



Leaders Guide

Introduction

Groundwork is a seven-week workshop designed to help new believers build a strong foundation in the Christian faith. Together, participants will explore who Jesus is, what the gospel means, how to read the Bible, the role of prayer and the Holy Spirit, why the church matters, and how to follow Jesus daily with hope.

This Leader's Guide is exactly that – a guide. It is designed to support and equip you as you lead, rather than to be followed rigidly. You are free to use the material as it is, or to adapt it to suit your group. The content is not intended to be exhaustive, but to create space for conversation, questions, and discovery.

Our hope is that **Groundwork** helps people grow in confidence, curiosity, and faith – inspiring them to discover more about Jesus for themselves and to live full, abundant lives as they follow Him.

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Session 1 • Who Is Jesus?

Introduction to the session

The Biography vs The Person

Imagine reading a biography about someone famous – say a musician, athlete, or historical figure. You can know facts about them: where they were born, what they achieved, what people say about them.

But that's very different from actually knowing them.

You could pass a test on their life and still never have met them.

Christianity begins with a similar distinction. It's not just about knowing facts about Jesus – it's about knowing who He really is and what that means for us personally.

Information Isn't Enough

This session isn't about mastering information. It's about starting with the right question: **Who is Jesus – really?**"

Most people, even those who don't follow Jesus, have an opinion about Him.

Some say He was a great moral teacher. Others say He was a prophet. Some think He was a misunderstood revolutionary. And others see Him as little more than a figure from history.

But Jesus never allowed people to keep Him safely boxed as "interesting but irrelevant."

At one point, He asked His closest followers a simple but unsettling question:

"Who do you say I am?"

- Not "What do people think?"
- Not "What's the popular opinion?"
- But "Who do you say I am?"

That question still sits at the heart of Christianity.

The Bible claims that Jesus was not just a teacher pointing the way – but the way. Not just someone speaking about God – but God with us. John's Gospel opens with words that would have shocked its first readers:

"In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was God... and the Word became flesh."

Christianity rises or falls on who Jesus really is.

- If He's just a teacher, we can admire Him.
- If He's just a prophet, we can listen to Him.
- But if He is who He claimed to be – then He calls for a response.

This session isn't about having all the answers.

It's about beginning with the right question.

So as we start Groundwork, we begin where faith begins:

Who is Jesus – really?

Objective:

Help participants understand who Jesus claimed to be, why He came, and why His identity matters.

Key Teaching Points:

- Jesus is both fully God and fully human (John 1:1, 14).
- He claimed divinity (John 8:58; 10:30), was recognized as Messiah (Matthew 16:16).
- His life, death, and resurrection are historically credible (include non-biblical evidence like Tacitus, Josephus, Pliny).
- The gospel is built on His identity – not just His teachings.

Final Tips:

- Keep tone conversational; avoid lecture-style.
- Encourage questions about Jesus' claims – doubts are welcome.
- End with reflection: **"Who do you say Jesus is?"**

Session 2 • The Gospel / Good News

Introduction to the session

Medical Diagnosis

Imagine going to the doctor because you've been feeling tired and unwell for a long time.

The doctor could say:

'You seem fine – just get more rest.'

Or they could say:

'There's something wrong – but the good news is, it's treatable.'

That second conversation might feel uncomfortable at first – but it's actually good news, because it leads to healing.

The gospel works the same way. It doesn't pretend everything is fine. It tells the truth about what's wrong – but then offers real hope.

Before the good news makes sense, we have to understand the problem it's addressing.

Why The Gospel Is Good News

The word gospel simply means good news.

But good news only feels good when we understand the problem it addresses.

Most of us instinctively compare ourselves to others:

- *"I'm not perfect – but I'm better than most."*
- *"I try to be kind."*
- *"I do my best."*

The Bible doesn't deny that people can do good things – but it does challenge the idea that goodness alone can heal what's broken in us.

Scripture says something both uncomfortable and honest:

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Sin, in the Bible, isn't just bad behaviour – it's a broken relationship. A deep disconnect between humanity and God that we can't fix ourselves.

And this is where Christianity becomes radically different from religion.

- **Religion says: Try harder.**
- **The gospel says: God has acted.**

Paul sums it up like this:

“Christ died for our sins... He was buried... and He was raised.”

The gospel isn't advice about how to live better.

It's news about what God has done to rescue us.

This session we're not here to make anyone feel guilty – but to understand why grace is such astonishingly good news.

Objective:

Show clearly what the gospel is, why we need it, and what Jesus accomplished.

Key Teaching Points:

- **Good news** = what God has done, not advice about what we must do.
- **The problem:** sin separates us from God (Romans 3:23).
- **The solution:** Jesus' death and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:3–4).
- Salvation is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8–9).
- Include common objections (e.g., “I’m a good person”) and gentle responses.

Final Tips:

- Use analogies (disease, debt, broken relationship) to make sin relatable.
- Encourage participants to share what “good news” means personally.
- End with short prayer of thanks or invitation to faith.

A quick word about “sin”

In essence, from a biblical perspective, **sin is the condition or act of turning away from God – a breach of divine order.**

More deeply:

Sin is not just doing something wrong, but **a rupture in relationship – between human beings and their Creator.**

It arises when a person chooses their own will, desire, or wisdom over God's, thereby missing the mark of what they were created to be.

The **Hebrew** word often translated as sin is **hattat**, which literally means **“to miss the mark,”** as in an archer missing the target.

In **Greek** the word **hamartia** carries the same sense – **failing to hit the true aim or purpose of life**, which is to love and reflect God.

Session 3 • The Bible: God's Word to Us

Introduction to the session

User Manual

When you buy something complex – a phone, a car, even flat-pack furniture – it usually comes with instructions.

You can ignore them... but life tends to go better when you understand how something was designed to work.

The Bible presents itself like a guide from the Creator – not to restrict life, but to help us live it well.

A Guide For Life

This session isn't about turning the Bible into a rulebook, but discovering why Christians see it as **trustworthy** and **life-giving**."

The Bible is one of the most loved, questioned, misunderstood, and criticised books in history.

Some people see it as ancient and outdated.

Others think it's been changed too many times to trust.

Some feel intimidated by it – unsure where to even begin.

And yet, for centuries, people have returned to this book again and again, finding truth, hope, and life.

Jesus Himself treated Scripture with deep seriousness. He quoted it, relied on it, and described it as **truth**.

The Bible doesn't claim to be a random collection of spiritual thoughts – it presents itself as God speaking through real people, in real history, for real purpose.

This session isn't about answering every question about the Bible.

It's about understanding what it claims to be, why Christians trust it, and how it's meant to be used – not as a weapon, but as a guide.

The Bible is not just something to study.

It's something that shapes us – slowly, honestly, and deeply.

Objective:

Build trust in Scripture as reliable, inspired, and life-giving.

Key Teaching Points:

- The Bible is “God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16; see also Psalm 19:7–8, Isaiah 55:11).
- Canon = the recognized collection of inspired books.
- Evidence for reliability: manuscript accuracy, fulfilled prophecy, historical corroboration.
- Scripture is both divine revelation and practical guide.

Final Tips:

- Bring physical Bibles – encourage everyone to open and explore.
- Address misconceptions (“The Bible’s been changed,” “It’s outdated”) calmly and factually.
- Discuss how to begin reading regularly (e.g., start with the Gospels).

Session 4 • Prayer, Worship & the Holy Spirit

Introduction to the session

The Relationship Check-in

Think about any close relationship – a friend, spouse, or family member.

- If you never spoke to them...
- never spent time with them...
- never expressed appreciation...

That relationship wouldn't grow – even if you believed it mattered.

Prayer and worship are like relationship check-ins with God. And the Holy Spirit is God's presence with us. Not distant, but personal.

Christian faith isn't about keeping God informed.
It's about staying connected.

Relationships Require Our Time

At its heart, Christianity isn't a system – it's a relationship.

Prayer is simply talking with God.

Worship is responding to who God is.

And the **Holy Spirit** is God's presence with us – not distant, but personal.

Jesus didn't invite people into a religion of rituals. He invited them into life with God.

When He taught His disciples to pray, He didn't start with rules
– He started with relationship:

“Our Father...”

And before He left them, He promised they wouldn't be alone:

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper.”

The Christian life was never meant to be lived through willpower alone.

It's lived through dependence – on God's presence, guidance, and power.

This session is about discovering that prayer doesn't need special words, worship isn't just singing, and the Spirit isn't something to fear – but someone to welcome.

Objective:

Help participants experience prayer and worship as daily relationship, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Key Teaching Points:

- Prayer: honest conversation with God (Matthew 6:9–13).
- Worship: whole-life response to God's love (Romans 12:1).
- Holy Spirit: our Helper and guide (John 14:16–17).
- All three connect – prayer fuels worship, the Spirit sustains both.

Final Tips:

- Create space for practical prayer – perhaps pairs or silent reflection.
- Model authenticity over performance.
- Encourage one small daily rhythm (e.g., morning prayer, gratitude list).

Session 5 • The Church & Community

Introduction to the session

The Lone Coal

Have you ever watched a fire and pulled one hot coal out of it?

At first it still glows. But slowly, it cools and goes dark. Put it back with the others – and it comes alive again.

The Christian life works the same way.

Faith is personal – but it was never meant to be isolated.

Stronger Together

This session is about why God designed us to grow best together.

For many people, the word church brings mixed feelings.

- Some think of buildings.
- Some think of rules.
- Some think of disappointment.

But in the Bible, **church is not a place you go – it's a people you belong to.**

When Jesus called people to follow Him, He didn't call them individually and leave them isolated. He formed a community – imperfect, diverse, learning together.

The early church didn't grow because it had great buildings or programmes.

It grew because people shared life, faith, food, prayer, and hope.

Christian faith is personal – but it's never meant to be private.

This session is about rediscovering church not as an obligation, but as a gift: a place to grow, belong, be supported, and learn to love like Jesus.

Objective:

Show why belonging to the church family is essential for growth and witness.

Key Teaching Points:

- The church is God's people, not a building (Acts 2:42-47).
- Every believer is part of Christ's body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).
- Love for one another is the church's greatest witness (John 13:34-35).
- Early church history shows vibrant, shared life of faith.

Final Tips:

- Invite personal stories of community – both joys and struggles.
- Use analogies (body, family, fire-coal) to illustrate interdependence.
- Encourage practical engagement (serving, joining a group, attending regularly).

Session 6 • Following Jesus Daily

Introduction to the session

The Direction of Travel

Imagine getting on a train and realising halfway through the journey that it's going in the wrong direction.

The important thing isn't how long you've been on the train – it's whether you're heading the right way.

Following Jesus isn't about perfection or speed.

It's about direction.

Being a Disciple / Apprentice

Discipleship is choosing, day by day, to keep moving toward Him – even when the journey is hard.”

Becoming a Christian doesn't mean life suddenly becomes easy.

Jesus never promised comfort – He promised presence.

He never promised the absence of struggle – but the presence of hope.

He said:

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must take up their cross daily and follow me.”

That word **daily** matters.

- Discipleship isn't a moment – it's a direction.
- It's not about perfection – it's about perseverance.
- Not about trying harder – but learning to live differently.

And the good news is: we don't walk this road alone.

Hope isn't wishful thinking.

It's confidence rooted in the resurrection – that Jesus is alive, at work, and faithful to finish what He started.

This session is about realism and hope holding hands.

Objective:

Encourage perseverance in faith, showing that discipleship is a lifelong, Spirit-led journey of hope.

Key Teaching Points:

- Discipleship = apprenticeship to Jesus (Luke 9:23, John 15:5).
- It's about daily surrender and lifelong transformation (Romans 12:2).
- The Holy Spirit empowers us to live and grow.
- Hope is rooted in Christ's resurrection and promises (Hebrews 12:1-3).
- Invite to follow-on course "Brick by Brick"
(based on Practising the Way, by John Marc Comer).

Final Tips:

- Share personally about your own ups and downs in following Jesus.
- Reinforce community – we grow better together.

Session 7 • Gifts of The Holy Spirit

Introduction to the session

The Team Project

Imagine being put on a team project where everyone has the same role – or worse, no one knows what they're meant to do. It wouldn't go very well.

Now imagine a team where each person brings something different – organisation, creativity, encouragement, practical skill. The Holy Spirit gives gifts like that – not to show off, but to help the whole group thrive.

This session is about discovering that God equips every believer for a purpose.

I wonder how you feel about the gifts of the Holy Spirit:

When people hear the phrase *“the gifts of the Holy Spirit,”* it can stir up mixed feelings. For some, it sounds exciting. For others, confusing. And for some, even a little intimidating.

Maybe you've wondered:

- *Do I have a gift?*
- *What if I don't?*
- *What if mine isn't very spiritual?*

If you've ever felt that way, you're not alone – and this session is not about putting pressure on anyone.

The Bible tells us that when someone becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes to live within them. And with His presence comes His **power and generosity**.

Paul writes:

“To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”

- Not to a few.
- Not to the confident.
- Not to the loudest.
- To each one.

That means every believer is included.

But here's something really important to understand early on:

When the Bible talks about spiritual gifts, it gives us examples – not a complete catalogue.

The New Testament contains several lists of gifts – in Romans, Corinthians, and Ephesians – but none of those passages say, “This is the full list.” Instead, they show us the ways the Holy Spirit loves to work through people.

The Spirit is not limited by lists.

He is creative, personal, and attentive.

So if God uses someone in a way that:

- honours Him,
- blesses other people,
- and reflects the character of Jesus,

then that can rightly be understood as a gift of the Holy Spirit – even if it doesn’t come with a biblical label attached.

That means gifts aren’t just found in public moments or dramatic experiences.

They’re often seen in quiet faithfulness:

- in hospitality,
- in encouragement,
- in listening well,
- in organisation,
- in compassion,
- in creativity,
- in steady service behind the scenes.

Paul goes on to say that there are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit – and different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

In other words: difference is not a problem – it’s the design.

And the purpose of all of it is very simple:

“For the common good.”

Spiritual gifts are not badges of spiritual achievement.

They are tools for love.

That’s why, right in the middle of his teaching on gifts, Paul inserts an entire chapter on love.

Because **gifts without love miss the point entirely.**

The Holy Spirit is not trying to make us impressive. He is shaping us to look like Jesus.

So this session is not about discovering a title. It’s about noticing where God already seems to use you to bless others.

It’s about **availability, not ability**. And it’s about trusting that the Spirit knows exactly what He’s doing.

We’re not here to force anything. We’re here to listen, to learn, and to grow – together.

Objectives:

To help participants understand that:

- The Holy Spirit gives gifts to every believer
- Spiritual gifts are given to build up others, not to elevate ourselves
- Gifts are discovered through serving and love, not pressure or comparison
- God equips ordinary people to participate in His work

Key Teaching Points

- **Every Christian is gifted**
 - 1 Corinthians 12:4–7 – the Spirit gives gifts to each one
 - No hierarchy of gifts; all are valuable and needed
- **Diversity of gifts, unity of purpose**
 - Different gifts, same Spirit, same goal: building the church
 - Include practical (serving, mercy) and spiritual (wisdom, prophecy) gifts
- **Gifts are for the common good**
 - Gifts exist to serve others, not to impress
- **Love is the context for all gifts**
 - 1 Corinthians 13 – gifts without love lose their purpose
 - Character matters more than charisma
- **Gifts are discovered, not forced**
 - Often recognised through action, affirmation, and fruit
 - Encouragement and humility are key

Leader Tips

- **Keep it accessible and non-intimidating**
 - Avoid over-emphasising dramatic gifts
- **Avoid ranking or comparison**
 - Emphasise equal value of all gifts
- **Create a safe environment**
 - Invite curiosity, not performance
 - Allow space for questions and gentle reflection
- **Encourage serving over self-analysis**
 - Suggest participants try serving in small, practical ways
 - Affirm observed strengths and fruit in others
- **Keep Jesus central**
 - Remind the group that gifts point to Christ, not the individual
 - Tie gifts back to discipleship and love
- **Pray for one another to receive gifts from the Holy Spirit**

NOTES





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