

Discipleship service outlines

How to use these outlines

Whether you've been a Christian for fifty seconds or fifty years, it's helpful to revisit the big questions from time to time. These service outlines explore four key themes of Christian discipleship. They aim to challenge worshippers to consider who God really is, and what it means to be a follower of Jesus in every moment of our lives, not just on a Sunday morning. They are not a series – you can pick up any one without using the others – but they can also be explored together over four weeks.

These outlines are intended for Local Arrangements and pioneer settings – times when you have more opportunity to add variety or do something creative. There are great opportunities to get lots of people involved, so make the most of it – ask a young person, or group, to contribute with a reading, story, or musical performance. Dispense with the sermon in favour of a discussion (see our webpage on [creating conversation spaces](#)). Make and serve a meal together. Some helpful general tips for running a Local Arrangement [can be found here](#).

These notes are only intended as guidance, recognising that you know your context and community best. You might want to read a bit, then do an activity or question, then read a bit more. Pick whichever activity is best for you and the people you're serving. Or just use the theme and songs and create everything else yourself. You can take these notes apart and rebuild them in a way which works best for your situation or use them 'off the shelf' when needed. So, if you get a call on Friday evening to say the whole team has been taken ill and you need to run the whole meeting, you're good to go!

Children, youth and family workers

We believe that young people can be just as capable as adults at getting to grips with meaty topics, and some adults learn better through games and crafts than a sermon. Rather than creating a separate resource or section for young people, we've designed these service outlines to be accessible to all ages. Pick and choose the bits that will help you. You know your people best.

Small group leaders

If you're using these materials on Sunday, then build into your small groups time for the discussion questions and interactive activities for going deeper. Ask someone who attended the worship service to summarise the talk, sermon or discussion for those who weren't present, and as a reminder for those who were. You can also use these outlines independently of Sunday services by using the Bible passages or background notes as a basis for discussion.

Remember, the key is to provide space for other people to share their thoughts, not to deliver an 'answer' to a question.

Each outline includes:

The good news to get across – the key message to help the community to understand.

Scripture passages – suggested Bible passages related to the key message. Pick one or two, don't try to cover them all.

Songs and hymns – including traditional and contemporary worship songs, as well as so-called 'secular' music to sing along to, or listen to.

Background notes – some reflections on the theme. Use these to write your own talk, or to share as part of a conversation. If you've been called to fill in at a last minute, you may wish to simply read them out, adding your own stories and comments as you go. You could intersperse these notes with discussion questions or a hands-on activity, to make a talk more interactive.

Discussion questions – these can be used during church services to make a talk more engaging, in mid-week small groups, with youth groups, or any other setting. It's good to give people in the congregation a chance to discuss their faith.

Hands-on activities – some fun, intergenerational activities to help make your services and meetings pop. Remember, adults like to have fun too! **Time to prepare** activities require a little more advance preparation and **Swap it out activities** are designed to work with little to no time to prepare. Choose whichever one works for you.

Creative prayer – rather than pre-written prayers, these creative ideas will help you to construct your own prayers for communal prayer times.

Ways to respond – a challenge or invitation to give within the meeting.

Prayer of blessing – a short and simple prayer you could read at the end of a service.

Keep exploring – action points, further learning, links to relevant resources and more, for both individuals and groups. Choose one or two that you think are right for your community and think about how you will share them with them.

With grateful thanks to all those who helped contribute to this resource.

All Bible verses quoted are from the *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition* (NRSVUE) unless otherwise stated.