



D.I.Y.



A course for small group facilitators

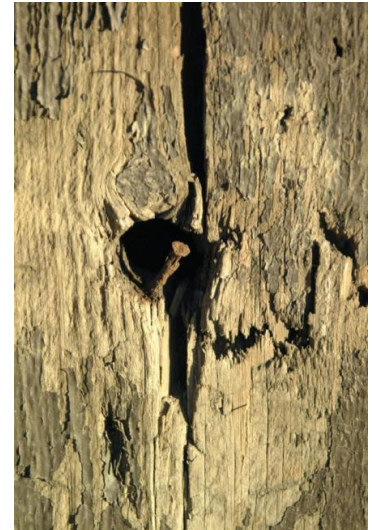
Experience Unlock's reflective theological cycle.

**Develop and try out your own
Unlock style sessions**

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Introduction

From 2003 Unlock implemented a strategy of 'local partnership projects' in cities across the UK. Whereby, in partnership with other Christian agencies and denominations, Unlock supported a local Urban Discipleship Development worker or workers for 2 years in various cities. Each project had a unique nature as Unlock strongly believes that every context requires a different approach. Each location brought with it different partners and their expectations.

In Liverpool the local partnership project was established in partnership with the Anglican Diocese, and an Urban Discipleship Development worker was employed for 18 hours a week for a two year period.

During the first year a number of groups were run for un-churched people connected to, but not members of, Christ Church Walton Breck. Members of the groups came from the Anfield area of Liverpool which has high levels of deprivation and, at that time, a regeneration programme that resulted in a large number of empty houses. Some of the resources developed in that first year are available on the resources section of the Unlock website, including Cooking the Book, Mess, Mistakes & Muddling Through, and parts of the Baptism Preparation Tool Kit.

This course comes out of the second year of the project with the aim of sharing Unlock's methodology with other practitioners. Those that came on the Unlock DIY course had a wide range of backgrounds and experience in working with small groups, from clergy thinking about one particular group, to group members with no facilitation experience in the process of taking on responsibility for their group. The course was run on several occasions and these materials are a result of running the course and learning from that process.

Ideally anyone delivering this course would have experience of using Unlock materials or, preferably, experience of developing their own materials based on the Unlock reflective theological learning cycle.

As the course is designed to be flexible enough to run with participants with varying degrees of experience and knowledge, there is an element of participant assessment involved and the course will be different each time it is run. Some elements of the materials may not be necessary with some groups. As a result you will need to prepare in advance and select the elements of the materials you will be using, this is not a course designed to be delivered straight off the shelf!

This pack was updated in 2023.

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published by the Bible Societies and Collins,
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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.

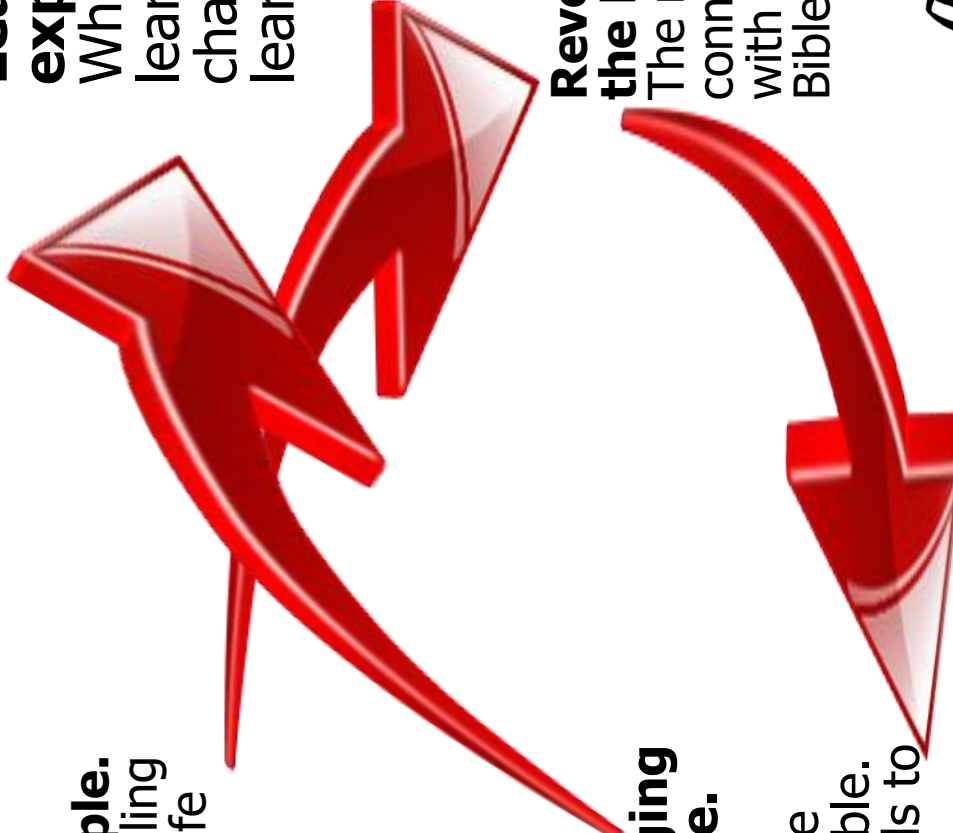
Releasing life changing skills and confidence.
Change happens as a result of linking real life experience with the Bible. This change often leads to action among others.

Leading to more experience.

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

Revealing Good News of the Down to Earth Christ.

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



Unlock DIY Course Overview



Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to:-

- Experience Unlock's reflective theological cycle
- Develop & try out their own Unlock style sessions
- Experience the process of facilitating a group from assessment & planning to delivery & exit strategy

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to:-

1. Recognise and enable others to engage in the different stages of the Unlock reflective theological cycle
2. Identify the cultural features that make a group more receptive to oral or person centred Bible engagement and learning
3. Create an Unlock style session or course of sessions to suit a particular group
4. Promote sessions and get people to attend
5. Plan appropriate times and venues
6. Facilitate a group session using a person centred approach to Bible engagement
7. Seek suitable prayer and pastoral support from their faith community
8. Review sessions and adapt future materials and actions accordingly
9. Share ideas and take on useful suggestions from other learners
10. Offer constructive comments on materials developed by others

Delivery: The learning includes:-

- group sessions with other participants
- structured independent activities
- experiential learning in the actual delivery of sessions
- collection of, reflection on and application of feedback
- recommended reading where appropriate.

As this will be a participant focused programme of learning the approach to using these different learning methods needs to be flexible. During the first group session we will look at the different areas of skills, knowledge and experience and identify those which it will be useful to explore as a group and those which are already within the capabilities of the participants. Each group session will include an Unlock style reflective exercise to increase the range of Unlock Bible engagement experience the participants have.

(Continued on page 6)





DIY Time Frame

During the Unlock Liverpool project the DIY course was delivered in a variety of ways. The first time over a period of months meeting every six weeks, and then subsequently as a one day event, condensing the materials to make the learning opportunity more accessible. The One Day events proved by far the more popular approach. The course materials could be used in either way, although for a one day event do not start each session with a sample Unlock session. Later, in 2019 the programme was adapted to run as a ‘long morning’ event, usually on Saturdays.

Learner Assessment

There will be no formal assessment as this is an informal learning opportunity. The process of writing and delivering the sessions will provide an assessment of whether the learning outcomes have been reached. Once participants have written their sessions there will be opportunities to share them with other participants, and then share advice and ideas within the learning group. This process will enable those that develop strengths in certain aspects of developing materials to share their skill for the benefit of others.

Facilitator Assessment

For each group session there will be an opportunity to feedback on that session. At the end of the course there is a more comprehensive feedback based on the aims of the course, and the facilitator's part in helping the participants reach those aims.

Evaluation

During the final celebration session a reflective activity will be included to explore what the participants have valued from the course. This is only really feasible if the course is run over a number of sessions.



DIY One Day (or long morning) Event Suggested Outline



- 9:00 Arrive, drinks. Unlock newsletters and storycards on tables for participants to look at as they gather.
- 9:15 Facilitator introduces themselves. With small groups everyone else can do this too including why are they here. What are we going to do today? Group Agreement of Ground rules [p12](#).
- 9.20 Participants complete [p13](#) questionnaire, put their own name on it and pass to facilitator.
- 9.30 Unlock Tasters - chosen and prepared in advance from this section of Unlock's website. Try as many as time allows in small groups.
http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/resources_projects.php#taster_sessions
- 10:30 Shift from experiencing reflective cycle to analysing it! What did they notice? What do they think? Context and theory. Facilitator explains where Unlock works how Unlock works and why. Answer any participant questions.
- 10:45 Comfort break and Drinks, fruit & biscuits. Invite participants to look at resources if available
- 11.00 In twos or threes, participants choose one real group that is actually known to them for which they'd like to plan an Unlock session.
- 11.10 Assessing real group needs - Each group of 2-3 uses [p20-27](#) to work on to reflect on the needs of the group they have chosen to work with.
- 11:25 Each group sets up their flip chart sheet as illustrated on [p8](#) and chooses a theme to put into the central box. Challenge - *try to avoid using churchy or theological language.*
- 11:30 Everyone walks around writing suggestions for material to use under the headings on everyone else's, and their own, flip chart sheets.
- 12:00 Back at their own tables groups use [p31-34](#) to plan a session outline for the group they have in mind, using a selection of the suggestions on their sheet.

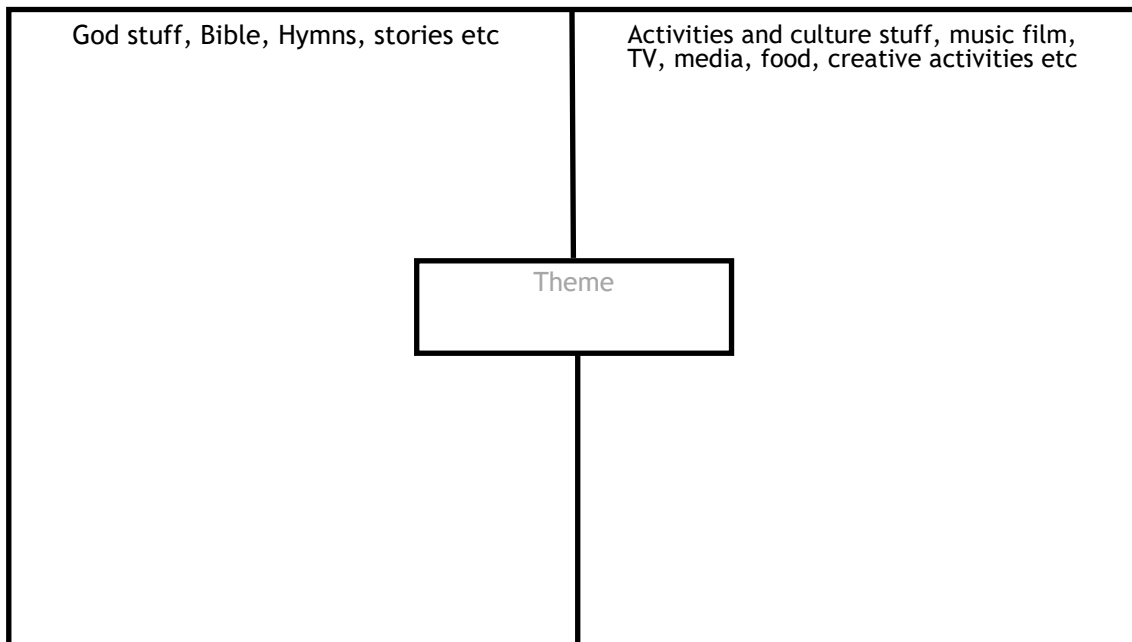
Return annotated Unlock DIY [p13](#) to them as they are working—or (for larger numbers) provide relevant page references as a poster or handout [p13](#).





- 12.30 Remind groups to consider;-
- How they will get people there
 - How they will make people feel welcome, safe and comfortable
- They might find [p35](#) useful.
- 12.40 Each group shares their plan, either with another group or for everyone depending on numbers and time available. Participants use [p43-44](#) guidance to offer questions and feedback on the plans of the other groups.
- 12.55 Feedback - Use the outline with post it notes as on [p9](#) of this pack.

Layout for flip chart sheets for group work



Unlock Single Session Outline for Feedback



Introductions

Group Agreement

Experiencing Unlock Sample Sessions

Unlock's Context and Approach

Identifying Group needs

Planning an Unlock session

Getting Feedback from others

Venue

Facilitator



Session 1 - Facilitator's notes

Meet together to collaborate on themes and ideas & explore one another's identified common learning needs from participants assessments.



Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to:-

- experience the Unlock reflective theological cycle
- identify the features of non-book culture
- explore Unlock's methodology
- assess a sample Unlock session

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to:-

- identify the different stages of the Unlock reflective theological cycle
- describe the difference between traditional Bible study and the Unlock approach

Prior to the session, I suggest that you assemble the handouts for each participant in order to place on the chairs at the beginning of the session. This way there is not an interruption for every sheet. If resources permit they could be placed in folders with some spare lined paper at the back.

2 hour session

5 minutes **Welcome participants**

Open in prayer. Give a verbal outline of what you will be doing during the session. Introduce group ground rules, ask for any clarifications, amendments or additions, ask the group if they are comfortable agreeing to them and, once agreed, put them up where they can be seen as a reminder.

10 minutes **Introductions.**

ask each participant in turn to introduce themselves and briefly tell the group why they have come on this course.

10 minutes **Participants Needs Assessments**

Ask participants to fill in the Participants Needs Assessment form and hand them in to you. Explain that shared needs will, if time allows, be covered in the course.

30 minutes **Experience an Unlock Session**

You will need to prepare a session that follows the Unlock reflective cycle to use as a 'taster' at this point. A session called 'The Kiss' was used the first time we ran DIY and can be found on p19 of these materials. However you may prefer to find one amongst the resources available on Unlock's website that suits your group better http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/resources_projects.php#taster_sessions. For the purposes of the session I felt that 'The Kiss' goes clearly through the stages of the cycle and is very different to a traditional Bible study.

15 minutes **Comfort Break**

Using an extra blank Participants Needs Assessment form and the completed forms make a tally of all the given answers. Where there are higher concentrations of people wanting to find out more or asking for more practice, these are the aspects that you should include in your course, outlines for each area of need are in these materials. If someone has marked that they are willing to share their knowledge, explore with them how this could happen.

15 minutes **Feedback from Sample Session.**

You may want to do one or more of these:

- **Line** - ask participants to stand in a line from those that really liked doing the Unlock session to those that disliked it. Split the line into 3 sections (like, neutral and disliked). Ask them to discuss the reasons for their opinion and explain them to the rest of the group.
- **Corners** - put the headings for the stages of the Unlock cycle from p4 up on the walls, one in each corner of the room. Ask people to go and stand in the corner that represents the part of the taster session they liked best. You may or may not want people to explain why!
- **Face it** - Using the feedback sheet from p17 ask people to simply tell you what made them smiley (what they liked) and what made them frownie (what they didn't like) and write the comments on the sheet.

If there are facilities at the venue, copy and give to all the participants whatever is written down in this feedback session, let them know it might help them to refer to it as they prepare their own sessions.



25 minutes Power Point

Using the slides from the power point slide show, called ‘Unlock DIY session 1’, available to download at

http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/pdf/powerpointforDIYpage10_001.pdf

Discuss with your participants the nature of a non-book learner, Unlock’s methodology and how it differs from traditional bible study. The notes in the slide show tell the stories behind some of the slides. If your participants are all competent readers there is no need to read the slides to them, however if there are participants for whom reading is a struggle, it may be necessary to read the content of the slides.

5 minutes Feedback from Participants Needs Assessments.

Let the group know which areas are going to be included in the group sessions. For those with needs that are not shared by the majority of the group, ask the group for suggestions of courses, books or other options for meeting those needs.

10 minutes Explain to the participants that they will be working in stages towards the preparation of their own materials. The first stage is to spend some time thinking about the group they are going to work with to help with the planning of sessions. They can do this using **pages 20-27** . The most important element of the take home task is to write the summary paragraph. If the additional sheet and questions help them to write that paragraph then they should use them, however, they may not need to, especially if they already know the group well.

10 minutes Feedback

Using the session outline on **p18** and some post it notes (if possible some heart shaped post its and some square, if not simply use two different colours), ask participants to put a heart shaped post it on the part of today’s session that they liked or found most helpful and to put a square post it on any elements they found unhelpful or disliked. They may wish to write on their post its or make a verbal explanation as they place them.

Group Ground Rules Agreement



- Be open to learning
- Respect each other
- Acknowledge strengths in each other
- Give constructive feedback
- Be inclusive (avoid interrupting or 'put-downs')
- Listen to others
- Don't make assumptions
- Respect the right of others to disagree
- Personal information will not be taken out of this context (except as required by law)
- What we have learned can be shared
- Making mistakes is part of the journey
- Have fun



Unlock DIY

Where we are starting from?

The table below shows the main areas of skills and knowledge that you might need to run an Unlock style group. Tick the box that is the closest fit for you.

Name _____


	I would like to find out more about this	I would like some practise at this	I have a lot of experience & knowledge of this	I would like to share my knowledge & experience of this with the rest of the group
1. Unlock's way of helping people connect with the Bible				
2. Thinking about group needs				
3. Different learning styles				
4. Planning what the group will do in a session.				
5. Getting feedback from a group & using it to improve future sessions				
6. Facilitating a group				
7. Planning Meetings venue, times etc				
8. Getting people there (publicity & forming relationships)				
9. Relationship with the rest of church pastoral responsibility, prayer cover				
10. Exit strategy - Planning for the group to finish or hand over.				



Answers for p13

The table below shows the main areas of skills and knowledge that you might need to run an Unlock style group.

You can find guidance on each of these topics on the pages of this pack as indicated below.

	<p>Information on this can be found here. See pages 15 & 16 for further information.</p>
<p>1. Unlock's way of helping people connect with the Bible</p>	<p>This is a core element of this course and will be addressed</p>
<p>2. Thinking about group needs</p>	<p>There are tools for this on p20-27</p>
<p>3. Different learning styles</p>	<p>http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/pdf/learningstylescomparison_000.pdf http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire</p>
<p>4. Planning what the group will do in a session.</p>	<p>There are tools for this on p31-32</p>
<p>5. Getting feedback from a group & using it to improve future sessions</p>	<p>You will find various ways of doing this on P9, 17, 18, 37, 43-44, 47</p>
<p>6. Facilitating a group</p>	<p>This is something you learn by doing it and then reflecting on how it went and what you could do better the next time. If you feel unsure try to start by working alongside someone more experienced.</p>
<p>7. Planning Meetings venue, times etc</p>	<p>There are tools for this on p35</p>
<p>8. Getting people there (publicity & forming relationships)</p>	<p>Page 49</p>
<p>9. Relationship with the rest of church pastoral responsibility, prayer cover</p>	<p>Page 50</p>
<p>10. Exit strategy -Planning for the group to finish or hand over.</p>	<p>Page 51–52</p>



Participants Needs Assessment;

How each need can be addressed



Unlock's way of helping people connect with the Bible -

This is a core element of this course and will be addressed.

Thinking about group needs -

This will be addressed as a key part of the course particularly in an exercise that participants take home.

Different learning styles -

There is a second slide show, 'Learning Styles Comparison', at

http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/pdf/learningstylescomparison_000.pdf

- which looks at some models of learning and compares them with Unlock's learning cycle. You could simply show these slides and encourage the participants to explore this further. However there is also a website that offers a questionnaire based on the VARK (Visual, Audio, Read/Write, Kinesthetic). Participants could be encouraged to fill in the online questionnaire and then make a note of their results.

<http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p=questionnaire> You could then record the groups results on the chart on p48 to give the group an insight into how diverse learning preferences can be.

Planning what a group will do in a session -

This is addressed as a key part of the course

Getting feedback from a group and using it to improve future sessions -

This will be modelled through the course as you take feedback in a variety of forms. You may want to let the group know if you adjust the content of a session according to something from their feedback.

Facilitating a Group -

There will be opportunities for each participant to facilitate in the context of this course. You could ask participants to facilitate the taster Unlock sessions if one or two highlight this as a need.

(Continued on page 16)





Planning Meetings venue, times etc -

There is no additional material for this question but it can be emphasised in the following parts of the existing materials: the first step is to ask people to focus on this in their group assessment. As they answer the questions about the group to include thinking about where they go, where they would be willing to go and where they wouldn't go. We have found that Unlock's approach is well suited to informal venues, pubs, cafes, people's homes, so our starting point is when and where are these people already gathering can the Unlock session be an extension of this?

Getting people there (publicity and forming relationships) -

There is a sheet on [p49](#) that deals with this element of running a group and would act as a half an hour add to any of the sessions.

Relationship with rest of church; pastoral responsibility, prayer cover etc -

There is a sheet on [p50](#) that offers questions to reach a plan for developing a good relationship with the rest of church. The questions could be used to stimulate group discussion or used as an independent learning activity in participants own time.

Exit Strategy. Planning for the group to finish or hand over

There is a sheet on [page 51](#) of these materials that gives some suggestions and questions to help think about this area. There is also a sample 'handover' agreement on [page 52](#).

For all of these areas you may find that someone has offered to share their experience. If you are running the course as a one day event try to use breaks to work out how suitable that will be, and at what point in the day it can happen. If running the course monthly meet with those people in between sessions to plan how those subjects can be addressed.



Unlock DIY
Feedback on sample Unlock session



Unlock DIY Session 1 Outline for Feedback



Introductions

Group Agreement

Unlock Sample Session

Feedback on Sample Session

Unlock's Methodology

Planning Ahead

Venue

Facilitator



Sample Session: The Kiss

Bible Focus: Intimacy!

Visual: a simple cross

Sound track: songs from current X factor show.



Icebreaker: The X Factor - each week a participant brings something that shows off their talent. It could be a poem, singing, something they have made (cakes, cards etc) anything!

Unlocking Real Life Experience

- Has a hug or kiss or a simple touch ever changed the way you were feeling?
- Have you ever embraced someone who was unclean, perhaps smelly?
- Have you ever been embarrassed or uncomfortable with someone's attention?

Extra Extra - read all about it

Revealing the Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said.

"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he cancelled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt cancelled."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven— for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." Luke 7:36-50

Exchange

Releasing Life Changing Skills And Confidence

- How is this story similar to our stories?
- How is this story different to our stories?
- Do you need a 'God hug' or a kiss from someone?
- Do you know someone who needs to feel loved?

Extreme - active reflection

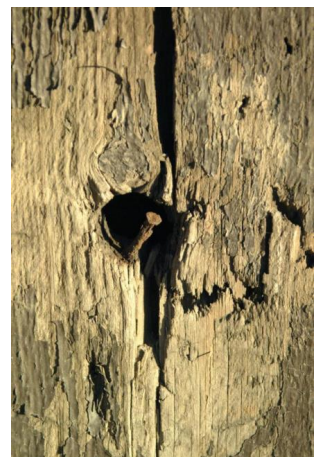
Model, make, draw or describe the way you would welcome God to get close to you or the way in which you could show His love physically to someone you know. (A modelling medium such as 'Plasticine' is one simple way to enable people to do this.)



Unlock DIY Group Summary



Please write below some of the key features that characterise your group.
It may help to use the exercises on the following pages to guide your thinking.



Unlock DIY Group Formation and Assessment



Introduction

The next few pages offer a variety of tools that you could use to help you think about the group you are going to work with. Some are suitable for groups that already exist, others are suitable to help in the formation of a new group and some may be useful in both situations. You don't need to use all or even any of them but they might help you to think about who you are working with and what will be helpful to them.

It might help to start by simply listing the group members, and potential group members, if you already know who they will be.

Who will be in the group?

Is there anyone else that might find the group helpful?



**Unlock DIY
Group Formation and Assessment**

Forming a Group

Do you already have a set of people in mind, if so, who?



What do these people have in common?

If you don't have a group in mind, what gaps are there in what is provided already in your area? (perhaps in terms of gender, age, location, time of day etc.)

Are there any groups on the fringe of Church that might be interested in an informal non-book opportunity to explore faith?

What will attract them to being part of an Unlock style group?

How will you use these things to appeal to them to join?

What will put them off?

How will you overcome those barriers?



**Unlock DIY
Group Formation and Assessment**



GOPIA
(a simple planning tool)

Givens – things you can't change, have no control over?

Opportunities – creative ideas or resources you could use

Purpose – what are you trying to achieve

Image—which expresses the purpose

Action—which will help people relate to the purpose



Unlock DIY

Group Formation and Assessment

Group Needs and Characteristics



Understanding Motives

- Why do the group members need or want to be in this group?
- What are their shared motives?

Assessing Values

- What values do group members have, what is important to them?
- What beliefs do they have in common?

Evaluating Norms

- What will the group expect? (like tea/coffee, or a prayer?)
- What would make the group uncomfortable?

Individual Needs

- What specific needs of individual members can be met by the activities of the group?
- What needs can be met by your role as facilitator?
- What needs cannot be met in the group?

Personal Characteristics

- What character traits do group members have?
- What roles or tasks might they be good at due to their skills and talents?



Unlock DIY
Group Formation and Assessment
Information Gathering



How will you know or find out what will be appropriate for your group?

Do you have enough existing knowledge of the group to work it out?

Would it be helpful to speak to group members one-to-one, or as a group, to find out more?

Could you observe the group during an existing activity?

How will you ensure that you listen in a way that will help you identify their needs?



Unlock DIY
Group Formation and Assessment
SWOT analysis



What are the *Strengths* of the group? (internal)

What are the *Weaknesses* of the group? (internal)

What *Opportunities* are there? (external)

What *Threats* are there? (external)



Unlock DIY Group Formation and Assessment



Gatekeepers

'Gatekeepers' is a term used to talk about the people that have a strong influence on the rest of the group. They may have a formal role which means your access to the group can be permitted or restricted by this person's authority (such as a vicar in church, or the bar staff in a pub). There are also informal gatekeepers who have a controlling influence on the attitudes and behaviours of the group through their personality, long standing membership of the group etc. Your work with any group can be greatly helped by forming good relationships with the gatekeepers, if possible before you start the sessions with the group.

Who are the gatekeepers for your group? - both formal and informal?

What is your relationship like with each gatekeeper?

Is there anything you could do to strengthen those relationships?

**What are the gatekeepers' concerns about your proposals?
How might they be addressed?**

What can you do to gain the support of the gatekeepers for your work with the group?



Session 2 - Facilitator's notes



Meet together to collaborate on themes and ideas, and to explore one other identified common learning need from participants assessments.

Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to:-

- experience the Unlock reflective theological cycle
- discuss and evaluate the use of aims and learning outcomes in planning sessions
- identify suitable themes for their group
- collaborate in finding a range of Bible passages & discussion starters for each theme

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to

- identify the different stages of the Unlock reflective theological cycle
- write aims and outcomes for a group session
- choose suitable themes for their group
- select Bible content and discussion starters to go with a theme

2 hour session

5 minutes Welcome participants

Check they have been able to complete the paragraph summary of their group's needs. Give a verbal outline of what will be done during the session.

15 minutes Reflective Cycle Exercise

These are being included in each session together, to familiarise the participants with the process of the reflective cycle, and to acknowledge God's presence in the midst of our learning and doing.

Before the session starts place a range of pictures around the room. You can print off a random selection of pictures taken from the internet, or postcards or photos of your own. The important thing is that they need to be a wide mixture of different kinds of images.

Ask participants to walk around and look at the pictures that are on the walls. After the group have had a chance to become familiar with the images ask them to go and stand by: -

- One that makes you angry
- One that you just don't relate to very easily
- The one that appeals to you most

(continued on page 29)





After each choice ask participants to tell the group why they have chosen that image before they move onto the next choice.

With the last one:

Relate the image you have chosen to some story in your own life - share with the group.

Relate the picture to a Bible story - again share this with the group.

Give other participants the opportunity to suggest other Bible passages.

You could invite one of the participants to pray at this point.

30 minutes Feed Back from Take Home Work

Divide this segment of time equally between your participants. They will probably need at least 5 minutes each, so if you have more than 5 participants you may need to make this segment longer and extend the time of this session accordingly.

Ask one participant to their read paragraph 'My Unlock Group'. Then with the whole group brain storm themes / issues that group have in common. Record all the ideas on a flip chart. Try not to let the group edit or criticise suggestions at this stage so as to gather as many creative ideas as possible. Repeat this process for each participant.

13 minutes Aims & Outcomes

Hand out session planning frames [page 31 to 32](#) and Aims & Outcomes sheets [page 36](#).

Taking the time to determine the aims and outcomes for their course or session at this stage will help participants to select which themes are most appropriate for their groups. Give participants a moment to read the sheet. Have a group discussion concerning the usefulness of aims & outcomes and the differences between the two. Encourage participants to take notes of helpful comments.

Allow about 5 minutes for participants to think about the aims and outcomes for their group.

(continued on page 30)



7 minutes Select Themes

Each participant takes their flip chart page and selects the themes from brainstorming that they want to explore for their group. Then write each theme in the middle of both sides of an A3 sheet - just one theme per sheet.

20 minutes Suggest Bible Passages & Prompts

On tables around the room (if none available, on floor or walls) lay theme sheets out and participants add Bible story or God 'stuff' to theme idea on one side. If possible have a number of concordances and an online searchable Bible available. Once people have run out of ideas turn the sheets over and on the other side add activities, music, food, films etc. that connect with theme.

10 minutes Plan one Example Session as a group

Take one A3 theme sheet and, using the session planning frames on [pages 31 - 34](#), work collaboratively with the participants to fill out as much as possible of one session. Explain that this is a process they can use at home to plan sessions using the remaining themes.

Tell participants that when you next meet the plan is to 'run' a session from each of their courses so they need to go through this process completely for at least one session. It is up to them how many sessions they work on before that meeting, however any that they bring could be discussed and receive feedback at the next session.

15 minutes Shared Learning Need from Participants Needs Assessment

If a majority of your participants identified the same learning needs use this time to explore one of those together. Suggestions for each of those not covered in the core content of this course can be found on [pages 49-52](#) of this pack.

5 minutes Feedback - using aims and outcomes as on [page 36](#).

[Pages 38 - 40](#) show what was produced by the first group doing Unlock DIY to give an idea of the kind of thing you are working towards with your group.



Unlock Session Planning Frame 1 - Ideas (page 1 of 2)



Course / Event name:

Facilitator(s):

Session Number: Session Theme:

Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to . .

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to . .

Session Content

Icebreaker

Will an ice breaker help your group get talking? Is there an icebreaker activity that relates to your theme?

Unlocking Real Life Experience

What prompts are you going to use to draw out stories from your group?

Think of as many as you can, although when working with a group you may only need one...

Music, film / TV clip, other sound, question, object, picture/ cartoon, smell, etc...



Revealing Good News of the Down to Earth Christ



What Bible passage(s) will you have prepared?

Remember Unlock's teaching method is learner centred - listen to the stories that people tell and be ready to use a Bible passage or account of God's work that relates to what they say.

Is there a creative way you can re-tell any of the Bible stories?
(visual, dramatic, video clip, modernised etc.)

Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Connect

What questions will encourage the group to connect their story and God's story?

Reflect

Is there an activity that will help the group reflect on what they have learnt or help them plan to put that learning into action?

Continuing Reflective Cycles...

Is there anything that you want to do or ask at the beginning of the next session to follow up this session?

Review

Will you seek feedback from participants? If so how?

Is there anything in this session to pay attention to in your own evaluation?



Ten Unlock Principles And some Dos and Don'ts

- To pay attention to the local, regional and cultural factors that influence people's lives
- To develop the ability to help other people tell their stories.
- To take a genuine interest and enjoyment in LISTENING to other people's stories.
- To AFFIRM and ENCOURAGE people so that they can be confident enough to formulate their own questions, and not to impose our own answers on other people's questions.
- To be PATIENT and WAIT for people to see the gaps in their own knowledge.
- To believe that people can make sense of the Bible and their own experience, and make the connection between the two; and that God by his spirit will lead people to truth and action.
- To encourage working together in groups where each person's contribution is valued, and where diversity of opinion is accepted and tolerated.
- To be aware of what is going on in and between people in such groups.
- To work with a group so that it can come to its own conclusions and decide on its own actions.
- 10. To value everyone as a 'Treasure –chest of information and experience; seeing our task as one of giving people the keys to undo their treasures.

Do: -

- Know and use each person's name
- Accept whatever is offered and encourage further contributions
- Encourage everyone to have a go
- Find non threatening questions to enable people to join in
- Build trust between group members



Do - (continued from page 33) -

- Try to work with groups of between 5 and 15 people
- Create an environment where each member has confidence to contribute
- Encourage and enable people to draw on their own experience as a primary learning tool
- Help the group to work together
- Make it clear that you value each person's opinion enough to want them to say what they think
- Gather information about what is already known and shared in a group before introducing new information
- Ask questions like, 'What do you think?', 'what would you like to change?', 'How are you going to change it?', 'What's the best thing about . . .?', 'What's the worst thing about . . .?'
- Encourage participants to consider where their information has come from and how their views have been formed.
- Create experiences for the group to reflect on, you can use film, drama, pictures, paintings, or photographs, cartoons, music, creative activities, community experiences.
- Stress the vastness of the data which the group already possesses.
- Give chances for people to respond, question, discuss.
- Introduce new information (including the bible) in manageable chunks
- Expect change
- Help the group apply the Word to the here and now. 'What has this got to do with me? With us?'
- Work at presenting in the language of the group.
- Be creative
- Adapt published material to the needs of the group
- Write or make your own material
- Create flexible programmes that can adjust to group needs as they emerge
- Seek the group's agreement for the programme, allow them to modify it as necessary
- Listen attentively

Don't: -

- Use religious language, jargon, or clichés
- Use middle class illustrations, examples, case studies
- Assume a familiarity with the bible
- Tell people what they should do, think, believe; don't say, 'This is how it is.'
- Put people on the spot, or in the spotlight
- Make assumptions about people's lifestyles and domestic arrangements
- Don't ask questions with 'right' or 'wrong' answers or that rely on knowledge, rather than experience
- Make value judgements about people who think and learn differently to you and your friends
- Assume that everyone can read – or that no one can
- Lecture, give out handouts, issue book lists.



Questions to consider in planning Unlock activities/events:-



Basics

Who has asked for the event? (we will refer to this person as the 'Sponsor')

What is the sponsor's role in relation to: -

- The Unlock Facilitator
- The participants
- The context

Requested Subject

Date(s)

How many sessions

Times

Venue details: -

- Location,
- type of building
- telephone number/contact person
- directions – please send (including postcode if using Satnav!)
- parking
- disabled access?
- Who will unlock? What time? (contact details in case of emergency)
- Will furniture be set out?
- Or can we move things to suit our activities?
- Capacity of room(s)
- Number of rooms
- space (indoors/outdoors)
- seating
- tables
- toilets
- white board
- pin-boards or walls where things can be stuck up
- OHP & screen/wall
- Piano
- Tape/CD player
- Video/TV
- Dataprojector?
- Electric sockets/ extension cables

Refreshments

Refreshments will be: -

- unnecessary
- provided by the venue
- students will bring their own
- provided by the sponsor
- provided by the Unlock Facilitator
- other arrangements

Time and type of refreshments

Context

The event is: -

- open to all
- restricted to
- by invitation to

Participation is: -

- Voluntary
- Encouraged
- Strongly encouraged
- Required

Numbers

- Anticipated numbers
- Agreed the publicity
- Where will the event be publicised?
- How will people book?
- Who will handle bookings?
- Unlock Facilitator will be informed of final numbers by (date)

Prior Learning

- Previous experience/learning of participants
- What does the sponsor think the participants will expect of the event?
- On what is their assessment based?

Outcomes

- What difference the sponsor would like the event to make to the participants?
- What does the sponsor hope will come out of the event?
- What is the sponsor's motivation in asking for the event?
- What is expected from the Unlock Facilitator?



Aims & Outcomes

'If you don't know where you're going, any bus will do.'



Aims and Outcomes can be thought of as the 'destination' for any learning activity. A good assessment of the group prior to the learning activity will let you know where they are starting from. Knowing your starting point and destination helps you work out the best way to carry out your journey between the two. At the end of your learning journey together knowing your intended destination, your aims and outcomes, helps you work out if you got there and anything you might need to do differently on another similar journey.

Aims

A statement of the aims of a learning activity answers questions such as:

- What is the purpose of this learning activity?
- What is the learning activity intended to achieve?

The statement of aims will help a potential participant to decide whether or not this is a learning activity she or he might want to take and what to expect if they do.

Learning outcomes

The learning outcomes of a learning activity should specify the knowledge and skills that participants will gain from the learning activity. The learning outcomes answer the question:

- What have participants shown that they can do?

Learning outcomes should line up with the aims of the learning activity. In other words, if participants fulfil the learning outcomes you will also know that the aims of the learning activity have been fulfilled. Your aims and outcomes also help you to assess and evaluate the learning activity once it has been delivered.

Examples

From Cooking the Book

Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to:-

- Experience Unlock's reflective theological cycle
- Hear and respond to Bible passages that offer a broad overview of the Bible
- Cook and taste a variety of different dishes

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to:-

- Reflect on their own experiences and connect them with the Kingdom of God
- Recall key elements of the Bible passages from the course
- Identify ways in which the Bible is relevant to their lives
- Cook a range of simple savoury and sweet recipes

From a discipleship course on giving and generosity

Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to:-

- Build a habit of collaborative Bible study
- Explore biblical teachings on money
- Be equipped to form their own understanding of giving and generosity as part of discipleship

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to:-

- Describe the importance of generosity and it's part in the mission of the church
- Evaluate and discuss issues that arise from Biblical texts
- Review their giving on a regular basis in the light of their learning
- Engage in financial decisions in an intentionally prayerful manner

Unlock DIY Session 2 - Feed Back



The session includes some work on aims and learning outcomes so the feedback for the session reflects that. The aims and learning outcomes for this session are below. You may want to add the aim from the course overview that corresponds with the shared learning need that you are tackling in this session

Print this page out and cut out each statement separately. At the end of the session blu-tac the word 'unmet' to the left of the wall in front of participants and stick the word 'met' to the right. Hand out the aims and outcomes so participants have at least one each. Ask them to blu-tac the aim or outcome somewhere between met and unmet according to how they feel it has been fulfilled by the activities in the session

Unmet met

- Participants will have the opportunity to experience the Unlock reflective theological cycle.
- Participants will have the opportunity to discuss and evaluate the use of aims and learning outcomes in planning sessions
- Participants will have the opportunity to identify suitable themes for their group
- Participants will have the opportunity to collaborate in finding a range of Bible passages and discussion starters for each theme
- Participants will be more able to identify the different stages of the Unlock reflective theological cycle
- Participants will be more able to write aims and outcomes for a group session
- Participants will be more able to choose suitable themes for their group
- Participants will be more able to select Bible content and discussion starters to go with a theme

Outcomes of Session 2 with first DIYers

The below information relates to one of the groups represented on the first running of DIY to show the kind of outcome the session can give:



Group summary: the group are all between 25 & 35 years old. Most never come to church although they believe in God and the power of prayer. They are all parents, family is important to the group members. The group started when someone came to the church looking for help, which led to a group asking to meet on a regular basis, one of the group said, 'We just want somewhere to chill out', which led to the group being called 'Chill Out'. The group have recently been bereaved, the man whose house they met in has died. A service was held in keeping with the way the group normally meet.

Theme Ideas from Brainstorm: relationships (especially with partners), conflict, children, trauma, parenting, bereavement, rejection, teenagers, loss, regeneration, being alone at home, vulnerable, isolated, separation, trouble.

Bible Bits & Story Prompts from collaborative exercise:

Theme: Relationships:-

Bible Bits: Song of Songs, Ruth & Naomi (Ruth), David & Jonathan (Samuel), Jesus & Disciples (Gospels), Father, Son & Holy Spirit (Romans), 10 Commandments (Exodus), Love is patient... (1 Cor 13), 'Who is the greatest' (Mat 18:1-6), Dealing with someone else's sin (Mat 18:15...)

Story Prompts: A scene from the TV series Friends, picture of a family, picture of mother & children, question 'Who couldn't you live without?', argument.

Theme: Parenting:-

Bible Bits: Jacob & Esau fight over birth right, Prodigal Son, Jacob & Joseph, Jacob & Esau, Proverbs, Abraham nearly sacrifices his son, Mary losing Jesus, Noah, God the Father risking Jesus the Son on earth, Hosea.

Story Prompts: A scene from 3 Men and a Baby or question 'What, if anything, caused you to rebel from your parents and what form did that rebellion take?'

Theme: Loss:-

Bible Bits: Disciples after crucifixion (Luke 24), Jairus' daughter, Luke 15 - lost sheep, lost son, lost coin, the widow whose son died

Story Prompts: Play hide and seek, Question 'Ever lost one of the kids?'

Theme: Vulnerable:-

Bible Bits: Joshua & the Battle of Jericho, Rahab hides the spies (Jos 2:1), Jesus born as a baby into a hostile situation, Disciples in the garden of Gethsemane, David & Goliath, Jonah, Joseph in the pit & his brothers' anger.

Story Prompts: A scene from Home Alone, picture of empty nest or broken eggs, picture of empty houses/streets

Unlock Session Planning Frame 1 - Ideas



Course / Event name: **Chill Out**

Facilitator(s): **Linda & Carol**

Session Number:1 Session Theme: **Parenting (as we spoke, rebellion became part of the focus)**

Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to . . .
experience the Unlock theological reflective learning cycle
develop an awareness of how valuable they are to God
explore what they have to offer to God's work

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to . . .
reflect on their own life experiences and connect them to the Bible
describe how they are valued by God
contribute to God's work in the church and community

Session Content:-

Icebreaker

Will an ice breaker help your group get talking? Is there an icebreaker activity that relates to your theme?

Ask participants to put a Terry's nappy on a baby doll & see whose stays on when the doll is shaken!

Unlocking Real Life Experience

What prompts are you going to use to draw out stories from your group.

Think of as many as you can although when working with a group you may only need one...

Music, Film / TV clip, Other sound, Question, Object, Picture/ Cartoon, Smell, etc...

If you rebelled from your parents, what made you rebel and what form did that rebellion take?

Or you could use a clip from 3 Men & a Baby.

Revealing Good News of the Down to Earth Christ

What Bible passage(s) will you have prepared?

Remember Unlock's teaching method is learner centred - listen to the stories that people tell and be ready to use a Bible passage or account of God's work that relates to what they say.

The story of the Prodigal son. An abridged version of the story of Jacob & Esau - this would need a lot of preparation to work out which bits of the story to use to keep it to a suitable length. Mary losing Jesus.

Is there a creative way you can re-tell any of the Bible stories?

(visual, dramatic, video clip, modernised etc)

For Jacob & Esau you could tell the story using a photo of a farmer for Esau and a young good looking film star for Jacob.

(Continued on page 40)



Releasing Life Changing Skills and Confidence

Connect

What questions will encourage the group to connect their story and God's story?

How is the Bible story similar to your story? How is the Bible story different to your story? What qualities in your parents, or in God, would make you want to come home to them?



Reflect

Is there an activity that will help the group reflect on what they have learnt or help them plan to put that learning into action?

Draw an outline of a person and cut round it so that each participant has one. Ask the group to think about the things that they want to run away from - that put them off being around their family. Write or draw these things on one side of the paper person. Then ask them what they want to 'come home' to, the things that keep them close to their family. Write these things on the opposite side.

Encourage the group to remember that all the good qualities in their families are a reflection of God's goodness and that if those are qualities that would make them come home trying to develop those same qualities will keep their children 'coming home'. You could ask the group to say a simple prayer such as 'Thank you Lord that you are [then list good qualities from paper person], help me to be like that too. Amen'

Continuing Reflective Cycles...

Is there anything that you want to do or ask at the beginning of the next session to follow up this session?

Have they been aware of their own good qualities as parents?

Review

Will you seek feedback from participants? If so how?

We did not have any particular ideas for this.

Is there anything in this session to pay attention to in your own evaluation?

Talking about rebellion and broken aspects of family relationships can be emotional - how did the group handle this? As a facilitator how did you think it went? Do any of them need to speak to you or someone else about any of the relationships or issues that came up?



Session 3 - Facilitator's notes



Meet together to try out some sessions and explore any other identified common learning needs.

Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to:-
experience the Unlock reflective theological cycle
facilitate an Unlock session that they have prepared
gather feedback and suggestions on their session
offer constructive criticism on other participant's sessions

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to
identify the different stages of the Unlock reflective theological cycle
facilitate an Unlock session
identify ways of improving delivery and content of a group session

Prior to this session it might be useful to have a conversation with each participant to make sure that they are ready to run their sessions and to do anything you can to ensure that they have all they need.

Venue: whilst it is not necessary, it might be useful to run this session in a venue where multiple rooms are available or where there is a room large enough for each participant to use a different space to set up their session.

Session time will be 1 hour plus 40 minutes per trial session and any extra time for meals or drinks.

5 minutes Welcome participants.

Check they have their sessions prepared and all the resources that they need. Give a verbal outline of what will be done during the session. Decide the order in which you will have the trial sessions. Go through the suggestions on p44 concerning offering feedback, and ask if participants want to add anything then display the list so it can act as a reminder later on.

5 minutes Set Up Sessions

Allocate a room or space to each participant so that they can set up anything they need ready for their trial session.

10 minutes Reflective Cycle Exercise

Pass the parcel - see Unlock website

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

(Continued on page 42)





- 30 minutes** **Trial Session 1**
- 5 minutes** **Comfort Break**
- 10 minutes** **Feedback on Session 1**
- 30 minutes** **Trial Session 2**
- 10 minutes** **Feedback on Session 2**
- 30 minutes** **Lunch**
- 30 minutes** **Shared learning need**
- 30 minutes** **Trial Session 3**
- 10 minutes** **Feedback on session 3**
- 5 minutes** **Date set & feedback on today's session using the same form as for the trial sessions.**



Session 3 - Trial Session Feedback



Honest and loving feedback can bring about revelations that lead to positive change, even if that is uncomfortable. When you receive feedback it is up to you what you do with it - ignore it, seek confirmation or act on it.

Session name.....

We liked...

The best bit was...

Ideas for improvement...



Offering Feedback



- . Truthful
- . Caring
- . Loving
- . Respectful
- . Offered rather than imposed
- . Suggestions for improvement - rather than lists of faults
- . Solutions rather than problems
- . Remember your opinion is only - one way of seeing things
- . Think first
- . Be brief and clear



Session 4 - Facilitator's notes

Celebrate learning together, review achievements and explore next steps.



Aims: Participants will have the opportunity to:-

- experience the Unlock reflective theological cycle
- reflect on their experiences of facilitating a group
- support, challenge and encourage one another as they continue to work with their groups.

Outcomes: Participants will be more able to:-

- reflect on and resolve problems in their groups
- identify their own successes and struggles as facilitators

5 minutes **Welcome participants.**

Open in prayer. Give a verbal outline of what will be done during the session.

30 minutes **Pass the Parcel - Unlock Style!**

As with the other sessions we are going to start with an experience of Unlock's learning cycle but with a party feeling! Prior to the session you will need to prepare a pass the parcel. You might want to choose a gift for the middle of the parcel that can be shared by the group at the end of the game. In each layer place an object or picture that can act as a prompt to draw out people's stories. Ask the person who unwraps that layer if the prompt reminds them of an experience from their own life. Then invite the whole group to suggest Bible passages that connect with the story. For further ideas look at

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

30 minutes **The Good, The Bad and the Ugly**

Print out enough copies of [p47](#) so that there is one for each participant. Cut and fold them into 3 cards per page. Hopefully by now participants will have had the opportunity to run one or more Unlock style sessions with a group that they are working with. This is a moment to reflect on their experiences and help one another with difficulties. Allow about 10 minutes for filling in the cards, longer if people are still writing. Then ask everyone to place their cards into 3 piles; the good, the bad and the ugly. Everyone takes one from each pile. Take it in turns to read them out allowing room for the group to comment. As facilitator take this time to reflect if any of the things that are brought up might need further follow up later.

(Continued on page 46)





30 minutes **Pray for Each Other**

As the last meeting together this is a good opportunity to pray for one another and the groups people are working with. You know your group by now and will be able to assess what approach to prayer will fit. You might consider gathering round one person at a time and allowing the group to pray as they feel led or it may be more appropriate for you to pray for everyone or perhaps to pair people off to pray for each other. If the group are less verbal it might be suitable to write everyone's names on pieces of paper, everyone picks out a name and writes a prayer for that person to take away with them.

60 minutes **Food & Drink**

Finish the session with some 'treat' food and drink. Celebrate the success of the course and make room for questions and conversations emerging from their learning and experiences.



The Good



The Bad



The Ugly



VARK

Learning Style Preferences

16				
15				
14				
13				
12				
11				
10				
9				
8				
7				
6				
5				
4				
3				
2				
1				
	Visual	Audio	Read/Write	Kinesthetic



Getting people there (Publicity and Forming Relationships)



Our experience is that it takes time to develop the kind of relationships that will provide the basis for inviting people to join a group, especially as we are wanting to form groups that will reflect on connections between their experiences and the Bible, even though those we are inviting don't yet believe in God and might not be able to read! Most of the groups that have lasted beyond an initial short term course, have done so due to the strength of the relationships that they were based on. Knowing group members well means the facilitator can create session materials that really suit the group.

Forming Relationships

Prior to inviting people to belong to a group when and where will you spend time with them:

Whole group?

Where they are already together...

Where I could invite them to an activity or event...

Individual Group Members?

Face to face...

Phone...

Internet...

How long am I going to dedicate to building relationships before I invite them to form a group?

Getting People There

Once you have invested time in getting to know the potential group members you may find that it is a lot simpler to form a group and materials for them. Think about times and places they already meet and see if there are any natural gaps that a group meeting could fit into, for example a group in Liverpool formed out of a morning toddlers group so the Unlock group members simply stayed for lunch in the same venue.

- What is it that will attract your group members to belong to the group?
- What are they interested in?
- Do they all watch similar TV programmes, sport, films, etc.?
- Do they have a shared interest or hobby?
- Do they simply want to belong?

How can you draw these aspects into what the group does in order to make it attractive to the members?

Publicity

As those we work with prefer informal approaches that are tailored to them we favour the personal approach, face to face invitation or word of mouth for groups that are open to anyone. However take a moment to think of those you intend to work with, is there a method of publicity other than personal invitation that will reach them such as local paper, radio, poster in local venue, announcement at pub?

The best advert is someone who came and liked it, so even if numbers are low to start with encourage participants to bring their friends.

Relationship with rest of church, Pastoral Responsibility and Prayer Cover



(Shared Learning Need 9 from Participants Needs Assessment)

Relationship with rest of Church:-

- What support and help do you need from the rest of the church to run the group?
- What are the hopes and expectations of the church for the group you are working with?
- What are your hopes and expectations for the group?
- How do your hopes and expectations differ from those of the rest of the church?
- Could these differences be harmful in anyway? If so, how can you bring both sets of expectations in line with each other?
- Is the usual worship style of your church suitable for group members or do you need to look at an alternative option? (If group members come to faith or want to belong to a larger worshipping community)
- What plans can you make that will enable your group to become integrated in the family of the church?
- Who within the church family might act as a strong advocate for your group?
- Would it be helpful to develop a working agreement between yourself and the church to define your responsibilities with this group?

Pastoral responsibility:-

- Who is pastorally responsible for the members of your group? If someone else from the church shares some of that responsibility with you how will they meet group members and what kind of information and situations will you hand over to them?
- Is there someone in the church leadership that you could arrange to meet every few months to review how things are going for you with the group? (for your benefit and the benefit of the group)

Prayer Cover:-

- What prayer activities exist in your church? How can you place your group on their lists?
- Can you talk to other small groups and ask for prayer cover?
- Is there someone that you could ask to pray for the group when you meet?

Action Plan:-

To do now:

To do regularly:

To do once the course is running:

To do at the end of the course:



Exit Strategy: Planning For a Group to Finish or Handover



Start as you mean to go on...

Okay, so it's a little clichéd but it will benefit your planning and the security of group members if you are clear about how long you intend the group to run. When you are inviting people to participate in the group it is useful to tell them how and when it is going to end.

So here are some possible approaches:

Limited Length Course

Deciding on a fixed number of sessions can be helpful, especially if your potential participants have never belonged to a group before. Making a commitment for something over a short term may feel more feasible than a longer term or going commitment. As a facilitator this is particularly suitable if you are uncertain about the group, after the course if it has gone well you can of course suggest another set of sessions.

Indefinite Commitment

You may be in a position to commit to running a group for a long time and therefore invite people to belong to something that will be continuous. This is useful if those you are inviting would benefit from a sense of belonging to something. If this is the case I suggest that regular reviews of the groups activities are made to ensure that the practicalities, content and activities are meeting the needs of the group members.

Identify Emerging Facilitator

In order to enable many groups to become established it may be that your role is temporary within a group even though the group stays together in the long term. In this scenario your observations of the group will be vital in identifying a potential future leader. Not necessarily the one who is most articulate or quickest to contribute but rather the one who remembers what others have said, who draws out contributions from more reticent members and who is more concerned about the whole group than their own agenda. We have used a handover agreement in such situations that roughly takes two terms to achieve. Feel free to adapt it to your needs as appropriate:

See page 52 for an outline of an Unlock Group Handover Agreement



Unlock Group Handover Agreement



“Group Name”

Para 1: Description of group, numbers meeting time, venue, purpose of group etc

“Reason for Handover”

Para 2: departure of current facilitator A and choice of replacement B and date of final handover

Hand Over Phase 1- specify 3 month period

A and B will run the group jointly for 3 months. Prior to our first session we will explore Unlock's methodology together, look at the theory behind some of the sessions we have experienced together and plan the first session.

During this phase A and B will meet for an hour following the group session to review how it has gone and plan for the following week's session. Each week B's input to the content and the aspects that she is leading will increase.

Hand Over Phase 2 - specify following 3 month period

B will take over facilitation and planning of the sessions for the group. A will be available to support B in facilitating the group, however it will be B's decision whether or not A attends the group sessions or if that support will take the form of weekly review and planning support.

Hand Over Phase 3 - specify final 3 month period

From January onwards we will have a support / supervision meeting once every half term. Before the end of this 3 month period we will establish a support / supervision agreement with the Church leadership in order to help B sustain the group's activities.



Unlock the Theory

I know it's a cliché but one thing I keep finding myself saying to people when I am talking about Unlock's work is '**it's not rocket science**'. I reckon there is pretty much someone in every church that could grasp the issues, and the basic principles of how to tackle them. That is why Unlock works in a way that does; trying not to generate yet another layer of dependency, where people from outside come in and 'fix' things. We work in a way that enables local leadership, offers support for a time while things develop, and then moves on to raise awareness of the issues, and some possible approaches somewhere else.

Three types of culture have been identified in the UK today. We wouldn't argue that there are only these three, there will certainly be others, not least the distinctive cultures of some ethnic minorities, but for now we will focus on these three. They are known as: -

- '**Modern**' culture,
- '**Post Modern**' culture, and,
- '**Traditional Tabloid**' culture.

Unlock has worked for since 1972 developing ways of using the bible within **Traditional Tabloid Culture**. One of the recognised features of Traditional Tabloid Culture is that people within it don't relate very readily to books and text. These are households where you probably won't see many books, if any, perhaps just a TV guide, or a catalogue. It's not that people can't read; it is just that it isn't part of their way of life, not an activity that they are used to or particularly comfortable with.

So what do you do? This is a 'non-book' culture and the thing you want them to engage with (the Bible) is – a book! Not only that, it is a big fat book, with no pictures, and loads of text, strangely laid out and using language that is strange to most of us!

The trick is not to start with The Book at all, but rather to begin with the real life everyday experiences of the people you are working with.

You could start with: -

- their stories
- their own experiences
- a shared group experience
- Making or drawing something together
- Something within the life of their community
- Something everyday for them
- Whatever they were all talking about as they came in
- An object from everyday life; a carrier bag, bus ticket, mobile phone, cup of tea, etc.
- A culturally appropriate film or TV clip
- A picture
- An emotion – e.g. think of the last time you were angry, ashamed, excited, etc.

The key is to focus on the participants. What is needed is very much learner centred learning, that is



not too precious about content, but is about helping people explore their own experience, relate it to scripture, and discover their own potential. In Theological reflection, or in traditional bible study, you begin with a text. All you need to do when working in 'non-book' cultures is begin with a different kind of 'text', one that is not in print.

This may be scary for those who are used to knowing what they will say and what they want people to learn. Unlock's five decades of experience suggests that to work in this kind of culture you have to respect the participants enough to give up the agenda to them, and let them discover what they want to learn, and to enable that process with them. One of the things that will affect how scary this approach is for you is how you look at faith. If you understand faith as a nicely wrapped package, with a fixed content, safely fastened up, which you were given some time ago, and all you have to do is keep it safe – you are likely find this approach to enabling theological thinking pretty uncomfortable. If you see faith as a pilgrimage of discovery, to which each of us is committed (faithful), and within which each of us is uncovering different aspects of God, and viewing him/her from different places, this sort of approach is much less threatening. I don't believe that I am qualified to tell you that either of these ways of seeing faith is correct, or incorrect. But I do know that Unlock approaches are much more comfortable for facilitators who see faith as dynamic, growing and changing; than they are for those who see it as fixed and unchanging. Unlock's approach leaves a good deal of what people will actually learn in the hands of the Holy Spirit! Prayer is an essential part of the process!

The use of questions is important. It is really the most effective way in which groups can be challenged to think more carefully or explore an alternative perspective. And it's a very creative tool, not to be underrated. If you look at how Jesus taught, you will see that he used stories from everyday life, and questions, more than any other approaches. It is best if you use questions that rely on *insight and experience* rather than *knowledge*, so probably not, 'who can tell me what Jesus said to the Syrpheonietian woman in Tyre!' but more like, 'can you think of a time when you felt rejected by someone who was important to you?'

For example, just say, there is an issue with teenagers being disruptive on an estate, a meeting is called, people come with predetermined ideas about the nature of the problem and what the solution is. Unlock's approach would be to get people into small groups and ask them to talk with each other about what each of them wanted most when they were a teenager? Who was the adult they liked best when they were teenagers and why? What aspects of their own teenage behaviour most upset their parents? Discussions structured in this way are much more likely to lead to creative outcomes than confrontational debates about who has the best idea for solving the 'problem'. The principle is simple, you are asking people to apply their own 1st hand experience to help them develop insights into the situation and begin to formulate their own solutions. This is empowering. These principles can be applied to any topic, including the Bible.

The Unlock approach isn't one precious method; it's a series of principles which have evolved over 50 years of practical experience. It has manifested itself differently in different places. Workers in Sheffield focussed on the use of contemporary film and have produced resources based on Billy Elliot and The Full Monty. There are all kinds of clips from films, or television programmes, which can be used to open up theological discussions of contemporary issues; see 'The Veronica Sessions' for ideas. In Hull they specialised in the use of creative visual arts and hands on activities. One of the keys in Hull seems to have been their way of thinking in very concrete terms, which fits well with traditional tabloid culture. In Hull they have – made bricks with no straw – literally, they have conducted an 'exodus' from the safety of the church, into the 'new territory' of



the estate, on go-carts that they had all worked together to build, and they have 'entered the promised land' by placing a big thick curtain across the sanctuary and then pulling it down to reveal a feast of fish and chips, ready to share on the other side. Afterwards people have reflected in small groups on their shared experiences, and made connections between them and the stories in the Bible and with their own life experiences, so they have identified and explored their own times of 'slavery', 'exile' and their own 'promised land' experiences.

If you want to know more about Unlock and its work you can:-

Visit the Unlock website www.unlock-urban.org.uk

- Complete the feedback form provided on the website.

Contact the Unlock National Office: Unlock, 15 Station Road, Rotherham, S60 1HN, Tel: 01709 380 318 office@unlock-urban.org.uk

Dawn Lonsdale (Chief Officer)

Nothing new under the sun.....

One worry that is often flagged up when considering non-book ways of communicating theology is that it will detract from the Word of God, i.e. not using the Bible – the written word - is dangerous. However, there is nothing new under the sun when it comes to visual and dramatic ways of communicating theology. In medieval times (pre Protestantism), when congregations were largely illiterate and the mass was conducted in Latin anyway, churches were full of paintings and murals illustrating stories and themes from the Bible. Mystery plays were also performed in the market places citing traditional interpretations of Scripture in an effort to bring theology to everyday people. The popular "Second Shepherd's Play" is one example, available here <http://seas3.elte.hu/coursematerial/PikliNatalia/AGuthrieSecondShP.pdf>

Or from the Unlock office on request.

Nowadays illiteracy is not so much the issue. Rather the shift is towards the spoken and seen word as a matter of choice. Occasionally this is due to lower basic skills levels and problems such as dyslexia; more often not. Whatever, the challenge these days remains the same: to communicate Scripture in ways that are relevant, accessible and meaningful to everyday men and women.

One example of how theology can be communicated in a very real and down-to-earth way is in the life of a 17 year old friend who recently came with me on an outreach trip to Morocco. She is bright, articulate, big-hearted, wise and theologically sound and profound. She is also severely dyslexic which means she finds not only written words difficult to assimilate but spoken instruction too. The best way she learns theology is by living out what she grasps from DVDs, songs, dramas, conversations and through the example of her foster parents and Christian friends around her.

Fiona Smith, Unlock Hull Field Worker, 2007



Acknowledgements & Concluding Remarks

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Now that you have read, and possibly used, these materials we would welcome your feedback, in order to revise and improve this resource. So please get in touch with us via our website <http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/> and let us know how Unlock DIY went for you, and if there is anything we could improve.

God bless you as you take His good news to those around you.

(Sonya Doragh, Unlock Liverpool, 2010.)

Updated in 2021 & 2023 by Unlock Chief officer

