



Creative Leadership



**A sensorial approach to leadership
using the five senses to
teach, learn and relate**

Stephen Mayers

This booklet is one of a series for the Leadership Development Course (LDC) of YWAM International. Contact Stephen Mayers for other titles. Stephe@newstrategy.org

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Cover design by John Mayers

Printed in Spain



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Prologue:

I have put off writing this little booklet for too long. Somehow the lie of being uncreative won over and I struggled putting pen to paper. I questioned why I, a high C on DISC, not always known for their “out of the box” thinking, and an introvert, who has always had a love-hate relationship with speaking, should be writing on this subject of creativity. Yet the urge continues and of all the booklets that I have on my mind to

write, this is the one most asked for. Having done a good job of being a self-effacing Brit, internally I do recognise that I have a capacity to be creative. It’s just as a Myers Briggs trainer would say – my creativity is under my hat, where no one initially sees it. So here goes.



Why write this booklet at all? First of all, I am married to Rite, who is also creative, but her creativity is worn on the outside and everyone and their dog sees it! She has certainly stirred me into being more creative during our 33 years of marriage. Her motto is “Why do anything the simple way when you can spend lots of time preparing it creatively!!” Christmas cards for instance. Every year there is a different hand crafted design that we send out to 50, 100, 150 people, depending on how much time we have. Rite spends some quality time creating various prototypes and then we decide which is to be “the one” that is to go into production. In my thinking, the easiest card to make gets my vote. However the creative person sees not just the end product, but the importance of what it communicates and how it makes you feel. So usually many hours are spent with various adaptations taking place to the cards as we go, in order to keep Rite motivated with a new twist! For the creative individual, change is very motivating.

So yes, creativity takes time and although it’s easier to do it the simple way, it’s the end result that is important. We see God’s creativity all around us as we observe how he shaped the world and put so much attention into the detail. Yet so often when it comes to leading, learning, relating, speaking, worshipping, interceding and meeting together, we go back to the boring old predictable ways that have been modelled to us for years. When I think of the thousands of sermons that I have heard over my lifetime, why is it that I remember so few? Simple – I remember the creative ones.

As you read through this booklet you will see a number of symbols en route.



Ice-breaker: This is a question to get you thinking about the topic. Do take time to think for a moment about it before going straight on with the chapter.



Application: As it states, this is the opportunity of going through an application from the content of the chapter. Of course you can apply in your own way too. This gives another moment to pause and think through – what does this mean to me?



Prayer: It's always important to have a spiritual application to an exercise as well as a practical one. This gives a simple prayer to pray. Allow God to speak to you as you pray.



Idea: Here are some ideas to use, or starting points to get your own ideas flowing.

1. What are you thinking!



Ice-breaker: What was the last thing that stopped you in your tracks and made you 'think'?

In 1792 Haydn's orchestra was mad because the duke wouldn't give them a vacation. In order to get his point across, Haydn wrote the "farewell symphony". Gradually, throughout the symphony, one musician after the other stopped playing and made an exit, until finally no one was left. The Duke got the message!

When was the last time you came up with a creative idea? This morning, yesterday, last week, last month or last year? What was it? For instance, I am sitting in a small office in the basement of our house. It used to be a store room and stuffed to the brim with all kinds of junk. One day my wife, Rite, and I realised that there was a nice window on one wall and actually it would make a nice office. So here I am enjoying the fruit of a creative idea.

When you take a look at the picture here you probably see a person immediately. You may see a young lady or you may see an old lady. At this point some might be confused as you only see one lady either old or young. You have to look creatively to see the other picture. Once you have seen it, you can flip between both pictures.



Often we aren't looking for the second picture or another way of doing something, especially if the way we are doing it right now is working fine! The problem for some is that thinking differently is energy consuming and takes more time. For others it's fun and exhilarating and they would ask "why would you do something the same way if there is an alternative way of doing it?" These two statements show that there are very different personalities that have their biases in terms of doing things differently or the same.

What is this object?



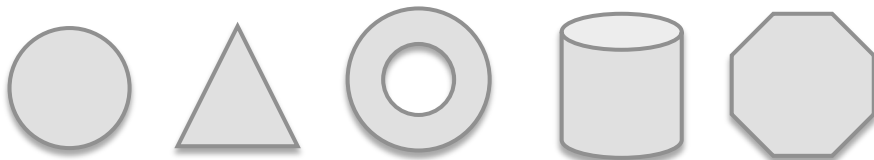
Take a moment to think about it.

If you answered with one answer – a circle – you are right.

But there are a whole lot more right answers. It's a ball, a button, a cupboard handle, a swimming pool, an M&M and the list will go on. Creativity just takes a little more time and a little more out of the box thinking.

Stuck with the right answer!

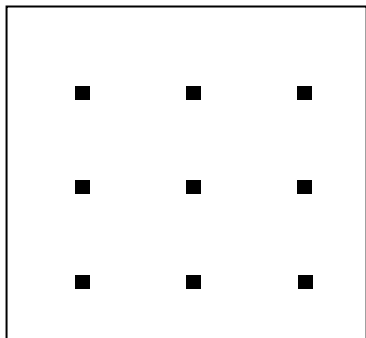
Which one is different from all the others?



The fact is that each shape has its own uniqueness. Each is different from all the others in some ways.

Why don't we think differently or creatively more often? Well, the truth of it is that we are taught in school to come up with the answers that the teacher is looking for. It's like the Sunday school teacher who is telling a story. She describes a small, grey, furry animal with long ears and long back legs, that likes to eat cabbage and greenery. She asks the class, "Who am I a talking about?" One boy answers, "Well it sure sounds like a rabbit but I guess the answer is Jesus!"

We are taught to guess what the teacher is thinking, not to think for ourselves. We are looking for the right answer not what we think! Very quickly we get locked into certain patterns of thinking. We can't break out of the box. We live with boundaries and restraints and only think what we feel is right to think.



Take a moment to complete this challenge. You will need a pen. Without taking your pen off the paper, join all the dots with four straight lines.

Were you successful? Of course the answer lies in moving outside the boundary of the 9 dots. We tend to get stuck with boundaries like these. The only way to solve the problem is move your pen outside of the boundary.

2. Made in the image of God

*God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, And, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth." God created human beings; he created them godlike, reflecting God's nature. He created them male and female. **Genesis 1:26***



Ice-breaker: To be considered cool among the younger generation, what kind of image do you need?

In the beginning was God. It's hard for us to think of there being absolutely nothing but God. Years ago I was in the south west of England visiting some caves with the family. At one point in the tour, they wanted everyone to experience total darkness and so they turned all the lights off. It was a very eerie experience. The darkness we normally experience is not dark at all. There is the light from the city close by in the sky, or light from the moon, stars or street-lights. But to stand still in pitch black and not see anything at all is quite something. That's what it was like in the beginning. God spoke into the darkness and created light. Into the light he spoke some more and the world came into being. We look out at the beautiful creation around us and often take it for granted. The thousands of species of animal life, the myriad of variation of plants, trees and vegetation, the mountains and lakes, the sunsets and cloud formations – it's awesome. This is the handiwork of the God we worship. The incredible thing is that we have been made in God's image. He has taken something of himself and placed it in us. There's nothing we do, apart from the bad stuff, that God hasn't done a trillion times better.

*I don't want to get
to the end of my life
and find that I
just lived the length
of it. I want to
have lived the width
of it as well.*

— DIANE ACKERMAN —

Outside our kitchen is a terrace where we spend time sitting, reading, thinking, praying and eating. It has an incredible view of the Sierra Mountains on the south coast of Spain and every evening there is a sunset of amazing colours. I never tire of looking at the ever-changing view. My God put that together. We read in Genesis, "He spoke and the world was

made". He made something beautiful out of nothing. He put shape and colour to something that had no form and was void.

If you have had opportunity to travel you will know the incredible variety of people, terrain, architecture, climate, plant life, flowers and animal life. Each new location has a beauty of its own. Each people group or nationality has been gifted in different ways and their crafts, music, architecture, dress, dance and writing, tell their own story. We are part of this amazing creation, and we are marvellously put together. Due to the fact that we are made in God's image, it sounds obvious to expect creativity to flow from us. Yes?

Someone asks, "Why do we need to be creative?" The number one reason is because God is. He thinks and breathes creativity. He says, "behold I will do something new" in Isaiah 43:19. Creativity is his second name. He made us and guess what? - we have the DNA to make stuff too – we are all creative. He wants us to be like him. He wants us to use our God given creativity. That's why!

Rosalie Pedder, in her "teaching well" booklet, writes, *"it is said that in a group of 100 students there are traditionally about 5% considered 'gifted', that is 5% of students who perform exceptionally well in linguistic intelligence and in math-logical intelligence. These are the five students out of every 100 who speak and*

write or handle maths and logic extraordinarily well. That however, ignores the other equal intelligences (equal in worth, not in training or reward). Suppose now that we applauded as 'gifted' the 5 % who demonstrated exceptional ability in spatial, musical and bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence. That would give us about 20-25 students per 100 who are rated as 'gifted' and it is the contention of researchers that we have far more gifted students in our classrooms than we have ever identified. However, many of those gifted students whose strong ability is not in language and maths, but perhaps in music, drama or art have been told repeatedly that they are 'talented' in their fields, but basically stupid because their strength is not in the typical areas associated with 'academic' pursuit. The truth is, though, that these students are equally academic – they simply arrive at their learning by a different route."



The word 'creative' however, is still a negative one for some people. I guess it's due to placing that word into a specific context. Like me, you can probably immediately think of the areas that you aren't creative in! I used to dislike writing essays at school. Why? Because I thought I wasn't creative in my imagination. I found it so hard to think abstractly and make up stuff. What I actually found hard though, was to do that spontaneously like some of my mates. If given time I could think of all kinds of wild things. Then there was public speaking. I would freeze when it came to speaking in front of the class, especially when it had to be spontaneous speaking on a subject chosen for me. I definitely didn't have creativity with words when I was put on the spot! In every class we had a joker, the class clown who made everyone laugh. This was another area that I wasn't gifted in. And so it goes on. The danger is that we make creativity so narrow that we don't qualify. Creativity however is a vast subject and each one of us has creative elements.



Creative questionnaire:

1. Do you think about how systems and processes could be developed, simplified or improved upon?
2. Do you have an eye for how things, people, rooms and presentations could be arranged?
3. Do you find yourself day dreaming, thinking out of the box and looking at a different way of doing something rather than the usual way?
4. Are you a colour coordinator and know what clothes suit certain people?
5. Do you like to decorate the table, living room or meeting room for special events?
6. Do you have fun brainstorming and coming up with ideas?
7. Do you like solving problems?
8. Do you like developing plans to implement something new?
9. Do you like the challenge of persuading someone to do something?
10. Do you like thinking of novel ways of presenting material to teach?
11. Do you like thinking how to help people apply truth into their lives?
12. Do you like putting a programme together so that it flows from beginning to end and is productive and fruitful?
13. Do you enjoy putting something together that makes people feel challenged, blessed, stimulated, loved and helped?

You will have noticed that I didn't include any of the traditionally thought of creative areas like: painting, drawing, dancing, playing an instrument,

singing, craft making, designing, etc. If you answered any question with a yes – then you are creative. Accept it. You are made in God's image.

We all express our creativity differently. You may be musical and can sing or play an instrument, draw or paint, sculptor or arrange flowers, have an eye for fashion or landscape gardening, design websites or buildings – the list of aspects of creativity is endless. Our response though is often to downplay what comes naturally to us and feel that anyone can do that – whereas the reality is they can't. The fact is, we are all made in God's image and therefore we are all creative.

Many react to this word creativity and are quick to say, "Oh I'm not creative!" The topic however of creativity is extremely broad and we don't all have the same kind of creativity. Here's a short list. Tick those that you can relate to:

<input type="checkbox"/> Acting	<input type="checkbox"/> Painting
<input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorming ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Poetry
<input type="checkbox"/> Crafts of all kinds	<input type="checkbox"/> Pottery
<input type="checkbox"/> Comedian	<input type="checkbox"/> Playing instruments
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking	<input type="checkbox"/> People skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Dancing/Choreography	<input type="checkbox"/> Mediation
<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing	<input type="checkbox"/> Team building
<input type="checkbox"/> Designing	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> - Buildings	<input type="checkbox"/> Presentations
<input type="checkbox"/> - Clothes/fashion	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem solving
<input type="checkbox"/> - Courses	<input type="checkbox"/> Research
<input type="checkbox"/> - Graphics	<input type="checkbox"/> Selling
<input type="checkbox"/> - Products of all kinds	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculptor
<input type="checkbox"/> - Websites	<input type="checkbox"/> Story telling
<input type="checkbox"/> Developing systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Song writing
<input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneur	<input type="checkbox"/> Sowing
<input type="checkbox"/> Electronics	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaking
<input type="checkbox"/> Flower arranging	<input type="checkbox"/> Shop window arranging
<input type="checkbox"/> Home decoration	<input type="checkbox"/> Stained glass
<input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing
<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape gardening	<input type="checkbox"/> - novels
<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/> - biography
<input type="checkbox"/> MC for meeting	<input type="checkbox"/> - non fiction
<input type="checkbox"/> Photography	<input type="checkbox"/> - journalism
<input type="checkbox"/> Programming	<input type="checkbox"/> - curriculum

Evaluating your creativity:

So how did you do? How many ticks appear above? Sometimes we are unaware of gifts that still lie dormant in us. For instance I was useless at English at school and yet now discover that I enjoy writing and over the last few years have spent hundreds of hours writing manuals and booklets to inspire and encourage others. My Dad was an artist and while I was in primary school I was asked if there were artists

Use what talents you possess. The woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best.

Henry Van Dyke

in the family. Something must have been apparent in my work as teachers encouraged me with my painting creations. Unfortunately I haven't pursued my art any further. Perhaps one day I will have some time to explore in this area once more. I have also come to realise that I have a gift in designing courses. It started when I began to put meeting schedules together and realised that I would think of how everything fits together for the best possible outcome for the audience. Some years ago I attended a mediation course and to my surprise seemed to do quite well at it. I have always avoided conflicts, so this was a surprise to learn that I enjoyed helping people through their differences and bring them to a place of new awareness. We also have to recognise that our creative gifts lie in different categories of expertise. Some things we just dabble in, others we put time and commitment into in order to gain expertise.

You are probably like me in that there are so many things I would love to learn to do. If there were enough hours in the day I would try my hand at pottery, painting, photography and a whole lot more – maybe in my retirement on the new earth! What about you? Be honest with what you are good at, identify your gifts and use them to the utmost.

In my teens and 20's I wrote lots of songs. So when Rite and I got married in Canada back in 1979, and we wanted to make it a memorable day, I thought about a song. I wrote a song from the Song of Solomon about "my sister, my bride" and took courage to play the piano and sing to her as she walked down the aisle. I had

The greater danger for most of us, is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.
Michelangelo

a hard time maintaining my composure especially when I saw others with tears running down their faces! Following the opening hymn, we wanted to make personal vows rather than just recite the normal ones. So we both sat down on the piano stool and sang the song I had written a few weeks before. We will never forget them. I was so pleased to be able to use one of the gifts God has given me to make the day special. However as soon

as I came into YWAM, my creative juices went into leadership and the song writing dropped off. Twenty-five years later the Lord spoke to me through the scripture and through a number of close friends that I should take it up again. I took it seriously and begun pursing it once more. Since then I have continued to write special songs for special occasions. For instance each year I write a theme song for the Leadership development course we run. I also write poems for special days for the kids. I might not be amazingly eloquent with words but I can use what God has given me.

You too can use your God given gifts of creativity and impact and influence those around you. Begin to accept that you are in fact creative in your own unique way.



Application:

1. Sign on the dotted line here: I,
am made in the image of God and am a very creative person.

2. Do you have a tendency to be right or left-brain oriented?

Then make a commitment to use both sides of your brain. Both sides have creative elements and there is evidence to show that the more we stimulate the brain the less likely we will end up with Alzheimer's.

3. I would like to develop in the following areas of creativity:



Prayer: Dear God, You keep creating and creating:
New stars, new plants, new animals, new thoughts, new lives. When You said: Let there be Light, You did not worry about the electricity bill. When You thought of creating man and woman as companions, You did not stop and say:

Wait—maybe they won't love me. You do not spend time thinking up criticisms about Your creations, nor do You hold back in any way in Your endeavors.

O Glorious God, I am free and I now create like You!

I create fearlessly, with great love, purpose and passion.

From the smallest detail to the largest project

I am inspired to work with Your ardor.

My creative fire is awakened within me for You are creative, Lord,
And I am made in Your image and likeness. I have a right to create,
I am in the Flow Of Your Ideas, And I flourish through my creativity.

Thank You, God, that I am creative. And so it is. Amen.

3. Creativity and the bible

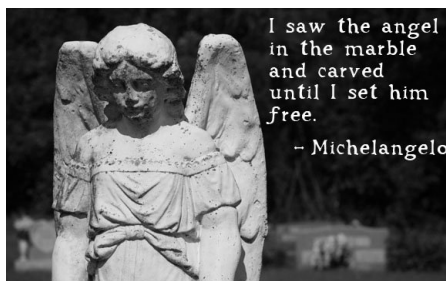
*God's Message, the God who created the cosmos, stretched out the skies, laid out the earth and all that grows from it, who breathes life into earth's people, makes them alive with his own life. **Isaiah 42:5***



Ice-breaker: The bible starts with the creation of the earth and ends with the creation of the new earth. Where do we see God being creative in between?

From Genesis 1 to Revelation 22 we see God at work in all kinds of creativity. The story of creation itself is so powerful. God had dreamed for perhaps millions of years and come up with all kinds of plans and strategies. Then one day He made up his mind and spoke creative words and the world came into being. He crafted beautiful landscapes, trees, flowers, birds, animals and finally mankind. God is so extravagant with his creative flare. Of the 1,500,000 insects, there are about 200,000 *species* of Lepidoptera (moths and *butterflies*) worldwide. Approximately 15,000 of these *species* are *butterflies*. Scientists say there are over 270,000 species of flowers and around 10,000 species of birds. I guess he thought, "I must stop sometime" otherwise there would have been millions of species of everything. Perhaps he is saving some of his creative juices for the rest of eternity!

The birth of Jesus was surrounded with creativity. First of all Mary conceives Jesus by the Holy Spirit. An angel is sent to communicate with Mary, then Joseph receives a dream that is so vivid he goes against the customs of the day and is prepared to marry Mary in spite of the fact that she is to be stoned by law. At the same time God speaks to some wise men and shows them a star they are to follow to Bethlehem. On the night of Jesus' birth more angels appear to shepherds and instruct them where to go to see the baby Jesus. After the birth, Simeon recognises Jesus at once and brings a prophetic word over him and his mother Mary. Ana follows suit and brings another word from God. Another angel appears to Joseph in a dream to warn him about the danger they are in and so they escape to Egypt for the safety of Jesus. Talk about a drama and a creative story line.



At the start of Jesus' ministry, Father God planned a creative entrance. Rather than a simple baptism, he got John to point him out in the crowd and shout "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." This created a wonderful picture of Jesus' purpose on earth and helped people to recognise that he was special. It was certainly better than John introducing Jesus by saying, "Hey folks here is my cousin Jesus." Having been baptized by John, a dove then appears over Jesus and a voice booms from heaven, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." Do you think Jesus would have remembered that? I am sure he would often look back to that day and be encouraged by his father's words and the comfort of the Holy Spirit with him as a dove hovering over him.

At the start of Jesus' ministry he attended a wedding and added a little creative touch by changing the water into wine. When it came time to pay the taxes, he didn't just ask Judas for some money from the bag but asked Peter to go and catch a fish, open it up and inside he would find the money to pay the officials. He used a whip in the temple to drive out the money-changers who were defiling the courts, and declared, "My house shall be called a house of prayer but you are making it a robbers den." He used different methods when it came time for healing. He would spit on the ground and rub the dirt into the person's eyes, he would just say a word and a girl miles away would suddenly receive life, he would be touched by a woman and healing power would flow from him. There was no formula that he went through. He was very flexible and creative in the way he approached every person. He would get his point over by telling stories or parables. He made meals for 5000 people by multiplying the lunch of someone in attendance. He responded to questions by asking challenging and powerful questions back. He caused the storm to cease with a simple word. Talk about creative!

The end of Jesus life is also characterised by all sorts of creativity. So many details of the betrayal, arrest, trial and crucifixion are prophesied beforehand. As Jesus dies, the temple veil is torn from top to bottom. The sky turns dark and dead people arise from tombs – scary stuff. On his resurrection, he chooses to appear as a gardener to Mary first, then appears to the disciples and eats with them. Finally he is taken up into heaven from the mountain as they stand by and watch.

All these events have a creative element, that helps us remember them. The story stands out – it's definitely not hum-drum. It's not ordinary or boring. There's surprise, shock, out of the box thinking and creative events taking place. A day in the life of Jesus over the 3 years he was in ministry

was full of spontaneity, storytelling, fun, practical experience and learning. Living for God is anything but boring.

The Old Testament prophets were similar. They didn't simply bring lectures or rant and rave about the state of Israel and how the people needed to repent. They often went about it in a creative way so their message would stick.

Elijah: He called all the prophets of Baal to mount Carmel where they would have a challenge to see which was the true God. (1 Kings 18) Whose God would burn up the altar? When it came to his turn, he wanted to underline the fact that his God could overcome the natural elements. He didn't just pray down fire, no, no. He soaked the altar in gallons of water, at a time of drought in the land. People watched that precious water pour over the altar and must have thought – what a waste, no fire will come on this altar and we could have drunk that ourselves. But fire does come and a mighty victory for Jehovah. Elijah performs many other miracles and then at the end of his life he ascends to heaven in a chariot of fire. (2 Kings 2)

Ezekiel: God gives Ezekiel a series of illustrations to demonstrate his message to the exiles. First, God asks Ezekiel to set up a model of the city. Then he sets up a siege against his model to illustrate the coming siege against Jerusalem. Ezekiel's model of Jerusalem and toy soldiers and siege machines were to serve as a sign to Israel (4:1-3).



Then God asks Ezekiel to lie down on his left side for over a year (4:4-5). After that he is to lie down on his right side for another 40 days (4:6). The 410 days represent the number of days that Babylon would lay siege to Jerusalem. Of course, it is difficult to lay on one's side for over a year, so he is to be tied up in ropes so he can't turn over. Imagine the bed sores!

While Ezekiel lies on his side, his food and water is limited and he is to cook over a fire made of human dung. This is to represent the famine and lack of resources which Jerusalem would face while under siege. Understandably, Ezekiel isn't too excited about cooking over human dung, so God relents and allows him to cook over cow's dung instead.

In chapter 5, Ezekiel is to shave his head and divide his hair into three piles (5:1-2, 12). The shaving of the head is a sign of shame amongst the Jews, and especially for a priest. The first pile would be burned representing

people being consumed by famine. The second pile is to be hit with a sword, representing people who will be killed by the sword. The third scattered to the wind, representing those taken into exile.

In chapter 12, God tells Ezekiel to pack his bags and set them out, and then pretend to leave Jerusalem with his bags (12:1-7). This was to prepare the people for the coming of more exiles from Jerusalem after it is destroyed. Those that are spared from famine and sword and arrive in Babylon for exile are coming to demonstrate to the exiles that that Yahweh is God (12:16).

In each of these cases, God has Ezekiel do some dramatic object lessons in order to get the attention of the exiles.

Other prophets also went to great lengths to give a picture to the people rather than just speak mere words. Hosea even married a prostitute.



Application: We often take the creativity for granted in the bible and somehow take ourselves out of the equation. What stories come to your mind that highlight how creative God is?

How did characters from the bible overcome their obstacles and battles with creativity? Moses, Joshua, David, Nehemiah, Esther, Jesus, Paul....



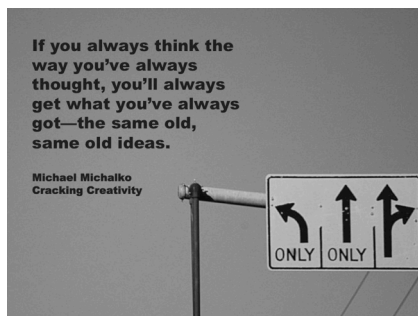
Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to see things from your perspective. Help me to remember that you are in the business of creating all things new. Nothing is impossible for you. No obstacle is too large to be moved. Keep me in faith for creative miracles.

4. God doesn't fit in a box!



Ice-breaker: Do you like doing things in exactly the same way or do you mix things around and do them in different ways each time? Think of some examples of how you approach things.

God is so creative when it comes to answered prayers. Have you noticed that he doesn't answer in the same way very often? I just have to think of the number of cars that I have prayed for over the years. I never knew how the car would be provided and it was a surprise each time. The first car we received as a gift from a YWAM base. The second car, we took money from our team budget, saw an advert in the paper and went and bought it. The next car belonged to a car mechanic we knew. I felt it was just what we needed and I asked him, "Can you wait a week for the money?" During that week we received the money in the mail. Then two friends said they would put money by monthly so that we could buy a better car and pay it off over a three-year period. We had never had such a new car in our lives. We thought we had died and gone to heaven. I could go on. Every provision has been different. God is very creative in the way he wants to provide and answer our prayers. He doesn't want us to presume, but to wait on him and listen for his strategy.



The second villa we rented in Spain enabled us to start to develop a leadership retreat centre. We began to organise seminars and leadership retreats and God was blessing these gatherings. The villa was needing development but the owner wasn't wanting to put any money into it. So our next thought was, "why don't we try to buy it." To cut a long story short, the asking price was raised above the bank valuation and so it was impossible to get a mortgage. Being a little discouraged, we went to the Lord in prayer. He asked us to make a "wish list". We thought, if we could have a villa that was ideal for our use, what it would look like? The list was quite long. I got in touch with an estate agent and she said there is really nothing that fits our description, especially with a large enough meeting room for seminars. Then she called me back and let us know she had just received information of a villa that wasn't on the market yet, but would we like to see it? We weren't that excited as we had looked at so many villas over the previous two years. Reluctantly without much faith we went to see it. By

the time we had walked to the basement and viewed the meeting room and garden, we said to one another, “shall we just say we will rent it right now?” This villa ticked all the boxes. It was amazing. What an answer to prayer. But just a few hours before we had been in the depths of despair. What a God.

It was another property answer to prayer we recently experienced with our church. We were renting a villa for our local church but were told we had to vacate in two months as the building had been sold. We started looking for property and found a large disused restaurant in a good location. The challenge was increasing our rent and raising money for the renovations. Negotiations began and we started fund raising through special offerings on a Sunday. The villa we were using was sold and so the church moved into our villa for a few weeks before we could close the deal on the restaurant. The negotiations seemed to be going slowly and we were a little concerned. Two weeks became four weeks and still no conclusion. Then we found that another deal had been going on behind our backs and the restaurant was rented to another party. As we prayed we felt the Lord said that he had something better for us – but where? Out of the blue, another building became available right in a shopping plaza. As we looked around it we realised it was even better than the previous building. We had the money now set aside for renovation and our faith had risen to take on a much higher rent each month. God had prepared this place for us and prepared our hearts at the same time.

Sometimes God's guidance is like travelling the corners of a square. He wants to get us from the bottom right hand corner to the opposite top left hand corner. However to get there we have to travel through the top right hand corner. Suddenly on arrival at the top right hand corner we see the new location on the left. God uses some ingenuity to get us to be where he wants us to be.



Application: God doesn't usually answer our prayers in the way that we imagine. Start looking from God's perspective. What has he taught you from the way he has answered or not answered your prayers?



Prayer: Thank you God for being a master at shaping and reshaping my life. You are like the carpet maker who turns a flaw into part of the design. Take my failures, dysfunction and flaws and make something beautiful of them.

5. Life is possible where there is an atmosphere!

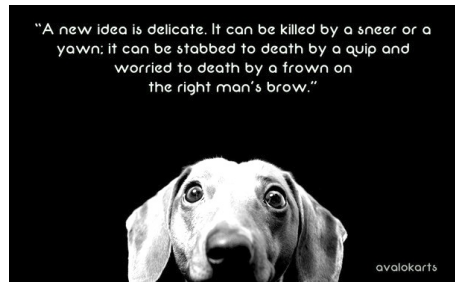


Ice-breaker:

What surroundings enable you to be the most productive?

The right atmosphere is crucial for building relationships, for enjoying celebrations, for learning together, for working together in a leadership team, for brainstorming vision for the future, for dealing with confrontation and a whole host of regular events.

Coach Powers, a YWAMer based in Kona, Hawaii, came into the meeting at the end of a long day of business agenda. People were tired and ready for a break. In 2 minutes there was a change in the atmosphere. He started a chant: "I am happy." "I am healthy." "I feel terrific." Smiles broke out, people started to join in, they pulled their stomachs in, stood straighter and then the exercises began. Suddenly we had new energy and rather than drooping at the end of a hectic day, we were dancing!



Who can you think of that changes the atmosphere in a positive way when they come into a situation? These people are thermostats not thermometers. They turn the heat up in the room. They don't just measure the morale of everyone there.



Application: Write down some people right now who are thermostats for you:

What is it that they do, in order to change the atmosphere?

I have a whole list of people who make an impact on their entrance. At the top of the list is my wife Rite, who in any social group, in no time at all, gets people laughing, warms up the atmosphere and enables us to relax together and enjoy friendship. She brings a positive outlook into even the most negative of situations. She looks on the bright side of life.

A good friend who I have worked with for many years is a South African lady named Mariette. When she stands up to lead a workshop she stirs faith in everyone. She hardly ever teaches for long but processes a message with the group and has them actively engaging with the content. Your spirit is impacted and you are encouraged to step out of your comfort zone and get active.

Lynn Green is a man of God who has been a spiritual father to me over many years and has spoken at most of the leadership development courses that I have run. When he stands up to speak, there is an authenticity about him that commands respect. His depth of wisdom to share on any subject makes a profound affect on everyone. He tells stories of his personal experience that become nuggets of gold and principles that remain in my thinking. There is always a sense of feasting at a table when he speaks. He brings an atmosphere that says – it's going to be OK, it's all in hand, be secure.

When the YWAM founder, Loren Cunningham, gets on stage, you start thinking big. He shares dreams and a picture of what God wants to do in the future, that inspires and encourages everyone. Faith, hope and expectation are released and you leave knowing that nothing is too hard for God.

Joshua met with God and received the go ahead for “operation promised land.” He went through the camp and communicated that in 3 days they would march. There was a new atmosphere of expectation. I am reminded of the book and film of “Lord of the rings” where Aragorn makes a speech to the troops as they wait in fear and trembling before the black gates of Mordor. As he speaks, he imparts hope and faith. The army begins to stand up straight and believe that they can make a difference. They raise their spears and swords and live to see the battle won. As Joshua goes through the camp encouraging the troops they become ready for anything.

The conquest of Canaan begins with the miracle of the waters of the Jordan separating to allow them to cross the Jordan on dry land. The morale of the troops is sky high. When they face the daunting walls of Jericho and hear their leader once more say “God is making a way where it seems there is no way” or something to that effect, they put their trust in God. They walk around Jericho each day for 6 days and then on the 7th day they circle the walls seven times, shout, blow trumpets and see the walls crumble. Joshua knew the importance of creating a faith environment, stirring up anticipation and getting everyone involved to see victory.

What if you don't read atmospheres?

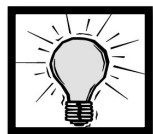
This is obviously a problem! Some people don't pick up on atmospheres in a room, or in a group of people but the good news is that they can learn. It's all to do with our emotional awareness. Are we aware how people are responding to us or not? Is there faith in the room or not? Are people with us or just being polite? Are we aware when we need to change tack and do something different? Are we aware of people struggling? If we aren't fluent in reading atmospheres yet, we have to get close to people who are. Many are able to read feelings and atmospheres so naturally that they think everyone must feel what they are feeling. This is often the reason for arguments and frustration in relationships where one party expects the other to understand how they are feeling when the fact is they don't even know those feelings exists!

Every man needs to understand that romance requires a right atmosphere. Words are important, but alone don't do the job. Gifts like flowers or a meal out are helpful but again by themselves are not enough. Candles, fires, low lights, music, fragrance, warmth, kind words, views, open sharing, body language, tone of voice, décor, and more all go towards creating an environment where romance can grow. Of course we know that when we first fall in love, we wear those rose coloured spectacles and we don't see anything but the person in view. But it doesn't remain that way for long. To maintain and enable relationships to deepen requires time and energy.

*A single sunbeam is
enough to drive away
any shadows.
Saint Francis of Assisi*

So, what can we do in order to grow in picking up or reading an atmosphere?

- Observe the person or group and watch their body language. Are people fidgety or engaged in conversation?
- How is the flow of conversation and interaction?
- Have some difficult words been spoken in the midst of the conversation that could be taken wrongly?
- Are there smiles, laughs and eye to eye contact?
- Are there cliques forming in the group?
- Do you notice that questions aren't really being answered or asked? Are barriers going up for some reason?
- Is information being offered or does it need to be drawn out?
- Are you receiving feedback or is everyone silent?
- When you ask a question do you receive straight honest answers?



If you are wanting to grow in this area it may be helpful to talk to someone who intuitively picks up atmospheres and get them to share what they are feeling and why. Ask them to translate the emotions of the room to you. It's like a new language that you can learn.

Creating an atmosphere for learning

a. How do we feel? When we enter a room, what is our first reaction? Is it safe, warm and comfortable? Do I feel welcomed? Is there something for me to do or somewhere for me to go, or do I just feel awkward? Is the room or location we are meeting at the right temperature? The first thing Jesus did when he met some potential disciples on the street was to say, "Come to my home for tea". This was so ordinary and yet so relational and meaningful for these two fishermen.

b. What do we see? Is the room organised? Is the seating set out in the best way? Does it tell you if we are going to listen to the speaker or talk to one another? Is the room pleasing to the eye? Are there pictures, decorations and plants and flowers to bring some life to the room? I have often put some jokes up on the PowerPoint on a loop so while people are finding their seats, there is laughter in the room. It enables people to relax and forget about whatever negative issues have been playing on their minds previously.

c. What do we hear? Before there can be a meaningful silence there needs to be a healthy noise. It's good to have people chatting away, music going on in the background and to experience that buzz of expectancy. I love the sound of the orchestra tuning up in the theatre. All those sounds that aren't yet in tune but create anticipation of what is to come. How are the acoustics? Make sure the speaker has a good microphone so he or she can be understood without effort.

d. What we taste? Psalm 34 says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." The psalmist is saying when we think of the Lord, it's like we have a wonderful taste in our mouth. How can we create an appetite for what is coming? Of course it's always nice to have some goodies available to nibble on and water to drink on the table. If you have a long meeting, to have some boiled candy to suck on can be the boost that is needed. The bottom line is that the message needs to be tasty!

e. What do we smell? I love going outside our villa and smelling the Jasmine, Plumeria or the orange blossom. Somehow the fragrance calms your spirit. It can be just the same in a room. What a shame if you can just smell the disinfectant from this morning's cleaners. Try baking some bread

or simply put a pot of coffee on the brew. You will hear the umms and ahs that say – all is now well. You can almost smell when a place is prayed in and prepared in every way.

1. SENSORIAL LEARNING. Now we have just been talking about the initial atmosphere as we walk into the room. Sensorial learning takes this to a whole new level. This is where we want to involve the 5 senses throughout the learning process. I learned the word from my wife. Rite is a preschool teacher and 3-5 year olds are desperate to learn with all their senses. They want to touch, see, hear, taste and smell everything. The many learning centres set up in a preschool enable children to learn in this way. Through pouring, matching, shaking, and utilising their senses through these various projects they learn skills in the best possible way. Are adults any different? We all want to do more than just use our ears and listen to a speaker up the front of the room. Don't we?

2. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING. Aristotle once said, "For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them." Pretty obvious really isn't it. Yet we put so much emphasis on learning from a book, or learning from a teacher in the front of the class without any experience of the topic. One of the reasons I like the sciences at school was the fact that there were always practical experiments to do. In my 6th year studies (16-18 year olds), whole afternoons were given over to laboratory work. It was a lot of fun. The strange thing about studying music at ordinary level (15 years old) was that there was so much theory and history rather than listening and playing music. So even though I was musical, I dropped it because it was so boring! I think you can tell that I like hands on learning. According to David Kolb, an American educational theorist, *knowledge is continuously gained through both personal and environmental experiences*. He states that, *in order to gain genuine knowledge from an experience, certain abilities are required:*

- *the learner must be willing to be actively involved in the experience;*
- *the learner must be able to reflect on the experience;*
- *the learner must possess and use analytical skills to conceptualize the experience; and*
- *the learner must possess decision making and problem solving skills in order to use the new ideas gained from the experience.*

Obviously this kind of learning takes more thoughtful, creative preparation and time but can be so much more rewarding for the teacher and student. The student learns through hands on activities, playing games, case studies, role-play and working with others on assignments.

3. APPLICATION LEARNING - putting into practice the things you have heard.

In order to develop an atmosphere where people are able to share freely it is helpful to use ice-breakers. These do what the name implies – they break the ice. When people first meet, there is no common ground established, and people can feel awkward or struggle for meaningful conversation. This is where ice-breakers can be useful. We will give some examples in the next section.

An entry from the performance improvement blog in 2009 said this: We know that for people to learn and retain knowledge and skills they must apply that knowledge and those skills during and soon after training. Whether learning how to use a software program, build a team, or solve a strategic problem, application of new knowledge and skills should occur as part of the learning process and within hours and days of the learning event, not within weeks and months, or never, as so often happens in organizations. This means that learners must have opportunities to apply that learning and bosses and supervisors must plan ahead with learners to ensure these opportunities during and after training.

The latest research on the brain suggests that repetitive practice strengthens neural connections which are the basis for memory. To remember “knowledge items” one has to practice using them in situations similar to what will be required in the workplace. Sometimes application can only be practiced in a simulated environment, but that can be sufficient.

Whether simulated situations or real situations, application is essential for learning. As Chickering and Ehrmann, wrote: *Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write reflectively about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.*

**Application:**

Write down 5 things that you could do in order to create a more positive atmosphere in your home, your office, among your staff or team in your work place and in your friendship circle.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Prayer: Heavenly Father, your knowledge is infinite and You have given us a wonderful capacity to learn on every level: practical, social, cultural, intellectual, and spiritual. Bless all institutions of learning and all teachers as well as students. Grant to them all as well as to me a dedication to true knowledge, a true love of learning, and a capacity to

continue to learn through life, until we arrive at the knowledge of You, and your Son, Jesus, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

6. Variety in relationships is the spice of life



Ice-breaker: What gift or surprise would you like to receive from a close friend?

Have you ever thought of the incredible wide range of individuals from such different backgrounds that are weaved into the genealogy of Jesus. They range from nomads, shepherds, kings and peasants. There's even a prostitute, a murderer and a thief. He also uses such a mixture of races including Hittites, Moabites and Canaanites, all who were known for their ungodliness.

If we could only see all the connections that are made and the interactions of so many people, in order for us to be brought to know Jesus, we would be so much more thankful. Then as we continue in our discipleship to become more like Jesus, there are literally hundreds of people who have an impact on our growth and learning. God is very creative in the way he shapes us through relationships.

Mark Zuckerberg is the founder of facebook, which at this point is the largest social networking site. In January 2011, it was reported that there are more than 800 million active users of which 50% log on to facebook in any given day. The average user has 130 friends and uploads more than 250 million photos every day and is connected to 80 community pages, groups and events. More than 350 million active users currently access Facebook through their mobile devices. Now some would consider facebook as superficial, a waste of time and hate the thought of finding out what someone else is doing throughout their day. Why do we want to know that they are drinking coffee and eating a donut right now anyway! However no matter what you think, the connectivity we have with people across the globe has skyrocketed compared to just 10 or 20 years ago. There's no doubt that social networks like facebook are very creative. The question is, are they developing creativity in our relationships?



Let's ask ourselves the question about our personal relationships. How connected are we to our circle of friends and colleagues and how creative are we in our relationships? The fact is without time, energy and creativity put into relationships they will grow stale. You can have a best friend, or be

in love with your wife but a few years with no excitement, surprise, fulfillment, or meaningful interaction and the relationship will plateau.

Gordon Macdonald in his book “restoring your spiritual passion” talks about 5 types of people in our lives.

A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with bricks that others throw at him. David Brinkley

1. The *very resourceful people*. VRP's ignite our passion. When you see them you feel lifted, compelled to greater growth, more aware of flaws and possibilities. They make a positive contribution to our world. We study their ways and customise them for ourselves.

2. The *very important people*. VIP's share our passion. They unite themselves together to get the task done. They stir one another and keep one another working towards the right goals. There is mutual input into one another's lives.

3. The *very trainable people*. VTP's catch our passion. They are to us what we were or are to VRP's. Now we ignite their passion. They usually give into us and seldom take away. In sharing our lives with them, we stir our own passion.

4. The *very nice people*. VNP's enjoy our passion. They come in large numbers, clap, laugh, build our egos and fill our pews and programmes. They are good people and make fine friends, but overall their contribution is imperceptible. They take whatever you have and can exhaust you. But they are potential mentorees, so choose carefully.

5. The *very draining people*. VDP's sap our passion. They call us during supper, take our time after meetings, are always sick and can be moaners who cause conflicts. Every group has a percentage of them. One can be a VDP to one person and not to another. Again choose carefully, they may be potential mentorees.

All but the very nice people can have creativity in their relationships and are able to move on and develop. Even the very draining person has a dream of what they want. They pursue you and ask you questions and desire your time. The very nice people though create what I refer to as “nothing relationships.” You may spend time with them but there is nothing added into one another's lives. There is no investment, encouragement or growth.

Creativity in marriage & family. When we had young children we read a little book called “the blessing.” One of the applications from the book was to have “blessing meals” as a family to encourage a greater depth of love and appreciation for one another. We liked the idea and so we tried it out. The plan was that we would schedule a special meal for each child. For

their blessing meal, they could choose the menu and the activity after the meal. The rest of us made a card for the person and wrote in the card some nice things about the person. We could even give a gift of something. We laid the table nicely and made a special placemat for the person getting blessed. We would enjoy our meal and then get to speak out those words of encouragement over the person and pray for them. Those evenings were very enjoyable. We went on to hold blessing meals for parents and special friends too.

Of course in our ywam family, we have had many very meaningful “love feasts” or special meals together. They started initially as a Friday community event at the end of the week. This was a time to dress up, have an extra special meal and take time enjoy one another, express appreciation for one another and pray for one another. Some wonderful memories flood back. One evening our small group decided we would decorate the room as it may have been for the last supper. We became the servers in costume and ended the evening with celebrating communion. Another time I was speaking at a school in Lausanne. The group created a jungle out of one of the rooms. We were all led in blindfolded without shoes. The meal was eaten in a lettuce leaf and with our hands. The drink was poured out of an old boot with dry ice pouring its fumes everywhere. There were natives running about the room and the whole evening was a simulation of eating with a tribe in the jungle. Others have taken us to different parts of the world and introduced us to other cultures. With a little bit of thought, a simple meal can be transformed into an experience that impacts our lives.

We have always made regular trips back to British Columbia in Canada, where Rite was born and grew up. The family members are now living in different provinces with many miles separating them. So we thought it would be a good idea if we all gathered one summer on one of the islands close to Vancouver. We rented a house and the whole family, all 26, descended for a week together, where we celebrated Rite's Dad's 80th birthday. We had a blast. Another summer we realised we hadn't spent Christmas together in many years and looking ahead couldn't see it happening. So we had an out of the box thought – why not celebrate Christmas in July! I know what you're thinking - they are a crazy family. You got that right. You can imagine trying to explain to the customs officer on the border of Canada and the U.S. that the tree in the back of the truck was for our Christmas party at a park just a few miles away! He did finally let us through. Yes, we had a tree, lights, presents the whole shebang. The only strange thing was that it was hot and after lunch we all went swimming. What a memory.

Creative hospitality

I grew up in a middle class family in London. My mum was a good traditional English cook. Roast beef on Sunday with all the trimmings was something we always looked forward to. It was also our hospitality day. We never really knew who was coming but after church there would always be someone who would join us. It helped to make Sunday special.

One of the things I appreciated about our home was that I could invite any of my friends home for a meal at any time without any warning. My mum could always whip something up and make people feel very welcome.

Rite grew up in a similar home where there was always an open door and always guests at the table. So when Rite and I came together, one of the values that was at the top of the list was hospitality.

I remember one day laying the tables for a young leaders training day meal. I always wanted the table to look nice, with flowers and folded serviettes, giving a message that said – you are welcome here, special thought has gone into making this meal as nice as it can be. One guy was on duty to help out practically and came to me wondering what I was doing. He shared his opinion very quickly – this is just a waste of time! Who cares about flowers and serviettes and plates laid out like this. I prefer watching TV with my meal on my lap! He had missed out on a family that ate meals around a table.

Now I realise some people are more aesthetic than others. For me, the way the table looks, the way the food is presented, the way the meal is introduced is extremely important. Of course how the food tastes is important too!!

During the LDC, we have an afternoon where we introduce the topic of hospitality. How would we go about doing that? Certainly not by standing up and talking about it! No. We keep it a surprise. We set tables in the most beautiful way possible, have scones and cream freshly made, make every variety of tea and coffee we can imagine and then invite the people in. Hospitality is all about ‘how we make people feel.’ How do these leaders feel, being served in this way? Blessed, privileged, honoured, encouraged, warmed and inspired – that’s what they have told us. They don’t forget it.

During the LDC we also have a worship time where we place a table in the middle of the room. We cover it with a beautiful tablecloth and then laden it with all sorts of fruit, snacks and goodies. It looks absolutely beautiful. This is the ‘Father’s table’. His table is overflowing with provision. There is

more than enough and he invites us to sit and eat with him. It's a special evening.

Let's spare no effort in honouring, blessing and encouraging one another in hospitality. Recently there have been many very creative proposals on 'you tube' where the guy goes to incredible lengths to create an atmosphere and a setting that enhances the words that he wants to share. When he says those special words of 'I love you, will you marry me' in the context of creativity, somehow it can have a greater impact. Our words too go deeper when the environment has been prepared.

A hospitable leader, makes people feel at home, even when they are in the office! They have a welcoming spirit. They help people to be relaxed. They make their staff and guests feel special. A simple act like bringing in a snack for everyone to enjoy during a coffee break says – I have been thinking of you.



Application:

1. Think about your family for a moment. What creative thing could you do next week or during this month that would encourage, surprise and bless them?

2. How could you make your normal staff meeting more meaningful this month?

3. What could you plan for your wife or friend that would blow them away?



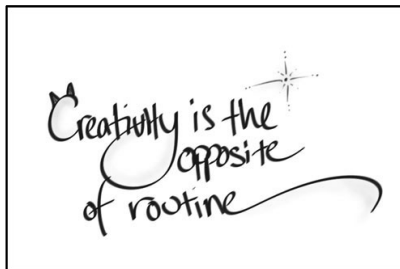
Prayer: Say a prayer for a relationship that needs an injection of life and creativity right now. Ask the Lord what you can do for them that will encourage them, open up a new bridge of communication, draw you closer and enable you to touch one another's spirit.

7. The art of making memories



Ice-breaker: How's your memory?

Here's a little test for you. Take a few minutes to think back over the years and recall some memorable moments.



1. What is a wonderful memory of your Mum, Dad or one of your siblings that comes to mind when you think of your childhood or home?

2. What sermon, lecture or presentation stands out in your mind and what was it that made it so special?

3. What subject at school interested you the most and why?

4. What hobbies are you involved in? What makes them enjoyable?

5. Think of an extra special meal that you have eaten. Who was there, what did you do, what made it special?

6. What has been your favourite holiday and why?

7. What's been your favourite home (if you've had a number) and why?

8. Who is your favourite artist, musician, celebrity and why?

Perhaps part of the reason you chose certain memories was because they were different, out of the ordinary or had a creative element to them.

For instance, when I was at high school from the 2nd to 6th year, I had a job outside of classroom hours working in the chemistry laboratory. I was a laboratory assistant and got paid a small amount of money to put out equipment for classes and clean up afterwards. When I think of the 5 years I worked in the lab, what do you think I remember? Well, top of the list is the day the physics laboratory assistants made tear gas and caused the whole school to be evacuated. The second, is the day we made a contact explosive called NI3 and put it under chairs for the following day's class (unfortunately for us the teacher knew who the culprits were). And third prize goes to the day we had inter-lab wars and flooded the entire top floor of the science block. These all had a very creative element to them.

Our minds tend to move to the memories that were different, unusual, out of the ordinary, bizarre, thought provoking or shocking. Therefore when

we want to create a memory for those we are leading, it will need to be something out of the ordinary. We will be exploring some creative ideas in all sorts of categories in the following chapters but let's take a moment to have some creative thoughts right now.



Application: What could you do next week in your leadership meeting to create a memory?

What could you do next month in your family to create a memory?

What could you do the next time you teach to create a memory?

What could you do at the next birthday celebration, anniversary, or special event to create a memory?



Prayer: Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you! For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you. Isaiah 64:1-3

8. Kids are born creative



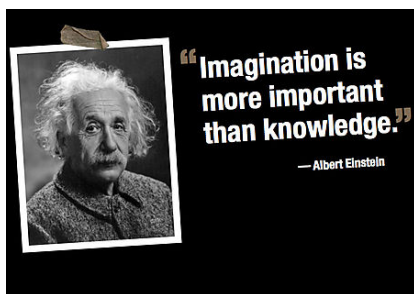
Ice-breaker: Think back to your own childhood or the families you have observed. Can you remember some incidents where the creativity of kids was evident?

According to the experts, it is possible to encourage or inhibit the development and expression of creativity in young children. Most theories of child development view young children as highly creative, with a natural tendency to fantasize, experiment and explore their physical and conceptual environment. However this high level of creativity is not necessarily maintained throughout childhood and into adulthood. The level of creativity declines when they start preschool and peaks again when they reach puberty.

Creativity is essentially a form of problem solving. But it is a special type of problem solving - one that involves problems for which there are no easy answers: that is, problems for which popular or conventional responses do not work. Creativity involves adaptability and flexibility of thought. These are the same types of skills that numerous reports on education have suggested are critical for students.

For a proper understanding of children's creativity, one must distinguish creativity from intelligence and talent. Researchers have argued that intelligence and creativity are independent of each other, and a highly creative child may or may not be highly intelligent. Creativity goes beyond possession and use of artistic or musical talent. In this context,

talent refers to the possession of a high degree of technical skill in a specialized area. Thus an artist may have wonderful technical skills, but may not succeed in evoking the emotional response that makes the viewer feel that a painting, for example, is unique. It is important to keep in mind that creativity is evidenced not only in music, art, or writing, but also throughout the curriculum, in science, social studies and other areas.



Creativity can be assessed informally by parents or teachers, or formally by tests and the experts. One of the more common tests is "alternative uses" test, whereby the test subject is asked to think of as many uses as possible for a common object. For example, when we ask four-year-olds to tell us

"all the things they can think of that are red," we find that children not only list wagons, apples and cardinals, but also chicken pox and cold hands. These tests assess divergent thinking and are usually scored in relation to both the quantity and the quality of the answers. Children's responses may be either popular or original, with the latter considered evidence of creative potential.

For young children, the focus of creativity should remain on process, i.e. the "generation of ideas". Adult acceptance of multiple ideas in a non-evaluative atmosphere will help children generate more ideas.

How can adults encourage (or hinder) creativity?

** Provide an environment that allows the child to explore and play without undue restraints. The atmosphere should reflect the adults' encouragement and acceptance of mistake, risk-taking, innovation, and uniqueness, along with amount of mess noise.*

** Accept unusual ideas from children by suspending judgment of children's divergent problem solving. Respect their efforts and let them know that you have confidence in their ability to do well. Let the child have both freedom and responsibility to deal with the consequences of their thinking.*

** Use creative problem solving in all parts of the curriculum. Use the problems that naturally occur in everyday life. Encourage the child to experiment with the novel and unusual. Listen to the child's questions and comments about his or her observations. Clarify what the child has observed by repeating what you have heard and ask further questions about the experience. New questions and observations may emerge from this process of exploration together*

** Creativity does not follow the clock. Children need extended, unhurried time to explore and do their best work. Allow time for the children to explore all possibilities, moving from popular to more original ideas.*

** Children find it hard to be creative without any concrete inspiration. Instead, they prefer to draw on the direct evidence of their senses or memories. These memories can become more vivid and accessible through the adults' provocations and preparations. For example, children can be encouraged to represent their knowledge and ideas before and after they have watched an absorbing show, taken a field trip, or observed and discussed an interesting plant or animal they saw in the park.*

** Expose your child to a diversity of cultures, experiences, people, and*

ways of thinking. Let them see that there are different ways to think about a problem. Encourage children to try new experiences within their age level abilities and expectations.

** Emphasize process rather than product. Relax and enjoy the creative process with your child. Children who are constantly directed to conform to expected outcomes lose the confidence and spontaneity essential for the development of creative thinking.*

** Beware of barriers to creativity. Rewards- when people do not expect a reward, they are more creative and enjoy the process more. Expected external evaluation- Knowing beforehand that a piece of art is going to be graded can lead to a decrease in creativity. Peer pressure - There is some evidence that pressure to conform can lead to temporary decreases in creativity. Surveillance - Being observed by others while engaged in a creative process can undermine creativity.*

The interesting thing about this list is that, each area applies to adults as well as children. In our leading, relating and training we need to put this understanding into operation for the greatest release of creativity. It's important to see how easy it is to hinder creativity by doing the complete opposite of what is suggested above.

There are many easy tasks that will promote creativity:



1. Use creative questioning. One way to help children/leaders to think more creatively is to ask them how they would change things to make them better.

Kids: What would taste better if it were sweeter? What would be more fun if it were faster or slower? What would be happier if it were smaller or bigger? What would be more interesting if it went backwards?

Leaders: What do we want to do more of and less of in our leadership meetings? What activities would make staff meetings a more fun experience?

2. Ask, "What would happen if?"

Kids: What would happen if all the cars were gone? What would happen if everyone wore the same clothes? What would happen if no one cleaned the house?

Leaders: What would happen if all the present leaders resigned together? What would happen if we were given £1,000,000?

3. Ask "in-how-many-different-ways" questions?

Kids: How many different ways can a button be used? How many different ways can a string be used?

Leaders: How many different ways can we build relationships with the people of the city? How many different ways can we fund raise for the overseas outreach?

4. Use creative play.

Kids: Activities such as "follow the leader" encourage a child to think of creative movement and experience the reward of others following their example. Use simple materials (blocks, mud, sand, clay, water) that the child can build and design using their own skills.

Leaders: Give some playdough to a group of leaders and ask them to think about their last 6 months and come up with a sculpture that expresses what it was like.

5. Use a continuing story concept.

Kids: Someone starts the story and then each person adds a part. Read a story and act it out. Use puppets to act out a plot.

Leaders: Brainstorming an idea around the circle so everyone is involved and builds on what the person before shares. One person shares a problem in 1 minute and the 5 others in the circle then have one minute each to share their ideas for a solution.

6. Use props to create new ideas.

Kids: Animal cracker game - child chooses one cracker; looks at it; then eats it. Then the child becomes that animal for 1-2 minutes. Use creative movement to act out how the animal acts and moves.

Leaders: Place all kinds of different objects in a basket – everyday objects, office items, things from the kitchen. Ask people to come up and take an object that relates to them in some way regarding what they have been learning. Or take an object and use it to pray for someone in the room.

7. Use role playing

Kids: Use family happenings, simulation games, school situations to help children see the viewpoints of others and to explore their feelings. Have children describe the people that they see in pictures as to how they might feel or think.

Leaders: Use conflict situations, personality types, problems to role play and help leaders step into the lives of others and gain insights.

(adapted excerpt from "stimulating your child's creativity" – brainychild website.)



Application: We are all kids at heart and can all get bored in meetings. Think about a creative idea for your next staff meeting or speaking engagement or small group time that involves the group by using one of these methods.



Prayer: "God shine Your light on the most gifted areas of my life... Give me understanding of how to utilize these gifts effectively so that I can fulfill my calling and destiny. It is my joy and satisfaction to be a helper of humanity, exuding all kindness and humility to lift and improve the lives of others for the betterment of people. Lord, I ask You to release in me Your Creative Spirit, including clever and witty inventions along with significant, life changing ideas... Release all the creativity You put in me, so that people might be drawn to You through my life." ~ *Creativity Prayer by Kent Henry*

10. The two sides of our brain



Ice-breaker: What was your best subject in school? Check out as you read on if the topic was more right or left brain and if it coincides with your general tendency.

This theory of the structure and functions of the mind suggests that the two different sides of the brain control two different “modes” of thinking. It also concludes that each of us prefers one mode over the other. Experimentation has shown that the two different sides, or hemispheres, of the brain are responsible for different types of thinking. Most individuals have a distinct preference for one of these styles of thinking. Some, however, are more whole-brained and equally adept at both modes. In general, schools tend to favour left-brain modes of thinking, while downplaying the right-brain ones. Left-brain scholastic subjects focus on logical thinking, analysis, and accuracy. Right-brained subjects, on the other hand, focus on aesthetics, feeling, and creativity. See the list of words below. I call the left brain words hard words, because they are black and white, correct and concrete. The right brain words I call soft because they are shades of grey and there is no right way, it's more conceptual and artistic.

I HAVE NO SPECIAL
TALENTS. I AM ONLY
**PASSIONATELY
CURIOUS.**
-ALBERT EINSTEIN

Hard words – Left brain words	Soft words – Right brain words
Logic, reason, precision, consistency, work, exact, organised, reality, direct, focused,	Metaphor, dream, humour, ambiguity, approximate, fantasy, paradox, play, hunch, generalisation

Someone said, “There are two kinds of people in the world –those who divide everything into two groups and those who don't! Guess which kind of brain came up with that statement!

The two sides of the brain could be summed up in this way: the left brain thinkers are practical and as soon as they think of something want to put it into action. The right brain thinkers, think of something, then something else and actually would rather keep thinking options than put anything into action. One side is more concrete the other more conceptual.

The mind is like a
parachute. It works
best when it is open.

How Right-Brain vs. Left-Brain Thinking Impacts Learning

Curriculum – In order to be more “whole-brained” in their orientation, schools need to give equal weight to the arts, creativity, and the skills of imagination and synthesis.

Instruction – To foster a more whole-brained scholastic experience, teachers should use instruction techniques that connect with both sides of the brain. They can increase their classroom’s right-brain learning activities by incorporating more patterning, metaphors, analogies, role-playing, visuals, and movement into their reading, calculation, and analytical activities.

Assessment – For a more accurate whole-brained evaluation of student learning, educators must develop new forms of assessment that honour right-brained talents and skills.

The table below illustrates the differences between left-brain and right-brain thinking.

The Left side	The Right side
Deals with inputs one at a time	Demands ready integration of many inputs at once
Processes information in a linear manner	Processes information more diffusely
Has a lineal and sequential mode of operation	Has a non-lineal and simultaneous mode of operation
Deals with time	Deals with space
Responsible for the faculty of verbal expression, or language.	Responsible for gestures, facial and body movements (or body language), tone of voice
Responsible for verbal and mathematical functions	Responsible for spatial and relational functions; awareness of one’s own body, for sports and dancing; recognition of faces, crafts, artistic endeavour; musical ability
Specialises in memory and recognition of words or numbers	Specialises in memory and recognition of objects, persons and places, music
Normally tends to specialise in logic and analytical reasoning or thinking	Normally tends to specialise in intuition and holistic perception or thinking
The seat of reason	The seat of passion and of dreams
The crucial side of the brain for wordsmiths, mathematicians and scientists	The crucial side of the brain for artists, craftspeople and musicians

As you read the characteristics of the two sides of the brain, which side tends to be stronger for you? Put an X on the continuum below on the spot that you feel represents how you tend to function:

Left Brain

Right Brain

The encouraging news is that although we may tend towards the left or right side, we do have both sides available! Yes all of us. So with a little help and motivation, we can see those brain cells being used a little more.

So what can I do to develop my right brain capacity? Here are a few things for starters:



1. When you face a problem and are thinking of options, don't stop with one or two, go on to think of at least 5 options.
2. When you have a decision to make don't think of A or B but think of the third alternative. Nothing is usually simply black and white, but all kinds of shades of grey.
3. When you are planning something, rather than just think it through yourself, invite someone else or several people to think it through with you. Others will often stimulate new ideas and come at it from a different perspective. This is especially true if the personalities of the individuals are very different.
4. When you are preparing to speak to a group of people, ask yourself several questions: How can I involve the audience in participation rather than just listening? What stories will express the heart of what I want to share? What can we do that will make this time memorable?
5. If you are organising an event, be it a birthday, anniversary, staff meeting, or social gathering, ask yourself, "How can I make this time different, fun, engaging, and lasting in its impact?"

**Application:**

Make a list of all the things you believed in before you were told they were impossible.

**Prayer:**

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

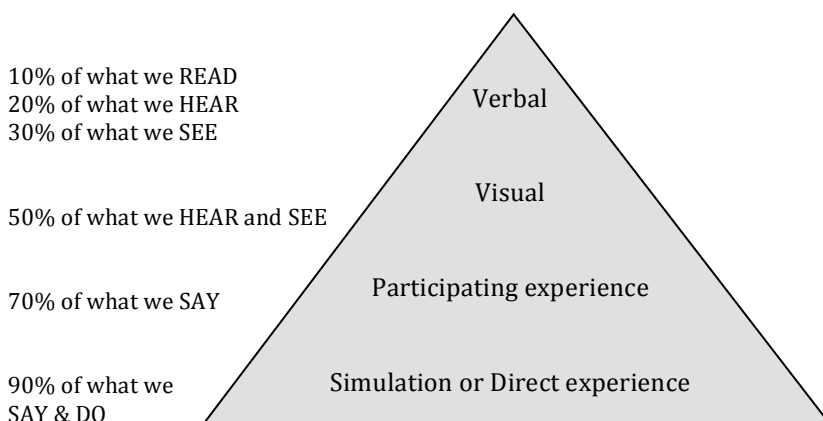
Ephesians 3:20-21

11. There's more to learning than meets the ear or eye



Ice-breaker: What was the most recent personal discovery that you learned about yourself?

Turn-of-the-century educationist Edgar Dale illustrated how we learn with research when he developed the "Cone of Learning." His research findings share that after two weeks we remember only 10% of what we read, but we remember 90% of what we do!



1. First stage of the cone: **VERBAL**

There has been understanding of the cone of learning for many years but practices are slow to change. Most of our training is done with "the talking head" or lecture mode and relies on the verbal ability of the speaker. Occasionally, very occasionally you will experience a dynamic speaker with wonderful communication skills who is able to keep you spell bound for hours without props and creative interaction.

I remember well an evening at a conference in the north of England. I was 15 at the time and had been a Christian a couple of years. This Scottish preacher was sharing an inspirational message from Luke 5 on missions. Verse 5 gives Peter's response to Jesus asking him to let down the nets – "at your word I will". This was a response having fished all night and caught nothing. In his heart he must have thought, this is ridiculous but he obeyed. Then the miracle came. The preacher must have spoken for an hour but the clock seemed to stand still. My heart was beating faster than normal, because God was speaking to me and putting a call on my life that would change me forever.

So – what can I say? Speaking without any props can still have a wonderful effect. I have listened to thousands of messages since then and it's good to think back and evaluate the quality of those messages. Although it may have

Great minds discuss ideas;
Average minds discuss events;
Small minds discuss people.

- Eleanor Roosevelt

been enjoyable and entertaining and stimulating, what did I come away with? Did I learn anything? Do I remember anything that was said? If I am honest, there have been many times that I have been thoroughly bored as I have listened to even well known speakers. I remember sitting in church in my youth and counting squares on the floor, the number of ums and ahs spoken by the speaker or guessing the number of people who were really asleep but had trained their eyes to remain open. I used to be quite creative in coming up with ways to keep awake and keep focussed.

The key principle to remember is: “I tend to retain what I think through, rather than what I’m taught.” So therefore, as teachers, we need to be creative in what we can do to bring thoughtful responses, interaction and involvement of the people we are talking to and not just look for nods, laughs and applause.

Even if as a speaker, I am careful to have some kind of interaction, break out groups, discussion and time for asking question in the course of my lecture, verbal communication is still the least powerful means of learning. But here’s a good place to start to improve.



Ice-breakers: Some years ago, when I got involved in cell church, I learned the importance of the regular use of ice-breakers. In any groups there is a need for individuals to connect together and break the ice, to be able to have a meaningful time. That means as soon as possible everyone needs the chance to speak.

An ice-breaker simply asks a question or raises an issue that everyone can respond to and thus help the group to bond and be ready for really sharing together. Once an individual has shared something verbally, it is easier for them to speak again (having had the ice-broken). Even with groups that regularly meet and know one another well, the ice still has to be broken and often it is useful to ask a question or have an exercise that helps you discover something new about each other. (See the appendix for some ideas.)

Creative ice-breakers and exercises:

- What kind of landscape would describe your last season?
- How has your life been described as a weather pattern?
- What does the garden of your heart look like? Describe or draw it.
- Express your leadership as an animal, as a colour, as a flower, a piece of furniture or crockery.
- What could you do to enhance a friendship or close relationship? Doing the same thing has got you where you are. What could you do differently?
- If there was a pill you could take to help your relationship with God, what would it do?
- What does your life need right now in order to have; excitement, joy, enthusiasm, ambition, adventure, etc.
- Think of a task you do that's become boring. Eg washing dishes, giving announcements, driving to work, preparing meals, etc. What could you do to enhance one of them?
- 666 – 6 people, 6 perspectives, 6 minutes: Get into a group with 6 people. Ask one person to share a problem or decision. The individual has one minute to share, each of the group members have one minute to share responses and potential solutions.
- Creative breakthrough – community clinic. Put someone on the hot-seat. Ask them to share the biggest problem, decision or issue facing them right now. Everyone asks questions or brings their advice to the individual.



Break out groups: Throughout a lecture or message it's a useful habit to give opportunity for the group to talk together. Rather than the speaker share all their wisdom and knowledge with the group, he or she can stimulate them with a question, so they can come up with what the teacher has in their notes. The result? The group learns better. As a teacher, I simply have to know my material more broadly so I can emcee and add comments and context to all the input given when break out groups give feedback. Other discussion can involve case studies where the group draws out conclusions from a scenario or biblical passage. Or you can simply have some basic questions to ask in the group context that encourage interaction. Anything that helps the group talk through the issue at hand is going to be useful.

Application: Once you have shared your content or brought out the content from the groups interaction, it's time for application. What is the

individual or group going to do with what they've heard? Time needs to be given for thought, meditation and prayer. After this there can be a specific challenge, prayer offered, an assignment given, further discussion or advice offered in a follow up meeting or a host of other approaches. The important thing is, something is done with what is said.

2. Second stage of the cone: SYMBOL/VISUAL

Verbal communication, even with a gifted speaker, can lose its hold on people after 15-20 minutes or so. If you are a good story-teller, then this will help to keep your audience's attention. This was a method that Jesus liked to use. Most people like a story – from little kids right up to grandparents. Stories inspire our imagination. If you are not such a good story teller, then you can introduce movie clips, visual aids of all kinds, power-point that is creative, or give something for people to hold, look at or apply in some way. Anything visual will enhance concentration and hopefully the learning process will be more effective.

Recently I was speaking in church and wanted to give a graphic illustration of the change that God wants to bring in our lives. Sometimes changes don't take a lot of effort or time, they just need the motivation to do it. I had come to church in a t-shirt, shorts and sandals and looking a little scruffy! (it was hot!) So while I had them in a break out group for 5 minutes, I popped into a room and changed into nice clothes, changed my hair style and came back to the group with a sense of fresh confidence. There were oohs & ahhs and the point was made. It made an impact on the pastor who the next week came dressed in a white lab coat as a doctor doing a check up on a patient. How we all need regular spiritual check ups!

Perhaps you have an assignment to speak on the love of God. Ask yourself, how you can bring the concept to life a little more. Think of a film where love was expressed in a very meaningful way, perhaps even a sacrificial way. Tell the story. Perhaps use a story of Jesus showing his love to someone. You could show the clip of Jesus being challenged by the Pharisees, as they threw the woman caught in adultery at his feet. How wise Jesus was in his response to them and what love he showed the woman. Think of a story from your own life that involved a positive or negative expression of love and share it in a way that will be relevant to your audience. Perhaps you have a key verse you are basing your message on and want to give it out to everyone. Print it on a bookmark, write it on a heart, get everyone to make a mural of the verse on a piece of wallpaper, put them into groups to come up with a drama summarising the verse, or whatever you can think of to imprint the verse in their memories.



My wife Rite, taught and trained preschool teachers for many years and one of the main principles she passes on with regards to teaching children is:

“One idea, simply stated, clearly illustrated.”

That holds true for adults too. After all we're only grown up kids. We so often try to pass on too much information in one go and end up passing on nothing. Rite would take the one idea for the whole week of preschool. Share it simply in different ways each day using a variety of mediums in which to do it. For instance using flannel graph, acting the story out or having a hands-on activity illustrating the story. Like children, adults like an idea illustrated to be able to fully understand it.

3. Third stage of the cone – PARTICIPATING EXPERIENCE

The next stage is not just helping people understand by illustrating but now we get them involved in discussion and talking things through. The simplest form of interaction is to ask questions and encourage response. If people aren't used to participating you may have to warn them that although you encourage them to take notes you also expect them to respond to questions. So when the question has been asked, give them time to respond. Hopefully there are some extroverts in the group that will help the group dynamic. With a lively group you can keep the interaction at a group level. It is more productive often to have break out groups, where everyone is in a small group and therefore there is a greater chance for everyone to speak. As we process, we discover our own ideas and thoughts about the topic. The aim is to bring the group to a place where they are thinking for themselves and are proactive in asking questions. Depending on your style, this can be at any time of your speaking or at given times throughout your presentation.

If teachers aren't used to receiving questions and interacting with the group, then ask them to prepare some questions in advance. These questions can be written out or put on the PowerPoint for a small group to discuss. Sometimes it's sufficient to just have a 5 minute break out group with 3 or 4 people to stimulate people's thinking. At other times, you will give a small assignment that will take 20 or 30 minutes.

It is always useful to have a few minutes at the end of a teaching or exercise to debrief, bring application and to identify the take away from the time. There are many ways to do this and it's good to mix it up and do something different each time, otherwise it becomes predictable and not necessarily so helpful.

For instance, get the class into 2's or small groups and ask:

- What were 3 key concepts that you heard and want to apply in your life?
- With your group, create a one minute drama, that identifies the main idea that you have received.
- Have a number of random words on pieces of paper scattered on a table. Ask each person to pick up one that relates to them in some way with regards to the topic under discussion.
- Have people pray out their response.
- The facilitator gives a summary question to each group, in order for them to discuss together and come up with appropriate applications.



If you have the time, a great group participation activity can be to study a book on the topic that you are learning about. In a small group, say of 6 people, divide up the book into 6 and allocate certain chapters to individuals. Then once the individuals have read their chapters, come together as a group and each individual shares a summary of their chapters. In the space of an hour, you will have a wonderful summary of the book, along with personal thoughts and applications.

4. Fourth stage of the cone - SIMULATED & DIRECT EXPERIENCE

a. Simulated experience. The more we can actually involve people in the learning process the more they will grasp. I can sit in a Spanish class and understand what the teacher has said. I may think I understand the several examples he gives. But then it is my turn to respond back and my tongue is all twisted and doesn't seem to work. I thought I understood until it was my turn to speak!

Simulated experience takes a lot more thinking through and a lot more preparation work but the power of this type of teaching is very worthwhile. When teaching on personality types, I have used role-plays to help people understand communication. People can nod their head with understanding of the different type of personalities. But when it is their turn to do a role-play of recruiting another personality type into a DTS, they communicate to others the way they like to be communicated to. The result is that the person often isn't persuaded because the communication hasn't fitted their personality. Only on feedback does this become clear. Feedback from the individual can identify the weaknesses and assumptions made of the person in the role play seeking to persuade, recruit or advise the other. The person may have understood the principle as you shared but it's only as people walk out the concepts in real life that understanding takes place.

When pilot Chesley B. Sullenberger III, with his co-pilot and three flight

attendants, safely ditched US Airways Flight 1549 in the Hudson River, saving the lives of 155 people, it was simulation training that saved the day. It would not be safe nor practical to practice actually landing an A-320 jet on water. Practice and repetition with a flight simulator and walk-throughs of cabin procedures prepared the crew for this extremely rare event.

We have used simulation in a number of ways in our leadership training courses. For instance, usually at the start of the teaching on team leadership, we split the group into teams and get them to build a tower, made out of newspaper. The highest free standing tower wins. Of course, the exercise isn't about building a tower, it's about how we function as a team. But it is a simulated task and we tend to act in the task similarly to how we do in normal leadership tasks.

As a climax to the teaching on the leader's time-line, we organise a major simulation of each phase of the time line using different rooms. So for instance, the sovereign foundations phase has a simulation of being born. The inner life or discipleship phase has a simulation of dying to self as you lie down on the cross. This inner life phase, is also represented by a low parasol over a table, that you sit under to dwell on your inner life processes. The ministry development phase has various symbols representing the kind of development processes you are moving through. These symbols are used in the prayer time. The life maturing or wilderness development has a simulation of walking through a desert place and experiencing God's presence. The convergence phase has the individual finishing a race and being presented with a 'well done' winners badge. So the whole process of 3 hours or more is a simulation of you walking through your life from room to room.

Case studies can be used to help students with problem solving. Students are presented with a scenario and then asked to talk through the issues and come up with a decision. During feedback afterwards, the principles are drawn out and you see more clearly whether your decision was the best, or it could be improved upon.

b. Direct experience

"I see and I forget, I hear and I remember, I do and I understand." – Confucius

This is the most powerful way to really learn. Our discipleship training school has 3 months lectures followed by 2 or 3 months of outreach. This outreach is a direct experience where the students have the opportunity of putting all they have learned into practice. The challenges are real, the stress is real, the people are real and hopefully those involved come out with real learning.

So where there is an opportunity, it's far better to get students out there in the real world than sitting and listening in a classroom. If you are talking about the city, then it's good to get on a bus and visit that city, see the sights, talk to the people, experience the atmosphere and have the opportunity of your heart and soul being touched, as well as good principles written down in your notebook.

Here is a short list of ideas for simulation and direct experience:



- a. Case study. For example the small group is given a real situation that requires a decision making process. The group thinks it through and presents their findings. This is then compared with what actually took place and the principles are drawn out.
- b. Role-play. For example you read a script for a mediation role-play. You only know the facts of the relationship where you have a conflict and how you are feeling. You don't know the struggles the other person is having. The mediator doesn't know anything and finds out as he or she goes through the role play. This kind of simulation is powerful and can help you to learn skills.
- c. Fish bowl. For example you have a small group in the centre of the room with the rest of the class on the outside circle looking in. The inner group is given a task or topic to discuss and come to conclusion on. The outer circle observes. Then the exercise is debriefed together. This can also be used for demos from the front. For instance when modelling a method of prayer ministry, the person being counselled and the leader sit in a relaxed mode with everyone else surrounding them. Obviously the person volunteering needs to be secure and willing to be vulnerable in front of the group for it to be effective. Many share that once they start the process, they are oblivious of the people around. Those watching learn so much as observers and are able to feed back and ask questions at the end.
- d. Games. There are all kinds of interactive games that can be played by small groups. The importance is not the game itself but what you learn through it which is brought out through a good debrief.

- e. Activities. Use clay for sculpturing, lego for building, painting or drawing or any other materials, to express ideas and give hands on experience to people.
- f. Drama. Making a drama to express ideas and concepts is helpful to really think issues through. Passing understanding on to others requires a good working knowledge of the material under discussion.



Application:

1. How often do you follow through each stage of the cone in teaching others?
2. The next time you teach, ask someone to brainstorm application ideas with you.



Prayer: Heavenly Father, you allow me to go through all kinds of experiences in order that I can reflect, learn and grow from them. Help me to teach in a way that enables people to process in the best possible ways.

12. Teaching so that people learn



Ice-breaker: Which messages do you remember?

Let me ask you a question before I say anything. Think back to all the messages you have heard over the years. If you have been a Christian for some time, there's probably thousands of them. Personally I was brought up in a Christian home and went to church two or sometimes three times on a Sunday, mid week bible study and often a youth group as well. So if like me, you spent hours listening to messages, what stands out to you? What would be the two or three messages that you can't forget? What was different? What made it special?

I asked our kids a few years ago this question. My daughter responded by saying, "the best was when that guy (Carl Tinnion – at that time he was in the YWAM leadership team of Holmsted Manor, England) cooked fish over a fire in the church and we got to go up and taste it. I remember it well too, and that fish was delicious. Ever since then I have had a fresh picture of Jesus cooking breakfast on the beach in John 21.



We travel back to Canada every couple of years to visit our family and supporting churches. While we were there, my wife and I were team teaching and we referred to a previous message we had given about the mustard seed of faith. From the back of the room, the pastor stood up and pulled out the little mustard seed glued onto a card, and said, "I still have it and it reminds me continually of the little faith I need to see the mountains moved."

You have probably heard of the story of Winston Churchill speaking to university students. He stood up to the podium and there was great expectation and anticipation of what the great leader would have to say. Winston Churchill with his characteristic voice boomed out to the group, "never give up." He paused and said once more, "never give up." Then for the third time pounding the podium, "never give up." Then he sat down. You can imagine the atmosphere. The question is whether that speech is

remembered because of those three words or because those were the only three words used when he could have given so many more. It was different and it made an impact.

People don't often lead creatively because it takes time, preparation, work and can be risky. Generally we are busy people and so we take the easiest route and become a talking head. We can feel good ourselves after giving a great message but the question is, "How much learning and growth has really taken place in the lives of those we are speaking to?"

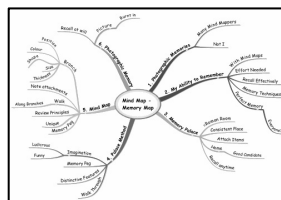
Principle: "people remember best, the ideas they come up with themselves." So we need to give our audience thinking time, dialogue time, interaction time, question time and in fact anything that will help them to process.

Learning styles. God has wired us in different ways when it comes to learning. Some for instance, don't particularly like reading but prefer listening to pod casts, watching videos or listening to talks. Others learn by doing. Ask people if they read the instructions before assembling something or just go for it and the answer will be mixed. Some people are motivated by a personal story that is filled with emotion, others are put off with emotional content. If you do a search, you will find different lists of styles used for teacher training but here is one list that includes 7 areas.

1. Visual – you learn best by seeing.
2. Auditory – you learn best by hearing.
3. Tactile – you learn best by doing.
4. Oral – you learn best by saying.
5. Social – you learn best in groups.
6. Logical – you learn best in linear process.
7. Imaginative – you learn best through art, story and image.

So can you see which you prefer out of the 7 styles listed? What this tells us is that in order to teach in the best possible way, we need to adapt our teaching style so that as many as possible will be able to learn according to their style. So our style of teaching has to be mixed up and developed.

Preparing a message. One of the ways that I prepare many messages is by the use of mind-mapping. It's the process of brainstorming on a sheet of paper or board, to get all your thoughts out in view. It's very visual and gives the overall content in summary form. There are 3 stages in the process.



1. **Brainstorm:** Write the topic in the centre of the page and then brainstorm and write down your thoughts and ideas connected to the centre with branches and links. Where thoughts and ideas are connected, then attach them on similar branches.
2. **Illustrate:** Think of examples and stories that are related to the topic. Look at the principles and concepts you want to pass on and think about the best way of illustrating them.
3. **Organize:** Pull the ideas and examples together with a simple plan for the presentation.

Here is a typical process of a message:

Introduction: Start with an attention grabber that pulls your audience into the topic and builds an interest.

Content: This can be the classic 3-point message, each idea simply stated and clearly illustrated or simply the concept you want to pass on illustrated and grounded in as many ways as possible to help your audience understand.

Conclusion: Summarise the message and underline the key issues.

Application: This helps people answer the question, “What do I do with what I have heard?” Help people establish a take away, encourage further discussion and possibly give homework or a specific exercise to follow the material through to personal application.

Spiritual application: There’s one thing to have mental understanding of the principle but another to really grasp it and allow it to change your life. Think through the question, “How do I move the head knowledge to a heart process?”



Colour code system for your notes. For many years when I was learning to speak, I used a colour code to help me balance out the message. I used to underline my notes with the following colours:

- Blue: Telling a story, giving examples from the bible or my own experience
- Green: Sharing biblical references
- Yellow: Reading quotes or principles to remember
- Red: Titles, categories or points of the message
- Orange: Questions to ask the group, break out group or interaction point



I would look over my notes and see if under each red heading, there were enough examples, biblical references, principles or quotes and interaction taking place. This helped me tremendously to know where I needed to put more creative thinking in place.

What is the basis for your presentation?

Messages grow in us in many ways. I practice journaling and as I reflect on my day, week or month, I recall experiences that I have gone through and try to debrief myself and learn the lessons from my journey. Sometimes we go through an experience that is a message in itself. Perhaps we have gone through a transformation through this experience and so a message is formed around it. It becomes a powerful way of sharing because we are the message. There are certain topics that I keep coming back to. You could call these my life messages. I find myself talking about them all the time – it's like the saying, "all roads lead to Rome." We all have passions on certain subjects. Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words. It's great to think of an illustration that helps to clarify an understanding of the topic or thought.

Often our messages come from thinking moments, debriefing an event or making a connection in understanding. As we meditate on scripture or contemplate God and the world he has made, we can think deep thoughts and develop teaching principles to live by. Then some days we have those aha experiences. It feels like God is whispering in our ear. We receive a revelation and the lights go on and we feel like we have a new thought that seems to change everything. I like those times and wish they came more often. So here are those 5 categories again.

1. Experience: This is a great basis to build a teaching on. This gives you authority because you have been through it. You know it!
2. Passion: Speak from your soapbox. What means a lot to you? If you stick to these areas you will have life and enthusiasm for the topic and people know it's coming from your heart.
3. Illustration: Use a picture, a personal story or a parable that helps to bring a principle or teaching point down to earth.
4. Meditation: Read about a topic and chew on it for a while, like the cow chewing its cud. Let it percolate in your mind until you have things to share that bring understanding.
5. Revelation: Something God drops into your spirit. Its like God whispers to you and he switches all the lights on.

What is the purpose or motivation of the presentation?

We are all different in our makeup, personality and gifting. So as we come to teach and share with others we have different motivations. It's good to understand this otherwise if we ever fall into the bad trait of comparing, we will wonder why people are approaching their teaching in the way they do.

- Prophetic: They bring the word of God to stir people up, to stimulate them, to exhort them and to obey God in order to serve him and please him.
- Visionary: They are motivated and energized to see something come into being. They see the future and want to inspire people to move in that direction. They want you to see the vision alongside them and join them in going and doing something new.
- Teachers: They have a love for the truth and want to teach it in systematic ways and build precept upon precept.
- Pastors: They are motivated to share the word of God in a way to build you up and encourage you. You will leave knowing that you are cared for and loved.
- Evangelists: They are motivated to focus on Jesus and his life changing message. They are looking for a response to his call on your life.
- Leader/Coach: They are focused on application and are motivated to help you put the principles or tools into practice.

Application

The more I am involved in training leaders, the more I am aware that the emphasis of our training must be on application. As a leader/coach myself, you understand my motivation. Teaching principles is obviously important but our tendency is to teach and teach and teach. We like to share our knowledge and wealth of wisdom with others. We love to tell our stories. But the truth is, most of what we say goes in one ear of our hearers and out of the other. In order to be more effective as trainers we need to concentrate on what do we want our students to put into practice and go away with?

For every topic or teaching that we bring, it's important for us to ask the question: What is the take away? What do I want them to put into practice? What principle do I want them to understand?

Our minds can generally only focus for fifteen minutes or so at a time, so we need to organise our teaching around this time frame. Fifteen minutes is a reasonable amount of time to get a thought across and then we need to have some kind of question to ask for further thought, a break out group for discussion or some means through an activity, case study, role play, question time, etc. to help each person grab a hold of what you want to leave them with.

So you talk – they talk. That's the first application. Making it a focus and getting them to personalise their thoughts and opinions.

When you have shared a few ideas, thoughts or principles over a session, it's then time to give a practical application for them to work on at home. Do they really understand the concept? Allow them to write about it, answer questions for their own lives. This exercise focuses more on their minds.

What we need now is a spiritual application. How do we move understanding from their heads to their hearts? This is where through prayer or some prayerful activity, people can get in touch with their needs and be inspired to hear God and receive revelation, freedom, motivation and anointing for what God is saying to them. So we begin to recognise that for people to really learn and apply and see their life change as a result, it will take a lot of work and involve a lot of energy, prayer and thought.

Remember the principle of “one idea, simply stated, clearly illustrated.” Well we can add a couple more elements to it.

One idea – simply stated – clearly illustrated –
practically orchestrated – spiritually activated

Interaction is vital to keep people's attention and focus. So how do we create a climate where people feel free to ask questions, participate and share openly?

- bring the topic down to earth and into the 21st century rather than sharing only giving biblical examples or pure theology
- ask questions to stimulate thought
- give personal examples that will be relevant
- don't give all the answers
- make yourself vulnerable, share honestly, be real

So a one hour session, may look something like this:

Attention grabber and introduction 10 min; break out group/activity 5 minutes; key point 15 minutes; discussion questions to triplet 10 minutes; last point and conclusion 10 minutes; practical application and spiritual application 10 minutes.

In a series of teaching it is also good to mix up the presentation formats. For example here is the basic framework for teaching the *leadership time line* (adapted from the book, the making of a leader, by Robert Clinton) in 6 sessions. 1st session: Introducing the subject of how a leader learns and develops in his role as a leader. 2nd session: Practical overview and getting them started writing their time line with staff mingling to help them when they get stuck. This involves looking at particular meaningful events and

responses in his or her life. 3rd session: Telling stories in triplets so everyone recognises some of the growth processes they have been through. 4th session: Everyone does a bible study in groups, looking at individuals in the bible and identifying the growth processes in their time line. 5th session: A panel discussion drawing out the experience of older staff and opening up for questions from the class. 6th session: Spiritual application. The 5 stages of the time line become 5 rooms that each person experiences as a simulation exercise with prayer and specific activities (we just referred to this in the last chapter). Finally the practical application of writing out the time line becomes the homework. After these two intensive days students really understand the 5 stages of development because they have talked about them, worked on a bible study of biblical characters, experienced them in a simulation and thought them through personally in their homework.



Application: Think about your favourite topic to teach. In what ways can you enhance your teaching by providing more opportunity for interaction?



Prayer: Lord, help me to focus on the goal of my teaching being the transformation of the participants and not on the feedback of what a great teacher I am.

13. Leading without formulas



Ice-breaker: When was the last time you surprised your staff or team in a positive way? What did you do?

Think about these statements. How true are they for you?

1. Predictability kills!
2. Change brings motivation!

Where shall I go?

☐ To the left where nothing's right?

☐ To the right where nothing's left?

ITSEVERYTHINGNICE.TUMBLR

If they are true at all, and I for one think they are, then our leadership must be careful of not falling into predictable ruts. I am reminded of my local church growing up. I attended an Open Brethren church where the morning service was centred around the Lord's table. There was no defined leader of the meeting. Anyone could start or ask for a song, pray a prayer, bring a short meditation and at the right time step up to break the bread and pour the wine and then distribute it around the congregation. From time to time I even took part as a teenager and prayed or passed on a short meditation. However, if you had been attending for a while, it was more predictable than it looked. At any stage of the meeting, you could boil it down to a choice of several people stepping up initially to get the meeting going, or to suggest songs or to bring a word just before communion. The meeting always finished at the same time and had the same kind of feel to it. Any step away from the tradition would have been looked down on.

Even the churches free of tradition or organisations, very quickly establish a form that becomes the norm and it takes effort to break away and do something different. Once a structure has been created, people tend to follow it legalistically. So as leaders, the challenge is to create an environment where we are ready for the unexpected. There is a need to switch everything around a little.

After attending the YWAM England leadership team meeting each month for years, I observed a principle in action. I call it the IBM principle. It stands for Intercession, Business and Ministry. I enjoyed the monthly, daylong meeting because it had variety. There was a strong emphasis on intercession. So we didn't just pray at the beginning and then at the end but took issues to God throughout the agenda. Once we had discussed an issue, we would wait on the Lord and share together what we were hearing. We would give specific time for intercession for the work in general, to hear

God's word to us. We would pray for the nation and pray into any prophetic words brought by staff and leaders. Of course there was always a business agenda but it was prioritised. We focused on the important and spent time working each issue through to conclusion. When there was no clear closure, we would pray and if there was still no clarity, several members would be asked to continue to process before the next meeting and bring a proposal. The ministry to each other became a highlight for me. We understood that if we weren't taking care of each other and carrying each other's burdens then we weren't living up to the second commandment. Without supporting each other we would easily come under pressure and be subject to burn out and make it all the more difficult for each other. We became friends not just colleagues. We looked out for each other and developed a bonding that has lasted through the years.

Let's take a quick look at the creative side of the leadership of Jesus. In his first meeting with the two fishermen, Simon and Andrew, he prophesied over them and challenged them to, "follow me and I will make you fishers of men." A few moments later he also recruited James and John and immediately they followed him and went home with him.

*It's not what you
are that holds you
back, it's what you
think you are not.
Denis Waitley*

Then on the Sabbath, he heard that Simon's mother in law was sick and so he went to her and healed her. Of course, the Pharisees didn't like this because they wanted to keep the Sabbath holy. Jesus seemed to delight in healing especially on the Sabbath. By evening the whole town was at his door and he ministered to them. Then the next morning he was gone.

Jesus knew his priority was spending time with his father. His lifestyle created a deeper hunger in the disciples as they had to search for him. There was a mystery about Jesus. They never quite knew what to expect. Whether it was a man with a withered hand, a centurion with a sick daughter, a woman who has seen every physician and spent all her money, a Samaritan woman, or prostitutes and lepers, Jesus had time for them. Anything out of the ordinary, anything unjust or people who were marginalised and Jesus was there. He picked out the woman who put her last coin in the offering. He turned the tables of the businessmen in the temple and removed them with whips. He paid tax with a coin he retrieved from a fish, and rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. He spoke not for the benefit of the scribes and Pharisees but for the ordinary people. He told stories that they could relate to. He used symbols that were meaningful to them – bread, mustard seeds, fig trees, sheep, and everyday pictures. He

taught over meals, while they were travelling on the road, from the mountain side – he used teachable moments.

Have you thought how Father God, related with Jesus? It always had a creative element! His first words to Jesus as he started his ministry were at his baptism. He made it a multi-media presentation with water and doves and a voice speaking out of the sky. The transfiguration again had a touch of Hollywood (of perhaps it's the other way around!), where at the top of the mountain Jesus has the spotlight turned on him and there alongside were Moses and Elijah. You can imagine them floating ten metres above the ground and the disciples scared out of their wits.

Right after an amazing miracle, Jesus and the disciples were in the boat together. Jesus tired from ministry was asleep and a storm rose up. Father God wanted to teach these disciples faith. Suddenly the boat was filling up with water and the disciples were afraid that they were going to perish. So they woke up Jesus in a panic. In a moment he spoke to the wind and it was calm once more.

At the crucifixion, the Father spoke again, this time with dramatic action. The sky went black. The curtain in the temple was split in two from top to bottom. The graves opened up and people who were dead were resurrected. He used angels to roll the stone away and they stood at the tomb and shared with Mary and the disciples that Jesus had risen. Then the Father called Jesus to be at his right hand, and there on the mountain, he was lifted into the sky. What does a day in the life of your leadership look like? So how do we go about relating with our disciples and peers? How exciting are our meetings?

For some years I was involved in developing cell groups in my local church with my wife. We saw such fruit from the lives of those who were involved that we implemented the principles wherever we could. I began to organise conferences across the nation to share the blessing with others. The beauty of the cell group for me is that it enables those who perhaps never see themselves as leaders, begin to lead. Anyone is able to take one of the aspects of the group – for instance an ice-breaker and lead out in it for a few minutes. After being in the group for some time, each member will have had the opportunity of taking each of the aspects of the group and before long is comfortable in leading out. The cell group is all about sharing our lives together, being real with each other and being community. It's not a small version of church where one person is doing all the talking from up front!

Cell group principles:

1. Welcome – share an ice-breaker to get everyone talking.
2. Worship – musical, non musical, meditative or a reflective time to focus our time on God and express our thanks, praise and love.
3. Word – question asking about a passage or topic to draw out personal stories and experience and introducing principles from the bible. Then there is an opportunity for personal application and prayer for each other.
4. Witness – praying and discussing how to affect my neighbourhood with the gospel.

Cell values

1. **Jesus at the Centre:** *John 15:5; Matthew 18:20.* We seek to create an atmosphere in the cell group where Jesus can be right in our midst.
2. **Community of Care:** *Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 4:32.* We seek to create an atmosphere where members of the group support, encourage, help, pray for and are there for each other.
3. **Everyone Growing:** *Hebrews 10:24, 25; James 5:16.* It's always encouraging when after sharing one week the person comes back with a praise report the following week with what has taken place. It is contagious when people are growing. The knowledge that we are going to ask one another how things are going brings an added accountability that also encourages that growth.
4. **Everyone Taking Part:** *1 Corinthians 14:26; Romans 12:6-8.* There is no place for spectators in the cell group. Everyone is given the opportunity of sharing and taking part and feeling a sense of belonging to the group. Each week there will be at least 4 people growing in their leadership of different elements. So each week there is a different style and feel to the meeting with a variety of people being involved.

Meeting Ideas: Some things to think about when you are putting a staff meeting, conference or large gathering together.

- The name of the gathering is important. *Conference* gives a message of input, teaching, sitting and listening. *Staff meeting* sounds boring. Use a *consultation* if you are going to involve people in discussion and process material together. Community gathering or staff interaction sounds better than meeting. I am sure you can come up with more creative names.



- What's the theme? People want to know the focus, the purpose, an idea of the outcome and so a theme is important. It gives us something to evaluate around.
- Think about seating arrangement to allow people to see one another in the best way, rather than just the back of people's heads.
- Use multi-media – sound, power point, film, music, drama and pictures, to involve as many senses as possible.
- Create some movement so people aren't sitting in the same place for the whole meeting time.
- Structure the meeting
 - Ice-breakers to get everyone engaged and talking
 - Share content with illustration and personal involvement
 - Process the content with groups, games, role-play, and any means of helping people connect with the content
 - Debrief sessions, get feedback and summarise throughout
 - Make sure there is application and take aways. Make practical application by way of hands on activities, discussion, and working the material through. But then also make spiritual application so the thoughts go from head to heart.
- Share out the MCing. When possible use two MC's to add variety, gender, personality and gifting



Application:

1. How do you as a leader interact creatively with your team? Or how do you as a father or mother interact creatively with your kids?
2. What was the last positive, out of the ordinary meeting, that you have led? What made it effective?
3. What boundaries have you erected that hinder you seeing Father God intervene through your ministry, as he did with Jesus?



Prayer: Lord, thank you for being such a dynamic God who does things in new ways, answers our prayers in unexpected ways, provides for us in out of the box ways, and always shows us love in amazing ways. May your creativity rub off on us as we interact with others. Amen.

14. Making intercession fun



Ice-breaker: What prayer meeting has had a lasting impact on you and why?

The little girl kneeling by her bed at night saying, ‘bless them’ prayers sums up the caricature of prayer that is often held. I started out my prayer life in this way and often feel I haven’t moved on very far. I still go through my list of people, asking God to bless them. Sometimes it gets more specific and I ask God to do special things for people. I have replaced the kneeling by my bed with walking outside. Somehow the fresh air, the constantly changing views of colourful skies, mountains and water stimulate my soul to connect with God. I have had the privilege of living in beautiful locations like Epping forest in London, Edinburgh, Dumbarton, West Kilbride, on the west coast of Scotland and now in Malaga in the south of Spain.



Jesus tells a story of a Pharisee and a tax collector. The Pharisee has a ritual prayer of thanking God for who he isn’t – not a child or woman or gentile. Then he tells God why he is so blessed. He tithes, he worships and he obeys all the commandments. The tax collector however falls on his face before God and says “God be merciful to me a sinner.” The picture is vivid. The stance of the two men is so telling. One man, standing proud, sophisticated, self-righteous and talking to himself. The other, on his face, broken, humbled and meeting with God.

I grew up with more of the ritual model of prayer meetings. We would all gather in the room and sit in formation shoulder to shoulder. One of the elders would start by standing and share his eloquent prayer of extolling God for who he is, usually sharing half a dozen scriptures in the process and offering thanks, praise and blessing. Then would come the list of people that needed our prayers. One of the unspoken rules was this – you could never pray for someone who was actually in the room. To qualify for receiving prayer you had to be absent. I always found this a little strange but I guessed if you made it to the meeting you must be OK. Others of you may have grown up in a different tradition where all the prayers were

written and shared from the prayer book. There's no right or wrong way but if prayer is to be a real communication between us and God then it has to be alive and dynamic.

Communication between God and man starts in the book of Genesis where we read that God walked in the garden with Adam and Eve. It was a dynamic relationship of sharing daily how they were doing and talking about the task that had been given. Genesis 5:21-24 "When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away." What an epitaph to have on your grave! "Stephe walked with God and then was no more!" They must have been pretty close.

In Genesis 6-9 God speaks to Noah and commands him to build a boat and take in animals to save them from the coming flood. He then speaks to Noah again in chapter nine giving the sign of the rainbow to declare his covenant never to flood the earth again.

When God speaks to Abram, he gives him pictures to look at – the land as far as his eye can see is given to him and his descendants. He is to be the father of nations and his descendants will be like the stars in the sky.

The Old Testament prophets didn't just preach, they were often actors as we have seen already. They communicated to the people in visual and verbal means what God was saying to his people.

During a DTS that I was staffing, we had a visiting speaker who had become a kind of monk. He spent much of his time in intercession and had a little hut in the garden called Edinburgh. When someone made a telephone call, the house-keeper would say he had gone to Edinburgh! As he walked into the lecture room you knew you were in for an entertaining time. He had taken a vow of poverty and wore an old moth eaten woolly sweater. He wore two pairs of glasses but both were broken - fortunately the right lens in one of the pairs and the left lens in the other were in tact! He used to take his glasses off and try to clean them with his old sweater on a regular basis which brought a smile to everyone. However, when he opened his mouth, you were enthralled by the wisdom he shared. A life of intercession brought forth a depth of relationship with God that oozed out of this man.

There have been other monks that did strange things over the years. Some monks made vows of silence, others went into seclusion, and another lived on top of a tall pillar for many years. Why? They were the message, just like those prophets from the bible. They didn't have to speak because one look at them and you knew they were making a statement. When they did speak they carried an authority.

Because our relationship with God isn't a clinical one, you can't put a formula to it. Relationships don't do well when they are have tight boundaries and have to work to rule! Relationships are dynamic and so as we come to the topic of intercession, you would expect it to have a creative dynamic.

Here is an account of an experience of creative intercession during a young leaders seminar: At the beginning of the evening session the leader asked us to make a pile of all the furniture in the centre of the room. So everything went onto the pile - chairs, sofas, tables, everything! Then he asked us to leave the room. When we came back it was dark, except for a small lamp shining in the middle of the pile. The pile of furniture looked like a heap of rubbish - quite depressing. Solemn music was playing in the background. We began to pray, listening to the Lord.

It seemed that most people felt the same thing - that in the Spirit all the furniture represented what Satan was doing to the young people of this generation - discarding them on a scrap heap! There was a sense of anger at what he was doing and many began to pray forceful and powerful prayers in spiritual warfare. This continued for some time. Then there was a pause. Someone had a prophetic word, that all the items on the scrap heap still had their original design and that the young people for whom we were praying were made in God's image and still had his design in their hearts - they were redeemable! Someone pointed out that a cross had been placed in the middle of the pile. Upbeat music started up.

A spirit of hope swept over the group. The mood changed to a powerful atmosphere of faith. Spontaneous prayers erupted as people declared their confidence in God to release a move of his Spirit to redeem the young people of this generation. Then there was another pause. We were asked to quietly and reverently take each item of furniture and restore it to its original place in the room. It was a prophetic act! And we knew that God wanted us to get involved in practical ways with these young people in order to see them restored to God's destiny for their lives. It was a very powerful experience of creative intercession!

We have experienced hundreds of creative times of prayer over the years. Kings Kids International, have been very inspirational in helping to make prayer fun for kids with their Daniel prayer groups. Things like putting prayer requests in balloons and punching them around the room. Then when the signal is given everyone bursts one open and prays what is written inside. Or “musical prayers” played like musical chairs but you pray for the topic written on the back of the chair. Or pass the parcel and when the music stops you unwrap the parcel and pray into the prayer request inside. There are so many ways to make prayer creative and not just for kids!

One time we were organising a prayer night for our youth. We set up a whole bunch of rooms in our local church corresponding to the rooms of a house. There was a kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, living room, study, dining room, etc. Each of the rooms was a room in our heart and there were instructions of how to pray in each one. For instance, in the dining room, we were asking what kind of spiritual food we were eating, how often did we go to eat, did we eat with anyone else, etc. For the bathroom we talked about how important it is to have a clean heart and clean hands. We encouraged them to go before God and be cleansed, refreshed and ready for a new day! They loved it.

During a week of prayer in our church, we set up a room for prayer. These have been made popular in recent years through Pete Grieg and his organisation 24/7 prayer international. There was a tent in one corner where you could hide in quietness and focus on the Lord. There were maps on the wall of the local area and highlighted where members of the church lived. Other key places were highlighted too, like government offices, commercial centre and social meeting places where we wanted to see God’s presence manifested. There was a prayer wall, with the opportunity of writing down our friends who needed prayer. In the centre was a cross where we could kneel and listen to the Lord – what was he saying to me about the church and the community?

Here’s a quote from Pete Grieg. *“I just joined a cult. I realize this may come as a disappointment to some of you and I hope we can still be friends – in fact I am hoping to stay involved in 24-7, if you’ll still have me. In the end I converted because so many cult members have been preaching at me, showing me how much better my life will be, explaining that I won’t fully understand until I take the leap of faith, and testifying daily to their own personal experiences. In the end I’m not sure if I was won over or merely ground down but I finally did it: I exchanged my battered old BlackBerry for a sleek and sexy black iPhone. I have joined the cult of Mac. It’s been a*

long process because my old phone really wasn't that bad – nothing like the neolithic Nokia brick that requires my mum to stand on one leg, on the front doorstep, with her mouth about 15 inches from her ear. However, now that I've made the switch, and although there have admittedly been no blinding lights and angelic choirs, I'm telling my friends how much better their lives could be too with an iPhone. I'm even advertising Apple courses at the holy church of All Things Apple in Regent Street, London. My old Blackberry was functional, but my iPhone is fun. What's more (and bear with me here), my iPhone has been teaching me things about communicating with God. Prayer can easily become formal and functional like an out-of date phone, when it's meant to be enjoyable, intuitive, surprising and expansive. Prayer isn't just a way of getting things done and making stuff happen (a healing here, a heavenly memo there and a parking space at WallMart on a Saturday afternoon). Prayer is the heart and soul of any dynamic, colourful, intuitive, intelligent, fun interaction with Jesus Christ."

Here are a few other ideas that we have used. Put your thinking caps on to create some special prayer times yourself.



- We placed daily newspapers on the floor and we asked people to read them with an eye for content for intercession. Reading a newspaper gives you a feel for the state of a nation – it highlights crime, priorities, politics, family life, the gods like sports and fashion, etc.. We then went into small groups to pray into what we found.
- Prayer for Children: We prayed into the 4 areas of great need: child soldiers, child prostitution, child abuse, child malnutrition. We broke into the 4 groups and wrote the areas on cardboard boxes. Then we began to pray for the children and against the enemy's strategy for tearing down children. We came together and as we did spiritual warfare we stomped on the boxes and crushed them.
- A nation. We discerned a spirit of death over the specific nation. We encircled the small team from the nation with toilet paper to signify the stronghold. We prayed for them and spoke freedom over them. Little by little they felt God's empowering and pulled off the paper. As they felt a new freedom they celebrated with a national dance.
- Written prayers. As we were praying over cities in Europe, we asked each person to write a prayer for their city. We prayed and proclaimed them out in faith and everyone joined in with a prayer of agreement.
- Prayer for younger generation. One girl had her face painted white and laid on the table as a corpse. We cried over the young generation that was not seeing their destiny in God. We turned our attention to the girl

and began to prophesy to this generation to take up their call. Slowly the girl came back to life. There was a dynamic prayer time for new life in the mission, in our churches, in our towns and through our influence.

- Consumerism. We had people lie down on the ground and spread advertising magazines over their faces. After meditating on this god of the western world, we encouraged people to rise up when faith entered their hearts, to pray against this god being worshipped around them.
- Homeless. We encouraged people to make houses from cardboard and newspaper and to imagine this was all that you owned in the world. As people gathered to agree together for God to meet the homeless in special ways there was a new power in their prayers.



Application: The next time you want to give a vision to your youth group or church, think about having a prayer time for the need. Be creative and bring their imaginations to life with symbols and visuals. Any ideas right now?



Prayer:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;*

*Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.*

O Divine Master,

*grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love.*

For it is in giving that we receive.

*It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.*

Amen.

Prayer of Saint Francis

15. Bringing meditation, worship & application to life



Ice-breaker: Meditation is only for certain personality types! What do you think about the statement?

You may have heard of the “Labyrinth”, that has been reborn over recent years. It re-shapes a 12th-century ritual for the 21st century. It’s maze-like path takes you on a symbolic journey, creates space to unwind and think - in particular about our relationships with ourselves, one another, our planet and God. Designed for young and old alike, it provides a mixture of rituals and visuals, of contemplative words and contemporary ambient music, of symbols and media to help guide the worshipper.

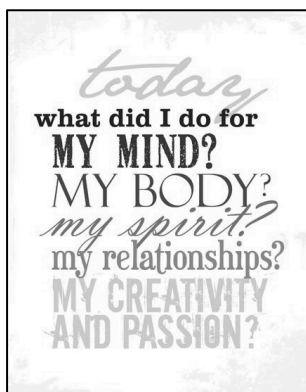
Labyrinths were a feature of many medieval cathedrals - one of the best remaining examples is found in Chartres Cathedral in northern France. Unlike a maze they have only one path - there are no dead ends. People walk the labyrinth slowly, as an aid to contemplative prayer and reflection, as a spiritual exercise, or as a form of pilgrimage.

This contemporary version includes music, meditations, art, media and symbolic activities at intervals along the path. Participants walk the Labyrinth with a CD player and headphones, in their own relaxing sound-world, at their own pace. Each track on the CD contains meditations, instructions and music relating to a part of the labyrinth.

The path has three stages - the 'inward' journey, the 'centre' and the 'outward' journey. The theme of the 'inward' journey is letting go of things which hinder our wholeness and inner approach to God. The centre of the Labyrinth is a space of meditative prayer and peace for illumination. The last stage is union, which is joining God, your higher power.

Labyrinths obviously take a lot to develop and create. However we can take the idea and utilise simple stations for use in the church, a meeting room or house. They can be very simple and straight forward. There may be one or two stations or many.

For instance, in many youth church situations, you will find materials towards the back of the room for painting and drawing during worship.



Rather than lead a communion from the front, a station could be set up, that is available throughout the worship time.

Over the last few years my wife and I have seen the value of creative meditation or the use of a labyrinth approach. The idea is that people are free to walk around tables or stations where there are activities, opportunities to think about a topic, write something down or process with someone else. Often it includes the use of symbols and specific application of a verse or principle. Sometimes the theme is a certain passage of scripture, or a parable, or aspects of a season of time, or specific topic. The variety is endless.

It has become quite a tradition in our leadership courses to start on the first morning with a very nice breakfast and following the breakfast to have an hour to focus on stations around the theme for the course. Last year the theme we used for the breakfast was the miracle of wine at the wedding feast, which tied in with the overall theme of the school – he is able to do more than we ask or think! (from Ephesians 3:20) See appendix... for the stations we used.

Stations can be used in:

- Worship times – to explore aspects of God's character, to encourage a deeper level of devotion, to creatively thank and praise God.....
- Intercession times – to simultaneously be praying for a number of different topics, bringing information on each station,
- Response to teaching – exploring the topic or passage more deeply, asking questions that help bring an application, clarify the main points of the message on different stations
- In place of teaching or in introducing a topic – get people thinking and meditating about the topic or passage before speaking about it, so individuals have content to bring and add to the discussion.
- Welcoming a new group – give them a transition time from where they have been and an opportunity for closure and bringing out the expectations and desires for this next phase.
- On-going experience with God.



So where do you start in putting a meditation or creative worship time together like this?

Let me give you an example: I was just working on a meditation for a retreat my wife is putting on next year.



1. Identify a theme or topic. The Theme of the retreat is Isaiah 58:11-12. A beautiful passage with such wonderful descriptive images, ideal for this kind of application.
2. Write out key words or phrases or thoughts.
 - a. The Lord will guide always.
 - b. Satisfy needs in sun-scorched land.
 - c. Strengthen your frame.
 - d. A well watered garden.
 - e. Like a spring whose waters never fail.
3. Think of a picture to symbolise the phrase or to relate to it in some way.
 - a. The Lord guiding is like a SHEPHERD
 - b. Satisfying needs sounds like thirst being quenched in an OASIS
 - c. Strengthen your frame sound like a BODY BUILDER
 - d. Well watered garden sounds like a SOAKING
 - e. A spring is a continual source of water
4. Think about the phrases and meditate on them.
 I quickly saw that each of the 5 phrases could start with an S - I kind of like alliteration, so this connection appealed to me. Shepherd, Satisfy, strengthen, Soak, Spring.
 I also noticed that the first 3 aspects are what God promises to us and the next two aspects are ways we respond to him and others.
5. Make each phrase personal. Ask questions: what, when, where, who and how?
 - a. The Lord is always guiding but sheep are stupid and can easily get distracted. Is that a picture of me?
 - b. I have to ask the question what does sun-scorched land mean to me? I like it hot but it gives a picture of no fruit, difficulties, trials, pain, no fulfilment, etc.
 - c. Strengthen frame – do I need strengthening – Oh yes in all sorts of areas. So how do I allow God to strengthen me?
 - d. What does being soaked mean for you? How is the garden of my heart soaked with water? What's the process?
 - e. If I am a spring that doesn't fail, I can be a source of life to others. In what ways?
6. Think of other verses that can tie in with the thoughts that you now have.
 - a. Psalm 23:1 – the Lord is my shepherd...

- b. Psalm 84:6 - No good thing does he withhold
 - c. Hebrews 12:12 - Weak knees
 - d. Song of Solomon 2:11 – rains are over and gone
 - e. Psalm 84:11 – makes valley of bitterness into a spring
- 7. What action, activity could be done to apply each thought?
 - a. Shepherd: Process with someone the tangents that I have been heading off in over the last few months. The distractions that fill my life!
 - b. Satisfy: He satisfies needs so write out a need and bury it in the sand, trusting that God is going to satisfy if not right now, in his time and he gives grace immediately.
 - c. Strengthen: Do an exercise you don't regularly do. Eg push up, weights, .. it will take regular activity to develop muscles. Write your goal.
 - d. Soak: What does the garden of my heart look like? Draw it – talk about it.
 - e. Spring: Who do you want to be a source of life for? Family, friends, church group? In what way can you become that for them? Pray it through with someone.
- 8. We can ask other questions like: how can I involve other people at the tables? Is this for me to connect with God, with someone else or to dig deep personally?
- 9. For the instructions for each station or table, I usually use PowerPoint slides. There are many beautiful templates that you can use and then print them out. Choose appropriate pictures for each slide that will communicate what you want to share. Add the title and then the content of instruction and perhaps a verse that ties in. You want the instructions to be simple, clear and easily understood so you don't have to go around explaining to people what they should do.
- 10. Generally I give an hour for these kind of interactive processes and then finish with some debriefing and feedback so we can all gain from what others have received through the exercise.



Application: 1. Think about one of your favourite verses. Break it into phrases and develop a creative meditation with applications for yourself.
2. Then develop it so that others can enjoy it too.



Prayer:

Isaiah 58:11 turned into a prayer

Lord, guide me always;
Satisfy my needs in a sun-scorched land
Strengthen my frame.
Make me like a well-watered garden,
Like a spring whose waters never fail.
Amen.

16. Worship with a difference



Ice-breaker: When was the last time you remember giving a standing ovation to someone? What had they done to deserve it?

I have always liked Christmas. In church it was the one time in the year where we had a very different service. A lot of work would go into the nativity play and often it would have a very creative element, with good music and even some humour. I sometimes wish every Sunday could be like that. What was different? The main thing was that the preaching was down to about 15 minutes, so many people were involved and the whole service was so colourful and visual in presentation. Yes, it took hours of preparation to set up and weeks of rehearsals with the kids but it was worth it. It was meaningful, everyone enjoyed it and with so many involved there was a feeling of unity and working together on a project. The Christmas season over and it was back to the normal boring format. Sound familiar? So what's the answer?



We have a shopping and entertainment complex quite close to us and we often walk through it. One section is full of designer clothes and each shop window is enticing with its beautifully clad models declaring how good you would look in the latest fashion. Now if the window was the same all year round, having looked at it several times, it would lose its drawing power. Of course the shop owners know that and change the display very regularly to keep you coming in. Websites operate on the same principle. If people come back to your site and nothing has been changed or been updated for months, they are going to lose interest. What about our church platforms? What about the schedule of our services? What about the format and décor? In this visual world where people are used to small sound bites, we would do well to encourage our congregations with different approaches to worship, involvement of more people and the use of surprise.

If you are from a traditional church, you will be more used to following the church calendar. The liturgical cycle divides the year into a series of seasons. For example advent, lent and Pentecost, each have their own mood, theological emphases, and modes of prayer. These events are signified by different ways of decorating churches, colors of Paraments

(hangings from the altar or pulpit) and Vestments for clergy, scriptural readings, themes for preaching and even different traditions and practices often observed personally or in the home. In churches that follow the liturgical year, the scripture passages for each Sunday (and even each day of the year in some traditions) are specified by a list called a lectionary. Sometimes the non-conformist churches miss out on these changes of season, colour and theme.

Before we go on, it's important to have an understanding of terms. Often when the church refers to worship, it is referring to the worship service. Worship then means the whole format of welcome, singing, liturgy, preaching, offering and any 'special event' taking place. I will be referring to worship in a more defined way, as our connection to and adoration of God. It can involve interaction with others, an act of worship in terms of giving an offering or presenting something to God. Or singing, thanking, praising and loving God as an individual or as a corporate body.

What comes to your mind when you think of a meaningful worship time? We are all so different and so we will all be motivated in different ways. The book 'sacred pathways' shares nine different pathways to express ourselves to God.

I have many memories of wonderful worship times over the years. Back in my DTS with YWAM in England, I used to play the piano quite often. There was one guy on staff called Gee, who had an anointing in singing new songs. Every so often he would make a signal to me across the room to encourage me to get ready to play. I would sit at the piano and make up a set of chords and rhythm to go along with them and Gee would launch out in a new song to the Lord. There was such a sense of God's presence in the room during those times.

We started a new contemporary service in a church of Scotland some years ago. The traditional service was going on at the same time in the church below and we had the opportunity of experimenting. So we laid out the church hall with tables and chairs and started the service with coffee.



We would often decorate the hall for particular services. On Palm Sunday we created a pathway of palm branches and coats leading up to a cross. One Sunday my brother in law was sharing on spiritual warfare. The song, the eye of the tiger, started blaring from the PA and from the back of the hall came he and his son, dressed up as boxers in their shorts and dressing gowns, punching the air. All eyes and ears were on the boxers! One Sunday we created the platform right in the middle of the hall

and set up a stove for the guest speaker to cook fish (I mentioned this moment before). We would often develop worship stations around the room where there was the opportunity to respond to the Lord individually or to pray with someone else. Communion would take place in family circles, groups of two or coming forward to be blessed by leaders at the front – each time it would be different.

In the various courses and seminars we run we have had all kinds of creative elements to the worship. One morning we hung up all kinds of herbs from the garden across the room on a string. We chose some verses around the theme of being a fragrant aroma to the Lord. We interacted with the herbs and made application to our lives. Another time we created a river of blue cloth running from one side of the room to the other. It started as a thin river coming out of the cross and got larger as it spread across the room. The passage was Ezekiel 47 where Ezekiel was encouraged to go deeper from ankle-deep, to knee-deep, to waist-deep and finally to swim in it. People interacted with the creativity and met God in the midst of the river.

Take some time to prepare and listen to God with your creative side and you will be amazed what ideas come to mind.

A few guidelines for the worship leader:

- Pray about a theme for the worship time. This can be a planned before or received spontaneously through the worship time. A theme can be a verse or phrase of scripture, a characteristic of God or a topic like commitment, sacrifice, generosity, adoration...
- Think process. We need creativity to break the ice initially with people. Often it's useful to start with praise songs to get people's bodies moving, to loosen up their spirits. After thanksgiving and praise comes a deeper worship and expression of love. It's here that we are more open to hearing what God is whispering to us rather than simply expressing ourselves to God. Then comes the high praise, an expression of praise that comes out of deep worship that has a faith declaration and power attached to it.
- What is the climax or goal for the time? There may be an aspect of worship that the group hasn't incorporated. For instance, extended singing in the spirit, singing new songs, clap offerings, body ministry of some kind, corporate involvement in praying out, high praise, healing, manifestation of God's presence in different ways, signs and wonders...

- Is there a particular song to focus on, a particular response that you are looking for or prayer that you want to pray and process with everyone?
- Responding to words of the Lord or bringing specific direction requires creative application. A wonderful theme can be lost if it is not presented in a way that enables people to respond easily. Sometimes we get afraid of the silence and move into another song before people have had a chance to process and bring their prayer or response to God. This is where we need God to anoint us with inspired creativity.

We enjoy a worship time called “Caedmon’s eve.” Caedmon was a monk connected with the abbey of Whitby in the 7th century. He had no musical ability but one night had a dream in which he composed a poetic song. He woke the next morning with a desire and ability to compose verse and music. He became known as the first English poet. In a Caedmon’s eve, we invite individuals from the group to bring something to the Lord. It can be a meaningful song, a poem, a piece of art, something they have made or a story bringing glory to the Lord. Often it encourages the unleashing of hidden talent and an ability to give something unique to the Lord in worship.



One of my favourite worship times has been when we take a theme – for instance, “For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.” from Isaiah 43:19. It helps when there is pictorial language in the verse or it’s easy to add an artistic flare to the words.

We then divide everyone into groups of their choice to worship the Lord through different mediums. For example: using clay, acrylic paint, poetry, song writing, junk modelling, collage, dance and any other ways you care to develop. Each group has 30-40 minutes to use their creative gifts. Then we visit each group’s creative expression as a whole body and the artists don’t explain what they have done but express in prayer and worship to the Lord their gift to him. It has always been a powerful time of team worship and bonding together.

Another highlight from the leadership development course has been the father’s table worship time. It comes from the story of the prodigal son. On the son’s return, his father kills the fatted calf and celebrates with a feast and welcomes his son to the table. Our gifted staff in hospitality, create a table beautifully laid out with fruit, snacks and goodies. The immediate

response from people entering the room is, “wow, amazing, beautiful.” It smells wonderful, it tastes delicious and looks like a King’s feast. There are chairs put around the table and at any time during the singing and worship time, individuals sit at the father’s table and enjoy his presence and the feast prepared. Both sons had a choice of coming to the celebration and we know that the older brother decided not to. Do we feel accepted and made worthy by the Father to sit at his table? Can we enjoy his presence and come close in intimacy? This is a special evening of recognising our place in the family and expressing our love and thanks to our heavenly father.



Application: When you next have a personal worship time in the car or going for a walk or sitting in your favourite chair, think of what theme you want to have for this time. It will help you to have a clear focus and enable you to go deeper.



Prayer: Father God, you are so awesome. You fill us with regular amazement at your glorious power, your wonderful, unceasing presence, your ever-surrounding knowledge of our quietest thoughts.

Thank you today and every day for the long-ago day when you took your all-consuming, firework love and turned it into a carpenter’s son, kicking his legs in a mere feeding trough.

You stripped away all your heavenly brilliance and stepped shivering onto the soil you made to greet the people you created because of that love, that never-ending, unbreakable love that you used to first explode the Universe and, equally, to die an awful human death on a cross made of trees that you sculpted with your very hands.

There is nothing we can say, or sing, or make, or do that is even within earshot of you and your love, and yet you kneel down beside us and listen carefully to our most unimportant worries.

We sitting here today are nothing on the grand scale of things, while you are everything and more, but still you smile and point out every individual and say proudly, “That’s my child.”

Let us never forget that you’re our father, our dad, our daddy, who reads us the best bedtime story there’s ever been, or will be, or can be.

You are God, and we praise you for it.

Amen.

A prayer by Katy Morgan

17. Dynamic evangelism



Ice-breaker: When was the last time you had a fun experience sharing Jesus with someone?

Arthur Blessitt was a radical in his day. He took evangelism to a whole new level. He began carrying the cross in 1969 and he completed his journey on June 7, 2008. He is listed in the Guinness World Records for the "World's Longest Walk." In total, Blessitt has walked 38,102 miles through 315 countries (including Island Groups and Territories), of which 52 were in open war. He has crossed every ocean and walked on all seven continents (including Antarctica). He is known internationally as the "Pilgrim with the Cross." It is believed that several million have come to the Lord through his evangelism over the last 44 years.



I think back to outreaches on the streets of Barcelona. We would form a tight circle as a group on Las Ramblas (one of the main walking streets in the city). Then the guitarist in the middle would start and we would all face into the circle and worship the Lord. We prayed for God's presence to fill the place and for his glory to be seen. We expressed our love and praise to the Lord. People were attracted to this new sound that many of them had never heard before. People formed an outer circle that grew bigger by the minute. After some time, there was a huge gathering and the whole group of YWAMers sat down on the ground leaving the preacher in the centre. He shared the gospel with a circular audience and many lives were touched and challenged.

Treasure hunt: The idea of a spiritual treasure hunt adds a new dynamic to street evangelism. Unlike a typical street evangelism outreach where you pick one designated spot and try to talk with everyone you meet, a treasure hunt narrows down the search asking God to show you specific people He wants you to minister to, those who are a treasure to Him.

Servant evangelism: This is a straightforward approach to sharing God's love in simple, practical ways. In 1984, founding pastor Steve Sjogren and several people from the Vineyard Community Church loaded up bags of groceries and bought Christmas trees and took them to housing projects on

the north side of Cincinnati. Out of this action was born a vision to reach the city of Cincinnati and the world by serving others with no strings attached. A form of this type of evangelism has been taking place in a town where I lived for many years. The town of Paisley in Scotland. The team there initiated a project called PIG. It stands for Paisley Is Great. They go into one of the plazas with a barbeque and give out sausages. It's a sowing strategy where the team meets hundreds of people and establish contact with them and at the end of the conversations, they come away with the understanding Christians are OK and God is OK.

Healing on the streets. This is a simple and gentle ministry that brings an opportunity for people to receive prayer on the streets. The team take a few chairs, a sign to show that prayer for healing is available and you are ready. Its amazing how people are very open for prayer, especially when they are vulnerable and in need. It creates stepping stones for people to get healed and come to know Jesus. A small group of Christians commit to meeting in a certain place every week and pray for anyone desiring prayer.

Evangelism needs creativity. I was just hearing a story of someone giving a dollar to anyone who could answer a simple question. People began to gather. A number of people received their dollar for giving correct answers and then came the question – How can I get to know God in a personal way? If there is a Christian in the audience they may give the right answer, otherwise the person giving away the money, gives their testimony.



Application: Everyone has their own approach to evangelism. What are some creative ways that you are comfortable with, through which you could begin to share Jesus with others?



Prayer:

Jesus Christ, Son of God,
make yourself known through me.
Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
speak through me to others. Amen

APPENDICES

Ice- breakers

These can be used for the start of small groups, staff meetings, leadership meetings, parties, social gatherings and anytime that you need to break the ice and get people talking. For leadership teams and committed groups that get together regularly its good to use deeper question ice-breakers so that you are getting to know one another more. If you find it hard to come up with ideas, you will find many on the internet.

Examples of easy question ice-breakers:

1. What's your favourite food?
2. What are your top 5 films of all time?
3. What scars do you carry and what's the story behind them?
4. What is your favourite character in the bible?
5. What country would you like to visit that you haven't been to yet?
6. What would you say is your number one gift?
7. What part of your body do you like best and why?
8. If you could change something about yourself what would it be?
9. What dream do you have for the future?
10. What have been your best and worst experiences over the last 6 months?
11. What do you see yourself doing in 5 years time?
12. On a scale of 1-10 how are you?
13. How would you describe how you are doing in terms of one of the seasons?
14. What is your best memory from last year?
15. When last year were you laughing so hard, tears were flowing down your cheeks?

Some deeper question ice-breakers:

1. What has been the theme of God's words to you personally lately?
2. How has the Lord been encouraging you with regards to your ministry?
3. Who are you influencing in a positive way through your life? How?
4. Who is having an influence on the way you live? How?
5. What scripture has impacted you the most in recent months?
6. What do you see as your 3 main strengths and 3 main weaknesses?
7. What areas of stress are you dealing at home and at work?
8. What aspect of your vision or calling are you frustrated with right now?
9. How healthy is your spirit on a scale of 1-10? How could you improve your health?
10. When you look at your ministry roles, which ones are you fulfilling well and which ones not so well?

11. What would you say your spiritual temperature is at the moment?
12. What discovery did you make about yourself over this last year?

Think of a way of asking “how are you?” in creative ways to continue this list.

Deep and meaningful icebreaker:

1. An ice-breaker that we have used many times at the beginning of a course enables the individual to share fairly openly what is going on in their life without getting into the details. You ask the group to think of their life over the last 6 months as a boat on water. It could be a sinking ship having been shot at by other boats, a rowing boat that needs a new coat of paint, a cruise liner ready to launch, etc. When everyone has a clear picture with as much details as they can see, you tell them that Jesus is coming on board their ship. Then you ask them, what does Jesus say? Generally we then take the first 5 people to share their pictures and what Jesus says to them. Then we bring them in the middle and everyone adds to the picture as God speaks to them. This exercise could also be done in a small group, one at a time.
2. A similar exercise can be done but this time with a different picture. Ask everyone to picture what the garden of their heart looks like? What kind of flowers, plants and vegetables are growing? How big is it? Is it neat and tidy or needing some weeding and repair? Then similarly Jesus comes into the garden. What does he say?
3. A similar exercise can be used but this time with the use of play dough. Each individual has the opportunity of sculpturing something that tells a story of the last 6 months. Then they share their story and again they can be prayed for.

Fun ice-breakers:

1. Throw one of your shoes in the middle of the room to create a pile. Then pick someone else's shoe and find out who it belongs to. Introduce yourself if you don't know them and find out an interesting fact about them.
2. Put a whole pile of objects in the middle of the room and ask people to pick up the object that relates to them in some way and get them to share with one or two other people. This can be done with so many categories – an object that relates to worship, to how you relate with people, to a weakness or a strength.....
3. Find two other people who you have three things in common with. This involves asking all kinds of questions to people in the room until you

find someone with the same hobbies, likes the same music, have the same name, etc.

4. Form a small group in a circle and place one hand in the centre – take hold of someone else's hand. Now put your other hand in the centre and grab someone else's hand. Now see how long it takes you to unwind as a group and stand in a circle once more.
5. Pass around a pipe cleaner (a piece of wire covered in cotton that bends easily) form it into a shape and declare what it is. See how many times it can go around the group. It takes some imagination think of items like, a halo, a question mark, a wheel, etc...

A get-to-know-you activity: A fun, interactive, introduction for medium to large groups. Ask everyone to stand up and then to walk around; explain that you will announce a category (see list or use your own) and that participants should then quickly organise themselves into smaller groups, based on the category to which they belong. Once everyone is organised into their groups, ask each group to identify itself. (Optional) Make a brief comment or ask each group a question. Allow participants time to say hello and mingle/chat with each other when the smaller groups are formed. Keep things moving by asking participants to walk around before announcing the next category. Continue until the group is "warmed up" and ready for the next activity. This will probably be after ~5 topics, depending on the group, purpose, and time available. Categories can also be used as a fun, simple way to organise people into smaller groups for other activities. For the first category, use one with two options and announce one side of the room for one category and the other side of the room for the other category. This should help participants to get the idea for how the activity works.

List of categories

Two categories

When you clasp your hands together and fold the thumbs across the top, is your right or left thumb on top?

Fold your arms across your chest. Is your right or left arm on top?

Which leg do you put into your pants first?

Which eye do you prefer to wink with?

Which side of the bed (left or right) do you get out of in the morning?

Are you a folder or scruncher (toilet paper)

Can you roll your tongue?

Three categories

When licking an ice cream cone...do you:

Twirl the cone clockwise

Twirl the cone anti-clockwise

Lick up and down?

Many categories

What is your favourite season?

How many siblings do you have?

What colour are your eyes?

What's your shoe size?

What type of shoes are you wearing?

What's your favourite colour?

The carousel: The general idea is to get two circles of people. An inner circle and an outer circle. So you need an even number of people. Then give instruction to the inner circle to identify their partner in the outer circle. Share a question and give one minute for the inner circle to share with their partner and then ring the bell. Then give opportunity for the outer circle to answer the question and ring the bell. Then ask the outer circle to move one person to their left. And start the process again, this time the outer circle starting to answer. The next time, ask the inner circle to move one person to their left. And ask another question. So the person who moves always answers the question first. For instance you could have this exercise at the beginning of a school and ask get-to-know-you questions, then at the end of the school ask debriefing type questions. When people know one another better, it's easier to ask more personal questions.

Creative meditation

John 21 – transition. Telling a story.

The disciples had been with Jesus for 3 years and now it was time for them to continue without him (the Holy Spirit was going to be their helper). This was a turning point for them.

The disciples had lost perspective – they needed new motivation to overcome the fear of change, anxiety for the future and uncertainty of the continuity of their lives

Are you experiencing change in family relationships; health or life stages; social relationships; work; or location?



Transition

What is God saying to you for your new road ahead?

What is the attitude you need for the journey?

Feel free to ask for prayer from one of the LDC staff who will be more than happy to bless you.

Do you feel discouraged? The disciples had lost their master and had now worked all night fishing and caught nothing.

Jesus came that morning, had already caught fish and was there cooking breakfast to brighten their spirits and encourage them on their way.



Discouraged

Write on a piece of paper how you are discouraged right now and bury it in the sand.

Now light a candle to signify that you are putting your hope in God and your spirit will be bright.

The disciples heard Jesus asking them to put their nets on the other side even though they had been working all night with no results. That's not what they were wanting to hear. But they listened, heard and acted.

What has Jesus been asking you to do or is asking you right now?



Listen

Take a seat and be still for a few minutes. Ask the Lord what he wants to tell you. Write down what he says to you on the card provided.

Ask someone else to pray with you if you would like them to listen to the Lord for you as well.

Jesus welcomed the disciples to come and eat breakfast. God shows his kindness in providing, protecting, directing and comforting. He knows what the disciples needed right then. A warm welcome, affirmation from their master and some good food.

They had tasted that the Lord was good. How has he shown his goodness to you?



Taste

Eat some bread and fish and think about how we are encouraged to "taste and see that the Lord is good."

Thank him for what he has done for you. Share with someone else your thanks.

Peter dived off the boat to swim to shore to see Jesus. He was overjoyed to see him and as he ate the breakfast Jesus had prepared, he had a smile on his face.

Jesus invites us to a feast where the table is full of good food. Rejoice and be glad.



Do you love me? Jesus asked Peter. He was fishing when he was to be keeping Jesus' sheep in Jerusalem.

Love is an active word. Jesus said love me and keep my commandments. When we love we want to please.

Jesus asks us the same question: "Do you love me?"



Feast with joy

Are you living in the fullness of joy.

Grab someone and give thanks for the provision of breakfast

Devotion

Take a heart and write on it your response to Jesus' question.

Tell him in your own words how you love him.

Application for a message – have stations ready for people to process the teaching, answer questions, meditate and respond.

Test of focus

Having a DREAM



- ❑ God gave Joseph a dream of his future leadership
- ❑ God wants us to have dreams for the future too. Take a dream paper and write down your dreams or at least one of them you would love to see come about.

Test of faith

Being DESERTED



- ❑ Joseph lost family and support and felt all alone.
- ❑ Do you feel a lack of support at times? Do you feel you are trying to make it all alone?
- ❑ Pick up the paper people and write down people who are supporting or who could support – ask the Lord if you are to connect with these people on a regular basis.
- ❑ Pray with someone else that they would sense God's support in a new way.

Test of patience

Experiencing DARKNESS



- ❑ Joseph was put in prison with no idea of when he would be free.
- ❑ Perhaps you are not hearing God speak to you, not sure of what your next step is, or all the circumstances are not working out.
- ❑ Put on the blindfold to experience darkness.
- ❑ Write a prayer with chalk on the black card. Tell the Lord you put your trust in him to speak the right direction, give the timing and provide for your needs.

Test of strength

Dangerous Desires



- ❑ Like Joseph we all face temptations or desires for things that aren't the best for us.
- ❑ Take a piece of cotton – see how easy it is to break. What about two pieces or three. Temptations get more difficult to break, the more we give in to them.
- ❑ What issues do you need to deal with and what habits do you need to break?
- ❑ Take one of the prayers with you. Have prayer with someone.

Test of readiness

Entering DESTINY



- ❑ After years in prison Joseph was asked to interpret Pharaoh's dream and he entered his destiny as prime minister of Egypt overnight.
- ❑ Are you too comfortable? Are you ready to jump into action when God says jump or perhaps you are jumping already? Are you ready to take a risk?
- ❑ Pray with someone a prayer of commitment to follow God wherever he leads and do whatever he says.

Meditation on scriptures

Isaiah 58:11

SHEPHERD:

“He will guide you continually”

- Ps 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd.
- Sheep are followers. They follow the one before and can therefore easily go off track. The shepherd is always leading in the right way so there's a need to keep our attention on him.
- How have you followed the shepherd over these last months? What can distract you? What hinders you from hearing or seeing his guidance and then obeying?
- Take a sheep and write your thoughts. Find someone else, share together and pray for fresh confidence that the shepherd will lead you.



SATISFY

“He will satisfy your needs in a sun scorched land”

- Has your land been dry? Are you thirsty? Felt alone? Lacking fulfillment? There are all kinds of needs that we face and very often the environment is not able to provide what we feel we require.
- Here's a promise that says even in the impossible situations, God is able to satisfy. When you are desperate for water in the desert. He has a secret supply – emotional, physical, spiritual, relational...
- Bury your need in the sand. He knows. Put your trust in him. If he doesn't satisfy it now, he gives grace until he does.



STRENGTHEN

“He will strengthen your Frame”

- There are areas of strength he wants to make stronger, and areas of weakness he wants to strengthen. (Hebrews 12:12) How will you allow Jesus to strengthen you? What are his ways to do that?
- What exercises will help you to be strengthened? There are all kinds of exercises for different muscles, different parts of the body and for general fitness aerobically. How about the importance of healthy eating, sleeping, sabbath, prayer, time with God, repentance, meditation on scripture, worship and so on.
- What will strengthen your frame for this next season? Write your goals on the bookmark.



SOAK

“You will be a well watered garden”

- For the golf course close by to be green and luxurious, it takes a lot of watering in the dry seasons.
- What does soaking mean to you? How is your garden watered?
- What does the garden of my heart look like? Draw it or use some of the pictures available. Share your garden with someone.



SPRING

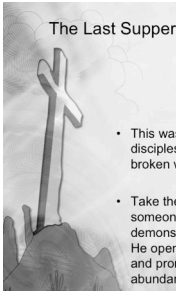

“You will be a spring whose waters never fail”

- What a contrast from the picture of the desert. Now even in the desert, I can be a spring. (Ps 84). I can give life to others, because there is a source to draw from. There is a reservoir.
- Spring means joy, life, sustenance, encouragement, wisdom, experience, support...
- What kind of spring is God making you? How will this spring bless others? Are there any specific people, that this spring will be a source for?
- Write on the card and share and pray with someone for your spring to never fail.




Easter theme: the stages of the cross – here is just a few of them.

The Last Supper

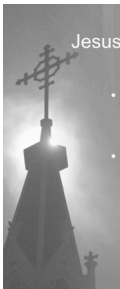
- This was Jesus' last meal with the disciples before laying down his life for this broken world.
- Take the bread and wine and join with someone else in thanking Jesus for demonstrating his incredible love for us. He opened the way for friendship with God and promised "life and life more abundant."

Jesus condemned to death



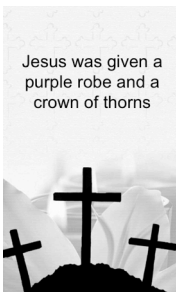
- Pilate washed his hands of any responsibility for condemning Jesus to death. The ultimate injustice.
- We live in a world full of injustices. Recently there have been some injustice done to families thrown out of Morocco. Have you had an injustice done to you, or do you know of a situation that burdens you?
- Take a rock, symbolising the injustice you are thinking about. Talk to someone about it and/or then say a prayer and ask God what you are to do, as you drop it into the water.

Jesus was stripped of his garments



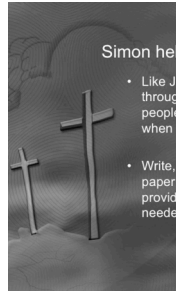
- Take something off – a watch, jacket, glasses, shoes, ring....
- Then ask, 'Have there been losses in my life, or things I have had to let go?' – relationships, finances, work or ministry, confidence, security...

Jesus was given a purple robe and a crown of thorns



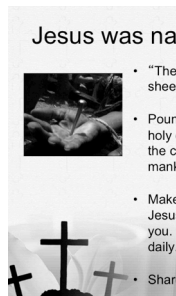
- The robe and crown they placed on Jesus was in dishonour.
- Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, so this Easter let's take the opportunity to give him the honour he is due.
- Take a crown and pin it on the robe as a declaration of who Jesus is.

Simon helped Jesus carry the cross



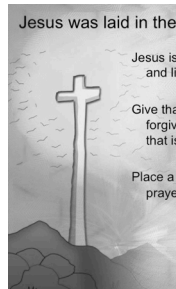
- Like Jesus we need others to help us through difficult times. Remember those people in your life who have been there when you needed them.
- Write, draw or paint something on the wall paper to give thanks for these people who provided strength and help when you needed it.

Jesus was nailed to a cross



- "The shepherd lays down his life for the sheep"
- Pound a nail into the cross. Jesus, the holy one, took your place and suffered the consequences of the sins of mankind.
- Make a cross and meditate on how much Jesus loves you to be prepared to die for you. He asks us to take up our cross daily. What does that mean for you?
- Share and pray with someone.


Jesus was laid in the tomb but didn't stay there!



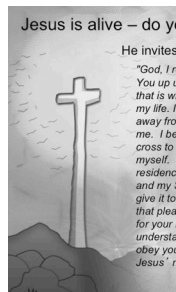
Jesus is alive and wants to give us "life and life more abundantly."

Give thanks and celebrate His love, forgiveness, mercy, strength and power that is ours for the asking.

Place a flower in the vase and add your prayer of thanks.



Jesus is alive – do you know him?



He invites you to pray this prayer:

"God, I recognize that I have not lived my life for You up until now. I have been living for myself and that is wrong. I need You in my life; I want You in my life. I am sorry and today I am deciding to turn away from this selfish lifestyle. I ask you to forgive me. I believe you gave your life for me on the cross to save me. You did what I couldn't do myself. Come into my life now, Lord. Take up residence in my heart and be my king, my Lord, and my Savior. I ask you to take control of my life, I give it to you. Help me to live every day in a way that pleases you. I love you, Lord, and I thank you for your Holy Spirit who comes to help me understand your words and gives me strength to obey you and live for you for the rest of my life. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen"