

# Living Faith in Suffolk



# Living Confirmation

## Images

Front page: l – r from top

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Living Confirmation is one of the Living Faith in Suffolk resources produced by the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and available on [www.cofesuffolk.org](http://www.cofesuffolk.org)

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## Introduction

People come to confirmation from many different walks of life and at various stages in their Christian journey. While some may have a thorough understanding of their faith and the Church, this cannot be taken for granted. Living Confirmation is a Living Faith in Suffolk course for those needing the opportunity to consider some of the basics of the Christian faith and perhaps seeking Confirmation. It aims to answer the following questions:

- What is God like? (page 4)
- What does Jesus have to do with me? (page 6)
- What is the role of the Holy Spirit? (page 8)
- What do we make of the Bible? (page 10)
- How can I pray? (page 12)
- What we know about the Church? (page 14)
- What do we understand by baptism and communion? (page 16)
- How can I put my faith into practice? (page 18)

Each session gives opportunity for teaching, discussion and practical activities. Use of the Bible, in different ways, is incorporated to familiarise people and to affirm its importance.

### **For facilitators:**

- Each session should last around 60-90 minutes overall including the settling down and welcome.
- The rooms used for the sessions need to be comfortable enough for people to be able to focus on what is going on and to be able to hear each other.
- A clear structure is given; some groups will want to spend longer over some activities than others. The necessary resources are listed for each session. All the handouts are at the back of the book, and individual pages can be printed out for each session as needed.

## Session 1: What is God like?

### Resources needed:

- Sheet: 'God is...' (p 20)
- Sheet: 'Bible verses for investigative task' (pp 21-23) (needs to be cut up).
- Sheet: 'Prompt sheet for Bible reading' (p 24)
- Bibles

**It is important** that these discussions give opportunity for people to express themselves without being told that they are right or wrong. Use open questions such as 'That's interesting, why do you think that?' and 'What does that mean to you?'.

**Be careful not to make assumptions** about people's Bible literacy. Many people struggle with using a Bible so it is useful to assume nothing and show the whole group how to use the *Contents* page as a matter of course.

This session aims to give people an increased understanding of how God is portrayed in the Bible, considering the implications of this for their experience of God. It also gives opportunity to build familiarity with handling a Bible and to experience one particular way of reading it.

Welcome people and allow time for introductions to each other and the course; if participants are not all known to each other, then do a brief familiarisation activity (such as each introducing themselves with one piece of information they'd like others to know; or discussion in pairs to then introduce each other). Set out ground rules for the group (confidentiality and respect). Ask people why they have decided to do this course and what they hope to gain from it. Explain to the group that this course looks at some of the ingredients that are important to being a Christian.

On Sundays in church we say the Creed, one version of which begins "We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen...". Ask people to complete the 'God is...' sheet – this could be done individually followed by feedback, or by going through each part of the sheet as a group and discussing responses. Through this discussion of ideas, move people towards discussing more generally their ideas about what God is like.

Investigative task: divide out the slips of paper with Bible references on; show people how to use the *Contents* page in the Bible; ask them to look up the references (working in pairs if they wish) and writing on each slip of paper what that verse says about what God is like. (These could be stuck onto a large sheet of paper to form a poster, as a record of what the group have done).

When complete, ask for feedback, and discuss: What did they discover? How did these ideas relate to the ideas they already have about God? What are the implications if God is described like this? What are the challenges in trying to believe that God is like this?

**There are good opportunities for discussion** in the open questions on the 'Prompt sheet for Bible reading'.

**Remind people** that this is a method of Bible reading which they can do on their own (let them take away the 'Prompt sheet for Bible reading').

Having looked at a range of verses, we are now going to look at one passage in more detail. We will do this by reading the Bible in a way that you can also use on your own.

- Read Luke 15:11-32 (maybe reading one verse each around the group).
- As a group (or break down into smaller groups who can then feed back) do tasks 3-5 on the 'Prompt sheet for Bible reading'.
- What have we learnt about God from the reading?

Give people the opportunity to share if they have any questions, or things they would like to discuss further.

Draw the session to a close with a prayer.

## Session 2: What does Jesus have to do with me?

### Resources needed:

- Bibles
- Sheet: 'Imaginative Bible reading' (p 25)
- Sheet 'Jesus now' (p 26)
- Sheet 'Father forgive' (p 27) and resources for this task
- Flip chart

### In a discussion,

while not leading people to a particular idea, it is possible to draw out contributions by pointing them in certain directions; for example 'Can you remember any other stories Jesus told?'

### Going deeper:

those who are interested could be encouraged to explore, at home, how sin was dealt with in the Old Testament's sacrificial system and to compare it with ideas about Jesus' death as sacrifice, atonement and redemption.

This session aims to give people an opportunity to explore something of Jesus' character through one of the gospel stories, before moving on to consider Jesus' role now. The group will then move on to reflect on ideas around sin and forgiveness.

Welcome people and introduce today's session.

On a flip chart, brainstorm: What do you know about Jesus?

As a group, read the story in Mark 2:1-12 of Jesus turning water into wine. Explain that, having tried one method of Bible reading in the last session, this time will use another method which can also be used at home. Give out, and use, the 'Imaginative Bible reading' sheets. Discuss:

- What does the passage say about the authority of Jesus?
- What does the passage reveal about different responses to Jesus?

An important question for us is: 'What about Jesus now?'. As a group, work through the 'Jesus now' sheet and discuss the implications of the findings, asking people how they react to what they discover, what surprises / pleases / is new to them and what the implications of this might be. Discuss:

- What do these passages say about how Jesus relates to God?
- What do these passages say about how Jesus relates to us?

In Jesus' day, many people made a connection between sin and suffering. The gospels suggest that Jesus was uncomfortable with this, but in this story it may be that the paralysed man himself thinks this way and so Jesus starts from where he is.

Discuss: do people feel that sin an outdated concept or is it something they can relate to? – ask people to explain their answers. How do they respond to the word 'sin' and the word

**The healing of the paralysed man**

involves more than simply restoring his body. As a disabled man at that time he would have been unable to make any positive contribution to society. His healing would restore his place in the wider world. One consequence of this would be that he could earn a living.

**When the gospels speak of Jesus bringing salvation**

they show how this embraces body, mind, spirit and relationships.

**Using a creative activity**

enables people to engage with the ideas on a different level than during discussion.

‘forgiveness’? What do they see as being the consequences of sin, if any?

What is sin? One definition talks about putting ‘I’ at the centre instead of God. There is a difference between ‘sin’ and ‘crime’ in that sins are against God’s will but not necessarily against the law of the land. Sin can also be in thoughts and intentions as well as actions and omissions – discuss these concepts.

The Bible teaches that all have sinned (Romans 3:23), that the consequence of this is separation from God (2 Thessalonians 1:8-10), but that because of Jesus’ ministry, death and resurrection (1 John 2:1-2) we can confess our sin and be forgiven (1 John 1:8-10).

Discuss: How does the group react to the biblical teaching about sin and forgiveness outlined above?

Activity: spend some time thinking about ways in which we, as individuals, a group, and as humanity, sin. Using the ‘Father forgive’ sheet as a background, write, draw or cut examples from magazines to make posters reflecting on the ways in which we go against God’s will.

Give people the opportunity to share if they have any questions, or things they would like to discuss further.

Draw the session to a close with a prayer.

## Session 3: What is the role of the Holy Spirit?

### Resources needed:

- Sheet: 'Confirmation: key words' (p 28)
- Bibles

**People have many different reasons for coming to be confirmed.** Don't expect a particular answer, but be prepared to discuss a whole range of expectations.

**Today's session contains a significant amount of teaching.** It is a good idea to give opportunities for questions and discussion throughout as this keeps people engaged and helps to consolidate learning.

This session aims to give people an increased understanding of the Holy Spirit in the Bible and in the Christian life, giving opportunity to understand what happens during Confirmation and to reflect on the impact the Holy Spirit could have on life.

Welcome people and introduce today's session.

Discuss: Why do you want to find out more about the Christian faith, or even get confirmed? What does it mean to you? What are you expecting it to be like? Explain that it means everything and nothing – nothing if it is done without it meaning something inside too. It is a stage on our journey, an outward sign of an inward step forward.

At confirmation, you confirm the promises that were made on your behalf at your baptism. Have a look at what you will say, the promises you will make (on 'Confirmation: key words'). Talk about these, discuss any issues that arise.

At the point of Confirmation there will be the laying on of hands by the Bishop, along with the words 'Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit'. The laying on of hands is used for healing, and for commissioning into a new life. It is a mark of God setting a seal on the person, affirming them, saying "I know who you are and you are mine" (Isaiah 43:1; Ephesians 1:14). This seal is the Holy Spirit.

As a group, read Acts 2:1-17a (using one of the methods from the last two sessions). Give the group some background to this passage (Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection, ascension; Jesus told disciples to wait for the gift that he had promised) and explain what happens immediately after (Peter preaches, three thousand believe the message and become Christians that day, and people continue to become Christians on a daily basis as they hear the teaching and see the miracles). The Holy Spirit can be thought of as 'breath' (Genesis 2:7, John 20:22), 'empowering', 'God-inside-us':

- Helping us to pray (Romans 8:26)
- Helping us to understand God's word (Ephesians 1:17-19)
- Helping us to grow like Jesus (Galatians 5:22-23)
- Giving us gifts to help us to grow and to help us help others (1 Corinthians 12:1-12)

Ask people to look up these passages and discuss:

- What do these passages say to you about God's involvement in our lives?
- What thoughts and feelings do they evoke in you?

Read to the group this definition of the Holy Spirit:

“In Genesis 1:2, the spirit is God's presence and power *within* creation, without God being identified with creation. The same spirit entered people, notably the prophets, enabling them to speak and act for God. At his baptism by John, Jesus was specially equipped with the spirit, resulting in his remarkable public career (Acts 10:38). After his resurrection, his followers were themselves filled (Acts 2) by the same spirit, now identified as Jesus' own spirit; the creator God was acting afresh, remaking the world and them too. The spirit enabled them to live out a holiness which the Torah could not, producing 'fruit' in their lives, giving them 'gifts' with which to serve God, the world, and the church, and assuring them of future resurrection (Romans 8; Galatians 4-5; 1 Corinthians 12-14). From very early in Christianity (e.g. Galatians 4:1-7), the spirit became part of the new revolutionary definition of God himself: 'the one who sends the son and the spirit of the son.'" (Tom Wright *Acts for Everyone* SPCK London 2008 pp200-201).

This final discussion ensures that people move from learning about the Holy Spirit to reflecting on the Spirit's contemporary significance. It is an important discussion to have, but may be difficult for some and so it needs to be led sensitively.

Discuss:

- How do we know that the Spirit is still speaking / working through people today?
- What real-life examples can you give of the Spirit working?
- Which of the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12 are currently evident in us? In the group of people who make up our church community? Which are missing? How much does it matter that these are missing?
- What difference could it make that this Holy Spirit lives in us?

Draw the session to a close with a prayer.

## Session 4: What do we make of the Bible?

### Resources needed:

- Bibles
- Sheet: 'Bible library' (p 29)
- Sheet: 'Using the Bible' (p 30)
- Resources for making a collage (pictures or words)

**Living Word 1** and **Living Word 2** are Living Faith in Suffolk courses which give opportunities for people to explore the Big Story of the Bible, and to learn how to read the different kinds of literature that it contains.

**There are a number** of audio, visual, simplified or tongue-in-cheek versions available of the Bible story; using one of these may be a useful way in to looking at the overall story.

This session aims to introduce people to the Bible as a collection of different types of literature, a unified story, and in some sense the word of God. It is intended to give tools and a framework for its use so that people can grow in confidence in handling the Bible.

Welcome people and introduce today's session.

Brainstorm: What do people know about the Bible? Welcome any contributions, including views about its content, authorship and relevance.

Using the sheet 'Bible library', explain the different kinds of literature included in the Bible. What might be the purpose of each kind of literature? In what ways might it be useful to us? What could be the difficulties with using each kind of literature?

Discuss: Why is the Bible important to Christians? Look up the following Bible passages and discuss what they tell us about why what is written in the Bible is useful: Luke 1:1-4; 2 Timothy 3:10-17; Hebrews 4:12; 1 John 1:1-4.

Discuss: What is the story in the Bible? What individual stories do people know (ask people to suggest examples, like 'Daniel in the lions' den', 'Jonah and the Whale', the 'Feeding of the Five Thousand')? Although the Bible is made up of many individual stories, they all fit together into the one Big Story of God's desire for loving relationship with his creation and the lengths he goes to in order to make that possible. The Old Testament tells the story of people repeatedly turning away from God, who calls them back again and again. The New Testament tells the story of Jesus showing people the way back to God and defeating all that gets in the way of the relationship, a relationship we then see being worked out in the early church.

**Depending on the nature of the**

**group,** you might find it more appropriate to use summaries of the relevant Bible stories (e.g. from a children's Bible) rather than giving people quantities of biblical text to work through.

**This could be a good opportunity**

to introduce people to the idea of Bible reading notes – many Christian bookshops will provide these on a sale-or-return basis.

As a group, read these extracts which give the skeleton of the Big Story and work together to build up a collage (pictures or words) of the Big Story.

- Humankind (represented by Adam and Eve – stewards of God's creation): Genesis 1-3
- Abraham (promise of blessing for all): Genesis 12:1-9, 15:1-6
- Moses (God's promise of blessing and freedom): Exodus 6:1-13
- David (blessing realised partially and imperfectly): 2 Samuel 7, Psalm 72
- Isaiah (the promise of a future David and a peaceful kingdom): Isaiah 11:1-9
- Jesus (God's promise fulfilled in Jesus): Luke 4:16-30
- Paul (God's promise fulfilled in the community of faith): Galatians 3:26-29
- John (God's promise fulfilled in a new heaven and earth): Revelation 21.

People can feel daunted at the prospect of reading the Bible; give to each person a copy of the sheet 'Using the Bible' as a resource to assist them with this.

Draw the session to a close with a prayer.

## Session 5: How can I pray?

### Resources needed:

- Sheet: 'Prayer continuum' (p 31)
- Bibles
- Sheet: 'Ways to pray mind map' (p 32)
- Sheet: 'Ways to pray – further info' (p 33)
- Sheet: 'Mind mapping a prayer' (p 34)
- Aids to allow people to try out some of the ways to pray (e.g. a newspaper, candle, book of prayers...)

**Prayer is often difficult.** People may fear that everyone else finds it easy and so be reluctant to admit that they struggle.

**Living Prayer I** is another Living Faith in Suffolk course which explores further some of the different ways of praying.

This session aims to give people the chance to think about the 'why' and 'how' of prayer. The main part of the session encourages people to pray and gives opportunity to try out different ways of praying.

Welcome people and introduce today's session.

**Activity: Word association – 'prayer'** (ask people what words, thoughts and feelings come to mind when they think about prayer, or praying). Use the Prayer Continuum, asking people to mark where on the line best represents their position and, if confident enough, to say something about why they put themselves there.

**Why pray?** Jesus modelled prayer (e.g. Mark 1:35) and taught his disciples how to pray (Matthew 6:9-13). In his letters, Paul taught the early Christians that prayer is important (e.g. 1 Thessalonians 5:17). As a group, look up these passages and discuss what you notice in each.

**What are we doing when we pray?** Prayer is two-way communication with God the Father (Matthew 6:6), made possible through Jesus and helped by the Spirit (Romans 8:26). As in any relationship, communication is a necessary ingredient to keep the relationship alive and enable it to grow. It feeds us, and enables us to become closer to God.

**How can we pray?** As a group, look through the "Ways to pray" mind map: Discuss responses to the suggestions on this mind map – for example, how do people feel about varying their posture when they pray? Are there any aids to prayer listed which particularly appeal to anyone in the group? Do people have any useful experiences to share?

**We are all different** and so should expect to pray in different ways. None of the ideas looked at today will appeal to everyone. Don't worry if some of the ideas seem a little strange; try something that feels comfortable.

**Taking it further...** Encourage people to try this activity again at home, repeating something they found useful or experimenting with something different.

Try it out! As a group, use the *Lectio Divina* method looking at Mark 9:30-37. Then, as space and time allow, individually try out some of the suggestions on the "Ways to pray" mind map, for example:

- Someone may wish to try praying through part of a newspaper
- Someone may wish to mind map a prayer
- Someone may wish to be quiet in front of a candle.

Encourage people to try something they do not usually do when praying, and allow about 15 minutes for people to experiment on their own as anything more open-ended could feel unmanageable for those who find this difficult.

Give people opportunity to feed back what they found useful or otherwise in whatever ways of praying they tried. Is there anything else they might like to try, or something they would try again, as a result of today's meeting?

Draw the session to a close with a prayer.

## Session 6: What do we know about the Church?

### Resources needed:

- Paper for drawing
- Bibles
- Vestments etc

### Searching the internet for images

related to “church quotes” and “church community” produces some interesting results which could stimulate discussion.

### One way of delivering this teaching

could be to ask people to read each passage in turn and discuss (or draw) what they notice in the teaching given about the behaviour and nature of the Christian community.

This session aims to give people a greater understanding of the New Testament portrayal of the Church and the centrality of the Holy Spirit to being Church as God intended. It then aims to give opportunity to explore some of the particular features of the Church of England.

Welcome people and introduce today’s session.

Ask everyone to draw ‘Church’ (don’t say ‘this church’ or ‘the church’, just ‘Church’ – give no further guidance beyond that). Ask people to feed back what they have drawn, with their reasons. Introduce the concept of ‘Church’ as being the people of God, community rather than organisation or building.

Work through the following elements of teaching concerning the pictures of ‘Church’ given in the New Testament, discussing the questions included (this should take no more than the first half of the session):

➤ The Church as a community.

Acts 2:42-47 describes what the Church was like when it began. It had four characteristics:

- The apostles’ teaching
- The common life of those who believed
- The breaking of bread
- The prayers

They belonged to each other; shared with each other; built up relationship with God through studying his word and through prayer; and built up relationships with each other. What do you think of this image of Church?

➤ The Church as a body

Paul uses the analogy of a human body to show that, just as we have a body with different parts which all belong to the one, whole body, so the Church is Christ’s body which has different parts which all belong to the one, whole body.

I Corinthians 12

- In the first place we are brought into the body by

**The final part of this session** could perhaps best be done by organising a visit to the church building in order to look at the vestments, artefacts, baptism register, prayer books, important pieces of furniture etc that are symbols of what the Church of England has come to mean in this locality. It might be a good idea to involve the incumbent in this activity.

**Some people might initially be reticent** to participate in dressing up and handling artefacts. This is a valuable activity, however, in order to encourage people to explore the symbolism of what goes on in a service.

the Spirit (verse 13)

- We are also sustained by the same Spirit (verse 13)
- We are equipped and empowered by the Spirit to live as parts of the body (verses 4-11, 28-31)
- Each gift is given to the whole Church through the individual who receives it; the different gifts work together to build up and grow the Church (verse 7)
- Every member ministry: everyone is given gifts by the Spirit (verse 7)
- Every member matters: all parts and all gifts are equally essential (verses 26-27)

Romans 12:1-21

- We form one body and belong to each other (a bit like being different members of a single family) (verses 4-5)
- Being 'Church' is about being 'counter-cultural' – we are to live differently to the world around us. Verses 9-21 describe what this might look like.
- In order to achieve this 'living differently' it's necessary to change the way we look at life by allowing God's Spirit to transform our minds (verse 2)

In what ways does our Church behave as a body?

➤ The Church as a way of life.

Galatians 5:13-26. These verses give another description of what it might look like to live differently to the world around us, as we learn to live a life full of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

How well does our church demonstrate these fruits?

For the remainder of the session, give people the opportunity to explore some of the artefacts associated with the local church.

- What are the connections between the church today and in the New Testament? What are the most obvious differences?

Draw the session to a close with a prayer.

## Session 7: What do we understand by baptism and communion?

### Resources needed:

- Mini chocolate bars or similar
- Bibles
- Chalice, paten, wafers, font
- Resources for creative (written / drawn) response

### Practical examples,

such as with the chocolate bar, can be a good way of getting people to understand a concept in a new way without possible inherited baggage colouring understanding.

### Useful Bible

passages when thinking about infant baptism could be:

- Mark 10:13-15
- Acts 2:39
- Acts 16:31

This session aims to give people the opportunity to explore the concept of 'sacraments' and to reflect on the significance of their baptism and participation in communion. It intends to offer a basic understanding rather than an introduction to different theological perspectives.

Welcome people and introduce today's session.

Go round the group, giving each group member a mini chocolate bar (or similar), saying to each person individually, 'Name, whenever you eat one of these I want you to remember that all good things come from God.' Afterwards, ask for reactions to this, but make no comment or explanation at this stage.

Discuss: What are sacraments? The *Book of Common Prayer* describes them as an 'outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace' – what might this mean? Celtic Christianity talks about 'thin places' – geographical places, objects and occasions – where God seems especially close and communicates with us in a particularly clear way. Both these descriptions apply to baptism and communion.

Baptism: What can the group share about their baptisms? – have they any memories of the event, photos or order of service? What do they know about why they were baptised and about what it means? Talk through what happens in the ceremony (perhaps using the font as a focus). The Church of England sees infant baptism as an opportunity for the child to receive God's grace, which they can respond to as they grow up. The Bible teaches that Jesus blessed children and that children are part of the community of believers, so baptism gives a way of receiving grace and of demonstrating this belonging.

Brainstorm: What do we know about communion (different names, meanings, beliefs, reasons for doing it...)? Allow opportunity to look at the chalice, paten and wafers / bread.

**There are different names** given to the ceremony which remembers Jesus' last supper: Eucharist (which means "thanksgiving"), Breaking of Bread, Mass (which is derived from the Latin for "dismissal" and has become linked to the idea of mission), Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, Agape meal (which puts the ceremony in the context of a meal).

**You can read more about** the sin offering in Leviticus 16. The peace offering, or fellowship offering, entailed the making of a burnt offering which would then be eaten, some by the priests, some by the offerer, and some given to God, to show God sharing in a meal with them, the symbol of a relationship restored (source: [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org)).

Read Matthew 26:17-29 (you could use one of the methods of Bible reading explored in earlier sessions). What do people notice? What strikes them, what speaks to them, what questions are raised? How does this connect to the sharing of chocolate at the beginning of the session? (draw out the idea of everyday objects being given a symbolic meaning).

There are different ways of understanding what was going on here. Jesus regularly shared meals with his disciples and others. On this occasion they were celebrating Passover, the Jewish freedom festival remembering how God rescued their ancestors from slavery, saving them from the angel of death by the death of the Passover lamb. They celebrated it as if it had happened to them too. Our communion service talks of Jesus as the Lamb of God and so we can make a connection between his death and our freedom.

Another way of understanding the ceremony is to think about the Jewish system of sacrifices: the sin offering, made to ask forgiveness for sin; the peace offering, eaten as a sign of the restored relationship with God; and the Passover sacrifice as a symbol of liberation.

The communion service therefore tells a story, pointing to the restoration of relationship with God. How helpful are these ways of understanding what is going on in the communion service?

As a practical follow-on activity, people could be given time to write or draw their response to these ideas, which could then be offered in the closing prayer.

Draw the session to a close with a prayer.

## Session 8: How can I put my faith into practice?

### Resources needed:

- Bibles
- Sheet: 'Useful links' (p 35)
- Any resources you can find from the organisations on the 'Useful links' sheet, or local church activities.

**You might like** to look, with the group, at Ephesians 4:2-9 and James 2:14-19 which talk about the importance of faith and of putting it into practice.

**Living Vocation** is another Living Faith in Suffolk course; it includes activities and reflections to assist in the identifying of our gifts, skills and callings. It may help you in your thinking about what you have to offer others as a way of putting your faith into practice.

This session aims to give people the opportunity and resources to begin to consider how their faith might affect the rest of their life.

Welcome people and introduce today's session.

Discuss: In what ways does your faith affect how you live? Be prepared for a wide range of answers here, including some saying that it has no effect, and some who don't know.

Being a Christian is about relationship with God, not about what we do; we can't earn our way into God's good books! However, it is a relationship that is intended to affect every part of our lives. Our passions come from God and he wants us to use them. If you are passionate about ecology, for example, that is a God-given passion to want to care for the planet that he has created.

Discuss: What are your passions? How might they be God-given? How could you use them?

As we get to know God better, we want to show his love to others. The things that he wants to change about the world become the things we also want to change.

Discuss: Who are the people who particularly need to see God's love? How might we be able to show it to them? What are the things about the world that God might want to change? How could we be part of that? These Bible passages might be helpful:

- Matthew 5:43-48
- Isaiah 1:17
- Matthew 25:31-46
- 1 John 3:11-18.

**It may be useful** to spend some time at the end of this session dealing with practical arrangements for the confirmation service. You may also want to think about whether the group needs any further help to engage with the practical project they are planning.

Spend the rest of today's session looking at some of the resources about activities / groups which put some of these ideas into practice: Which ones could you get involved with? What does your church already do? Perhaps members of the group could work together on a project which would stretch beyond their confirmation?

Draw the session to a close with a prayer.

If God were in a place he would be:

- in heaven
- in the sky
- in our hearts
- everywhere
- .....

If God were a feeling he would be:

- joy
- love
- hope
- contentment
- .....

If God were a person he would be:

- a kindly old man
- a powerful ruler
- a humble holy man
- an ordinary human
  - a woman
  - .....

# GOD?

If God were a colour he would be:

- red
- white
- black
- purple
- blue
- .....

If God were a force he would be:

- thunder and lightning
- a gentle breeze
- the sun's rays
- crashing waves
- .....

Session 1 – Bible verses for investigative task

Psalm 18:2	Psalm 23:1	Psalm 27:1
Psalm 91:4	Ephesians 3:20-21	Genesis 1:1
Jeremiah 29:11	I Timothy 1:17	Hebrews 6:10
Joshua 1:5	Lamentations 3:22-23	Deuteronomy 32:6
Jeremiah 1:5	Psalm 24:10	Exodus 33:19

Deuteronomy 7:9	Isaiah 43:18-19	Isaiah 6:3
Numbers 23:19	Isaiah 55:8-9	Isaiah 40:28-29
2 Chronicles 19:7	Exodus 20:5	Psalm 50:6
Psalm 35:24	Proverbs 5:21	Proverbs 15:8
I John 1:5	Proverbs 16:9	I John 1:9

Session 1 – Bible verses for investigative task conti'd

I John 3:1	I John 3:5	I John 3:20
James 5:11	Deuteronomy 32:4	Ephesians 1:18-20
Matthew 19:26	Psalm 139:7-10	Psalm 25:8
Romans 12:2		

Session 1 – Bible verses for investigative task cont'd

## Prompt Sheet for Bible Reading

1. Start by praying: ask God to help you to hear what he is saying to you as you read his word.
2. Read the Bible passage.
3. Work through the 'Six Big Questions To Ask':

- ◆ **WHO:** are the people? Who did it? Who can do it? Who is it talking about?
- ◆ **WHAT:** is it saying? What is happening? What is it talking about? What did they do?
- ◆ **WHERE:** are they going? Where did it happen? Where will it take place?
- ◆ **WHEN:** did it happen? When will it happen? When can it happen?
- ◆ **HOW:** did it happen? How can it happen? How was something done?
- ◆ **WHY:** did they say that? Why did they do that? Why did they go there?

Remember to take into account what is going on around the passage (e.g. before and after it – its setting).

4. Notice what ideas / words / phrases particularly strike you. What key idea comes across in this passage? What is it saying to you?
5. How could this passage apply to your life? In what way might you need to think / say / be different because of what this passage says?

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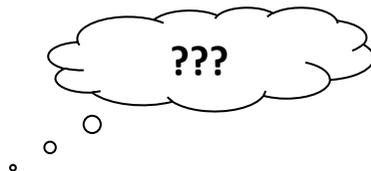
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## Imaginative Bible Reading

To read a Bible story using your imagination is a way of entering into the story and allowing God to speak to you through what you experience there.

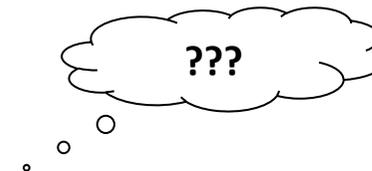
1. Start by praying: ask God to help you to hear what he is saying to you as you read his word.
2. Read the Bible passage.
3. Re-read the story, maybe a couple of times – but as you do so, imagine that you are actually there amidst all that is taking place.
  - What is the setting, what can you see around you?
  - What sounds can you hear? What can you smell, feel, taste?
  - What are your reactions to what is said and done?
  - What are your reactions to Jesus?You might decide to answer these questions as an observer; you might decide to imagine yourself in the role of one of the characters in the story so that you experience it from a particular perspective.
4. What speaks to you in this story? What is God saying to you?



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### Jesus now.....

Fill in the boxes to say what stands out, for you, in each passage.

Hebrews 1:3	
Philippians 2:9-11	
Revelation 17:14	
Colossians 1:18	
Matthew 28:18	
2 Corinthians 5:10	
Hebrews 2:17-18	
Hebrews 4:14-16, 7:25	

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Session 3 – Confirmation: key words

*The bishop asks the candidates*

Have you been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit?

**I have.**

Are you ready with your own mouth and from your own heart to affirm your faith in Jesus Christ?

**I am.**

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him.

Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

**I reject them.**

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

**I renounce them.**

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

**I repent of them.**

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

**I turn to Christ.**

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

**I submit to Christ.**

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

**I come to Christ.**

*The bishop addresses the congregation*

Brothers and sisters, I ask you to profess together with *these candidates* the faith of the Church.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*The bishop extends his hands towards those to be confirmed and says*

Almighty and ever-living God, you have given these your servants new birth

in baptism by water and the Spirit, and have forgiven them all their sins.

Let your Holy Spirit rest upon them: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and inward strength; the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and let their delight be in the fear of the Lord. **Amen.**

*The bishop addresses each candidate by name and anoints them with the Oil of Chrism, saying*

N, God has called you by name and made you his own.

*He then lays his hand on the head of each, saying*

Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Old Testament																							
Law	History																						
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## Using the Bible

### Looking up a Bible passage

1. This is the book of the Bible from which the reading comes.

You can look this up in the 'Contents' page at the beginning of the Bible.

2. This is the chapter of the book. Look for the large-sized numbers in the text.

**John 3:16**

3. This is the verse number. Look for the small-sized numbers in the text.

### Reading a Bible passage

There are some useful questions you can ask yourself as you read:

- What type of literature is this (law, history, letter...)?
- Why/to whom was it written?
- What is going on around the text, in the verses/chapters before and after the passage?
- How does this passage fit into the 'Big Story' of the Bible?
- What seems to be the purpose of the passage?

It is also a good idea to use a commentary or a Bible guide so that you can find out a bit about the historical and cultural setting of the passage.

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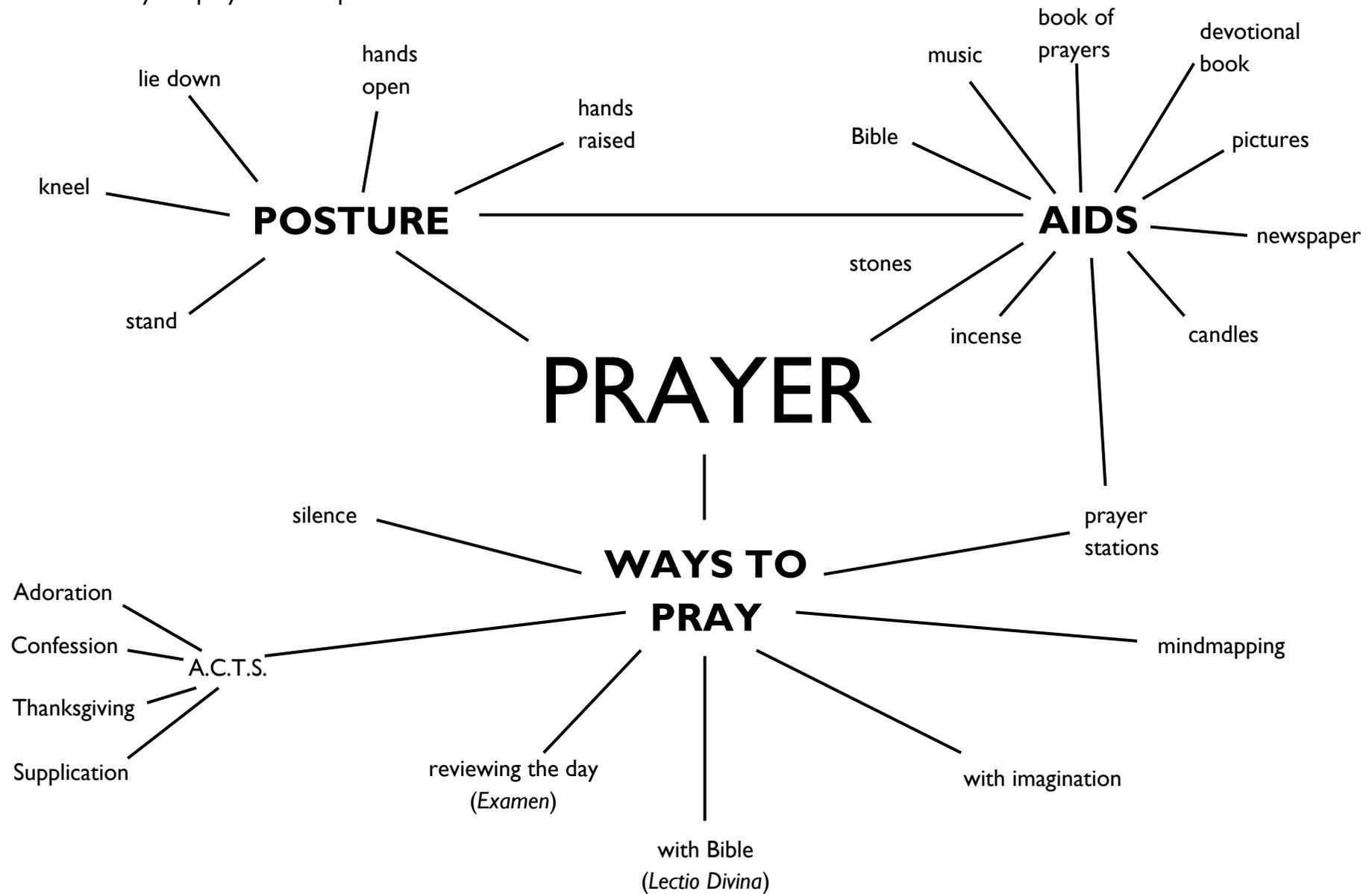
Session 5 – Prayer continuum

Prayer is so difficult  
there almost seems to be  
no point in trying to pray

Prayer is really easy,  
as natural as breathing.



Session 5 – “Ways to pray” mind map



## Session 5 – Ways to pray – further info

### Praying with the Bible - *Lectio Divina*

This is a traditional Benedictine way of praying. Begin by reading a Bible passage, slowly, several times. As you read, notice what words, phrases or ideas stand out for you and any questions you may have. Then spend time meditating on (thinking about, reflecting on) the things that stood out. Allow God to speak to you. Speak to him. Ask any questions which have arisen. Then spend some time resting in God's presence before ending your prayer.

### Reviewing the day – *Examen*

This kind of prayer comes from Ignatian spirituality and is a way of reflecting prayerfully on the events of the day in order to see God in them. In God's presence, go through your day and notice its highs and lows, the bits for which you are grateful and the emotions you experienced (an audio version of this is available on the Pray As You Go website). Ask God what he is saying through these emotions and events. Respond to what he says.

### Using newspapers

One way of praying for world (or local) concerns is to take a current newspaper and pray about some of the headlines.

### Using pictures / candles / objects

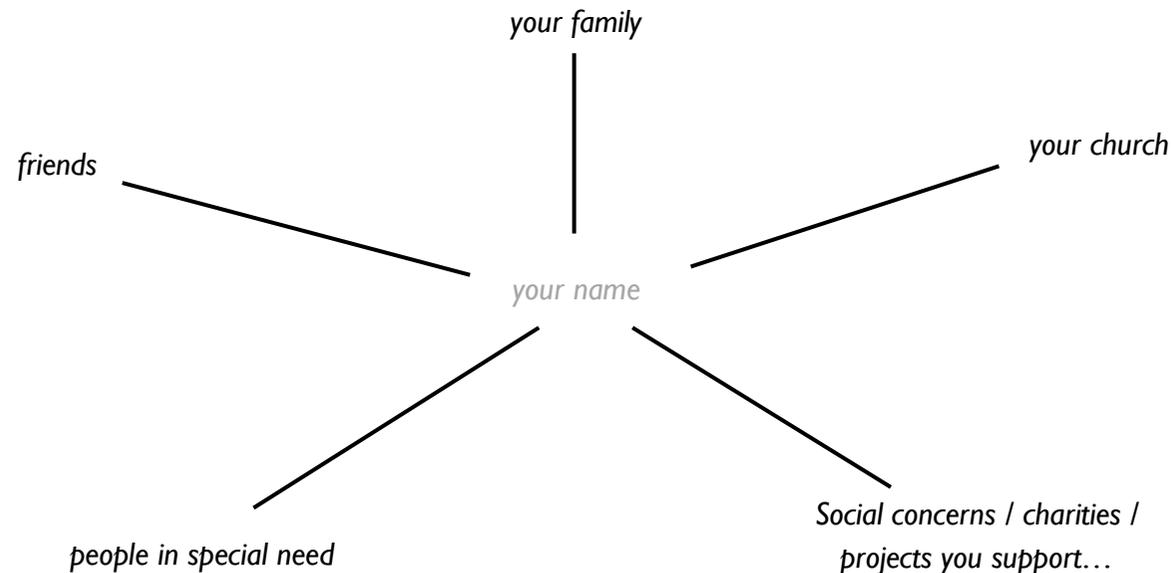
Distractions can be a real problem whilst praying. Some people find it useful to have something to look at, such as a candle, an icon or some other picture which helps them to focus or which has a particular message. Others find it helpful to have something to hold, such as a stone or a holding cross.

### Praying with imagination

This kind of prayer comes particularly from Ignatian spirituality. Choose a Bible passage (this works particularly well with stories from the gospels) and, in imagination, become a participant in the scene. Be aware of what you can see, hear, feel, smell, touch, taste. Notice what emotions are stirred, what feelings and desires are evoked. What do you take away from this experience?

## Session 5 - Mindmapping a prayer

- Put your name in the centre, where it says “your name”.
- Then, from each of the headings, put lines out and write in the names of people/situations for which you want to pray. You can add new headings if you want to. You also need not use all the headings that are there.
- You can then pray for all or part of a section of the mind map each day.



## Session 8 – Useful links

Below are websites for some of the organisations with which people may like to engage in order to explore ways of putting their faith into practice. It is by no means exhaustive but provides just a starting point to make people aware of the possibilities.

### Conservation:

- [www.arocha.org](http://www.arocha.org)
- [www.wwf.org.uk](http://www.wwf.org.uk)
- [www.wildlifetrusts.org](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org)

### Caring for others' needs:

- [www.stophetraffic.org](http://www.stophetraffic.org)
- [www.worldvision.org.uk](http://www.worldvision.org.uk)
- [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)
- [www.traidcraft.co.uk](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk)
- [www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk)
- [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)
- [www.trusselltrust.org](http://www.trusselltrust.org)
- [www.suffolkmind.org.uk](http://www.suffolkmind.org.uk)
- [www.christianaid.org.uk](http://www.christianaid.org.uk)

### Visiting those in need:

- [www.prisonfellowship.org.uk](http://www.prisonfellowship.org.uk)
- [www.naopv.com](http://www.naopv.com) (National Association of Official Prison Visitors)