

SESSION 1: Learning together

Notes for group leaders



LIVING IN LOVE & FAITH

Overview of the session

After the introductory section which gives an outline of the course and introduces the Pastoral Principles and the Commitments, the session continues as follows:

- Pastoral Principle: listening & speaking
(addressing ignorance & paying attention to power)
- Learning together: called to be learners
- Bible study: Matthew 7.24-29
- Learning together: identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage
- The story films: a preview
- Reflection and prayer

The following notes relate to the interactive elements at the end of each of the sections.

Discussing together: A listening exercise

Allow at least 30 minutes for this activity.

This activity is about each person having the opportunity to experience:

- being listened to, and
- being a good listener.

It's also an opportunity for the members of the group to get to know each other and to start building relationships that will help them to engage well with each other as the Course progresses.

If there are more than 5 people in the group, then invite participants to form groups of 3. Explain that each person needs to have an opportunity to speak, to listen, and to observe. That means that the following activity needs to be done 3 times for a group of 3.

Person 1: chooses one of the following topics to talk about for 3 minutes:

Share something about your own life story, or

Share some of your hopes and fears about doing this course

Person 2: listens attentively and reflect back what they heard in 1 or 2 minutes

Person 3: observes

When all the groups of 3 have completed this task, gather the group together and invite reflections on the following questions:

What did you notice...

- When you were the speaker?
- When you were the listener?
- When someone reflected back what you said?

Bible study: Matthew 7.24-29

Allow about 15 minutes for this discussion.

Encourage the group to re-read Matthew 7.24-29.

Allow the conversation to be quite free flowing, using the following questions as prompts if necessary:

- What do you think it tells us about learning and about life as a follower of Jesus?
- Can you remember a time when you were 'astounded' by Jesus' teaching?

Discussing together: thinking about learning and experience

Allow about 15 minutes for this discussion.

The 'teaser film' may have affected people in different ways. Allow time for the group to absorb what they have seen before encouraging some reflections and discussion. You may want to start by asking:

- We've been talking about what's involved in learning. Can you remember a time when you learned something significant that affected your life? What helped you to come to that understanding?
- We'll be exploring questions of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage in this course. What questions do you have in these areas that you're looking forward to exploring?

Reflection and prayer

This is an opportunity to thank God for each other in the group. Here is one way you might do this.

Have enough tea lights so there is one for each person in the group. Invite everyone to take turns to light a candle while praying quietly or out loud, 'Thank you, Jesus, for _____', naming the person on their right.