



**A CLASS
OF YOUR
OWN**

God in the Everyday

The Methodist Church 

INVITATION TO EXPERIENCE A CLASS MEETING

Many Church traditions have discovered that meeting in small groups helps people to become better followers of Jesus. The Methodist Church has found such small groups (which they call classes) essential to help one another in the journey to becoming “whole life, lifelong and world transforming disciples”.

We want to offer you something precious to us as a Methodist faith community that we think will also encourage other Christians as together we seek to change our world.

The basic idea is simple. Create some space to listen to each other, to put ourselves consciously in the presence of God, and talk to God what about comes to mind. During Greenbelt, or back home or at work, you might like to meet every day for half an hour over a cup of coffee or breakfast. Each group is structured using ideas from Methodist Class Meetings, and also from CELL UK’s material.

THREE STEPS NOW YOU’VE PICKED THIS UP!

Find a group! Find between 3 and 8 people to meet with.

Look for somewhere to meet for a short time. Over breakfast? Coffee? Tea?

Share out the leadership of the group. Leadership only means helping each part of the session to happen. Ideas for what to do for each day are in this booklet.

It would help to have some paper and pens; but if you haven’t, just ignore the bits that ask for them.

GOD IN THE EVERYDAY

The structure of each session is simple:

- **GREETING** catching up with each other
- **THANKING** noticing where God has been with us and being thankful
- **STORY TELLING** sharing stories about what matters
- **PRAYING** talking and listening to God

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three
	God in the home	God in my work place or school or community	God in the world
Greeting 5 mins	What’s your weather like?	Best song in the world when you’re feeling sad	Favourite food when you’re hungry
Thanking 10 mins	Fire in the house! What would you rescue? (The things that matter most to me)	Comfort when you’re sad (God of the everyday through good and bad)	“I think to myself, what a wonderful world” (Psalms and praise!)
Story telling 10 mins	Storm before a calm (Coping with conflict and stress)	Danger in the face of courage (Daring to be yourself)	Where there’s brass there’s muck (Longing for a better world)

DAY ONE

GOD IN THE HOME

GREETING: What's your weather like?

Each person describes how they're feelings as if it was the weather (eg stormy, sunny, windy).

THANKING: Fire in the house

Imagine that your house is about to burn down. What are the things that matter most to you? What would you rescue? Draw or write down your thoughts about. Place them in the middle of the group and in a short quiet time, give thanks to God for things that matter to us.

STORY TELLING: Storm before a calm

The wind ran out of breath

Late that day he said to them, "Let's go across to the other side." They took him in the boat as he was. Other boats came along. A huge storm came up. Waves poured into the boat, threatening to sink it. And Jesus was in the stern, head on a pillow, sleeping! They roused him, saying, "Teacher, is it nothing to you that we're going down?" Awake now, he told the wind to pipe down and said to the sea, "Quiet! Settle down!" The wind ran out of breath; the sea became smooth as glass. Jesus reprimanded the disciples: "Why are you such cowards? Don't you have any faith at all?" They were in absolute awe, staggered. "Who is this, anyway?" they asked. "Wind and sea at his beck and call!"

Mark 4:35-41 (The Message)

Share stories about home life:

- What makes it difficult and sometimes stormy?
- What helps get you through it?
- Does God seem to be sleeping or is God there saying to the storm 'pipe down'?

PRAYING: Cup prayer

Write down on a piece of paper a concern that you have, perhaps one that came out of thinking about storms at home.

Fold up the paper and with everyone else put the folded prayers into a cup (or hat).

Pass the cup around and read out each other's prayer.



DAY TWO

GOD IN MY WORK PLACE, SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY

GREETING: Best song in the world

Each person shares the best song, or piece of music, they listen to when feeling sad. How does it change their mood?

THANKING: Comfort when you're sad

Remember times when you have found support and comfort during difficult parts of life. Share names of people who have been alongside and helpful. Use short prayers either out aloud or quietly to say, 'Thank you for ____'.

STORY TELLING: Danger in the face of courage

They spent some time in Jericho. As Jesus was leaving town, trailed by his disciples and a parade of people, a blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus, was sitting alongside the road. When he heard that Jesus the Nazarene was passing by, he began to cry out, "Son of David, Jesus! Mercy, have mercy on me!" Many tried to hush him up, but he yelled all the louder, "Son of David! Mercy, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped in his tracks. "Call him over." They called him. "It's your lucky day! Get up! He's calling you to come!" Throwing off his coat, he was on his feet at once and came to Jesus. Jesus said, "What can I do for you?" The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." "On your way," said Jesus. "Your faith has saved and healed you." In that very instant he recovered his sight and followed Jesus down the road.

Mark 10:46-52 (The Message)

Share stories about your work place, school or community:

Bartimaeus had to be brave to face a future without being blind. He learned to survive because he was a blind beggar. His courage led him into danger. It costs to follow Jesus.

- When it has been hard to "be yourself"; perhaps to have different values or views from others?
- When have you felt pressure to go along with a noisy crowd?
- If Jesus were to ask, "what can I do for you?", what's your answer? Share your stories.

WHOLE LIFE

PRAYING: Breathe in God prayer

In God we live and move and have our being.

Get comfortable.

Notice your breathing – don't control it, just notice the feelings.

Cold air coming into your nose; the release as you breath out.

As you **inhale**, imagine breathing in God's love, peace, strength and kindness.

As you **breathe out**, let go of your thoughts, happy or sad.

Allow the **rhythm** of your breathing to set the pace for your prayer.

Although you do this on your own, it is amazing to do this with others. Simply rest, breathe and be with God!

GOD IN THE WORLD

DAY THREE

GREETING: Food when you're hungry

What is your favourite food when you're really hungry?"

THANKING: "I think to myself, what a wonderful world"

Share your favourite moments of creation.

Then either read out aloud this psalm – or write your own!

*On your feet now — applaud God!
Bring a gift of laughter,
sing yourselves into his presence.
Know this: God is God, and God, God.
He made us; we didn't make him.
We're his people, his well-tended sheep.
Enter with the password: "Thank you!"
Make yourselves at home, talking praise.
Thank him. Worship him.
For God is sheer beauty,
all-generous in love,
loyal always and ever.*

Psalm 100 (The Message)

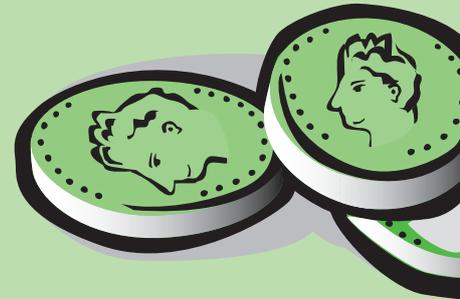
Try moving out into the open – standing together and reading the psalm as an act or praise.

Best if it's sunny, funnier if it's pouring with rain.

SHARING STORIES: Where there's brass there's muck

Then Jesus entered and walked through Jericho. There was a man there, his name Zacchaeus, the head tax man and quite rich. He wanted desperately to see Jesus, but the crowd was in his way – he was a short man and couldn't see over the crowd. So he ran on ahead and climbed up in a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus when he came by. When Jesus got to the tree, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, hurry down. Today is my day to be a guest in your home." Zacchaeus scrambled out of the tree, hardly believing his good luck, delighted to take Jesus home with him. Everyone who saw the incident was indignant and grumped, "What business does he have getting cozy with this crook?" Zacchaeus just stood there, a little stunned. He stammered apologetically, "Master, I give away half my income to the poor — and if I'm caught cheating, I pay four times the damages." Jesus said, "Today is salvation day in this home! Here he is: Zacchaeus, son of Abraham! For the Son of Man came to find and restore the lost."

Luke 19:1-10 (The Message)



Share stories about God in the world:

Zacchaeus doesn't change his job because he meets Jesus. Jesus accepts the difficult work he does. But Zacchaeus does change the way he does that work. It was not an easy choice to make.

If a miracle happened and the world became the place God wanted it to be, how would you know? What would be different? How would it 'smell, taste, look, sound and feel' different?

PRAYER

Read the Bible passage again, several times.

Don't ask, 'What does it mean?'. Just notice a word or a phrase that catches you.

What does this remind you of in your own life or in the news?

What do you want to say to God because of that?

If it does, write down any prayers, using the language and images of the Bible passage to help shape the prayer.

Read out your prayer in the group, but only if you feel comfortable to do so.



HISTORY OF THE CLASS MEETING

Methodism started as a renewal movement within the Church of England. Methodists formed 'societies', to nurture the people responding to the gospel. They were open to all, meeting for weekly prayer and fellowship to supplement parish worship. Those wishing to be members of the Methodist movement had to keep three rules: do no harm, do good and attend upon all the ordinances of God.

As societies grew, they divided into smaller groups. Each class had a leader, who visited the members to "inquire how their souls prosper", "advise, reprove, comfort or exhort" and to collect a weekly subscription. The leaders were lay members, women and men. Weekly meetings of the classes gradually replaced the weekly leader visits. The purpose of accountability was sustained: members shared testimony, advice and prayer, and supported one another in putting faith into practice in everyday life.

TO FIND OUT MORE

If you have enjoyed your experience of the class meeting, go to www.deepeningdiscipleship.org.uk for ideas to start up, or develop further a class meeting.

The Methodist Church website www.methodist.org.uk includes *A Word in Time/A Word in your Ear* which offers a commentary on a different Bible passage each day. Authors write a week of notes and readers can respond in an online forum. It provides excellent material for a class or any small group meeting.

You can also access *A Word in Time* through the **Methodist Church app** – available free from the App Store. The app also has the latest news, topical podcasts and tweets from the Methodist Church.

Look at the Cell UK website: www.celluk.org.uk for resources and ideas.

The Bible Society's *lyfe* (www.lyfe.org.uk) offers materials for small groups. Lyfe is about helping people to explore and discover a richer, deeper relationship with God through the Bible and experiencing spiritual challenges.


The **Methodist Church**

Design and production: divaarts.com
Text: Methodist Publishing on behalf of the Methodist Church in Britain,
registered charity no 1132208
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