

What's the Buzz?



Creative Material for 6 sessions
on assorted themes connecting
issues in day to day life with
Bible stories



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2014

What's the Buzz?

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Count Your Blessings

Icebreaker:

Count your blessings bingo (see page 6 for bingo boards)

Everyone gets 2 minutes to write down or draw everything they count as a blessing that can be described in two words or less. Then they pick nine and transfer to a bingo grid. Take it in turns to read out the lists and cross off the bingo grid. The first person to get a full house wins.

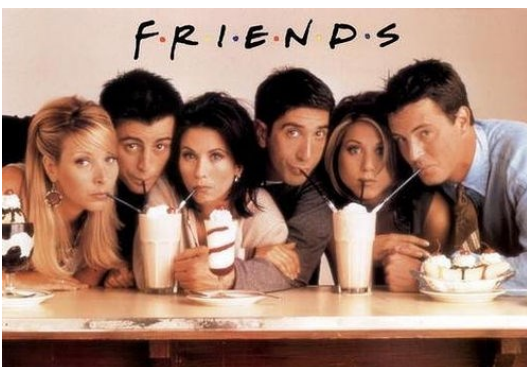
Questions for discussion:

1. *What was the most surprising thing that someone was thankful for?*
2. *How did creating your list affect you?*
3. *Did you have more or less items than you thought you would have?*
4. *How did it make you feel when you discovered that others felt blessed for the same things as you?*
5. *Of all the things on your list, which is most significant for you?*

Unlocking Real Life Stories of Urban people

Show a clip from *Friends* — *The One Where Underdog Escapes* 16:22 mins to the end

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2_HJTikNDs - 1.50 to end)



Questions for discussion:

- Have you ever felt overwhelmed by the demands of an occasion so you haven't been able to enjoy it?
- Have you ever had a time where it felt like everything went wrong but actually turned out great?



Revealing Good News of the Down To Earth Christ

Blessings

Philippians 4:8

In conclusion, my friends, fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable.

Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Questions for discussion:

- What things in your life would you describe as true. Noble, right, pure, lovely or honourable?
- Are any of those things on your bingo lists?

Active Reflection

Use cardboard boxes and decorate them to look like treasure chests. Encourage participants to fill them with notes or pictures of their own blessings and get them out to look at when times are hard.

Print the cards on page 5 and give them to people to take home.



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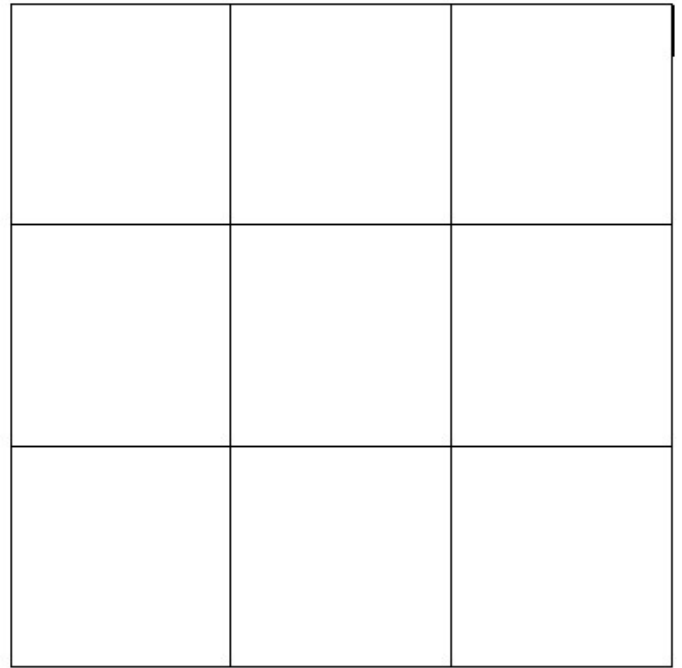
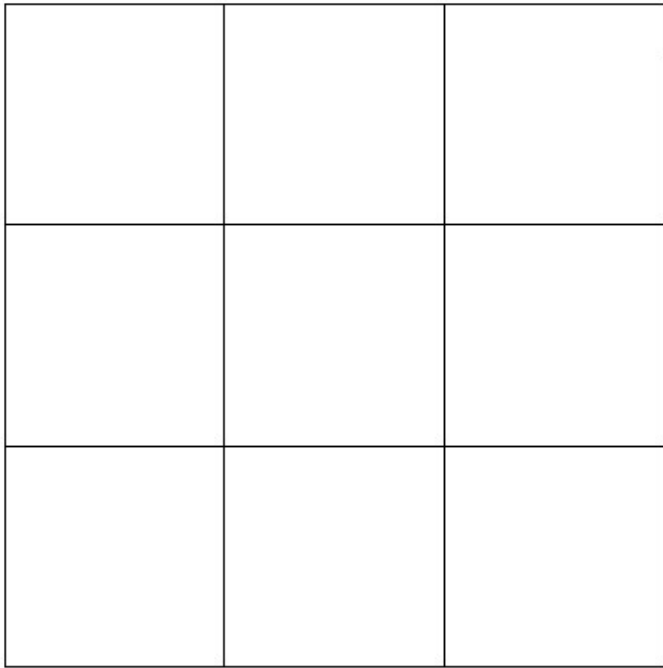
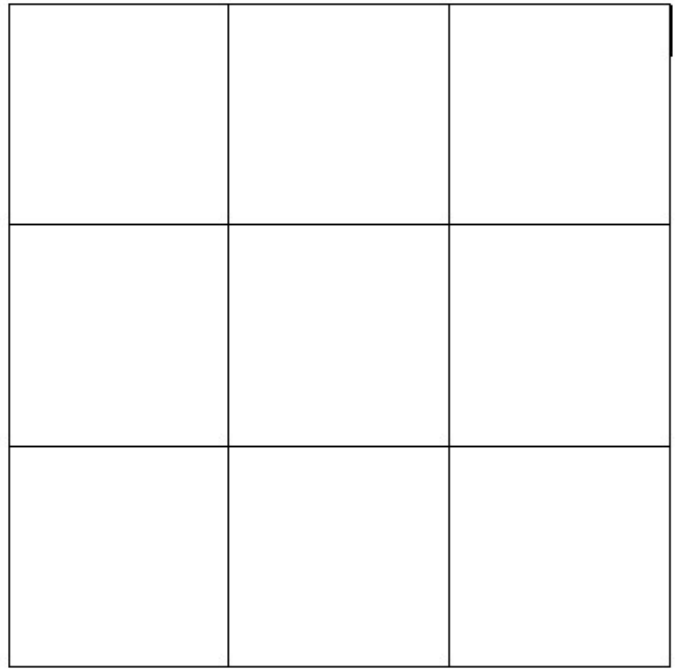
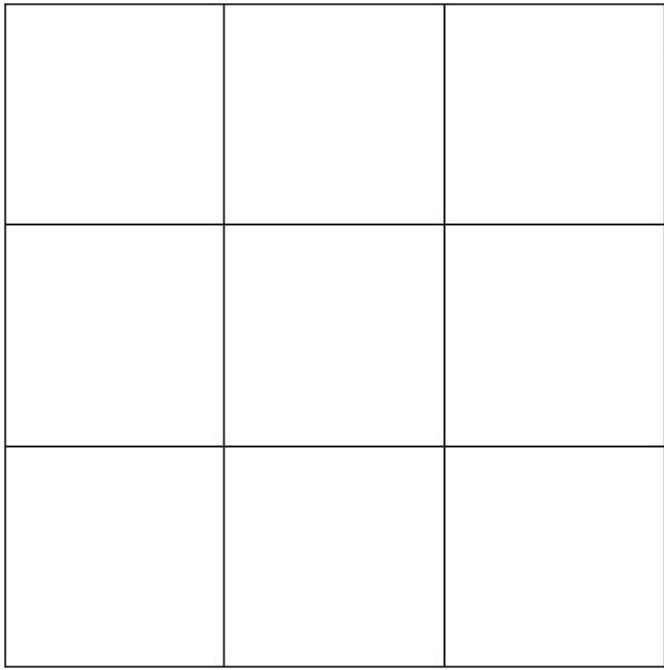
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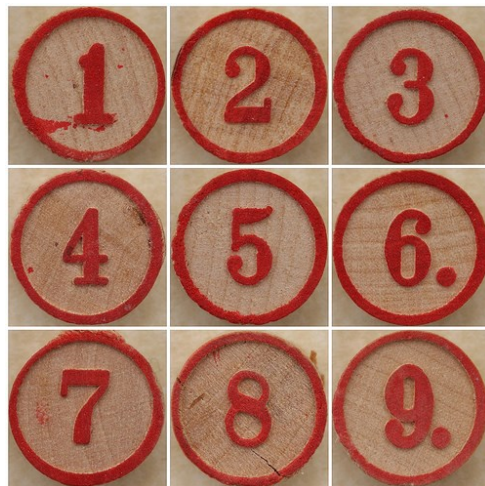
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**Print these cards
to use for Ice
Breaker Bingo
on page 3**



Facilitator's Reflection

Aims: will have the opportunity to reflect on the wonder of God's world

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to find a time and space to thank God for the good things in their world

What the group said

The group expressed an enjoyment of the fact that it gave them some focus to their meetings and something 'different' to do. They also expressed the fact that it was 'bite-sized' chunks of the Bible that really appealed to them. They also expressed an enjoyment of the craft activities.

What went well

I felt that the craft activity really helped them link the Bible passage to their daily lives, and gave them something they could focus on and apply to their daily lives. By focussing on blessings each person seemed to leave with wider smiles on their face, and had a level of enthusiasm that I hadn't seen before.

They agreed to further sessions, which I took as a positive sign.

Lynsey spent a lot of time 'bigging up' her daughter (Olivia) which is something I haven't seen her do before. It was nice to see her focus on the positives.

What didn't go well

The set up of the room was not conducive to sharing – long tables set out canteen style, and people not participating in the sessions nearby.

I don't think I was able to draw real life experiences from them very well, and on reflection perhaps put them 'on the spot'.

I watched the clock too much, and was focussing too much on getting through the activities rather than giving them space to explore.

The icebreaker had too much in it. Next time I think I would just get them to write a list, as I think that was enough.

Changes to make next time

Set up chairs and tables that allows a 'round table' or even just put the chairs in a circle. Move away from other groups or even into a new space if available.

Simplify the icebreaker, and don't be afraid to adjust activities and 'the plan' if the icebreaker seems to elicit stories.

Have a discussion with mentor about drawing out experiences – What do you do when everyone just looks at you blankly? Also, think further about the questions I am asking to draw out experiences.



Time After Time



Icebreaker:

Ask participants to draw a picture of the thing or things they feel are taking up the majority of their time (give an example if necessary i.e. children, work). Tell them it's a timed activity but you want it colourful and fills the page etc; and give them only a few minutes to do it. Then ask them to reflect on the stress of having limited time and high expectations.

Unlocking Real Life Stories of Urban people

Discussion Questions:

1. *Have you ever thought "there just isn't enough time in the day for everything that needs to be done"?*
2. *Have you suddenly wondered, "Where has all the time gone?"*
3. *Have you ever said, "I'll try to find the time, but I'm hard pressed at the moment?"*
4. *Have you ever felt you had so much to do, you haven't had time to take a moment to yourself?*
5. *Do you ever feel like your relationships are damaged because you have little time to give them?*



Revealing Good News of the Down To Earth Christ

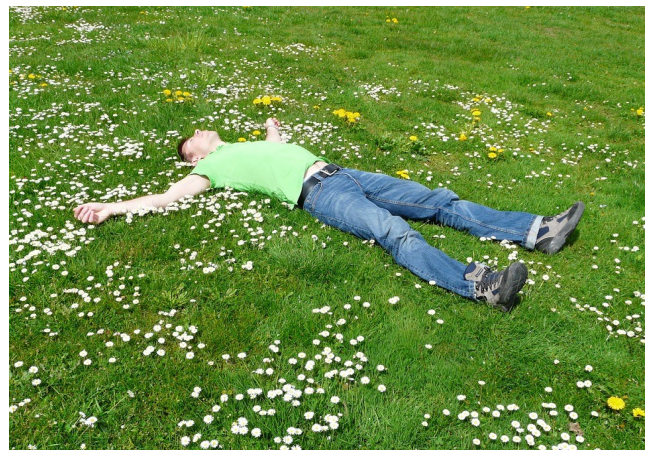
Mark 6:30-32

“The apostles returned and met with Jesus, and told him all they had done and taught. There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his disciples didn't even have time to eat. So he said to them, “Let us go off by ourselves to some place where we will be alone and you can rest a while.” So they started out in a boat by themselves to a lonely place.”

Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Questions for discussion

- What do you think the Bible is trying to tell us about our time?
- What do you think we can learn about time and our relationships – with others and with God?
- Do you think you're effective without taking a break?
- Are there times when you could be more patient with the people around you? Or when you could cut them some slack/ give them a break?



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Active Reflection

Time

Making paper heart chains:

[http://www.auntannie.com/Valentines/
PaperHeartChain/](http://www.auntannie.com/Valentines/PaperHeartChain/)

Make one colour for our responsibilities and one colour for the things we can do to take a moment for ourselves

Continuing reflective Cycles

Start of next session: ask if people were more aware of their time and where it was being stretched and donated

Print the cards on page 10 and give them to people to take home.



Facilitator's Reflection

Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on why time to themselves, and time for others should be balanced

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to give themselves a break, when needed, in order to be more present in their relationships.

Due to a miscommunication I only had one attendee to this session, which was slightly disappointing but the session did work one-on-one

What the group said

“Our Time is important – even to God” and reflections on how spending time on herself and her relationship with God was able to improve her relationships with those around her.

What went well

The one-to-one discussion went well, in that I was able to provide prompts and listen to her responses. She responded really well to the Bible passage, and seemed to appreciate discovering that even Jesus needed to take some time out from time to time.

What didn't go well

Although the paper chain was a good image, I think with some further thought there might be some activities that help highlight this in a better way.

Changes to make next time

Due to the fact that this became a one on one session, I feel I would like to run it with a larger group before I made any changes.



Home Comforts

Icebreaker:

Desperate Housewives Season Two Episode 11 – One More Kiss closing moments
“**Mary Alice:** *(narrating)* The act itself never varies, but each kiss conveys a meaning all it's own. It can mean a husband's eternal devotion *(shot of Tom and Lynette passionately kissing in bed)* or a wife's enormous regret *(shot of Gabrielle giving Carlos a quick kiss)*. It can symbolize a mother's growing concern *(shot of Betty kissing Caleb lightly)* or a lover's growing passion *(shot of Andrew and Justin passionately making out)*. But whatever it's meaning, *(shot of Edie and Karl kissing)* each kiss reflects a basic human need *(shot of Alberta Frome kissing her cat)*. The need to connect to another human being *(shot of Bree kissing her fingers, and placing those fingers on a photo of Rex)*. This desire is so strong, it's always amazing when some people don't understand it *(shot of Paul watching Julie and Zach kiss)*.”

Unlocking Real Life Stories of Urban people

Questions for discussion:

- *How do you comfort others when they need it? A hug? A kiss?*
- *How do you show others affection?*
- *What things do you find comforting?*
- *Who do you show affection to?*
- *How does it feel knowing someone is there to help you through the hard times?*
- *Who in your life has done this?*



Revealing Good News of the Down To Earth Christ

Isaiah 66:12-14

"The Lord says, "I will bring you lasting prosperity; the wealth of the nations will flow to you like a river that never goes dry. You will be like a child that is nursed by its mother, carried in her arms, and treated with love. I will comfort you in Jerusalem, as a mother comforts her child. When you see this happen, you will be glad; it will make you strong and healthy. Then you will know that I, the Lord, help those who obey me, and I show my anger against my enemies."



Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Questions for discussion

- What do you think the Bible is trying to tell us about what God will do for us?
- Why do you think the Bible likens God's love to that of a mother?

Active Reflection

Making a sock teddy to remind us that it's okay to feel overwhelmed and God is always there to provide the love and comfort of a parent. There are several instruction videos on Youtube; this is just one example.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayS8dl_zr5w

Choose one that works for your group. It may not be necessary to run the video if the facilitator can show the group how to do it.



Continuing Reflective Cycles...

Start of next session: Have you noticed any moments where you have found you have been in need of comfort? Or comforted someone else?

Print the cards on page 15 and give them to people to take home.





Isaiah 66:12-4

"The Lord says, "I will bring you lasting prosperity; the wealth of the nations will flow to you like a river that never goes dry. You will be like a child that is nursed by its mother, carried in her arms, and treated with love. I will comfort you in Jerusalem, as a mother comforts her child. When you see this happen, you will be glad; it will make you strong and healthy. Then you will know that I, the Lord, help those who obey me, and I show my anger against my enemies."

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Facilitator's Reflection

Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to discuss how they can seek comfort from God's love, and reflect on when knowing God is there and cares might help.

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to recognise when they need some comfort and recognise it as a moment to be present with God.

What the group said

The group seemed to really enjoy thinking about God as a friend and someone to 'listen' to them whenever. Lydia seemed to think that the teddy bear she made was going to be helpful for her in building that relationship with God.

What went well

They made the connections really easily, and seemed to work through the cycle on their own. The sewing activity seemed to work well in occupying people while giving them something to do with their hands.

What didn't go well

Not having the confidence to feel I was thoroughly prepared. Also, on a personal level I need to work on keeping people more on point with the conversation.

The video clip was perhaps a little quiet, and as it was an older clip, that had to be discussed first, rather than what I wanted them to start talking about.

Changes to make next time

Better instructions for sewing the piece together.
Perhaps a more recent clip.



Building Castles

Icebreaker:

Eating sugary doughnuts without licking your lips



Unlocking Real Life Stories of Urban people

Questions for discussion:

- Have you had to make a choice between what is right and what is easy?
- What are the things you struggle to say no to?
- Have you ever ignored good advice because the alternative is more tempting?



Revealing Good News of the Down To Earth Christ

Matthew 6: 22-27

“So then, anyone who hears these words of mine and obeys them is like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, and the wind blew hard against that house. But it did not fall, because it was built on rock.

“But anyone who hears these words of mine and does not obey them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain poured down, the rivers flooded over, the wind blew hard against that house, and it fell. And what a terrible fall that was!”



Alternatively you can tell the Bible Story using one or both of these videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1-7X2nX6D4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8p56i3S2SM>

Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

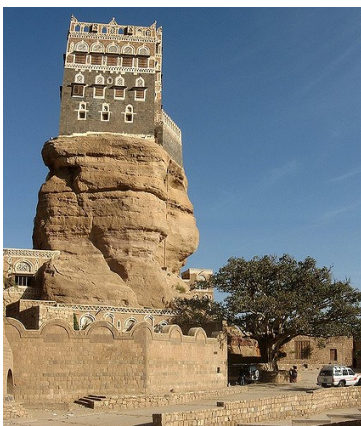
Questions for discussion

- Do you recognise anything from your own stories in this story?
- Do you think there are moments where you could be more wise? Or moments where you have been foolish?
- Why do you think Jesus wants us to listen to him when we make choices?



Active Reflection

Try to build walls out of cake while reflecting on how easy it is to achieve something using the 'wrong' materials.



Continuing reflective Cycles

Start of next session: Have you noticed any moments that have reminded you about what we discussed last time?

Print the cards on page 19 and give them to people to take home.



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Facilitator's Reflection

Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to discuss how the choices they make can have an effect their lives

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to think about the choices they make and think about God as those decisions are made.

What the group said

"Sometimes you just don't know whether you're taking the easy way out, or whether it's the best choice"

"I find it difficult when you know what someone's doing is going to end badly and they just won't see it"

"I can't ice cakes – I always make my Mam do it" and then proceeded to build a really good cake wall.

What went well

I felt that I really managed to get people talking and opening up. I think the questions I had worked really well to open up those stories. I also felt that the transition into the bible story was smoother than it can sometimes be.

What didn't go well

It is a continuing theme with my sessions that I need to work on keeping the discussion focussed during the reflective exercise; however, I feel this is more to do with me than the choice of activity.

Changes to make next time

Could work as well with the wall being built out of other materials, including paper 2D picture or cardboard/polystyrene bricks. By using these materials it would allow people to write on the bricks as a reminder of situations where they've made the hard decisions as well as giving them something more permanent to keep.



Over the Rainbow

Icebreaker:

Listen to a recording of the well know song from the Wizard of Oz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rd8VktT8xY>



Unlocking Real Life Stories of Urban people

Discussion Questions:

- *Have you ever heard someone say 'I can never forgive them'? Have you ever said that? Did you mean it?*
- *Do you find it hard to say sorry sometimes?*
- *Have you ever been prejudiced toward a person or group of people you've never met?*
- *Have you ever been caught in the middle of an argument? How did it work out?*
- *Have you ever had to sacrifice yourself/your ego in order to make the peace?*



Ephesians 2:13-14

“ But now, in union with Christ Jesus you, who used to be far away, have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies.”

Gentiles: Non Jews

Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Questions for discussion:

- What do you recognise from your own stories in this passage?
- What do you think God is trying to tell us about making peace with people?
- Why do you think Jesus wants us to listen to him when we make choices?



Active Reflection

Due to the nature of this session I did not plan a structured activity but allowed the conversation to flow naturally into discussions about where the participant can find peace, or activities they can do to find calm, possibly praying etc.

If you want to use an activity you could use the one on page 6 of this other Unlock resource

<http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/documents/Idontbelieveitupdated.pdf>

Continuing reflective Cycles

Start of next session: Have you been a peacekeeper in this last week?

Print the cards on page 24 and give them to people to take home.



Facilitator's Reflection

Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to discuss conflicts in their life.

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to recognise conflicts in their own lives and work towards peaceful resolutions by remembering that "We're all the same".

There was a different mix of people at 'The Buzz' today and I felt that the group that was there was not in a place where an Unlock session was appropriate, so this session was not used.



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Screwing Things Up

Icebreaker:

Provide images of various well known faces; ask participants to decide who they think deserves to be called the most kind or be given an 'Angel' award – alternatively create some made up characters with various info and get them to decide who deserves to be known as the best. (See character cards on page 26.)



Unlocking Real Life Stories of Urban people

Discussion Questions:

- Who is the kindest person you know?
- What makes them good?
- How good a person do you think *you* are?
- Are there times when you could be more kind to others?
- Does it ever feel as if you can't get anything right, no matter how hard you try?
- How does that make you feel?
- Do you ever feel like you've lost your way?



<p>Joanne Has one step-child and one natural child Has been married for five years, but together for fifteen Is a banker Donates old clothes when the bags come through the door Has a dog</p>	<p>Amanda Has four teenagers Has been married for twenty years Is a health care assistant Spends a lot of spare time volunteering with a health care charity Ignores homeless people on the street</p>
<p>Tim Is a joiner Never pays tax Has helped several strangers with his first aid training Buys coffee for a homeless man who lives in his town Enjoys long walks</p>	<p>Graham Is single Is a Doctor Often makes junior doctors cry Volunteers at the local food bank Goes snowboarding</p>
<p>Gillian Is a widow - cared for her husband for three years before he died Has no children although she always wanted them Makes tea and coffee after church on Sunday Puts things in her neighbours bins without asking</p>	<p>Roger Has four children Has been married twenty years, and has had one affair Works for the red cross Is a church warden Regularly completes triathlons for charity</p>

These cards above can be printed (or just read aloud) and used for the ice breaker on page 25.

Revealing Good News of the Down To Earth Christ

Screwing Things Up

Luke 15:4-6

“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home”



OR—Luke 15:11-32

11 Jesus went on to say, “There was once a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to him, ‘Father, give me my share of the property now.’ So the man divided his property between his two sons. 13 After a few days the younger son sold his part of the property and left home with the money. He went to a country far away, where he wasted his money in reckless living. 14 He spent everything he had. Then a severe famine spread over that country, and he was left without a thing. 15 So he went to work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him out to his farm to take care of the pigs. 16 He wished he could fill himself with the bean pods the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything to eat. 17 At last he came to his senses and said, ‘All my father's hired workers have more than they can eat, and here I am about to starve! 18 I will get up and go to my father and say, Father, I have sinned against God and against you. 19 I am no longer fit to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired workers.’ 20 So he got up and started back to his father.

He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity, and he ran, threw his arms round his son, and kissed him. 21 ‘Father,’ the son said, ‘I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.’ 22 But the father called his servants. ‘Hurry!’ he said. ‘Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. 23 Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! 24 For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.’ And so the feasting began.

25 In the meantime the elder son was out in the field. On his way back, when he came close to the house, he heard the music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked him, ‘What's going on?’ 27 ‘Your brother has come back home,’ the servant answered, ‘and your father has killed the prize calf, because he got him back safe and sound.’

28 The elder brother was so angry that he would not go into the house; so his father came out and begged him to come in. 29 But he answered his father, ‘Look, all these years I have worked for you like a slave, and I have never disobeyed your orders. What have you given me? Not even a goat for me to have a feast with my friends! 30 But this son of yours wasted all your property on prostitutes, and when he comes back home, you kill the prize calf for him!’ 31 ‘My son,’ the father answered, ‘you are always here with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and be happy, because your brother was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.’ ”



Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Discussion Questions:

- Which person or animal in the story do you most relate to?
- What do you do when you feel you've lost your way?
- Who finds you?

Active Reflection

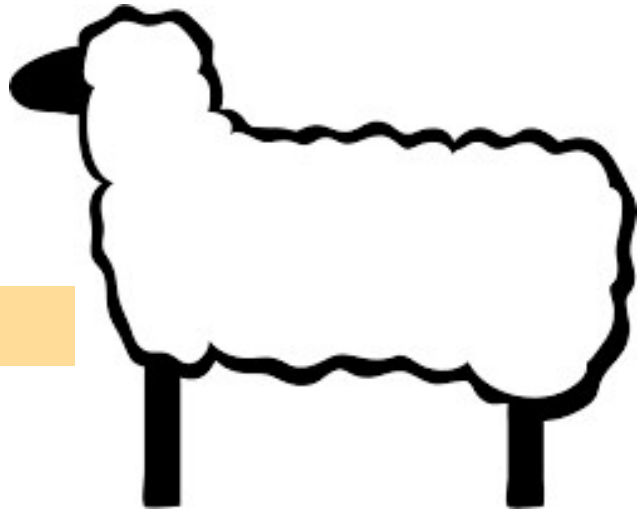
Provide sheep shaped cards to decorate with "Screwed things up, finding my way back" written on them.

Or -

Watch this video:

[www.unlock-urban.org.uk/
resources_heart.php](http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/resources_heart.php)

And then try the activity outlined on page 10 of this other Unlock resource pack.



http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/documents/UnlockingtheProdigalPopversion_000.pdf



Print the cards on page 29 and give them to people to take home.



Luke 15:4-6

“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home”

Luke 15:4-6

“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home”

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Luke 15:4-6

“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home”



For Group Leaders

Resource name: *What's the Buzz*

Authors / Facilitator: Bekih Bowsher (Unlock Sunderland 2014)

Aims: To enable participants to engage with their own stories in relation to lack of self confidence, broken family relationships, negative attitudes to life. To create opportunities to explore how their own story connects 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 group will be more able to engage with each other, using a reflective theological cycle, starting from their own story or the stories of others in the group, or things that have affected them on a daily basis, without necessarily having to have to understand at an academic level. The group will be more able to refer to the connections made with Scripture, and intended changed approaches in similar situations in the future. The group will be able to reflect on their own experiences, and topical issues which affect them, and to do this in relation to scripture. The group will be better able to manage the points of crisis and tension in their lives with reference to scripture.

Session Content

Unlocking Real Life Experience

Media: the sharing of participants' own stories is facilitated starting from various images, videos, stories and questions.

Own story: 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.



For Group Leaders

Ice Breakers and opening questions: See individual sessions for suggestions or insert your own.

Revealing the Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

Bible: Passages used (examples):

Count Your Blessings - *Philippians 4:8*

Time After Time - Mark 6:30-32

Home Comforts - Isaiah 66:12-14

Building Castles - Matthew 6:22-27

Over the rainbow - Ephesians 2:13-14

Screwing Things up - Luke 15:4-6 and Luke 15:11-32

The Bible passages suggested are a selection from which facilitators can choose; if the group's discussions go in a different direction you may need to choose others that are more appropriate.

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 as part of each session. Leaders are advised to review them in plenty of time to allow for the gathering of any necessary resources.

Throughout this material the red text in purple indicates facilitator's notes, mostly made in the light of the experience of actually running these sessions.



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 36, **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 **find part of the Bible** that comes to mind having listened to the stories. If you are using these sessions with a non-church group you will need to be ready to provide some Bible links, but only if they are unable to do so. It is always worth giving them a chance to come up with a Bible link for themselves first; they may surprise you! 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. The reflective activity creates space in which discussion and reflection can continue in an unforced way.

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 36). Unlock's approach 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 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. 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.

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

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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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