

The Witness Section

Welcome Worship Word **Witness**

How to lead the witness section

The idea of the witness section is to keep a focus on the growth of the group as members share their faith. Sharing the faith may include opportunities for putting love into action in the community or with people's friends, but it should mainly involve the group goal to grow and multiply. Over the months the leader of the Life Group needs to take the group through the stages of growth (mentioned below) and encourage people, by their words and example, to be active in sharing their faith. Normally the leader will take this section so that the vision for growth remains clear and each week can build on the previous one.

There is no need to reinvent the mission of the church each month, or single-handedly target a whole neighbourhood! The aim is to develop witness bit by bit, week by week. This often happens when the group has regular socials to which people can invite friends, colleagues, neighbours and others in our church who aren't in a Life Group.

Phil Potter (The Challenge of Cell Church, p. 98) recommends a four-stage process: Ask and intercede; Break out and bless; Come and see; and Decide and receive. This means beginning with prayer and a commitment to be a blessing to those around us. After this, evangelism is mainly a matter of saying 'come and see'. If the Life Group is loving and enjoyable, its socials will reflect this. Once they see that Christians aren't all that bad (!) visitors can then decide for themselves about the truth of Christianity, perhaps at church, Alpha or by coming to the Life Group. This approach can get us away from worrying about preaching at people. All of us can pray, be a blessing and invite others to a social event.

A Simple Witness Question

Have you had any chances to show or share the good news this week?
(People can share both chances they've taken and ones they've missed)

Witness Ideas

Stage 1 – Prayer / research:

- Set out the vision of the group – to grow and multiply (this is important from the start)
- Pray for your area or the network in which the Life Group is based (i.e., your locality, age group or lifestyle, etc)
- Brainstorm things that are keeping people from coming to Christ – pray specifically about these
- Discuss 'what is evangelism?'
- Do people believe they can bring friends to Christ? How might this happen?
- What does it mean for us to be a good witness in our neighbourhood, workplace or friendship group?
- Encourage each member to work out how might make significant friendships with some people who aren't Christians. Share ideas for this.
- Brainstorm appropriate social events the group could hold which would cement group relationships and provide a good opportunity to invite others

- Discuss the possibility of a group aim – what will define the group? What is the group's vision?
- Before getting too far towards multiplication, ensure that the cell is healthy and that its members actually think it is *worth* joining!

Stage 2: Sowing

- Ask people to name those who they'd like to become Christians / join the group
- Pray for these named people on a regular basis (perhaps split into 2s and 3s to pray for people's friends)
- Arrange (and keep arranging) social events for the Life Group to which people can be invited [see list below]
- Are there any ways the Life Group can be a blessing to the wider community: involvement in a church activity; supporting one particular Life Group member; local community projects?
- Put the names of all your friends you are praying for on a piece of paper. Pile the pieces of paper up in the middle of the group, then pray for those people and for opportunities to speak to them.
- See if the group can establish a list of 30 names of people they would like to see become Christians. It doesn't matter how many people each member mentions – 2 or 10!
- Encourage people to draw their 'circle of influence' (as an actual set of circles on paper) and consider how they can bless people within these circles
- Discuss – if our friends were to become Christians, what kind of church would they need us to be? Could we be doing things differently?
- Set aside days to fast (food or something else) and to pray for the growth of the group

Stage 3: Reaping

- Pray for and invite people to special services (e.g. carol service) or an Alpha course.
- Pray persistently for the people group members have identified
- As group size increases, try meeting in 2 smaller groups in preparation for multiplication
- Could the Life Group organise a gospel event – for instance a social event with a gospel talk? This could be done in partnership with another Life Group.

Socials:

- Meals: BBQ, bring & share, take away, theme dinners (e.g., Christmas, Harvest, international cuisine), safari meal (each course at a different house)
- Quiz night / board games evening (e.g., team monopoly)
- Video and drinks
- Joint cell group social / inter-cell sporting contests!
- Talent evening
- Desert Island discs (bring and introduce one musical piece each)
- Active: carol singing, cycle ride, bowling, pub night, pub quiz, film / concert, late night shop!
- A weekend away

Community Involvement:

- Survey people in your area / network of friends. How is Christianity perceived? What needs could the church be meeting?
- Consider 'servant evangelism' – announcing the kingdom of God through acts of generosity and service (especially to neighbours and friends). This could include offering help with gardening, decorating, car washing, litter picking...
- Organise a community party

- Make a list of the different skills in your group that might be offered to group members / people known to the group / a selected local area

Mission Involvement:

- Consider adopting a missionary or Christian outreach movement
- Take opportunities to remember the wider mission of the church – through informed prayer meetings, or using the Operation World prayer book
- Prayer for witness and wider mission concerns could make up occasional ‘prayer for mission’ Life Group meetings with extended time for worship and prayer

Whole meeting plans:

- Take a whole meeting to share communion together (if members of the group are comfortable with this). This could include an extended time to pray for each other and a short look at scripture
- Take one of the 4 W's and go deeper into it for a whole evening. E.g., an evening of welcome to get to know each other; an evening of worship and prayer; and evening of intercession for the church; an evening of discussion, planning and prayer for witness
- Worship evening – take a theme and/or passage and allow people to create some worship on that theme. They may write a creed or poem, choose a song or write a prayer. Then come together and share your contributions.
- Create a big picture each – ‘my life journey’. Mark on it significant events that have shaped you; then put a cross shape where you feel God has been especially at work in your life. Then take time to listen to each person's story (this takes time!)