

The Year We Stayed at Home - With Discernment



A Pick and Mix Resource pack of activities
and Bible linked materials for reflecting on
our shared experiences
of the COVID 19 Pandemic



The Year We Stayed at Home With Discernment

Contents

Contents	Page 2
Introduction	Page 3
How to use this resource	Page 4
Unlock COVID Timeline	Pages 5-7
Discernment Reflection	Pages 9-15
Discernment – Activities	Pages 16-18
Discernment – Resources	Page 19—21
Discernment – Bible	Pages 22-24
Information about Unlock	Page 26
Facilitator Guidance	Page 27-28
Image credits	Pages 29

*Material created collaboratively by Dawn Lonsdale and Carolyn Gower
With credited guest contributions*

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Why this? Why now?

Introduction

The COVID 19 Pandemic has been undeniably tough for everyone and particularly for those communities where our Unlock work is focussed.

We believe that ***all of us*** need, (without moaning or whingeing), to be prepared to acknowledge the energy drain and the emotional cost of COVID 19, for ourselves, for each other and in our communities.

Everyone is more or less bereaved all of the time, even if we have not lost anyone, and even if we have plenty to be grateful for. We have all lost opportunities and precious time with loved ones, we have all had to let go of hopes and dreams and plans; and that disappointment is real and painful. As well as that everyone is dealing with heightened levels of fear and anxiety, and having to manage day to day decisions that potentially have far more significant consequences than we are accustomed to. Many of us know at least some people who have lost loved ones, which is both sad to bear and adds to the fear. Plus we have all had to adjust repeatedly and fairly swiftly to new ways of doing things and to relate, usually by pretty clunky means, to everyone else who is dealing with all of that stuff as well, but probably differently! It's hard to rest and feel refreshed when we do not have access to many of the ways we would usually do that, and the end is still some way off. Self-care and care for one another are going to be really critical over the next 24 months or so at least; and creating safe environments where people can express their pain and vulnerability, without abdicating responsibility or getting sucked into unproductive self-pity, are going to be an essential part of what we need to offer out of our faith, both personally, as Unlock and as Churches.

We may feel that we just want to move on and forget all about it but ultimately that will not help us to grow and learn from these exceptional experiences. It's going to be essential that we support one another to remember and process the collective trauma of COVID 19, that includes allowing appropriate grief, acknowledging anger and remembering effectively, both the good and the bad things.

So we are offering you this resource pack as a way to start to do that work, in your own places, with your own people. We hope and pray that you will find it useful.

Dawn Lonsdale, Chief Officer





We suggest that you begin with the **timeline activities on pages 6&7**. We have noticed that, in the course of this pandemic, the details of what was happening just a few months ago become hazy memories quite quickly. It is hard to keep a clear picture of what happened when; when we last saw so and so, when we last went inside someone else's home, when we last left our home town and so on. The timeline will help us to get some perspective, a long overview of all that has happened. Those experiences will be different for everyone and it will be good to explore them together. You will be amazed at how much you have forgotten! You might return to the timeline activities as part of each of the other sections, or at the end, to see if there are any new insights to add.

We have chosen **six topics** that have formed a part of our own journey and reflections through 2020 and 2021. They are **Lament, Gratitude, Patience, Hope, Kindness and Discernment**. Each topic has its own section, which includes a reflection, some creative activities for groups or individuals, and some Bible material. These sections are not in any particular order and you can use them in any way that you like. **This pack includes the section on Discernment only**. The full pack is also available, as are five other individual topic sections.

You are encouraged to **be selective**. You use as much or as little of the material as you like. You know your people and your place. You know what will connect for folk, and what will engage them; please feel free to **choose** from this material and use only that which seems best suited to your own context. There's no reason why you can't present your groups with some options and respond to what they would like to do.

The **topic reflection/introduction** is on pages 9-11 and is intended as *preparatory reading for group facilitators*. Facilitators can choose how much of that material to share with their groups and how. Please note that there is absolutely no need to provide printed copies of all of the material for everyone involved!

The approaches in this pack are based on the **Unlock learning cycle** which you will find on page 28. Unlock has been using this approach for nearly 50 years. It is linked to the ways in which Jesus taught; using stories and connections with people's day to day lives; and we continue to use it because it works. We recommend that in using this material you use the learning cycle to structure your approach. The most important aspect is that we engage with our *own stories before* we explore what the Bible has to say, not the other way around.

It is important that you take some time when you are planning to **really understand the needs of your local group**, so that you can select activities and material that are appropriate for them, and work in a way that fits your local context. You can use pages 20—27 of our facilitator training pack, '**Unlock DIY**' to help you reflect effectively on the needs of your group(s). <http://www.unlock-urban.org.uk/documents/UnlockDIY2020update.pdf>

We recommend that you give yourself and your group plenty of **time and space** to work through this material. You will all get more out of it if you don't rush it, allow yourselves to be **creative** and to break free of the notion that there are 'right' answers. This is much more about sharing our experiences, what we can discover together, and how we can support one another in doing that, than it is about getting from point A to point B.

The participants are not the only ones who will benefit from thinking about this stuff, but not everyone will come and join in with group activities. So **share what you are doing**; find creative ways to display the results of your activities so that other people can see them and have a moment to do their own reflecting too.

See page 28 & 29 for further Unlock facilitator guidance.

What follows on pages 6&7 is an activity to help us begin to recall, process and understand the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on us personally, as a group, or groups, and also as a community.

The Timeline image maps some of the key events of 2020 (you can add others in 2021) and helps us place our personal key events into this framework.

The timeline image on page 6 is only for illustration. Obviously it is far too small for people to use to work on. The Unlock office has a supply of ready printed A2 copies of the timeline so (unless you have your own facilities to print page 6 at A2 size) you need to contact the Unlock Office and request sufficient copies to have at least one per person for your group(s). There is an order form below, or you can e-mail or telephone the Unlock office providing the necessary information.

The idea is that each person has their own individual copy and can personalise it by adding anything that feels important for them to remember. The coloured squares are deliberately left blank as spaces where people can add in their own personal events, milestones and experiences. Page 7 gives suggestions for the kind of things we might think about and add into our own copy of the timeline. Items can be added using pictures, words or a combination, or using cut out images pasted on. This needn't be a one off activity. We can return to our timelines and add more to them at any stage.

Groups can work both individually and together to help each other remember what happened when.

Ultimately each person's timeline will be their own personal record of their lives during the pandemic, a kind of visual diary, which they can keep and use to recall 'The Year We Stayed at Home', and perhaps to explain what it was like to future generations!

Covid timeline order form

The Year We stayed at Home

Please mail copies of the Unlock Covid timeline to -

Name: E-mail address

.

Postal address:

Telephone number (in case we need to check anything with you)

Please send completed orders to the Unlock Office, (C/O Shiloh) 15 Station Road,
Rotherham, S60 1HN or to office@unlock/urban.org.uk Tel: 01709 380318.

We welcome (but do not require) donations to cover the cost of printing and postage.



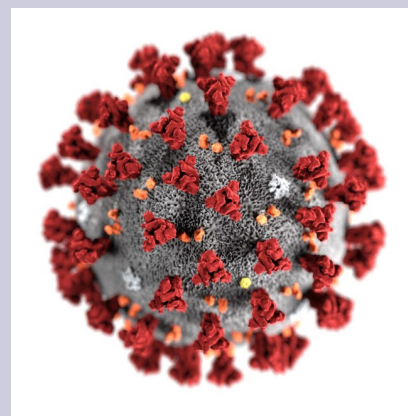
COVID-19 Pandemic Timeline Activities

You can add to the timeline anything that you want to record and remember about your personal experience of the pandemic.

You can use words, symbols, stickers, colours, drawings, pictures, or a combination; as you prefer.

You could include:-

- **Things that just were: -**
 - ◇ Family events, birthdays, etc
 - ◇ Significant moments or turning points
- **Lost or missed things: -**
 - ◇ People, activities or things you have lost or missed
 - ◇ Places you didn't go.
- **New things and things to be glad about: -**
 - ◇ Things you enjoyed
 - ◇ Things you are grateful for
 - ◇ Places you went
 - ◇ Things you made
 - ◇ Things that helped you get through
 - ◇ Things you learnt, or noticed
 - ◇ New things that you didn't do before that you want to keep
 - ◇ People you spent time with, either face to face or in other ways
- **Your responses and reactions: -**
 - ◇ What you discovered about yourself
 - ◇ What emotions did you feel?
 - ◇ When were you most afraid?
 - ◇ When were you most at peace?
 - ◇ Where was God for you; and where were God's people?



We have not included the regularly issued data on case numbers, hospitalisations and deaths. If you want to add in that kind of data you can find it here <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

You might find this Wikipedia timeline useful for reference, especially if you like to have precise dates and details https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_COVID-19_pandemic_in_England

You can use the months that are blank, either to continue to journal as the months go by, or to express your hopes for what is to come (or a bit of both!) The big yellow box at the bottom is for you to make a note of things you want to do when it's over that you can't do now.

Once groups can meet again safely the timeline could be used to structure a group or community reflection process.



The work of the mature person is to carry grief in one hand and gratitude in the other and to be stretched large by them. How much sorrow can I hold? That's how much gratitude I can give. If I carry only grief, I'll bend toward cynicism and despair. If I have only gratitude, I'll become saccharine and won't develop much compassion for other people's suffering. Grief keeps the heart fluid and soft, which helps make compassion possible.

~Francis Ward Weller

Photo by Magne Traeland - Unsplash

BRASSBALLS TENDER HEART Helping women Coaching for Men

AND
LET THE PEACE
OF CHRIST RULE
IN YOUR HEARTS
TO WHICH INDEED
YOU WERE CALLED IN ONE BODY
AND *be thankful*
COLOSSIANS 3:15



Discernment

By Sue Sheriff
October 2020

What are we talking about?

I've been asked to say a few words about discernment. So I'd better start by explaining what I think discernment is about. In its broadest form it is about deciding what is right and wrong, what's good or evil. What I'm thinking of specifically at the moment is discerning God's will in our lives, in our situation at any particular time and how we can work out what it is that God wants for us.

When I was a teenager I joined a fairly lively evangelical church which meant we were really into reading the bible, and when it came to discernment (knowing what

to do) we would pray a lot, we would read the bible, and then they used to say there were different elements that we needed to sort of get in line and that would help us discern or understand God's will.

So for instance they encouraged us to ask questions such as "Is it scriptural?" God wouldn't ask us to do anything that was contrary to what he taught in the bible, so if it goes against God's teaching it probably isn't God's will. Another question would be "Is it legal?" and "Is it moral?" so again God would be very unlikely to ask us to break the law or to do something that is generally considered to be not right in the world that we live



Paris France city street map art

Michael Thompsett — used with permission.



in although, hold on, I will qualify all these things a bit later. Another question would be "Is it possible?" Again God is the God of the impossible and God can supply money, and other needs, but there are some things that are just beyond possibility. So for instance there is very little chance of me flying to mars or becoming queen of England. Another question would be "Is it sensible?" If you were a single mum with 5 children under the age of 10, it would be very unlikely that God would ask you to go to the back of beyond as a mission partner. And another question would be "What about those people you turn to for advice?" "What do they think about?" "Does it make sense?" "Do they agree?" "What are they saying to you?" And we were taught that if you could sort of pray a lot and line those things up pretty



much in order then you would have a good idea what it was that God was saying to you.

For it seemed good
to the Holy Spirit and to us
to lay upon you no greater burden
than these necessary things.

Acts 15:28

A Grown-up Approach



Since those early days I probably still hold on to those basic thoughts but I've also relaxed a little bit. Maybe I've come to learn that God will often excite us and surprise us with things that we couldn't have expected or come to understand. There's a passage in Acts chapter 15 that I really like and it's the verse particularly that says "It seemed good to us and to the Holy Spirit". Paul and Barnabas had been talking to the Gentiles, the new Christians, the new believers, and He'd been saying "You don't need to do all the old rules" but others had come along, the Pharisees, and said "Ah yes but you've got to be circumcised, you've got to do this and you've got to do that". So they went back to Jerusalem to Peter, the apostles, the elders and they talked about it and Peter and James and some of the other elders sent a letter back saying do you know what, actually you don't have to stick to all those rules. If you just keep these basic ones and he uses the phrase as part of that letter "It seemed good to us and to the Holy Spirit". And I guess that's a big thing for me now in discerning, working out what



God's will is, and what the way forward is. That if it seems good to



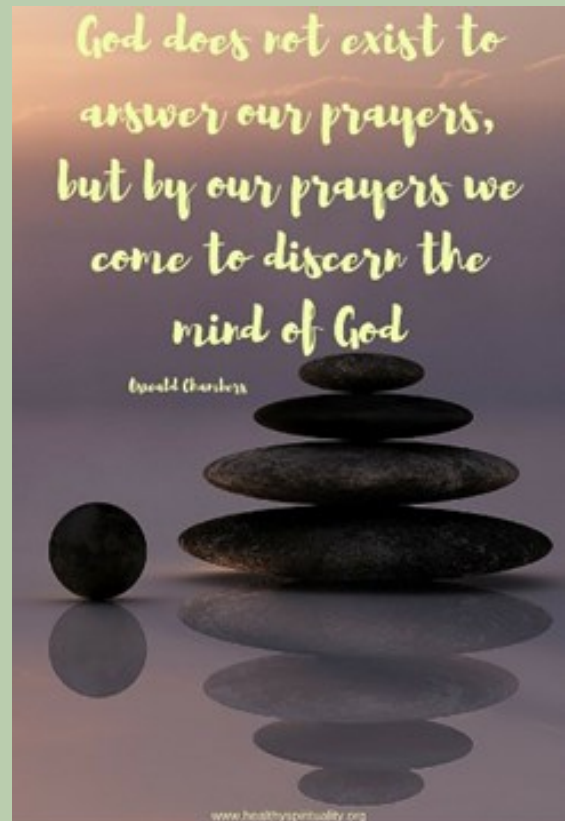
me and the Holy Spirit, if I've got that gut feeling that says it's right, and it still kind of ticks those other boxes, then that's the thing that really leads me in discerning God's will.

How does it work?

So how does discernment work in our current situation? How do we work out what's right or wrong? What's God's will? What it is that God's calling us to? First of all I'd say to you as someone using this material, there's a good chance that if you can do something you already are. Now I say "if you can", just remember not everybody can at the moment (especially during a global pandemic!), and that's OK. And also just because you can doesn't mean you should. There could be a whole load of possibilities. You could be working 24/7 if you wanted to but that doesn't mean it's a sensible thing to do. But this is why we look for discernment, to work out what God is saying to us as we move forward.

We're sort of passing through that knee jerk reaction and realising that we are in this (COVID in this instance) for the long haul, we need to work out what that means.

I think one of the things that can come in quite handy at this point is using the whole Unlock learning cycle (see page 118) because it starts with people's everyday stories. The first thing you need to do is know your people, know their situations, know



what's happening in your local area. What are their needs? There'll be some that are really clear and obvious and there might be some that are more subtle. There'll be some needs that lots of people are already meeting and maybe what you need to do is partner up with them. There may be things that have gone unnoticed, individuals who are slipping through the net and perhaps it's those for whom God is calling you to do something.

So, first of all, know your people, the people you're called to serve, your situation, your context, and come to understand what people's stories are. Then, know your God. I know I said earlier that we need to sort of measure things against the Bible. The Bible can be used in lots of ways to make certain things seem right and certain things seem wrong, and sometime it is used well and sometimes badly. But Jesus said the first commandment is this **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength, and then love your neighbour as much as you love yourself."** And I think they are pretty good guiding principles about what's biblical.



So, first of all, feel that love for the people that you're serving. And then think about how God met people's needs. One of the stories that came to mind was the woman at the well, and do you know, all she needed

was somebody to talk to. She had to go to the well at a completely different time to everyone else because she wasn't quite accepted. She was a religious woman, she was an intelligent



woman. You can hear both those things in the conversation, but she didn't do too well in relationships and so she ended up as an outcast. But first of all Jesus appealed to her for something. There was something that she could give to Him and then Jesus gave her something back. He gave her conversation, He gave her honesty, He spent time with her, and she just couldn't wait to go and tell others and to bring them back. Perhaps we need to give people time. Jesus



did it a lot. Look at Zacchaeus, another person who was very lonely. Of course, in his context, Jesus said "right, get down from that tree, cause I'm coming to your house today." Now we can't do that no matter

how much we want to because it's not in the COVID rules. So what about the rules? I said earlier "is it biblical? is it legal? and is it moral?" Now sometimes those two things aren't exactly the same any more, and we do have to work things out. But I remember many years ago being in Peru. There were some documents that were needed, and the system at the time was you paid bribes, if you wanted paperwork you paid bribes. And the Christian mission partners who were working there at the time weren't happy to do this because it wasn't legal, and yet on the other hand if they didn't buy in to that whole system then they didn't get the paperwork they needed.

At the moment, life's difficult. There are rules and regulations that sometimes stop us doing the things that we want to do. And you're going to have to work that one out to a certain



extent for yourself. How do we balance these things up? Are there other ways round our circumstance?

When Jesus was on the cross and He looked down at Mary and John who were both at the foot of the cross, He said to John "here's your mother" and to Mary "mother, here's your son" and from that day John took her into his house. She became part of His bubble. It was one of the ways round the situation at the time, and in some ways maybe that's part of our way round, that we form bubbles so that we can care for certain individuals' needs. I don't know, you're going to have to work a lot of this out yourself. And again we're going to have to go back to that verse that says "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us". And we're going to have to pray things through. We're going to have to work out some of these dilemmas, and we're going to have to look forward to the future.

The one thing I would say to end with is just remember that God's ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts. "His ways are so much higher" it says, "as high as the heavens are above the earth". So pray, and ask Him to show you, because He will delight and surprise you time after time. Don't necessarily look for things that

FOR MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT
YOUR THOUGHTS, NEITHER
ARE YOUR WAYS MY WAYS,
SAITH THE **LORD**. FOR AS
THE HEAVENS ARE HIGHER
THAN THE EARTH, SO ARE MY
WAYS HIGHER THAN YOUR
WAYS, AND MY THOUGHTS
THAN YOUR THOUGHTS.
ISAIAH 55:8,9

are going to give you an MBE at the end of this, but look for those things that are going to make a difference in people's lives. Perhaps we can bring a bit of Jesus into people's situation just by showing our love and care.



Activities to help us reflect on Discernment

Select whichever of these you think your group will relate to best and use them to explore together our own COVID experiences of discernment.

What does Discernment mean?

Discernment is a big 'churchy' word. Explore what it means. It's how we decide what's best. In mapping terms it is about finding our way. Other words that might be used in the same way are wisdom, understanding, insight. Synonyms for discernment can be found here <https://www.thesaurus.com/browse/discernment> but *be picky*; some are more helpful than others!

Image - map and compass:-

We sometimes find it is helpful to use an image or symbol to help us think about an idea. We have chosen map making as a way to explore the idea of discernment? Think of it in terms of finding our way. You've



heard the phrase "uncharted territory" maybe even in relation to COVID. Let's see if we can start to "chart" the territory? What are the landmarks? What are the dangers? Where be there dragons?! What would a compass, pointing north look like, metaphorically? Use the images on pages 19

- 20 to help spark a discussion.

Maps that help us tell stories: -

On page 21 you will find maps of the 100 acre wood (Christopher Robin); and of Bilbo's journey (The Hobbit). You could use these, or another map of a fictional place, or an ordinance survey map of anywhere, or you could use a map of your local area (perhaps even comparing old and new local maps) - these could all be used as a way to share and shape stories and dreams; if we were in *that* map space: Where would we go? How would we find our way? What would we do or

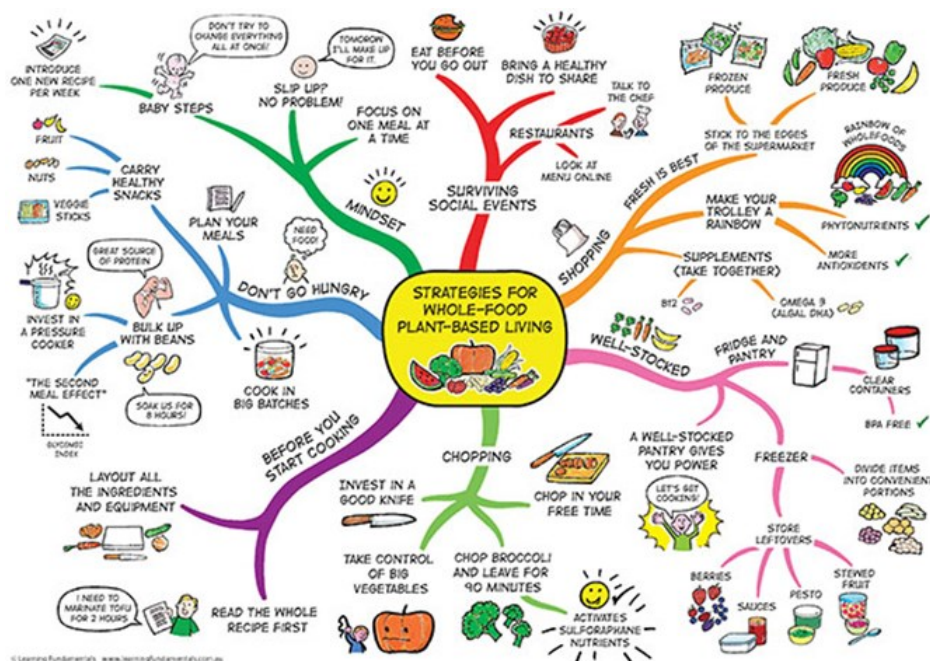


find? Where would we want to get to? What would the obstacles/dangers be? If you have used local maps you are already connecting these explorations to the real world. If you have used maps from fiction as a way in, then you can move to a local map and start to ask the same questions in a real world context. How is this story map like our real place?

All the time the key question is, 'How do we work out which way to go?'

Make an Ideas Map:

This is an example. It's best if your group work together to make it's own, (if that's not possible it can be done by individuals). This is a

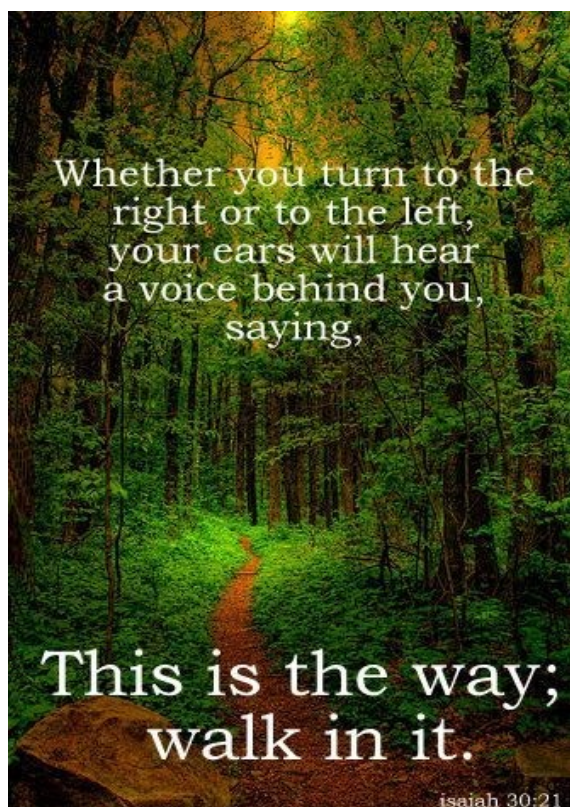


really useful exercise in lots of different contexts. It is a simple way of organising quite complex ideas into a visual format that often allows us to see connections and patterns that are much less obvious in a written, linear format. It can helpfully be used to discern a way forward, maybe thinking about 2021 as a year *with* the

virus but *without* the surprise of an unknown virus and unknown government-imposed lifestyle; a year when we can have strategies, plans, rhythms, patterns of behaviour that empower us. Maybe the central topic of such an ideas map could be: **2021 - living it well.**

Explore these ideas using the **COVID Timeline** on pages 6 (remember, poster size versions are available on request from the Unlock office)

· We will know the pandemic is over when... - this identifies the things we miss, and hope for...





- What we'd like to take forward from the pandemic - good outcomes
- What new things to keep and focus on - thought processes, lifestyle choices, what we want to invest our time and energy in going forward.
- What to leave behind - identifies the changes we are prepared to make now; the things we are willing to let go of.
- What we have discovered about ourselves - what makes me fearful; what makes me joyful; inner strength and resources I now know I have; how I react to rules; how I deal with anxiety, loneliness etc...

- What we have discovered about other people - maybe our preconceptions about individuals or groups of people have been challenged?
- What we have discovered about God - have I tuned in to God at all? If so how? Has it changed?

Look for patterns in the responses. Where do we see Change? Challenge? Growth? New Learning? Help each other recognise the positives while honestly acknowledging pain and loss.

Remember that the key question is, '**How do we find our way?**'

Another useful question could be, 'What have I become passionate about, or more passionate about?'

Listen :-

True North—Rend Collective - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwh27nFnVIU>

We know the way from Moana - [Moana - We Know The Way \(1080p - 4k\) \[English\] - YouTube](#)

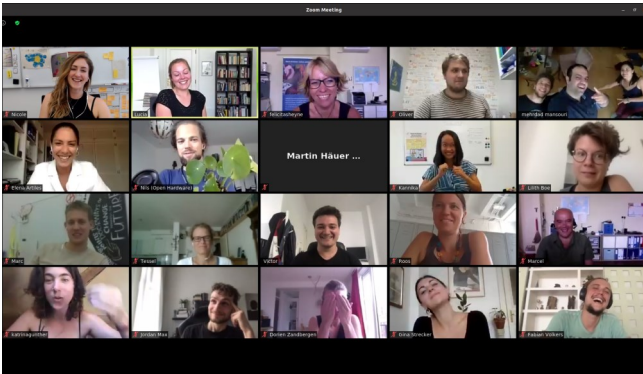
Display & Share:-

Find ways to display your work in a community space; ideas maps, posters, scrapbooks, etc; to help other people to reflect as well.



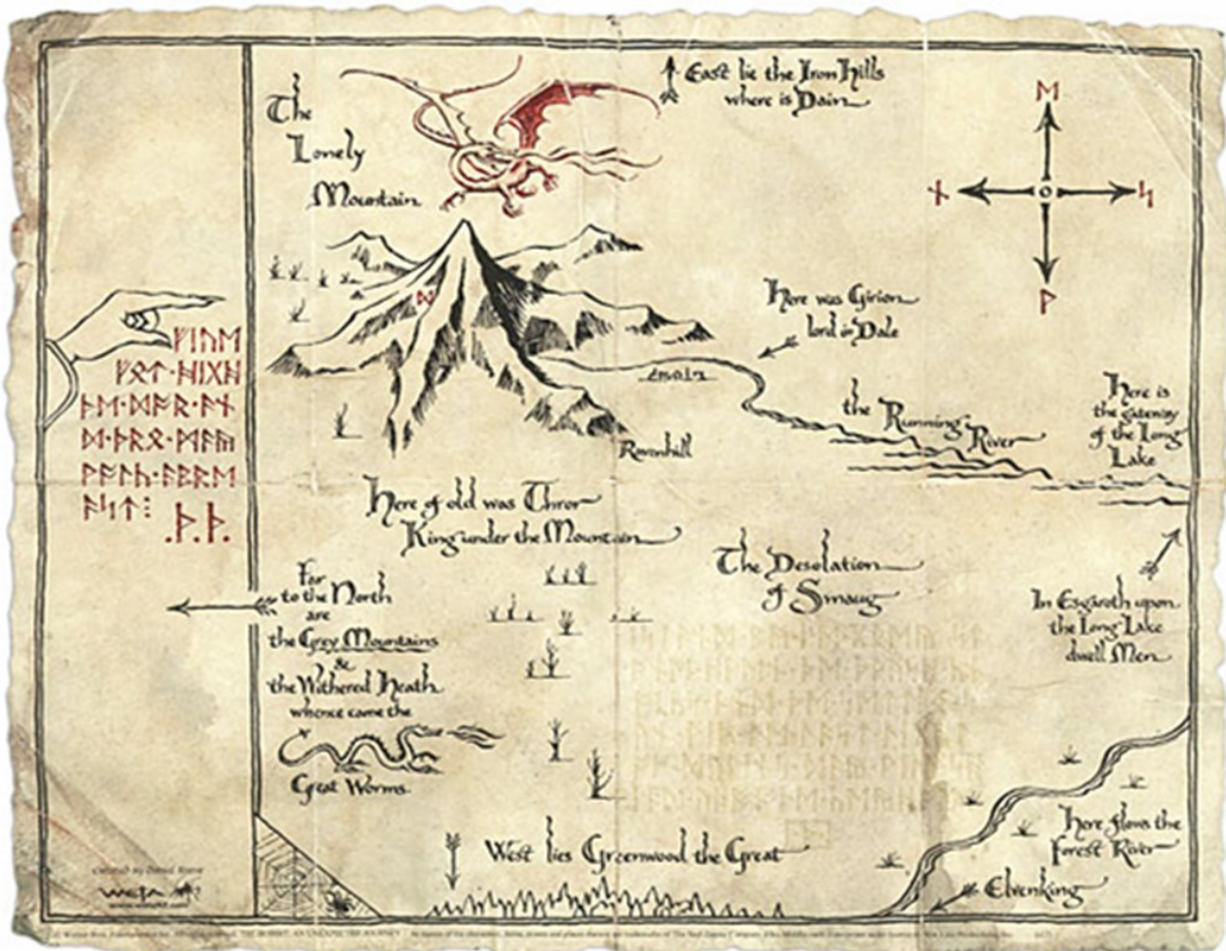
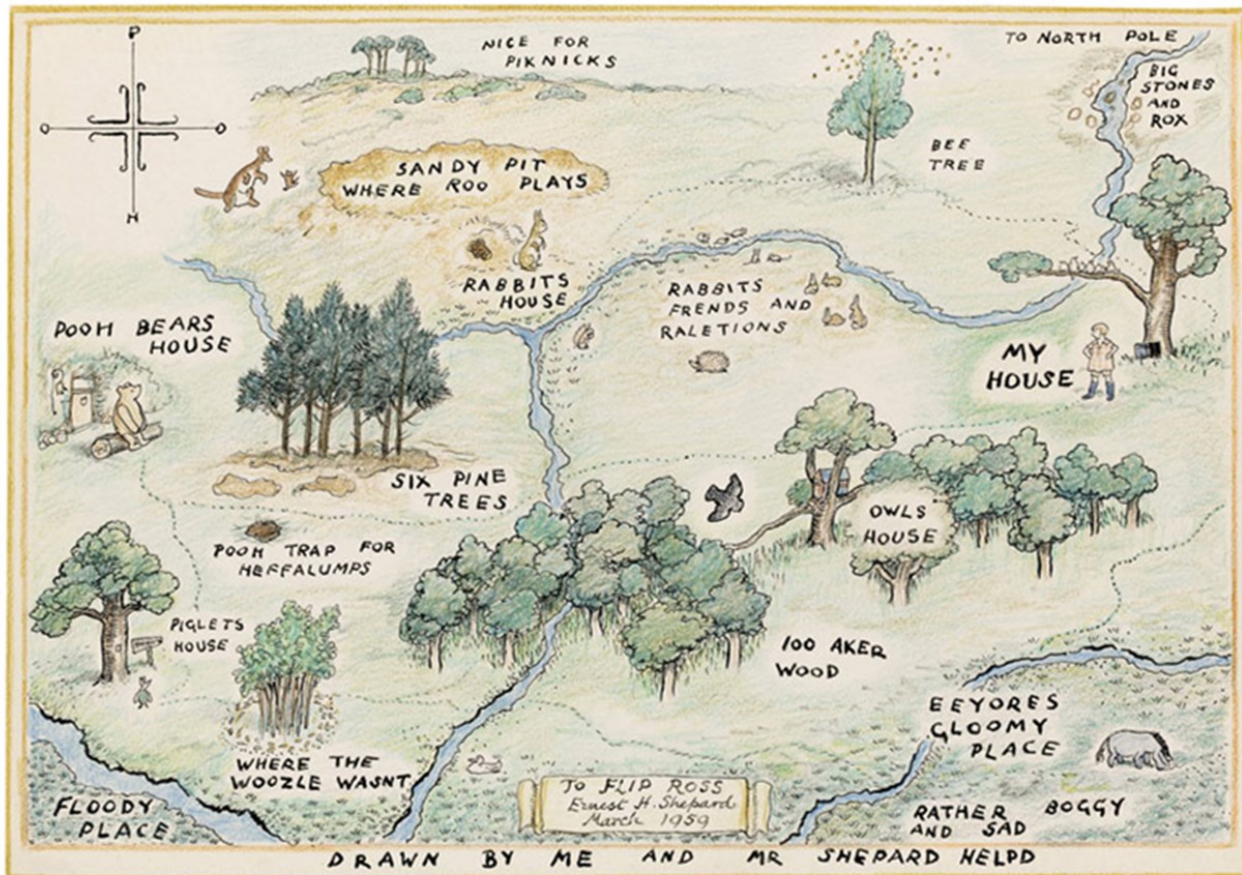
COVID Lockdown picture collection

Discernment - Resources



Discernment - Resources

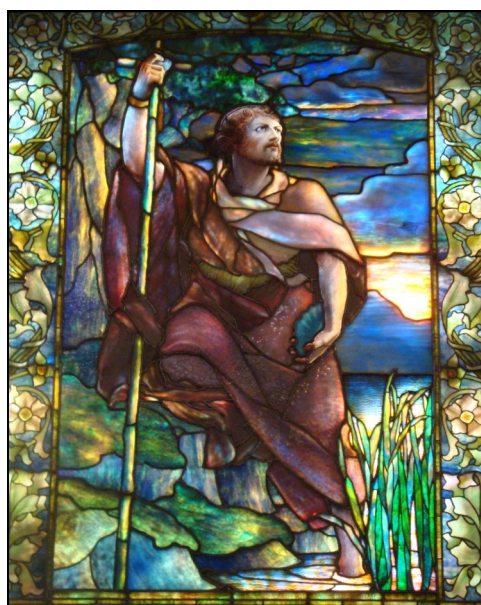






Bible Stories to help us reflect on Discernment

Select whichever of these you think your group will relate to best and use them to explore together our own COVID experiences of discernment.



Activity based on the Story of John the Baptist:

Using extracts from **Luke 1; 3, 7, 9 (Matt 9, 11, 14 / Mark 1, 6)** . Tell the story of John's life and use it together to create a 'wellbeing' graph. Time travels along the x axis and wellbeing is up and down the y axis. E.g. His birth starts off as a high on wellbeing (angels, greatly desired child etc); Adult life in the desert - perhaps just below zero on the wellbeing; Lots of people coming to listen to him - well above zero; Baptising Jesus would be another high, capture and imprisonment, a low...

etc... The purpose of this is to show the ups and downs in his life - to create an emotion map. We can use it as a template for our own emotion map of just the last year or even our whole life!

Below is a selection of stories of people whose lives were abruptly interrupted by Jesus and their future transformed.

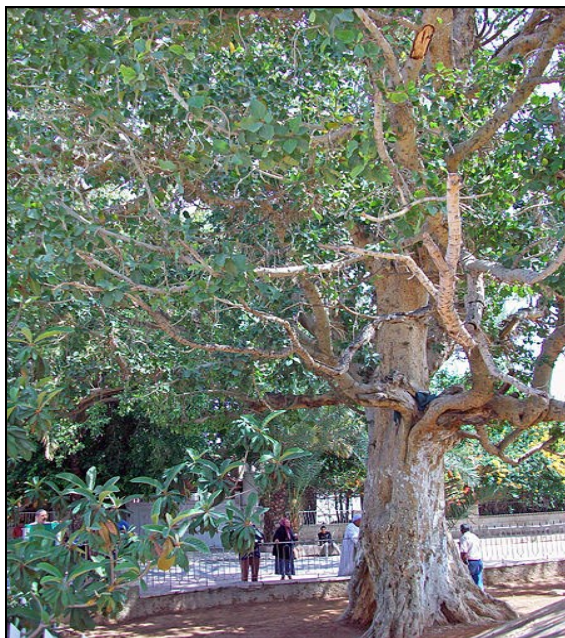


The woman at the well John 4. Both Jesus and the woman made choices and broke the social rules in this story. Jesus confronted her (when she approached, social norms at the time would suggest that he should have retired from the well); she carried on regardless of a strange man being at the well; they both engaged with each other in discussion/debate etc... We are told that when the disciples return from their shopping trip they

are 'shocked' to find Jesus talking with a woman. Jesus broke lots of 'social norms/barriers' in this story.

Zaccheus Luke 19:1-10.

Jesus went on into Jericho and was passing through. There was a chief tax collector there named Zacchaeus, who was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was a little man and could not see Jesus because of the crowd. So



he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus, who was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and said to Zacchaeus, “Hurry down, Zacchaeus, because I must stay in your house today.”

Zacchaeus hurried down and welcomed him with great joy. All the people who saw it started grumbling, “This man has gone as a guest to the home of a sinner!”

Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Listen, sir! I will give half my belongings to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone, I will pay back four times as much.”

Jesus said to him, “Salvation has come to this house today, for this man, also, is a descendant of Abraham. The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

The Bible tells us how Zacchaeus’ life changed completely; it was never the same again; and that change affected many other people too.

The woman who touched Jesus’ cloak



Luke 8:42b - 48.

As Jesus went along, the people were crowding him from every side. Among them was a woman who had suffered from severe bleeding for twelve years; she had spent all she had on doctors, but no one had been able to cure her. She came up in the crowd behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak, and her bleeding stopped at once. Jesus asked, “Who touched me?”

Everyone denied it, and Peter said, “Master, the people are all around you and crowding in on you.”

But Jesus said, “Someone touched me, for I knew it when power went out of me.” The woman saw that she had been found out, so she came trembling and threw herself at Jesus’ feet. There in front of everybody, she told him why she had touched him and how she had been healed at once. Jesus said to her, “My daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”

This woman had been in social lockdown for 12 years. Her decision that day changed her world.



Mary and Martha Luke 10:38-42

As Jesus and his disciples went on their way, he came to a village where a



woman named Martha welcomed him in her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat down at the feet of the Lord and listened to his teaching. Martha was upset over all the work she had to do, so she came and said, “Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!”

The Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha! You are worried and troubled over so many things, but just one is needed. Mary has chosen the right thing, and it will not be

taken away from her.”

We have to make choices. How do we come to understand what matters most?

The boy healed of a demon Luke 9:38-42.

A man shouted from the crowd, “Teacher! I beg you, look at my son—my only son! A spirit attacks him with a sudden shout and throws him into a fit, so that he foams at the mouth; it keeps on hurting him and will hardly let him go! I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they couldn't.”



Jesus answered, “How unbelieving and wrong you people are! How long must I stay with you? How long do I have to put up with you?” Then he said to the man, “Bring your son here.”

As the boy was coming, the demon knocked him to the ground and threw him into a fit. Jesus gave a command to the evil spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.



The raising of Lazarus John 11:1-46.—

How did Jesus know when to stay and when to go ...?

Isaiah 55: 6-13

Turn to the LORD and pray to him,
now that he is near.
Let the wicked leave their way of life
and change their way of thinking.
Let them turn to the LORD, our God;
he is merciful and quick to forgive.
“My thoughts,” says the LORD, “are not
like yours,
and my ways are different from yours.
As high as the heavens are above the
earth,
so high are my ways and thoughts
above yours.

“My word is like the snow and the rain
that come down from the sky to water

the earth.

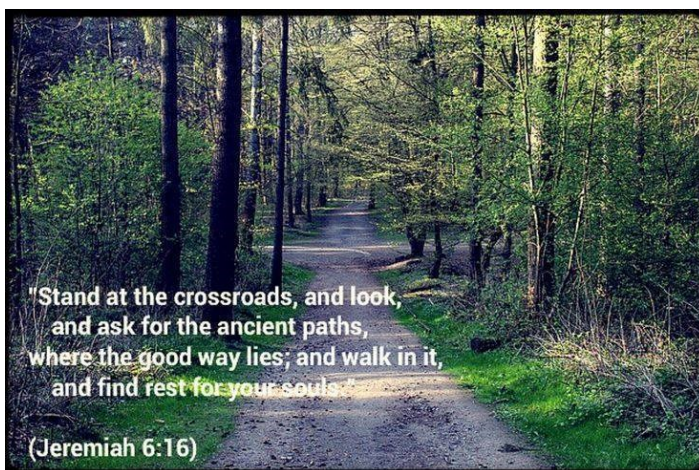
They make the crops grow
and provide seed for planting and
food to eat.

So also will be the word that I
speak—
it will not fail to do what I plan for it;
it will do everything I send it to do.

“You will leave Babylon with joy;
you will be led out of the city in
peace.

The mountains and hills will burst
into singing,
and the trees will shout for joy.
Cypress trees will grow where now
there are briers;
myrtle trees will come up in place of
thorns.

This will be a sign that will last
forever,
a reminder of what I, the LORD,
have done.”



Listen to: -

Rend Collective, My Lighthouse: [Rend Collective - My Lighthouse \(Official Video\) - YouTube](#)

Rend Collective, I will never walk alone: [Rend Collective - Never Walk Alone \(Lyrics And Chords\) - YouTube](#)

Rob Halligan, I Can't Make You Walk: [Rob halligan I can't make you walk - YouTube](#)

Paul McCartney, Find My Way (Dec 18, 2020) [Paul McCartney - Find My Way \(Official Music Video\) - YouTube](#)

The Croods Music Video – Shine Your Way: [The Croods Music Video ~ Shine Your Way - YouTube](#)

Wisdom's table - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hm6SQ1nmXPI>

Enya – So I Could Find My Way: [Enya - So I Could Find My Way \(Official Video\) - YouTube](#)



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

Unlock uses an approach to engaging with the Bible that is different to traditional Bible studies, based on a reflective learning cycle which is a tried and tested way of introducing people to the Bible in a non-threatening way (see below). We usually work 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 life. Our approach starts from the stories and experiences of group members, whereas a more traditional approach starts from the Biblical text. It has been found to work well with small groups of urban, oral learners. Many churches have activities that draw in members of their surrounding community but then struggle with how to move on from those relationships into exploring faith, especially in urban environments where anything formal might be treated with suspicion. Unlock's approach can help with that.

There are many free resources on the Unlock website www.unlock-urban.org.uk/resources designed for use with such groups. However, because each of these resources was designed for a particular

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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.

If you have any queries relating to Unlock materials, please contact:

Unlock, 15 Station Road, Rotherham S60 1HN

01709 380318 office@unlock-urban.org.uk

The Unlock Learning Cycle

Unlocking real life

stories of urban people

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

Releasing life changing skills and confidence

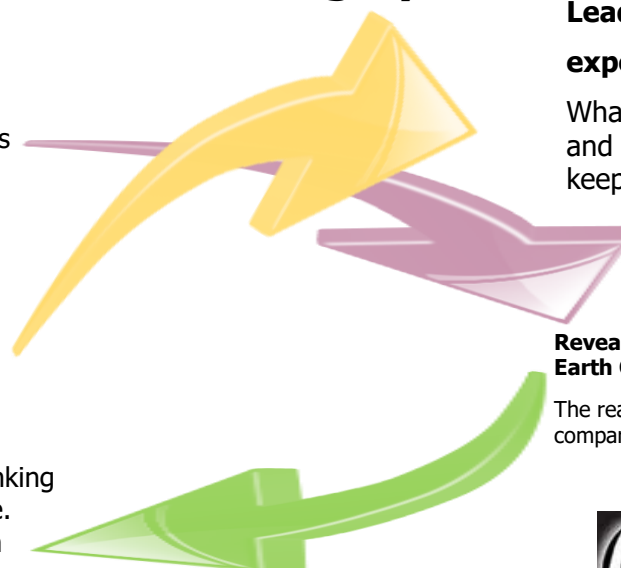
Change happens as a result of linking real life experience with the Bible. This change often leads to action among others.

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.



10 principles of Training used by Unlock in its work

1. Pay attention to the local, regional and cultural factors that influence people's lives
2. Develop the ability to help other people tell their stories.
3. Take a genuine interest and enjoyment in LISTENING to other people's stories.
4. 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.
5. Be PATIENT and WAIT for people to see the gaps in their own knowledge.
6. 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.
7. Encourage working together in groups where each person's contribution is valued, and where diversity of opinion is accepted and tolerated.
8. Be aware of what is going on in and between people in such groups.
9. Work with a group so that it can come to its own conclusions and decide on its own actions.
10. Value everyone as a 'Treasure –chest of information and experience'; seeing our task as one of giving people the keys to undo their treasures.

And some Dos and Don'ts

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
- 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.



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