

I don't believe it!



A workshop designed to introduce Unlock's methodology for Bible literate or 'churched' people

by Dawn Lonsdale & Sonya Doragh 2009

Unlock uses an approach to engaging with the Bible that is different to traditional Bible studies. Unlock's approach starts from the stories and experiences of group members whereas a more traditional approach starts from the text. This approach has been found to work well with small groups of urban, oral learners from outside of the church. We have many free resources on our website designed for use with such groups. This resource however is intended as an introduction to this approach for those that may be more familiar with the Bible and traditional models of Bible study.

Cooking the Book



A Bible overview with a difference!
Each week a recipe provides the framework
as participants explore their life experiences
then connect them with God's story.

Unlock





Introduction

Unlock usually works with people outside of church that may be interested in finding out a bit more about faith but perhaps not attracted to the formal methods of learning often associated with church. Our work is based on a reflective learning cycle and is a tried and tested way of introducing people to the Bible in a non-threatening way. 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 is keen to offer its methodology as an option to others seeking to 'make disciples'. We have found that the best way to promote our working methods is to give people an experience of a session that goes through the learning cycle. This short workshop is intended to be used in that way. It was first used at the World Wide Scripture Engagement Conference 2009 to introduce this method to delegates used to working with the Bible but not used to the learning cycle. The conference took the Emmaus story in Luke 24 as its theme. We drew inspiration from the shock expressed by the disciples at Jesus' apparent ignorance of the recent events in Jerusalem. Usually our starting point is stories from group members rather than the Bible text.

If you are wanting materials to use with a group that are not familiar with the Bible there are many resources available from www.unlock-urban.org or at the address below. However it is our experience that each group's circumstances are so unique that it may be best to develop your own materials using themes that you know your group will connect with and reflective activities that are inspired by their own interests.

May God inspire you!

Bible text in these materials is taken from the Good News Bible

(British Usage edition),

published by the Bible Societies and Collins,

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Unlock

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!

Unlock Learning Method

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 changes us.

We keep reflecting!

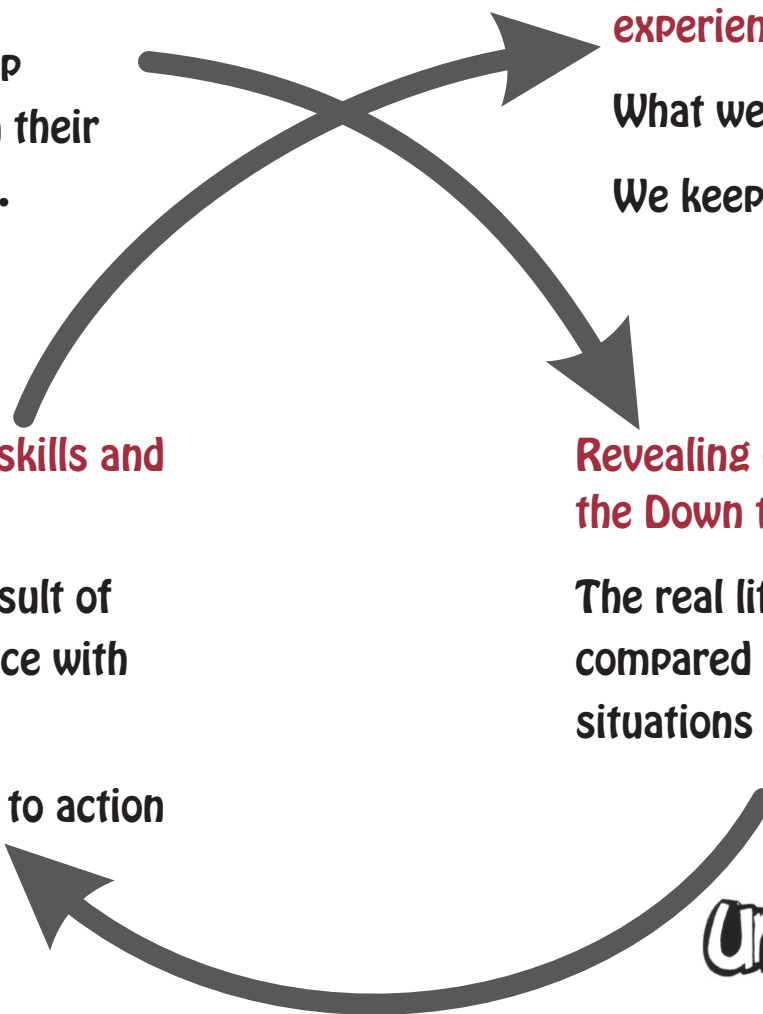
Releasing life changing skills and confidence

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 compared to similar situations in the Bible.



The session outlined on the next page applies the above cycle starting by using a prompt to draw out group members' stories. It is up to you which prompt you use or to find one of your own that will connect with your group. Give everyone time to tell their story 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 find part of the Bible that comes to mind having listened to the stories. As this session is designed for those that have some Bible knowledge we suggest you ask the group rather than doing this yourself, perhaps reminding them of any stories that get forgotten. Then ask the group to explore connections, similarities or differences.

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.

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



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Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to tell their own stories from situations when someone has said or done something hurtful or insensitive.

Participants will have the opportunity to share Scriptures that they are reminded of by the personal stories told.

Participants will be given the opportunity to reflect on the connections between their stories and the Scriptures and to develop ideas of any plans to change their own thinking or behaviour in the light of their reflection.

Participants will be invited to take part in a reflective exercise concerning the hurtful situation and any planned action to resolve it.

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to engage in a reflective theological cycle starting from their own story or the story of others in the group.

Participants will be more able to refer to the connections made with Scriptures and intended changed approach in a similar situation in the future.

Participants will be able to work towards resolving a conflict they have reflected on during the workshop.

Resources: You will need to decide on which kind of prompt you are going to use and make sure you have everything you need to share it with your group.

You will need some material for the reflective activity. Enough for everyone to have 3 strips about 1.5 cm wide and 50 cm long. It may help to have scissors available to snip the material to make it easier to rip. If you don't know how to plait make sure someone in the group does!

Unlocking Life Experience

TV clip: Friends Season 9 Episode 8 where Rachel's sister Amy visits. She arrives and refers to baby Emma as a boy and makes a series of rude statements about other members of the cast. I suggest you use from where Amy knocks on the door (2mins & 38 seconds into the episode) to where Ross says 'Amy, I'm gonna save you some time - all me!' (4 minutes and 21 seconds into the Episode). The clip is available on DVDs of the series and possibly on line.

Photo: (page 5 of this resource) Caster Semenya is the South African who won gold at 800m World Track and Field Championships in Berlin during the summer of 2009. The Italian runner, Elisa Piccione said, "For me, she is not a woman" The following weeks saw Castor Semenya undergo humiliating gender testing.

Own story: You may have had an experience that could trigger other people's stories."

Question: Has anyone ever said something to you that offended you / took your breath away?

Revealing the down to earth Christ

What, if any, other Scriptures come to mind in light of the stories told?

Perhaps there are stories from the history of the church or even your own journey of faith that connect?

Releasing Life Changing Skills

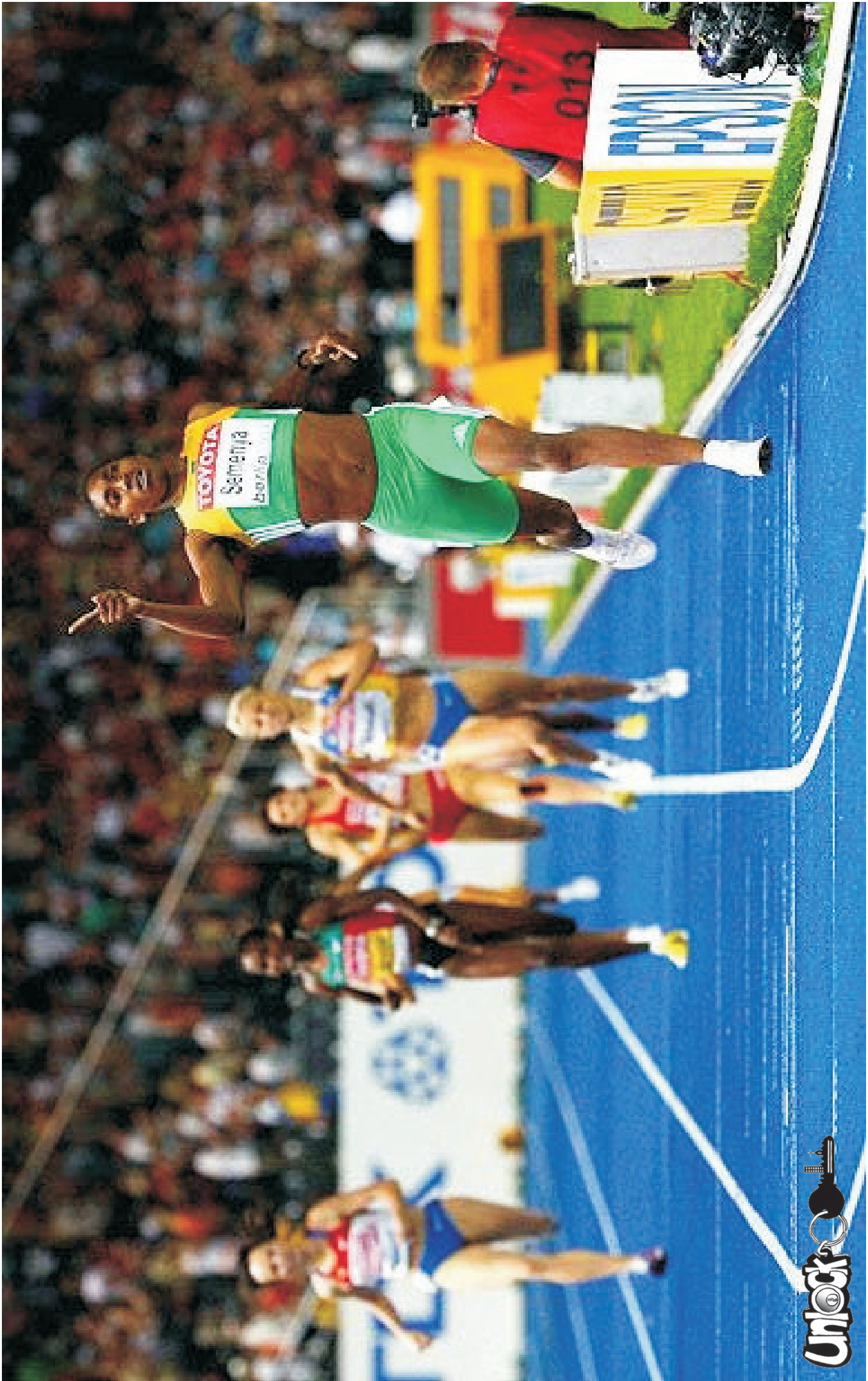
What connections do you see between the Scripture and your own experience?

What are the similarities or differences?

Is there anything you might do differently in a similar situation in the light of these discussions?

Reflect

Take a piece of material and think about the hurtful comment or action that you have been reflecting on. Rip the material into strips as you think. Then take these two pieces and add a third and plait them together – inviting God to be the third part in this relationship and asking for inspiration, opportunity and courage to resolve the conflict. You might want to tie the plait onto your wrist as a reminder until you pray and act to change this situation. See page 6 for a guide on how to make the plaited wrist bands.



Making the Wrist Bands

You will need enough fabric to make 3 strips of a centimetre wide and a metre long for each participant.



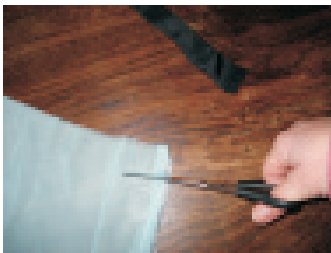
1. Cut a short slits into the fabric at 1 cm intervals.



2. Rip across the fabric starting from the slit.



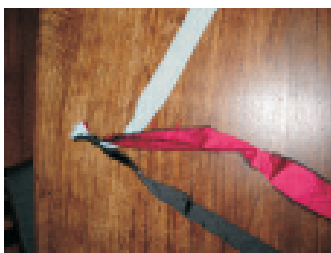
3. This should produce a strip of fabric.



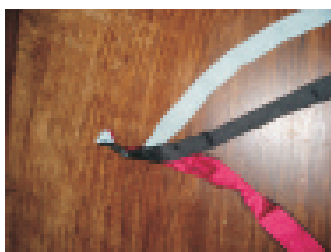
4. Repeat steps 1 to 3 until you have 3 strips of fabric each.



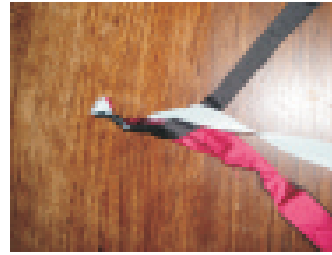
5. Line up the ends of your 3 pieces of fabric.



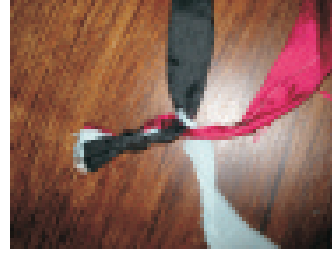
6. Tie the ends of the fabric together. Then separate the 3 strips out at the opposite end.



7. Take the strip from the left, over the middle strip leaving it as the new middle strip.



8. Take the strip from the right, over the middle strip leaving it as the new middle strip.



9. Then take the left hand strip over into the middle again - so now the same strip is in the middle as when you started.



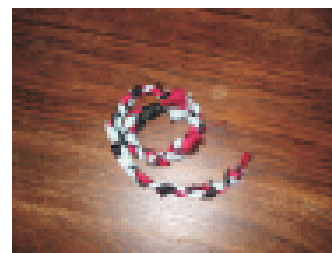
10. You may want to pull the strips apart to tighten the plait.



11. Repeat stages 7 to 10 bringing alternating outside strips over into the middle.



12. Continue until you have about 2.5 cm of fabric left at the end.



13. Tie the end of the plait to secure your work.



14. Wrap the finished plait around you wrist to make a wrist band. You may prefer to attach it to a bag or somewhere else.