

Masterpiece Master-class



A resource for creating generative themes and building relationships within a group.
Created by Unlock Glasgow in partnership with the Scottish Bible Society



A resource to help group facilitators to everyone in a group to share their personal and community stories, with an aim to creating a plan of topics the for the group to look at using the Unlock approach to studying the Bible.

The aim of this resource is to two-fold. The first is to generate by the end of the evening a series of potential topics for the group to explore which are immediately relevant to their lives. The second is to create a warm and friendly environment of trust between participants where people have had an opportunity to be vulnerable with one another in a non-threatening way.

The best foundation for a series of Unlock studies is to start with a group on the basis of a shared sense of trust and relationship, and in a way that immediately affirms people that their stories, right now, are valuable.

So we created this very simple resource pack! Its ideal for a group that is new to Unlock, or to each other. But its also good to use with a group that has been together for a while but wants to discover some new direction in their discussions of the Bible.

Resources needed:

- Large and varied collection of bits and pieces - material, decorative flowers, sequins, stars, different colours, photographs, words, magazines, newspapers, stickers, paint, paintbrushes, water-pots, pens, clay, glue sticks, craft glue in plastic cups, etc. etc.
- Enough newspapers to protect tables from paint and glue
- For each person a plain piece of canvas/material - choice of colours
- Print outs of the Masterpiece diagram on separate sheets of paper
- A flip chart to write down themes that come up.



Prayer and Reflection

It's a good thing to start an Unlock group with prayer and a meditation. We've given you a suggested reading at the end of this resource. It's a poem about reading the Bible and some of the difficulties and questions it can raise for us. Its called "How do you read the Bible?" and its by Jonny Baker and Doug Gay, from a book called *Alternative Worship*.

Step 1 – Explaining the process

Get everyone sitting in a big circle

Give each person a plain piece of canvas/material and suggest that they imagine it is divided by a cross into 4 quarters. Use the 4 different spaces to do something connected to:

1. Something that has happened to you in the past, or is happening right now. It could be happy or sad, a childhood memory or an issue you are struggling with at the moment.
2. A situation or an experience that you are going through in your church or your close circle of friends.
3. Something important in your community, good or bad. This could be in your local area or on a national level.
4. Something you would really like to see happen - a dream that you have.

Handout the 'Masterpiece Diagram' so that everyone is clear as to what image goes in which section of their picture.

Step 2 – The activity

Then get everyone to gather around the activity table and create their masterpieces!

Have a large and varied collection of bits and pieces - material, decorative flowers, sequins, different colours, photographs, words, paint, pens, clay, (as above) etc. etc.

Give folk at least 20 minutes, but the amount of time is flexible according to how much time you have.

Step 3 - Storytelling

Once everyone has finished, have them all return to their seats, with their masterpieces laid out before them. Get each person in turn to share their stories, based on the pictures they have created. The beauty of this section is that people feel they are sharing what is on their pictures, rather than being put on the spot and asked to be vulnerable. Their stories, struggles, concerns and desires are "out there" already, and so its easier to talk about where they are really at. Its worth taking as much time as possible over this stage, so that everyone can share fully. A lot depends on the size of the group, however.



Step 4 – Reflection on the Bible

Read out the two passages of the Bible from the appendix to this resource:
Psalm 16 and Lamentations 1:1-7

Then get everyone to discuss their reflections on the passages by asking the following questions:

Which of these two passages from the Bible connect with your story. Which of them don't connect to your stories? Why?

Step 5 – Outcomes

Get everyone to shout out some of the themes that came out of the stories that were told that they would particularly like to address. This is good way to get everyone remembering everyone else's stories, and show that they have been valued. It also creates the facilitator's program for them for the next few weeks! For this you will need a flip-chart and some pens.

Ending prayer

Its always good to end in prayer





How do you read the Bible?

How do you read the Bible?
Do you read the Bible?
Why do you read the Bible?

How often do you read it?
Do you read little and often, or great chunks occasionally?
Have you read it cover to cover?
Have you ever read more than a single chapter at one go?
Have you ever read it aloud?

Where do you read it?
On the train where everyone can see?
Or at home where no-one can see?

Which version do you prefer?
Do you go for word-for-word translation of the Hebrew and Greek or an easy-to-read paraphrase?

Is the Bible too heavy?
Would you like it to be broken up into its individual books so you didn't have to take all of them to your small group?
If it was broken up, would you put some books on one side and never read them?
If you had to buy the books separately, would you buy the whole set or only some?
If only some, which, and why?

Which books of the Bible have you never read from?
Why?
Which bits are your favourites?
Why?

Do you struggle to relate it to your own life?
Or does it speak directly to you?

Do you take every word as inspired?
Do you take every word as true?
Do you think it contains mistakes?

What bugs you about the Bible?
Genocide? Sexism? Patriarchy? Ritualized animal murder?
Which bits frighten you?
Which bits reassure you?

How do you read the Bible? Do you read the Bible?
Why do you read the Bible?

From *Alternative Worship* by Jonny Baker and Doug Gay



Masterpiece Diagram:

Facilitators can print off the diagram below and pin on the wall, or give a copy to each participant.

<p><u>Square no.1</u> Something that has happened to you in the past, or is happening right now. It could be happy or sad, a childhood memory or an issue you are struggling with at the moment</p>	<p><u>Square no.2</u> A situation or an experience that you are going through in your church or your close circle of friends</p>
<p><u>Square no.3</u> Something important in your community, good or bad. This could be in your local area or on a national level</p>	<p><u>Square no.4</u> Something you would really like to see happen - a dream that you have</p>



Passages to use with this resource:

Psalm 16 (of David) - GNB

Protect me, O God; I trust in you for safety.

I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord; all the good things I have come from you."

How excellent are the LORD's faithful people! My greatest pleasure is to be with them.

Those who rush to other gods bring many troubles on themselves. I will not take part in their sacrifices; I will not worship their gods.

You, LORD, are all I have, and you give me all I need; my future is in your hands.

How wonderful are your gifts to me; how good they are!

I praise the LORD, because he guides me, and in the night my conscience warns me.

I am always aware of the LORD's presence; he is near, and nothing can shake me.

And so I am thankful and glad, and I feel completely secure,

because you protect me from the power of death. I have served you faithfully, and you will not abandon me to the world of the dead.

You will show me the path that leads to life; your presence fills me with joy and brings me pleasure forever.

Lamentations 1:1-7 - GNB

How lonely lies Jerusalem, once so full of people! Once honored by the world, she is now like a widow; The noblest of cities has fallen into slavery.

All night long she cries; tears run down her cheeks. Of all her former friends, not one is left to comfort her. Her allies have betrayed her and are all against her now.

Judah's people are helpless slaves, forced away from home. They live in other lands, with no place to call their own--- Surrounded by enemies, with no way to escape.

No one comes to the Temple now to worship on the holy days. The young women who sang there suffer, and the priests can only groan. The city gates stand empty, and Zion is in agony.

Her enemies succeeded; they hold her in their power. The LORD has made her suffer for all her many sins; Her children have been captured and taken away.

The splendor of Jerusalem is a thing of the past. Her leaders are like deer that are weak from hunger, Whose strength is almost gone as they flee from the hunters.

A lonely ruin now, Jerusalem recalls her ancient splendor. When she fell to the enemy, there was no one to help her; Her conquerors laughed at her downfall.