

Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network: Appendix

1. Local Preacher and Worship Leader Initial Training

- 1.1 Standing Orders require that the Methodist Council prescribes the training programmes for Local Preachers and Worship Leaders (SOs 565 and 680(ii), respectively). This section briefly outlines the shape of the proposed new pathways for Worship Leaders and Local Preachers and describes the progress of the work. It is proposed that the Methodist Council delegates responsibility for the approval of these pathways to the Ministries Committee, working in collaboration with the Faith & Order Committee.

An outline of the proposed pathways for Worship Leaders and Local Preachers

- 1.2 The proposed new pathways for Worship Leaders (WLs) and Local Preachers (LPs) will replace the existing study elements (Faith & Worship and the Worship Leader Training Pack) with a set of eight modules. The practical, circuit-based elements of training (mentors, service reports, interviews etc) will continue, but with slight adjustments to enable better integration with the course of study. The student's learning and practical skills will be assessed by means of a structured portfolio of evidence drawn primarily from the student's leading of worship and preaching. Admission processes will remain as described in Standing Orders.
- 1.3 Some underlying principles that shape the proposals:
- The new pathways will operate within existing Standing Orders, although for clarity and coherence it may be desirable to review certain aspects once the new pathways are in place.
 - Initial training should normally take 1-2 years for WLs and 2-5 years for LPs. Many LPs at present take considerably longer than this, whereas the WL training is rather light, particularly in theological content.
 - For both LPs and WLs, there will be a greater emphasis on and accountability for continuing development post-accreditation.
 - There are elements of training that are common to both WLs and LPs. The new pathways enable WLs and LPs to study these common elements together.
 - Training needs to resource ministry in a diverse and developing range of contexts across inherited, emerging, and fresh expressions of church. Within initial training there needs to be both a grounding in elements that are common to all contexts, and scope for specialisation.
 - Reflective practice is key in shaping training that will equip people to continue learning after the end of initial training, and to adapt in fast changing contexts.
 - Training needs to be accessible to people from a wide range of backgrounds and educational experience. Assessment needs to be closely related to the skills and understanding needed for leading worship and preaching. Use of text-based teaching and assessment styles needs to be balanced with other approaches.
- 1.4 Study modules (**see Appendix A**) – eight modules form the basis of the study element of training. Modules 1-4 are core for WL training, and all eight modules are core for LPs. WLs will be encouraged to consider engaging with modules 5-8 as part of their continuing development. It is intended that further modules will be developed to resource continuing development of both LPs and WLs. Existing LPs and WLs who have trained via previous provision would also benefit from participating in the core modules for continuing development.

- 1.5 In addition to the pathway modules, all those training as WLs and LPs will need to have completed the Creating Safer Space Foundation Module, possibly before beginning training (see SO 564A(1)).
- 1.6 It is important to recognise that the study modules are one element of a broader initial learning pathway. Modules may be studied more or less intensively during the period of initial training, but a minimum period is set to ensure there is sufficient time not only for development in skills and understanding, but also for both the student and the Local Preachers' Meeting to explore and discern the person's call. A maximum time limit helps to ensure that training is not allowed to drag on for an unreasonable length of time.
- 1.7 Module format and delivery – each module is divided into three sections. Working titles and an indication of content are given in the module outline in Appendix A. Each section requires both individual study and an opportunity for group discussion. The materials are flexible for use in a range of different group contexts, including:
- peer-led small group
 - tutor-led small group
 - workshop or dedicated Local Preachers' Meeting
 - regional study day (full module)
 - residential block delivery (several modules)
 - e-group (with care to ensure sufficient face-to-face support).
- 1.8 The course seeks to instil a life-long learning culture by equipping the student to: recognise and reflect on their own theology and experience; appreciate and explore the perspectives of others (including theological scholarship); consider the implications for how they practise their ministry and develop their skills. Each section is shaped around the following framework (**see Appendix B**):
- **Worship** – resources and ideas related to the theme, for use individually, in group sessions, and / or in services.
 - **Prepare** – primary 'input' for each section, intended for individual study before the session (but could be adapted and delivered in additional sessions via regions, institutions or ecumenical partnerships, where a more tutor-led version of the course is required and can be resourced).
 - **Explore** – materials for use in group discussion, with a 1.5 – 2hr session outline.
 - **Apply & Reflect** – suggested tasks and activities for application of learning, with guidance for further reflection. There will be elements that relate to preaching, to leading of worship, to other areas of church life, and to personal discipleship.
 - **Extend** – signposts to deeper learning opportunities, e.g. books, further modules and courses, organisations.

Module content

- 1.9 The modules integrate key areas of the curriculum. For example, all modules will engage with the Bible, hymns and prayers, contextual issues (e.g. working with different age groups and cultures), and Methodist identity and theology. This enables a spiral approach to learning as the areas are revisited, and applied in new contexts, thus deepening understanding.
- 1.10 It is recognised that within the calling to be a WL or LP, there is huge diversity in the ministries of individual people. While the eight modules cover a core of knowledge and understanding, the 'apply & reflect' phase enables individuals to plot a pathway through that is relevant to their own context and calling, and the 'extend' phase offers ways into deeper and more specialised learning. The format of assessment will guard against too narrow an engagement with core areas.

Portfolio:	no. of services:	Services to include evidence of:	Additional portfolio elements:
WL portfolio	3 - 5	Specified elements of worship led by the student (see example at appendix C)	Two reflections on acts of worship attended. Six pieces of work that show application of learning from the modules in a range of different ways
LP portfolio part A	5 - 7	As WL portfolio, plus two further exegeses with preaching, including at least one full service.	As WL portfolio
LP portfolio part B	5 - 7	Specified elements of worship, exegeses and preaching in a range of styles and contexts.	As WL portfolio (see example at appendix D)

Assessment

- 1.11 WLs will be required to produce one portfolio during initial training lasting 1-2 years. LPs, during 2-5 years initial training, would be required to produce a larger portfolio submitted in two parts, part A during the first half of training, and part B in the second. Although various 'apply & reflect' tasks set within the study modules may correspond with portfolio elements, essentially the portfolio structure is independent of the study modules.
- 1.12 Both portfolios are structured, with a clear list of required contents (see **Appendices C and D**).
- 1.13 It is suggested that assessment of portfolios be carried out in partnership between local tutors and regional staff in the Network. Network staff bring a connexional perspective to the process, and may form a Connexion-wide moderating body.

Current state of progress

Development of proposals and writing of resources

- 1.14 From the outset it was clear that there is a pressing need for new WL and LP pathways to be implemented, but that this must be balanced with the need to ensure that this important piece of work is done well.

Writing core modules

- 1.15 In April, an implementation timetable was shared with the Ministries Committee. This proposed the release of a sample module in August 2013, for piloting in identified settings in the early autumn. Completion of the eight core modules, initially in electronic format only, is scheduled for April 2014, in order for the two pathways to be launched at the Conference. Over 2014/15 feedback will be received and the resources fine-tuned prior to making hard copies available alongside the electronic format.
- 1.16 It was decided relatively early on that the best process for writing module resources would be to convene small groups of writers to draft each module. This enables a depth and range of theological understanding, practical experience and creative energy to be brought to the task. These drafts will then be edited by a small team to ensure a coherent style and pick up any duplications or omissions that may exist across the whole set of modules.

- 1.17 Since April there have been some necessary amendments to the timetable. A significant portion of time was spent in preparation for the workshops held at the 2013 Conference, and many of those involved in the writing process have also been involved in the transition process to the new Network staff team.
- 1.18 As a result, work on the sample module has not yet been completed. Nevertheless, some significant work has been done. The three sections are approaching the final draft stage, and will be ready for piloting in late October.
- 1.19 It may still be possible to have resources available around the time of Conference 2014, or at least in time for the new connexional year, but this will require significant progress to be made over the coming weeks and months.

Assessment package

- 1.20 There is some additional work to do to finalise the competencies. The Ministries Committee, at its meeting in October 2013, will work towards the identification of a quality assurance and enhancement framework for pathways for Local Preachers and Worship Leaders. Plans for the portfolio format are well developed, although assessment criteria still need to be developed, along with clarification of how and by whom assessment will be undertaken, and particularly the role of staff within the Network.

'Training the trainers'

- 1.21 Introduction of these new pathways clearly entails significant change for circuit tutors and mentors, Local Preachers' Meetings, district tutors, and others. It is likely that some people will choose to retire, rather than making the transition to the new pathways. Therefore, there will need to be a drive to recruit new people to fill these roles, and a training package in place to equip new and existing office holders. Work has not yet begun on this area, and can probably only fully commence once the new pathways are approved. The capacity of Network staff with the Ministry Development specialism will be important here, and so hopefully this work can begin once a greater number of these roles are filled.

Transition for existing LPs on Trial

- 1.22 It is anticipated that people who have already started Faith & Worship will have three options:
1. continue studying F&W – with the existing system supported for 3-4 years, which should allow the majority of existing students to complete if they wish.
 2. start the new course at the beginning – those who have struggled with the style of Faith & Worship, or have only recently begun, may wish to start afresh.
 3. transfer to the new course, with credit for any sections of Faith & Worship successfully completed.
- 1.23 Option three requires the sections of Faith & Worship to be mapped against the new modules, and clear requirements to be put in place for those who transfer at the different stages. This work is best done once modules have been agreed.

Accountability

- 1.24 The proposals described in part 1 of this paper have been shared in varying levels of detail with a number of bodies to whom there is accountability.
- 1.25 The Ministries Committee has received papers at meetings in March 2012 and April 2013 (1112-5-C and 1213-4-H). At each stage reports were warmly received and the committee was happy for work to continue.

- 1.26 A conversation has begun with the Chair of the Faith and Order Committee, with a view to identifying an appropriate level of scrutiny, and ways of taking this forward.
- 1.27 This work is not thought to need input from the Law and Polity Committee prior to launch as it will operate within existing Standing Orders. However it may subsequently be desirable to review Standing Orders, particularly in the light of bringing together pathways for WLs and LPs.
- 1.28 Three workshops at the 2013 Conference offered representatives the opportunity to engage with this work. A good number of written responses were received, and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Further consultation and sharing of information

- 1.29 There has been ongoing consultation with Faith & Worship assessors and District Local Preachers' Secretaries via their annual meetings. Although these groups have perhaps been the most cautious, they have been broadly receptive of the proposals, and have provided helpful input.
- 1.30 A small number of districts have requested input on this work at meetings of LPs and WLs. Three invitations have been accepted, and these meetings used as an opportunity for further consultation. Again, the majority response has been positive, with some excitement generated.
- 1.31 Some basic information has been placed on the Local Preachers' page of the website. A steady trickle of comments continues to be received via the Local Preachers postal and email addresses. The vast majority of this correspondence raises concerns that are being addressed within the proposals, but have perhaps not been communicated in enough detail to allay concerns. Posting a FAQs document on the website would help to answer these concerns in an accessible way.

Module 1 Encountering God... an introduction

1.1 Introduction to the course

Introducing the format of the course, reflective practice, and the model of assessment. Study options, mapping out pathway, recognising prior learning and experience.

1.2 Introduction to theology

Exploring how we think about God using a range of images from scripture, hymns, art etc. Tools we use for theology, including Wesleyan quadrilateral, pastoral cycle.

1.3 Focus on discernment

Thinking about our whole-life calling, priorities and commitments, and calling to particular roles. Exploring roles of WL, LP and others.

Module 2 Encountering God... in the life of the Church

2.1 Encountering God in the Bible

What do we make of the God we meet in scripture? Thinking about the persons of the Trinity. Basic introduction to the Bible, beginning to ask questions of scriptural authority and interpretation.

2.2 Encountering God in the Church

Reflecting on the God we meet through the life and worship of the Church. Thinking about how we represent God in our language, imagery and praxis, continuing to reflect on persons of the Trinity.

2.3 Focus on worship

Life as worship, and worship as an act of the whole people of God. Recognising diverse needs within the congregation. Thinking about how an act of worship is put together, and what it means to lead others in worship. Worship curation.

Module 3 Encountering God... in daily life

3.1 Encountering God for myself

Recognising our own journey of faith, and exploring different devotional practices. Reflecting on ways the life of the church may support this aspect of faith.

3.2 Encountering God in the world

Seeing God beyond the church, in daily life and work, in creation. Thinking about our participation in God's mission in those contexts.

3.3 Focus on prayer

What is prayer, and why do we pray? Different types of prayer (adoration, confession etc) and different styles of prayer (written, extempore, meditative etc). Leading and enabling others to pray.

Module 4 Encountering God... in unexpected places

4.1 Encountering God in difficult times

Exploring loss, failure, anger and lament, in scripture and human experience. Pastoral awareness and sensitivity with self and others. Handling unexpected situations in worship.

4.2 Encountering God through the eyes of others

Thinking about how we respond to difference. Exploring perspectives that may enrich our understanding of God. Diversity in society and local community; within congregations and between denominations; global diversity within Christianity; encountering other faiths.

4.3 Focus on reflective practice and continuing development

Taking stock of progress. Incorporating reflective practice for the long term. Identifying interests and priorities for further development.

Module 5 Ministry of the Word

5.1 The Bible – a bird's eye view

What is in the Bible, and how do we come to have it today? Development of the canon, transmission, translation, interpretation – implications for our understanding of Biblical authority.

5.2 The Bible – close up

Principles of handling a text and seeking meaning for today. To include thinking about contexts then and now, genre, authorial intention, original hearers, textual context.

5.3 Focus on preaching (part 1)

What is preaching? What is it for? Considering the needs of the 'hearers' – ages and stages, culture etc. Evaluating some different models.

Module 6 Living faith

6.1 A new kind of Kingdom

The concept of kingship and Kingdom in Old and New Testaments. Jesus' Kingdom parables. How do we understand God's Kingdom today, and what is the Church in relation to the Kingdom?

6.2 Kingdom Ethics

Exploring how ethical teaching is related to context. Particularly looking at Jesus, Paul and our context today – what is cultural, what is unchanging, and why? What is the place of ethical teaching in preaching?

6.3 Focus on preaching (part 2)

Looking at Biblical and contemporary sermons, and how they connect with their hearers. Thinking about the process of preparing, writing, delivering and evaluating a sermon.

Module 7 Understanding our story

7.1 Salvation history and the life of Christ

God's interaction (as Trinity) with the created order – themes such as creation, fall, covenants made / broken, reconciliation. Atonement theories – ways the work of Christ may be understood in that context. The liturgical year as a way of telling the story.

7.2 Church history and the story of Methodism

An overview of the story of the Church, NT to today. Emergence of Methodism – context; emphases in theology and praxis; unity, diversity and connexionalism; Methodism today and for the future.

7.3 Focus on preaching (part 3)

Biblical and contemporary examples of 'different' preaching styles. 'Curating' ministry of the word. Engaging senses and imagination; inductive, interactive and discussion-based preaching; stations etc.

Module 8 Marginal voices

8.1 Prophets

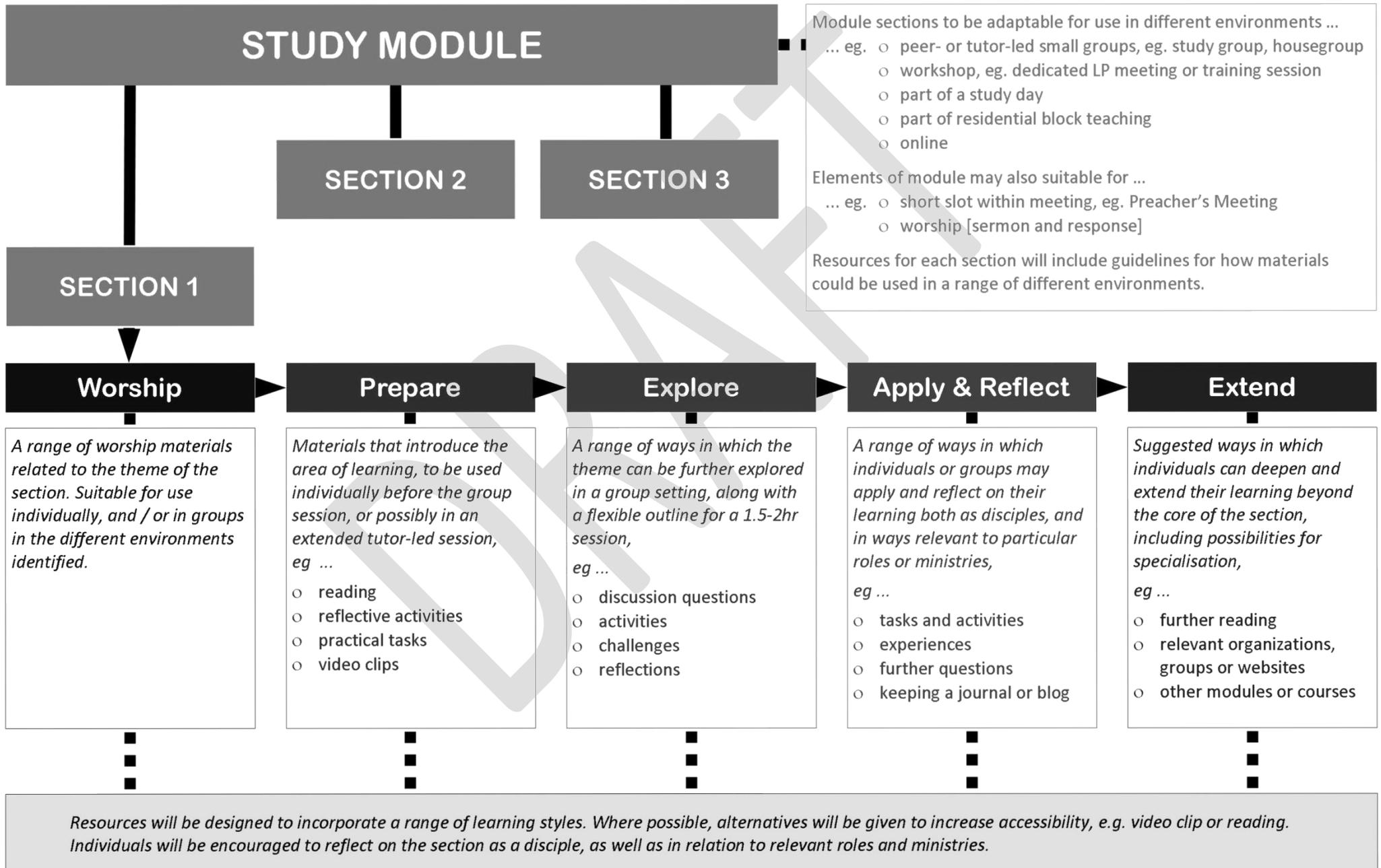
What is a prophet? Biblical prophets in their contexts. NT / Christian 'use' of OT prophecy. Present day prophets. Introducing the idea of the church as a prophetic community.

8.2 Theologies and cultures after modernity

Considering some diverse ways the Bible has been interpreted, and how we respond (e.g. liberation / postcolonial, feminist / womanist, black, queer, disabled, green). Whose are the marginal voices in our context? Being a prophetic Church – what should / do we speak out on?

8.3 Focus on contextuality and continuing development

Revisit diversity of own context(s), recognising ever changing nature of culture. How does my own sense of call relate to the needs of my context? Identifying interests and priorities for continuing development.



Appendix C | Sample Worship Grid – Worship Leader Portfolio

	Worship leading opportunities:				
Evidence of:	1 [date / location]	2 [date / location]	3 [date / location]	(4) [date / location]	(5)
Leading prayers (adoration, confession, thanksgiving, intercession – each to be included, but not necessarily in one service)		<i>Planned and led prayers of intercession</i>	<i>wrote prayers of adoration, confession and thanksgiving</i>		
Planning a 15-20 min portion of a service (with sense of direction and developing a theme)			<i>planned and led the opening 15 mins of service</i>		
Use of creativity (e.g. music, drama, art, dance, technology, meditation, reflection, discussion)	<i>used a drama from Seed Resources website</i>	<i>Congregation invited to write prayers on stars and stick them on to large 'night sky'</i>			
Using the gifts of others in leading worship	<i>members of the congregation acted in the drama</i>		<i>Members of the congregation read parts of the prayers of adoration</i>		
Exegesis planning document with related presentation of a Bible passage				<i>Told Matt 5:14-16 using candle and bowl - without oxygen candle went out</i>	
Exegesis planning document with related prayers		<i>Intercessions based on Gen 15:5 - God's promise to Abram</i>			

Appendix D | Sample Themes Grid – LP Portfolio B (modules 5-8)

Theme to be explored:	Medium for exploration:										
	Small group discussion or bible study	10-20 min presentation	Article for church newsletter (500? words)	Short essay (1500 words)	Sermon (or equivalent)	Analysis of a song or hymn	Prayer station(s)	Short sketch or drama	Reflection, meditation or poem	Visual art, short video or similar	Other medium as agreed with tutor
Aspect(s) of Methodist heritage and its relevance for today			✓								
An ethical issue in Biblical and contemporary context							✓				
The meaning of Jesus' life, and/or death, and /or resurrection						✓					
The person and work of the Holy Spirit											
The identity and purpose of church in my context									✓		
Biblical authority and interpretation	✓										
A particular Bible passage [from a given list?]											
A Biblical theme (e.g. covenant, kingdom, heaven, sacrifice, ...)										✓	