

Discipleship Resources for Small Groups

‘And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.’ (Heb 10:24-25)

This paper groups discipleship resources for small groups into the five ‘aspects of discipleship’ that have been adopted by the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network:

- 1) **Being Called:** learning and development which enables people of all ages to experience and explore faith at an introductory level.
- 2) **Being Equipped:** learning and development which enables people of all ages to identify, understand and develop their vocation and gifting as disciples
- 3) **Being Formed and Transformed (or being (trans)formed):** learning and development which enables people of all ages to engage in spiritual practices (e.g., studying the Bible, prayer, worship, communion) which deepen discipleship.
- 4) **Being Sent:** learning and development which enables people of all ages to live missionally and evangelistically.
- 5) **Being Sustained:** learning and development which enables people of all ages to journey faithfully together through life.

The resources that have been included are those widely used throughout the Connexion, or those that could be so used. It includes key Methodist resources, including those adopted from the United Methodist Church. It also, however, includes resources widely used within Methodism that have been produced by para-church agencies or other denominations. To signify the distinction, an asterisks (*) will signal resources produced specifically by the Methodist church (including by the UMC).

The list also includes resources for children and young people, as it is widely recognised within the Methodist Church that the provision of good quality resources is needed for this age group. The abbreviation C&Y will be used to signify resources specifically designed for children and young people.

While such a list of resources can be a useful reference for those within the DMLN and beyond, it can also be a helpful guide for those wishing to develop new resources, allowing them to avoid replicating resources that already exist or in helping them identify ‘gaps’ within the existing resources.

The document is not intended to cover all resources and learning opportunities, but it rather signposts the significant small-group resources.

The following list of resources is not intended to suggest that small groups and the resources they adopt are the only or best way to nurture disciples!¹ Discipleship involves, of course, a range of other ‘learning and development opportunities.’ Nonetheless, small groups remain a significant part of the life of many Methodists and churches throughout the Connexion, and this paper provides an accessible resource for keeping track of those resources that do exist.

Being Called

*Resources which enable people of all ages to experience and explore faith at an introductory level.*²

Resource	Description	Notes	# of sessions
Compass *	Compass is a six-week course that introduces the Christian faith to those who wish to explore its meaning, and includes a particular focus on Methodist identity. It could be used as a membership course, or for those exploring faith for the first time.	The Leader’s guides are available for download at www.methodist.org.uk/deepening-discipleship/small-groups/key-resources/compass , and participant’s workbooks can be ordered for £5 each (+ P&P) from Methodist Publishing. One member of the DMLN noted that this was being warmly recommended by a local minister.	Six Sessions.
Table Talk	<i>Table Talk</i> is a conversational game that creates an opportunity to explore some of life’s biggest questions with friends. A range of ‘games’ are available, including <i>Table Talk for Easter</i> , <i>Table Talk for Blokes</i> , and <i>Table Talk for friends</i> .	Tabletalk can be ordered from www.theuglyducklingcompany.com A Table Talk ‘app’ is also now available!	Six sessions (‘games’) per pack.

¹ For a broader discussion of what nurtures disciples, see the recent work of Roger Walton who points to mission, worship and community as the key ‘energies’ of discipleship; see Roger L. Walton, *Disciples Together: Discipleship, Formation and Small Groups* (London: SCM Press, 2014).

² For a helpful survey of some of the evangelistic resources listed below, see Mike Booker and Mark Ireland, *Evangelism – which way now? An evaluation of Alpha, Emmaus, Cell Church and other contemporary strategies for evangelism* (London: Church House Publishing, 2003)

<p>Pilgrim: A Course for the Christian Journey</p>	<p>Developed by the Church of England <i>Pilgrim</i> is made up of a series of 6 session courses – some for those new to faith and some for those who wish to go further. Several of the courses are modelled around key texts within Christianity (e.g., the Creeds, Lord’s Prayer, the Beatitudes).</p>	<p>For details of Pilgrim, and to purchase the course, see www.pilgrimcourse.org</p>	<p>Six sessions.</p>
<p>Alpha</p>	<p>Alpha, an ‘opportunity to explore the meaning of life’, is a 10-week course – and a weekend away – covering the basics of Christian faith. Each session of the course typically includes an ‘Alpha Supper’, a talk or presentation (often a video), and discussion in small groups.</p>	<p>For further information and to purchase materials, see www.alpha.org</p>	<p>Ten sessions, plus a weekend away.</p>
<p>Youth Alpha (C&Y)</p>	<p>Modelled on the same structure as Alpha, Youth Alpha similarly includes 10 sessions on the basics of Christianity.</p>	<p>For further information and to purchase materials, see www.alpha.org</p>	<p>Ten sessions.</p>
<p>Christianity Explored</p>	<p>Christianity Explored is a seven-week introduction to Christianity, with three ‘bonus sessions’ held during a day/weekend away. The course is based on a study of Mark’s Gospel, and also includes video/presentation</p>	<p>For further information about the course and to purchase material, visit www.christianityexplored.org</p>	<p>Seven sessions, with three ‘bonus sessions.’</p>

	material. Churches are encouraged to hold the course after a meal together.		
Christianity Explored also offers two 'youth' versions. (C&Y)	'CY Nano' has been designed for 11-14 year olds 'CY' has been designed for those aged 15plus.	For Christianity Explored youth resources, and other material (such as 'Discipleship Explored'), see www.ceministries.org	Seven sessions.
Start!	Start! is a basic six-session introduction to Christian faith designed for those who have no previous knowledge of anything Christian. It uses a mix of DVD input, discussion activities, and space to reflect.	For details about the course, visit www.startcourse.org.uk	Six sessions.
Puzzling Questions	<i>Puzzling Questions</i> explores six of the most popular questions asked by those outside the church but interested in spirituality, with course material presented through magazine style TV programmes.	<i>Puzzling Questions</i> has been developed by the Ugly Duckling Company, and details about the resources can be found at www.puzzlingquestions.org.uk	Six sessions.
4Life (CellUK)	CellUK has 4Life as a resource for 1-1 meetings with a new Christian. It can also, however, be used in small groups over a 10week period.	For further details, and to purchase material, visit www.celluk.org.uk	Ten sessions.
The Y Course	An eight week evangelism course that focuses on key questions that spiritual seekers might ask. Includes 'chat show style segments' on DVD and over 100 questions	For further resources and to purchase the material, visit www.ycourse.com	Eight sessions.

	to stimulate discussions within groups.		
Emmaus	A 15 session course for those exploring Christian faith. There are also, however, Emmaus courses for those new to faith ('nurture') and for those growing in faith ('growth'). The material has been developed within the Church of England, but is easily adaptable to Methodists contexts, that helps	For purchasing resources for Emmaus, see http://www.chpublishing.co.uk/category/christian-books/the-emmaus-course-1509	Fifteen sessions.
Youth Emmaus (C&Y)	A course designed to help those aged 11-16 explore the basics of the Christian faith. A second book, Youth Emmaus 2, explores more topics connected to discipleship.	For purchasing resources for Emmaus, see http://www.chpublishing.co.uk/category/christian-books/the-emmaus-course-1509 One member of the DMLN felt that the material on prayer was poor, while the teaching on atonement didn't quite reflect the breadth of Methodism.	Fifteen sessions.

Being Equipped

Resources which enable people of all ages to identify, understand and develop their vocation and gifting as disciples

Resource	Description	Notes	# of sessions
Encounter*	Encounter was developed by the Methodist Church in Yorkshire as a 'programme of exploration into discipleship and vocation. Encounter includes twelve sessions which include a mix of organised and personal activities.	See www.methodistencounter.org.uk	Eight four-week sections (32 sessions).
Step Forward*	Designed to be run over a 12 month period, this course	Each region of the DMLN was invited to attend <i>Step Forward</i>	32 sessions.

	encourages participants to feel more confident in their life, ministry and mission. Written by Mark Wakelin (President of the Methodist Conference, 2012/2013) in response to the 'Extending Discipleship and Exploring Vocation' within the Methodist Church.	facilitator training in 2014, and so there are opportunities for different regions to offer this resource across the Connexion. For access to the resource, contact Tony Moodie at moodiet@methodistchurch.org.uk	
Participate! * (C&Y)	A seven week course exploring discipleship and vocation. Aimed at 9-14s, but could easily be adapted for older young people. Available from BRF Course Book: £11.99 Journal: £3.99	Participate was written by Meg Prowting, Penny Fuller and Mike Seaton and includes an 'active participatory section' where young people take on a placement role for a number of weeks. To purchase, see www.brfonline.org.uk/9781841018546/	Seven sessions.
The Chaplaincy Everywhere Course*	A seven session course that aims to help a group set up a local, congregation-led chaplaincy within their community.	The course can be downloaded at www.opensourcechaplaincy.org.uk/course	Seven sessions.

Being Formed and Transformed (or being (trans)formed)

Resources which enable people of all ages to engage in spiritual practices (e.g., studying the Bible, prayer, worship, communion) which deepen discipleship.

Resource	Description	Notes	# of sessions
Disciple*	Disciple is a 34-week 'high-commitment, transformative Bible study programme' that takes participants through the sweep of salvation history from genesis to Revelation. Participants follow a disciplined pattern of daily home study leading up to a regular group meeting. There are also shorter Disciple	Each region of the DMLN was invited to attend <i>Disciple</i> facilitator training in 2014, and so there are opportunities for different regions to offer this resource across the Connexion. For details of disciple, see www.methodist.org.uk/disciple The Discipleship Development Team also has copies of <i>Disciple</i> resources (select handbooks and	Thirty-four sessions.

	courses available.	DVDs) at Cliff College.	
Christian Believer*	Adopting a similar format to Disciple, Christian Believer takes participants through key Christian doctrines by providing citations from the Christian tradition.	The Discipleship Development Team has copies of <i>Christian Believer</i> resources (select handbooks and DVDs) at Cliff College.	Thirty sessions.
Talking of God*	A free small-group resource produced by the Methodist Church to help Christians develop confidence in sharing the stories of their faith in everyday life. The resource comprises 4 sessions and a concluding act of worship, and can be used over consecutive weeks or within one day.	For a free download, see www.methodist.org.uk/talkingofgod	Four sessions.
Navigate* (C&Y)	A short course for 10-15s to enable them to explore the basics of the Bible and how they might engage with it. Produced by Methodist Children and Youth and the bible Society www.methodist.org.uk/navigate	To download the course, see www.methodist.org.uk/navigate	Five sessions.
Lyfe (Bible Society)	<i>Lyfe</i> have produced over 30 small group (6-week) sessions based around six key themes: Prayer, the Holy Spirit, Scripture, Authenticity, Compassion, and Everyday Life. Sessions include supporting video interviews. <i>Lyfe</i> also produced a resource for the Methodist Deepening Discipleship website.	See the LYFE website at www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/lyfe For the resource produced for the Methodist church, see www.methodist.org.uk/deepening-discipleship/small-groups/group-material/the-spiritual-practices-of-jesus	Six-week sessions (per 'course').
Making Good Sense of the Bible Together	Formerly a ten-week course on biblical interpretation (called H+), <i>Making Good Sense of the Bible Together</i> is now a six-session introduction to biblical interpretation that is ideal for small groups.	To purchase the resource, and to access the leader's guide, visit www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/9780564044276	Six sessions.

D:Sign*	A series of 12 postcards that combine Scripture, questions and conversation with the striking artwork of Ric Stott to provoke conversations about discipleship.	An accompanying resource is found at www.methodost.org.uk/dsign	Twelve potential sessions.
The Prayer Course	A six session course on the Lord's Prayer, developed by 24/7 prayer. The course includes interactive videos and discussion guides.	To access the course, visit www.prayercourse.org	Six sessions.
Just People? (C&Y)	A course for 6 weeks around discipleship and justice aimed at older teenagers. Comes with a DVD so clips can be watched, and includes a range of activities. Aimed at older teenagers.	Search at http://resources.tearfund.org	Six sessions.
'Windows Into the Christian Faith.	The Diocese of Truro and the Cornwall Methodist District in the South West have produced a set of short courses on Christian basics called 'Windows into the Christian Faith'. This is part of their focus on 'education for discipleship', and includes 'windows into' the Bible, the Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer and many others. Recommended by Revd Steve Wild and Revd Dr Chris Blake.	Sessions can be accessed at www.trurodiocese.org.uk/vision-strategy/windows-into It looks like these courses are available within the South West, but present an interesting model for others too.	Six sessions for each course.
Scripture Union – Substance (C&Y)	A whole range of these books covering different topics. Include a range of activities to choose from within the resource.	For Scripture Union resources for young people, see www.scriptureunion.org.uk/Light/42705.id	A range of different resources.
Unlock Bible Studies	Unlock provides a number of small-group Bible study resources designed for those within 'non-book' or 'text-shy' cultures.	Studies can be downloaded from the Unlock website at www.unlock-urban.org.uk/resources.php	A variety of different resources.

Being Sent

Resources which enable people of all ages to live missionally and evangelistically.

Resource	Description	Notes	# of sessions
Talking of God*	A free small-group resource produced by the Methodist Church to help Christians develop confidence in sharing the stories of their faith in everyday life. The resource comprises 4 sessions and a concluding act of worship, and can be used over consecutive weeks or within one day.	For information and to download the resource, see www.methodist.org.uk/talkingofgod	Four sessions.
Life on the Frontline	This six-session DVD resource aims to inspire and equip Christians to make a difference on their 'frontlines', where they spend most of their time.	Life on the Frontline is one of a number of resources developed by LICC to help nurture whole-life discipleship, and details about the course can be found here: www.licc.org.uk/resources/2012/04/08/life-on-the-frontline	Six sessions.
Fruitfulness on the Frontline	Fruitfulness on the Frontline is a six-session DVD follow-up course to Life on the Frontline, and aims to help disciples make a difference in their daily life.	For details of the course, produced by LICC, see www.licc.org.uk/splash/index.html	Six sessions.
Faith at Work: Spirituality and Discipleship for today's world	A 6-week study course, launched in Feb 2014 by Lincolnshire Chaplaincy Services, that aims to help participants relate their faith to what they're doing in their daily lives.	For details about the course, see www.faihatwork.info	Six sessions.
Manmade (C&Y)	A course for boys, produced by Share Jesus International, that seeks to help boys discover what it means to be a male disciple. Suggests that a boys	For details of the resource, see www.sharejesusinternational.com/product/manmade/	Six sessions.

	weekend could be part of the course.		
Journey to Faith: A Local Church Training Course	Journey to Faith is a tool to equip rural churches in reaching out in evangelism and mission, and can be run over two half-days. The resource has been developed by the Arthur Rank Centre.	All the resources are freely available at www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/publications-and-resources/rural-evangelism#Downloads	Designed for 2 ½ days workshop.

Being Sustained

Resource which enable people of all ages to journey faithfully together through life.

Resource	Description	Notes	# of sessions
Walking with God's People	A facilitation resource that can equip those new to leading groups, as well as those who are more experienced.	The resource has been developed by the ecumenical Eastern Region Training Partnership, and is free to download at www.ertp.org.uk/index.php/resources .	Four sessions.