

* Other Resources

See the back of the 'Serving Others'- a Simple Guide' leaflet.

LEADING THE WAY

Way of Life - a pattern for Christian Living

Journeying Out
Serving- others.



'Door'. Bridget Macaulay. Used with permission

Leaders Guide.

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



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

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

* Prayer

To draw together all that you have done in this session, pray together the prayer on the front of Serving Others- a Simple Guide. It could be done responsively in 2 groups like this, group 1 bold print , group 2 normal print, together in italics:

Dear Lord,
Help us to follow your example,
by looking out for those who, each day,
feel that they are marginalised,
who cannot find hope,
who believe that they have little to offer,
who are overcome by the challenges of poverty.
Help us to widen our horizons,
to make space for the stranger,
to watch out for those who feel invisible,
to give time to the outsider,
to talk to the person facing silence,
to restore justice and value.
Give us the courage to undertake this,
the determination to join with others in seeing grace in
every human face,
and the faith to embrace the opportunity in your name.
Amen.

⇒ What values and interests do we have as a Church which could be a meeting point with others who are not church members but also wish to serve?

⇒ How might we make our building more welcoming and useful to our local community?

* Beginning where we are

Spend some time thinking about your area then lead a prayer such as the one below.

Almighty God,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law:
grant that we may love you with our whole heart
and our neighbours as ourselves;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Post communion prayer 16 after Trinity

* Icebreaker

NB If possible, before running this session collect a number of pictures of your locality, community and congregation or a map of the area and display where people can see them.

Give each participant a number of post it notes and ask them to note areas/ issues of particular need in the Parish and fix them to the board/map. Now with different coloured post it notes ask participants to write where/how the church is serving the community. Place these on the board/map.

* Introduction

A short précis from ‘Serving Others- a Simple Guide.’

Serving Others is part of our ‘Journey Out’. God created all that is, seen and unseen. God is involved with all our lives, he came to live amongst us in Jesus. God loves all people equally, and rejoices in community within the Trinity.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be involved in our community, our society, and all life around us. Just as God reaches out to us, so we are called to reach out to others and share God's love with them.

Give each participant a copy of the 'Serving Others—a Simple Guide' leaflet if they don't already have one, and encourage reading (again). If you feel that more teaching is needed in this area, you could go through the simple guide leaflet in more detail - but don't just read directly from it!

* Bible 'conversation'

Isaiah 58:6-12

Participants will find the full text in their booklet

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

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

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

• Community

To be in a position to serve our community we need an intimate knowledge of the contexts in which our churches are set. Engaging with our community needs to be an intentional part of our ministry and seen as an essential part of holistic mission and our journey OUT.

⇒ Reflecting back on the reading from Isaiah, are there any points which relate to our community and ways in which our church might serve?

⇒ Where is God at work in our community? Did we identify any particular projects in the ice-breaker session? How might we join in? Who would the partners be that we would offer to work with?

⇒ Are there issues and needs in our community which are not being addressed? Can we identify any that God might be calling our Church to engage with? Who else might we work with on this?

⇒ What are the barriers/opportunities for hospitality, sharing and serving?

- **Congregational.**

As a congregation we are made up of individuals with differing gifts, skills and needs. We have different interests and come from diverse backgrounds but we are the body of Christ in this place and can be used by him to minister to and serve one another.

- ⇒ What are the policies and values of this church? Even if we don't have an explicit 'Mission Statement' or Mission Action Plan, what are the priorities which drive our decisions?
- ⇒ Where do those policies and values reflect those held by the local community and how /where could we engage with them of under those headings?
- ⇒ What might God want our church to be like in five years' time?'
- ⇒ How well do we know each other? Are we in a position to recognise need within our own congregation?
- ⇒ How do we serve the needs of people within our congregation?

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

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

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

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

Now that you have explained the process, you could use this prayer of St Benedict as an opening prayer and go through each step.

Gracious and holy Father, please give me:
Intellect to understand you;
reason to discern you;
diligence to seek you;
wisdom to find you;
a spirit to know you;
a heart to meditate upon you;
ears to hear you;
eyes to see you;
a tongue to proclaim you;
a way of life pleasing to you;
patience to wait for you;
and perseverance to look for you. Amen

* Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

• Personal

We are called to love our neighbours, not just our fellow Christians. Encounters with others are part and parcel of our daily lives both in our homes and outside them.

⇒ Where do I meet people, strangers in chance/daily encounters? Think through the last (typical) week; where did I meet people, and what sort of exchanges did I have with them?

⇒ Can I think of anything I recently learnt in a specific encounter with someone.

In our everyday lives during the week we are part of a network of Christian disciples making a difference to those around us, acting as salt and light.

⇒ How does my faith affect my encounters with others? Is there a bible verse/passage which particularly influences me here?

⇒ Can I think of particular individuals or families in my neighbourhood who are in need? What could I practically do to help them?

⇒ Are there ways that God may be calling me to be more involved with my neighbours and acquaintances?