

HOSEA

A five session course
by Roger Dowley

HOSEA'S WIFE LEFT HIM - BUT GOD DIDN'T

Roger Dowley's "Hosea" shows the modern relevance of an ancient Scripture.

Session 1: What God wants from us
Session 2: Constant love
Session 3: Hosea's marriage
Session 4: Hosea's children
Session 5: Hosea's heart

- "Knowing God" or just "knowing about God".
- Pictures of the "constant love" of God -from Hosea, elsewhere in the Bible and in our own experience.
- God's "wedding presents".
- What do names matter ?
- God the loving parent - "I held him to my cheek.
I bent down and fed him.

LEADER'S GUIDE
& handouts for you to photocopy

Unlock, Handsworth Parish Centre, Handsworth Road, Sheffield, S13 9BZ
'HOSEA' - NOTES FOR THE LEADER

1. This course is designed to relate an ancient scripture to your group's own lives and experiences. It does not take the group verse by verse through the book, but concentrates on Hosea's life and the things that he learnt through the various things that happened to him. Your group will learn from this course two central themes of the Biblical understanding of God:-
 - **Constant Love.**
 - **The tension between God's perfect justice and righteousness and his love and mercy.**
2. The course is equally suitable whether your group is familiar with the Bible or not, but you will need to alter your style to suit your group's knowledge. All of the Bible material has been extracted on to eleven handouts and you could run the course without opening the book if you wanted to. The use of the handouts is especially useful where Bible verses are fathered from several locations.
3. However, in all cases we advise you to have Bibles available in the room. As your group gets into the story, its members will want to read more, and some will want to read the whole text of Hosea at home. The version used is the 'Good News Bible'.
4. You will need a "flip-board" with "wall-sheets". This will be a board about 3 feet by 2 feet with lining-paper torn into lengths and held with bulldog clips. You will need a few sheets for each session. In some sessions you are asked to draw charts beforehand, but a wall-sheet is useful at many points in the course to write comments and trigger words. You will also need felt pens in two colours.
5. Sometimes you are asked to display your wall-sheets at the next session. They can be stuck up with blu-tac although if you are in a house, don't damage the furnishings.
6. The group for this course should be between 5 and 10 people if possible. This is very flexible but if your group is 12 or more people you should consider dividing it into two.
7. **Timing:** The sessions are divided into lettered sections and the times estimated for these are given. The whole session lasts about 2 hours. In each session you could omit one or more of these sections if you were running short of time. Try to get the group to assemble and start promptly.
8. **Breaks:** It is best in our experience to have refreshments at the end. If you prefer to break in the middle, keep it fairly short, only 15-20 mins.

“HOSEA” SESSION ONE
“WHAT GOD WANTS FROM US”

PREPARATION

- (a) Photocopy Handouts 1 - 3 for each member of the group. It is best to separate 2 from 3, and to staple together the three sheets of Handout 2 with a staple in the top left corner.
- (b) Prepare a sheet for your board with these columns:-

	GOD WANTS.....	RATHER THAN
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

General introduction to the course.

(10 minutes)

The book of Hosea was written more than 700 years before the birth of Christ. During his time the Jews were divided into two kingdoms. In the south was Judah, centred on Jerusalem, and in the north was Israel, centred on Samaria

Hosea spoke to the Northern Kingdom, although he often refers to Judah. From the time of its King Jeroboam onwards, the Northern Kingdom had stopped worshipping God and had adopted the idol worship of the other