

STARTER FOR TEN

Getting people talking



Starters for *REAL* Conversations



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Unlock Woodhouse Worker

Starter for Ten

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Sometimes you can be left scratching your head, wondering how you can engage people in conversation – not just with you, but maybe with each other. Even if you're working within a group that's already established, it can be hard to get people talking to those they don't sit with or talk to regularly. We're creatures of habit, who like to talk to the same people, sit in the same place, do the same thing at the same time week by week.

These are some of the tools that have been used to encourage people to chat and maybe explore. Some will work better than others; they are pretty dependent on the context and the people. So try not to be disheartened if something doesn't work; just try something else. And don't expect good conversations straightaway. In one context it took nearly two years to find a conversational activity people were comfortable being a part of.

Most Unlock resources are designed for people right on the church fringe and beyond. ***This one is different.*** Its

aim is to break down barriers between church communities and the communities within which

churches are set, by developing listening and conversation skills in relation to faith and community issues.



Exploring Talents



This idea was based around the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30 (see [page 6](#)). The story is of three servants who are given money to look after by their master. Two of them use the talents to make more talents. The third does nothing with his talents and buries them. In this story the talent is a form of currency, but in this activity the word is used in the modern context – a gift, or ability. The Parable is interpreted thus: God gives each of us a talent/gift, and the way we use it shows that we appreciate God's gifts to us. We are given our gifts for a reason, and we let God down if we don't use them to expand God's Kingdom. What is the point of a gift that is not used?



People aren't always comfortable with thinking about the talents or gifts that they have. Some may feel it's like bragging about how good they are, and aren't that keen to engage. So try to encourage them to think about their talent as something God has given them that God wants to share with others through them.

When you start to talk to people about their gifts, you will often find that they match up with common traits you find in Bible characters who God values: kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, caring for others less fortunate. You might be able to use this as a hook for starting conversations.

If you find people are still reticent about accepting that they are gifted or talented, try instead to focus on the fact that their gifts are *received* from God, in the same way the servants received from their master. Using this perspective, you are encouraging people to think about gifts received, rather than talents they have. There's a subtle difference that lessens considerably any discomfort about 'bragging'.



Matthew 25:14-30

The Parable of the Bags of Gold

¹⁴ "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

¹⁹ "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'

²¹ "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

²² "The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.'

²³ "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

²⁴ "Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

²⁶ "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

²⁸ "So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹ For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'



You may find that people talk about answers to prayer, perhaps a loved one recovering from illness, knowing what to say in a difficult situation, finding a new job, or starting a family. Even those without faith are likely to have an example of an answered prayer; most folk, whether or not they believe in God, will chuck up a quick prayer at some point in their lives (even if it's to find a space in a busy car park).



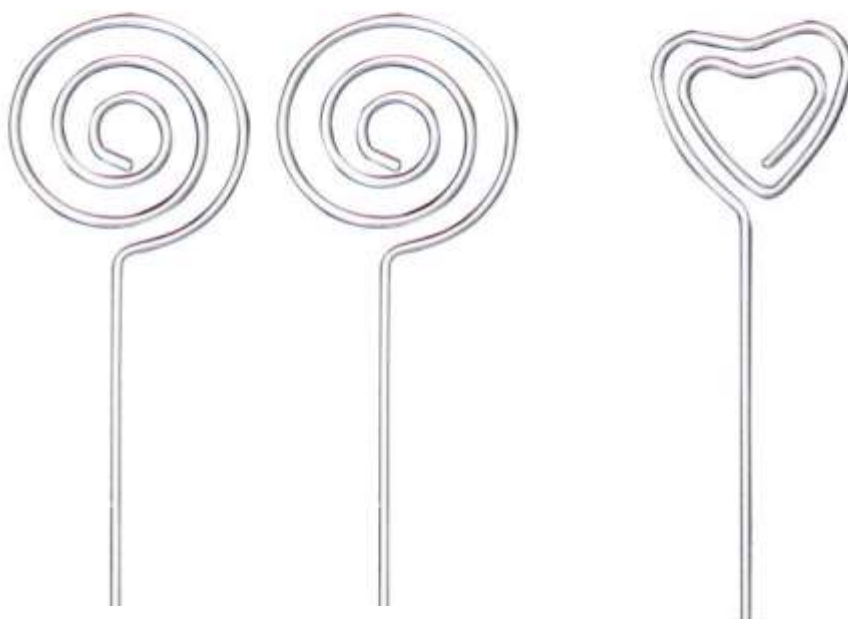
So here's how it goes.

You will need: -

- Black permanent marker pens (like Sharpies) if you're going to put them outside, or you can just use felt tips if not
- Glue stick
- Florists' wire
- Cut-outs of a Roman talent printed on to card (see resources **p11**). If you're going to put your planter outside, you'll need to laminate them
- Planter (for plants)
- Compost
- Flowers. You can use bedding plants like pansies, or in the spring perhaps you can use daffodils. Or you might like to use something more permanent that can live outdoors if you have a church garden.

First make your talents. It's helpful to have made these in advance. Print out onto thick card the talents provided on **page 11**. Stick them back to back so they are double-sided. Decide whether these are going to stay indoors or whether they will move out into your church garden at some point. If you think they might end up outdoors, you'll need to laminate them but you can fit quite a few on a sheet together.

The idea is that people will write their gift onto the talent, and then clip it into a holder, which they will make themselves using the wire. It's important people have the opportunity to make this themselves, or the activity will feel imposed. Use the image below to help guide people. It's a good idea to try this out yourself first, to make sure it works, and so you can guide people if they get stuck. You'll find most folk like doing this bit.



If you are working with a community gathering, such as a coffee morning, you might find that you will have to take your talents to them, rather than have a separate craft table. People don't always like to be seen to be taking part, and sometimes leaving their established group to see what you are doing and join in is a step to far. So be prepared to circulate with your activity.

Ask people to think about the gifts they have. They may need encouragement; they might come back with 'I don't have any gifts', but everyone has something, so try to help people to explore what it might be. It can be something very simple, eg being able to bake, which means they can share cake with others; gardening knowledge; or DIY skills. If you're going down the 'gifts received from God' route, invite people to think about answered prayer; perhaps recovering from illness; a new job; having grandchildren.

Whatever it is, ask them to write it on their talent, clip it into the photo holder they have made, and plant it into the planter that you have already planted with plants. It sounds like a small thing, but adding them to a container of plants is a simple way of encouraging people to take part. The planter can be displayed in the church, or the community place where you are working, and if you have used outdoor plants and laminated talents, the planter can go outside eventually. You could even leave the materials out on a table for anyone else using the building to join in. You might be surprised by how many people take part when they can do it without anyone watching!



- **Pictures of a Roman talent**, (included below, on **p11**). It's best to make them double sided by sticking them back to back.
- **Florists' wire** can be found at Hobbycraft. It's strong enough to keep its shape, but soft enough for you to mould with your fingers. You will need pliers to cut it though. Go for the Oasis silver aluminium wire 11.5m.

<https://www.hobbycraft.co.uk/advancedsearchresults.aspx?query=florists+wire>

- **Sign and instructions to leave out if you choose to make this activity available to others using your building.**
- **Print **page 6** and leave it with the display and materials for people to see the story.**
- **If people still struggle to think of their gifts, you could use the suggestions on **p12-13**. You could leave these out with your resources to help others think about their own gifts.**





Your best physical feature

Your best holiday destination

The best food you cooked

Your proudest moment

The best thing you ever made

**The time when someone helped
you out when you most needed it**

Your most precious item

What are the gifts you have received from God?

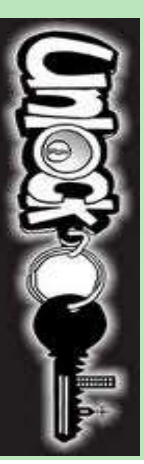
Perhaps you're really good at baking, DIY, painting and drawing, looking after really young children, or gardening.

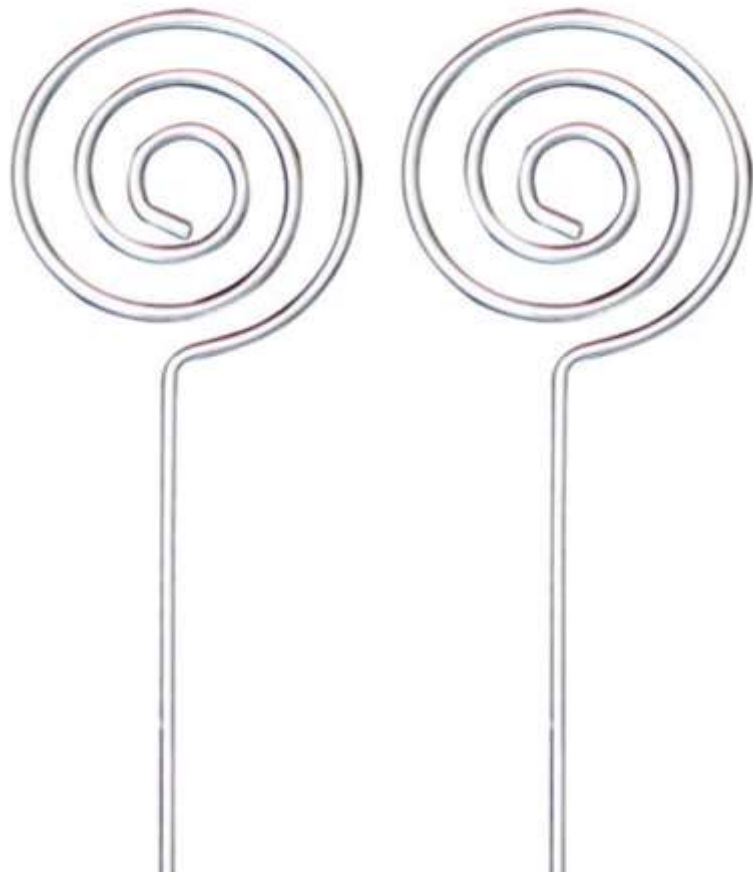
Take a look at our suggestions if you're a bit stuck.

Why not write it onto one of these 'talents' and add it to the display as a way of giving thanks.

Take one of the 'talents' and write your gift on one side. Then cut about 30cm of wire and make it into a holder using this picture as a guide.

Add your talent to the display.





Blessings Pebbles



This activity was designed to follow on from 'Exploring Talents', but it can be standalone too. The idea is to inspire people to think about gifts they have given others. They have received gifts. Sharing those gifts with others is a good and generous response. This is reflected in the Parable of the Talents ([see page 6](#)). The servants who did their best to share/expand their talents to the advantage of others (in this case, their master, but you get the gist) were the ones who were rewarded.

It can be difficult for people to think about things they have done for others, and they may need help in thinking about this. People usually think it must be something big and obvious, but often it's the tiny things that have made a



difference to someone. Perhaps they babysat for someone for free; mowed someone's lawn; paid for a friend's coffee; drove someone to a hospital appointment; took someone's dog for a walk when they were ill.

You will need: -

- Pebbles, which are easily found anywhere selling garden goods, like B&Q or Wickes for example. Buy them by the sack – you will get through them pretty quickly. Before you use them, wash them, as they are dusty and will ruin your pens
- Permanent markers (like Sharpies). Get different colours, although darker colours work best, even on dark pebbles
- All purpose varnish

Similar to the 'Exploring Talents' activity, if you are working with an established community group, be prepared to move round with your craft activity. It makes it far less obvious to others that they are taking part. Once people have written the gift they have shared onto a pebble, varnish it (or given them opportunity to do it themselves) and place it on a tray to dry. It will help if you line your tray with kitchen foil. This makes your display look a little prettier and helps prevent varnish getting onto it. Leave the pebbles on display in the church or the room where you have been working. After a few weeks, if you have access to a church garden, place them around the garden or make a small cairn. You could invite people to make this with you,



if you have enough decorated pebbles. Children especially will like doing this. As with the 'Exploring Talents', you could leave your resources out for other people/groups to take part. You will find a sign and instructions in the Resources section on **page 18**

Another, similar exercise you can do with your pebbles is to ask people to write or draw something onto a pebble with a view to giving it away to someone else to raise their spirits or to give thanks for something they have done. This can go down really well, especially if you decide to hand them out around your community. It could be just one word, like 'hope' for example; it might be a phrase, religious or not, that might make someone smile; or it might be a picture.

You may have heard of people leaving decorated pebbles around to be found by others, but this runs the risk of the less savoury characters in your community (or just bored teens!) finding them and using them as very handy missiles. If you decide to give out these pebbles, it's recommended you (and anyone else who wants to take part) give them directly to adults. Good Friday is a fantastic opportunity to do this; as part of your walk of witness, give one to every person who is working in your local shops that day. If you think you might use your pebbles in this way, why not involve other churches in your community? You might have to get the materials for them, but it's worth it for the number of pebbles it will generate, as well as the community spirit that may grow between the



churches. It has been known, that where churches' young people's groups have decorated the pebbles, it has generated a simple opportunity to talk about Jesus and Easter. It's also recognised that keeping hands busy and eyes concentrating on what they are doing allows a safe space for people to explore faith.

Resources

- **Signs and instructions (for either writing the gifts shared, or for blessing others) to leave out if you choose to make this activity available to others using your building.**
- **Print [page 6](#) and leave it with the display and materials for people to see the story.**
- **If people struggle to come up with blessings or gifts they have shared with others, and especially if you decide to leave this activity out for others to take part in, there is a set of questions on [page 20 – 21](#) you could use to provoke a response.**





What are the gifts you have shared with others?

Perhaps you baked a cake for someone; took your grandchildren on a day out; took a friend for coffee. Take a look at our suggestions if you're a bit stuck.

Why not write it onto one of these pebbles and add it to the display to say thank you for the opportunity to help someone.

**The nicest thing you ever did
for someone else**

**The best day out you organised
for friends or family**

**One time you made something
for someone**

**The best present you gave
someone**

**One time you cooked for some-
one else**

**The time when you helped some-
one out**

The time when you gave somebody a heartfelt hug

The time when you complimented someone without their prompting you

Blessings Pebbles



Why not decorate one of these pebbles with a word, phrase or picture that might bring joy to someone.

We'll give them out as a thankyou to those working in our community.



Cake & Conversation



This can be used as a one off, or as a series of opportunities, to facilitate conversation. Its original conception was to get people talking about homelessness, neighbourliness and addiction because these were issues in the community that was creating an 'us and them' atmosphere. It was an attempt to get the 'haves' to think about the 'have nots': who they were, and their situation; and to think about people different from them: people from a different culture, faith or country; and to think about what makes a good neighbour. This activity was created at a time of heightened distrust of people different from oneself – the Brexit referendum in 2016. Cake and Conversation is a great way of tackling thorny subjects – what might be a difficult conversation in your community? There is a saying that a dog with a bone has its mouth too full to bark. The same goes for people and cake! While people are fed cake, they are less likely to fall out, and more likely to chat



than not chat at all.

This is how it works:

If you are working with an established community you will need to hand out flyers asking people to bring a cake to share with others for a few weeks before the date/s you have set for your Cake and Conversation event. If you are working with a small group, it's probably still wise to give people a flyer with the details. People soon forget things without a bit of paper to remind them! There is an example of a flyer on **page 29**. If you choose to do this as a series, begin with one main flyer with all the dates on, but if there are a few weeks between each event, you should distribute a fresh flyer a couple of weeks beforehand with just the one date of the next event. You can't remind folk too many times.

However, if you are working in the kind of context where asking people to make and bring cake is too much to contemplate, (because people do not have the skills or the resources) you will need to try and find another way to obtain cakes for your conversations. Are there members of the church who would make cakes for you, or a local bakery who would provide them? - in which case you'll need to find funding, and adapt the flyers and signage accordingly.



At the event, lay a table very nicely, with signage explaining your Cake and Conversation event. The idea is to share the cake with others (including those who haven't brought anything) – but they have to answer a question first. It works best if you have two baskets: one with thorny questions for people to ponder on, and one with really easy icebreaker conversation starters. If people come to the table for a piece of cake, offer them a seat and ask them to take one of the easy questions first, and then one of the harder ones. This works best if you have more than one person at your table if that is possible. People might bring cake to the table and then disappear off to their usual seat. If this happens, approach people and offer them some cake. If they accept, then you ask them to take your questions before serving them. Sometimes, getting people to come to a separate table is too much of an ask; they feel exposed and vulnerable, their taking part is just too obvious. This was the case when Cake and Conversation was used in its original setting. So the cake and the questions were taken to the people. The handy thing doing it this way is that you automatically have several people in one place who might take part, which offers opportunity for conversation between a ready-made group of people.

Originally, Cake and Conversation was used over three months – one event each month. This didn't work altogether well as impetus was lost, and by the third



event, despite plenty of publicity no-one brought any cake at all. So think carefully about how you run your event. Is it better as a one-off, or could you do a series of events close together? It's your call and you are the best judge of what will work in your context.

What you need: -

1. Sign for the Cake and Conversation table (if you choose to do this on a separate table). This is designed as a fold-over sign, so print it on card.
2. Invitation for the Cake and Conversation table. Put this on your table to help invite conversations. Be warned! It won't work on its own, it's just there for encouragement and for people to see what you're doing. It's really important you are there to encourage chat.
3. Posters. There's one to advertise all your Cake and Conversation events if you're doing more than one, and one to advertise a single Cake and Conversation, which you'll need regardless of how many you decide to do.
4. Flyers. You will need one flyer for all of your dates which goes out several weeks in advance, and then one for each date which goes out a week or two in advance, one at a time.





Conversation

Cake and

Welcome to

Welcome to

Cake and

Conversation





Welcome to Cake and Conversation!



To get you started, why don't you take a question from the 'Easy Peasy' bowl and ask the others at your table to answer?

Then have a go at the questions in the 'Points to Ponder' bowl....

Don't forget to have plenty of cake!





Cake and Conversation

We all like a bit of cake and we all like putting the world to rights. It's all about hospitality, really.

Bring along your favourite cake, your favourite friend, your thoughts on being welcoming. Let's share together – we've got *(insert number of dates here)* planned

(insert times and dates)

**Our first Cake and Conversation is on *(insert date)*
*(insert venue details)***





Cake and Conversation

We all like a bit of cake and we all like putting the world to rights. It's all about hospitality, really.

Bring along your favourite cake, your favourite friend, your thoughts on being welcoming. Let's share together.

(insert times and dates)

Look out for our next Cake and Conversation

on *(insert date)*

(insert venue details)





Cake and Conversation

Bring your favourite cake to share, your favourite friend and have a right old natter about what really matters to you, putting the world to rights at Woodhouse Trinity.

We've got *(insert number)* Cake and Conversation events coming up.

(insert times and dates)

(insert venue details)

Look out for our next

Cake and Conversation

(insert date)



Cake and Conversation

Bring your favourite cake to share, your favourite friend and have a right old natter about what really matters to you, putting the world to rights at Woodhouse Trinity.

We've got *(insert number)* Cake and Conversation events coming up.

(insert times and dates)

(insert venue details)

Look out for our next

Cake and Conversation

(insert date)





Cake and Conversation

Bring your favourite cake to share, your favourite friend and have a right old natter about what really matters to you, putting the world to rights at Woodhouse Trinity.

(insert time and date)

(insert venue details)

Look out for our next

Cake and Conversation

(insert date)



Cake and Conversation

Bring your favourite cake to share, your favourite friend and have a right old natter about what really matters to you, putting the world to rights at Woodhouse Trinity.

(insert time and date)

(insert venue details)

Look out for our next

Cake and Conversation

(insert date)



Cake and Conversation

1. Tough points to ponder: **pages 34-35** (blue border) and easy conversational icebreakers: **pages 35 - 36** (green border) (put them in separate bowls)

2. 'Would you do this for a new neighbour?': **pages 36 - 38** (rust Border) These are suggestions on what you might do to help a new neighbour. Ask people to take one of these and think about whether they would do this for a new neighbour; and if not, why not. Or you could ask them if anyone did it for them when they were new to a neighbourhood. How would it have made them feel as a newcomer?

3. If you think people would be comfortable, invite them to take one of the Bible quotes: **pages 38 - 40** (yellow border). What do they think about it?

4. Being a good neighbour: **pages 41-55** These are little pictures about being a good neighbour to one another. Ask people to take one from the bowl and to talk about it. What do they think? Have they done, or would they do, whatever is written on their paper?

5. Pictures of neighbours: **pages 56—61**. These are just



pictures of different people. Ask people to take a picture. You could ask:

- how would they feel if those depicted moved in next door?
- what are their thoughts about the picture?
- What does it say to them?



Points to Ponder



Which is the best party you have ever been to? Why was it the best?

PTP

Have you ever met the kind of person you would not normally encounter, and found yourself becoming friends?

PTP

Is there somewhere in your town where you wouldn't like to go on your own? Why is that?

PTP

**Has someone befriended you
when you needed it the most?**

PTP

**Have you ever made friends with
someone who was unpopular
– at school for example?**

PTP

Easy Peasy

**What's your favourite
drink?**

EP

**What's your favourite
weather?**

EP

**If you were to have a dog for
a pet, what would it look
like?**

EP

What's your favourite hobby?

EP

What music do you like to listen to?

EP

Would you do this for a new neighbour?

For new neighbours, make up a welcome box or basket of the things they are likely to need on that first day.

Give new neighbours a welcome gift such as a house plant, and top it off with a little card welcoming them to the house.

Introduce yourself to new neighbours who have just moved in, or to new neighbours you have just moved next to.

Say hello to people on your street, even if you don't know them.

Give new arrivals to your street some useful addresses and phone numbers, a local magazine or guide to the village/town, bus timetables, local take-away menus, doctor and dentist numbers, and the days the bins are collected.

Invite new neighbours to local events or groups you go to, or introduce them to other people you know on your street.

Organise a small gathering; pop round to immediate neighbours and tell them you'll be having a bit of a get-together and invite them along.

If you see a neighbour out in their garden, ask them if they need a hand.

Invite your neighbours to a party, a meal, a glass of wine or just for a quick coffee.

Bible quotes about neighbours . . .

O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbour, nor takes up a reproach against his friend.

Psalm 15:1-3

If anyone sins and commits a breach of faith against the Lord by deceiving his neighbour in a matter of deposit or security, or through robbery, or if he has oppressed his neighbour or has found something lost and lied about it....he shall restore it in full and shall add a fifth to it, and give it to him to whom it belongs on the day he realises his guilt.

Leviticus 6:2-5

And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

Luke 6:31

.....You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

Matthew 19:19

Do not do anything that endangers your neighbour's life.....

Leviticus 19:16

Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbour as yourself

Leviticus 19:18

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone.....

Galatians 6:10

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself,' you are doing well.

James 2:8

Do not plan evil against your neighbour, who dwells trustingly beside you.

Proverbs 3:29

Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 13:10





Whether you're new in the neighbourhood, or new residents have just moved in, introduce yourself. Offer a welcoming gift and share/ask about the local area: 'Where's the nearest takeaway?' or 'The bin men come on Tuesdays, usually around eight in the morning, but sometimes he sneaks in at seven.'





Consider your neighbour's lifestyle. Get to know your neighbours eg what they do for a living, what their schedules might be like. Sometimes, you can remedy problems before they even start eg if they work nights, quiet mornings will be important for them. And give them information that'll help *them* be more considerate of *your* lifestyle.





Be aware of shared walls. If you're in a terrace any home where you and your neighbours share adjacent living spaces, position noisy household appliances such as washing machines and tumble dryers - even TVs and speakers - away from partition walls. If you live above someone, put lino or rubber matting underneath your appliances to deaden or muffle the noise, and remember that someone downstairs can hear you walking around, so minimise how often you wear high heels or heavy boots indoors, for example.



Control your dog. Keep your dog on a lead if it has a habit of running rampant on your neighbours' lawns, especially if they have a cat or a dog of their own, and make sure to clean up after it. If you have a particularly noisy dog, this may also become a source of contention for your neighbour. Put yourself in their shoes and imagine how upset you'd be if you or perhaps your newborn was woken from a much-needed nap by the sudden yapping of a nearby dog. If you have problems controlling your dog's barking or whining, consider seeking advice from your local vet or a local animal organisation





Practice parking etiquette. When you park your vehicle, be sure not to block anyone's access, or make them have to pull out of a *very* tight spot. Don't bang car doors or over-rev your engine early in the morning or late at night. Park in front of your home, not theirs. Avoid slamming your doors or shining your headlights into your neighbour's windows late at night.





Alert your neighbour to parties. If you're planning a party, be sure to give your neighbours plenty of warning, letting them know when it's going to start and how long you expect it to go on. Leave them a telephone number to contact if they need to ask you to turn it down. If you get on well with your neighbours, why not invite them too? When it comes to the party itself, stick to your agreed arrangements and ask your guests to be considerate when leaving





Keep your garden tidy. Weed your garden regularly, because the presence of weeds in your garden is not only unsightly but can also spread to your neighbour's garden. Mow your lawn regularly and keep your flowers, trees and bushes trimmed appropriately. Put equipment away as soon as you're finished with it. Ask if your neighbour has chemical sensitivities, small children or pets before applying pesticides.





Control your bonfire, barbecue or backyard fire. Position it where the smoke and smell will least likely blow onto your neighbour's property. As with parties, notify them in advance of your intentions, since they might have been planning to dry their clothes outside on that very same day!





Put rubbish out on the right day. Only put your rubbish out on the day it's due for collection. If you accidentally miss the collection, bring it back onto your property immediately and try to contain it well. Rubbish can attract vermin, insects, and other pests, and is also unsightly. Keep your bins clean and debris free. Wash your bins if they begin to smell.





Communicate with your neighbour. Above all, touch base with your neighbours regularly and keep them in the loop. Remember the golden rule and if anything you are planning to do may affect them, minimise it and let them know in advance. Keep the channels of communication open by reminding them that if you're doing anything which disturbs them, they should feel comfortable approaching you about it.





For information on Neighbourhood Watch go to www.ourwatch.org.uk

Be aware of your surroundings, as well as theirs. Even if you're not in a 'neighbourhood watch' community, keep your eye on anyone you don't know acting suspiciously around your neighbour's property. When in doubt, call the police so they can quickly curtail any criminal activity.





If you're a 'car booter', offer to take your neighbours' stuff; offer to take their rubbish to the recycling centre when you take a trip; have them over for a bite to eat, a brew or a drink; or offer to babysit their kids/pets while they're away. They'll do the same for you.





If you hear of any neighbourhood news (events, crimes, special rubbish collections, road-works, special event parking restrictions, etc.) give them a heads-up.





When you're clearing leaves or snow from your garden path or drive, offer to clear your neighbours' too. It will save them a lot of hard work and they'll be grateful!





**Be nice to your new neighbours.
When someone new is moving
next to you, welcome them.
They will be thankful to you for
a cup of tea and a biscuit.**

















Posh Lunch



You'll need lots of help with this one, there's a lot of work involved.

This was first held to bring together the churches in the community, but it's been done for other reasons too, and you can hold a 'posh lunch' for whoever you want.

Many churches have a lunch club of some sort, but it's usually something quick and easy, and fairly ordinary. The idea of the posh lunch is to make something really special and make it silver service. Have really nice tablecloths; flowers; and nice cutlery and crockery. Offer three courses,



finishing with tea and coffee. Top tip, don't use cheap stuff from the local cash and carry. Use quality, and use Fair Trade whenever you can.

To get people chatting, make little envelopes (**page 84**) with a question inside, that you can put at each place setting.

To make it easier for you, decide how many people you can cater for, and make it a ticket do to keep the numbers at the level you want. You could make each ticket a 'plus one', where each ticket holder brings a friend. You could ask that the friend is not a churchgoer if you wanted.

Perhaps you could ask for donations for your ticket, giving the money to a community charity. Perhaps you could sell your tickets via a 'pay it forward' scheme where people give the cost of two tickets so anyone unable to afford a ticket is still able to come.

If you're a bit tech savvy, you could make your tickets available via Eventbrite www.eventbrite.co.uk. The site is really easy to use, both to set up the tickets, and for people to book their place and it means you don't need to be physically around to give out tickets. It will help you to keep tabs on numbers and dietary requirements. But how well this works is very dependent on how many of your intended diners have internet access or are internet savvy. If that's not your market, stick to the old fashioned ways.

Before you begin, you will need to bag yourself people



willing and able to cook. Think about what you might cook. Have a first course of soup or melon, for example, followed by something you wouldn't normally serve that's relatively easy to make – curry, chilli, lasagne – but not so simple your diners could do it at home (jacket spud and beans, anyone?). You will need plenty of servers – this is silver service, so you need people willing to wait tables, take orders (if you're brave enough to offer choices), and collect dirty plates. You'll need washer-uppers, even if you have a dishwasher. It really is all hands on deck!

Don't try to do an Unlock-style activity with this (beyond your conversations). People want to enjoy their lunch, and afterwards they will not want to hang about. That's eating into precious nap time!

The most activity-ey you can get is to encourage chat over the dinner table, and there are resources to help you with this on **pages 76—81**



Here's how it works:

1 Let's assume you're inviting the people from all the churches in your community, on the premise they will bring a non-churchgoing friend. This gives you an opportunity to encourage discussions between those with and without faith. You never know, you might have the seeds of an Unlock group!

2 With the help of your own minister, approach the other churches' leaders. If your community has a 'Churches Together', this is the ideal forum within which to pitch your proposal. You need the buy-in of the leaders; you will need their support to work with their lay workers/stewards/church volunteers. If your church, or the other churches you are working with have other denominations using their church building, include them too. You will be surprised at how keen they will be to be a part of what you are doing, especially if they are from another culture or country. It's a very welcoming thing to do, and helps to make them feel accepted and included in the life of the church building.

3. You will need to set up a small working group incorporating those who will help you on the day, and those who will help you plan. You will need to be free on the day to hover, and help keep conversations



moving, so try not to get involved in the cooking/serving side of things.

4. Get posters and flyers into all the churches. You can find templates for these in the Publicity section. It really helps if you are able to go to the churches' coffee mornings to talk to people face to face as well as distributing your flyers. People are way more likely to come to something if they've had a personal invitation. In fact, you could use invitations with an RSVP as well as flyers. Its really important to have a 'sell by' date on your flyers and invites; people are notoriously last minute – or will even tip up on the day without having let you know at all. So make sure there is a contact phone number and Email – and the link to your Eventbrite page if you choose to go down the electronic route.

5. Decide whether this is going to be free, donations, or pay-it-forward. Bear in mind that with free events, people will often not treat it with the same kind of respect as something they have had to pay for, and the risk is your numbers being lower on the day than you had anticipated. Conversely, if you try to sell tickets, there will be people who can't afford it. There is a halfway house where you could 'charge' a returnable deposit, which they get back if they turn up on the day, or you could ask for donations. It varies between communities as to what might work best, so its your call



as to how you do this. Do remember, the main point of your posh lunch is to bring people together, so breaking even or making a profit is not your focus here.

6. At the original Posh Lunch, questions were placed inside simple 'parcels', and took the place of Christmas crackers (it was close to Christmas). You will find patterns for this in the Resources section on **page 83**. It's best if the questions aren't faith based if you're expecting a mix of church/non-church folk, but there's nothing wrong in including a Bible verse on a separate piece of paper to encourage faith talk if you wish. Again, it's your call. If you decide to do this more than once, you might want to keep any overt faith stuff out of it until a bit further down the line.

7. Because people are creatures of habit, people from different churches tend to stick to their own crowd. To try and combat this (if you want to try and mix it up a bit), colour-code your tables, and give each person (and their guest if they have one) a coloured piece of paper corresponding with one of the coloured tables. Hopefully, then, tables will have a good mix from different churches. You can't stop people ignoring this, you can only do your best. Sometimes people just don't want to mix with others they don't know too well.

8. Even if you don't do the colour-coding thing, be the one at the door to greet your guests. Quite a few will have



already met you when you visited their church; it will be nice for them to see a friendly face – not that all the other faces are unfriendly, but you get the drift.

9. Make sure you mooch between the tables between courses. Ask about the questions you gave people, and the conversations they may have had as a result.



Posh Lunch

This includes:

Flyer

Poster

Invitation with RSVP. There are two invites on a page. When you print them off, cut horizontally across the page to create a landscape-shape invite.



Posh Lunch — Publicity





Posh Lunch

Why not join (*insert community and venue*) for a Posh Lunch? Three courses and silver service.

You can get your ticket from (*insert details*). Bring a non-churchgoing 'plus one'

Numbers are restricted, so hurry to bag your exclusive place!

(*Insert time and date*)



Posh Lunch

Why not join (*insert community and venue*) for a Posh Lunch? Three courses and silver service.

You can get your ticket from (*insert details*). Bring a non-churchgoing 'plus one'

Numbers are restricted, so hurry to bag your exclusive place!

(*Insert time and date*)





You are cordially invited to a

‘Posh Lunch’

(insert time, date and venue)

We’d love it if you could join us!

Bring a non-churchgoing friend and enjoy a three course, silver service lunch.

Please send your RSVP to:
(insert contact details)



I would LOVE to come to the Posh Lunch

on (insert time and date)

at (insert venue)



Name.....

Phone.....

Dietary Requirements.....

Guest.....

Dietary Requirements.....



You are cordially invited to a

‘Posh Lunch’

(insert time, date and venue)

We’d love it if you could join us!

Bring a non-churchgoing friend and enjoy a three course, silver service lunch.

Please send your RSVP to:
(insert contact details)



I would LOVE to come to the Posh Lunch

on (insert time and date)

at (insert venue)



Name.....

Phone.....

Dietary Requirements.....

Guest.....

Dietary Requirements.....



The Gift of Hospitality: Sharing Food, Sharing the Lurve

Why not join (*insert community and venue*) for a Posh Lunch? Three courses and silver service.

You can get your ticket from (*insert details*). Bring a non-churchgoing 'plus one'

Numbers are restricted, so hurry to bag your exclusive place!

(insert time and date)



Posh Lunch

Remember that whatever you choose to put inside your envelope needs to fit, so don't cut them out until you have your envelopes and know exactly what size paper will fit inside.

If you choose to use the Bible quotes, you might like to buy pretty 'luggage labels' along with your pretty paper. You can glue your text onto them. Remember – taking the time to make something really pretty will give joy to the receiver, make them feel cherished and be more likely to take part in what you are offering.

1. Bible quotes: **pages 76– 77** (Yellow outline)

2. Icebreaker questions: **page 77** (purple outline)

3. Picture questions **pages 78– 81**

Use any of these sets for your conversation starters. It's suggested you use a Bible quote (if you think it's OK with your guests) and *either* the icebreaker questions *or* the picture questions.





Instructions for making 'parcels' for your conversation starters
You need pretty paper for this. You can get pads of different patterns that are used for scrapbooking. They're available from places like Hobbycraft and The Works. Your pad needs to be square and big enough to take the printed resources once folded into envelopes. Don't worry if you can't find a square pad; you can trim the paper to a square, it just adds a bit more time to the prep. The minimum size of your finished square needs to be around 15cm square.



Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1 Cor 13:4

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

1Peter 4:9

**Share with the Lord's people who are in need.
Practise hospitality.**

Romans 12:13

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

Hebrews 13:2

For the entire law is fulfilled by keeping this one command:
'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

Galatians 5:14

**Mark of the true Christian.....
Extend hospitality to strangers.**

Romans 12:13

When God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil – this is a gift of God.

Ecc 5:19

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Matt 6:26

....the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

'Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.'

John 6:57

....We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.

Romans 12:6

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

2 Cor 9:15

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

1 James 1:17

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

1 Cor 12:4

Cast all your anxiety on him because He cares for you.

1 Peter 5:7

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others....

1 Peter 4:10

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Deut 6:5

The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself...

Lev 19:54

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

Psalms 103:8

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures for ever.

1 Chron 13:64

If I were to have a last meal, it would be.....because.....

Have you ever had someone turn up unexpectedly that you had to look after?

What was that like? Was it hard work or a delight?

Have you ever turned up at someone's unexpectedly and received hospitality?

What was that like? Did you feel like a welcomed guest or a nuisance?

What does this image remind you of?



What does this image remind you of?



What does this image remind you of?



What does this image remind you of?



What does this image remind you of?



What does this image remind you of?



What does this image remind you of?



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What does this image remind you of?



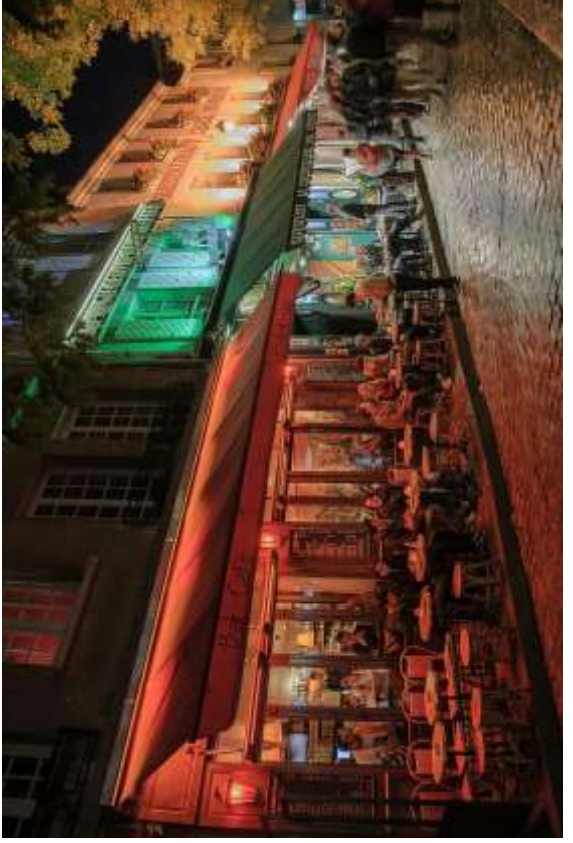
What does this image remind you of?



What does this image remind you of?



What does this image remind you of?

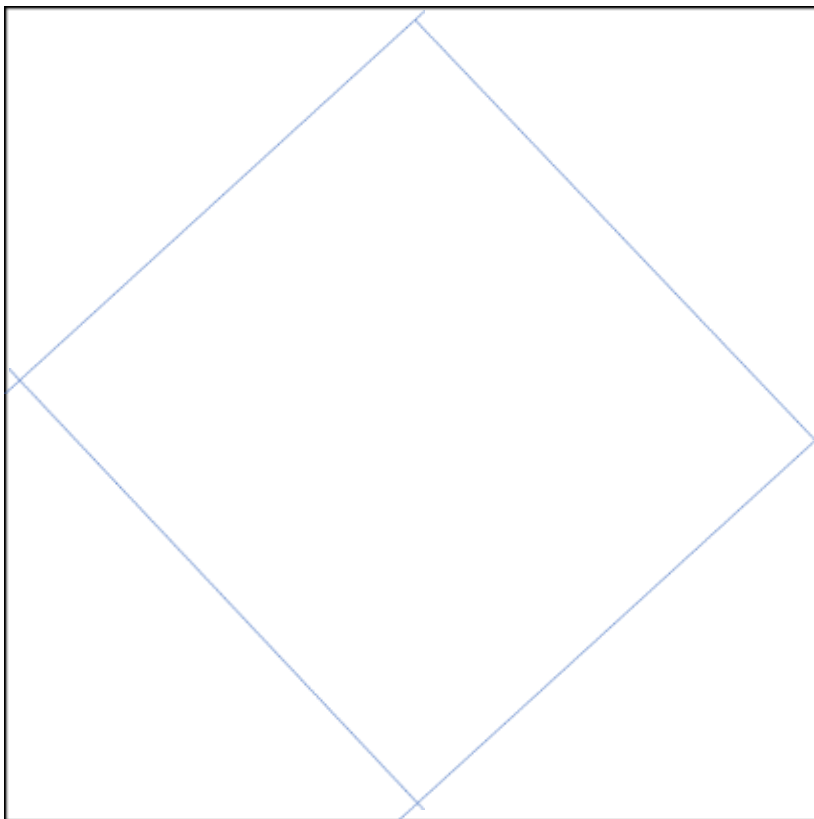


You will need: -

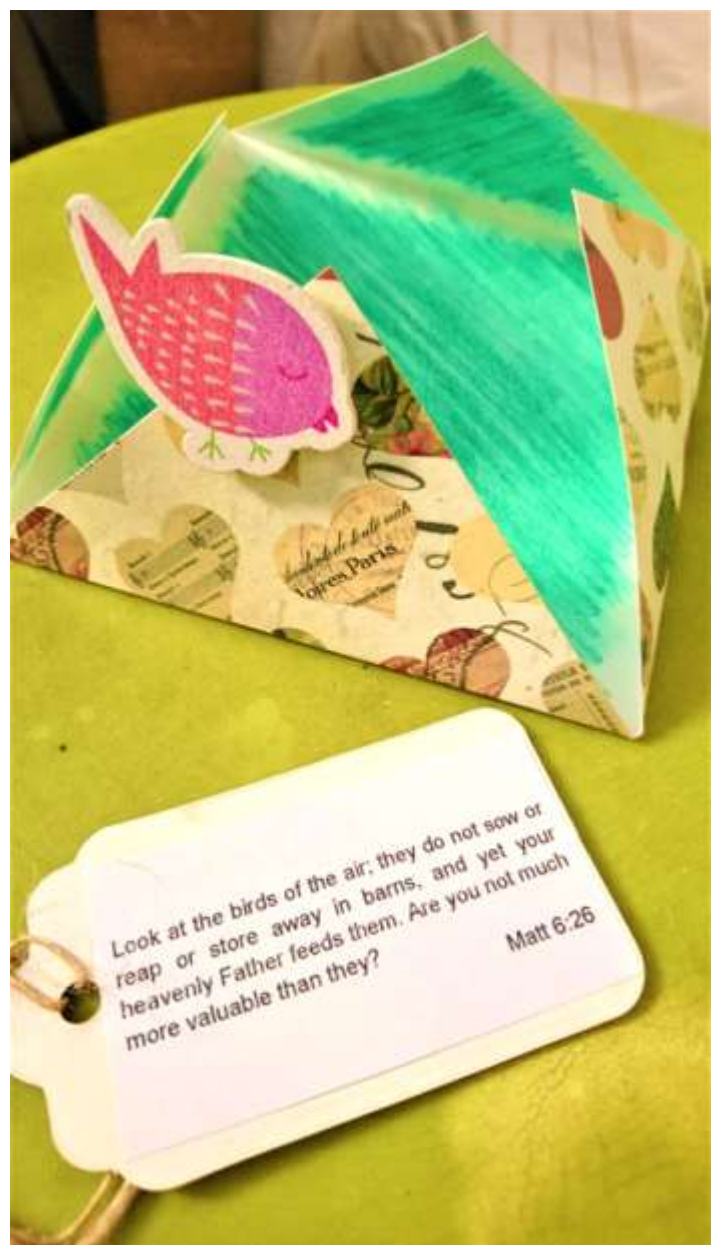
1. A very sharp craft knife
2. A metal ruler (preferred, but you can use a plastic one – just be careful not to nick the edge with your knife)
3. A plastic ruler to measure with
4. Pencil
5. A surface you can cut on (a cutting mat, or you can use thick corrugated cardboard from a packing box)
6. Square pad of pretty paper
7. Pretty 'luggage labels' (optional)
8. Sticky Styrofoam shapes (with sticky pad on reverse)



1. Separate out your pad into sheets of paper. You will need one sheet for each guest, but it's a good idea to make extras just in case you find yourself with unexpected guests.
2. If your paper isn't square, trim it into a square.
3. If your paper is patterned on one side, lay your paper so the pretty side is face up – you want this to be on the outside of your envelope.
4. Using your ruler, find the centre of each side of your square, and draw a line from the centre point on one side to the centre point on the opposite side



5. Using your ruler and sharp knife, score along the diagonal lines. You only need a light touch – be careful not to cut all the way through. Perhaps have a practice first.
6. Turn your square over so the pattern side is now face down, and fold across your score marks. These are the flaps of your envelope. They should meet in the middle of your square, but don't worry if they don't quite.
7. If your envelope is plain white inside, you might like to decorate it. Just quickly shading in with a pencil is enough.
8. Place whatever conversation starter/s you are using inside your envelope.
9. Your envelopes won't stay closed without a little help. This is where your Styrofoam shapes come in. You can get these from The Works, or anywhere supplying stuff for scrapbooking.
10. Once your conversation starters are in their envelopes, stick them all down with your shapes.



Guest List

	Phone	Dietary Requirements
Name		
Guest		
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For Group Leaders

Resource name: *Starter for Ten*

Authors / Facilitator: Siggy Parratt Halbert (Unlock Woodhouse)

Aims: To enable participants to become accustomed to talking with each other about their lives and their beliefs and to engage with and share their own stories. To explore together common issues such as local tensions, disrespect for differences, a lack of self confidence, selfishness or entitlement. To create opportunities to explore how their own stories connect with the bigger story within scripture. To be able to reflect on the impacts, both positive and negative, of our attitudes and actions. To enable participants to reflect theologically on situations in their lives and in society, and to make reflective and informed choices about how they respond to challenging experiences and circumstances.

Outcomes: The participants will be more able to engage with others, more aware of their own stories and situations and of how to listen to other people's. They will be better prepared to risk deeper discussions about life and faith, amongst themselves and with other people.

Participants will be able to reflect on their own experiences, and topical local issues which affect them, and to do this in relation to scripture. They will be better able to manage the points of crisis and tension in their lives and communities with reference to scripture.



For Group Leaders

Session Content

Unlocking Real Life stories of Urban People

Within our own narratives and situations are threads that can be woven into scripture and understood, helping us recognise our connections with God's story. The contents of this resource were designed for a specific group of people with particular needs. Other groups will have different needs.

Images, activities, hospitality, questions and other prompts are used to encourage people to share their own stories with one another.

Revealing the Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

Bible: Passages used (examples):

Proverbs 3:29, Matthew 25:14-30, Galatians 6:10, Leviticus 19:16, Romans 13:10, Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 19:19, James 2:8, Psalm 15:1-3, Leviticus 6:2-5, Luke 6:31, and more on page 76 & 77.

The Bible passages suggested are a sample selection, chosen for the context in which these activities were designed. If the context of your work means you want to explore different topics and Bible verses you can choose different ones.

Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

By connecting God's story with our own, participants begin to encounter alternative responses to the issues and pressures they encounter in their day to day lives.

Reflective Activities

Creative activities to enable further reflection are offered in many of the outlines. Leaders are advised to review them in plenty of time to allow for the gathering of any necessary resources.

Because the activities in this particular Unlock Resource pack are designed mainly for use with Church folks they use more Middle Class images and scenarios than we would usually use in Unlock Resources. Like all of our materials you may need to adapt them so that they are culturally appropriate in your own specific context.



Unlock, by various names, has been around since 1972, trying to help (mainly) urban Christians to understand and share their faith appropriately. Our life experience matters; our stories; our joys and sorrows. The Bible has plenty to say, more than we'll ever know, about our lives, if we know how to read it and apply it - if we know how to **UNLOCK** it!

The work outlined in this pack applies the learning cycle on page 91, **starting by using a 'prompt'** or ice breaker to draw out group member's stories. Allow plenty of time for people to respond to the prompts and share their own experiences and listen carefully as they do. What are the themes and issues arising in the stories? Try to remember so that you can remind people later if necessary.

The next stage is to help people to connect their own stories and experiences to a **part of the Bible** and to reflect on the connections and differences between them.

Finally there is a **reflective activity**, giving people an opportunity to reflect on the session and any action they might want to take as a result. The reflective activity creates space in which discussion and reflection can continue in an unforced way.

*Most Unlock resources are designed for people right on the church fringe and beyond. **This one is different.** Its aim is to break down barriers between church communities and the communities within which churches are set, by developing listening and conversation skills in relation to faith and community issues.*

How well the group know and trust one another will affect the type of story that they share, often the newer the group, the more light hearted the stories are likely to be.



Unlock uses an approach to engaging with the Bible that is different to traditional Bible studies (see page 91). It is based on a tried and tested learning cycle which introduces people to Bible stories in a non-threatening way and starts from the stories and experiences of group members, whereas a more traditional approach starts from the Biblical text. Unlock's approach has been found to work well with small groups of urban, oral learners from outside of the church. There are many free resources on the Unlock website designed for use with such groups. However, because each of these resources was designed for a particular group in a particular time and place they are unlikely to be a perfect fit for your group as they stand. They are offered more as inspiration to you to design your own materials along the same lines, rather than as ready to use packages.

Unlock usually works with people outside of church who may be interested in finding out a bit more about faith but perhaps are not attracted to the formal methods of learning often associated with church. Many churches have activities that draw in members of their surrounding community but then struggle with how to move on from those relationships into exploring faith, especially in urban environments where anything formal might be treated with suspicion. Unlock's approach can help with that.

This resource has been developed by an Unlock worker in Sheffield. The sessions were developed to meet the needs of specific groups of local people.

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Unlock, 15 Station Rd, Rotherham S60 1HN. Tel: 01709 380 318

office@unlock-urban.org.uk



The Unlock Learning Cycle

Unlocking real life

stories of urban people

Start with the group telling stories from their real life experience.

Leading to more experience

What we learn now is learnt for life and changes us. We also learn to keep reflecting!

Releasing life changing skills and confidence

Change happens as a result of linking real life experience with the Bible. This change often leads to action among others.

Revealing Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

The real life stories are connected to and compared with similar situations in the Bible.

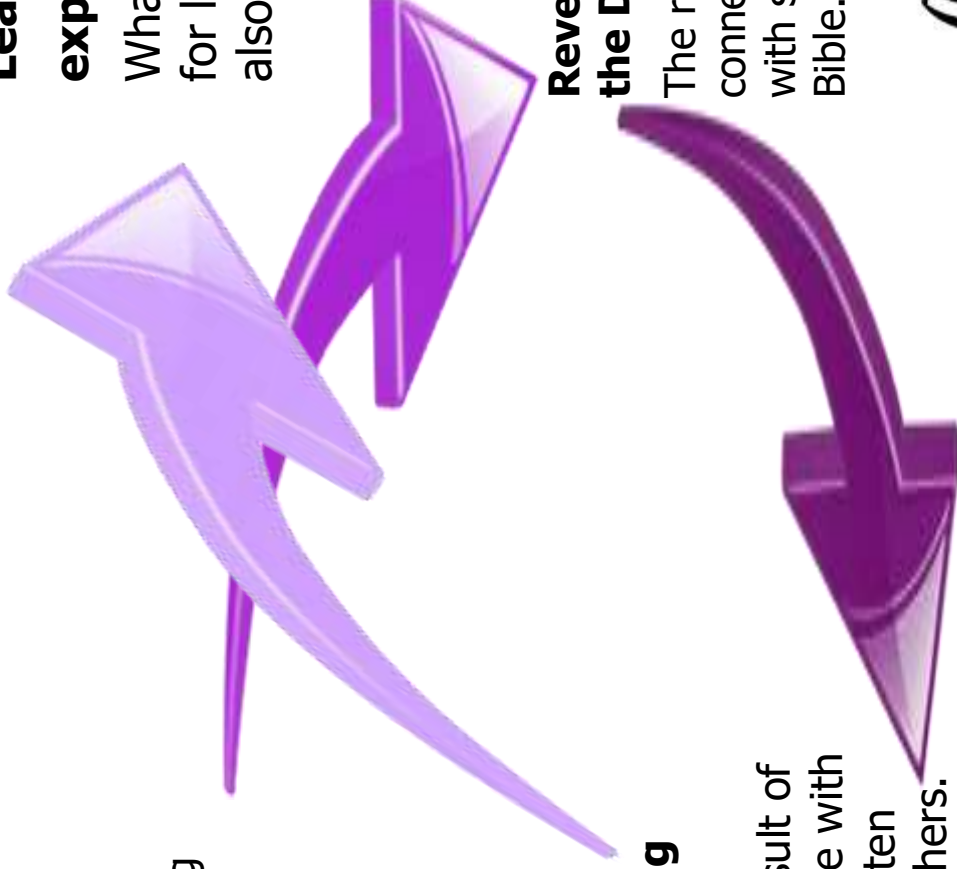


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Page number	Image	Image Credit
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4	Talents in trough	Authors image
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P28—32	cakes	<i>Authors image</i>
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55	Tea and biscuits	Public domain image
56-61	Assorted groups	Public domain images from https://www.piqsels.com/
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65	Lasagna	Public domain image
70	Bread and butter pudding	<i>Veetraag - Used under Creative Commons License</i>
75	Printed envelopes and papers	Public domain images
78-81	Food, drink and parties	Public domain images from https://www.piqsels.com/
82	Sticky shapes and craft knives	Public domain images
84	Decorated envelope and label	<i>Authors image</i>

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