

Unlocking real life stories of urban people
Revealing Good News of the Down to Earth Christ
Releasing life changing skills and confidence



UNLOCKING LIFE

- FIVE SESSIONS ON HUMAN EMOTIONS
IN LIFE & IN THE BIBLE



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What is Unlock Glasgow?

Unlock Glasgow is an initiative of the Scottish Bible Society in partnership with Unlock UK and the Church of Scotland Priority Areas Group. We are here to support the work of any church or community group in Glasgow's Urban Priority Areas. We can provide resources, or help to lead a Bible study group, or training for group leaders.

Unlock is about meeting in small groups to explore the Bible together - but taking as a starting point experiences of everyday life. As people think about the stories in the Bible in the light of what happens in our own homes, in tower blocks, on our city streets, in our lives each day, the pages come to life for us, and we can imagine much better how Jesus' disciples felt, what the situations facing the old testament characters were really like. Find out more on: www.unlockglasgow.org.uk

This material aims to:

- Let people share their experiences about "real emotions" and life stories, and how these emotions are present in the Bible.
- Show that many Bible stories are full of varied and sometimes potentially conflicting emotions, and that those stories can fit in with the whole range of emotions we feel as human beings.

This material will not:

- use Bible stories with the purpose to come up with any kind of "answer", or act as traditional Bible Studies where we mainly learn from facts or theological statements.
- Simplify or talk about emotions as something for God to "sort out", eg, think that Christians have fewer reasons to feel certain negative feelings than others.

The structure of the evenings:

The first session is a fun and creative exploration of the range of "hidden" emotions in the Bible stories, letting people have short conversations about what feelings do to us, how conflicting emotions can exist within us and that no emotion is "wrong".

The remaining 4 sessions focus on one emotion each time:

Fear
Anger
Jealousy
Doubt

It is of course possible for people to come for just one or a few of the sessions.

People don't need to bring their own Bibles, but some might. All texts on the handouts are from the NRSV Bible, but sometimes they might say "edited" or "shortened". The editions are simply to clarify things, like that "he" in the text meant "Jesus". Or state a fact that was given at a previous point in the text. If people want to look up things in their own Bible, let them do so, but point out that the topics you are discussing are not dependent on the exact wording of a text, since you are discussing possibilities and not facts!



Length of each session:

If you start each session with tea/coffee, any latecomers can finish their tea/coffee during the starter exercises. Each session probably needs at least 1 hour 45 minutes (eg. 90 mins plus 15 mins coffee break) but if you keep the discussions fairly short, it's possible to do a session in 1,5 hours (75 mins plus 15 mins coffee break)

Ground rules for participants:

The first session should set out some "ground rules" for the discussions, to let people know what will happen in the discussions, and how they are expected to contribute.

The ground rules should be repeated (briefly) as and when appropriate, as new people join the later sessions:

** Everyone will contribute as much or as little of their personal stories that they are comfortable with.*

** Everything said during these evenings will stay within the group and be treated as confidential, whether it's someone's personal story or opinion.*

** People can opt out of exercises as they wish, without having to give a reason for it.*

** Most discussions will be "unfinished" and be interrupted after short periods of time. This is as it should be, since the aim is to start discussions, not finish them.*

** There are no "right" or "wrong" answers or opinions, and those who perhaps have more in-depth knowledge of the Bible should feel free to contribute to the discussions with "facts" provided they know that those comments are not more valid than other opinions expressed in the group.*

Leader's notes:

The sessions are planned for groups of approx. 6-25 people. If you expect more or less people, the sessions might need to be adapted slightly. There are brief "INPUT" notes in italics interspersed in each session, with assorted facts/comments for the leader, that can be fed back into the discussion as appropriate. In most cases the groups should however come up with so many interesting things themselves, that the leader won't have to add much at all! Depending on the group's willingness to talk, the suggested times for each part of a session might need to be adapted too.

Materials needed:

There is a list of "things to bring" at the beginning of each session.

Suggestions for handouts are included in this material, and ready to photocopy, but feel free to make your own!

The Bible readings are taken from the NRSV Bible.

If you want to use another translation, just compare the texts beforehand, in case the translations are very different.

FEEDBACK FROM GROUPS USING THIS MATERIAL IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!

Good luck!



SESSION ONE: A WORLD OF EMOTIONS

Materials needed: Handout 1A (one per person), flipchart, pens, piece of cloth (eg. a piece of Jesus "mantle") Optional: something to put in the middle of the circle for the closing worship (candle or table cross) a CD-player and some gentle music...

WELCOME (15 mins)

Welcome people, ask them to briefly introduce themselves to the people they're sitting next to.

Then use one of the following **ICE BREAKERS:**

CHAT: Talk briefly in pairs about a time when you let your face show another emotion from the one you were feeling. How was it?

OR

GAME: Ask everyone to try and express an emotion with their face and body language, and then walk around the room trying to find a person who displays a similar emotion. They should stop and talk to that person and compare which emotion they tried to express!

INPUT:

Move around the room during the game and chat to people who might be unable to move around or choose not to "play". Gather people back quite quickly, and praise them for the attempt, since it's hard to show feelings you don't feel. I.e. how many tried to look "angry" or "sad" but found themselves smiling or embarrassed instead?

Introduce the Unlock method and go through the "ground rules" for the sessions. Make sure to point out this should be fun and not just serious discussions!

STARTER EXERCISE (10 mins)

Hand out the different quotes on Handout 1A, make sure people have pens, and ask people (in pairs or small groups of 3-4 people) to discuss what they think the tone of voice (emotion) is behind each quote. Ask them to use their own experiences, and if they come up with several emotions for a quote, that's fine.

FEEDBACK FROM THE GROUPS (10 mins)

Briefly compare answers in the big group. Did the groups agree on the emotions? Did anyone think of where all these quotes might have come from?

INPUT:

It's Jesus who said all these things, although some quotes have been modernized! Ask people if any of their answers would have been different if they had been told it was Jesus who said all these things? Why?

The Bible often leaves the emotion behind words to be interpreted by us, and there are often many possible interpretations. Does a quote necessarily get a different meaning if Jesus was angry or mild when he said something? If Jesus was fully human, he must have experienced a whole range of human emotions too. Is it hard to believe that?

And apart from the different emotions in each person in the story, other characters in it (whether they are specifically mentioned in the story or not) could have had conflicting emotions about what was happening....



MAIN EXERCISE (30 mins)

Read Luke 8:40-46 aloud (*read it from handout 1B so the wording is the same as in the exercise, or do your own handout based on the Bible translation you want to use*),

Ask people to try and place themselves in the story, eg. picture the full scenario, who is there, what are the sounds, smells...etc. Those who want can close their eyes.

Form groups of 2-3 people and give out Handout 1B. Explain that the text will be read again, but pauses will be made after each section of the story, and the groups will then write down any emotion they think different people in the story could have had at that point in the story.

INPUT:

Encourage people to think especially of the characters not mentioned in the actual sentences read, but who must have been present (i.e. onlookers), and to not think of any kind of emotion as "wrong".

If anyone in the group suggests a character had a certain emotion, they are not to discuss it at that point, just write it down. If someone thinks another emotion was present, add it! Leave plenty of time for this, and feel free to walk around the room when you read the story, so you can keep an eye on how many emotions people fill in, and how long the pause between each portion of the text should be to give the groups time to fill in several suggested emotions

Did they feel closer to any of the characters in the story?

If time allows, let people talk in pairs again for 1-2 minutes while the leader prepares for a short closing worship.

- *Share a time when you in any way have felt like any of the characters in the story...*

SUGGESTION FOR A SHORT CLOSING WORSHIP (10 mins):

Sit in a circle.

Remind people of the Bible story, and how Jesus said he felt power go out from him when the woman touched him. Isn't that an amazing thought, that Jesus not only heard but FELT the woman's needs? And we can gather today believing that Jesus still not just hears but feels our prayers.

Send the piece of cloth around the circle, asking people to imagine it is the mantle of Jesus, and those who want can hold it for a second or two while they say their own, silent prayer, whether it's a prayer for help or thanksgiving.

A chant can be hummed, or classical music played in the background for this, since it might take a while for the cloth to go around the circle if the group is large..

End with short, free prayer/blessing



Which emotions do you think are behind these sentences? *There are no right answers – use your imagination!*

-Why don't you understand what I'm saying?

-People will talk about this

-You don't get it, do you?

-Leave her alone

-You'll never find me

-Get up, will you

-She was nice to me

-I love you, but you're still wrong

-I have a new job for you

-You've made a mess of things

-Leave me alone

-Can't someone else do it?

-Take care of my mother for me

-Are you deaf?

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE CHARACTERS FELT AT DIFFERENT POINTS IN THE STORY?



| The story... Luke 8:40-56 | Jesus | Jairus | The disciples | The haemorrhaging woman | Jairus's wife | Any onlookers (the crowd, the servants in Jairus's house) | Jairus's daughter |
|--|--------------|---------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|--------------------------|
| When Jesus returned (from the other side of the lake), the people welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. | | | | | | | |
| Then a man appeared, Jairus was his name, and he was president of the synagogue. Throwing himself down at Jesus's feet he begged him to come to his house, because his only daughter, who was twelve years old, was dying. | | | | | | | |
| While Jesus was on his way, he could hardly breathe for the crowds. | | | | | | | |
| Among them was a woman who had suffered from haemorrhages for twelve years; and nobody had been able to cure her. She came up from behind at touched the edge of his cloak... | | | | | | | |

| <p>....and at once the haemorrhages stopped. Jesus said: Who was it who touched me? All disclaimed it, and Peter said: Master, the crowds are hemming you in and pressing upon you! But Jesus said 'Someone did touch me, for I felt that power had gone out from me'.</p> | <p>Jesus</p> | <p>Jairus</p> | <p>The disciples</p> | <p>The haemorrhaging woman</p> | <p>Jairus's wife</p> | <p>Any onlookers (the crowd, the servants in Jairus's house)</p> | <p>Jairus's daughter</p> |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <p>Then the woman, seeing that she was detected, came trembling and fell at his feet. Before all the people she explained why she had touched him and how she had been cured instantly.</p> | | | | | | | |
| <p>Jesus said to her: Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace. While he was still speaking, a man came from the president's house with the message: Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any more.</p> | | | | | | | |
| <p>But Jesus heard and said 'Do not be afraid, simply have faith and she will be well again'.</p> | | | | | | | |

| | Jesus | Jairus | The disciples | The haemorrhaging woman | Jairus's wife | Any onlookers (the crowd, the servants in Jairus's house) | Jairus's daughter |
|---|--------------|---------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| When he arrived at the house he allowed no one to go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. | | | | | | | |
| Everyone was weeping and lamenting for her. He said: 'Stop your weeping, she is not dead. she is asleep'. | | | | | | | |
| And they laughed at him, well knowing that she was dead. | | | | | | | |
| But Jesus took hold of her hand and called to her: 'Get up, my child'. Her spirit returned, she stood up immediately. | | | | | | | |
| And he told them to give her something to eat. | | | | | | | |
| Her parents were astounded; but he forbade them to tell anyone what had happened. | | | | | | | |

SESSION TWO: FREEDOM OR FEAR?

Materials needed: Flipchart (prepare beforehand by writing out the words from Main exercise question 3 in large letters on a page), pens, paper, copies of Handout 2A.

Optional: Some traditional pictures of angels, to be passed around during the feedback after the starter exercise.

WELCOME (15-20 mins)

Welcome people, ask them to briefly introduce themselves to the people they're sitting next to. Then use one of the following **ICE BREAKERS:**

CHAT: Talk briefly in pairs about if there was any specific "monster" you were scared of (from a book, TV-programme or your own imagination) when you were a child?

OR

GAME: Charades! Divide people in small teams and let each team get a "monster" each. E.g Frankenstein, Dracula, Hulk, Zombie, Mummy, King Kong, Ghost, Loch Ness Monster... Having people do this in teams means everyone don't have to "act".

STARTER EXERCISE (20 mins)

As opposed to "monsters" the Bible is full of stories of how God sends good beings – angels - to help people. In small groups, list as many positive characteristics of an angel you can think of? List the answers in the big group afterwards.

INPUT:

Look at the list of positive attributes of an angel. Yet, when people in the Bible meet an angel the first words from the angel are often "Don't be afraid!" Why do you think people would be afraid of an angel, if they are good and helpful?

Does that say something about the things we fear in general?

MAIN EXERCISE (35 mins)

INPUT:

To "fear" someone in the Bible can mean different things: to obey and respect God (or a person) for example. But there is no doubt that many occasions the Bible talks of would have given people reason to be genuinely "scared" as well. Sometimes even scared of God. Some of the stories in the Old Testament might paint a picture of a powerful God who sometimes seems to act out of anger or vengeance. But Jesus came to show us – as someone we can relate to – how God really is. But it's still very human to fear things that are unfamiliar to us, and even the people around Jesus struggled with their fears when faced with certain situations...



Read Handout 2A with different quotes from the Gospels, and talk about the following:

1. What kinds of fears are present in these quotes? Are the different people afraid for themselves or for others? Are people afraid due to an actual event or because of something they fear MIGHT happen?
2. How did Jesus handle the disciples being afraid? Is there anything Jesus did that can tell us something about dealing with fear?
3. What do you think is the opposite of fear: Discuss the following words in your group and see how much you agree / disagree:

love

knowledge

hope

trust

confidence

faith

strength

Give brief feedback in the big group, as time allows.

SUGGESTION FOR A SHORT CLOSING WORSHIP (5 mins)

Use the phrase "Don't be afraid" and pick up on themes mentioned during the night, and current or local situations/events. The leader or someone else can simply say a free prayer with a moment of silence between each phrase.

For example:

God says, through angels, through Jesus and through the people who support and love us: Don't be afraid.

Don't be afraid when people don't understand you, or persecute you.... (silence)

Don't be afraid when it seems hope is gone....(silence)

Don't be afraid when there are rumours about terrorism or war...(silence)

Don't be afraid when the mortgage rates rise...(silence)

Don't be afraid, not even for the things you only dare to mention in silence... (silence)

God says: Don't be afraid, for I am with you.
Amen.



Matthew 2:1-3

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Betlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking "Where is the child who has been born a king of the Jews?...we have come to pay him homage. When King Herod heard this, he was frightened...

Matthew: 17:5-8

While Jesus was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said: 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased, listen to him!' When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying: 'Get up, and do not be afraid.'

Matthew 21:45-46

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded Jesus as a prophet.

Luke 9:45-48

But the disciples did not understand what Jesus had said (about the Son of Man) and they were afraid to ask him... An argument rose among them as to which one of them was the greatest. But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts, took a little child and put it by his side, and said to them: 'Whoever welcomes this child in my name, welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me, for the least among all of you is the greatest...'

John 19:6-8

When the chief priests and the police saw Jesus, they shouted 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' Pilate said to them: 'Take him yourself and crucify him; I find no case against him.' The Jews answered him: 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God. Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever...



SESSION THREE: TO ANGER, WITH LOVE

Materials needed: Handout(s) 3A, each page cut up into pieces with a word on each piece, and the pieces put in an envelope, marked with the number of the proverb for reference (one envelope per group) 3B (one handout per person), 3C (one copy for the reader), pens, clipboards or pieces of cardboard so people can glue/sellotape their "proverbs" on them, glue sticks / sellotape.

Optional: 4 pieces of coloured paper

WELCOME (10 mins)

Welcome people, ask them to introduce themselves to their neighbours. Briefly introduce Unlock / the ground rules for new participants.

Use an **ICE-BREAKER:**

CHAT: Let people talk in pairs about which they think is worst: anger in words (unfair accusations, name calling) or in actions (slamming doors, banging fist on table, smashing a plate).

Obs! Actions in this case don't refer to physical violence!

OR

GAME: Have 4 pieces of coloured paper put up in the 4 corners of the room. For example: black, red, bright yellow, bright purple. Ask people which COLOUR they would associate with anger, and to go to that corner of the room and briefly chat to people there.

INPUT:

Be prepared for ANY kind of outcome of the game (eg. almost everyone goes to "black", some people can't choose since they don't think in colours etc). The aim is to get people up and moving, and however it works out, gather people back with a smile and a comment about how fascinating it is how we agree / disagree!

STARTER EXERCISE (10 mins)

Form groups of 2-4 people, and give the groups an envelope each.

The task in each group is to form a proverb of the words in the envelope. They don't have to use all the words, but the sentence must start with a word with a capital letter.

Although a Biblical proverb is "hidden" in each envelope, the task is not to find the "right" proverb, but to make one up that feels right for them!

When the groups are happy with their sentence, they should glue/tape the proverb to a piece of cardboard and then talk about what they think it means.



INPUT:

Look at page 1 of handout 3A to see the "hidden" proverbs. Number 1 and 2 are slightly more well-known than the others, so don't give those out to groups who are very knowledgeable of the Bible. Finding the Biblical proverb straight away takes away the creative process in the group!

Make sure the groups have a chair and piece of cardboard in the middle (to use as a table) so everyone can see the words and physically move around the pieces like a puzzle. Walk around the room and try and catch sight of the various proverbs the groups come up with initially, some can be gems even if they don't end up being the version the group agrees on! Encourage the groups to be creative!

FEEDBACK FROM THE GROUPS (10 mins)

When each group has a finished proverb, and have discussed it amongst themselves, ask each group to show their proverb to the other groups and briefly say what they felt it meant. Then read out the "right" Biblical proverb for each group, just as comparison. Did anyone choose the actual Biblical quote? Or did they make up a better one?

Only invite very brief comments if/how the Biblical proverb differed from the one that group came up with. Move on to next group quickly, and don't let long discussions start at this point since this is only the warm-up!.

MAIN EXERCISE (30 mins)

Give each person a copy of Handout 3B with the Bible readings.

INPUT:

Tell people that the 4 different texts are found – in that sequence – in Matthew's gospel.

One text is taken from John simply due to a more detailed wording of the event in that gospel. We can only imagine how it was when people met Jesus for the first time. Some people tried to follow him around to see as much of him as possible, but some people only encounter him once.

We will hear these 4 Bible stories and then hear a short meditation about two different people whom we will assume met Jesus in very different situations...

Invite 4 different people to read one of the Bible texts each. Then leave a few seconds silence, before a person you've asked beforehand (preferably a man) reads the meditation on Handout 3C.

Then invite the groups to discuss the boy's question, as if they had to reply to the child. Why was Jesus angry?

If people start to debate whether Jesus was angry or not, tell them that is a separate issue.. The issue here is what you would reply to a boy who seemed to think Jesus WAS angry!



FEEDBACK FROM THE GROUPS (15 mins)

Discuss how this felt. Was it hard? Did you think Jesus could have been angry? What are your thoughts from this exercise?

If the discussion in the big groups takes off, let the evening finish with a discussion in the big group. If you feel you want to let people briefly speak in small groups again, here are some suggestions for questions:

- When can it be POSITIVE to be angry?
- When is it easier to show anger?
 - Among friends?
 - Before God / in church?
 - When you know you're right?
 - When you speak on behalf of someone else?

SUGGESTION FOR A SHORT CLOSING WORSHIP (5 mins)

(Sit in a circle and invite people to take off their shoes.)

Lord,
we have taken off our shoes before you, and we are vulnerable.
Are my socks clean enough? Is the floor clean enough? What if one shoe goes missing?
What if the fire alarm goes and we have to leave the building in our bare feet...?

Sometimes our faith is like a pair of shoes. It comforts us, protects us.
We want to feel calm, reassured, trusting...
But you ask us to take off our shoes, because this is holy ground.
Here, where your broken, angry, doubting and scared people meet.
Here in your church, where we come as we are, trying to build your kingdom on earth,
despite the fact that we are so busy building perfect lives for ourselves, but so often failing.

But this is holy ground, and it's here you want to meet us.
Not to tell us we aren't good enough, but to show us that it's only
when we bare something of ourselves, be it our feet or our souls,
that we can truly meet you.

So draw near, to where we ponder the mysteries of your creation.
How love and anger can be so intertwined. How we sometimes are afraid of feeling
what we feel, and regretting doing what we never wanted to do.

In silence, we now mention before you, things that makes us angry,
and we pray for your help to discern if the anger is something that hold us back
or moves us forward...

(silence)

Lord, thank you for letting us grow in faith and each day become more like you,
in all our human frailty.
Amen



Quotes from Proverbs (NRSV)

1. A harsh word stirs up anger (15:1)
2. Those with good sense are slow to anger (19:11)
3. Fools show their anger at once but the prudent ignore an insult (12:16)
4. A king's anger is like the growling of a lion (19:12)
5. A gift in secret averts anger (21:14)
6. Make no friends with those given to anger (22:24)



A

Many a

harsh

hasty

delightful

deceitful

word

tongue

woman

stirs up

loves

creates

anger

**Those with
Children with
good sense
quick minds
bad parents
fearful hearts
are
should be
become
quick to
prone to
slow to
anger**

**Fools
calm their
show their
anger
at once
clearly
but the
prudent
wise
ignore
provoke
an insult
a lie**

A king's

A husband's

anger

sounds like

is like

the watchfulness

the growling

the raging

of a

warrior

lion

battle

dog

A gift

A kiss

A promise

in secret

from the heart

with words

averts

challenges

creates

speaks of

is the opposite of

anger

**Make no
Avoid
Cherish
enemies
friends
promises
debating
with those
with rulers
given to
surrounded by
dwelling in
anger**

Matthew 5:1-8

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth....
...Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God....

Matthew 20:29-34

A large crowd followed Jesus...there were two men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"
The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet, but they shouted even more loudly "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!"
Jesus stood still and called them, saying "What do you want me to do for you?" They said to him: "Lord, let our eyes be opened."
Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

John 2:13-16

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of chords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"

Matthew 21:18-20

In the morning, when Jesus returned to the city, he was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the side of the road, he went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves. The he said to it: May no fruit ever come from you again!
And the fig tree withered at once.



MEDITATION (preferably read by a male voice)

My auntie Esther is a good woman.
She is always out helping the neighbours,
and that makes her a good source of gossip from our village.
A while ago she told me about a man she had met.
She had seen a big crowd of people walking up a mountain,
and people told her that a new teacher had gone up there with his followers.
So my aunt followed the crowd,
and apparently heard the teacher say lots of nice things about God.
I guess he was telling people to "be good and behave",
since that's what adults always seem to tell others, especially children!

My aunt seemed changed after that meeting, happy and kind of...excited!
And it was only a day or so later that she came back home full of joy,
saying she had seen the man again!
He had been passing the two blind beggars by the street.
You know, the ones my auntie always tells me to be nice to.
She often asks me to give them a coin or piece of bread when we pass by.

But this man had apparently done even more, he had made them see again!

I wish I could meet such an amazing man! But no, not me....
I'm only eight, so I have to behave and stay in the house most of the time.
Apart from when I can sneak out, of course...!
Like yesterday, when I managed to run away to the temple for a while.
There's always something happening at the temple, lots of people and noises!
And yesterday it was more exciting than usual, since a man came in and overturned the
tables and swung a whip while shouting at people!
No wonder people ran away from there, he acted like he was crazy!

But now it's early morning, and I've been allowed to go with my auntie to a nearby village.
It's a long walk, so I hope something exciting happens on the way!
I soon see a small crowd of people standing by the roadside, so I start to run ahead of my
auntie.
The people look tired, and I suspect their journey started even earlier than ours.
It seems like one of the men is trying to find some figs on the tree.
But there are none to find!
Doesn't he know it's not season for them yet?
The man frowns and says something - and the tree suddenly just withers and dies!
And then I recognise him, it's the crazy man from the temple!

My auntie has just caught up with me, and she spots the man too.
She stops and gasps and says with a happy voice: I know that man!

-You do? says I, In that case, maybe you can tell me: Why is that man so angry?

SESSION FOUR: THE WEB OF JEALOUSY

Materials needed: Handout(s) 4A + 4B (one per group) + 4C (one half of the page per person) pens, post-its, flipchart paper, flip chart markers.

Optional: bag of nice sweeties (paper-covered chocolates or similar).

WELCOME (10 mins)

Welcome people, ask them to introduce themselves to their neighbours. Briefly introduce Unlock / the ground rules for new participants.

Use an **ICE-BREAKER:**

CHAT: Let people talk in pairs about if they think jealousy is mainly wanting something someone else has, or the fear of losing something you've already got?

OR

GAME: Do some kind of quiz with the big group, any kind of very easy questions, and after each question, the person who says the right answer out loud gets a sweetie. After the first 2-3 questions, start being really unfair and give some people several sweeties, don't give the next winner a sweetie because that person probably "guessed" the answer, take away a sweetie from a person if they don't get the next question right too, give a sweetie to the person sitting next to the person giving the right answer simply because that person has a nicer jumper on, etc.

I.e, be really illogical and unfair with people!

Finish the game by giving the rest of the bag of sweeties to either a latecomer who's missed most of the quiz, or someone who got a question wrong or didn't contribute at all...

This game is just a fun starter, and shouldn't need to be explained, but it can be good to end it by saying something like "maybe that got us thinking more about what creates jealousy..."

MAIN EXERCISE part 1 (15 min)

We will read the beginning of a famous story in the Bible. The story is slightly shortened, but the story is as it appears in the Old Testament.

Give a copy of handout 4A to each person. Sit in a circle and take turns reading 3-4 sentences each, just so different voices are heard. Anyone who doesn't want to read out loud can opt out. When the text is read, form groups of 3-5 people. Give a copy of handout 4B to each group.

Explain we will look at the potential for jealousy in the text, eg. are there events or relationships in the text where jealousy could have occurred? One person in each group is the "secretary" and will draw lines on the paper between the characters between which jealousy could have occurred.



INPUT:

It is important to point out that it doesn't matter if people believe the character in the story WAS jealous or not. Remind them they're looking for the potential for jealousy. The groups should at this point discuss as little as possible, and just try and draw "potential jealousy lines" between the different names on the handout. It might help if the leader gently moves through the room discouraging too long discussions, and encouraging groups who are "stuck".

FEEDBACK FROM THE GROUPS (25 mins)

Let all groups briefly hold up their page so the other groups can see how the other "webs" look like. Have a flip chart page prepared where you have written out the characters as on handout 4B. Start with Abraham at the top, let all groups say which lines they have drawn from Abraham to anyone else, then move on to the next character. In that way you will make a "combined web" of all the connections the groups have come up with. When the web is finished, let the groups ask questions of each other, eg. why they have drawn a line between certain people.

INPUT:

Depending on the feedback from the group, the leader should be prepared to mention some of the more unusual examples of potential jealousy, so they can be added to the flipchart web. For example: Lots's wife could have been jealous with Sarah since she had sons, Ishmael could have been jealous with Pharoah since he was rich and famous, Lot could have been jealous with Abraham since he didn't have all his land destroyed, Pharoah could have been jealous with Isaac since he had a kind father and beautiful mother etc.... In the end, the "combined web" should have lines between almost all characters in the story. It seems like the potential for jealousy is everywhere, and always in the eyes of the beholder! But in some Bible translations, the word jealousy is sometimes replaced with the word "passion", which perhaps shows us the strength of emotion we are dealing with...and perhaps also that jealousy can be a positive force if handled correctly?!?

MAIN EXERCISE part 2 (15 mins)

Give out handout 4C to the groups. Discuss what this exercise taught us about jealousy.

The questions are suggestions, let the groups talk about anything they feel is relevant to the topic!

FEEDBACK FROM THE GROUPS (15 mins)

Let people give their final comments and thoughts about the discussions.

As a conclusion to the discussion, ask people to think of if there's anything any of the characters in the story would have needed or wanted to hear in order to NOT have as much potential for jealousy. Eg. reassuring, affirming, clarifying comments.

Hand out post-its, and ask people to write one sentence per post-it.

It doesn't matter exactly which character in the story the sentence is meant for.

Put two flipchart papers in the middle of the room, on the floor or on a table.

Draw something in the middle of each paper beforehand. One paper should represent "men" the other "women". Draw a brief outline of a man and woman (in the simple style of the signs on restroom doors) or the universal signs for man/woman.

Invite people to place their post-its on the papers, and choose if their comment is meant for one of the male or female characters.

INPUT:

If there is have time, look briefly at the post-its afterwards and discuss if there is a difference in language between men and women.

Do we say things and express feelings in the same way?

Are there any comments meant for a women in the story, that maybe a man had needed to hear too (or the other way around)?

SUGGESTION FOR A SHORT CLOSING WORSHIP

Sit in the circle and say a short prayer.

Some of these comments we've just written are perhaps things that we need to say to others, but more so, things that God wants to tell us.

Leave some silence while you move to the flip chart paper and read out some of the most affirming sentences on the post its, like "you are loved", "I trust you" or whatever people have written that is so general it can apply to most people in the group.

Leave the flip chart paper out for a few minutes afterwards, so people, if they wish, can have a better look at the other post-its before they leave.



Genesis 11:27 onwards....(NRSV, shortened and slightly edited)

Abram married Sarai, who didn't have a child. Abram lived with his nephew Lot, the son of his brother Haran. Abram was told by God to leave his country and go to the land of Canaan. And God said to him: "I will make of you a great nation...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"

On their way to Canaan, the Lord told Abram that his offspring would get the land where the Canaanites now lived, so Abram built an altar to the Lord there, and settled in Negeb. But Canaan was soon affected by famine and Abram and Sarai went to Egypt. Abram told the beautiful Sarai to pose as his sister so he wouldn't be killed by other men. Pharaoh saw Sarai and liked her, and took her into his house, and Abram got rich because of his connection with Pharaoh.

But God let plagues affect Egypt, and Pharaoh found out the truth, and asked Abram why he had lied. Pharaoh asked Abram and Sarai to leave. They went back to Negeb.

Abram and Lot were now rich, and decided to part ways since the land couldn't support them both. The herders of their flocks were fighting. Abram let Lot choose first where to go, and he would go the other way. Lot chose the most fertile land he could find which included the city of Sodom. Abram went the other way, to live at Hebron.

Ten years after that, Sarai still hadn't conceived. She had an Egyptian slave-girl called Hagar, and Sarai said to Abram: "You see that the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my slave girl, it may be that I will obtain children by her". And Abram listened to Sarai, and Hagar got pregnant. When Hagar saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on Sarai. Then Sarai got upset and spoke to Abram, who told her to do with Hagar as she pleased. Sarai dealt harshly with Hagar, so she ran away.

But an angel of the Lord found Hagar by a well in the wilderness, and told her to go back to Sarai, and that Hagar would have multitudes of offspring, and call her son Ishmael ("God hears"). So Hagar returned to Abram's house and gave birth to Ishmael.

13 years later, Sarai still had no children, and the Lord appeared before him again, and said Abram would be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. And God re-named him Abraham, and told him to re-name his wife Sarah. God also said that Sarah would bear him a son. Abraham laughed, and said that seemed impossible since Sarah was too old. But God promised they would have a son in one year's time, and call his Isaac ("He laughs").

Later on God reveals to Abraham that he plans to punish the city of Sodom for the sins of the people there. But Abraham gets God to promise to spare the city if there were at least 10 righteous men there. Sodom was where Lot now lived, and he had a wife and two daughters.

When the angels of the Lord came to Sodom, Lot treated them well. So Lot and his family were allowed to leave the city before it was destroyed. All the surrounding land was destroyed too, Lot's wife died on the journey because she didn't listen to the advice God gave her. Then Lot and his two daughters had to live in a cave for a while.

After a year, Sarah did indeed give birth to Isaac, and he grew up. Isaac and Ishmael played together, despite the 13 years age difference, which made Sarah angry. She once again arranged for Hagar and Ishmael to be sent away. Abraham was worried but God told him to do what Sarah wanted. Hagar and Ishmael was sent away, but was rescued by God when they had run out of water in the desert.

Then Hagar and Ishmael lived in the wilderness for many years...

Who had potential reasons (even if "silly ones") to be jealous with whom in the story? *(Draw lines between the names below)*

Abraham

Lot's wife

Pharoah

Sarah

Isaac

Lot

Ishmael

Hagar

Haran

UNLOCKING LIFE - HANDOUT 4C

1. Are you surprised the word **“jealous”** isn’t mentioned once in the Bible in relation to this story? Why / why not?
2. People in this story seemed focus on God’s “Master plan” but how much did they let faith and prayer be a part of their everyday lives and relationships?
3. Do you know any families with step-parents, adopted children, children outside of marriage, new partners etc? How can jealousy be prevented in new or complicated relationships?
4. Is anything in this story helpful when we think about how to accept or handle jealousy in our own lives?



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SESSION FIVE: DISCIPLES OF DOUBT

Materials needed: Handout 5A + 5B (one per person), pens, paper

WELCOME (10 mins)

Welcome people, ask them to introduce themselves to their neighbours.

Briefly introduce Unlock / the ground rules for new participants.

Use an **ICE-BREAKER**:

CHAT: Let people talk in pairs about if doubt has ever been a positive experience for them? Not just in faith matters, but in life in general.

OR

GAME: Ask people to talk very briefly (1 min) to the person next to them. Choose a very simple question which doesn't encourage discussion, like which is their favourite programme on TV.

Then move around the chairs so people sit back-to-back with the person they just spoke to. When the pairs sit so they can't see each other, hand out pens and papers to everyone and ask them to describe what the person behind them is wearing. Clothes as well as jewellery, hair clips, watches, hairstyle and colour of hair and eyes.

Give them 2 minutes for this, and no cheating/looking at the person!

Then let the pairs look at the descriptions of each other, and each give a "percentage" of correctness to the description of themselves.

In the big group, do a quick survey of the percentages the pairs had.

INPUT:

No explanation needed for the game, although after the last exercise of the evening, you might want to make a reference to the game and the fact that we sometimes "doubt" our own eyes and memory!

STARTER EXERCISE (15 mins)

Give people Handout 5A and let them talk in groups of 2-3 about which definition they think is right.

Then look at the Bible texts on Handout 5B and see which types of doubt they think are expressed there.

If you are short of time, let each group mainly do one of the texts each, but can move on to a second text if they have time. People don't have to limit themselves to the definitions from the handout, those were just to get them thinking....



FEEDBACK FROM THE GROUPS (15 mins)

Let the discussion be led by what the groups say.

INPUT:

People could possibly say that text 1 is about people doubting because of a judgement (he's just a carpenter) or even doubting themselves (he's one of us, he can't be that good!) Text 2 could be about Peter doubting the condition of something (eg. the extent rather than the existence of Jesus' powers) or doubt because as a fisherman he knew the power of the sea. Text 3 could be about Peter not having enough facts to understand why Jesus said this. These are just possible answers, the groups will probably come up with much better ones!

As a leader, do this exercise for yourself beforehand and see what answers you come up with!

MAIN EXERCISE (20 mins)

Give out handout 5C, one per person, and form groups of 4-6 people and let the groups read the text and answer the questions themselves.

FEEDBACK FROM THE GROUPS (20 mins)

Let the group decide the topics, and also take a moment and reflect on the series of sessions as a whole.

INPUT:

If people have questions / comments about the last exercise, assure them that the point wasn't to "make excuses" for Thomas. He did doubt. His name "Didymos" means Twin, and in some translations that is mentioned within brackets (like in this text) but in some translations it is mentioned like Thomas had been given the title "Thomas the Twin". Sometimes we actually have real experiences which can make us doubt. Like when some scientists find it hard to believe the creation story because they know it took longer than seven days to create the world.

On the other hand some scientists find it easier to believe in God, since they know how complex and miraculous the whole creation is! The question might be what's more important, to start our faith journey by firmly believing in every details, or to generally believe in God's love and compassion...and seeking to grow in faith each day!

SUGGESTION FOR A SHORT CLOSING WORSHIP (5 mins)

Bring something really OLD that people have used in prayer, like an old, worn handheld cross, an old Bible, an old Hymnary, a worn kneeler from church, an old rosary...

The item has to look and feel really old, and preferably smell old as well!

Talk about how we can't stick our hand's in Jesus' side, but we can touch and feel items that generations of Christians before us have used in prayer, and use that as inspiration for our faith.

Send around the item for people to touch / smell / look at while you sing a chant, play some music or leave a short silence.



Below are some definitions of the word “doubt” as found in various dictionaries.

Which ones do you think are applicable when we use the word doubt as the opposite of having faith?

- 1. A wavering in opinion or judgement**

- 2. A fluctuation of mind arising from defect of knowledge or evidence**

- 3. An uncertainty of the condition of something**

- 4. An inclination not to believe**

- 5. A method of philosophical questioning**

- 6. A suspicion that something is not true, likely, or genuine**



Which types of doubt do you think these stories express?

(NRSV) *Some verses slightly shortened.*

Matthew 13:54 –

Jesus came to his home town and began to teach the people in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said: Where did this man get this wisdom and this power? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary?...Where then did this man get all this? And they took offence at him.

Matthew 14:26 –

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying "It is a ghost!" But Jesus spoke to them and told them not to be afraid. Peter answered him: "Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you on the water". Jesus said "Come". So Peter got out of the boat and came towards Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened and started to sink. Peter cried out: "Lord, save me". Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Matthew 16:21 –

Jesus began to show his disciples he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering, and be killed, and on the third day raised. Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, saying "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you!"

John 20:19-27 (shortened)

(The resurrected) Jesus came and stood among the disciples and said "Peace be with you".... But Thomas (who was called the Twin) one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

So the other disciples told him they had seen the Lord.

But Thomas said to them: "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe..."

A week later...Jesus came and stood among them and said "Peace be with you".

Then he said to Thomas "Put your finger here and see my hands.

Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe!"

- 1. Why do you think Thomas was called "the Twin"?**
- 2. Have you ever known any twins? What happens when you look like someone else and go to the same school / live in the same village?**
- 3. If we assume Thomas was a twin, or at least looked very much like someone else, is there anything in Thomas EXPERIENCES that might have made him doubt that the other disciples had seen Jesus?**
- 4. What can Jesus' reaction to Thomas doubt tell us?**



