

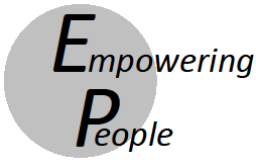
# **Help!**

## **I'm leading part of my Small Group**

A must for everyone in a  
Small Group



**A resource for small group members and leaders**



Other titles in this series:

Developing Leaders - training for small group leaders  
Empowering People - the place of small groups in local church  
Small Groups - an Introduction  
Encounter - 20 interactive Bible studies for small groups  
Small Groups—Bigger Kingdom - Pathways to faith in today's world

## **Help! I am leading part of my Small Group**

Copyright © Trevor Withers 2019

The right of Trevor Withers to be identified as author this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

Published and distributed by:

Cell UK Ministries,  
Ashley Church,  
Ashley Road,  
St Albans,  
Herts. AL1 5DA  
Registered Charity No. 1088578

*First published in the UK in 2004*

*This impression 2021*

Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV®  
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™  
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

ISBN: 978-1-902144-51-1

E&OE

# Contents

Introduction	4
Help I am doing the <b>welcome</b>	7
How on earth do I lead heavenly <b>worship</b>	11
Oh no! its the <b>word</b>	17
From in-reach to <b>outreach</b>	23
<i>Other resources</i>	27
<i>About the author</i>	28

# Introduction

A friend of mine highlights the need for a good trellis to help her plants to grow well in the garden. The trellis is unseen as the plants thrive and cover it with their foliage and flowers. In the same way our small groups benefit from some sort of framework that enables the people in them to grow and flourish. There are many such frameworks available. Some use 'up, in and out': an upwards direction in terms of worship and teaching, inward in terms of prayer for one another and accountability, and outward in terms of missional activity. Others have looked at three Ps: Presence, which could be worship and scripture; Pressure, praying for one another and encouraging one another; and Purpose, What are we here for? What's our 'front line'?

For the sake of simplicity I am using a framework that has commonly been called 4Ws. This is used in thousands of small groups around the world.

## Why do we use 4Ws?

The 4Ws of **welcome, worship, word** and **witness** act as a vehicle to live out the values of our Christian life, those beliefs and attitudes that are at the core of our lives in small groups and motivate our choices, namely:

- ⇒ Jesus at the centre
- ⇒ Community
- ⇒ Every member ministry
- ⇒ Every member maturing
- ⇒ Every member reaching out

We want to see these values lived out in the life of our small group. This will not happen unless we have an intentional structure to our gatherings

that facilitates it. The **welcome, worship, word** and **witness** are designed to give this framework. Some people will want to push against formal structures and say that they stifle the life of God in a group. The Ws, however, are to act as a framework through which we can experience the dynamic presence of God.

Just as a body without any bones would just be a blob, so a small group without some framework will be blobby and have no sense of purpose or strength. Some years ago Howard Astin, Vicar of St John's Bowling, suggested we could add a 5th one of these Ws, namely the wind of the Spirit that enables us to listen to His prompting within the safety of the framework so we don't get trapped and shut down by it, instead we retain some flexibility.

They provide a vehicle that allows members to make their contribution in a safe environment. We all feel insecure if we don't know how we are supposed to respond or react in a given situation. Spending time in a small group without any idea of where it is going creates an atmosphere of discomfort for most people. We all like some degree of familiarity to create an environment where we can contribute. The 4Ws bring this to our meeting and so encourage participation.

Where a 4Ws structure is not used, the group either gets dominated by the pet themes of the leader or hijacked by strong personalities. Welcome, worship, word and witness ensure there is a balance in the time we spend together. The chart below demonstrates this, showing how the focus of our attention shifts through the flow of the meeting time. It also gives a guide to the length of time you might spend in each area.

Finally, this simple structure means that a greater number of people can lead a group, because they act as a facilitator which means that the leadership role is light.

<b>Focus</b>	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Approx Time</b>
You to me	Welcome	15-20 mins
Us to God	Worship	15-20 mins
God to us	Word	40 mins
Us to others	Witness	20 mins

# Help! I am doing the welcome

## Aim

The idea behind this is to simply get everyone to be involved at the beginning of your time together. This can take a number of forms but is often a simple exercise or each person answering a question in turn.

If using a game, make sure everyone can participate and is enabled to communicate with the rest of the group.

**For example** you might put several household items on a tray and ask everyone to take one, and then ask each person to say why they chose the one they did.

If you are using a question, choose one that suits the stage the group is at:

## Stage 1. Getting to know you

If the group has not been together long then you need something that is not too penetrating, will be straight forward for people to answer and not alienate them. In these early stages of the group's life use questions that encourage personal history to be shared. This shared history builds community.

**For example** you might ask what did you most enjoy as a child and why? Or where did you live between the ages of 7 and 10 years old? It is surprising what you discover about each other as you go round the group and answer these simple questions.

## **Stage 2. Going deeper**

This level of question should just move the group on a little and encourage a slightly deeper level of sharing.

**For example** when did you last do something for the first time and what was it?

## **Stage 3. Questions with a challenge**

As the group becomes established, you can ask deeper questions involving faith in God or other areas of a more intimate nature. Here are some good ones for this stage: What area of your life is God speaking to you about at the moment?

It is often helpful to choose a question that connects with the theme or passage that the group will be looking at in the word section. If your focus is on trust, you may want to ask a question about when you had to put your trust in someone or in God.



# Icebreaker playing cards

A fun pack of playing cards with each card having a different question.

Ideal for the Welcome section of your small group. Can also be used in other situations such as one-to-one mentoring, fun discussion starters amongst friends or as a normal pack of playing cards.

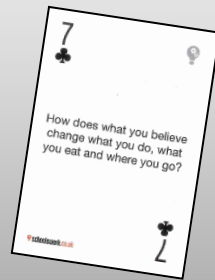


Questions about you

Questions about others

Questions about the world

Questions about beliefs



**£9.99**  
Inc p+p

**Practical**

**details**

A great resource for use in all sorts of situations

Order online at [www.celluk.org.uk](http://www.celluk.org.uk)

1. It is a good idea to answer the question yourself first. This does a number of things: it enables others to be thinking while you are answering, it also demonstrates what sort of answer you are looking for. Questions can be answered on several levels, so you can show to what depth you want the group to participate.
2. Go round the group, in order, from the person on your left or right, thanking them in turn as they answer and moving onto the next person. This creates safety for the group and ensures you don't miss anyone.
3. Don't make your question or game too complicated - you can't spend half the evening doing it.
4. Keep your own answer on track, and fairly short, or you will give everyone else permission to take as long as you did.
5. If you are struggling for a question look at [www.celluk.org.uk](http://www.celluk.org.uk) where you can order a pack of Icebreaker Playing Cards. (See previous page for details.)

# How on earth do I lead heavenly worship?

## **Aim**

The aim of small group worship is to connect us with God. We need to move our focus off ourselves, where it has been for the welcome, and onto God. A variety of ways can be used but they all have a common key to make them successful, namely good communication about what you are asking the group to do in this part of your time together. People will not participate if they are in any way unsure of what they are supposed to be doing at any point. This in itself highlights a second key: involvement by everyone. With these two things in mind, here are some thoughts and ideas of different approaches.

## **Singing**

For many people this is the main ingredient of worship. It enables us to connect with God and frees our emotions to engage in a way that other things may not. If you are planning to sing, bear in mind that the experience is likely to be different from a Sunday morning or any other larger gathering, owing to numbers. Therefore, choose songs that are not too complicated and are well known. Print out some words if you don't have song books or ensure that everyone knows the words before you start. To enhance the experience you could sing along to a CD or find the song online where you can often find a video with words on the screen as well. Take your own CD player or laptop or check that the host has a system that you can use in the room you will be meeting in.

## **Music**

You can use music in a reflective way without the need to sing along. This can create an oasis in the lives of otherwise busy people. Choose a track that has a mood of calm and tranquillity. It is often good to read

aloud a suitable passage of scripture that connects with the music in some way. This is particularly necessary if the music is instrumental, as it gives words for people to reflect on while they listen. It is important that you first explain what you are expecting people to do while the music is playing and what you are going to do afterwards. For instance: ‘As we listen to the music let’s reflect on God’s goodness towards us and lead each other in prayers of thanks when the music ends’.

## **Scripture**

Worshipping by using scripture alone has many benefits. You are not dependent on a group that can sing well, or on mastering someone’s over-technical hi-fi unit. Everyone has access to the words through their own Bible and you are focusing on something that is designed by God to connect us with Him. The Psalms are particularly good, as many of them were written solely for use in worship. Take some time looking at the passage you want to use and select an appropriate portion. You may want to stop short of slaying the Amorites or a long list of detailed instructions that follow the verses of praise! Often ten to fifteen verses are about right. You can read them and pause at suitable points, asking people to speak out a response as a prayer. Alternatively you can go round the group and read a verse each, leaving a pause for contributions. You can ask someone to read the whole passage and then simply reflect on it together, bringing your worship as you are prompted. It is sometimes good to pull out themes that the verses highlight and suggest the group worships around them to give some direction and structure. As with all these areas, have a clear idea of what you want to happen and communicate it to the group so they can participate.

## **Objects and pictures**

Many of us connect with God through images rather than words alone. So why not use a visual form such as a picture or object to act as a vehicle for worship. Our cell had a time of worship that was stimulated by a

poster. This had some words from John 10 on it and we used blank sheets of paper to write or draw our reflections on. We were then encouraged to share our thoughts in the form of prayers. Using everyday objects can also act as a stimulus, particularly when used with a passage of scripture or piece of music. A salt-shaker, pair of walking shoes, a bowl of water and a towel, all simple things that create a wealth of response in offerings of worship. The items you choose should be placed where everyone can see them and explanation given as to what you are going to do i.e. 'I am going to pray that God will stir our hearts to worship Him as we look at these objects, so let's encourage one another as we speak out our praise'. Often having some music playing or reading some verses helps to set a context.

## **Bread and wine**

The most powerful objects we have to lead us in to worship are, of course, bread and wine. To lead the group in worship through celebrating the Lord's Supper is always a powerful experience. It is helpful to remind ourselves why we do this and using the words in 1 Corinthians 11 acts as a good framework. You may want to read the relevant verses and then pause and do what they say.

### **1 Corinthians 11:24-29**

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

Ask someone to thank Jesus for his broken body

Verse 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This

# 40 *more* Creative Worship Ideas



Building on the success of our first tin of worship ideas, our brand new second set of 40 *more* Creative Worship Ideas covers a broad range of Christian worship. We all connect with God in different ways, so these sets of cards each contain a range of ideas with the hope that everyone in your group can lead worship confidently. These fantastic worship ideas are each printed on a card with a picture and presented in a set of 40 in an attractive durable tin.

They contain the following streams:-

Our lives  
Scripture  
Objects  
Words

The natural world  
Games  
'I am' sayings of Jesus  
Stories behind the hymns

Anybody doing small groups will find these creative worship ideas a great and helpful resource.

Order online at [www.celluk.org.uk](http://www.celluk.org.uk)

cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Ask someone to thank Jesus for his poured out blood

Verse 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Verse 27 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

Verse 28 A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.

Verse 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Spend some time in confession, sorting out anything that stands between us and God, or each other

Take the bread and break it and offer it around the group. You may like to encourage each person to say to their neighbour as they pass it on 'the body of Jesus was broken for you'. Do the same with the wine 'the blood of Jesus was poured out for you'.

You could close the time by praying prayers of thanks together or singing.

If you are in an Anglican church please talk to your Vicar about having bread and wine in your group.

## Summary

- Worship is about connecting with God
- Communicate clearly what you want people to do and what is going to happen
- Be creative and try new ideas
- Do things that will involve everyone
- Prepare well, particularly if you are using songs, music or objects
- Try using your idea in your personal time of worship with God to test it out.



# Oh no! it's the word

This often seems like an overwhelming task that needs expert biblical knowledge, a degree in teaching and group interaction. So let's shed a few myths about this before we look at how to lead this section.

What you are **not** doing

You are **not** leading a Bible study

You are **not** teaching as if in a classroom

You are **not** showing off your expertise on a subject

You are **not** re-teaching the sermon from Sunday

You are **not** leading a discussion group

So what am I doing?

You are leading people from the theoretical understanding of a message or scripture, to practical application, usually through a time of ministry. This will often be based out of what was preached on Sunday and is about the application of this to individuals' lives. As James puts it in James 1:22-25:

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says, Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it - not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it - they will be blessed in what they do”

There are several stages that we can consider to help us to achieve this and to act as an outline for us to use in the group. These stages are best

expressed like this:

Stage 1. What is God saying?

Stage 2. Connecting with experience

Stage 3. Ministry time

Let's look at each one in turn.

## **Stage 1. What is God saying?**

As Christians we believe in a God who reveals himself to us, and His primary vehicle for this is His word given to us through scripture. We should therefore have an anticipation that God will speak as we engage with scripture together.

So we start by reviewing what was in the message from Sunday and read the main passage of scripture that was used.

Then ask:

What seems to be the main point of this passage or what does this passage say to us today?

You need to give time for people to respond and you may want to ask the same question again in a slightly different way if a response is slow in coming.

Then ask:

What stands out to you in this passage?

It is important that you acknowledge people's answers with a thank you or head nod. As one person finishes look around expectantly for the next contribution.

Again, give time and encourage responses. Keep a mental note of key points so you can summarise.

These first two questions get us connecting with the scripture itself and what the preacher brought on Sunday. We now want to move to the application of what has come up.

It is good to summarise at this point and draw together a common truth from what has been shared. You will probably have an idea of what this might be as you will have spent time preparing beforehand, but go with what God is highlighting in the group rather than bringing your pre-formed answers.

## **Stage 2. Connecting with experience**

To move to application, ask:

Can you illustrate this truth from an experience in your own life?

This draws people in and helps them see how a particular truth can be lived out in practice. You may need to ask clarifying questions as people share. If something is not clear to you it probably isn't clear to the rest of the group. You may have to start things moving here with an illustration from your own life, but don't be too quick to jump in as you want to encourage participation by the group.

As stories are shared, a sense of reality is created and we begin to see how God has grown us and applied His truth to our lives.

## **Stage 3. Ministry time**

The climax of our word time should be seeing God move among us as He ministers to us through those in the group. Sounds great, doesn't it! But how do we encourage it to happen! This is where the faith dynamic

kicks in. We need to ask a question that leads to ministry and allows people to respond to what God has been stirring in them through the last two stages. It needs to be something like:

What is God saying to you right now? Or Who needs help?

It may be that you will need your small group leader to ask this question for you, if you feel it requires more leadership than you are able to bring to the group. If so, then make sure you talk to your group leader beforehand and ask them to do this for you. I would really encourage you to go with this final question and expect God to move through you as you ask it and lead the group to pray and minister to those who respond.

## **Some tips to encourage a ministry response**

Pray, pray, pray!

Pray that God will give you a specific word for someone in the group that will lead to ministry.

Activity aids response. Asking the group to stand as you ask the 'who needs help?' question encourages people to be active spiritually as they are active physically. This also means that you are all on your feet as you start to pray and can gather round an individual where appropriate.

You may also want to move a chair into the centre of the room in anticipation of someone sitting in it and the group gathering around to pray.

## **Some tips in ministry time**

Encourage people to bring scriptures, pictures, prophecy and words of knowledge as you pray together. Even if they themselves cannot see the relevance of what they are sharing, someone else in the group often brings understanding and interpretations. Encourage people to lay hands on the individuals being ministered to appropriately if they are comfortable with that.

Start by praying that God will move through you all as you pray.

Be aware of any response from the person being prayed for and act accordingly, for example are they moved emotionally with tears, and do they need a tissue?

Don't rush things to a conclusion. It is often helpful as the ministry comes to an end to ask if anyone has anything from God that they have not yet shared or prayed out.

## **In summary**

We want to see people edified, as outlined in Ephesians 4:11-16:

‘So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that

is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work..’

Our objective is to encourage each other to grow in maturity as we share our lives together and minister to one another as God leads us in response to His word.

We can think of this as a bit like building a house. We start with an idea which is in the form of plans drawn on paper. This is the theory part, we imagine what it can look like and how it will take shape. We then apply these plans and start building from them and see a house come into being. The plans on their own are not much use, you can’t live in a set of plans, they need to be used! So it is with the word of God, we need to use it to shape our lives, not just have it as a theoretical idea.

# From in-reach to outreach

## **Aim**

The witness section of our time together is about each of us feeling supported as we live out our lives following Jesus in a watching world.

## **Reflection**

Luke 10 describes Jesus sending out the 72, before this happens Jesus says “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

So what do we pray for. The harvest? No, the workers: you and me and our friends in the small group with us.

The witness section of a small group should be the climax of our time together, not just because it comes at the end. However, in reality it either doesn't happen at all because the rest of the evening has over-run, or it is dreaded by most group members because they feel they will be put under pressure to share their faith with their friends. Or, even worse, invite them to come to a future meeting. So, what do you do with this time in the group? How do you make it have value without sending people home feeling guilt-ridden?

Here are a few ideas to stimulate your thinking and make this part of your time together enjoyable and productive.

## **Supporting each other on our front lines**

This is about our individual connections with the world around us. This may be our workplace, the school gates, clubs that we belong to, family

connections etc. It is often surprising how little we know about each other and these other areas of our lives.

The passage mentioned earlier from Luke 10 encourages prayer for the workers who go out into the harvest. These workers are the members of our small group. One way we can do this is to have one person each week share about their lives on the front line where they work and live, so that we can pray for them.

You can use three simple questions to help, built around three Ps:

1. Presence: How or where do you sense God's presence?
2. Pressure: Where are you feeling pressured?
3. Purpose: What do you feel is your purpose?

Give time for the individual to share around these areas and then simply pray for them. As it is often towards the end of the meeting time it is good to pull a chair into the middle of the room and stand around the individual as you pray for them. This re-energises the group and shifts the focus onto the individual you are praying for. Encourage the group to listen to God as they pray, and share any words or pictures that they receive.

You can work around the group over a number of weeks, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to share and be prayed for.

### **Eight areas we can focus around**

We at Cell UK have created a set of cards that break down into eight themes, each taking your small group on a journey, renewing minds and creating new rhythms for life.



These 40 Missional Ideas cards have a total of forty ideas to enable your group to have an outward heartbeat, a missional focus. Each idea will take about 15 minutes and give practical ways to encourage and empower each other as we seek to love those around us. (See overleaf for more details.)

Some of the ideas are aimed at the group doing something together, whilst others are designed to encourage us as individuals to live active lives as followers of Jesus in a watching world.

We have listed below the eight areas with a short description of the things they cover.

- **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 where 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.

# 40 Missional Ideas for Small Groups

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.

Each idea takes about fifteen minutes and gives practical ways to encourage and empower each other as we seek to love those around us and share Jesus with them.



Printed on attractive postcards and presented in a high quality durable tin, these ideas break down into eight themes each taking your small group on a journey, renewing minds and creating new rhythms for life.

Order online at [www.celluk.org.uk](http://www.celluk.org.uk)

# Other resources



## Sowing Reaping Keeping

*Laurence Singlehurst*

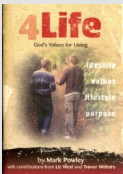
Discover the reasons why evangelism may have been difficult in the past and learn new ideas to help you share your faith in a relevant way.



## Developing Leaders

*Laurence Singlehurst and Trevor Withers*

This booklet has been a collaborative project between Trevor Withers and Laurence Singlehurst, who have been running successful and popular small group training across denominations and church streams for over 20 years. It enables both theoretical understanding and practical application in a real small group with other potential group leaders from your church. Grounded in biblical beliefs and values, this booklet includes reading matter for people to learn on their own, questions for discussion in a group, and material to be used in an actual small group setting.



## 4Life

*Mark Powley*

Do you want to know God better, find your place in his plans, have your value system transformed, have some help along the way? Take the risk, follow this guide for a deeper journey into the Christian life. 4Life has been developed for new Christians or anyone seeking to refresh their faith and go deeper with God. It's full of honesty, passion and humour, and seeks to give a solid foundation for practical Christian living today.



## Prayer Cards

This is a dynamic way to use the Lord's Prayer and bring creative energy to your small group as you pray together. These cards can also be used by individuals in their own lives to give an effective pattern to their prayer life.



## Small Groups-an introduction

*Laurence Singlehurst*

This booklet seeks to give some biblical background and framework along with a practical understanding of what it might be like to be part of a small group. Suitable for those joining or starting a group, or for those already in one to refresh your understanding of what it means to be in a small group.



## Empowering People

*Laurence Singlehurst*

Laurence is asked all the time what have we learnt in the last 20 years about holistic small groups with a missional heartbeat, sometimes called cells? In this booklet he answers the questions: what has worked? what has not worked? and 'Am I positive about the future?' This booklet contains lessons learned and ideas for the future to give churches and individuals the best practice for small groups. This booklet is also available as a free PDF download at [www.celluk.org.uk](http://www.celluk.org.uk).

For more books and resources and information about our training days and courses visit our website at [www.celluk.org.uk](http://www.celluk.org.uk)

Or phone: 07715 069939  
email: [resources@celluk.org.uk](mailto:resources@celluk.org.uk)

---

## About the author



Trevor leads the leadership team of Network Church St Albans as well as working alongside Laurence Singlehurst at Cell UK. He also runs a small business and has a pottery studio and garden railway for fun. He is passionate about small groups.