

Facilitator Notes

A huge **thank you** for agreeing to take on this role for your group and well done for putting yourself forward. Importantly, a word of encouragement from Vic Camp below the course arranger who is always on hand to support you if you need help at any stage.

“Thank you and welcome to our course we are so excited to see how you find the course and to hear your feedback. We have designed this course to operate as a traditional teacher/student course. There is no pressure to run this course in any particular way – find what works for your group.

We have used a “flip classroom” idea here where the homework is done ahead of the sessions to relieve some of the pressure and enable people to take the learning at their own pace.

The entire foundation of the course is to create space to **share, grow and learn together** as group in a safe way.

We ran the course as a trial with a group of 6, often only 4 of us met and we did this online. We did not all do the homework every week, but we shared and we learned and we formed ideas and built confidence together. I really hope you have the same experience.”

Initial Set Up

There might be some work in getting a group together if you don't already have a group that's set up and this can feel quite daunting. We put out some calls via Root & Branch for volunteers, you could use your Parish Newsletter, or a few friends meeting for coffee, the course is designed to work in small groups, but you could even do this on your own as well.

Try to be flexible with the timings as it will be hard to get everyone together and often getting that first session in is the hardest – aim for around 60 minutes for your first session. Once the group has met for the first time you can agree timings and frequency recognising everyone has different life patterns. We did 60 mins roughly every 2 weeks and that seemed to work well. If you are doing this online then Zoom offer a 40-minute free session so it might be you are limited to that timing, you can make that work as well. We used emails to set up the first session and then a WhatsApp group to share reminders and chats in between sessions.

Week 1

The main aim of week one is to create a safe space for the group to come together. We start every week with 60 seconds of silent reflection and then a short prayer. It would be good to lead this section.

Introductions - Perhaps introduce yourself to the group and why you have decided to run the course and ask others to introduce themselves as well.

The next few slides set out the course outline and the overview for week 1.

Following this is a slide which sets out the tone for the course and how we intend to honour and respect each other.

Next are two short group exercise to do together which is to set some personal learning goals and intentions and also some group boundaries. These might be things like turning up on time, no judgement, allowing people to speak uninterrupted etc.

The video for this week is from Root & Branch explaining their work and how they have been set up and their journey. There is also a link to the Spirit Unbounded website with all the SU companions.

The personal action plan and homework for this week include researching some of the companions and reporting back to the group.

There are also week 2 videos to watch in relation to the content for week 2.

Check in with the group before the end, manage expectations and set a time for week 2 session.

Finish with a quick show of the slide with signposting information for more support if people need it and a prayer.

Week 2

Welcome the group and start with 60 seconds of reflection and prayer.

Check in with everyone and use the first few slides to outline what will be covered in week 2 and ask for feedback from week 1. There are prompts for discussion items on slide 2.3.

Climate stripes show the global earth temperature and the significant rate of change in the last few decades, link to BBC website with details.

There are also videos for this week which hopefully some will have watched, and which highlight the issues with climate change and how this links to justice for everyone and inequality. You can also ask people to feedback on any videos they watched and how they found them to share with others in the group who might not have been able to do so.

Support a group discussion around climate change and anything the group might have done in this regard and point towards the resources including how to calculate your own carbon footprint and to look up your own towns carbon footprint as well.

Remind everyone to check in with their personal action plan, look up the videos for week 3 and enjoy the course.

Close with a prayer and reminder of the safeguarding numbers for additional support.

Week 3

We move into discussing a bit more about exclusion in the church this week so as usual open with silent reflection and prayer and check in with the group.

Again there are lots of videos to choose from so perhaps ask if people watched any and ask them to share.

The group exercise this week is defining certain terms – there are no right and wrong answers here it's more to support a discussion about what do we mean by inequality and what is it that we as a group might settle on as what we think is the right choice of language. The image following just helps explain the differences and there are many others online for people to check out if they like.

Also this week try and encourage people to share from their own lives or those around them - stories from their parish perhaps if they have some. The idea is to help people recognise that

this is not a problem happening elsewhere it is happening everywhere in every parish across the globe.

Close with a reminder about personal action plans, watching videos for the following week and finish with a prayer and signposting to those important numbers.

It might also be good to do an extra check in at this point that people feel or seem able to discuss openly in the group and are coping with the topic content well. If you feel at this point that the group is struggling, then consider regrouping later on.

Week 4

Open with reflection and prayer.

Set out the course outline for the week and check in with your group.

Ask for any feedback from personal action plans.

Review any feedback or input from the videos which explore the ways in which the Church continues to exclude people and allow the group to discuss openly.

Values exercise is simply to choose some words which might reflect your personal values and then think about how you can use these to spot, highlight and challenge inequality when you see it, some examples below:

- I value honesty and so when someone in my parish says something and I'm not sure if it's true I will try and find out the truth for myself and if appropriate correct people.
- I value bravery and so if I see someone being excluded or marginalised in my Church who might feel they have no voice I will use my bravery to support me in speaking out.
- I value teamwork or collaboration and so I will use this skill to bring people together to tackle an issue in my local area that relates to climate change or inequality.

The paintings of the last supper are used to show us how a different perspective or a different framing on an event can shed a whole new light on its meaning and how those with the pens/ink were often those telling the stories and informing our views.

Close with a check in on the group, prayer and reminder about learning resources for the following week.

Week 5

Open with reflection and prayer and check in on personal action plans.

Note halfway through the course and ask people how they feel about the course?

Two videos this week from some global heroes and details on Rev Sharon Sterringer – people who are actively and publicly speaking out and creating or trying to create the Church we want to see.

Ask the group if they have any local heroes who are doing amazing things, or people they follow in the media.

Check in if people have watched any of the other videos and signpost to the speaker pages on SU website which list all the speakers and their talks.

Week 6

Welcome the group, begin with silent reflection and prayer. Check in with the group and see if they watched any of the videos this week.

This week is about recognising that those around us who we think of as heroes are also people just like us and what is holding us back from creating the church we want to see.

It's important this week to really think about what is holding the church back and also what is holding us back. See if you can get the group to talk about what makes them afraid of speaking up or trying new things and how their values might help them combat this fear.

Remember it's important for the group to feel safe in this setting and that sharing some thoughts about what makes us afraid might be really difficult. If you are able to lead with an example of your own this can be a very useful way of enabling others to share their own thoughts as well. If the group finds this hard that's okay, just share and allow the group to discuss what matters to them.

Close with a reflection and prayer and noting that next week is the last full session.

Week 7

It's commitment time!!!

Welcome the group and congratulate them for getting this far into the course. Recognising the commitment and learning and sharing that has taken place in the previous weeks is really important at this stage.

Open with reflection and prayer. Ask the group to share any reflections since week 6.

This week we are asking the group to make ONE commitment to doing something new or different as a result of the course. This is really about taking the learning about reform in the church as well as about ourselves and thinking of one new thing we can do to support the reform movement. This is not about making big declarations or promises, this is about making small manageable and safe steps into something new that would not have felt possible 7 weeks ago.

Ask the group to share their One Thing if they feel able to or at least note it down somewhere.

Perhaps have one yourself ready as a prompt.

The next step is to ask the group to think about what might help them achieve their goal and what stands in the way and to note down or share thoughts about what those might be. The idea here is to get people to realise that what stands in their way might not feel as overwhelming any more and that the things to help them are also available, even that the group can act as a support network.

Group can agree an accountability session if they want too – this is a neat idea to check in with people over a 1-, 2-, 3- or 6-month period and to see how they got on. What worked, what didn't and why not? The group might decide to do this via a WhatsApp group or emails – or another session, whatever works for your group is fine.

Ask people to look back to their week one learning hopes and see if those have been met, perhaps chat about the course and what you liked and what improvements or changes would be useful.

There is a link for a course feedback form if people want to use that we can gather feedback and improve the course.

Thank your group for taking part and agree your week 8 session.

Close with prayer and reflection.

Week 8

It might be some time since you have all met so let people have time to catch up on life and getting comfortable around one another again.

Open with prayer and reflection.

Perhaps remind people of the course content and the journey you shared together to help settle any nerves and then ask people how they got on with their One Thing.

Listen to the stories shared and congratulate people no matter what the outcome, acknowledging and valuing all our lived experiences is so important.

Share your own reflections since the course ended and how you have found implementing anything new.

Thanks everyone again and agree if you want to continue to meet or stay in touch – respect boundaries people may want to set.

Close with prayer and reflection.