

NOTES FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS | W/C 1 OCTOBER

How Do We Feel About Evangelism?

Explanatory Notes

First of all, a big THANK YOU for leading a BLESS group this term. We believe this series will be life-changing – for us as individuals, for us as a church, and also for many outside the church as we grow closer in fellowship and community and reach out more effectively.

These are the notes for the ‘pre-week’ of the BLESS series. The aim of this evening is to explore and, at times, challenge our feelings and understanding of evangelism.

Planning your evenings

Everything in these notes is a suggestion – so feel free to run your session in the way you think will work best for your group. For instance, you can decide whether or not the icebreaker and worship theme will work with your group, and you can pick and choose the discussion questions you think will be most helpful. If you’d like to add any elements, like breaking bread, that’s of course fine too.

Sharing stories

One thing we’d really like to be a feature of this series is people’s stories. Hopefully you’ve already had the chance to share your story during the previous week’s Small Group evening, using the guidelines we sent out on how to shape your story. If not, it would be good for you as the leader to share your story first to model openness and honesty to the group. Then ask for volunteers for subsequent weeks.

We would also really appreciate hearing any stories that emerge from your group, as well as feedback on the materials we’re providing throughout the series. Please share stories and feedback with us, either through your Cluster Leader or by emailing sgc@kchw.co.uk

Through the ‘King’s News’ section at the end, we will aim to keep you informed of things that are coming up so you can remind your people about them.

Finally, as a staff and leadership team, we’re praying for you and all our Small Groups. Let’s trust God together for an amazing and fruitful term!

Starting Out

ICEBREAKER SUGGESTION

If you could choose one person to become a Christian, who would it be? Would it be someone close to you or a person of influence? Why?

WORSHIP SUGGESTION

Read *Philippians 2:5-11*. Read it first to yourselves, then ask someone to read it out loud. Spend time praising God using the lines from this glorious passage.

PERSONAL STORIES

Someone in the group (asked in advance) shares their 3-minute story. Following this, ask for a volunteer(s) for next week.

Discussion & reflection

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. What is your instinctive response to the word 'evangelism'?
2. Is there a difference in how you picture an 'evangelist' and someone who is 'pastoral'? What words would you use to describe the two?
3. Think of the person, or a person, who helped you come to faith. What were they like? What did they do?

For discussion: Is it possible the distinction we sometimes make between 'evangelistic' and 'pastoral' is a false distinction? Isn't evangelism the most pastoral and loving thing we could do... even if it's hard?

IN THE BIBLE

1. Read *Matthew 28:18-19*. What is your response to this command of Jesus? Does it excite you or daunt you? Do you find yourself looking for ways to do it, or for excuses as to why you can't? Does verse 20 change how you feel?
2. Why do you think Jesus says *make disciples* rather than *convert people*? Is there a difference?
3. Do you see 'making disciples' as an individual or corporate thing? How does it happen in the church? How could it happen more?

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

1. Can you think of a time when you've had the opportunity to talk to someone about Jesus but you held back? What held you back?
Leaders, if you have an example here, it would be great if you could share first.

Notes for leaders: The main cause of holding back is fear, and you could group this into four different fears:

- *Fear of being inadequate* – I don't know enough, I'm not very good at explaining...
- *Fear of losing reputation* – what will they say or think of us...
- *Fear of rejection*
- *Fear of appearing hypocritical* – does my life demonstrate the difference Jesus makes?

How might we address these fears?

- *Fear of being inadequate* – don't be worried about what we don't know – share what we do know
- *Fear of losing reputation* – Jesus made himself nothing for us (*Phil 2:7*) and set an example for us to follow. If He wasn't worried about His reputation, why should we worry about ours?

- *Fear of rejection* – we need to lean into the security that comes with being accepted by God
- *Fear of appearing hypocritical* – it's good to examine ourselves, listen to God's voice and pursue godliness. But it's important to be real with others about your struggles and how Jesus gets you through and loves and accepts you.

1. Can you think of an occasion when you *have* talked to someone about Jesus? How did it go? What have you learnt that might help others?
2. Read the following true story (from 'Breaking News') and then use the questions that follow to encourage your group to reflect:
A Christian family was on holiday, travelling down a road, when they saw a suitcase fly off the top of a car going in the opposite direction. They stopped to pick it up, but the driver of the other car hadn't noticed and so didn't stop. The only clue to the driver's identity was a gold coin with the inscription: 'Given to Otis Sampson on his retirement by Portland Cement Company'. After extensive correspondence, Otis Sampson was located and contacted. He wrote a letter telling them to discard the suitcase and contents and send only the gold coin. Mr Sampson used the phrase 'my most precious possession' several times to describe the coin. They sent it to him with a letter about their own most precious possession – Jesus Christ. A year later, they received a Christmas package. In it was the gold coin. Mr Sampson wrote, 'You will be happy to know we have become Christians and active members of a church. We want you to have this gold coin. I am 74 and my wife is 72. You were the first people to tell us about Jesus. Now he is our most precious possession.'

FOR REFLECTION

- Is your relationship with Jesus more precious than anything else?
- How many of your family, friends, neighbours, colleagues know about this treasure? How infectious is your love of Jesus?
- If you have forgotten that Jesus is your most precious treasure, how can you help to remind yourself? How can you grow in your love of Jesus so it becomes infectious?

Reassure your group that the BLESS series starting on Sunday 7 Oct is aimed at equipping us in evangelism, in the full knowledge that most of us don't find it easy. We trust it will prove to be an effective tool for everyone in the church, regardless of how un-confident they feel. Encourage people to have an open mind and to be expectant of how God could use this in each of our lives to transform how we reach out to others.

Prayer

- Take time to pray through any particular issues that were raised during the discussion – as a whole group or in smaller groups.
- Pray for the BLESS series starting on Sunday 7 Oct – that God would use it powerfully and that it would bear fruit long into the future.
- Pray in pairs – ask, 'what is the best thing I could pray for you?'

King's News

We have an Encounter Evening on Sunday 14th October, 7-8.30pm at the Town Centre site. Encourage people to make it a priority as we come together as one church to worship, pray and encounter God.