in a day.

### Action

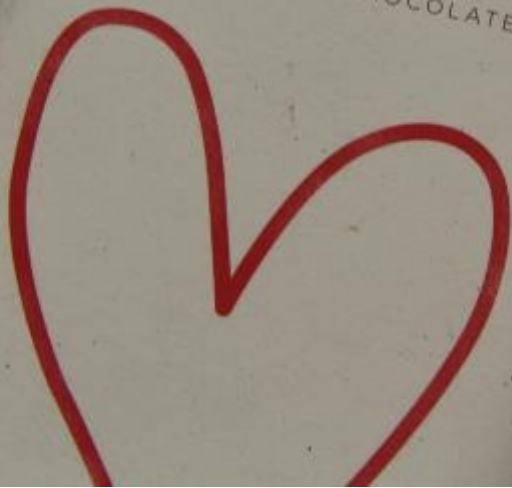
Tell your group a story where you have seen an answer to prayer that has taken many years. Our nation and culture today have become very resistant to Christian love and Christian ideas. So let us make a commitment to prayer that is persistent, as in the story.

I have been deeply challenged by my connection with black majority churches. Their commitment to prayer, shown in all night prayer meetings held



throughout the year, is a fantastic example of persistence. Discuss in your group how persistent prayer can be a bigger part of your small group and personal lives.

**HONEST**  
ARTISAN CHOCOLATE



## Pray for one another

Read Galatians 6:2.

In this scripture we are encouraged to bear one another's burdens, to love one another. So as we pray for one another and share our trials and tribulations, our burdens and heartaches, we demonstrate loving care and concern.

Read John 13:35.

When we love one another and care for one another it has a missional dynamic. Jesus says 'all men will know you are my disciples if you have love for one another.'

### Action

Ask each group member to share a need they would like prayer for, a situation that they perhaps find difficult, then pray for one another. This would be good to do in your small group on a regular basis. Love outworked; prayer in action; these things change us and empower us.







## Praying for workers

Read Luke 10:2 out loud. In this striking verse Jesus is encouraging us to pray for workers in the harvest field. Who are these workers? Well, today, it is you and I - the body of Christ.

In this card we want to encourage you to think about a rhythm of prayer, so that for a season you spend 10 minutes at the end of your small group meeting praying for one member. Ask them where they live and who they know in that area where God has called them to love and reach out. Pray for them, the worker, that God will empower them in their mission.

If the person being prayed for is not really connected to local people, then pray that God will show them creative ways (either through a church project or through their own initiative) to find people to love where they live.



Depending on how many people are in your group this will take between 6 and 10 weeks and is well worth doing at least twice a year.