

4Life

Group Notes

God's Values for Living

4Life Group Notes

4Life is based on The Arrival Kit by Ralph Neighbour (Cell UK, 1993, 1999 & 2000) and Deeper by Gabriel Smy (Cell UK 2003).

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This impression 2022

Cover design by **bluepig**design, Harlow, Essex

Published by:

Cell UK Ministries, Ashley Church, Ashley Road, St Albans. AL1 5DA

Registered Charity No. 1088578

ISBN 978-1-902144-33-7

E&OE

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Introduction

4Life Group Notes

4Life Group Notes are written to be used alongside *4Life* by Mark Powley (with contributions from Liz West & Trevor Withers, Cell UK, 2006). 4Life was originally written to be used in four 1-to-1 meetings with another Christian. These Group Notes make the same material accessible to small groups over a 10-week /10-session course (technically it should be renamed 10Life!).

Why Use 4Life Group Notes?

- To establish solid foundations for discipleship
- To take groups deeper in honesty and fellowship
- 4Life Group Notes can be used with small groups at all stages of development, including after an Alpha Course, when seeking to follow Cell Church principles, or just when a group wants to become more committed and outward looking

How to do 4Life as a Group

This guide contains suggestions for 10 group meetings, ideally over 10 weeks. In between each session, members of the group should try to complete part of the 4Life book. Each week's meeting is designed to build on the material in 4Life, without excluding anyone who has missed previous sessions or hasn't managed to read 4Life that week. There are also opportunities for people to share in groups of 2-3 during the session, but it's up to you how you use these. The 10 meetings run as follows:

Session One	Introducing 4Life
Session Two	New Life
Session Three	New Identity
Session Four	New Foundations
Session Five	New Values
Session Six	New Habits
Session Seven	New Lifestyle
Session Eight	New Power
Session Nine	New Purpose
Session Ten	Review

Introduction

How These Notes Work

This guide is written for the leaders of groups looking at 4Life together. Group members won't need a copy of this guide, but should each have a copy of 4Life where possible (these can be ordered direct from Cell UK Ministries at www.celluk.org.uk 07715 069939). Before each meeting, you, the leader, need to read through the notes to make sure you're ready for what might take place.

Leader's Notes

These give an introduction to the topic and let you know what you might need. It's important to be prayerfully prepared for what God might want to do through the meeting, and to make sure there's sufficient space in the right places.

Meeting Suggestions

This section aims to give help and ideas for structuring the meeting, especially if your group follows a 4W pattern like many Cell Groups.

Welcome – an icebreaker question for everyone to answer. These can be great for warming people up into listening and sharing, but shouldn't go on too long. Suggested time: 10 mins.

Worship – deepens the groups awareness of the presence of God and prepares our hearts for what the Holy Spirit wants to teach us. Suggested time: 10-15 mins.

Word – see Word Section below. Suggested time: 40 mins discussion and sharing / 20 mins prayer (more in sessions 3, 6, 8 & 10)

Witness – even if it's only brief, a focus on those outside the group who aren't Christians is a vital part of healthy group life. It will also help encourage the outward-looking life 4Life is about. Suggested time: 5-10 mins

Introduction

Word Section

The purpose of the Word Section is to look at the passage from the bible and apply what is read our every day lives. Please consider the guidelines below. They may just take the meetings from interesting discussion to a genuine encounter with God!

- ***Begin by reading the introduction.*** This is written to make clear the aim of the session and raise faith for how God may want to use it.
- ***Use the questions simply as they're written.*** These questions are carefully planned to be simple, open, and to lead towards deeper group reflection. Try sticking to them, even if you're used to writing your own questions or letting discussion wander.
- ***Make space for answers.*** There's no need to jump in with your own views straight away. People will need to hear the question a couple of times, then have a moment to think. Your job is more to listen than to speak. Encourage people to respond (there isn't one right answer you should be looking for). If necessary, bring people back to the question when discussion has run dry or gone off track.
- ***Things to avoid.*** Avoid lectures or sermons, letting stronger members dominate discussion, or red herrings that lead away from the theme.
- ***Keep it practical.*** A good group session should be full of honesty and practical sharing about real life. Make sure the group doesn't get distracted by arguments about theology or individual bible verses. People will follow your lead if your contributions are personal and real.
- ***Make time for prayer.*** Prayer for one another is vital. It gives God room to work in our groups. At the end of the day, members can always reread sections of 4Life or discuss issues outside of the meeting, but the opportunity to pray for each other is unique and powerful – don't let it get squeezed!

Before the next meeting

4Life is about going beyond church attendance and even group membership to a life which is genuinely being transformed by God at every level. Your role as a leader is absolutely vital in reading through 4Life yourself and encouraging group members to persevere. As the meeting ends, remind people which section of 4Life to look at for next time.

Introduction

Making the Best of 4Life

4Life is a tool for change. How can we be best involved in that process?

- *Each week pray daily for your group by name.* In particular, follow up what's been covered the week before – pray for special times with God following the focus on prayer; pray for opportunities to share the faith following the discussion on witness; pray for growth in gifts after the Holy Spirit session... Then see how God is active in your group as you pray and his Spirit goes to work.
- *Model what you're looking for.* If you take 4Life seriously yourself, your group is much more likely to follow.
- *Encourage people to discuss in 2-3s where relevant.* Some of the deeper sections of 4Life are best shared with only 1 or 2 others (4Life was originally designed to be used 1-to-1 throughout). If it's possible, make the most of the sections where discussion is suggested in pairs and threes (sessions 3, 5 & 7).

It would also be highly beneficial if group members were able to get together with 1 or 2 others on four occasions outside the group meeting (after sessions 3, 5, 7 & 9). This will enable people to work through each main unit of 4Life more deeply (Identity; Values; Lifestyle; Purpose). They may want to use the review questions at the end of each 4Life unit, or simply to chat and pray through last couple of group meetings. This kind of meeting can be crucial in encouraging faith and discipleship.

If your group is able to form these kind of 4Life mini-groups, you may need to give some thought to how it could happen. It's normally advisable to stick to single-sex groupings. You may want to consider who could meet with whom, though at the end of the day groupings should usually be self-chosen.

Introduction

- *Encourage older Christians to keep going.* If any older Christians feel some of the early material in 4Life is too basic, it may be worth pointing out that 4Life is written to work on many levels. There are many challenging and deep aspects of 4Life as it develops, and many older Christians have found working through 4Life helpful. The emphasis is not on learning new things, but on having our lives reshaped to be like Christ – something we could all do with! In fact, older Christians can play a vital role in any group like this: providing real life examples, taking a lead in the pairs and threes, and leading with their honesty and enthusiasm.
- *If possible, give out 4Life in advance.* This may help group members get used to the book and prepare to work through it.

Session One

Introducing 4Life

Leader's Notes

This meeting is mainly to introduce 4Life and to encourage us to get serious about discipleship. It includes time to hear each others' stories of faith – there is such power in telling our stories. Even if you think you know each other, hearing our stories afresh can be a wonderful thing. For some this might be a significant step (you can never predict what people will share!), so it's important that there's a respectful and listening atmosphere. Your role may include encouraging shy group members, and also making sure that talkative members don't take up all the time.

You may need

- Copies of 4Life, if they've not already been given out.
- Spare Bibles (worth having every week).
- If you are following the Worship suggestion below, some worship music, paper and pens.

Meeting Suggestions

Welcome

'Name a skill that you learnt from somebody else. Who taught you and what made you want to learn?'

Worship

Play some worship music (especially something that celebrates what Jesus has done for us). Ask people to write a short prayer of praise and thanks as they listen. After the song, ask people to stay in an attitude of worship and read out their prayers.

Word

Introduction

Welcome to 4Life! Over the next 10 meetings, this group will have the chance to go deeper into the Christian faith and what it means to follow Jesus. 4Life was originally designed for 4 meetings with one other Christian. These group notes have been developed to help groups work through the same four foundations of Christian living: identity, values, lifestyle, and purpose. The sessions are designed to work with the readings from 4Life. Please commit to working through five

readings from 4Life between each session, so you can get the most out of the whole experience. If you already spend regular time with God in the week, please use this to look at 4Life; if you don't spend regular time with God, this is a great way to start!

This introductory session begins by looking at the start of the journey – how we come to faith in the first place and what it means to be a disciple, or student, of Jesus Christ.

Read Mark 1:14-18

1. How would you explain what it means to repent and believe?
2. Have you come to repent and believe in Jesus? If so, how did it happen?
[Leave plenty of time here for people, possibly everyone, to share their testimonies]
3. What difference did becoming a disciple make to Simon and Andrew, both when they started and later on?
4. How do you feel about being a disciple, or student, of Jesus Christ?
[Note: the word disciple means student or learner]

Witness

Invite a few short prayers thanking God for the testimonies you have shared and for the power of the gospel to change lives.

Before the next meeting...

Take a moment before the end of the session to have a brief look at a copy of 4Life together, including a sample day's reading – has anybody got any questions or concerns?

Ask people to work through the Identity section, units 1-5 (p. 13-23 in 4Life), before the next meeting. Encourage them to make notes in the spaces and to bring their copy to the next meeting. The more you put into the 4Life process, the more you get out.

Session Two

New Life

Leader's Notes

This section picks up on the first half of the Identity section of 4Life (Identity 1 – 5). It begins by helping the group members to be certain of their relationship with God. It's important for all of us to recognize the Vital Signs of new life (see Word section) in ourselves and in others. This can be a great encouragement, especially if we see them growing while we do 4Life. Being confident about God's love for us and our new life in Christ, we can then be honest about the doubts and difficulties we face. Try to ensure that people feel they have 'permission' to ask difficult questions and share doubts without being singled out or preached at.

The questions end with time to think about how teachable we are and being willing to learn from others. At this point it may be appropriate to gently challenge everyone in the group to be willing to step into new things over the coming weeks, however far we may already have come.

You may need

- Spare copies of 4Life, if anyone missed the last meeting.
- Spare copies of the Vital Signs list (see the Extra section on page 30 at the back of this booklet).
- Resources for worship, if following the suggestion below.

Meeting Suggestions

Welcome

'Give an example of a big change you have made to your life. What effects has it had?' Answers could be shared in pairs first, then briefly all together.

Worship

Confession is a part of our worship. Spend some time individually writing down anything which group members feel they need to confess. Have someone read 1 John 1:8-9. Then the lists on paper can be torn up, binned, shredded, nailed to a cross or burned (!). Finish with some prayers of thanks for God's forgiveness.

Word

Introduction

One of the most important things we can know as Christians is our identity – who we are in Christ, and the new life God gives us. In this session we will look closer at what that new life means. We should never give up on these truths, even if we've heard them before. And we shouldn't stop learning, either. As with all

living things, growth is a sign of life. If we're humble enough to be always learning, we'll be amazed at what God will teach us.

Read 1 John 5:1-5

1. According to this passage, how do we know that we have new life?
2. What Vital Signs have you seen in your life?
[Group members will need a copy of the Vital Signs list, either in their copy of 4Life (p. 16) or from the back of this booklet. You may want to do this activity in 2-3s as a gentle introduction to pair-work]
3. What doubts and obstacles do you face in the Christian life?
[The group needs to resist the temptation to 'solve' all the difficulties with easy answers. It is often better to listen and be honest oneself!]
4. How willing are you to learn new things? How well do you cope with change?

Pray

Spend some time as a group praying for each other, and interceding for any other needs people have or things that have come up in this meeting.

Witness

Spend a short time praying for your group/church to grow as more people find new life in Christ.

Before the next meeting...

Ask people to work through Identity 6-10 (pages 24-34) and bring their copy of 4Life to the next meeting.

Encourage people to spend some time chewing on the memory verse

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. (1 John 3:1).

Session Three

New Identity

Leader's Notes

This session concludes the Identity unit (Identity 6-10). Having covered the basics of repentance and new life, we look deeper at how far the truth of the gospel has shaped the way we see ourselves. The aim here is to get beyond simply saying 'I'm a Christian' or even 'I'm a child of God', so that we begin to know much more deeply who God is, who we are in his eyes, and the love he has for us. Mature Christians aren't the ones who have 'grasped' all this perfectly, but are the ones who realize how hard it is to live this truth and how wonderful it is when God reveals it to us again.

This is a key session to press further into what's really going on under the surface of our lives. Group members need to know that they can trust each other not to spread what is shared beyond the group and to know what they share will be sensitively handled.

You may need

- To consider carefully how the group might split into 2s and 3s for some of the discussion and prayer.
- Copies of questions for 2s and 3s (see Extra: page 31).

Meeting Suggestions

Welcome

Choose three words to describe your identity.

Worship

Have a time of prayer in which every prayer is just a sentence that begins, 'God is...'

Word

Introduction

Every person in this room is amazing! Incredible. Wonderfully made. Extravagantly loved. Completely forgiven. Graciously included. Carefully being restored. This is who we are – our Identity. This session is about letting that reality sink deeper into the way we live. Some of the questions will only make sense if you have worked through the identity unit in 4 Life. It's an opportunity to share our reactions with 1 or 2 others. This will give us some space to talk, honestly and in confidence through what our identity means in practice.

Read 1 John 3:1-3

1. What does this passage teach about our true identity?
2. In what different ways does the world offer us an identity?

SPLIT into 2s and 3s

3. What lies about God have you ever believed (see Identity 7 in 4Life)?
4. What keeps you from living in your identity as a child of God?
[This may have come up in Identity 6 in 4Life]

Pray

Remaining in 2s and 3s, pray for each other. Be honest about how deeply you feel your true identity has sunk in. As you pray, claim the identity that Christ has won for you and reject any false ideas about yourself and God.

Witness

Pray for those you know who are blinded to the truth of who God is and who they are.

Before the next meeting...

Ask people to work through Values 1-5 (pages 35-45) before your next group meeting.

Session Four

New Foundations

Leader's Notes

This meeting is about having our foundations in the biblical story. These days biblical literacy can be very low. There are so many other stories competing for our attention – the plots of TV series and soap operas, the daily unfolding of the news, the ups and downs of sporting seasons. We need to constantly reorient ourselves so that our lives are grounded in the bigger picture of God's plans for the world.

This session aims to tackle some key issues about how we see the world. It challenges faulty worldviews – that God is distant, that morality doesn't exist, that the world is heading nowhere, and so on. It may be that discussion brings up deeply held beliefs or patterns of thinking that haven't been challenged before. Because of this, it's important to be graceful and patient. It's also important not to insist too firmly on anything the Bible isn't clear about (for instance, particular interpretations of Genesis or Revelation). But at the same time we should be clear on the key markers of the Christian story. If our faith is going to go the distance, and if our lives are going to break out of the world's mould, we'll need to be firmly rooted in God's story as revealed through scripture.

Meeting Suggestions

Welcome

'Share part of your life's story that made you who you are'. Answers could be shared in pairs first, then briefly all together.

Worship

Ask a few people to share a favourite bible verses, then turn these verses into prayers of thanks and praise.

Word

Introduction

We've looked at our identity in Christ, now we can take a wider view - what's the story of the world and what's truly important? The Christian life isn't just a set of feelings or private beliefs; it's a bold claim concerning the truth about our world. Life isn't pointless, our actions do have meaning, the world is headed somewhere. This is why it's crucial for us to have the foundations of a Christian worldview in place: God's good creation, our sinful fall, the chosen people – Israel, the coming of Jesus Christ and the new creation we're looking forward to. If we can live in *this* story, our lives will be changed and used by God beyond our imagining.

Read Acts 17:22-31

1. What's the story of the world according to this sermon, and what difference should it make?
2. What did you used to believe about the world? What difference did it make to your actions? (See Values 1)
3. What has struck you as we've looked at the biblical story in Values 1-5 and the Acts passage?
4. If the big picture revealed in the Bible is true, what difference should it make to us?

Pray

Pray for each other. Intercede for any needs people have and pray through things that have come up in this meeting.

Witness

Close with a reminder: if this Biblical story is true, it is not just 'true for me', it is true for everyone. Everyone we know was made for God, everyone we know faces judgment, everyone we know needs Jesus. If we truly believe this, then declaring and demonstrating the message of Jesus to them is one of the most important things we can ever do. How do we view those who don't share our faith? How does Jesus view them? Do we need to change in our attitudes?

Before the next meeting...

Ask people to work through Values 6-10 (pages 46-56).

It's especially important to persevere with this section of 4Life, as the Values material contains really significant units when it comes to living in God's story. In particular it would be very helpful if people could bring a completed Values list (page 47).

Session Five

New Values

Leader's Notes

The aim of this session is for people to confront the values that influence them in their daily lives. Honestly done, this activity can bear real fruit for working through some of our deeper drives and the areas of our lives where God's priorities have not yet taken hold. Once again, the keys to a successful session are honesty, gentleness and confidentiality. For this reason, working in 2s and 3s for the second half will probably be much more beneficial.

The Witness suggestion is also important for this session as it allows people to begin to be more purposeful about reaching out to those around them. If your group doesn't use the Witness suggestions, is there some way you can encourage people to pray for their Circle of Influence (4Life, p53) and to share encouraging stories of outreach?

You may need

- Spare copies of My Values and questions for 2s and 3s (see Extra: pages 32-33).
- Paper and pens for people's Circle of Influence lists, if you're following the Witness suggestion.

Meeting Suggestions

Welcome

'If your house was on fire, apart from saving others, what one thing would you rescue?'

Worship

Read Mark 12:29-30. Play a worship track that seems appropriate and encourage people to use the time to surrender themselves to God and to commit to love him above all else. During the song, people may want to open their hands as an act of surrender. After the song, finish with prayer.

Word

Introduction

The Values section is one of the crunch points of 4Life. We can all say, 'I'm a Christian; God comes first in my life', but is it really true? In reality, the Christian life is a process of learning to surrender things to God as he changes our values – the things that are important to us. If we're honest about what's yet to change in

our lives, and the things that sometimes drive us, God can take us further along the process of change. If we let him, he won't finish until we're just as he wants us!

Read Romans 12:1-2

1. What does this passage teach about transformation?

SPLIT into 2s and 3s

2. Share your Values lists (Values 6). What effect do your top values have on the way you live?

[If people haven't already completed their list, they may need a space to do this]

3. What values would you like to change (see Values 10)?

Pray

Remaining in 2s and 3s, take time to pray through what's been discussed. If there's a value you'd like to change, repent of it and in the power of the Spirit commit to live by a different value. Pray for each other, too, that God would give you grace to walk in his ways and live for what is truly important.

Witness

Ask people, if they haven't already done so, to make a 'Circle of Influence' list of their friends, neighbours and colleagues who aren't Christians. Encourage them to pray for each person daily by name this week, asking for God to bless them and make himself known to them.

Before the next meeting...

Ask people to work through Lifestyle 1-5 (pages 57-67).

Session Six

New Habits

Leader's Notes

Although Lifestyle 1-5 covers worship, prayer, the Bible and church, this meeting focuses mainly on prayer. Because of this, it's vital to leave plenty of time to pray. In fact, it's better to see this meeting as an extended prayer time with some discussion squeezed in than a discussion with some prayer squeezed in!

There are many ways to listen to God's voice in prayer. The approach suggested here is based on Paul's eagerness that we prophesy to each other for our encouragement and upbuilding (1 Corinthians 14:1-5). It's important to step out in faith at this point, believing that God wants to encourage us and speak to us. Some of your members may not be used to speaking out a message from God, so they will need encouragement that we're all in this together and it's OK to make mistakes. Their job is not to weigh the word they're given, but to speak it in faith as long as it sounds encouraging and Christian. Then the person receiving the word can weigh it up for themselves (have a look at 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22). As a leader, your role is also to check that any message that's given sounds appropriate (see 4Life, p63) and that no one is pressured to receive a message they don't accept.

You may need

- Paper and pens to write down words from God.
- Music for the Worship suggestion.

Meeting Suggestions

Welcome

'When in your life have you experienced a sense of awe?'

Worship

Play a worship track or some instrumental music while people read through Psalm 103. End with prayers of thanks for who God is and what he has done.

Word

Introduction

When it comes to the Christian life, there are several habits that will keep us close to God throughout our lives. The Lifestyle section covers worship, prayer, the Bible and church, but here we focus on prayer. God wants to speak to each one of us, even in this meeting. For this reason we'll be making extra time to listen to God, believing that he can speak through us to encourage each other.

Read Matthew 6:5-13

1. What do you learn about prayer from Jesus, here and elsewhere?
2. What's your experience of hearing God's voice in prayer?

Pray [*Make sure you leave plenty of time to pray!*]

Explain the following process carefully and clearly before you start, so everyone knows what is going on and doesn't feel pressured:

- Ask for a volunteer to be prayed for (only pray for those who are happy to be prayed for)
- The leader begins by praying that God will allow us to hear his voice and give encouraging words for this person
- Spend some time listening in silence, asking people to write down anything that might be from God. It could be a word, a message, a picture or a verse of scripture.
- After a while, ask people to share anything they think might be from God. Encourage people not to be too hard on themselves and to share what feels right even if they're a bit unsure.
- Suggest the person being prayed gives some feedback about what they've heard (for instance, if something has immediately struck a chord).
- Pray God's blessing over the person and the words that have been spoken, that God would confirm the words that are truly for them.
- Continue the same process with the next volunteer...

Witness

Allow people an opportunity to pray for those in their Circle of Influence (4Life, p53). Ask God to bless them and for opportunities to be a blessing to them. Next week you can see how God has been at work to answer these prayers.

Before the next meeting...

Encourage people to spend time listening to God this week and to share some of what they hear with others.

Ask people to read Lifestyle 6-10 (pages 68-78), especially the Hindrances List (page 73).

Session Seven

New Lifestyle

Leader's Notes

The Lifestyle section is about bringing our lives into the light and allowing God to do his slow work of restoration and release. There are dark corners in all of our lives and God often uses Christian accountability as a way to bring new healing in these areas. On the one hand this meeting can be very fruitful time; but on the other hand, it needs sensitive handling. Not everyone in your group may have earned the trust needed to talk about these things; very few of the issues raised can be straightforwardly dealt with; all of them require sensitivity and grace.

For these reasons your role as a leader will be crucial. It's important to set a tone of gentleness and openness, and perhaps also to suggest some ground rules: personal information is confidential; no one should be pressed for details they don't want to give; each individual must come to their own conclusions on any issue in their life. Some group members may also appreciate a chance to speak with you at some point after the meeting.

You may need

- Spare copies of Hindrances and questions for 2s and 3s (see Extra: pages 34-35).
- Candles for Worship suggestion.

Meeting Suggestions

Welcome

'Describe a change you're glad you made (it can be anything, serious or simple)'

Worship

Give everyone a tea light. Turn the lights off and light a candle. Read 1 John 1:5-7 twice. Give some space for people to listen to God about any ways they need to 'walk in the light'. Ask people to light their tea light from the candle and place it near the candle as a sign of commitment to walk in the light. Finish with 1 John 1:7 and a prayer.

Word

Introduction

Christian Lifestyle is not just about taking on godly habits; it's about leaving old patterns behind. Because of the identity you have in Christ, and the values of his kingdom, and the purpose he's called you for, certain things will have to change. But here's the wonderful thing – by God's power, we *can* change.

This meeting is an opportunity to be honest about some of the things in our lives which hold us back. No one will have to share more than they feel they can, and what's shared needs to be kept confidential. God isn't finished with anyone of us. Tonight is an opportunity to bring our lives into the light and know more of his restoration and release.

Read Galatians 5:16-26

1. What strikes you about the change Paul describes here?

SPLIT into 2s and 3s

2. Is there anything in particular that is holding you back as a Christian – a hindrance, worry, bitterness or unhelpful habit (see Lifestyle 6-10)?

Please note:

There may be nothing you particularly want to share.

All of these issues are very different. They may be complicated; they could be a matter of opinion; they may not be something God wants to deal with right now.

Pray

If you are happy staying in 2s and 3s, spend some time praying for each other. It may be worth praying for one issue at a time and listening to God for anything he wants to say. The person being prayed for may want to repent of something in particular, to renounce its influence on their life, and to resolve to live differently.

Witness

Have people seen any answers to prayers that God would bless the people in their Circle of Influence? Have they had any opportunities to be a blessing? Challenge them to look out for opportunities.

Before the next meeting...

Ask people to work through Purpose 1-5 (pages 79-89), especially the Gifts List (page 83).

Session Eight

New Power

Leader's Notes

The aim of this session is to ask God to reveal the various gifts he has given, and wants to give, to members of the group. When we use our gifts we are all a gift from God to each other. And when we lay hands on each other and pray, the power of the Holy Spirit is released and his infilling presence and spiritual gifts are poured out with great generosity.

Paul teaches us to 'eagerly desire' greater spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 14:1). We need to pray with faith that God will give new gifts, of prophecy for example or that certain group members will have a passion to pray for healing, and that others will receive the gift of tongues. You can judge as the leader whether it would be helpful to encourage people to step gently into the gift they desire – to try speaking out words of prophecy in prayer for others, to pray for healing, or to speak out whatever bubbles up within them when they are praying for tongues.

This session is another chance to go further in evangelism. The suggestion in this Witness section is to encourage people to step out and use their gifts to help others come to know Jesus.

You may need

- Spare copies of the Gift Checklist (see Extra: p36).

Meeting Suggestions

Welcome

'Share a time when you received a wonderful gift'

Worship

Ask people to close their eyes, open their hands and prepare themselves to receive more from the Holy Spirit in this session. Read John 20:19-22. Give some time for people to quietly bring themselves before God. Close this time with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help with the meeting.

Word

Introduction

Each person in this group is a part of the body of Christ. Each one has a part to play; each part needs the others. God has made you in a certain way so that, in being most truly yourself, you can be of great service to others. And God the Holy Spirit has promised to fill you with his power and to give you gifts beyond the

talents you naturally possess so that you can be used for a great purpose in the kingdom of God.

This meeting is an opportunity to know and experience more of the work of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul teaches us to eagerly desire the Holy Spirit's filling and his gifts (1 Corinthians 14:1, Ephesians 5:18). If we open our hearts and lives to him; he will come.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

1. What strikes you from this passage?
2. How do you feel about experiencing the Holy Spirit and the gifts mentioned in this passage?
3. What gifts from the Gifts Checklist do you think God has given you (4Life: pages 82-83)? Are there any other gifts you would like?

Note:

Some people may need space here to complete the Gift Checklist. When each person shares their gifts, other group members may be able to confirm this or suggest other gifts they can see.

Pray

Would anyone like to receive more of the Spirit, pray for a new gift, or be healed? Pray for each person, one at a time (perhaps split into two groups to do this so that the person does not feel under pressure from the whole group). Ask permission to lay hands on them. Give space to listen for words or pictures from God. Allow those who have, or would like, the gift of healing to pray for those who want to be healed.

Witness

Take some time to discuss people's Circle of Influence. How do people feel about using their gifts in being a witnessing to the people around them? Are there many opportunities? Ask people to pray *specifically* for opportunities to speak about Jesus with people in their Circle of Influence or to offer to pray for them.

Before the next meeting...

Encourage everyone to look for ways to use their gifts this week.
Ask people to read Purpose 6-10 (pages 90-100).

Session Nine

New Purpose

Leader's Notes

The aim of this session is to catch a sense of vision for serving the kingdom of God in every area of our lives. It can be hard for us to believe we're serving God in our daily business, whether it's in regular work, in the home, in retirement, or elsewhere. But God has purposes for each one of us, and in his eyes a humble act of service is worth just as much as a renowned public ministry (maybe even more!). Your group can be the incubator of people's dreams and a source of vision and purpose for the dispirited. Be positively hopeful, encouraging people to see God at work through them in the steps of faith they take, however small. At the same time, be realistic, acknowledging where there is demotivation and struggle.

The end of the session is a great opportunity to turn the thoughts of the group outward, to the local area and the world. Who knows what God may place on your hearts as you catch more of his passion for every part of this world.

Meeting Suggestions

Welcome

'A local or global need that concerns me is...'

Worship

What is true worship? Read Isaiah 58:5-14 and give people a chance to reflect, and then pray together.

Word

Introduction

God wants to use us to change the world. He is bringing his kingdom here on earth and we are to join him in the family business. He has appointed us to announce the good news and to demonstrate what it means to know him. And the marvelous thing is this; we can do this wherever we find ourselves, every second of every day.

God is at work already in your life. There is more he wants to do through you in your daily work, relationships, church commitment, and in the world around you. God's purpose for us may not be spot lit fame, but it is always vital work for his kingdom, especially when it's done in humble service of the king.

Read Matthew 6:25-34

1. What does it mean to seek God's kingdom first?
2. How have you seen God at work recently as you've used your gifts and prayed for people and situations around you?
3. What opportunities do you have to serve God through the week at the moment (including work, family, church, etc)?
4. What dreams and visions do you have for serving God and others in the future?

Witness

Spend some time praying for each other in your areas of work and witness.

Also pray for your local area and global issues that have been raised from the Welcome question.

Before the next meeting...

Ask your group to review what they have learnt over the weeks that you have been doing 4Life, in preparation for the final session next time, particularly with the emphasis on what God has been teaching you. If they have time, this might be an opportunity for them to meet up in pairs before the next session to help each other with this process. A one-off meeting like this could be used to discuss how the whole 4Life process has gone, what God has done and what still might need to change.

Session Ten

Review

Leader's Notes

This last session is an important opportunity to review all that has happened through looking at 4Life together. With so many topics being covered in such a short length of time, it's worth standing back to see the wood from the trees and to discern what it is that God has been doing in us. The focus should be on the positive and the practical: what has God been doing in my life? At the same time, 4Life may have raised some deep and ongoing issues for some group members. That's OK, too – it's part of the function of 4Life as a kind of 'buildings inspection' on our faith, helping us to identify areas where we still need God to go to work.

(Note: The discussion time may raise problems or faults in the 4Life material or these group notes. These points may be important to briefly take note of, but unless they lead to constructive comments about discipleship they can become a distraction.)

Is there any way your group can take the principles of 4Life further? People may want to consider continuing to meet from time to time in smaller accountability triplets or mentoring partnerships. It depends on what is appropriate in your setting and in your church (it's a good principle to let your church leaders know about any kind of arrangements like these). Whatever you decide, part of the purpose of 4Life is to encourage these deeper discipling relationships which can equip us to follow Christ in every part of our lives and right to the end.

Meeting Suggestions

Welcome

'One hope I have for the future is...'

Worship

Share in pairs something to be thankful for from the last 10 meetings. Then spend some time all together thanking God for these things.

Word

Introduction

Congratulations! You've finished working through 4Life. We've covered four essentials of a life devoted to Jesus Christ: to know our identity in him; to seek the values of his kingdom; to let him transform our lifestyle; and to give our lives for the purpose of serving his kingdom.

This meeting is a chance to reflect on all God has been doing in your life and teaching you through 4Life. Honestly sharing what God has been doing is part of

the growing process, and a great encouragement to others. It reminds us that though God is not finished with us yet, he promises to persevere until his work is completed.

Read Hebrews 12:1-3

1. What inspires you from this passage?
2. What has God done in you or taught you over the last 10 meetings?
[Give plenty of time for people to consider this. It may help to share answers in pairs first]
3. What still needs to change?

Pray

Make plenty of time to pray for each other. If possible, pray for each person one by one, praying over anything they have shared with the group, listening for any words of encouragement, and ending with a prayer of commissioning and blessing like the one below.

Father God, commission your servant (*name*).
Fill ... with your Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ.
Seal in ... all you have been teaching him/her,
Use his/her gifts in the service of the kingdom.
In Jesus' name and for his greater glory.

Amen.

Witness

You may want to plan a group social event, perhaps something you could invite others along to as well. Is there any way God is calling your group to reach out to others? Could you run or help with an Alpha Course, develop a social life to invite non-Christian friends to, serve in your neighbourhood or support world mission in some way? Discuss the possibilities with the group and make plans where appropriate.

Extra

Session Two: Vital Signs

What signs can you see in your life?

- A more sensitive conscience.
- Talking to God through the day.
- A new love for people around me.
- A deep sense of God's love for me.
- A feeling that I've been forgiven.
- Wanting to read the Bible more.
- A desire to praise God.
- Leaving old selfish habits behind.
- Wanting to obey Jesus and be more like him.
- Powerful signs such as miracles or a new prayer language (see Purpose 2).
- Past hurts being healed.

You may not have all these signs, but new Christians will start to see several of them. The signs of faith can't be faked or whipped up. They grow naturally. As Jesus said, a good tree just can't help producing good fruit (Luke 6:43). God has given you new life and it will bear fruit in time. Right now his power is at work, changing you from the inside out.

Session Three: New Identity

Questions for 2s and 3s

3. What lies about God have you ever believed (see Identity 7 in 4Life)?
4. What keeps you from living in your identity as a child of God?
[This may have come up in Identity 6]

Pray

Remaining in 2s and 3s, pray for each other. Be honest about how deeply you feel your true identity has sunk in. As you pray, claim the identity that Christ has won for you and reject any false ideas about yourself and God.

Session Five: My Values

This next exercise isn't easy, but completing it carefully will reveal a huge amount about what makes you tick. Try to honestly rank each value (don't put what you *think* should be important, but what currently matters most). If you're unsure which values should be high, imagine if you had to choose between them.

 **Give each value a rank for you from the most important (No 1) to the least**

- Being wealthy.
- Having close friends.
- Achieving something significant.
- Having an exciting life.
- Sharing my faith with non-Christians.
- Feeling equal with others.
- Living without conflict.
- Being free to make my own decisions.
- Doing God's will at any cost.
- Being admired or widely recognised.
- Having a close family.
- Being powerful and influential.
- Loving others, no matter what it takes.
- Having fun.
- Having a fit or attractive body.
- Feeling happy and fulfilled.
- Physical/emotional intimacy with others.

Any others?

Extra

Questions for 2s and 3s

2. Share your Values lists (Values 6). What effect do your top values have on the way you live?
3. What values would you like to change (see Values 10 in 4Life)?

Pray

Remaining in 2s and 3s, take time to pray through what's been discussed. If there's a value you'd like to change, repent of it and in the power of the Spirit commit to live by a different value. Pray for each other, too, that God would give you grace to walk in his ways and live for what is truly important.

Session Seven: The Hindrances List

 Which items on this list have you experienced in your life?

- Involvement with a cult.
- Involvement in another religion.
- New age practice: meditation, crystals, etc.
- The strong influence of horror films/books, or music that celebrates evil.

- Addiction to alcohol or smoking.
- Drug or solvent abuse.
- Addiction to lust, porn or masturbation.
- Uncontrollable sexual desires.

- Strong pride and stubbornness.
- Extreme bitterness towards someone.
- Uncontrollable anger or violence.
- A person or activity that takes the place of God in your life.
- An obsessive interest or unhealthy, controlling relationship.

- Extreme depression and suicidal thoughts.
- Constant feelings of doubt/unworthiness.
- Overwhelming fear of something.
- An eating disorder/self-harm.

- Involvement with the occult, spiritualism, Satanism or witchcraft
- Horoscopes or fortune-telling.

Circle the box by anything on the list that's still an issue in your life.

Questions for 2s and 3s

2. Is there anything in particular that is holding you back as a Christian – a hindrance, worry, bitterness or unhelpful habit (see Lifestyle 6-10)?

Please note:

There may be nothing you particularly want to share. All of these issues are very different. They may be complicated; they could be a matter of opinion; they may not be something God wants to deal with right now.

Pray

If you are happy staying in 2s and 3s, spend some time praying for each other. It may be worth praying for one issue at a time and listening to God for anything he wants to say. The person being prayed for may want to repent of something in particular, to renounce its influence on their life, and to resolve to live differently.

Session Eight: Gifts Checklist

There are about 20 gifts mentioned in the New Testament, but no one ever set down a definitive list. The checklist below is designed to get you thinking about the gifts God might have given you, or ones he might be leading you to ask for. There is more detail about each gift in 4Life (pages 110-113).

- ✓✓ There are lots of signs I have this gift.
- ✓ There are some signs I have this gift.
- ? This is a gift I'd love to have, or think I might have the beginnings of.

- I take initiative in starting and looking after new churches (apostleship).
- I naturally lead Christians (leading).
- I give good guidance and organisation to projects/groups (administration).

- I receive encouraging messages from God which strengthen others (prophecy).
- I explain the Bible clearly to others and pass on Christian truth (teaching).
- I find many opportunities to share my faith with others (evangelism).
- I can often tell whether a message is inspired by God (discernment).
- I receive brief words and pictures from God for other people (messages of wisdom, knowledge and revelation).
- I can speak in a language of prayer I don't understand (tongues).
- I sometimes sense a clear meaning behind someone's prayer language interpretation of tongues).

- I have seen miraculous answers to my prayers (miracles).
- I feel a desire to pray for the sick and have seen them healed (healing).
- I have had an unusual confidence in God, sometimes for unexpected things (faith).

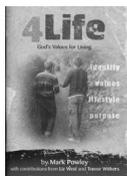
- I often counsel and care for other people (pastoring).

- I am passionate about helping strangers, the poor or those who suffer (helping).
- I can do a particular job to help or care for the needy (serving).
- I have a strong sense of compassion and forgiveness for others (mercy).
- I often encourage and support others (encouragement).
- I feel compelled to give with great generosity to others (contributing to others).

What spiritual gifts do you think you might have?

What other talents and abilities has God given you?

Other Resources



4Life

by Mark Powley

Do you want to know God better, find your place in his plans, have your value system transformed, have some help along the way? Take the risk, follow this guide for a deeper journey into the Christian life. 4Life has been developed for new Christians or anyone seeking to refresh their faith and go deeper with God. It's full of honesty, passion and humour, and seeks to give a solid foundation for practical Christian living today.



Walking Together

by Liz West and Trevor Withers

This booklet looks at lessons we can learn from the way Jesus worked with his disciples and how the early church understood discipleship. It outlines ways in which we can both become and make effective 21st century disciples.

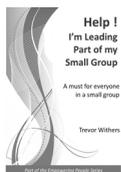


Small Groups—an Introduction

by Laurence Singlehurst

This booklet seeks to give some biblical background and framework along with a practical understanding of what it might be like to be part of a small group. Suitable for those joining or starting a group, or for those already in one to refresh your understanding of what it means to be in a small group.

Other Resources



Help! I'm leading part of my Small Group by *Trevor Withers*

Designed to help small group members who are leading one of the sections of the meeting on any occasion. The aim is to increase the understanding of what should be happening in each of the sections and give practical ideas and help that will make the section you are leading a success.



40 more Creative Worship Ideas for Small Groups

Building on the success of our first tin of worship ideas, our brand new second set of 40 *more* Creative Worship Ideas covers a broad range of Christian worship. We all connect with God in different ways, so these sets of cards each contain a range of ideas with the hope that everyone in your group can lead worship confidently. These are: Our lives, Scripture, Objects, Words, The natural world, Games, 'I am' sayings of Jesus, and Stories behind the hymns.



40 Missional Ideas for Small Groups

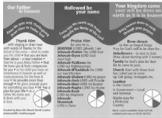
How can each one of us live out Christ in the context of where we work, where we live and in our families? We have brought together 40 fantastic ideas for use in small groups. Each idea takes about 15 minutes and gives practical ways to encourage and empower each other as we seek to love those around us and share Jesus with them. The ideas in this set of postcards, presented in a high quality durable tin, break down into 8 themes each taking your small group on a journey, renewing minds and creating new rhythms for life.

Other Resources



Discipleship Deck Playing Cards

This is really good resource by Fusion. It is a pack of 52 cards, each containing a question or challenge about relationships, lifestyle, spiritual growth or mission. These cards can be used in any discipleship context, but they also lend themselves exceedingly well to small groups. For example, some of the cards would make fantastic ice-breakers for the welcome section of your small group meeting. Others would be very suitable for the witness section. It also makes it very easy for members to participate by leading one of the sections of your small group.



Lord's Prayer Cards

This is a dynamic way to use the Lord's prayer and bring creative energy to your small group as you pray together. These cards can also be used by individuals in their own lives to give an effective pattern to their prayer life. Sold in packs of 20 or 50 this simple practical resource divides the Lord's prayer into bite size sections; each card is laid out as 6 segments (double-sided, i.e. 3 on each side) and gives you creative ways to pray around each key phrase.

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