

Let your life speak of new beginnings

Despite Peter's passionate love for Jesus and enthusiasm for the cause of Jesus, for God's Kingdom, he has a lot of growing to do, and some devastating mistakes to mature through before he can become the rock on which the church will be built.

Group facilitator welcomes everyone. Each person introduces themselves. Leader reminds people of the guidelines. Leader begins by reading out the session title and two sentence explanation.

**Connect (10 minutes)**

Share experiences of giving/receiving to and from others as you lived with attention to God this week. Did you experience any fear and how did you find courage to overcome it?

**Contemplate (8 minutes)**

Sing together or read through together Brian Wren's hymn. (StF 588).

1. I come with joy to meet my Lord,
Forgiven, loved, and free,
In awe and wonder to recall
His life laid down for me.
2. As Christ breaks bread and bids us share,
Each proud division ends.
The love that made us, makes us one,
And strangers now are friends.
3. And thus with joy we meet our Lord.
His presence, always near,
Is in such friendship better known;
We see and praise Him here.
4. Together met, together bound,
We'll go our diff'rent ways,
And as His people in the world,
We'll live and speak His praise.

In silence together spend some time, repeating slowly to yourself each of the phrases: "I come" letting its meaning sink deep into you, then moving on to "with joy"; then "to meet my Lord"; "forgiven"; "loved" and "free". This is like sucking on a sweet to slowly take in and savour the flavour.

End by reading through the hymn together.



Consider (15 minutes)

John 21:13-19 or the Gospel passage just used in worship.

Someone reads the setting. Two people read the passage slowly one after the other.

Setting

Some of the disciples, full of discouragement after the death of Jesus, have returned to their previous occupation of fishing. Jesus meets them on the seashore. He asks Peter three times whether he loves him, to counter balance the three times when Peter denied him at his trial. Peter is called again from discouragement and Jesus' love for him reaffirmed, despite Peter's great betrayal. This gives Peter the belief that he is forgiven and courage to start again.

John 21: 13–19 (NRSV)

Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.' (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

Three minutes' silence to think about the passage individually. Guard this time of silence for personal reflection.

Each person has the opportunity to share a word, phrase or idea which lights up for them or a question raised for them. You may want to do this in twos or threes, rather than as a whole group.

Listen carefully without comment to each person's contribution.

Only when everyone has had the opportunity to share, let a conversation develop. The conversation may develop from the contributions or a focus for the conversation might be:

Can you think of an experience where you or someone else failed either in something big or relatively small? What did you see being learnt?



Commit (5 minutes)

How are you going to pay more attention to God so that you live with generous intention to others this week?

Work out for next week a small risky venture into your community that God may be asking you to investigate or help out with this week. Share your thinking next week.

Close with the series prayer.

*God of amazing grace,
you entrust to us the gift of your life.
You invite us to notice and treasure you.
May the threads of our lives,
mundane and spectacular,
speak of you, that your love may overflow to others
and the whole world.
Amen.*