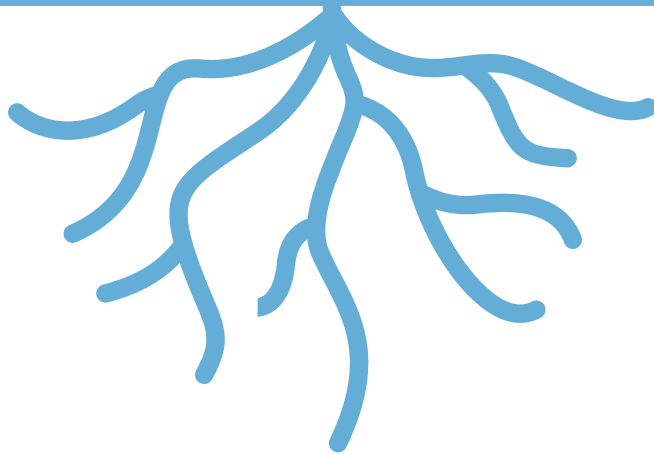


REDLANDCHURCH
GROW GROUPS



LEADERS' RESOURCE

“My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,” Galatians 4:19

“And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” 2 Corinthians 3:18

VISION FOR GROW GROUPS

Our mission as a church is:

Inviting and equipping people to be apprentices of Jesus; being formed by him to be a visible presence of renewal where he has placed us

One way we live out our mission here at Redland is through 'Grow Groups'.

To be an apprentice of Jesus is to open our lives up to him allowing Him to transform us; to form us into his image. A Grow Group is simply a group of people who are committing to encourage, challenge and pray for each other as we apprentice our lives to Jesus and seek to be transformed by Him.

The whole point of a Grow Group is that we expect to grow through being part of it. We expect to grow in our intimacy and love for God, in faith, patience, love, compassion, our concern for justice and issues of sustainability, our heart for those who don't know Jesus, kindness, joy, peace, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control etc. We want to grow not simply in what we know about God but in both our relationship with him and our likeness to his image.

A Grow Group operates not on a set model but on core practices. Grow groups can look very different from one another but will all share a common commitment to 5 practices that will be realised in contextually appropriate ways for each group. These are practices that we would expect to see present in the life of each grow group across a month. Some groups may inhabit all of them each week others giving focus to different practices on different weeks. We believe that is through an engagement in all of these practices that those in a group will grow together in Jesus. Some practices will be more attractive for some groups than others but we would encourage a good balance of all five in your group's life together.

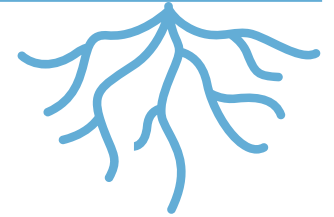
FIVE PRACTICES

1. Connection
2. Being with Jesus
3. Growth Focus
4. Sharing
5. Prayer

CONNECTION

'And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another- and all the more as you see the day approaching.'

Hebrews 10 v 24-25



We believe that building deep relationships is central to what will make Grow Groups thrive. This practice is about investing in building trust and friendship within the group.

Our value as a church, 'Growing Family', is all about cultivating community that thinks and behaves like a loving family. Following Jesus is not easy, especially in a world that is increasingly dissociated from Him. This makes journeying together and supporting each other so vitally important.

Grow Groups should be a place where deep relationships can be formed. Where followers of Jesus join together, to share life with one another, supporting each other and encouraging each other in their apprenticeship to Him. We would love Grow Groups to be a place where people feel able to come as they are, no matter who they are, and feel loved and accepted.

As our Church grows we hope Grow Groups will be a place where pastoral care for each other is practiced in a serious way; coming alongside those within our group who are struggling or in times of difficulty, supporting one another in both emotional and practical ways. To enable this we need to invest in the practice of building family.

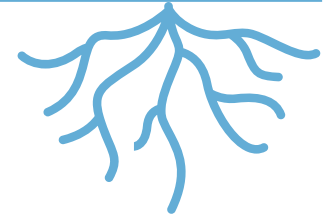
Ways you might practice **connecting** within a Grow Group:

- Time in your session for refreshments and catching up with one another
- Sharing a meal together
- A whole session dedicated to doing something fun and spending time together
- Days out together as a group maybe together with families
- Whatsapp or email groups for your Grow Group to connect through the week
- Grow Group Gatherings
- Providing practical support for one another e.g. organising meal rotas when someone is going through a difficult time

BEING WITH JESUS

'Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.'

John 15 v 4



One of our core values as a church is 'being with Jesus'. We long to be with and abide in Jesus in everything, actively taking time in everything we do to become aware of His presence with us. Jesus is the core of everything and it is only in Him that we know the living God.

We can meet Jesus in all things. There is however something about practicing being with Jesus as an end in itself, that over time better attunes us to be with him in all things. We want to encourage our Grow Groups to actively practice spending time with Jesus with no other agenda, dwelling in his presence together.

There are many ways you can develop this, and we in no way want to be prescriptive, but it can be very helpful to start your sessions together by practicing this value. This is because it helps to centre our hearts and minds on the person of Jesus as we begin, welcoming His presence for our time together.

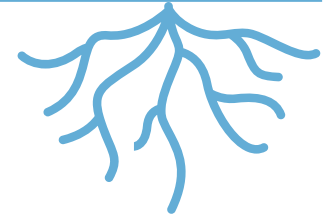
Ways you might practice being with Jesus within a Grow Group:

- Spending a period of time in silence
- Spending time in sung worship together
- Practicing Lectio Divina
- Time of reflective guided prayer
- Reflecting on images
- Reading a psalm
- Listening to a worship song

GROWTH FOCUS

'And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.'

Colossians 2 v6-7



Grow Groups are all about growing together in our apprenticeship to Jesus. We want to journey into our value of 'deep formation' together, allowing Jesus to shape who we are and also the people we are becoming. We want to develop our relationship with Him, attending to the deeper, slow work of formation such that we can become more like Jesus and be an increasing blessing in the world.

A Growth Focus is the content we engage with, which will help us on this journey of growing. It is something which will enrich our spirituality, develop our understanding, equip us for our daily lives and empower us in our vocation. Its focus is to help us grow - it is about transformation rather than information.

Different groups will find different growth focus' helpful. This is ok. You might engage in a variety of different types of growth focus or the same kind every time i.e. one group might always study the bible, another might always read a book, another group again might do a totally different thing every time they meet. What matters is that we are engaging with something that helps us focus on growing in Christ.

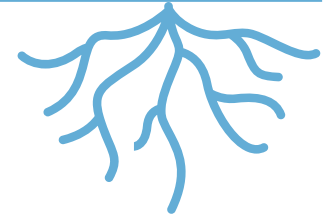
Ways you might practice growth focus within a Grow Group:

- Studying a passage from the Bible *
- Reading a book together *
- Doing a series together *
- Thought for the day lead by someone from the group
- Reflecting on the sermon series *
- Working through a spiritual practice
- Doing a missional activity together

*See resources booklet

SHARING

'Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.'
1 Thessalonians 5v11



It's easier and safer when considering a growth focus to just talk about concepts in a way abstracted from the self. We want Grow Groups to be a place where people journey with Jesus together. One of our values as a Church is being 'courageously vulnerable'. This means that we create cultures of trust and love within our Grow Groups, allowing us to be real with one another, feeling able to admit our weakness and need for God. It is a time to be honest with one another about the realities of following Jesus.

Engaging in this practice is about giving time to share openly, encouraging and learning from one another through both our successes and our failures. Below are some areas we would encourage you to regularly share about and discuss as a Grow Group:

What God is doing in your life at the moment?

What are your experiences of Him?

What has He has been speaking to you about in the last week?

What things you are finding difficult in your walk with Jesus?

How are things going in the area of life you are 'placed' in?

How do you live out your faith in a specific area of day to day life?

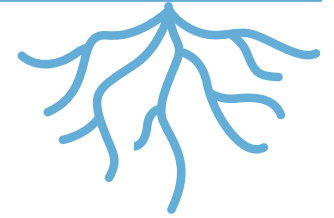
How are you living out *whole life mission* (church value) e.g.how does your faith impact areas of your life such as sustainability, money, relationships etc?

Ways you might practice **sharing** within a Grow Group:

- Discuss one or more of the questions highlighted in the blue box
- Discuss how you apply the Growth Focus of the session into your life, thinking through the challenges, joys and realities of this
- Reflect back on the last session and how individuals have taken forward what you thought and discussed
- Have a session where everyone shares their testimony of how they came to faith
- Reflect on how you have found integrating a specific spiritual discipline into your life
- Intentional questions in smaller groups at Grow Group Gatherings

PRAYER

'Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you'
1Thessalonians 5v16-18



We believe that spending time in prayer is essential to the life of an apprentice of Jesus. We believe that the practice of prayer should be core to every Grow Group. It's easy for prayer to be the thing we quickly tack on to the end if we have time. In grow groups we want the place of prayer to be significant.

There are many types of prayer, all of which are important and have their place. We believe a healthy grow group will engage in all forms of prayer together. These might include:

Silent prayer | Intercession | Listening prayer | Prayer Ministry

As a church we want to grow in our mission. As such we'd love to encourage groups to be praying into the following three areas on a regular basis

INVITING | praying together for those we know and love who don't know Jesus.

EQUIPPING+ FORMATION | praying together for areas of our lives where we want to make more space for Jesus / areas we are struggling with currently in our journey with Him

PRESENCE OF RENEWAL | praying for each other that we may continually grow as an effective presence of renewal in the places we are placed in life (relationships, roles, geography)

Ways you might practice prayer within a Grow Group:

- Using the Inviting | Equipping+Formation | Presence of renewal model listed above.
- Praying during a session (using one or more of the types of prayer listed)
- Focusing a whole session around praying for one another and listening to God
- Prayer walking as a group
- Sending prayer requests on a whatsapp group or email chain
- Committing to pray as a group for a local or global partner

REDLANDCHURCH

GROW GROUP GATHERINGS



Three times a year, we plan to gather together centrally as Grow Groups for **Grow Group Gatherings**.

These evenings will be based in the halls, and we encourage all of our Grow Groups to come to be part of it. The Gatherings will be a time to join together as Grow Groups in the same space. We will spend some time worshiping together and one of the leadership team will share something with us. The rest of the evening will be spent in your individual Grow Groups and will be focused around two of our Grow Group practices:

Connection + Sharing

We will share a meal together in our Grow Groups: eating together is an amazing way to spend time with one another. We hope this will provide opportunities to have fun together, build depth of relationship and invest intentionally in one another.

The rest of the evening will be set up to allow for times of deeper sharing. We will encourage each Grow Group to split into smaller groups of around 3 people of the same sex (these groups of 3 we encourage to remain the same each time, but this is not essential). There will be some questions, put together by the leadership team, for the groups to work through together. The idea of this is to encourage us to think more deeply about how our apprenticeship to Jesus is affecting our day to day lives. It can feel quite daunting to share openly about some things within a big group, or for some in a multi gender setting. We hope that this time will allow people to explore and discuss things more openly within a safe environment.

GROW GROUP SIGN UP

OUR DREAM IS THAT EVERYONE AT REDLAND MIGHT BE AN ENGAGED PART OF A GROW GROUP.

Some people don't know what groups are out there. Some have never seen the value in one. Some fear being placed in the wrong group. Some fear getting stuck in a group that doesn't work for them.

We want to give a regular opportunity to envision the church with a call to commit afresh to a Grow Group. Twice a year we are going to give an opportunity for everyone to sign up for a Grow Group. We will go big on promoting Grow Groups and will have both online, and in the building, photos and descriptions of all the groups that are open for sign ups. People will then be invited to sign up for a group for the next 6 months.

For many this will be a simple act of recommitment. For some it will give a chance to try out a group for the first time. For others it will provide an opportunity to change groups if for whatever reason things aren't quite working where they are.

As leaders do look out for potential new members for your groups. We love to encourage you to invite people to try you out. This could be both new faces and more familiar faces. Sometimes people come to church for years and are simply never invited to join a group and so never do. Your invite could change that.

RESOURCE HUB | ONLINE

BIBLE PROJECT

The bible project team are amazing. They have videos for everything in the bible, including really helpful overview videos for each book of the bible. If you ever study a book of the bible, it would be well worth fronting the study with a bible project video.

Find these here:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/bibleproject>

They have also developed a number of small group studies on a range of topics with videos for each. Check these out here:

<https://bibleproject.com/bible-studies/>

THE PRAYER COURSE 1 & 2

24/7 Prayer have developed two online courses on prayer with a third to follow soon. One is on **prayer** and explores different ways to deepen your prayer life. The other is on **unanswered prayer**.

These are both ready to go resources with a video and accompanying guide to run each session.

<https://prayercourse.org>

HOMEGROUPS.ORG.UK

This is an enormous library of pre made studies. Each comes in a short few week series. They are sorted by topic/category and have something for everything. From prayer to mental health to the environment. A good place to check for ideas or if you know what you want to look at but can't think of a resource.

<https://homegroups.org.uk>

RUTHLESS ELIMINATION OF HURRY

This is a four session video series to accompany the book 'The Ruthless elimination of Hurry' by John Mark Comer. You can engage in this alongside or without reading the book. It's a very practical series looking at developing and trying spiritual practices that help you slow down to be with Jesus. You can find a study guide for the session online here. (Start with session 2 as the video for session 1 isn't online) <https://reader.rightnowmedia.org/1790/729104>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CZDF0FIUUK>

(The other 3 videos can be found by searching 'The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry pt2' etc)

RESOURCE HUB | ONLINE

PRACTICINGTHEWAY.ORG

A fantastic collection of courses and other resources to help people engage with God in being shaped into Christlikeness. Very practical and engages with many of the spiritual disciplines.

This is currently undergoing a revamp and will launch in autumn 2022.

www.practicingtheway.org

ALPHA

Whilst maybe not an obvious choice for a small group, Alpha is a great way to revisit some of the basics of what it means to be a Christian enabling a time for open discussion and questioning that might not usually be possible in a normal meeting. Each week has testimonies from people speaking of their experiences, these build faith and encourage. Do speak to us if you're thinking of running Alpha in your small group. You can preview the first session here to get a flavour of the new films.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBMMD5C0k-s&t=9s>

BIBLE SOCIETY LYFE SERIES

36 ready to go different studies on a variety of topics. Each session has a short video followed by a framework for a group discussion and time of prayer.

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/lyfe/small-groups/>

HTB

A variety of ready to use series based on a variety of topics including books and themes in the Bible, Christian literature and many more.

<https://www.htb.org/group-more-resources>

RESOURCE HUB | HARD COPY

Most of these resources we have available for you to use. If you would like to borrow one of these please e-mail the office.

THE BIBLE COURSE

The Bible Course by the Bible Society is focused around helping you to understand the Bible for yourself. It has 8 sessions that look at the big picture of the Bible storyline- from Genesis to Revelation. It provides tools and skills to help you read it for yourself. The videos and handbook are available in the office.

EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY DISCIPLESHIP & EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS COURSES

These courses help people to reflect on the interplay between emotional and spiritual health and how a neglect of this leads to spiritual stagnancy. They are very practically orientated around seeking growth and change. Emotionally Healthy Discipleship is focused on our own spirituality and Emotionally Healthy Relationships around how we relate to others. We have copies of both in the office but you can trial the first session of each online at:
<https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/your-church/>

LIVE NO LIES VIDEO SERIES AND STUDY GUIDE

This is a four-session course based on John Mark Comer's book 'Live no lies'. It's all about how we fight the things that harm our spiritual wellbeing namely the world, the flesh and the devil. We have a copy of the study guide in the office. You can sample the first video online:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcWYIg0WL74>

MISSION SHAPED LIVING COURSE

This is an 8-part course, aimed at helping people reflect on growing in what it means to live missionally every day. The course is highly practical and grounded in daily living. This is available in the office.

RESOURCE HUB | HARD COPY

Most of these resources we have available for you to use. If you would like to borrow one of these please e-mail the office.

STRANGE NEW WORLD

This is a video course exploring the themes of Carl Trueman's book 'Strange New World'. This book explores the current cultural moment through a Christian lens asking how and why we have arrived at a world where self-expression and expressive individualism have come to be viewed as the highest good. A great resource to help your group better understand and navigate the current cultural moment as an apprentice of Jesus. This is available in the office.

LICC

Lots of good stuff for thinking about how we live in the way of Jesus all week at work and in the world. In particular the whole life worship course can be accessed as a free download.

<https://licc.org.uk/ourresources/small-groups/>

FOR EVERYONE STUDIES

These began as a series of short and accessible new testament commentaries by renowned scholar Tom Wight. He has now developed a study guide for each book of the New Testament. These are a great resource in leading a study on a NT text. We don't have hard copies of these but if you would like to use one they are available at:

<https://www.eden.co.uk/christian-books/bible-study/bible-study-guides/for-everyone-bible-study-guide-revelation/>

RESOURCE HUB | BIBLE STUDY TOOL

These are some simple questions that you can use when doing a study on any passage in the Bible.

- + **What does this passage teach me about God?**
- + **What is the cultural context and original intention of the writer?**
- + **What does it mean to read and interpret this passage in the light of Jesus?**
- + **How are these verses relevant to my life today?**
- + **What is God saying to me through these verses?**

RESOURCE HUB | SUNDAY REFLECTION TOOL

These are some simple questions that you can use to reflect on the talk or series that we have been following on Sundays.

- + **How was God speaking to you through the talk on Sunday?**
- + **What bits about the talk did you find inspiring?**
- + **What bits about the talk did you find challenging?**
- + **Was there anything which made you think about things in a new way or maybe for the first time?**
- + **How does it relate to your life?**
- + **How do you need to respond in light of this?**
- + **How can we support and prayer for each other in this?**

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