



SMALL GROUP RESOURCES Using Bible Passages

The following pages contain material for those leading discussion groups as part of the series on the Great 50 Days. As group leaders, you know your groups best. Please feel free to adapt the material to suit the needs of your particular group members.

How to use the material:

In this option we have offered a suggested framework for use with your group, which first is shaped around suggested Bible readings. It offers some ideas for taking action as a group.

Each week begins with a chance to share any thoughts, comments or questions arising from the daily readings, weekly sermons (for those participating in themed preaching), or the discussion from the previous week. Groups could be invited to share something that encouraged them, challenged them, or made them think.

Each session then has a suggested reading or readings, followed by some discussion questions, and a suggested action for your group to undertake. Some additional resources have also been included, which may help you to explore the theme. Please feel free to add additional material of your own.

Each week has three main questions for people to discuss, and some groups may be able to fill a session with just those three questions. For those who would prefer a little more direction, each of the three main questions has some subsidiary questions to aid the discussion. Don't feel that you need to answer all the questions – they are simply there to give a starting point and focus for conversation.

As with the first option it is important to adapt the material for use with your group. Please also look at the website (www.thegreat50days.org.uk) for more resources & ideas to use with your group.

We hope that you enjoy exploring A Life of Mission together, and that you and your group will be deeply blessed.

WEEK 1 - HOW WAS I CALLED?

DISCUSSION STARTER:

Think back to the sermon which you heard on Sunday, and the daily reflections from this week. Share anything that encouraged, challenged or surprised you.

READ: Luke 5: 27-32

1. WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE DOES GOD CALL?

Consider the calling of Levi (Luke 5:27-32). You might also like to think about some of the stories of other people who are called by God in the Bible. For example:

Abraham (Genesis 12: 1-4); **Samuel** (1 Sam. 3: 1-10); **Mary** (Luke 1: 26-38); **Levi** (Luke 5: 27-32); **Philip and Nathaniel** (John 1: 43-51); **Mary Magdalene** (John 20: 11-18)

- What do you know about each of the characters? What are they doing when they are called? What are the circumstances in which God calls them?
- What do you notice about how they are called? What are they called from? What they are called to?
- What do their stories tell you about the kind of people God calls?
- How do they respond to God's call?

2. HOW DID GOD CALL YOU?

- When and how did God call you? What were your circumstances at the time?
- Did God call you from something, or to something, or both?
- How did you respond to God's call?
- Has God's called you in other ways since then?

3. WHAT DOES THE CALL TO FOLLOW GOD MEAN TO YOU TODAY?

Read the extract from 'The Vision and the Vow' by Pete Greig

<https://www.24-7prayer.com/blog/565/thevisionfilm>

- What do you think about the things he says are part of the call to follow Jesus?
- Did anything in particular stand out to you?
- What do you think God has called you to do and to be?
- What, if anything, is stopping you from fulfilling your calling?

GROUP ACTION

Give each group member a piece of paper with their name on it. Pass these pieces of paper around the group. For each person, other group members write down the gifts, talents, or call they see in that person.

WEEK 2 - WHICH BIBLE PASSAGES HELP ME TO SHARE MY BELIEFS?

DISCUSSION STARTER:

Think back to the sermon which you heard on Sunday, and the daily reflections from this week. Share anything that encouraged, challenged or surprised you.

READ: Luke 24: 13-32

WATCH: If you have Internet access, the following poem might be a good way to begin this session:

David Bowden || “I Believe in Scripture” || Spoken Word

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZdzjf5uuv4>

1. HOW CAN THE BIBLE HELP US TO SHARE OUR FAITH?

- In the passage from Luke 24, how does Jesus use scripture to explain and share faith? Why do you think he starts with Moses (and the giving of the Law) and the prophets?
- What is the disciples' response to encountering God through the scriptures?

2. WHAT BIBLE PASSAGES HAVE HELPED YOU IN YOUR OWN FAITH?

- How important has the Bible been in shaping your faith?
- Do you have any favourite verses or passages from the Bible? If so, why are they important to you?
- Is there a particular character in the Bible that you identify with?
- Are there parts of the Bible that you struggle with? How might we deal with these passages?

3. WHICH BIBLE PASSAGES OR VERSES WOULD YOU WANT SOMEONE ELSE TO HEAR?

- If someone you know wanted to start reading the Bible, which passage or passages would you recommend? Why?
- If you had to choose some passages to explain the gospel and the hope you have in Jesus, which passage or passages would you choose?

GROUP ACTION

As a group, choose one of the passages of scripture and have it printed onto cards for each person in the group. Commit to memorising this passage.

WEEK 3 - WHO HAS GUIDED MY FAITH JOURNEY?

DISCUSSION STARTER:

Think back to the sermon which you heard on Sunday, and the daily reflections from this week. Share anything that encouraged, challenged or surprised you.

READ: Esther 4: 6-16 and 2 Timothy 1: 1-5

1. WHAT ARE THE THINGS WHICH SHAPE/INFLUENCE OUR FAITH JOURNEY?

- In the two Bible passages, who or what influenced Esther and Timothy as they grew in faith?
- What other things can guide or help us we grow in faith?

2. IN YOUR OWN FAITH JOURNEY, WHO OR WHAT HAS INFLUENCED YOU?

- Consider your own journey of faith. Who are the people who have helped or influenced you along the way? How did they help you to discover more of God?
- Other than people, what else has helped you to encounter God, and to know and love him more deeply?
- Are there times when you have been aware of God guiding and leading you?

3. WHOSE FAITH JOURNEY COULD YOU BE GUIDING?

- Think about the people in your church, workplace, school, or community. Is there someone who you could walk alongside and guide in their faith journey?
- This week, pray for opportunities to be alongside those people, and the courage to take the opportunities when they arise.

GROUP ACTION

For next week, ask each person to bring an object or photo which represents someone who has guided their faith journey

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

One of the Bible passages which speaks of God's leading and guidance is Psalm 23. Some people have written their own alternatives to that Psalm, which may make helpful reflections during this session.

Here are a few examples:

- The Lord is my compass and the Lord is my choirmaster
<http://nevfam2.tripod.com/material/psalm23.htm>
- The Lord is my boss
<https://re-worship.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/psalm-23-lord-is-my-boss.html>
- I am a character in The Author's novel –
<http://mcpfaithwriter.blogspot.co.uk/2016/10/23-my-alternative-version.html>

WEEK 4 - WHAT IS MY FAITH STORY?

DISCUSSION STARTER:

Think back to the sermon which you heard on Sunday, and the daily reflections from this week. Share anything that encouraged, challenged or surprised you.

READ: Acts 26: 1-29

1. WHY DO YOU THINK OUR FAITH STORIES ARE IMPORTANT?

- Consider Paul's testimony in Acts 26 (you may also want to look at what he says in Acts 22:1-21) . What do we learn about Paul from his story?
- What does Paul consider to be the significant events in his story?
- Why do you think Paul shares his story and not just theological arguments?

2. WHAT IS YOUR FAITH STORY?

- Take a few moments to consider your own faith journey. (Feel free to make notes, draw pictures, or plot things on a timeline if it helps).
- What are the significant events or milestones on your faith journey? When have you been particularly aware of God in your life?
- If you are willing to, share your faith story with the rest of the group. Set yourselves a strict time limit (such as 1 minute per person).

3. WHAT IS HAPPENING IN YOUR FAITH STORY AT THE MOMENT?

- Paul's testimony includes the story of how he came to follow Jesus, but continues right up to what God is doing in the present day. If you could only share the most recent six months of your story, what would you say?

GROUP ACTION

Commit to sharing your testimonies with the wider congregation, either as part of a service, or perhaps as a series of articles in the church newsletter or website.

WEEK 5 - HOW DOES MY FAITH SHOW IN MY EVERYDAY LIFE?

DISCUSSION STARTER:

Think back to the sermon which you heard on Sunday, and the daily reflections from this week. Share anything that encouraged, challenged or surprised you.

READ: John 4: 7-30, 39-42

1. HOW DOES OUR FAITH SHOW IN EVERYDAY LIFE?

- After encountering Jesus, what is the first thing the woman does? Why? Have you ever felt like that (about anything)?
- How is her new-found faith evident in her life?
- What is it about the woman that convinces others to seek Jesus for themselves?
- What other ways might faith be evident in someone's life? (Consider, for example, Acts 2: 42-47; James 2: 14-18; Acts 4: 32-35; Ephesians 4: 17-32).

2. HOW DO YOU SHOW YOUR FAITH IN YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE?

- What is the one thing everyone knows about you? What are you always talking about?
- Do you think your faith is equally obvious or well known?
- How do you think your faith is revealed in your day to day life?

3. WHAT COULD YOU DO MAKE YOUR FAITH MORE OBVIOUS TO OTHERS?

- Is there anything which stops you from showing your faith? How could you overcome that?
- Are there some changes you could make to your life which would make your faith more obvious to others?

GROUP ACTION

Ask everyone in the group where they will be this time tomorrow. Pray for one another for opportunities to demonstrate your faith in those situations.

Additional Resources:

Isabel's Story - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0xLfxcc0n0>

Spoken word (woman at the well - two versions)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q49BbfgJbto>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5y2GImTxpkM>

WEEK 6 - WHY DO I SHARE MY FAITH?

DISCUSSION STARTER:

Think back to the sermon which you heard on Sunday, and the daily reflections from this week. Share anything that encouraged, challenged or surprised you.

READ: Matthew 28: 16-20 and Acts 1: 7-8

1. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR CHRISTIANS TO SHARE THEIR FAITH?

- Why do you think Jesus asks His follows to pass on their faith and the things He has taught them?
- Looking at the instructions Jesus gives His disciples in Matthew 28 and Acts 1, what will sharing their faith involve? What does Jesus ask them to do and to be?
- Jesus gives His followers an important task, which must have seemed quite daunting. What encouragement are they given about the task of sharing their faith?

2. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR US TO BE ABLE TO SHARE OUR FAITH?

WATCH - If you are able to, watch the video 'Talking Jesus'

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNPayyT_G2A

- What are some of the ways in which people hear about the Christian faith?
- Why might it be important for us to be able to share our faith? Why can't we just leave it to the 'experts'?
- Romans 10:14 says that people cannot believe in someone they haven't heard about, and cannot hear without someone telling them. Think for a moment about the people you know. Are there people who might not hear about Jesus from anyone else other than you?

3. WHAT STOPS YOU FROM SHARING YOUR FAITH WITH OTHERS?

- Are there things which stop you from sharing your faith, or being confident in telling other people about Jesus? What are some of the barriers you need to overcome?
- What would help you to be more comfortable sharing your faith?
- Is there one practical step you could take this year to build your confidence?

GROUP ACTION

As a group, commit to a random act of kindness as a way of sharing your faith (for example, leaving a gift for someone, with a note telling them God loves them)

WEEK 7 - WHO SHOULD I SHARE JESUS WITH?

DISCUSSION STARTER:

Think back to the sermon which you heard on Sunday, and the daily reflections from this week. Share anything that encouraged, challenged or surprised you.

READ: Acts 16: 9-33 (and Acts 1: 8)

1. WHO DO YOU THINK CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO SHARE THEIR FAITH WITH?

- Who does Paul attempt to share faith with first? Why do you think that is?
- Who else does Paul have an opportunity to share his faith with?

2. WHO COULD YOU SHARE YOUR FAITH WITH?

WATCH - If you are able to, watch the video of Zoe's story:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gH_sRBejKKU

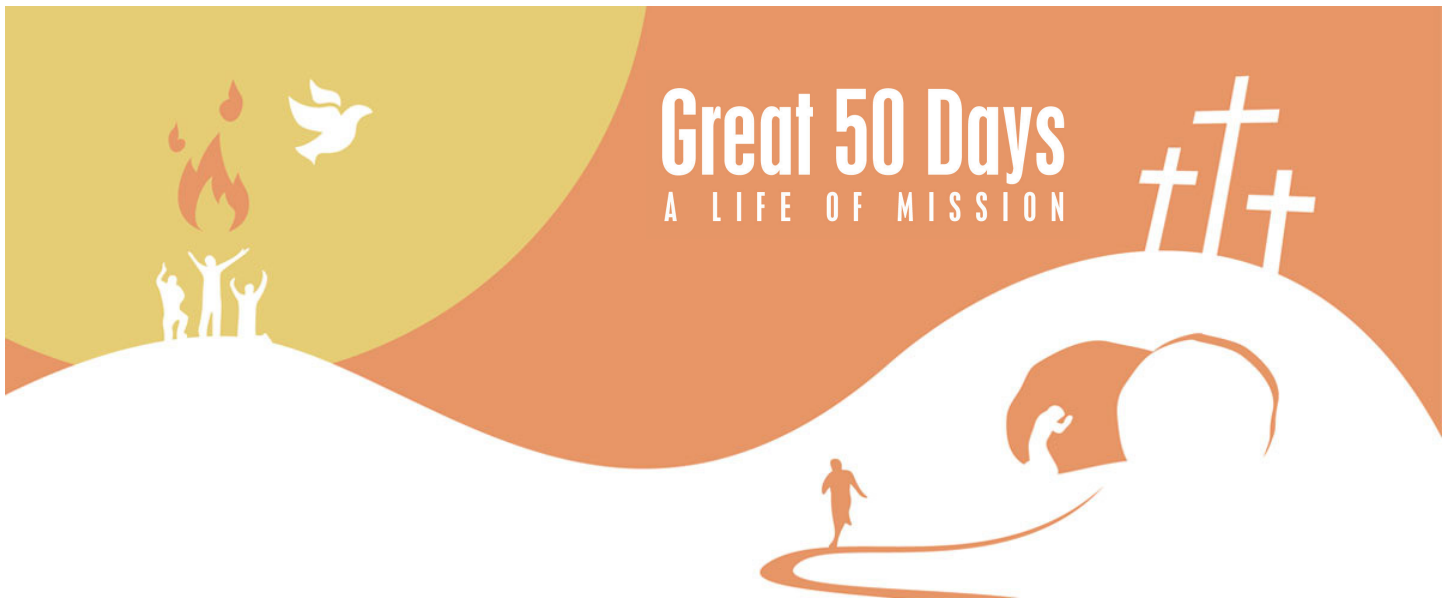
- Who are the people closest to you who don't yet know Jesus? Have you ever tried to share your faith with them? What happened?
- God gave Paul a vision of the people he wanted him to share his faith with. Are there particularly people that come to mind when you think about sharing your faith? Are there some who already have an interest in, (or an openness to) the Christian faith?
- Paul took advantage of opportunities to share his faith wherever possible, often with people he didn't know. How do you feel about sharing your faith with strangers? Does it feel more or less difficult than sharing faith with people you know?

3. WHAT WILL YOU DO TO SHARE YOUR FAITH?

- In previous weeks we have looked at different ways of sharing our faith: telling our faith story, living in a way which speaks of Jesus or makes those around us ask why we live as we do, sharing bible passages/verses, offering to pray with/for people. Which of these comes most naturally to you?
- Can you think of any opportunities coming up in your life where you could share your faith naturally?

This week, pray for:

- A person you would love to come to know Jesus
- An opportunity to share your faith
- Courage to see unexpected circumstances as opportunities to share faith



SPECIAL THANKS TO...

Ian Kent, Tricia Mitchell, Elaine Lindridge and James Patterson for putting this small groups resource together for the Great 50 Days.

Again we hope that you enjoy exploring “A Life of Mission” together, and that you and your group will be deeply blessed as you learn, share and grow together as disciples of Jesus Christ.