

Session 4: Being witnesses to Jesus Christ – Members' Handout

Vision Prayer:



Heavenly Father,
we embrace Your call for us to make disciples,
to be witnesses and to grow leaders.
Give us the eyes to see Your vision,
ears to hear the prompting of Your Spirit
and courage to follow in the footsteps of Your Son,
our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Getting Started:



In pairs discuss the following

- What 'good news' have you been told recently?
- Which people helped us to discover the 'Good News' about Jesus?

Bible Passage: Colossians 4:2-6



² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Option 1

From the Bible passage underline the things that Paul lists which will help people hear the Good News about Jesus. Which of these things do you feel confident doing? Which things seem harder? Discuss this in groups of four.

Option 2

Paul was the great missionary of the first century and longed for others to share his passion.

1. Why was prayer so vital for Paul's witness to Jesus Christ?
2. In his instructions, underline the word(s) which seem particularly relevant to you for your witness to the message of the Gospel and discuss with others your choices.
3. How can we prepare to make the most, and more, of 'every opportunity'?

DVD Teaching Input:



Stepping Stones:

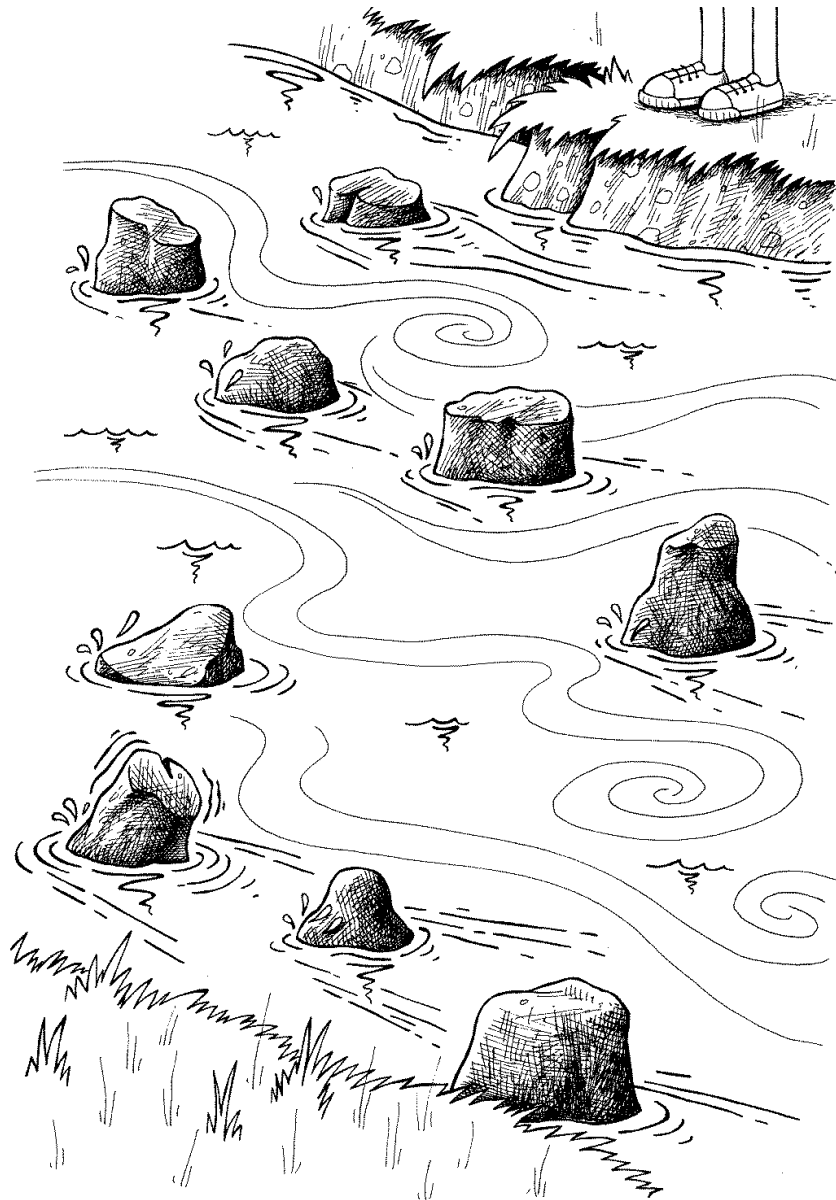


Imagine our journey of faith as being a series of stepping stones across a river. The role of the local church is to make sure that 'stepping stones' are in place to help people move forward in their faith journey.

You could label the picture on page 3 with the stepping stones that are currently part of your church. Some ideas are listed below. Are any of the 'stepping stones' missing or a bit wobbly? What should be done to sort out the 'wobbly' stones or fill the gaps?

- What stepping stones might help encourage people to move from exploring faith to becoming a committed disciple of Jesus who is serving God and bringing the Good News of Jesus to others?
- Often the first steps that people make in their faith journey are coming into contact with Christians at a social event. Does your church have social activities that would match the interests of the local community?
- They may then respond to an invitation to attend an event at which an aspect of the Christian faith is communicated in a positive and appropriate way (e.g. men's breakfast, ladies' craft evening, Pub Quiz night, other outreach events or possibly an invitation to a service). Does your church organise these types of events?
- Some 'Stepping Stones' that churches have found helpful include: running Enquirers' courses (Alpha, Start! Christianity Explored etc.), inviting people to Confirmation/membership courses, encouraging involvement in Church based activities or taking opportunities to serve others in the local community. Do these 'Stepping Stones' exist in your church? Are there other 'Stepping Stones' that might help people move forward as followers of Jesus?
- Consider what preparation you offer to people bringing children to a Christening. How can you help people understand the promises that they make in a baptism service? How will you continue to stay in contact with baptism families?
- Would planting a new congregation, such as messy church or a service for a particular group of people or starting a fresh expression of church, help to bridge the gap between people in your area and the life of church?
- Just as with real stepping stones, if the gaps are too big or if any stepping stones are missing then people get stuck, give up and go back, or fall in! It is hard to go from mild curiosity about God to regular attendance at a church service; we need to make sure there are some stepping stones in between these two points. What happens in your church when someone 'falls off' or stops on their journey?

Once you've had the chance to jot down some ideas, discuss your thoughts in groups of four or five people.



My Story:



Share in pairs the story of how you came to be a disciple of Jesus (you have 3 minutes each). The story might include something about your background, how Jesus came to be a part of your life and what following Jesus means to you now.

The share as a whole group your experience of doing this exercise.

Our Priorities:



As a group, come up with some suggestions that would help the church and all of its members be a witness to Jesus. Some things you might want to consider are:

- Pray regularly for three people (or more) who are not yet committed Christians.
- Be a witness to Jesus by serving others through actions – you might like to revisit the exercise you did in Session 2 of this course looking at practical ways of bringing transformation to your community.
- Develop a 'Culture of invitation' by encouraging one another to take the initiative in inviting people to events, services or to come on an Enquirers' course. One simple way of inviting others is... 'I'm going, it's going to be good; would you like to come?'

You might like to record some practical suggestions for ways the church could help equip its members to be witnesses in this box.

Prayer Reflection: (3 minutes)



The following reflection based on the earlier Bible passage can be read by two people in the group. One person reads the text in **bold type** and another responds with the text in *italics*

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

Lord, sometimes I'm not very good at praying. I'm too busy, distracted or occupied with other things. To be honest Lord, sometimes I get scared about talking about you to other people. At times I feel chained up by fear and anxiety. (pause)

Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Lord, there are times when I don't think I'm a very good witness. I'm not sure about being bold, there are times when I feel timid and would much rather keep quiet. Jesus, I'm grateful for those who cared enough about me to tell me about Jesus. I thank you for their example and for their words. (pause)

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Lord, help me to be a good witness in what I do and in what I say. Help me to share my faith in a way that is relaxed, natural and helpful. Lord help me to know what to say and how to say it. I'm nervous about being a witness for you, please give me courage and help me to point other people to you. Amen

Take it Away Material:



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You might like to print out this text and pin it up in the bathroom. Every time you turn on a tap you could:

- Pray for three people (or more) who are not yet committed Christians.
- Think about ways you could be a witness to Jesus by your actions.
- Pray for opportunities to be a witness to Jesus through your words.